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# Southwest Digest

A newspaper for the 21st century, representing the Black community's ideas and ideals since 1977.

December 22-28, 2005

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50¢

Worth More!

1302 Avenue Q  
Lubbock, Texas 79401  
Phone (806) 762-3612



## Merry Christmas

SOUTHWEST COLLECTION  
Texas Tech University  
LUBBOCK, TEXAS 79409

Unto you is born this day in  
the city of David, a Saviour,  
which is Christ the Lord.

- Luke 8:11



### Should we celebrate tradition Christmas customs?

By Pastor William Mark  
Bristow  
From www.bible.com

#### Origin of St. Nicholas

Every year Christians ask me, "Should I celebrate with all the traditional customs of Christmas? They all seem so materialistic. Aren't some of these customs really pagan?" So every year, I endeavor to bring out a few facts from our Christian heritage. Let's start with the real shocker — There really was a Santa Claus (however, he is not the one that people know today). The real Santa Claus was a PREACHER!! Yes Sir! His name was St. Nicholas and he lived and worked as the Bishop of a little town of Myra, (now in the country of Turkey). Tradition says he was born in Patara, a seaport, and traveled to Egypt and Palestine as a young man. Eventually he became bishop of the church at Myra. During the period of persecution of Christians by Emperor Diocletian, he was imprisoned, but he was released by Diocletian's successor, Constantine the Great. By the 6th century his burial shrine was well known at Myra. In

1087 his remains were moved to Bari, Italy, which became a crowded pilgrimage center in his honor. Devotion to him spread throughout the Christian world, and he was chosen patron saint of Russia and Greece. Thousands of churches throughout Europe have been named for him. His feast day was set on December 6. He was credited with many miracles. In one story he saved three officers from death by appearing to Constantine in a dream. In another legend he provided bags of gold to a poor man as dowries for his three daughters. When he died on December 6 in the year 345, he was revered for his generosity and kindness. It became the custom to give gifts to loved ones on his saint's day, the date of his death. Later Christians adopted St. Nicholas for Christmas day, which commemorates the date God gave the greatest gift of all, Christ Jesus for the redemption of the world.

#### Origin of the Modern Day Santa Claus

Santa Claus is probably a Dutch mispronunciation of Sinter Kluis (Saint Nicholas). Kriss Kringle is probably an English

mispronunciation of the German, "Christkindlein" (little Christ child). In 1822 Santa received a drastic makeover through the poem penned by a pastor, Rev. Clement C. Moore felt his church's poor offerings were going to make a very dismal Christmas for his children. The weather was bleak and everyone needed some cheering. Rev. Moore held down a secular job to help meet expenses. He had been thinking of Saint Nicholas, from old accounts a very serious and austere man in appearance. A story began to form in Rev. Moore's mind, his children would love a good story. What about a visit from Saint Nicholas? He looked over at the portly German fellow who drove the sleigh on their way home from work. A new vision of St. Nick began to take shape — the horse drawn sleigh... NO! ... flying reindeer. Well, you know the poem by its first line, 'Twas the night before Christmas... The poem was intended for his children's ears, only, but after great insistence it was read to his congregation. A parishioner published the poem a few years later in a Troy, New York newspaper. In the 1950's Coca Cola need-

ed a spokesman for their soda at Christmas time. Someone drew an artist's rendering of Rev. Moore's St. Nick and Coca Cola made the jolly ol' elf famous as we have him today.

#### How We Came to Celebrate on December 25th

Another question is always asked, "Why December 25th? We know Jesus was probably born sometime between April and November, - after all the scripture says that shepherds were watching their flocks in the fields?" Recently, I was seated at a table with hosts of a major television program. The question of the date of Christ's birth arose and I was told in no uncertain terms that Jesus was born on the 15th of Tishri, (Sept/Oct) which is the feast of Tabernacle, or Hebrew "sukkah", (pronounced 'sook-kaw'). Although this is a real possibility — I must tell you after hours of searching Matthew Henry, Halley's Bible Dictionary, Compton's Encyclopedia, The American Book of Days, the 12 Volume Interpreter's Bible, Holman's Bible Dictionary, Keyell Bible Dictionary and volumes on Christian Sites on the World Wide Web, all definitely state, "we do not know when Jesus was born, or even what year." (Although he had to be born sometime between 4 and 8 BC due to Herod's reign and death which is known from archaeological records.) While it is accepted that Jesus was born in the small town of Bethlehem a few miles south of Jerusalem, there is no certain information on the date of his birth, not even of the year (see Jesus Christ). One reason for this uncertainty is that the stories of his birth, recorded in the New Testament books of Matthew and Luke, were written several decades after the event. And for several centuries the Christian church itself paid little attention to the celebration of Jesus' birth. The major Christmas festival was Easter, the day of his resurrection. Only gradually, as the church developed a calendar to commem-

orate the major events of the life of Christ, did it celebrate his birth.

Till about the year 250-300 there was little celebration of Christ's birth, other than a solemn memory. His death and resurrection were all important to new Christianity. As the church spread around the world, it encountered the Roman/Byzantine festival of the Winter Solstice. This was a day of great festivity in the pagan world. Because there was no knowledge about the date of Jesus' birth, a day had to be selected. The Eastern Orthodox and the Eastern Rite churches within the Roman Catholic church chose January 6. The day was named Epiphany, meaning "appearance," the day of Christ's manifestation. The Western church, based at Rome, chose December 25. It is known from a notice in an ancient Roman almanac that Christmas was celebrated on December 25 in Rome as early as AD 336. In about 547 A.D. St. Augustine was sent by Pope Gregory the Great as the first official missionary to England. He followed an edict from the Pope, "If the religious customs of the people are not evil in origin, they should be blended into Christianity." (This is scriptural read Acts 15:19-20). The early church had a real problem with this all important festival of the SUN God. The church in the Holy Land had begun to observe January 6th at the birth of our Lord. The Austrian church observed May 20th. Still other parts of the church observed March 25th.

In 625 A.D. central leaders of the church decided since people were going to celebrate the re-birth of the SUN on December 25th — the church could really celebrate — the most important birth, the birth of the SON of God. It took a little time but Christianity prevailed. Although two customs, the Yule log, and kissing under the mistletoe still remain from the pagan days, most every other custom we have today comes from Christ's birthday.

Story continued on page 5

### Community Meetings

This is a list of what is happening in Lubbock, to help complete the unfinished, community-building work of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

- African American Chamber of Commerce, Lubbock meets on the 3rd Monday of each month, from 5:30-6:30pm at the Parkway Community Center, 405 MLK Blvd., 806-771-1015
- Lubbock Area Client Council meets on the 2nd Saturday, 1:00pm at the Patterson Branch Library
- Hub City Kiwanis meets every Tuesday, 7:00pm, 1702 Avenue G
- Dunbar Alumni Association meets 2nd Saturdays, 4:00 pm
- Booker T. Washington American Legion Post #08 meets every 2nd Tuesday at 7:30pm, American Legion Building in Yellowhouse Canyon
- Forgotten West Riders meets on the 1st & 3rd Mondays, 7:00 pm, Patterson Library
- East Lubbock Chapter AARP meets every 1st Thursday at 1:00 pm, Mae Simmons Community Center
- Lubbock Chapter of Black Alumni meets every 3rd Tuesday, 5:30 pm, TTU Market Alumni Center
- Dunbar/Manhattan Heights Neighborhood Association meets every 3rd Thursday at 6:00 pm 1303 East 24th St. (outreach center/party house)
- West Texas Native American Association Pot Luck Supper meets on alternating months prior to meeting, meetings held on 2nd Saturday of each month at 7:00 pm, Educational presentations and demonstrations.
- Texas Juneteenth Cultural & Historical Commission - Lubbock Affiliate meets at Patterson Branch Library every 3rd Thursday at 7:00 pm
- West Texas Native American Association meets 2nd Saturday each month at Groves Library, 5520 19th Street, 7:30 pm.
- West Texas Chapter of 100 Black Men meets the 3rd Monday evening at 7:00 pm at the Parkway Neighborhood Center.
- The Parkway Guadalupe & Cherry-Point Neighborhood Association meets the 3rd Tuesday evening of each month at 7:30 pm at Parkway Neighborhood Center.

If you have an announcement you want to appear in this paper, there are three ways to get information to us:

Southwest Digest  
Community Meetings  
1302 Avenue Q  
Lubbock, TX 79401

Fax: (806) 741-0000  
email us at:  
swdigest@shcdigital.net

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### Knight Readers at Wheatley



Reading has always been an integral part of Coach Bob Knight's life. The Texas Tech basketball coach grew up with a love of books, getting his first library card at a nearly age. "Reading has been my favorite pastime as long as I can remember," Knight says. "I'm talking about since I was a kid. My mom was a school teacher for 37 years and I had a library card before I was in the first grade." Out of that love of reading, Knight Readers was created. Knight Readers was initially started by Knight and Steve

Downing while at Indiana University. The program was so successful there, they decided to kick it off in Lubbock. Two schools were chosen as pilot schools - Wheatley Elementary and J. T. Hutchinson Junior High. Margaret Randle, principal of Wheatley Elementary, said the program was extremely successful at her school. "Coach Knight came out and read to the kids, it was very touching to watch that," she said. "It really made an impact on our kids for him to come out and talk to them about reading and how

important academics are to their future." The Knight Readers from Wheatley Elementary School recently were chauffeured to a Texas Tech University basketball game via an Escalade limousine. This was sponsored by Coca-Cola. During the game, the students sat in the Coca-Cola suite. The following students attended the game: Je'Tahaj Johnson, Brandon Julios, Destiny Willard, Khaira Cooper, Rodrick Keys, Deneshia Robinson and Jaron Thomas.

### Notice to home delivery customers

If you fail to receive your paper, please call the Digest at 762-3612 and give us your address. Due to the death of our delivery person, W.H. Pitts, we have had some difficulty getting papers delivered. We are aware of the problem and regret it. Please contact us and we will correct the situation as soon as possible. We apologize for the inconvenience.

The Southwest Digest

If you find mistakes in this publication, please consider that they are there for a reason. We publish something for everyone, and some people are always looking for mistakes.

# Chatman Hills Corner

By Doris Reynolds

The Lincoln/Douglas Committee, the alliance for Human Needs and Social Justice will be sponsoring its annual Lincoln/Douglas celebration. If you need information about this upcoming program, call either 762-8063, 762-5038, 762-3350 or 747-6591.

Classes were dismissed for the Christmas holidays for students of the Lubbock Public Schools Thursday afternoon, December 22nd, thru Tuesday, January 10, 2006. Be especially careful when driving to and from school these young people are excited about the Christmas Season.

Watch Services are set for 11:00 p. m. at the Bethel African Methodist Episcopal Church, 2202 Southeast Drive, Saturday evening, December 31st. Rev. Eddie L. Fineshine, Jr. is pastor.

Services were well attended last Sunday morning, December 18th, at the New Hope Baptist Church, 2002 Birch Avenue, the "Church Where The People Really Care," and Rev. B. R. Moton is pastor. If you are looking for a church home, then come and visit New Hope.

The morning services began with Meditation and Prayer, followed by selections from the

Praise Team. After the morning scripture and prayer, the New Hope Choir sang several selections. What a time in the Lord.

Pastor Moton delivered another sermon which was most appropriate for the Christmas Season. After an invitation to discipleship, the morning announcements were read by Sister Marjorie Thomas. All visitors were welcomed by Sister Annetta Phillips.

Let us continue to pray for our sick and shut-in citizens. Among those on the sick list this week

Include Brother Clarence Ervin, who is a patient at the Southwest Regional Medical Complex, Room 301. He was doing well at this report, but your prayers are welcome.

As you look at the number of citizens in our community who are on the sick and shut-in list, if you are not one, thank God for his blessings, because it is all because of his grace and mercy. This reminds us of what Christmas is all about. Jesus is the reason for the season.

Sister Ollie Coleman is still recuperating nicely. Brother Willie Blocker has been shut-in over a cold virus. God is able.

Let us not forget those who

have lost loved ones. "Even though I walk through the shadow of death, I will fear no evil, for you are with me, you rod and your staff, they comfort me." Psalm 23:4

The New Hope Broadcast is heard every Sunday morning over Radio Station KJAK, 92.7 FM, from 11:30 a. m. until 12:30 P.M. If you are unable to attend church services, because of reasons beyond your control, then tune in for services.

Let us not forget that Sunday, December 25th is Christmas and people have waited a year for this wonderful day to arrive. It takes time for all of this, because of what this day really means and what this day gives. No one ever says it is too long to wait, because it means so much to so many people. Just think of your time waiting as waiting to enjoy Christmas and every waiting minute will be worthwhile as long as we keep Christ in Christmas.

Yes, Jesus is the reason for this glorious season. As believers, let us not forget it and become hung up in all these things which are not important. Have a wonderful Christmas.

Merry Christmas to all of You!

## Rabies confirmed in fox found in Lubbock

The City of Lubbock Health Department received confirmation from the Texas Department of State Health Services (DSHS) that an injured fox that smelled of skunk odor, tested positive for rabies. The fox was found lying in a driveway near a park in N.E. Lubbock. The skunk was not found but will probably also die of rabies in that area. If ill, the skunk may attack dogs, cats or humans. This alert is being issued to increase public awareness:

- Prevention is key to protecting pets and family members from rabies.
- Pet owners are reminded to vaccinate their pets against rabies. Rabies occurs in a variety of wild animals, including bats, skunks, raccoons, and other mammals, and can spread to domestic animals such as dogs and cats from contact with the saliva, bite or scratch of the rabid animal.
- UNVACCINATED pets can transmit rabies to their owners.
- Rabies is most often transmitted by bites, but transmission

can occur in other ways that allow the saliva from an infected animal to enter a person's body such as from a lick to a person's face or to fresh wounds or broken skin. Transmission also can occur if a person kisses the infected animal on its face or lips.

- A series of post-exposure shots, if given in time, can prevent rabies from developing. Once symptoms develop, rabies is almost always fatal.
- City and county residents are urged to increase awareness of wild animals on their property, and any wild animal contact with pets, and to report ill or oddly behaving animals to Animal Services immediately for instructions on proper disposal and disposition of the animal or carcass.
- There have been no human cases reported in Lubbock County.
- There have been 2 animal rabies cases so far in December in HSR 1 (the 41 counties in the West Texas Panhandle).
- There have been a total of 79 cases of rabies within 20 of the 41

counties in HSR 1 during 2005. Six of those 79 cases have been from Lubbock County with five of those being bats and the recent sixth case being a fox.

## In Remembrance

**Rev. George Jackson**  
Funeral services for a longtime Lubbock resident, Rev. George Jackson, were held Thursday afternoon, December 22, 2005, at the New Hope Baptist Church with Rev. B. R. Moton, pastor, officiating.

Interment was held in the City of Lubbock Cemetery under the direction of Griffin Mortuary and Funeral Home of Lubbock.

Rev. Jackson passed away Saturday, December 17, 2005 at Southwest Medical Complex.

**Paul Ray Roberson**  
Funeral services for Paul Ray Roberson were held Saturday afternoon, December 17, 2005, at Abbey Chapel.

Interment was held at Peaceful Gardens Memorial Park in Woodrow under the direction of Resthaven.

Mr. Roberson passed away Sunday, December 11, 2005.

He was born November 20, 1947 in Paris, Texas to Allen and Beauty B. (Hearn) Roberson. He grew up in Paris, but as a teenager, he and his family moved to Lubbock. He married Betty Brightman in Lubbock in 1967. He worked for Farm Pac Meat Packing for ten years before moving to Dimmitt where he was employed by Good Pasture Meat Packers. Also, he worked for John Deere as a mechanic. He was also a truck driver.

His wife, Betty, passed away and he returned to Paris. In 1998, he returned to Lubbock. He was a faithful member of Faith First Baptist Church, with Pastor Norman Garrett and associate Pastor Roosevelt Portee.

Mr. Roberson is preceded in death by his mother, Beauty B.; his wife, Betty; and a daughter, Jennifer Roberson.

He is survived by his father, Allen Roberson of Paris; children: Paula and Lakita Roberson of Lubbock, and Marshaw Roberson of Paris; brothers: Jimmy Roberson of Houston, Lenzel Roberson of Lubbock, Dewayne Roberson of Euless and Gene Roberson of Paris; sisters: Lela Faye of Dallas, Willie Lee Roberson and Marie Roberson, both of Sherman; four grandchildren: Bette, Christopher and Blashee Roberson and Serenity Roberson Walker.

**Lorine Sheffield**  
Funeral services for Lorine Sheffield were held at the Methodist Church in Olton on Friday afternoon, December 16, 2005.

Burial was held in the City of Olton Cemetery under the direction of Griffin Mortuary.

She passed away Wednesday, December 7, 2005, at her home.

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**MERRY CHRISTMAS!**  
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Hear the gospel - Romans 10:17  
Believe Jesus Christ is the son of God - Mark 16:16  
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# Church News



## We Thank God for Jesus What Will You Do With Jesus???

Written by Evangelist Billy "BJ" Morris, III - Your brother in Christ Jesus always.

Last week we "Xmas Is Not For Christmas," and not "Xmas Is Not For Christmas." It was an error, you see the devil doesn't like me ya'll!

John 3:17 - Jesus said, for God sent not his son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through him might be saved.

(Christ-Mass is suppose to be a Christian fest held on December 25th which used to be a Christian celebrating the birth of Jesus Christ. The word mass is part of a religious service with prayers, songs and preaching ceremonies giving praise to God. Mass was added to Christ making it Christmas. X is added to mass meaning no mass. No Xmas. Can you see the truth in it? The world doesn't want Christ to be used in Christmas no more!!!)

Matthew 7:6 - Jesus said, do not give that which is holy unto the dogs, neither cast you pearls before swine. Lest they trample them under their feet, and turn again and rend them.

Even my President has removed the word Christmas from the Christmas tree. America doesn't want God in their lives. That way they can think they're free!!!

John 8:31-32 - Jesus said, if you continue in my word, then are you my disciples indeed

(truly), and you shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.

\*\*\* Did The President Rob God???

Now that (the ungodly, ungrateful, unbelieving, hateful, Xmas set), what will you do to observe it? What will be your Xmas reason???

Galatians 6:7-8 - Be not deceived, God is not mocked; for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap. For he that soweth to his flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption, but he that soweth the spirit shall of the spirit reap life everlasting.

Will you enter the stores for one thing, shoplifting and that's stealing with no money, and prices so high is making your Christmas reason???

Ephesians 4:28 - Let him that stole steal no more, but let him labour, working with his hands the things which are good, that he may have to give to him that need.

Will you party, get drunk, get high on dope, thinking you're happy and joy? Then get into your car or go home, then right there, you wind up to kill somebody!!!

\*\*\* Is Partying And Drinking, And Killing Part Of God???

Many Churches will not be

open on the December 24th, Sunday. Closed for Xmas Season. But every Sunday is God's business day, so what will be the closing reason???

Galatians 1:6 3:12; 4:6 - I marvel that you are so soon removed from the called you into the grace of Christ unto another Gospel. O foolish Galatians, who have bewitched you that you should not obey the truth. Am I therefore become your enemy, because I tell you the truth?

\*\*\* Yes, The Churches Will Be Robbing God!!!

Will you go to shop and waste money, and buy some expensive kind of toys, trying to show love. You haven't showed all year to your girls and boys!!!

Ecclesiastes 4:13 - Better is a poor and wise child than an old and foolish king, who will no more admonished (teachable).

Will you do what the shepherds did, be humbled, and give God his praise. God so loved and gave a gift, and that was Jesus, accept God's gift and be saved!!!

Micah 6:8 - Where shall I come before the Lord, and know myself before the high God? He hath showed the O'man, what is good, and what do the Lord require of you but to do justly, and to love mercy and to walk humble with your God?



## From the Desk of Parson D.A. Smith A Christmas Without Food Stamps

Being on top of things is very important in our current environment. How often is it that what we need to prepare for in our lives, catch us off guard and we find ourselves in a quagmire.

Today's world for people of color is becoming extremely adulterated and complicated by government budget cuts, policy and corporate greed. The complication process exists itself because we do not have the tools, finance, lobbyist or the skills to battle the issues that involve today's living.

How are people of color and poor people of any group to survive in a conservative environment that favors the upper class, the wealthy and demoralized those persons who are struggling from paycheck to paycheck? Worst yet, eliminating a part of the federal budget that would help those who need it most - the poorest of the poorest. How does a CEO justify his conscience when his salary would feed thousand upon thousands of hungry children or provide them with the educational opportunities to become a successful American and he cut jobs because of his or greed and his or her board of directors attitude toward the poor.

People of color and the poor in America need to wake up and realize the politics and economic philosophy of America without words is to have a caste sys-

tem. How foolish are we to believe what our leaders are saying about putting more money in our pockets.

Congress is in the midst of preparing the budget and some has called the winners in the budget process as "the Mister Scrooges" garnering large additional tax cuts on top of those they've already gotten, and the big losers will be the Tiny Tim of the world who could lose child support, health care coverage to a degree, food stamps benefits or the like."

Using another form of expression the U. S. House of Representatives passed the Deficit Reduction Act of 2005 in the following manner:

Cut Medicaid which provides medical care and treatment for the disable, poor and indigent.

Deny food stamps to 200,000, which provides monies for these poor and low income Americans to purchase food.

Cuts student assistance program designed to provide relief to middle and working class American students by providing educational aid to students so they can improve their social-economic status over the long haul.

Authorization to sell 20 million acres of public land including range preserves, public parks, and protected forests.

The United States Senate

did not reduce the budget of the above mention. However other items were subject to budget adjustment.

This writer was pleased to know that liberal and moderate church activists are making themselves heard in a political climate that has been heartlessly dominated by conservative Christians and religious leaders. Representatives from the Episcopal Church, Evangelical Lutheran Church, Presbyterian Church, United Church of Christ and United Methodist Church issued a statement urging Congress to defeat the cuts, which they said would "cause greater hardship and suffering" among the poor.

I am well-pleased that some members of the faith community outraged at Congress have gotten enough "grit in their craw" to stand up for what is right and the likes of the leader of Focus on the Family, the Jerry Farwell's, Pat Robinson, the Christian Right and those Blacks and Mexican preachers who throw a rock and hide their hands while their people suffer. Are you aware of how the 19th Congressional District Representative voted?

Think about it, we as American; not having the moral courage to stand up for the poor that could deny them a Christmas dinner because they have no food stamps.

Have A Merry Christmas!

## Outreach Prayer Breakfast

The members of the Outreach Prayer Breakfast are very happy to share this special with you each week. This is a continuation of the article last week, "The Ministry of Jesus."

God can only use people that have discipline in character, discipline and self-control. Here are some tips to help walk in divine health and prosper:

Develop a prayer altar in your home, fasting, eat healthy, lower your cholesterol that might cause strokes or heart attacks and etc. Exercise on a regular basis, control anger, don't hold grudges, envy, jealous, hatred, malice, and unforgiveness. These are all negative emotions. Replace the negative emotions with the positive which is the fruit of the spirit such as love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness and faith.

Shall we pray: "Father, you said in your word, I Corinthians 3:16 that our body is the temple of God and the Holy Spirit dwells in us. Therefore, help us to cleanse our temple from negative thoughts. Let us not defile our temple with eating unhealthily; help us to change our life styles, our way of thinking, order our steps, help us to walk in the path of righteous, bridle our tongue.

Lord, help us walk in obedient according to your word that our soul will prosper and we enjoy the blessing and the benefits that you promise us not only in the eternal life, but while we are here on earth. Lord, help us not stress ourselves during this Christmas Season with shopping, but let this holiday be a season of joy, peace, and love, because you loved us so much that you sent your only begotten God to die and redeem a sinful world. In Psalm 91, verse 16 - "You said you would satisfy us with a long life and show us your salvation." Lord, we pray for wisdom that we may prosper and be in good health, even as our soul prospers as we look forward to the year of 2006.

"Now let the words of my mouth, the meditation of my heart, be acceptable in thy sight, O Lord, you are my strength and my Redeemer. AMEN."

If you pray this prayer, or would like more prayers, pick up the telephone and call (806) 762-337 or write to us: Outreach Prayer Breakfast, 2132 East 30th Street, Lubbock, Texas 79404.

For all of you who are hurting, remember Jesus is the answer to all of our problems. We cannot give up. If you are alive today, you have had to go through something, and

with hope, Jesus brought you through it. The Outreach Prayer Breakfast is praying for you.

If you know of someone who is shut in, why not go by and visit or give them a cheerful telephone call? Let them know Jesus is able to overcome any situation we are confronted with this day and time. Yes, there are so many who are shut-in. Will you share with them?

As we celebrate this glorious time of the year, let us not forget why we celebrate. Jesus is the reason for the season.

As we sit down at our table and share a delicious meal with our family members, remember there are so many in our community and around the world who are not so fortunate. We should be thankful with what we have, God is able.

During the holiday season, let us not forget our drive by prayers in our community, in our neighborhoods, our schools, and our local businesses. Keep our churches, pastors and ministers on our prayer list as well.

Thanks for reading, Saints. You're the greatest!

Sister Dorothy Hood, president; Sister Christene Burleson, vice president; Sister Elnora Jones, teacher; and Sister Rosianana Henderson, secretary.

## St. Matthew's Baptist Church News

Services were well attended last Sunday morning, December 18, 2005, at the St. Matthew Baptist Church, 2020 East 14th Street, where Rev. Edward Canady is pastor.

Services begun with Sunday School with Superintendent Sister Lucella Harris at her post of duty. The morning lesson was entitled "Hope For The Suffering." It was taught and reviewed by Pastor Canady who brought out some powerful points. He advised that all of us have gone through some suffering, but as long as we know who holds our hand, it will be

alright.

The morning services began with the morning devotions, which were led by Deacon Edward Williams and Brother Gerald Jackson.

The St. Matthew Senior Choir sung out of their hearts and souls. What a time in the Lord as singing God's praises brings the spirit.

The morning sermon was delivered by Rev. Monty Smith. His subject was "I Will Rise Again!" His scripture text was Matthew 17:22-23. It was a wonderful message for all of us hear.

The monthly meeting of the Federation of Choirs met at St. Matthew Baptist Church last Sunday afternoon, December 18th. What a wonderful time in the Lord all had singing God's praises.

Let us continue to pray for our sick and shut-in residents. Prayer really changes things. God is able to handle any situation.

Thought of the Week: "The tiny baby born in the manger is the mighty creation of the universe."

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Parents name: _____	Relationship to nominee: _____
PARENTS SIGNATURE: _____	Daytime phone: _____
Parents Address: _____	Do you want your nomination to be anonymous? <input type="checkbox"/>
Daytime phone (parent): _____	Did you include a good quality photo of the child? <input type="checkbox"/>
On a separate sheet of paper	(Photos will be returned only if a self-addressed stamped envelope is included.)
1) Briefly tell us about your nominee and	
2) list the accomplishments of your nominee.	

**SPOTLIGHT ON KIDS INFO**

1) No purchase necessary. Nomination forms will appear periodically throughout the year in the Avalanche-Journal and on the Kids Count sponsor business cards. An Award will be made available at the A-J Information Center, 710 Ave. J.

2) Nomination forms can be mailed to Spotlight On Kids, PO Box 491, Lubbock, TX 79408, or one of dropped off at the A-J Information Center, 710 Avenue J.

3) Selection will be made by a 3-member panel on the basis of the nomination, parental approval and the merit of the nominee, including family wealth, citizenship, volunteerism, character, ability and exceptional good behavior, church membership, caring for others, etc.

4) All nominees agree to share their names, and photographs to be published in The Avalanche-Journal without further compensation.

5) The Avalanche-Journal is not responsible for returned and unreturned envelopes, lost, late, mis-addressed, damaged, illegible, incomplete or postage due.

6) By entering, each entrant or their representative acknowledges acceptance of the rules and agrees to be bound by them.



# A dream deferred: First-ever national study on African hairbraiders finds tangle of cosmetology laws

Arlington, Va.—For more than a decade, African hairbraiders—who create attractive and artistic hairstyles without damaging chemicals—have been handcuffed, arrested, thrown in jail or fined thousands of dollars for practicing their cultural art form. But thanks to the advocacy of the Institute for Justice and its clients, lawmakers and courts in a growing number of states are forcing overzealous bureaucrats to set braiders free.

Today, the Institute for Justice issued a first-ever national study that documents how ten states have led the way through this tangled mess—exempting braiders from all cosmetology requirements and leaving them free to twist, lock, weave and extend hair without unnecessary and costly cosmetology licenses. Not only do these states show no harm to consumers after opening up the market, but consumers are better served by a broader choice of braiders and once-beleaguered braiders can freely practice their craft and grow their businesses without worrying that the next knock on the door might be a government regulator looking to shut them down.

As noted in "A Dream Deferred: Legal Barriers to African Hairbraiding Nationwide," the freedom to braid has come in different forms:

- Simple exemption statutes in Arizona, California, Connecticut and Maryland;
- Optional licensing in Michigan;
- Registration and/or posted brochures on common sense sanitation guidelines in Kansas and Mississippi;
- Administrative exemptions in Minnesota, North Carolina

and Washington.

In each of these states, braiders remain subject to general business requirements and any applicable state health regulations. But they no longer need to take courses on unrelated cosmetology techniques like permanent waves and chemical straighteners, which too often cost braiders thousands of wasted hours and dollars. Instead, braiders are free to practice the skills many of them learned at their mothers' knees.

In its 15-page paper, the Institute for Justice summarizes the current state of cosmetology laws and their relationship to braiding. In doing so, the Institute notes that although braiders are making headway through this maze of bureaucratic red tape, there is much work still to be done. In 9 states, braiding is included in the definition of cosmetology, either by statute, regulation or court decision—meaning that braiders must submit themselves to the onerous cosmetology laws if they want to practice their craft. In another 22 states, the laws are silent, allowing boards of cosmetology to determine whether to prosecute braiders or leave them in peace. (Cosmetology boards, however, are often made up of the very individuals who want to use government power to limit their competition from braiders.) The white paper details the hundreds of hours of cosmetology training—up to 2,100—that braiders in many states may be required to complete before legally practicing their profession.

"Perversely, state cosmetology licensure schemes allow cosmetologists to braid despite not having any experience, even as

they forbid experienced braiders from practicing or teaching their craft," noted Valerie Bayham, a staff attorney at the Institute for Justice and author of the report. "These harebrained regulations have turned the opportunities that should be available for African hairbraiders into a tangled mess."

Fatou Magassouba, a braider in Bethlehem, Ga., knows this story far too well. Magassouba, a legal alien from the Ivory Coast, has been earning a living braiding in the United States for nine years. But recently, the Georgia Board of Cosmetology has stepped up its prosecution of braiders, issuing \$1,000 fines for braiding without a cosmetology license. "Braiding is my life, but I want to braid legally," stated Magassouba. She is faced with a stark choice—temporarily close her salon while spending her hard-earned money on 1,500 hours of cosmetology training or close her business for good. "The only braiding the schools teach is French braiding—something we don't even do." Until Georgia changes its laws, Magassouba's business will remain closed—her opportunity to better her future through honest enterprise denied.

According to Talib-din Uqadah, founder of the American Hairbraiders and Natural Haircare Association and a leading national braiding activist, the state has no business in restricting entrance to the braiding profession. Uqadah said, "Braiders lose valuable years engaging both legislative and bureaucratic bullies, asking for a right we already have. You should never have to ask anyone for permission to do something already granted to you by Almighty God Himself. AHNHA firmly believes that the African cultural practice of

hairbraiding does not require a cosmetology license of any kind. Asking a state-licensing agency if you need a license to braid hair is like asking a barber or beautician if you need a trim or a cut. It's in their nature to tell you what you do."

When states eliminate entry-level barriers to the natural hair care industry, business booms. The Mississippi legislature granted braiders an exemption from the state's cosmetology laws this spring, and Melony Armstrong, owner of Naturally Speaking in Tupelo, Miss., has already hired three new braiders. She is also thinking about expanding her braiding salon and academy, which offers advanced courses for braiders who want to develop their skills. She said, "I want to share my passion for braiding with others. I don't need a state license to tell me that I'm a professional. My work speaks for itself."

Bayham explained, "Government regulations that do nothing more than protect established interests—in this case cosmetologists and cosmetology schools—from competition are cutting off the bottom rungs of the economic ladder. These regulations prevent braiders from earning their share of the American Dream."

The opportunity to succeed based on her own talent is all that Memphis braider Debra Nutall has ever wanted. This single mother of three braided her way off of welfare and has taught braiding in Tennessee for years. State senators unanimously passed a braiding exemption last term, but the measure died in a house committee. Nutall is now considering moving her braiding skills to Mississippi, where the

climate is friendlier towards braiders.

The Institute for Justice hopes its white paper on braiding regulations will be a wake-up call to legislators across the country. African hairbraiders nationwide are ready and willing to share their passion for natural hair care with the nation—if only the bureaucrats would just set them free.

Founded in 1991, the Washington, D.C.-based Institute for Justice has a long record of success in representing entrepreneurial Davids against government Goliaths. It opened up hairbraiding markets in Arizona, California, the District of Columbia, Minnesota, Mississippi and Washington. It led the effort to strike down Tennessee's casket sales licensing scheme as unconstitutional. This marked the first federal appeals court victory for economic liberty since the New Deal. Its litigation also led the U.S. Supreme Court to declare unconstitutional New York State laws

that barred the interstate direct shipment of wine to New York consumers. It opened taxicab markets in Denver, Indianapolis and Cincinnati, the limousine market in Las Vegas, and removed the New York City Council's veto over new dollar van operators.

**"Happy Birthday Jesus"**

Happy Birthday Jesus  
Thank you for dying for me  
With your great sacrifice  
You redeemed, and set me free  
I am grateful, Lord, and praise your Holy Name  
For someone to thank you,  
I'm ashamed, ashamed, ashamed.  
If only all would realize  
You could have come down from the cross  
And then, all souls would have been lost.  
There will always be some, like  
Thomas, do not believe, and only doubt.  
But I want to be in that number who  
I hear the loud shout, "Time will be No More"  
Then I want to go with you, to the other shore  
And hear you say welcome home servant  
For a race well run, I will give  
You a crown of life for a job well done!  
"Happy Birthday Jesus"

Submitted by Sister Katie Parks  
"Love and Prayers"

## Patterson announces plans for annual visit to jail

Former Lubbock City Councilman T. J. Patterson will make his annual visit to the Lubbock County Jail Sunday afternoon, Christmas Day, December 25, 2005, at 3:00 p.m.

Patterson began this annual visit on Christmas Day,

December 25, 1987, and this will be his 18th visit.

"It has become a means of visiting those men and women in custody because of an act for which they have been apprehended, and to let them know they should look forward to bigger and better things in their

lives."

Continuing, Patterson reminds us, "Most of us have been encouraged along the way. So why not encourage these men and women, who may be husbands or wives and mothers and fathers, to do better with their precious lives."

"After all this is Christmas and what a better time to make an annual visit to encourage those who need someone to tell them to keep their heads up," concluded Patterson.

## Practice tests available at Lubbock libraries

Learn-a-Test, a database of practice examinations, is now available at the Lubbock Public Library. The exams and test preparation guides are accessible through the library's website [www.lubbock-library.com](http://www.lubbock-library.com) and on Internet computers at each library location. Test takers may click on the "Learn-a-Test" link to access the database. A Lubbock Public Library card is necessary to use the database, and may be obtained by bringing a current picture ID to any library location. Library locations include Mahon, 1306 9th St., Godeke Branch, 6601 Quaker, Groves Branch, 5520 19th St., and Patterson Branch, 1836 Parkway Drive.

Hundreds of practice examinations are available including college entrance exams (SAT and ACT), elementary, middle school and high school skills improvement

tests, and graduate school entrance exams (GRE, GMAT, MCAT, and LSAT). Several vocational exams are also available, such as firefighter, law enforcement, basic nursing, EMS, cosmetology, and real estate. Preparation for U. S. Citizenship and English as a Second Language tests are also

offered in the Learn-a-Test database.

The Learn-a-Test database subscription for Lubbock Public Library was made possible through a grant from the West Texas Library System and the Texas State Library and Archives Commission. Call 775-2824 for more information.

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**Should we celebrate tradition Christmas customs?**  
Continued from page 1

**Celebrating and Gift Giving**  
The word "CHRISTMAS" comes from the Old English term *Cristes mæsse*, meaning "Christ's mass." This was the name for the festival service of worship held on December 25 to commemorate the birth of Jesus Christ. Gift giving is one of the oldest customs associated with Christmas; it is actually older than the holiday itself. When the date of Christmas was set to fall in December, it was done at least in part to compete with ancient pagan festivals that occurred about the same time. The Romans, for example, celebrated the Saturnalia on December 17. It was a winter feast of merrymaking and gift exchanging. And two weeks later, on the Roman New Year January 1, houses were decorated with greenery and lights, and gifts were given to children and the poor. As the Germanic tribes of Europe accepted Christianity and began to celebrate Christmas, they also gave gifts!

**Should We Celebrate With The Christmas Tree?**

Much confusion has concerned the beautiful Christmas tree. Jeremiah 10:2-4 (NRSV) "Thus says the LORD: Do not learn the way of the nations, or be dismayed at the signs of the heavens; for the nations are dismayed at them. 3 For the customs of the peoples are false: a tree from the forest is cut down, and worked with an ax by the hands of an artisan: 4 people deck it with silver and gold; they fasten it with hammer and nails so that it cannot move." This scripture certainly sounds like a description of the Christmas tree. Many use this scripture to teach against a Christmas tree and the customs in the celebration of Christmas. But, is that really what the passage speaks of? Let's read on.

Jeremiah 10:5-10 (NRSV) "Their idols are like scarecrows in a cucumber field, and they cannot speak; they have to be carried, for they cannot walk. Do not be afraid of them, for they cannot do evil, nor is it in them to do good. 6 There is none like you, O LORD; you are great, and your name is great in might. 7 Who would not fear you, O King of the nations? For that is your due; among all the wise ones of the nations and in all their kingdoms there is no one like you. 8 They are both stupid and foolish; the instruction given by idols is no better than wood! 9 Beater, silver is brought, from Tarshish, and gold from Uphaz. They are the work of the artisan and of the hands of the goldsmith; their clothing is blue and purple; they are all the product of skilled workers. 10 But the LORD is the true God, he is the living God, and an everlasting king. At his wrath

the earthquakes, and the nations cannot endure his indignation."

**Custom of Decorating the Christmas Tree**

Verse 5 has the key — this is speaking of hewing down a tree and carving an idol to be gilded or silvered, and placed as a "god" for worship. This has nothing to do with a Christmas tree as you and I know it. The nations around Israel had some terrible idol "gods" whom they worshipped. The custom of decorating a tree comes directly from the Great Reformer: Himself, Martin Luther and from a German Play about Adam and Eve in Paradise. One Christmas eve, Martin Luther was out in the field and the beauty of the star shining through the snow covered limbs of the tree overwhelmed him with the beauty of God's creation. He had to show his children. Rather than risk their health in the snow, he cut down the tree and carried it home. Candles replaced the stars, and thus the Christmas tree began. There was also a very popular play in the German church about Adam and Eve. The paradise tree was a central theme of the play. It was adorned with fruit — all representing the things they were allowed in the garden. After Martin Luther's example, many families adorned a paradise tree with fruit, or even gilded fruit (our glass balls) as gifts to their children, and to teach them of the provision and goodness of God who gave the best gift. Later Prince Charles carried a tree home to Buckingham Palace where Queen Victoria decked it for Royalty. Society news spread all over the world, and the decorated tree immediately became the symbol of the gifts God had given, and the evergreen tree, the symbol of everlasting life.

**Holly**

There is a legend that Holly was originally a thorn vine, and was originally used as the cruel crown of thorns for our Lord. The berries being originally white, when they became stained with His blood, they turned forever red, and the plant withdrew its vicious thorns for the spiny leaves. The plant was probably originally called "HOLY" not Holly. Whether true or legend only, the early French and English hung a piece over the door of a house

where Christ was celebrated. Holly, with its prickly leaves and red berries, came into holiday use because it reminded people of the crown of thorns worn by Jesus on the way to his execution, the berries symbolizing droplets of blood.)

**Lights, Food and Bells**

Our burning of lights (previously candles) is a symbol that Christ is the light of the world. The rich frosts and deserts come from the precious gifts the Magi brought to Christ. Mince pie is the real symbolic food of Christmas. It is full of spices and fruits (and yes, if made correctly) meat! (A luxury in the days of no refrigerators). It was baked as a symbol of the gifts, spices, and treasures of the Wise Men from the east. Originally churches rang (or tolled) their bells when someone died. Churches in medieval times tolled their bells to tell the devil his time was short, because Jesus was born.

**Christmas Carols**

Christmas Carols bear a remarkable origin. In 1223 St. Francis of Assisi decided the regular celebration of Christ's Mass was in a rut. So, he had an entire manger scene built in his church in Italy, replete with hay, actors, and animals. He thought the singing was also in a rut. So he took a couple of secular, pagan, songs and wrote words telling the story of the birth of Christ. The church elders said he was crazy. The people said he was a saint. The most loved hymn of all time has an interesting history, and, of course, is a Christmas carol. On Christmas Eve 1818, Joseph Mohr, assistant pastor of the church of Saint Nicholas asked the organist Franz Gruber to put music to a poem he had written for the midnight celebration of mass. Franz went to the organ and found that rats had eaten holes in the bellows. Thinking quickly, he took out his guitar and played the only song he knew well on the guitar — an old bar song — a beer-drinking pub song! The poem fit perfectly (and surely everyone would know the music!) Silent Night, Holy Night. All is calm, All is bright, Round yon virgin mother and child, Holy infant so tender and mild, Sleep in heavenly peace, Sleep in heavenly peace, Sleep in heavenly peace. Silent Night, holy night, Son of

God, love's pure light, Radiant beams from thy holy face, With the dawn of redeeming grace, Jesus, Lord, at thy birth, Jesus Lord at thy birth. (These are verses 1 & 2. Verses 2 & 4 were added later and are anonymous.)

Over the years, the very pious and religious have sought to stamp out festivities. Old laws can be found which forbid any celebration in 1644 in England, and several in the early years of the American Colonies — but the truth is, we have something to celebrate! God gave His son for our redemption. Mary celebrated, "My soul doth magnify the Lord and my Spirit hath rejoiced in God my Savior ... For He that is mighty hath done to me great things and holy is His name. (Luke 1:46-47)." The shepherds celebrated, the angels celebrated, the "Wise Men" celebrated and gave gifts. You can still hear His name in department stores. You still see His image in manger scenes. You still find people who desperately need to know the truth of this Jesus — This Savior. Get out the lights, the food, the gifts. Show your love. God did, He gave us Jesus, His greatest gift! Yes, you can celebrate Christmas and let others know about Jesus!

*William Mark Bristow and his wife, Lisa pastor a church in Monahans, Texas called Grace*

*Fellowship: He is an ordained servant of God who is blessed with the Gifts of the Holy Spirit operating in his ministry. He is also multi-cultural in a multi-ministry of lead-*

*ing in praise and worship vocally as well as on the organ and piano. Pastor Bristow can be contacted via email at grace@ultraevangel.net*

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# Editorials • Comments • Opinions



## THIS N THAT

by T.J. Patterson

**LET US NOT FORGET THE REASON FOR THE SEASON! THIS N THAT**, like so many of you, is anticipating another glorious CHRISTMAS SEASON, and really can hardly wait until this comes on Sunday, December 25, 2005. It's very important as we see it, to keep CHRIST in this season as it was the birth of this child, JESUS, in a manger that we celebrate this day, as we read the scripture, "TO YOU IS BORN THIS DAY IN THE CITY OF DAVID A SAVIOR, WHO IS THE MESSIAH, THE LORD" LUKE 2:11. Let us continue to keep in mind why we do this. As it is also written, "GLORY TO GOD IN THE HIGHEST HEAVEN, AND ON EARTH PEACE AMONG THOSE WHOM HE FAVORS!"

**GOOD TO SEE KNIGHT READERS!** THIS N THAT was glad to learn about a group of young people at WHEATLEY ELEMENTARY SCHOOL who are called the "KNIGHT READERS", which is a reading program initiated by COACH BOB KNIGHT and STEVE DOWNING while they were at Indiana University. This has proved to be a very successful program, so last year, two schools were chosen as pilot programs - WHEATLEY ELEMENTARY & J. T. HUTCHINSON JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL. It is just great to see these young people reading books, and that Coach Knight and Downing are involved. This is great!

**PENNY HASTINGS THE BARBER SAYS:** "A PERSON WHO POURS his SOUL into his work POURS his work into his SOUL." **SCHOOL IS OUT FOR HOLIDAYS!** THIS N THAT wants to remind us, to be very careful while driving through the community as LUBBOCK PUBLIC SCHOOLS were dismissed on today, THURSDAY December 22, 2005. The schools will reopen TUESDAY, January 10, 2006. Remember these young people are like many of us were in younger days, so please beware of them! They are just excited about the holiday season, and are with their FAMILY & FRIENDS!

**BICYCLE PROGRAM GOOD FOR KIDS!** THIS N THAT salutes TEEN PUBLICATIONS for their effort each year at CHRISTMAS SEASON, providing NEW & RECONSTRUCTED BICYCLES for young people of the community. Under the leadership of TAYLOR RUDD, this has been a very positive program, and it has served a valuable effort for the entire community! It's remarkable how these bicycles serve as a catalyst for young people in need. Yes, TEEN PUBLICATIONS really cares about our young people! So when you see people who are associated with this organization tell them you appreciate what they are doing to brighten the life of a young person in the community or better still, why not call Taylor Rudd at 749-5565 and let him know how you feel.

**NORTH & EAST LUBBOCK DEVELOPMENT NEEDS YOUR HELP!** THIS N THAT will always be supportive of the efforts of the NORTH & EAST LUBBOCK DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION, as this organization continues to bring about a significant development change to these areas of the city. One must realize, it will take much time in seeing that this plan comes together. With the KING'S DOMINION HOMES on the table and perhaps an upcoming shopping mall, things could really move in a swift path. There appears to be some other positive things in the future. As long as there are some positive announcements, nothing will stop this effort. THIS N THAT appreciates the hard work of JOHN HALL, who serves as executive director of this effort. No doubt about it, with the closing of CHURCH'S CHICKEN on East Broadway Avenue & MLK Blvd., and a TOWN & COUNTRY STORE, located on MLK Blvd. and East 50th Street... it appeared to dampen the efforts, but let's continue to look for bigger and better things. There's no doubt about it, ONE DAY, we will see much development in the North & East Lubbock areas. We firmly believe it will happen!

**HAVE A MERRY CHRISTMAS & A HAPPY NEW YEAR!** THIS N THAT is hoping each of you will have a MERRY CHRISTMAS & HAPPY NEW YEAR!

## In Cinque

by Renetta Howard



*Editor's note: Because of the Christmas messages, we decided to include two of Renetta Howard's articles in this week's paper. Otherwise, they would have missed the Christmas issue and lost the power of their message.*

### First Message

Every year, in this Christian country, the United States of America, which was founded on Christian principles, people are usually of good cheer. Everywhere you look, people of all persuasions are in a hurry preparing for the Christmas holidays. As a matter of fact, the preparation itself is a part of the cheer.

Christians prepare to celebrate the birth of the Christ child while the Jews celebrate Hanukkah. Jesus Christ is one of the Islamic prophets, though not considered to be the Savior, they too, celebrate Christmas. All of the people, of all other religious faiths who have something to celebrate, do celebrate and enjoy the Christmas season.

The Christmas season as well as Christianity, continues to be harassed by the unhappy grinch who seek to keep everyone else from being happy and enjoying the season. The too scholarly scholars are busy making a name for themselves by seeing just how technical they can get in taking Christ out of Christmas. It is true that we have cut short the spelling of Christmas to Xmas, saying that the "X" stands for the cross of Christ, but to try to eliminate the word Christmas should be the "straw that broke the camel's back."

Our government is concerned about keeping the church and the state separate, but they are busily trying to find ways to make churches pay income taxes. If it is going to truly be separate the state should leave the church alone. The church should not have to file any papers to be a non-profit organization. The

church should only have to function through its own governmental structure.



Howard

State and federal governmental bodies are able to pass laws and make amendments to constitutions to put into existence what they believe government to be. Since they are all aware that this country is based on Christian principles, how difficult would it be for Congress to amend the U.S. Constitution to reflect that the official religion of these United States is Christianity.

Making an amendment to the Constitution does not mean that other religions could not exist or be protected in this country, but be treated like the English language and be the official religion of this country. This would eliminate many of the Civil Liberties cases going to court each year and should make all believers happy. Every country has an official language and many have an official religion. It is time for us in America to get 'in cinque' and have an official religion, Christianity.

### Second Message

Thanksgiving is usually the beginning of the Christmas holiday for many individuals as it is coordinated with the gigantic sales, which are promoted by the various department stores. Rushing to the early morning sales puts some of us into the spirit of giving.

Giving, not receiving, is what the Christmas season is all about. God gave us his son Jesus, that we might have everlasting life. In that same vein, we give gifts during the Christmas season as a symbol of the spirit of the birth of the Christ child; the time when wise men came to behold the holy spirit working in the Middle Eastern world over two

thousand years ago. It had to be a believable miracle for us to continue to trust and believe in this new millennium these many centuries.

This new century has not changed the belief of Christians. They still believe in the immaculate conception of Jesus; that he was sent to earth to save men in order for them to have life and live more abundantly. People who do not believe in Christianity still celebrate Christmas and gift giving is a part of the tradition. The kind of gifts may vary from culture to culture, but it is still in the spirit of love and peace and happiness.

The only problem with the gift giving, spirit of love, peace and happiness is that Christmas is the only time of year that some people feel anything worth noting about others. This time of the year makes some people feel worthless and useless because they hate themselves and in turn, hate others who choose to be happy. They need someone to truly care for them and break down their walls of hostility, but it needs to begin to take place long before Christmas. We need to celebrate Christmas every day and everyone needs the opportunity to celebrate it.

If it takes shopping to put you into the Christmas spirit of giving, then shop. Some people feel the urge to bake cookies and cakes and candy to share with others.

There is something that each of us does to get the old spirit going. Whatever it is, let us get 'in cinque' and get our spirits going, then have a wonderfully wonderful Christmas and a happy new year!



## Commentary: Richard Pryor wasn't crazy

By Earl Ofari Hutchinson, BlackNews.com Columnist

Only twice can I remember an entertainer agitating audience members to the point that they stormed out of a performance or sat stone silent. Richard Pryor was that entertainer. The first time he did it was at a concert I attended on New Year's Eve at a small club in Hollywood. Pryor cut loose with a bitter, explosive laced, diatribe on black and white relations. He aimed his sharpest barbs at the whites. He needed, hectoring, and browbeat them for their racial sins. Midway through his rant, the predictable happened. A trickle of whites made a beeline for the door. Pryor, nonplussed by the sound of their marching feet, didn't relent from his verbal tongue lash. The trickle quickly turned into a stampede. Even then Pryor didn't miss a beat he continued to hurl barbs at their backs.

But Pryor was a take-no-prisoners, equal opportunity baiter. Shortly after he returned from his racial epiphany trip to Africa in 1980, I, and other blacks in the theater audience at another Pryor concert, sat in stunned silence when he stopped the funny stuff, looked dead at the audience, and flaged himself from the stage, and other blacks that routinely spit out the N-word with every sentence. Pryor could talk. He had practically elevated the word to a high art form. He called the word demeaning, offensive and insulting, and solemnly pledged that he would expunge it forever from his rap. The audience squirmed in puzzled silence. They didn't know whether to cheer or hiss. This was not the Pryor that many of us had come to know and love. The madcap king of irreverent, black humor. The fall-out from his announcement was swift.

Pryor said that his fellow comedians, friends, and even some fans

lambasted him for going soft, and for selling out. Still others accused him of being a black militant. He claimed that he got death threats, and garbage thrown on his lawn. He took the heat from fans and friends not because he used the N-word, but because he had renounced it. A reflective Pryor was dumbstruck that a drug addicted, paranoid, frightened, lonely, sad and frustrated comedian (his self-description) could draw public bile for his simple, but very personal step toward asserting racial pride. Pryor's tormenting swipes at whites, and blacks, and his willingness to take criticism for it, was vintage Pryor. He was the artist that didn't just live on the edge, but sharpened the racial edge in his art.

Pryor was hardly the first black funnyman or woman to chide, cajole, and poke fun at America's racial sensibilities from the stage. Redd Foxx, Dick Gregory, Moms Mabley, Nipsey Russell, Godfrey Cambridge, and Slappy White, tossed out occasional one-liners on race issues, but they were always careful that they kept their audience, especially whites, laughing with them and at them, and not steamed at them. Pryor also was not the first comedian to sprinkle ribald, dark humor social commentary through his punch lines. Lenny Bruce beat him to that, and in some ways, did it better. However, Pryor's neurotic, hyper, frenetic, rapid-fire rap on race and social issues, perpetually made audiences laugh and think. He did it without stepping over the line by sounding like a preachy crusader, at least most times. He was the consummate artist that even at his wildest drug induced, insulting and irreverent worst, never forgot his calling. If he had forgotten that, his message would have been a turn off, and his audiences would have turned off to him.

But even when they did to the

door in disgust at his barbs, or looked at each other in puzzled silence, they still came back. That was tribute enough to his genius. A Pryor concert gained you, but it was a good draining, the kind that made you want to come back for more. The current crop of the gutter, elite of comedians and performers, Robin Williams, Eddie Murphy, Chris Rock, and David Chapelle, have publicly, and loudly paid homage to Pryor's influence on them. But there are legions of other comic artists that haven't gotten their recognition, and the headline billing, who also cut their teeth on Pryor. They're the conscious comics. That's the new play term for comics that purposely blend race and social commentary with humor. In many cases, there's less humor in their raps than commentary. Pryor is their godfather.

Pryor will be justly lauded for his more than 40 movies and 20 albums, and his much-abbreviated TV show, his Emmy and Grammys, that included his signature, That Nigger's Crazy, and for smashing racial barriers for black comics and artists. Those are fitting remembrances. But it's not the screen and record awards that I, and many others, toast and remember Pryor for. He made us laugh, hoot, curse, and squirm in our seats, but he also made us think deeply about America's racial foibles. That's something no crazy n\*\*\*\*\* could do.

Earl Ofari Hutchinson is a columnist for BlackNews.com, an author and political analyst.



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The Southwest Digest is an independent newspaper serving the Lubbock, West Texas, South Plains of Texas and Eastern New Mexico areas printing the news impartially supporting what it believes to be right without opposing what it believes to be wrong without regard to party politics.

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# Why Black businesses must rebuild New Orleans

November's BLACK ENTERPRISE Examines Hurricane Katrina's Devastating Impact on Black Businesses and How to Save Them

(New York, NY) Nov. 1, 2005 - One of the biggest casualties of Hurricane Katrina has been black business. In the November BLACK ENTERPRISE special report "Blown Away By Katrina," Features Editor Alan Hughes found that approximately 60,000 black-owned companies along the Gulf Coast had been ravaged by the hurricane. The impact on black businesses in the gulf region will be "dire," says Eugene Cornelius Jr., district director for Louisiana

Office, U.S. Small Business Administration. The immediate effects are obvious: the instant devastation of businesses and the complete loss of markets. In Mississippi alone, more than 2,000 black-owned businesses generating sales and receipts of \$126 million were severely affected. In Louisiana some 20,000 black companies that generated nearly \$866 million were impacted by the storm. In total, black-owned businesses in the region, formerly generating \$3.3 billion a year, could be irretrievably lost.

Although rebuilding New Orleans should give the economy a boost, the question at hand for black entrepreneurs is whether

African American businesses will get a shot at the billions in reconstruction contracts. "By late September, minority business owners across the Gulf Coast claimed they were being shut out of the rebuilding process and that contracts were being doled out to white business owners who had longstanding connections with federal officials," says Hughes. "Also posing a challenge to business owners is that there are few black enterprises of scale that can handle such daunting projects. It's the proverbial catch 22; black-owned firms need to be large enough to handle these projects but need the business to get to that scale."

President George W. Bush

addressed some of the black business community's concerns in his Sept. 15 address to the nation. "What wasn't mentioned were contracting opportunities which would grow black business and in turn, increase the number of black employees and generate higher average incomes in a city that has long been plagued by poverty and crime," says Hughes. "With rebuilding costs estimated at well over \$100 billion, African American business participation could provide the stimulus needed to create jobs and bring some of the displaced African American city residents back home. But that's only if the black community is included when contract recipients are

decided." Alden McDonald, president & CEO of New Orleans-based Liberty Bank & Trust Company, who was recently named to the rebuilding commission formed by Mayor C. Ray Nagin (eight blacks and eight whites sit on the 16-member board), is optimistic. "We have our work cut out for us, but black folks have never had it easy. We've always had to work as if there was a Depression." The SBA's Cornelius is also optimistic about opportunities for black business. "I can assure you that we're going to rebuild New Orleans...and we're going to have good and solid representation of African Americans in those rebuilding efforts."

"Many questions remain regarding the fate of black business in the hurricane affected region," says Hughes. "But without significant representation in the rebuilding process these businesses and the jobs they create will be swept away."

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## Christmas Message: The Christmas Gift

Submitted by Shellie Evans

Giving and receiving... a wonderful Christmas tradition. It began when the wise men brought their treasures to the baby Jesus and shared them with reverence and love. How did that wonderful event become so commercialized?

I remember the year it peaked for me. My children were young, and did not shop for themselves. My weeks before Christmas were filled with rushing, shopping, wrapping, and complaining.

When Christmas morning arrived, I was exhausted. I found myself saying, "What is this all about?" I yearned in my heart to

feel something more. I had to look for its meaning.

Is Christmas just about the birth of the baby Jesus? As I have read and studied What Christmas Means to Me and other Christmas Messages by author Mary Baker Eddy, I see that it is so much more. It is seeing the light, the Christ, which is for all mankind and for all time. In her message, "Christmas, 1900", she said, "Today the Christ is, more than ever before, the way, the truth, and the life," "which lighteth every man that cometh into the world," healing all sorrow, sickness and sin."

When light shines through a prism, we see many colors. When the light of Christ shines

in our lives, we see love, joy, peace, hope, healing.

I became more aware of this Christ light while working in an elementary school. Children came to my office to bring gifts. It was not the trinkets they had purchased or picture they had drawn, but the love in their smile and joy in their eyes that made me realize "this is what it is about."

Several years ago as we were decorating the Christmas tree, my daughter who was home from college, said, "Mom, I just love Christmas," I smiled. I knew I loved Christmas too.

In spite of the commercialism and shopping crowds, I no longer look on the weeks before

Christmas with dread, but with anticipation of peace, joy and love to share. I realized the light of the Christ cannot be overshadowed. This was not a sudden happening, but has come gradually. I have deepened my awareness of the gift God gave.

"God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son." What gift could be more wonderful than that!

I am not sure who coined the phrase "the gift that keeps on giving," but it does describe what we have been given. So with Paul we can rejoice, "Thanks be unto God for his unspeakable gift."

Shellie Evans lives in Abilene, Texas.

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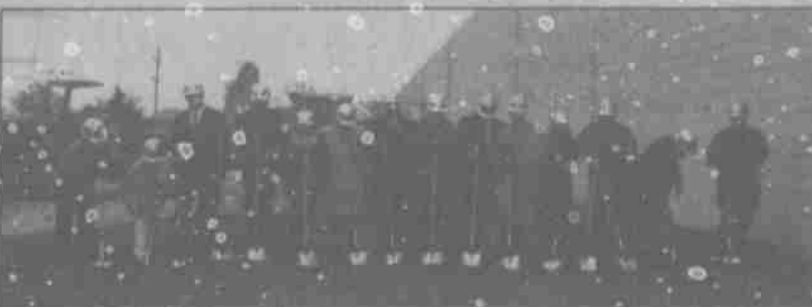
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