



Friends by Liz Lemon Swindle

Role as ‘Jesus’ renews lapsed believer’s faith

by Billy James Hargis II, publisher

You’ve seen the extraordinary paintings of Jesus’ life. They’re in bookstores and magazines. They’re all over the Internet.

They’re the work of artist Liz Lemon Swindle. They’ve won worldwide acclaim – even been compared to Italian master Michelangelo Merisi da Caravaggio, who refused to paint Jesus with halos or holier-than-thou poses.

Swindle paints a very human Christ. But where does she get her inspiration? Several years ago, construction worker Phillip Miner, raised a Mormon, but who had decided he didn’t want anything to do with religion, was approached in a bookstore by a total stranger, who started chatting with him as if they were friends.

It seems she was one of Swindle’s assistants and she had mistaken Miner for Swindle’s longtime Jesus model, Christopher Crofts. Stunned at the resemblance, she asked if he would like to visit the artist’s studio.

He was at first skeptical, but agreed to drop by.

continued on page 10

Christian Crusade

Volume 60

January-February 2012

Number 1

Washington Post: Americans want a President with strong Christian faith

compiled by the *Christian Crusade* staff

“Atheist alert!” writes Jordan Sekulow in the *Washington Post*. “New statistics from the Public Religion Research Institute show that over 70 percent of Republicans and over 50 percent of Democrats want a president who has “very strong religious beliefs.”

This comes as increasingly aggressive atheist groups continue to mock publicly anyone who be-

lieves in God – particularly targeting politicians – although a large majority of the electorate fully embraces the importance of the commander-in-chief’s faith, writes Sekulow:

Atheists see the majority of the American people as “less educated but more abundant indoctrinated masses,” who are led by fundamentalists.” According to the group American Atheists, these include

continued on page 7

Texas, Alabama, Arizona groups ignore threats from Wisconsin atheists

by Keith Wilkerson, managing editor

Thousands of Texans, including the state attorney general and presidential candidate Gov. Rick Perry, have sent a clear message to Wisconsin atheists who enjoy intimidating small towns into removing nativity scenes.

The message is the same from an American Legion

continued on page 6

Wall Street Journal: Why does media promote any bad news about church?

compiled by the *Christian Crusade* staff

The national news media recently yawned over a Baylor university study which found that the number of American atheists has remained steady at 4 percent since 1944 while church membership has reached an all-time high.

However, it was big news when another study

continued on page 7

Tiny Bible expected to sell for \$50,000

by Keith Wilkerson, managing editor

A 1,245-page Bible that once visited the lunar surface is expected to be auctioned off for \$50,000.

“A rare Bible that’s been to the moon and back will have a new owner Thursday night – the complete King James version, framed



This tiny text has been to the moon and back

in gold leaf, is under the hammer at an auction house in New Hampshire,” reports Richard Allen Green for the Cable News Network:

But whoever takes it home won’t be able to leaf through it. It’s a piece of microfilm,

continued on page 19

Today’s girls growing up in a ‘moral abyss’

compiled by the *Christian Crusade* staff

Girls today are growing up in a “moral abyss,” say Dr. Helen Wright, telling an annual conference in Britain that she is greatly concerned by the “erosion of the innocence of childhood in the 21st Century.”

Indeed, society must wake up “to the profound damage we have inflicted” on today’s girls “due to creating a society that is highly sexualized,” agreed Andrea Williams, chief executive officer of Christian

continued on page 18

Baseball pro credits God for rescue from kidnappers

compiled by the *Christian Crusade Newspaper* staff

"I was always praying to God, and thanks to God, He gave me the miracle of sending me these wonderful people," proclaimed Washington Nationals baseball player Wilson Ramos after security forces rescued him from kidnappers demanding millions of dollars.

ASWAT team of the Venezuela's National Guard and police rescued the 24-year-old Major League Baseball rookie catcher two days after he was abducted from his mother's home in that South American nation.

"The truth is I'm still very nervous, but thanks to God everything turned out well," Ramos told the Caracas daily newspaper *la Universal*.

He described a gunfight between his abductors

and police in the mountainous region of Montalban. He told the *Washington Post*:

"There were many shots fired. I could not do anything but get under the bed, to pray, to cry, and then I felt a great relief when I heard the police yell my name. That is when I responded, because I could not even speak.

"Being a step away from death is something that changes your life

completely. It is something one cannot easily forget," Ramos told *la Universal*.

"This is beyond any comparison. I never thought I would go through something like this," he said.

"Mike Rizzo, general manager for the Nationals, was also happy to hear the news." Though details are

limited and we have not yet talked directly with Wilson, we are thrilled with reports that he has been rescued," Rizzo said in a statement.

"We greatly appreciate all the prayers and thoughts of all who have joined us in wishing for this conclusion to what has been a nightmarish 48 hours.

"We are eager to see Wilson and let him know just how many all over the world have been waiting for this news."



Kidnaping has become an increasing threat to the middle and upper-classes in Venezuela.

In the 113 games he played during his 2011 rookie season with the

Nationals, Ramos had a .267 batting average with 15 home runs and 52 runs batted in.

8 out of 10 young Christians can't apply their faith to life

compiled by the *Christian Crusade Newspaper* staff

Eight out of ten young Christian adults in America have no idea how to apply their faith to their daily living, reports pollster George Barna.

His finding was announced as the Barna Group released its end-of-the-year top six trends in American faith for 2011.

One of the most favorable discoveries by pollsters was that three-quarters of Americans see churches as a positive factor in their communities. Only 5 percent consider the church's influence to be negative. However, "Americans are struggling to determine how faith, Christianity and church fit into modern life," reports Barna.

Among 2011's other trends:

"Forty-one percent of Americans are unable to identify who they consider to be an influential Christian," reported Barna. When surveyed about their Christian heroes, many Americans came up blank.

"Only Billy Graham, the Pope, Barack Obama and Joel Osteen were mentioned by more than 1 out of 50 adults as the most significant Christian leaders," reported Barna.

"Another way in which Christianity hit the mainstream radar was prominent discussion about hell," reported Barna. "This issue sparked so much controversy and vigorous debate in part because America is essentially split down the middle on most issues of universalism and religious pluralism. For example, 43 percent of Americans said it doesn't matter what religious faith you follow because they all teach the same lessons; 54 percent of Americans disagree. Half

of Americans believe that all people are eventually saved or accepted by God no matter what they do, while 40 percent disagreed.

"With the nation's population so divided, expect to see these issues continue to stoke lively conversations," said Barna.

Pollsters also found "a great deal of openness among millions of Americans to overtly supporting Christian business and brands. In fact, nearly half of all adults (including all faith groups) said they would be open to purchasing from a business or brand that operates according to Christian principles."

A consistent theme from Barna Group's research this year is Americans' growing acceptance of limitations.

"Compared to the experience of economic surplus of recent decades," he writes, "residents are living within a redefined American dream. For many, this includes lowered expectations, rethinking spending habits, and relearning savings.

"One reason for their modest outlook on life is that three-quarters of adults claim to have been personally affected by the economic downturn. Another reason: Americans have come to accept that the economy is not recovering anytime soon. They are settling in for the long haul. Seven out of 10 Americans believe it will be two or more years and nearly half say it will take three years or longer. One out of 17 Americans now believes the economy will never fully recover, up from one in 50 two years ago.

"One of the unfortunate consequences of these changes is a reduction in charitable giving," writes Barna. "Three out of 10 adults have reduced their giving to churches and four out of 10 have downgraded their giving to non-profits. One of the measures of generosity is tithing, or giving 10 percent or more of one's income.

The tithing indicator, too, has dropped from 7 percent to 4 percent of all Americans. The patterns of giving and generosity suggest a tough year ahead for non-profit and church leaders.

What does it take to make church relevant?

Another key theme from Barna Group's research in 2011 is the new generation gap hitting the Christian community. Many of today's congregations are struggling to remain connected with Millennials. The faith journeys of teens and young adults are often challenging for many parents and faith leaders, who often misunderstand how and why young people become disconnected.

Barna cites six reasons that young adults leave church as well as five common myths about church dropouts.

The six reasons? According to Barna:

Reason #1 — Churches seem overprotective. A few of the defining characteristics of today's teens and young adults are their unprecedented access to ideas and worldviews as well as their prodigious consumption of popular culture. As Christians, they express the desire for their faith in Christ to connect to the world they live in. However, much of their experience of Christianity feels stifling, fear-based and risk-averse. One-quarter of 18- to 29-year-olds said "Christians demonize everything outside of the church" (23 percent indicated this "completely" or "mostly" describes their experience). Other perceptions in this category include "church ignoring the of staying faithful to their beliefs and to their

Christian Crusade Newspaper

Volume 60

January-February 2012

Number 1

Billy James Hargis II, publisher

Betty Jane Hargis, associate publisher

Keith Wilkerson, managing editor

Billy James Hargis III, contributing editor

Betty Miles, editorial assistant

Christian Crusade Newspaper is the printed voice of the nonprofit Christian Crusade, Inc. Contributions are tax-deductible. The Newspaper does not accept paid advertising. Freewill support is essential for the continuation of this faith project.

Visit us on the Internet at: www.ChristianCrusade.com

SUBSCRIPTIONS: Free, but gift subscriptions must be requested.

For a free subscription, write to:

Christian Crusade, Dept. 198 P.O. Box 21228, Tulsa, OK 74121-1228

All material herein copyright © 2011 by Christian Crusade Newspaper

EMAIL: Editorial Department - ChristCrew@aol.com



Family Circus creator leaves a legacy of hope and humor

compiled by the *Christian Crusade Newspaper* staff

Bil Keane, 89, the creator of the world's most popular single-panel newspaper comic, the Family Circus, passed away recently, leaving behind a half-century of daily visits to the Keane family where he, his wife, now-grown kids and their pets were the models for Daddy, Mommy, Billy, Dolly, Jeffy, P.J., Barfy, Sam and Kittycat. The comic appears in more than 1,500 newspapers worldwide.

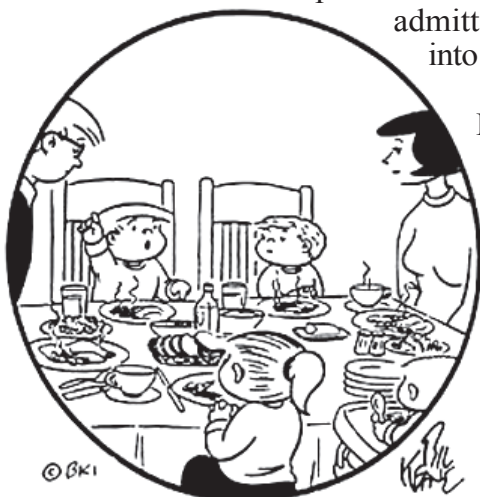
In a 2003 interview published in the *Baptist Standard*, the Catholic Keane admitted he enjoyed inserting his personal faith into his daily commentaries on life.

In one classic, Jeffy prays before bed "Our Father who art in Heaven, how did you know my name?" In another, Dolly asks, "Is God white, black, brown, yellow or red?" Mommy simply answers, "Yes."

Keane told Religious News Service reporter Kathi Wolfe that shortly after the September 11, 2001 attacks, he received mail from readers "who are gratified that there is something in the comic pages that devotes some space to the influence of religion and God. No one has an explanation for the attacks. But most people believe that guidance from above will help to beat terrorism."

Keane began drawing the iconic daily comic in 1960, and it will continue since his son Jeff—yes, the model for Jeffy—took over a few years ago. Keane enjoyed a 60-year marriage to Thelma Keane, who at the peak of the comic's popularity was often recognized at the supermarket by strangers who would ask "Are you Mommy from the Family Circus?"

Behind the scenes, he was the upbeat master-of-ceremonies at the National Cartoonists Society annual awards banquet for 16 years. "His



"When we say grace, do we look up at Heaven, or down at the food?"

fellow cartoonists unfailingly described him as the nicest of nice guys, and startlingly funny," remembers Brigid Alverson for Comic Book Resources.

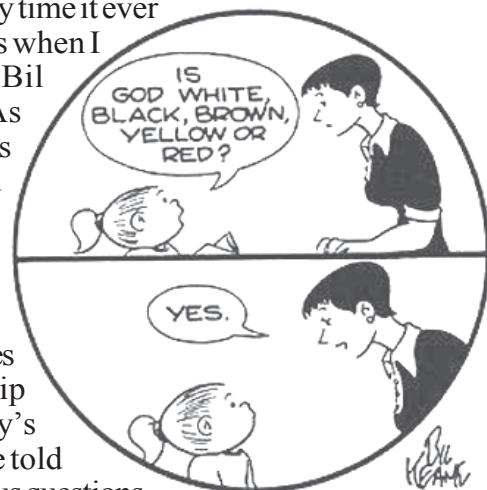
The University of Wisconsin's at Madison's Artist-in-Residence, Lynda Barry recalls:

I was a kid growing up in a troubled household. We didn't have books in the house but we did have the daily paper and I remember picking out Family Circus before I could really read.

There was something about the life on the other side of that circle that looked pretty good. For kids like me there was a map and a compass hidden in Family Circus. The parents in that comic strip really loved their children. Their home was stable. It put that image in my head and I kept it.

I'd always heard that great art will cause people to burst into tears but the only time it ever happened to me was when I was introduced to Bil Keane's son, Jeff. As soon as I shook his hand I just started bawling my face off because I realized I had climbed through the circle.

The religious themes expressed in the strip grew out of his family's experiences, Keane told



Wolfe. The children express "the religious questions that I had as a child or that other children have."

For example, in one, Dolly wonders, "When people get to heaven, are they allowed to hug God?"

Keane realized that he had to present his message subtly — and only occasionally, "or my editor would say he's not buying a religious strip," Keane told Wolfe. "It makes it more special that way."

"Religion was a part of our home life when I was growing up," he said. "I attended Catholic school. It was a good education — for the spiritual end, as well as for its discipline. Laughter was a part of the church services I attended as a child."

He recalls his sixth grade teacher, Sister Anne, who didn't mind his caricatures featuring her. "She was a great teacher. Instead of chastising me for drawing her in a not-too-flattering way, she encouraged me." When he left her class, Keane said, "Sister Anne said, 'I hope someday to see you drawing cartoons.'"

He believed "Jesus must have had a sense of humor. I like to think of Him as a guy who got people to listen to Him by leaving them laughing and chuckling with one another."



Good Samaritan's kindness saves his life

compiled by the *Christian Crusade Newspaper* staff

A Canadian who saw a woman stranded on a Wisconsin highway with a flat tire stopped and helped — only to have the tables turned on him a few miles down the road when she saved his life.

"Indiana-bound Victor Giesbrecht, 61, a father of four from Winnipeg, was driving east Saturday evening on Interstate 94," report Paul Walsh and Gabrielle Giroday in the *Winnipeg Free Press*, "when he stopped to help cousins Sara Berg and Lisa Meier, both of Eau Claire, get rolling again."

The two women were struggling on the shoulder with a flat and were grateful when the grandfatherly Giesbrecht pulled over and lent a hand.

"Good deed accomplished, and just minutes after getting back behind the wheel," reports the *Free Press*, "Giesbrecht was stricken with a heart attack. His wife, Ann, at his side helped bring their pickup truck to a stop.

"Seemingly right on cue, along came the car he had just helped get back on the road. Ann Giesbrecht was on the phone and waving her arms in search of help."

This time it was Sara who got to be the Good Samaritan. She's a nurse. As Ann called 911, Sara began cardiopulmonary resuscitation — and kept Giesbrecht alive until emergency personnel arrived.

"I talked to Sara on Sunday night and told her, 'You actually saved his life,'" Mrs. Giesbrecht said Monday from the Mayo Clinic's Eau Claire facility, where Victor remained in serious condition.

Why did he stop to help two strangers? Ann said Victor "always wants to stop" and help when he sees folks in need. "He's the type of person who gives you 100 per cent and worries about himself later."

"There's some good people out there," said Allen Giesbrecht, Victor's brother, who told the *Free Press*

he was grateful his brother had received assistance. "When you're on the road, you never know what can happen."

Trooper Kate Sampson was the first responder on the scene and was told by Sara that Victor "had no pulse and was not breathing." Dunn County Deputy Scott Pace arrived with an automated external defibrillator (AED), which restored Victor's heartbeat.

A medical helicopter whisked Giesbrecht to Eau Claire.

State Patrol Sgt. Michael Newton said the Giesbrechts' Good Samaritan act played a key role. The two cousins immediately recognized their benefactor and didn't hesitate to stop — whereas they might have been cautious had Mrs. Giesbrecht been a total stranger waving for help.

"It could have been a different outcome," Newton said. "It's an interesting turn of fate."

Judge rules Buddhist flags OK in class, but not U.S. national motto

compiled by the *Christian Crusade Newspaper* staff

A federal appeals court in California has ruled that a San Diego-area math teacher does not have the constitutional right to display America's national motto, "In God We Trust" in his classroom.

The Ninth U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals sided with the Poway Unified School District in a case involving a high school teacher who was forced to remove banners that mentioned God, including one that displayed the national motto. A lower court previously ruled that the school district violated Bradley Johnson's First Amendment rights, but the Ninth Circuit overturned that decision, as the judges said the math teacher's banners had nothing to do with calculus.

Bradley Johnson, a math teacher for Poway Unified School District, is 30 years into his career and had banners he believed celebrated "the religious heritage of America," according to the *Los Angeles Times*.

The ruling overturned California Federal District Court Judge Roger T. Benitez's decision that said the school districted violated Johnson's constitutional rights.

The overruling judgment said that Johnson's role as a state-employed math teacher was to do as his job title conveys, not to "use his public position as a

pulpit from which to preach his own views on the role of God in our nation's history to the captive students in his mathematics classroom," according to the *Christian Science Monitor*.



Johnson argued that school officials discriminated against Christians by forcing him to remove the banners, noting that other teachers were allowed to hang Tibetan prayer flags or lyrics to a John Lennon song that references heaven, hell and religion, according to the *San Francisco Chronicle*.

Judge Richard Tallman of the appeals court wrote in the ruling that while Johnson can make his views known on the nation's religious history beyond the schoolyard, it is not appropriate for him to do so in the classroom. Johnson had displayed the approximately 7-foot-by-2-foot banners – which had the four phrases "In God We Trust," "One Nation Under God," "God Bless America," and "God Shed His Grace On Thee" – in his classroom at another school for nearly 20 years. But when he came to Westview High School, Principal Dawn Kastner said the banners were "a promotion of a particular viewpoint" and ordered Johnson to take them down, reported the *Los Angeles Times*.

"Our country has been founded on 'in God we trust,' and that's the principle of the United States," contends Blanchard. "I think we've gotten away from that quite a bit, so we need to get back to center and get our focus on God."

"Seems to me that's kind of unfortunate, because I thought we all had First Amendment rights, regardless of where we were," Blanchard said. "And some of the things that are happening in schools, as well as bills that are going around ... in our court system, we are getting a little muddled, and it seems like we're trying to fit the situation, instead of actually standing up for what our forefathers fought for."

The court is also requiring the math teacher to pay the Poway Unified School District's legal fees.



School board praying silently after court ruling

compiled by the *Christian Crusade Newspaper* staff

Members of the Indian River School Board in Shelbyville, Delaware, bowed their heads for a moment of silence at the start of a recent board meeting. For decades, they have prayed together before meetings.

"Then they made a unanimous decision to seek U.S. Supreme Court review of the recent Third District Court of Appeals ruling that the district's policy of opening board meetings with a prayer – often a Christian one – was unconstitutional," reports Molly Murray of the local *News Journal* newspaper:

Charles M. Bireley, the school board president, said there is enough difference of opinion among federal courts on the constitutionality of prayer before public meetings that the issue needs to be settled by the nation's top court. "We feel as if it needs to be clarified," he said.

The U.S. District Court in Wilmington, Delaware, had ruled earlier in favor of the school board's prayer policy.

Then, a three-judge panel at the court of appeals level overturned the lower court.

The court battle over prayer at school board meetings dates back to 2004, when a Georgetown-area preacher delivered a prayer for the invocation at the Sussex Central High School graduation. Two non-Christian families complained to school officials.

Now, nearby Pennsylvania school districts are following suit. Board member Donna Wert said she "felt a void" when Penn Manor school board opened its meeting last month with a moment of silence.

Board Member Bryant Ferris said he's not happy that Pequea Valley school board meetings now begin with a brief period of quiet reflection.

It's not the silence that bothers them, but what it represents – the end of a long-standing tradition of starting their meetings with prayer.

Their school boards, along with Cocalico, Pennsylvania, have abandoned the practice of praying in response to the Delaware court ruling.

Four other nearby Pennsylvania districts neither pray nor observe a silent

pause at the start of their meetings. Only four area districts – Columbia, Eastern Lancaster County, Lampeter-Strasburg and Octorara – now pray at their public meetings each month.

School board members that recently stopped the practice said they had little choice but to change to avoid potential legal problems.

"I hate it that we had to do this," said Ferris, president of the Pequea Valley board. "Our community is a very strong, Christian-based community and we have never had anyone question us opening a meeting with a prayer to my knowledge."

But to avoid a legal challenge that could involve expensive legal fees, the school board's solicitor advised members to stop praying in public, he said. "All nine board members disagreed with the decision but felt it was the right thing to do to comply with the law."

Wert said she was dismayed that another avenue for public expression of faith was being eliminated.

"I get tired of seeing laws made for such a small minority of people when I believe that we represent our constituents" by praying, she said.

Board president Rich Frerichs said the prayers were usually general in nature and not associated with a particular religion.

He said the Penn Manor board wanted to continue the tradition but felt it had to follow the letter of the law and comply with the Delaware court ruling, which has been appealed to the U.S. Supreme Court.

Now, Cocalico school board members are meeting privately to pray before convening their board meetings, ending a public prayer tradition that goes back at least 30 years.

"To reflect our own desire to ask the Lord's blessing, we decided we would have our own prayer in private," Kevin Eshleman, board vice president, said.

Eshleman said he understands the district "has to be and wants to be" open to people of all faiths and backgrounds, but he believes "the majority of our community would be content and even glad that we asked His blessings at our meetings."



Tennessee football coaches told not to bow their heads

compiled by the *Christian Crusade Newspaper* staff

The football coaches at Westmoreland Middle School in Sumner County, Tenn., got into trouble for bowing their heads during a student-led prayer before a recent game.

According to local NBC affiliate WSMV, the unnamed coaches didn't say anything aloud themselves, but bowed their heads respectfully in observance alongside the students.

Word got back to the principal and the school district, which found the coaches' participation to be an uncomfortable mix of religion and public school.

"We've been telling our principals to kind of be looking for those things, because that is kind of a shift in how things have been done," district spokesman Jeremy Johnson told WSMV. "It can in no way appear like it's endorsed by Sumner County Schools personnel."

When asked whether bowing one's head was considered "endorsing," Johnson said it "depends what it looks like."

The district, it seems, is wary of legal problems after the American

Civil Liberties Union sued the district for violating the separation of church and state, saying teachers led students in Bible studies, invited a pastor to come speak to students during lunch and at least one instructor displayed a 10-inch cross in a classroom.

When asked whether bowing one's head was considered "endorsing," Johnson said it "depends what it looks like."

"That's where you kind of get into the gray area that we're having to deal with."



Actually the coaches were not reprimanded. Instead, they were required to sign letters indicating they understood the school's policy, which prohibits staff from appearing to participate in a student prayer in any way, even if it takes place after hours.

But longtime referee and local resident Tony Bentle says word of the incident "blew my mind."

"We're just respectful, God-fearing people up here. Nobody in this town is offended if you pray. Nobody."

Further violations of the policy could lead to disciplinary action for the coaches — as the school walks on eggshells to avoid further difficulties with the ACLU.

"That's a violation of their rights. We should be able to bow our heads in reverence to God, wherever we are," Bentle told the TV station. "It's time we draw a line in the sand and say, you know, this is ridiculous."

Sumner County school officials also sent guidelines to staff members in advance of this year's "See You At the Pole" prayer event in which Christian teenagers around the nation gather around campus flag poles before class to pray for their schools, the nation and each other.

Teachers have not been banned from praying, but if they do — it must be done out of sight and earshot of students.

"To tell the teachers that they cannot attend 'See You At The Pole,' which occurs before school hours, just doesn't seem to be constitutional," David Landrith, pastor of Long Hollow Baptist Church, wrote on his blog.

"This is the United States of America."

"You can't ban people from practicing their faith in the marketplace — whether it's a Muslim, Buddhist, or a Christian. Christianity should not be favored over other religions."

"However, Christians should have the same rights as everyone else."

Football team stomps out of offensive assembly

compiled by the *Christian Crusade Newspaper* staff

Members of the football team stomped out of a Hartford, Connecticut, high school assembly when a pro-homosexual advocacy play featured two boys kissing on stage.

When the actors locked lips, reports Vanessa de la Torre for the *Hartford Courant* newspaper, "a piercing clamor rang through the auditorium."

"There were screams and loud voices and a bit of feigned or real disgust. Dozens of students, mostly male and a few in their Owls football jerseys, hurried out of their rows and walked out. A few jumped over seats to leave."

Principal David Chambers said the students had heard ahead of time that there might be same-sex affection in the play. Some asked to be excused. Chambers considered sending an opt-out letter to parents but decided against it.

In his opinion, he told the *Courant*, the high schoolers need to develop a "sense of empathy toward gays and lesbians."

"Our kids are not there yet," Chambers told the newspaper.

Teachers, administrators and a football coach had to keep the teens who walked out from leaving the school building.

"Even though it's kind of chaotic, kind of wild and

crazy, I see it as very successful," Chambers said. "Our kids never deal with this, they keep it inside, and that's that nervous energy. That's why they walked out."

It apparently did not occur to him that some of the



kids had moral issues with the scene — believing that glorifying same-gender romance is wrong. Chambers' intent was to wear down the students' sense of disgust and discomfort with viewing homosexuality on stage.

Before the afternoon was over, Chambers had at least one angry Christian parent in the Hartford

Public High School main office, furious that the school would promote something that their family did not condone. Other parents took their students out of school early. Another school official, Adam Johnson, "said his office phone was ringing. A lot," reported the *Courant*.

The homosexual kiss was part of a musical called "Zanna, Don't!" about a reverse world in which heterosexual people are outcasts and the most popular boy in school is the flamboyant homosexual star of the chess team. At one point in the play, he admits to liking the football captain, who admits to being a "closet heterosexual."

The play was brought to the school by members of Leadership Greater Hartford's Quest, "a program for professionals that develops leadership skills, put forth 'Zanna' as an anti-bullying community service project that helps lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and questioning youth," reported the *Courant*.

"In a partnership with the non-profit True Colors, one Quest team raised \$10,000 to show the musical three times at Hartford High this month. The Knox Foundation and the Samuel Roskin Trust at the Hartford Foundation for Public Giving gave sponsorship money."

"It's not an easy subject to approach, so we're trying to make it easy for school administrators, local

Football team stomps out of offensive assembly

continued from page 4

nonprofits, community groups,” said Louise Provenzano, a marketing and strategy consultant in the Quest program. The message for the Hartford teenagers is “diversity, inclusiveness, compassion.”

The *Courant* reported that the students’ reception to the play was less than positive:

Many settled into their seats and tried to listen to the musical’s dialogue and glittery songs, despite competing chatter in the back. “I like that scarf!” one boy shouted at the chess king.

The Family Institute of Connecticut condemned the incident, and called for a protest of the school’s decision, calling it “an outrageous attack on parental rights.”

A bill introduced earlier this year by Republican State Senator Kevin Witkos would have mandated that parents be allowed to opt out their children from sexuality instruction in schools, however it never made it to the floor for a vote.

“We will fight for it again next year and every year until it is passed,” said the family institute.

After a the incident was described on the LifeSiteNews website, reader response was unanimously critical of school officials.

“This goes beyond tolerance for people with same-sex attraction,” objected a reader identified as Michael L.

“This is demanding approval of a homosexual act. I predict this will backfire in the worst way for those responsible.”

“This is one more example of how parents can simply not trust the public schools when it comes to teaching their children about morality and sexuality,” wrote a reader identified as Sunshine.

“They knew this would offend Christian students

and their parents, but went ahead without notifying parents in advance.

“This school is encouraging young people to experiment with a lifestyle that is dangerous and immoral. I can’t believe such things are happening in America. When will this nightmare end?”

“Uh, yeah, sure, it was just “nervous energy” that



made them walk out. Whatever. You keep telling that to yourself, Mr. Chambers. There is one good thing about this story: if so many walked out, it means those people have a conscience that still works,” wrote Veritas.

“Do you think Mr. Chambers will tell his students that life expectancy for a 20-year-old practicing homosexual is 8 to 20 years shorter than that for non-homosexuals males? I would not bet on it,” wrote Allan D.

“I have a suggestion. Since Chambers thinks “a release of students’ inner conflict about homosexu-

ality” is good, why not make a play educating the public on the destructiveness of the LGBT lifestyle? That will sure elicit that ‘reaction of disgust’ which he thinks is ‘a good sign.’ The play would be nonfiction, too!” wrote “John John.”

“Some effort should be made in that community to methodically (and fairly) hold public hearings and form tribunals,” wrote Raymond Peringer. “Run a public notice in the paper, and get the process started.

“It may not be possible to actually execute whatever judgment is reached, but it is important to at least keep in the community awareness that the common law of immemorial community standards is a foundational legal principle, while provocative and disruptive behavior does not necessarily have such a status.”

“David Chambers said that he had considered sending an opt-out letter to parents before changing his mind,” wrote Theresa Henderson. “This man is another of those cowards so frightened by homosexual activists he changed his mind about informing parents.

“It may come as news to this ‘educator’ but the home is the first and most important phase of education. The state

has no business in the dining rooms of the nation. The state is there only to collect money for education, to set teaching and examination standards. Sex and family life are out of bounds for public school teachers.”

“I applaud the young men that got up and left the show,” wrote Jacqueline. “It shows courage to stand up for what is right.

“Instead of sitting by silently and being forced to accept views they do not agree with, they stood up for their on beliefs and convictions.

“Real men stand with courage for what is right.”

12-year-old girl kisses boy, school calls cops

compiled by the *Christian Crusade* staff

In what would seem to be political correctness gone mad, an elementary school assistant principal called police after a 12-year-old boy and girl were caught kissing on a Florida playground.

The school administrator had called state child abuse officials first, who told her that sixth graders exchanging their first kiss wasn’t something they would respond to — that perhaps she would want to pursue the matter with law enforcement. Lee County deputy sheriffs responded to an emergency call from the Orange River Elementary School and declined to file charges, reported Kristine Gill for the Scripps-Howard News Service.

Was Tinkerbell trying to prevent sexual abuse in “Peter Pan”? (Photo: Walt Disney Co.)

Sgt. Stephanie Eller of the sheriff’s office told reporters that deputies informed Assistant Principal Margaret Ann Haring that a kiss between children is not a sex crime.

“This incident is more of a simple assault,” Sgt. Eller said, wryly — adding, “though by definition there would have to be a victim.”

And neither 12-year-old is willing to go on record that they objected to being kissed.

Now irked parents are accusing the school of over-reaction and taking political correctness to a bizarre new level.

According to the Naples, Fla., *Daily News*, two sixth-grade girls had a crush on a sixth-grade boy. On the playground during a physical education class, they began arguing in front of their friends about which one of them loved him the most. According to witnesses, the boy in question was aware that he was the object of both girls’ affection and basking in the attention as he climbed on the monkey bars.



Suddenly, one of the girls decided to prove she was his one-and-only. She jumped up and gave him a kiss. Witnesses do not agree whether or not he kissed her back. However, it caused quite a sensation on the playground among their gawking classmates — particularly the crowd of girls who had been taking in the romantic drama.

A teacher on playground duty reported the kiss on the monkey bars to Assistant Principal Haring. She reportedly feared it was a “possible sex crime” and that school regulations required that such an assault be reported. She called social workers at the Florida Department of Children and Families. They said the call came in on their sex-abuse hotline, but according to DFC spokesperson Terri Durdaller, “It did not fit our criteria.” Sheriff’s Deputies responded, talked with teachers and took no action.

Apparently stealing a kiss is not against the law in Florida — particularly among children.

Deputies “went ahead and took a report,” said Sgt. Eller. Local reaction has been predictable.

“Whatever happened to common senses?” demanded one parent. The incident has even made the British tabloids. Officials have declined to name the 12-year-olds publicly — although every 12-year-old girl in Naples knows exactly who the kissing couple was.

“It’s all so much foolishness — and one more reason the public is losing confidence in the education system. A kiss between 12-year-olds, I would say is relatively harmless,” parent John McDaniel told the *Daily Mail*’s Paul McDonald, who quoted another parent saying: “Principal Margaret Ann Haring needs to be fired immediately. It is pretty obvious she is out of touch and clueless. Two little kids kissing is a sex act? What an idiot.”

Offended leaders tell Britain to back off, keep its money

compiled by the *Christian Crusade Newspaper* staff

Whether or not to legalize lifestyles they consider immoral should not be a requirement for receiving British foreign aid, a key African leader has told Britain's Prime Minister David Cameron.

Offended by the implication that Ghana's former colonial masters in Great Britain are wiser than native Africans, Ghana's President John Evans Atta Mills says Britain does not have the right to mandate Ghanaian cultural and moral values.

Britain has threatened developing nations which do not drop longstanding prohibitions on sexual immorality with the loss foreign aid.

"British aid should have more strings attached. Britain is now one of the premier aid givers in the world," Cameron told Australian talk show host Andrew Marr.

"We want to see countries that receive our aid adhering to proper human rights, and that includes how people treat gay and lesbian people.

"We are saying this is one of the things that will determine our aid policy. These countries are all on a journey and it is up to us to help them along that

journey."

Ghana is insulted, says President Mills.

"I, as president of this nation will never initiate or support any attempts to legalize homosexuality in Ghana," he said in an official response to Cameron – and he's not alone, according to David Baklinsky for LifeSiteNews.

"Several African countries are making their stand against Britain's threat that they either legalize homosexual acts or be excluded from financial aid," writes Baklinsky.

Mills was noticeably irked at a meeting in Perth, Australia, of countries which form the British Commonwealth af-

ter the subject of sexual perversion was raised in an internal report recommending all Commonwealth countries end their bans on homosexual activity, according to BBC.

The nation of Malawi's governmental spokesperson Patricia Kaliati told the *Nyasa Times* newspa-



per that it was "unfortunate" that Britain was considering "pro-gay strings" to aid. She noted that such acts are illegal in Malawi.

Uganda's presidential adviser John Nagenda made a stronger statement to BBC, saying that Ugandans were "tired of these lectures" and should not be treated "like children," adding that Cameron's "bullying mentality" was "very wrong."

"Uganda is, if you remember, a sovereign state and we are tired of being given these lectures," he said. "If they must take their money, so be it."

"After Mills' statements," reported Baklinsky, "Tanzania added itself to the growing list of African countries saying that they will not compromise on their cultural and moral values, even if it means losing Britain's financial support."

"Tanzania will never accept Cameron's proposal because we have our own moral values," said foreign affairs minister Bernard Membe, according to Tanzania's *Guardian* newspaper.

"This is not part of our culture and we will never legalize it. Tanzania is ready to end diplomatic ties with Britain if it imposes conditions on the assistance it provides."

"We are guided by our tradition. We have families of a mother, a father and children. What Cameron is doing might lead to the collapse of the Commonwealth."

"Zanzibar, Tanzania's semi-autonomous archipelago, has also come out strongly against British aid with strings attached," reports Baklinsky.

"We have a strong culture that abhors such activities, and to anyone who tells us that development support is linked to accepting this, we are saying 'no,'" Zanzibar President Ali Mohamed Shein told journalists. "We cannot compromise. Let them cut off aid."

Student punished for saying perversion is wrong

compiled by the *Christian Crusade Newspaper* staff

A Christian high school student has been punished by his school this week for saying he believes "being a homosexual is wrong."

Fort Worth 14-year-old Dakota Ary was sent to the principal's office, then spent most of the day serving an in-school suspension at Western Hills High School. During a discussion in his German class, "we were talking about religions in Germany.

"I said, 'I'm a Christian. I think being a homosexual is wrong,'" Ary told Lari Barager of KDFW News. "It wasn't directed to anyone except my friend who was sitting behind me. I guess the teacher heard me. He started yelling. He told me he was going to write me an infraction and send me to the office."

An assistant principal called Ary's mother at work.

"At first I was in disbelief. My son is on the honor roll with great grades. I don't have any problems out of him," Holly Pope said.

After hearing her son's explanation of what happened, the assistant principal reduced the in-school suspension from two days to one.

However, the boy's mother was not satisfied with that. "He was stating an opinion. He has a right to do that. They punished him for it," she said.

Attorney Matt Krause joined Ary and his mom for a meeting with the principal the next. They asked for the blemish to be taken off his record as well as assurances there would be no retaliation.

"Students don't lose their first amendment rights just because they go in the schoolhouse door," Krause said.

6-year-old's dad irked at school's odd ball agenda

compiled by the *Christian Crusade Newspaper* staff

A Canadian father was alarmed when his first grader brought home a school notice that included the Toronto District School Board 2011-12 daily planner's recommendations for "days of significance."

Such days that the six-year-old's family should remember, according to the calendar, included Nov. 19's Transgender Day of Remembrance, Dec. 1's World AIDS Day, Dec. 17's International Day to End Violence Against Sex Workers, Feb. 7's International Day of Zero-Tolerance on Female Genital Cutting/Mutilation and Feb. 12's International Sexual and Reproductive Health Day.

"It's just bizarre," said the outraged dad, who took the paper out of his son's folder before the boy saw it. "He's six. I want him to enjoy being six."

"What are those things doing in a young child's school planner?" asks Joe Warmington, writing for the *Toronto Sun* newspaper. "This boy's parents may have to tackle these issues far earlier than they planned."

"The school only goes to the fifth grade, so they are not going to be able to say it was in there for the older kids either," said the dad, who Warmington did not identify. "I just don't get it because the kids in first grade can read."

Claiming they knew nothing about it, the school board is conducting an

investigation. Spokesman Shari Schwartz-Maltz told the *Sun* that claims about the planner are "not consistent" with school policy. She said the board is contacting the school's recently retired principal to determine what happened.

"Could it be narrowed down to having been accidentally placed in the planners of one grade school?" asked Warmington. "This dad said he has talked to at least one other parent who has a planner with the same information."

Oddly enough, despite school officials' shocked response, the "Days of Significance calendar" is on the school board's website.

This Toronto dad is just not ready to explain to his first-grade son about transgender people, prostitutes, AIDS or female genital mutilation.

So one can imagine his shock when he found these issues listed as special days of recognition in his son's Toronto District School Board 2011-12 daily planner.

"I was looking through this thing and was shocked by the kind of days they are marking as 'days of significance,'" he said.

The first one that jumped out at him, under a headline that said "equitable and inclusive," was Nov. 19's Transgender Day of Remembrance.

Then came Dec. 1's World AIDS Day, followed by Dec. 17's International Day to End Violence Against Sex Workers. There was also Feb. 7's International Day of Zero-Tolerance on Female Genital Cutting/Mutilation and Feb. 12's International Sexual and Reproductive Health Day.

"It's just bizarre," said the outraged dad. "He's six. I want him to enjoy being six."

What are those things doing in a young child's school planner? This boy's parents may have to tackle these issues far earlier than they planned.

Hoping his son didn't notice, the dad said he pulled the pages from the book. "The school only goes to the fifth grade so they are not going to be able to say it was in there for the older kids either," said the dad. "I just don't get it because the kids in first grade can read."



THOUSANDS PROTEST TO KEEP TX
NATIVITY SCENE IN PLACE

LOW NOW

Texas, Alabama, Arizona ignore atheists' threats

continued from page 5

post in Montana, a city council in Pennsylvania and a federal judge in Arizona:

Go home!

At least 5,000 Texans showed up at a pre-Christmas rally supporting Henderson County officials who have refused to comply with the group's demand that they remove a nativity scene from the Athens, Texas, courthouse lawn.

Texas Attorney General Greg Abbott said that if the Wisconsin atheists sue as threatened, his office would come to the county's defense. Texas' governor, Rick Perry, also said he would intervene to support the county, reported the *San Antonio Express-News*.

The governor's office "strongly supports the right of Henderson County to display a Christmas Nativity scene on public property," said Lucy Nashed, deputy press secretary for Perry's office. "We have fought the Freedom from Religion Foundation before and won. Our founding principles give citizens freedom of religion, not freedom from religion. Faith and freedom helped build this nation, and faith cannot and should not be removed from public life."

Last summer, the Wisconsin atheists attempted to block Perry from organizing a prayer rally at Reliant Stadium in Houston. That complaint filed in July alleging that Perry's "initiation, organization, promotion and participation as governor in a prayer rally" violated the First Amendment was dismissed by U.S. District Judge Gray Miller.

Last week the group put up a banner next to the Henderson County nativity scene reading, according to the *Express-News*: "At the season of the Winter Solstice, let reason prevail. There are no gods, no devils, no angels, no heaven or hell. There is only our natural world. Religion is but myth and superstition that hardens hearts and enslaves minds."

A local pastor, Nathan Lorick, praised law enforcement officials for removing it and said the banner insulted believers and demeaned religion, whereas a nativity scene, menorah or other religious displays do not demean people of faith, instead remind the world of inspiring events in history.

Lorick noted that the Wisconsin atheists are notorious for attacking small towns that "do not have the means to defend themselves legally" and seeking as much publicity as possible.

The group filed a similar complaint in Ellwood City, Pa., last month. In order to avoid a costly legal

was a real statement to the nation that Christians are tired of the persecution and suppression. We want all to know that we are ready to contend for the faith."

"Our message to the atheists is don't mess with Texas and our nativity scenes or the Ten Commandments," said Texas State Attorney General Greg Abbott told Fox News. "I want the Freedom From Religion Foundation to know that our office has a history of defending religious displays in this state."

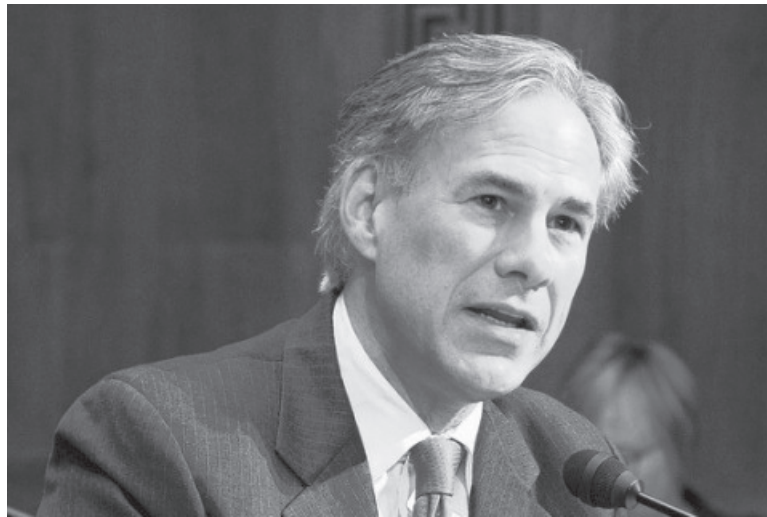
He said the organization is trying to "bully local governmental bodies" and he said he wanted to make sure Henderson County knows "there is a person, a lawyer and an organization in this state that has their back, that has the law, that has the muscle and firepower to go toe-to-toe with these organizations that come from out of state trying to bully governmental bodies."

"I do hope that people across the nation will take note and know that they too can stand up and speak up," Lorick said. "All I can tell you is that my eyes have been opened to a large number of people who want to see us fight for our faith."

Meanwhile, Michael Shepard, the commander of American Legion Post 108 in Whitefish, Montana, says he wishes the Wisconsin atheists would "take care of their own business and leave us totally alone."

He was irked that the Wisconsiners are threatening to sue the U.S. Forestry Service if they don't force the Whitefish chapter of the Knights of Columbus to remove a statue of Jesus that has been on the Big Mountain ski slopes for half a century.

"They call him Big Mountain Jesus: a six-foot statue of Christ, draped in a baby blue robe and gazing out over the majestic Flathead Valley from his perch along a ski run at the Whitefish Mountain Resort in Montana," writes Dan Frosch in the *New York Times*. "He has been there for more than 50 years, erected by the local Knights of Columbus chapter in honor of the soldiers from the 10th Mountain Division who told of seeing similar shrines in the



battle, the borough council voted to move the display off the municipal building grounds, where it had been erected annually for about a half-century.

Surveying the crowd of 5,000 on the courthouse supporting county officials, Lorick told Fox News, "We are humbled at the turnout of the crowd. We believe that God led us to do this and so we knew He was up to something great. This message is resonating in the hearts of people all over the country. This

continued on page 7

continued from page 6

mountains of Italy during World War II.”

However, the Wisconsin group—which is becoming about as popular at the Westboro Baptist Church, which waves obnoxious signs at the funerals of slain U.S. servicemen—says that because the statue stands on Forest Service property, it violates the U.S. Constitution. Of course, they are referring to the clause in the First Amendment prohibiting Congress from establishing a state religion. As always, they are ignoring the second part of the clause, which prohibits Congress from interfering in Americans’ free exercise of their faith.

Meanwhile, an Alabama school district decided to ignore a similar group’s threats to sue if the school’s choir sang “Silent Night” in the annual Christmas pageant.

The group of five, six and seven-year-old children sang the Christmas classic.

“The news came as a relief to students and teachers at G.W. Trenholm Primary School in Tuscumbia,” reported Todd Starnes of Fox News, “after they found themselves thrust into the war on Christmas.”

“We’ve always sung ‘Silent Night’ and we’ve never had a problem,” Principal Janice Jackson told Starnes. “We were just surprised, very surprised.”

Jackson said she received a letter from Americans United for the Separation of Church and State asking them to drop the song.

“We were so surprised because we are such a small school and we’re a small community. We can’t believe we were singled out for this,” Jackson said. “I thought it was a joke but the more I checked into it, I immediately called my superintendent.”

David Cortman, senior counsel for the Alliance Defense Fund offered its legal services to the school district free of charge in the event the group actually sued.

“Groups on the left such as Americans United have been trying to bully schools across the country all during this Christmas season,” Cortman said. “When they tell schools it is unconstitutional to include a song such as ‘Silent Night’ in their Christmas program, they are simply wrong not only as a matter of law but also as a matter of fairness.”

He praised the school system for standing up to Americans United instead of caving in to their demands.

“I think it’s about time that not only Americans but schools specifically stand up to these Grinches who go on this Christmas attack every year yet deny there is any war on Christmas,” Cortman said.

The community was furious with the out-of-town group.

“I think it’s sad,” parent Amy Johnson told television station WHNT in Huntsville. “I don’t think this is the place to make your point politically or religiously. Christmas is about



Jesus and that’s what the song is about.”

And in the continuing trend to ignore the atheists’ demands, a federal judge in Phoenix, Arizona, told the Wisconsin group that they needed to go home and quit fussing about other people’s business, reports Mary Kochan for *Catholic Lane*.

The atheist group asked a federal judge to force Arizona Gov. Jan Brewer to withdraw a public declaration of a statewide day of prayer. In written arguments, they told the judge they were suing because they had to turn off the television to avoid the topic of religion or news announcements about the Day of Prayer.

“This made them feel like ‘outsiders,’” reported Kochan.

The judge threw out their complaint, saying the Wisconsin group had no legal standing in Arizona matters.

The judge went on to note that the Wisconsin group was not injured by the governor’s proclamation, saying: “Plaintiffs provide affidavits to establish they turned off the television and altered conversational habits to avoid the topic of religion or the day of prayer.”

“Plaintiffs, however, do not explain why their alleged injury is different than injuries in other Establishment Clause cases in which the plaintiffs did not have standing, such as the President’s day of prayer proclamation.”

“Essentially, Plaintiffs seek a ruling obliquely holding that injury sufficient to confer standing exists under the Establishment Clause where government action is covered in the news or the subject of a social conversation.”

“The Court declines to depart from Establishment Clause case law on this ground. Plaintiffs have not shown injury beyond ‘stigmatic injury’ or feeling like an ‘outsider.’”

“Gov. Brewer’s proclamations proclaim a day of prayer, and one proclamation encourages all citizens to pray for God’s blessings on our state and nation,” the judge acknowledged. “Though ‘encouraged,’ no one, including plaintiffs, is obligated to pray. Nor are plaintiffs forced to alter their physical routine or bear a monetary expense to avoid a religious symbol.”

At best, the judge said, those challenging the governor’s actions have incurred a “stigmatic injury” or “feeling like an outsider.”

None of that, he said, gives them the right to sue.

Attorney Marc Victor said his clients are weighing whether to seek review from the 9th Circuit Court of Appeals or file a new lawsuit in state court.

In a prepared statement Gov. Brewer praised the court, calling the lawsuit “a futile attempt to stifle an American right and tradition.”

“Citizens of every race, background and creed have been coming together in voluntary prayer since our nation’s founding,” the governor said, “and will continue to do so against this organization’s best efforts.”

U.S. officials mock Poland’s Christian values

compiled by the *Christian Crusade Newspaper* staff

U.S. Embassy officials in Warsaw, Poland, under the Obama administration complained that Christian doctrine is a major source of “homophobia” in the heavily religious country, according to diplomatic cables released by Wikileaks.

The messages from the American embassy in Poland’s capital, marked “sensitive but unclassified,” were part of a dump of over 250,000 official government documents by the anti-secrecy website.

An August 2009 cable from the U.S. Embassy in Warsaw dated criticized church leaders as being central in promoting “homophobia” in the former Soviet-controlled country.

“Christians plays a significant role in the formation and propagation of anti-gay attitudes in Polish society, especially in rural areas,” states the communiqué entitled “Gay rights in Poland: long road ahead.”

Not explained is why the American embassy is involved in a matter of such sensitivity within a friendly nation.

Officials did note that “the Polish Episcopate has condemned violence and discrimination against gays and lesbians,” but said that message is ignored by local priests teaching that sexual attraction to the same gender is “a deviant condition.”

“Moreover, the Church continues to label homosexual acts as sins and calls on homosexuals to practice abstinence. Most Polish opponents of gay rights cite ‘Catholic values’ and ‘natural law’ to support their views,” the cable continues.

Within the United States, the same position is taken by most evangelical denominations. Only a small minority of “liberal” mainstream churches have stopped calling homosexual practice sinful, will perform homosexual marriages or ordain homosexual clergy.

The leaked cables noted that some Polish lawmakers are readying defenses against acceptance of homosexuality in schools by drafting legislation similar to a law in Lithuania that bans favorable depictions of homosexuality.

Despite cultural and political hurdles, the American embassy appeared optimistic that the gay rights movement would eventually take hold in Poland.

Pretending to be Jesus renews skeptic's faith

continued from page 9

When Swindle looked at him, she immediately offered him a job. He wasn't a Christian. He wasn't particularly interested in masquerading as Jesus.

"Jesus Christ didn't mean a lot to me, but he means a whole lot to other people," Miner recalls thinking. "If these paintings can impact people's lives, then great, I'll be a part of it."

He accepted her offer to pose for a painting.

Nothing could have prepared Miner for a modeling session with Swindle. Every production begins with the artist, crew and models praying together. Then, Swindle explains the story that she is attempting to capture on canvas—whether it is Jesus approaching the women at the empty tomb or blessing the little children or the visitation of the Wise Men.

The models are all posed in costume and elaborate stage settings. Then detailed photos are taken. Swindle then retreats to her studio with the photos. Norman Rockwell used the same technique—which is a lot easier on models, particularly small children.

The result over several years has been a series of widely acclaimed paintings of Jesus. However, if you look at them closely, you'll recognize a certain construction worker—or his lookalike.

Miner says it has been an extraordinary experience—and has changed his life. One photo shoot was in rural Africa, where Swindle, Miner and their crew visited an orphanage for African children whose parents had died of AIDS. Some of the children have the disease as well.

The orphans froze and whispered among themselves before

approaching Miner.

One HIV-positive 12-year-old girl began to weep openly. Other kids cried as well. Then they all started hugging Miner and burst into song in broken English: "Heavenly Father, you are wonderful."

Miner gently told the children his name was Phillip and he wasn't really Jesus. "Seeing the way those children reacted to me as Jesus, touched me in a way that I had not anticipated and in a way I couldn't have imagined," he recalls.

Playing Jesus has changed his life, he says. He's gone from no personal interest in Christianity to a deep recommitment of his faith. He now spends about half a year in Africa, building schools and orphanages for children.

He's attending church now and a few weeks ago, a 3-year-old boy was walking down the aisle while staring at Miner -- obviously stunned at the resemblance. The boy ran right into a pew.

Swindle says Miner makes a wonderful Jesus, with a fresh perspective.

"He has a light around him," she says. "I can feel the spirit so powerfully when I sketch him."

He sits in her office, lounging comfortably in an oversized chair. His legs stretch out to display a 3-inch rip in his jeans. His hiking shoes are encrusted with dried mud. He is wearing a long-sleeve T-shirt. Sunglasses perch on top of his hair, which is all one length and reaches to his shoulders. He sports a neatly trimmed beard.

He looks the part.

"The truth is," Miner says, "that the Spirit just took that opportunity to change my heart ...

"... and give me a wake up call."



The



Nativityby

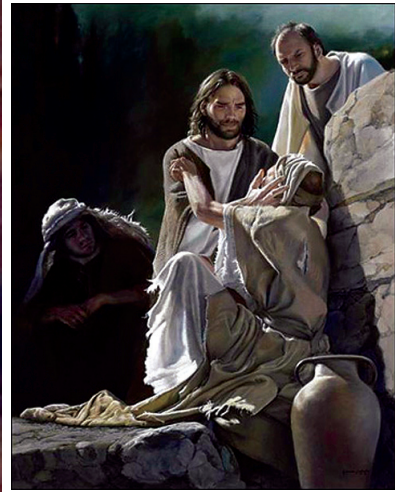
Adoration of the She



pherds by Giorgione



The Nativity by Francesco di Giorgio



Altarpiece of the Virgi by Jacques Daret

Tiny “Moon Bible” expected to sell for \$50,000

continued from page 1

with the text of 1,245 pages shrunk down to the size of a postage stamp.

“It’s the whole King James Bible on there. It’s really cool,” says Bobby Livingston, vice president of sales and marketing at RR Auction, which is handling the sale.

This particular Bible was taken on Apollo missions three times before it reached the lunar surface, said Livingston – first on Apollo 12, when it was stored in the wrong part of the spaceship and orbited the moon, but didn’t land on it, then on the ill-fated Apollo 13, which had an explosion on board that forced the crew to turn without landing.

The sacred text finally arrived on the moon aboard Apollo 14, reported Green: Lunar module pilot Edgar Mitchell brought several microfilmed copies of the Bible to the surface of the moon on February 5, 1971, Livingston said.

Bringing a Bible to the moon had been a dream of a group of committed believers in the space program since the beginning of the Apollo mission efforts to reach the moon, said Carol Mersch, author of “The Apostles of Apollo.”

“Through the centuries, explorers have carried the Bible across countries to far off lands, pushing the boundaries of exploration. It was not unnatural then that they would undertake a quest to see it carried to another celestial body.”

Apollo 1 astronaut Ed White wanted to bring the first Bible to the moon, but died in a fire on the launch pad, Mersch said.

“After his death, fellow astronauts took up White’s quest, so that, as Apollo

15 astronaut Jim Irwin said, ‘those who came after would know that we came from a world of believers,’” Mersch told CNN.

The moon Bible now under the hammer went from Mitchell, the astronaut, to a “well-known space collector from Texas,” Livingston said.

He expects it to go for about \$50,000. One top Bible-collecting expert, Scott Carroll, director of the Green Collection – one of the world’s largest collections of ancient texts – called the moon Bible an “oddity.”

“You could pick up a 13th-century Bible for that price, so it’s a tough call,” he said. It wouldn’t make a good piece for museum display, he said, because it’s so small. You gaze into it and say ‘wow,’ but you can’t see anything,” he said.

But there will be some people who want to buy it, either as an investment or out of personal interest, Carroll said. “Of course people who may be people of faith that are interested in astronomy, in aerospace exploration, it would be of great interest,” he said.

Several of the Apollo astronauts were just such men, Livingston said.

“What’s really interesting about Mitchell is he said he had an epiphany looking out the window” of Apollo 14, Livingston said. “It’s not just the death-defying part of it. They talk of the spirituality of the moment of being on the moon, the moment of standing on another planetary body.”

Apollo 17 commander Gene Cernan, one of the last men to walk on the moon, put it starkly, Livingston said.

“He said to me, ‘Bobby, I know infinity exists. I’ve seen it.’”

Why does the news media only trumpet bad news about church attendance?

continued from page 1

claimed that young adults are deserting the church in droves.

So, why is one study front-page headlines when another is not?

The latter survey really wasn’t anything new, note Rodney Stark and Byron Johnson writing in the *Wall Street Journal*. Nevertheless, “it made headlines and newscasts across the nation – even though it was a false alarm.”

It wasn’t news, notes the *Journal*, since “surveys always find that younger people are less likely to attend church. Yet this has never resulted in the decline of the churches. It merely reflects the fact that, having left home, many single young adults choose to sleep in on Sunday mornings.

The *Journal* article goes on to point out that once they marry – and especially after they have children -- young adults’ attendance recovers. Unfortunately, because the press tends not to publicize this small detail, many church leaders continue unnecessarily fretting about regaining the lost young people.

“In similar fashion,” notes the *Journal*, “major media hailed another Barna report that young evangelicals are increasingly embracing liberal politics. But only religious periodicals carried the news that national surveys offer no support

for this claim, and that younger evangelicals actually remain as conservative as their parents.”

Given the national news media’s terrible track record, notes the *Journal*, “it was no surprise this month to see the prominent headlines announcing another finding from Barna that American women are rapidly falling away from religion. The basis for this was a comparison between a poll they conducted in 1991 and one they conducted in January 2011.

“The reporters who ran with this story ought to have wondered why this change wasn’t picked up sooner if it was going on for 20 years. Many national surveys have been conducted during this period – in fact the Barna Group has been doing them all along. Did the organization check to see if its new results were consistent with its own previous data or with the many other national surveys widely available?”

Dream on!

If the media had checked its facts, reporters would have found that its findings about women are as unfounded as previous claims about young people deserting the church and young evangelicals becoming liberals.

Barna reported in 2010 that about 40 percent of both men and women read the Bible during a typical week, as female weekly Bible-reading had fallen from 50 percent in 1991. By contrast, the 2007 Baylor national religion survey found that 29 percent of men and 40 percent of women read the Bible about weekly. The statistic for women is consistent with Barna’s reported findings, but the findings for men differ greatly.

“The Baylor findings were in full agreement with the results of a 2000 Gallup Poll finding that 29 percent of men and 43 percent of women were weekly Bible-readers,” noted the *Journal*. “This, in turn, was consistent with a 1988 study by the University of Chicago’s National Opinion Research Center, which found that 25 percent of men and 39 percent of women were weekly Bible readers.

“If the Barna claim about a major decline in women’s Bible-reading is true, it must have happened in the past three years.

“This is quite unlikely, given the remarkable stability of the statistics over the past several decades.”

Americans want a president with a strong Christian faith

continued from page 1

Michele Bachmann, Sarah Palin, Glenn Beck, Rush Limbaugh, Rick Perry, Mitt Romney, Ron Paul, Tim Pawlenty and George Bush.

While they leave President Obama off the list, he has talked about his faith at the National Prayer Breakfast and issued a National Day of Prayer proclamation, recognizing that “throughout our history, Americans have turned to prayer for strength, inspiration, and solidarity.”

Another poll shows two-thirds of Americans think it is important for presidential candidates to have strong religious beliefs, regardless of their religious affiliation. That survey was conducted by the Public Religion Research Institute and found just one in five Americans would

be opposed to a candidate with different religious beliefs than their own.

Apparently, 67 percent of Americans would be

uncomfortable with an atheist president, 64 percent would be uncomfortable with a Muslim president, 53 percent would be uncomfortable with a Mormon president.

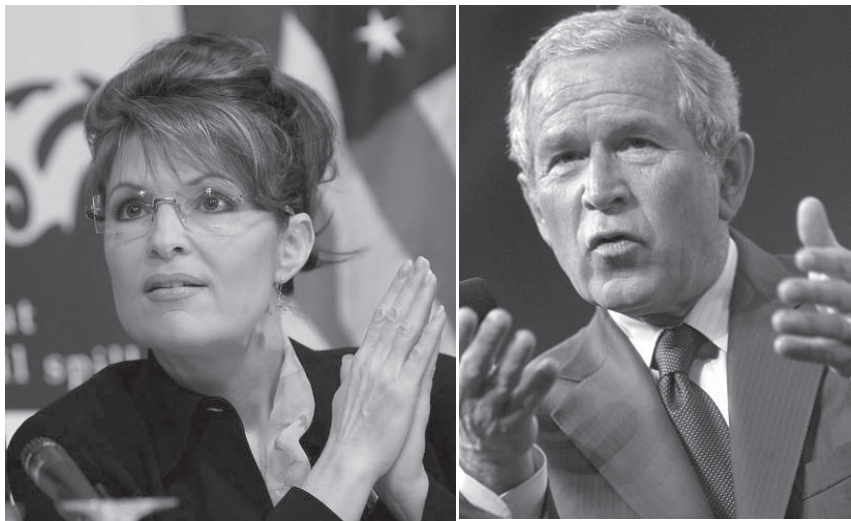
However, only 29 percent would be uncomfortable with an evangelical Christian president, according to the poll.

Two candidates for the GOP presidential nomination, Mitt Romney and John Huntsman, are Mormons. The remaining candidates are Christian.

Faith has been put in the spotlight as furor over the status over Mormonism in America has emerged over the last couple of months. Mormonism was put on the forefront in Oc-

tober after Robert Jeffries, a senior pastor at First Baptist Church in Dallas, called Mormonism a “cult.”

Romney later responded: “I just don’t believe that



continued on page 13

continued from page 7

kind of divisiveness based on upon religion has a place in this country.”

Just before Texas Gov. Rick Perry announced his plans to run, he told the *Des Moines Register* that he felt he was being “called” by God to seek the presidency.

Former Godfather’s Pizza CEO Herman Cain, who has since dropped out of contention, made his position on faith clear from the first.

“I don’t know if I’m the leader that this nation needs at this particular point in our history, but I believe God Almighty knows,” Cain told supporters at a campaign event.

The poll also showed eight in 10 Americans say creating jobs is the country’s main priority. Six in 10 say cutting down the government’s budget deficit is crucial. Most Americans do not feel politicians in Washington know what is best for the nation, the poll also showed.

Only 44 percent feel President Obama has adequate ideas on how to create jobs, and 28 percent said they were satisfied with his progress in the position.

The survey was conducted on 1,505 adults from Sept. 22 to Oct. 22.

Even while a large majority of the electorate fully embraces the importance of the commander-in-chief’s faith, atheists groups continue to denigrate

politicians – along with all religious people – who believe in God.

Atheists see the majority of the American people as “less educated but more abundant indoctrinated masses.”

Atheists are free to believe or disbelieve as they please, and no one is filing lawsuits to take away their constitutional rights. Increasingly when they sue to banish faith from public life, these angry atheists are losing in court because their interpretation of the

Constitution is flawed, little more than an exercise in “mental gymnastics” attempting to make a “fantasy” writes Sekulow.

“I believe a candidate’s faith is very important,” writes N.T. McQueen, author of *Between Lions and Lambs*. “Faith is about character. We must remember, as much as we use the term democracy to describe our system of government, it’s actually a republic. The people don’t make decisions on how they are governed. We elect others to do that for us. In doing so, it is in our best interests to do what we can to ensure that those officeholders are individuals of strong character.

“That’s why it’s so easy for the legitimate debate about issues in this country to be derailed by the frequent morality play of scandal. Affairs with staffers, arrests for indecent public behavior and a side order of graft and corruption will always make the headlines.

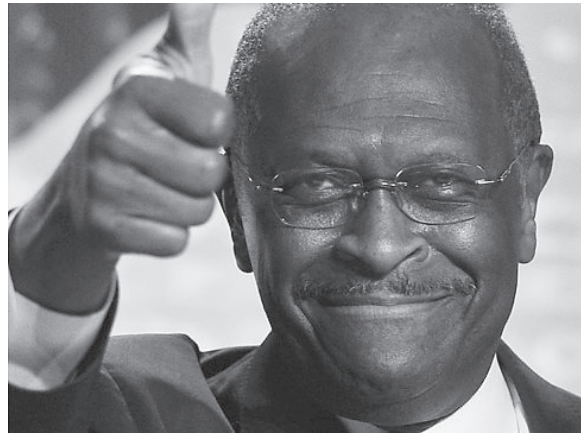
“However, there is a reason for that, above and beyond the public’s fascination with the prurient and the lurid. That reason is character.

“That is where I believe faith comes in. For those individuals seeking public office who profess faith, the conception is that they hold themselves to a higher moral standard, one of honesty, transparency, and veracity.

“Faith is important for everyone. I use the qualifier ‘professed’ faith, because it has been my experience that those who bellow about the superiority of their chosen faith are charlatans and lack the strength of

character valued by the very faith they proclaim they possess.

“This can sometimes make candidates wary of discussing their faith, but leaders should not be afraid of their spiritual beliefs. They should embrace them. They will gain more respect as people who hold steadfast to their beliefs than if they abandon their faith or misuse their faith for the sake of the ballot.”



Today’s girls growing up in a “moral abyss”

continued from page 1

Concern. Dr. Wright, president of Britain’s Girls Schools Association and headmistress of the exclusive boarding school for girls, St Mary’s, called for a return to Christian ethics.

“What hope have we got of safeguarding our children’s sacred childhood if they are knocked off their feet on the nursery slopes of life by an avalanche of images and malign influences?” she told the girls association conference. “And make no mistake, this is what is happening.

“It is time to take up the drawbridge of the liberal dogma of the past which has left us with the moral abyss of the present.

“If parents can’t see anything wrong in dressing up their children in ‘Future Wag’ T-shirts and letting them wear make-up, high heels and ‘mini-me’ sexy clothing, then something is intensely wrong in our society,” she told conference attendees. “I truly believe that issues such as the protection of childhood, of young girls and of young women, and speaking out against the premature sexualisation of children, are vital.”

Dr. Wright also criticized TV programs such as the X Factor, where she said contestants were “encouraged to be at each other’s throats.”

“Qualities such as bullying and arrogance are glamorized and become synonyms for ambition and drive,” she said. “Young people look up to these so-called stars who have themselves been catapulted into a spotlight which can be far too much for them.

“The only solution now for society is a wholesale return to Christian sexual ethics and moral restraint.”

Wright’s comments followed a British government report commissioned by the Home Office which warns that children in the United Kingdom are being increasingly exposed to sexual imagery – and a summit meeting at Prime Minister David Cameron’s Downing Street residence which addressed how to tackle the commercialization and sexualization of childhood.

Cameron recently launched a government-supported website to give parents a place to air their concerns about inappropriate products, advertisements or services.

Indeed, a crisis is at hand, writes Sonia Poulton in the *Daily Mail* newspaper: “Many young girls have low expectations of life because they have been debased

and we, their parents have enabled this. Our girls have been sold the notion that the ultimate achievement is to be a topless model, a Big Brother TV-show reject or gyrating like a lap dancer in a pop music group.

“The result is a generation of girls who are wide-eyed and vacant with cinched-in waists and aimless smiles. They are all attitude and no substance. Their innocence has been swept away like a sand drawing when the tide comes in.

“Defenders of this child abuse – for that it what it is – say that it takes a perverse mind to see children in a sexualized way. Oh, get real, already! Most people know the difference between a young girl modelling themselves on mummy and trying on her dress and lipstick and a five year old wearing a t-shirt which proclaims ‘so many boys, so little time’ or an eight-year-old buying a padded bra.

“I used to love pretending to be my mum and would swirl around in front of her dressing room mirror wearing one of her outfits, but what we have now is a whole new, and unwelcome, universe.”

Cameron recently condemned Britain’s growing “do as you please” culture, warned of a “slow-motion moral collapse” in the United Kingdom and called for a revival of traditional Christian values.

It’s time to stand up for what is right, he told a group of Church of England clergy at a ceremony commemorating the 400th anniversary of the completion of the King James Version of the Bible. “Put simply, for too long we have been unwilling to distinguish right from wrong. ‘Live and let live’ has too often become

‘do what you please.’”

“Whether you look at the riots last summer, the financial crash and the expenses scandal or the on-going terrorist threat from Islamist extremists around the world, one thing is clear,” said the Prime Minister. “Moral neutrality or passive tolerance just isn’t going to cut it any more.”

“In a rare foray into religious issues, the Prime Minister said the values of the Bible ‘go to the heart’ of what it means to be British,” reported the Press Association news service.

“Addressing senior clergy at an event to mark the 400th anniversary of the King James Bible, Cameron confessed to being only a ‘vaguely practicing’ Christian who was ‘full of doubts’ about big theological issues. But he insisted: ‘We are a Christian country. And we should not be afraid



continued on page 14

Today's girls growing up in a "moral abyss"

continued from page 1

to say so."

Should politicians get involved in matters of faith? Yes, said the prime minister, according to Tim Shipman writing in the *Daily Mail*, calling it "legitimate for political leaders to say something about religious institutions as they see them affecting our society, not least in the vital areas of equality and tolerance. The Bible has helped to give Britain a set of values and morals which make Britain what it is today. Values and morals we should actively stand up and defend."

He criticized the notion that by "standing up for Christian values we somehow do down other faiths," or that it was offensive to pass judgment on other people's behavior, reported political editor Joe Murphy for the *London Evening Standard*.

"I think these arguments are profoundly wrong," he said. "And being clear on this is absolutely fundamental to who we are as a people, what we stand for and the kind of society we want to build."

"He listed Christian values in British society as 'responsibility, hard work, charity, compassion, humility, self-sacrifice, love, pride in working for the common good and honouring the social obligations we have to one another, to our families and our

communities,'" reported Murphy. "These are the values we treasure. Yes, they are Christian values and we should not be afraid to acknowledge that.

But they are also values that speak to us all – to people of every faith and none. I believe we should all stand up and defend them."

He said faith is no guarantee that people would lead moral live, but religious faith could inspire people to more ethical decisions.

"The absence of any real accountability, or moral code, allowed some bankers and politicians to behave with scant regard for the rest of society," he said. An "almost fearful, passive tolerance of religious extremism" has let Islamic extremism grow unchallenged," he said.

During his speech, Cameron hailed the King James Bible as one of the greatest and most important works of literature.

Pollsters say 83 percent of church-going British voters are opposed to Prime Minister David Cameron's proposal to legalize same-sex marriage in the United Kingdom — and 57 percent are "less likely to vote" for his party as a result.

"The poll results are likely to be viewed as very concerning by the Conservative Party," notes the

British website Christian Concern. as church-going Christians represent several million votes.

The poll, commissioned by Premier Christian Media, found that:

83% were opposed to homosexual marriage, with 75% "strongly opposed"

93% were concerned that clergy would have to conduct homosexual marriages against their consciences;

85% that the value of marriage would be further undermined;

88% that schools would be required to teach the equal validity of same-sex and heterosexual relationships;and

78% that it would be harder to argue against "other novel types of relationship" such as polygamy.

"Incredibly," noted the website, "not one single respondent claimed that this move would make them more disposed to vote Conservative."

The Conservative Party has historically gotten the majority of the Christian vote. If the party were to lose millions of these, it could jeopardize the party's chances of winning the next general election — and result in Cameron having to step down as Prime Minister.

Pentagon retreats from Bible ban in military hospitals

compiled by the *Christian Crusade Newspaper* staff

One day after an outraged Congressman denounced a Pentagon ban on Bibles or any other religious literature in U.S. military hospital, the Obama Administration has dropped the policy.

But questions linger. Why would unelected bureaucrats think they can ban Bibles? How did such a policy ever get approved? Who is responsible?

In Texas, an ongoing battle has been waged by the Veterans Administration and volunteers from the American Legion and the Veterans of Foreign Wars. Officials at Houston's national cemetery barred any religious ceremonies at graveside and ignored denunciations by members of Congress as well as infuriated families. Calls have resounded nationwide for the firing of the cemetery's director — but she has remained in office.

Now, Congressman Steve King (R-Iowa) has demanded that officials explain why bureaucrats have prohibited family members of wounded military troops from bringing Bibles or any religious reading materials to their loved ones.

"The President of the United States should address this and should excoriate the people who brought about this policy and the individual who brought it about should be dismissed from the United States Military," said Congressman King.

Speaking from the floor of the House of Representatives, King blasted an order from the commander of Walter Reed National Military Medical Center written by Chief of Staff C.W. Callahan. The September 14th memo covers guidelines for "wounded, ill and injured partners in care."

"No religious items (i.e. Bibles, reading material, and/or artifacts) are allowed to be given away or used during a visit," the policy states.

"That means you can't bring in a Bible and read from it when you visit your son or your daughter, perhaps — or your wife or husband," King said. "It means a priest that might be coming in to visit someone on their death bed couldn't bring in the Eucharist, couldn't offer Last

Rites. This is the most outrageous affront."

Now the ban has been lifted.

"The instructions about the Bibles and reading material have been rescinded," said Sandy Dean, a public affairs officer for Walter Reed. "We appreciate Congressman King bringing this to our attention. We don't want our instructions to be ambiguous." King said the military has some explaining to do.

"I don't think there's any excuse for it and there's no talking it away," he told reporters. "The very existence of this, whether it's enforced or not, tells you what kind of a mindset is there. The idea that these soldiers, sailors, airmen and Marines that have fought to defend our Constitution, and that includes our First Amendment rights to religious liberty — would be denied that religious liberty when they are lying in a hospital bed recovering from wounds incurred while defending that liberty is the most bitter and offensive type of an irony that I can think of."

Ken Klukwoski of the Family Research Council said the policy is more than troubling. It would seem that bureaucrats with an agenda keep testing their boundaries — seeing what they can get away with as they overstep their authority.

"It flies in the face of not only the Bill of Rights, but 200 years of federal law," Klukwoski.

"This current administration is showing unprecedented hostility towards those practicing the Christian faith. But beyond that, we've also seen a militantly secular attitude of trying to sterilize the Defense Department of all references to faith."

The policy "must be rescinded and the people responsible for perpetrating it should be fired," said Richard Land, president of the Southern Baptist Convention's Ethics and Religious Liberty Commission. He repeated Congressman King's demand that whoever is responsible for the policy be fired. "It cannot

be allowed to stand. It shows the ugly face of the pseudo-tolerance of secularism. They claim to be tolerant but this is as intolerant as you can be — to not allow wounded soldiers to have religious artifacts."

Congressman King said Americans must "take a very strong stand."

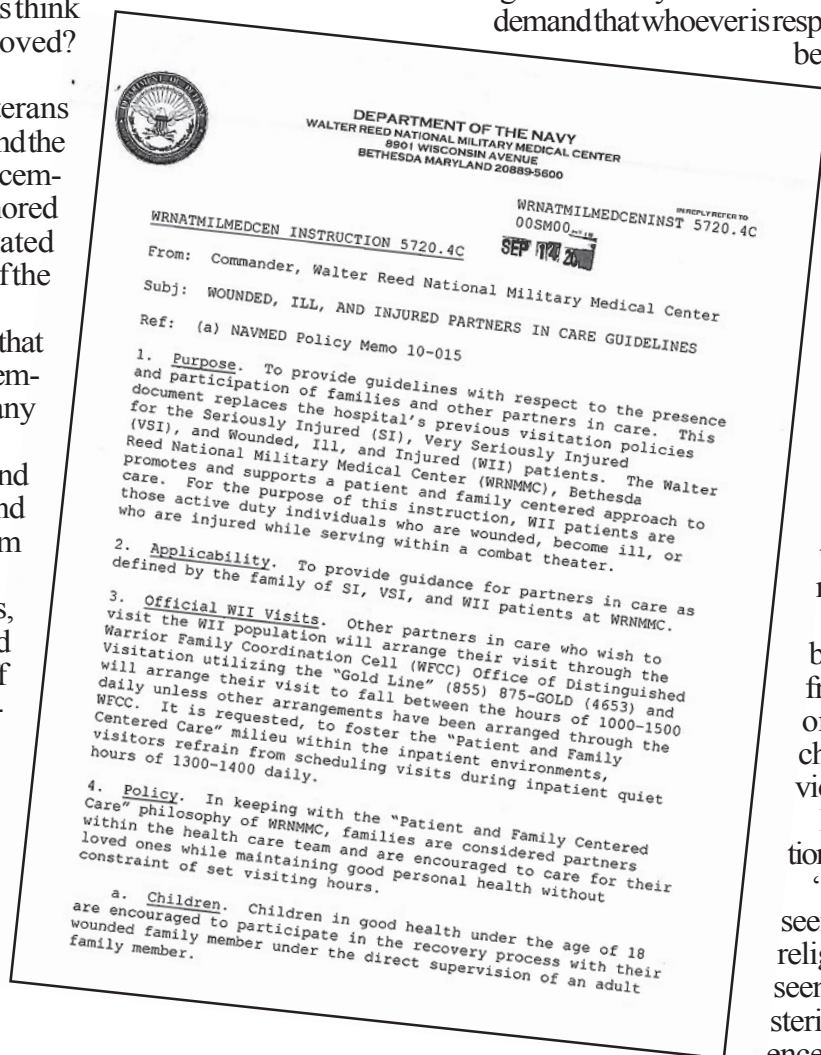
"Christians are generally nice people and for that reason they can victimize the Christians in this country," he said.

"There was a reason that Christ gave us the demonstration of righteous anger when he threw the money changers out of the temple. It gives us some license to throw these kinds of people out of the military."

The Congressman said he's alarmed by a trend he's seen to purge Christianity from America's military, such as a recent order to remove a cross from an Army chapel in northern Afghanistan because it violated Army regulations.

King blamed the Obama Administration.

"This is Orwellian," he said. "We are seeing a shocking level of hostility towards religious faith but beyond that — we've also seen a militantly secular attitude of trying to sterilize the defense department of all references to faith."





Somali radio gives kids assault rifles, grenades

A radio station run by Somalia's al-Shabab Islamist group has awarded AK-47 assault rifles to children as young as 10 who won a Koran-reciting and general knowledge contest.

Andulus radio, based near the Somali capital of Mogadishu, gave students who won top honors in the Ramadan competition their own rifles and the equivalent of \$700 in Somali cash, according to Jeffrey Gettleman in the *New York Times*.

The contest featured questions that al-Shabab seemed to think every child should know, "like which war was Sheik Timajilic (a famous al-Shabab warrior) killed in?" reported Gettleman:

Without a functioning central government, Somalia has some of the lowest schooling rates in the world, and many Somali children are more familiar with rifles than rulers.

Contestants in the Shabab quiz included children from all across Shabab-controlled areas of Somalia,



most of the southern third of the country.

The children competed live on air from the many radio stations nationwide that the Shabab control.

The awards were handed out at a ceremony held at the Andalus radio station in Elasha Biyaha, a small town near Mogadishu, the capital. (Andalus was the part of Spain seized by the Arabs in the Middle Ages.)

Second prize-winners also received an AK-47 and \$500. Third prize was two hand grenades and \$400, according to the BBC:

Al-Shabab, linked to al-Qaeda, controls much of southern and central Somalia.

Four children, aged 10-17, were chosen to represent each district in the competition held during the Muslim holy month of Ramadan, which ended in August.

"Youths should use one hand for education and the other for a gun to defend Islam," senior al-Shabab official Mukhtar Robow told the prize-giving ceremony in Elasha, 12 miles from Mogadishu.

"Al-Shabab and other militant Islamist groups in Somalia have become famous for their zeal in enforcing their strict interpretation of Islamic purity," reported the *Times*.

"Last year, al-Shabab outlawed school bells in a southern Somalia town after deciding that they sounded too much like church bells.

Al-Shabab has also banned bras, gold teeth, dancing and soccer, deeming them un-Islamic, and barred

many Western aid groups, even though Somalia is suffering from a famine and tens of thousands of people have already starved to death.

"Another militant Somali group, Hizbul Islam, ordered radio stations to stop playing music, which forced broadcasters to eliminate even the faintest suggestion of harmonious sounds from their daily programming," reported Gettleman:

Some stations substituted the musical introductions to news broadcasts with the sounds of gunshots, engine roars, car horns and animal grunts.

Somalia has subsisted without a functioning central government for two decades.

The country is now fragmented into various zones of loose control, with Islamist groups, clan militias, regional administrations and a very weak, internationally supported central government all battling one another.



Iran official says churches harming children

compiled by the *Christian Crusade Newspaper* staff

Iran's minister of intelligence has announced that underground Evangelical churches pose a serious threat to the nation's youth.

Meanwhile a senior Iranian religious official said Christianity is worse than Satanism.

Intelligence Minister Heydar Moslehi said the Ministry of Intelligence "has already started a serious

effort" to shut down grassroots Evangelicalism in Iran, according to reports from *Mahabat News*, an advocacy group that reports on the persecution of Farsi-speaking Christians in Iran and neighboring countries.

Last year, Iranian security authorities conducted Christmas Day raids of home-based churches in an effort to catch groups of Christians worshipping to-

gether. Hundreds of converts were arrested.

In September 2010, President Obama signed an Executive Order that imposed sanctions on a number of Iranian officials said to be responsible for human rights abuses involving Iran — including Moslehi.

Speaking at the Islamic Seminary of Feizieh, Moslehi urged leaders, teachers and students to "get

Iran official says illegal churches harming youth

compiled by the *Christian Crusade Newspaper* staff

involved in this field and guide the youth to the true way” — Shi’ite Islam — the official faith of Iran.

“Evangelical Christianity has seriously harmed the regime to varying degrees through 20 satellite TV channels, thousands of websites and tens of mission organizations,” he told seminarians. He said Christianity, New Age religions and mysticism all pose “serious threats” to Iran and blamed them for last year’s street protests. “The footprints of this threat are observable in recent events and protests following the presidential election,” he said.

The Ayatollah Hadi Jahangosha told another group that the danger posed by Christianity is worse “than new age mysticism and Satanism.”

In a talk about the long-awaited Shi’ite Messiah, the Hidden Imam, the ayatollah said that “the West is trying to divert our youth by publishing and advertising” false doctrines. He blasted the spreading of “distorted Christianity” and charged that “Christian satellite channels are trying to change the religious culture in the Iranian society.”

He said that Islam does not oppose traditional

Christianity. “Islam approves Christianity in general,” he said, but cannot permit the spread of what he repeatedly called “distorted Christianity” or Evangelicalism, which he said is being spread “among our youth.”

Jahangosha warned about what he called the widespread distribution of Christian books for children.

“One of these children books with Christian subjects has been published in 53 million volumes and in 128 different languages and it even can be found in smallest towns across Iran,” he said, perhaps referring to C.S. Lewis’ *Chronicles of Narnia* series. He criticized the existence of Christian symbols in books and toys in Iran and lamented the “large volume of cartoons and other cultural products with Christian symbols” which he said “are being sent freely and easily to people. Some satellite networks have dedicated 70 percent of their activities to the different languages of the Iranian people for various children’s programs.”

All Iranians should “feel responsibility in this matter and play his or her role in spreading of pure Islam and to fight false and distorted cultures,” he said.

Pakistan bans cellphone texting of “Jesus”

compiled by the *Christian Crusade Newspaper* staff

Incredulous cellphone companies in Pakistan have asked their government for “clarification” of a letter forbidding the texting of the words “Jesus” or “Christ” as well as 1,600 other words officials deem offensive to Islam.

Companies were told to begin blocking any text message sent from one customer to another containing such forbidden words, which also include “Satan,” “nude” and “athlete’s foot.”

The Pakistan Telecommunications Authority told mobile carriers they would be responsible to block the offending words.

The list has met widespread Internet criticism and sarcasm — and the list is circulating online. Some 1,100 of the words are in English, while less than 600 are in Urdu, Pakistan’s national language.

Some pundits have recommended replacing banned words with their corresponding numbers on the list — as “I hereby renounce 23 and his evil darkness and embrace the Son of God, 46 51, as my Lord and Savior.”

The ban may run into technical difficulties, according to a Pakistan wireless executive who spoke anonymously to the French news agency Agence France Presse.

He worried that the strict filtering would “degrade the quality of network services.” He wondered about the consequences of important messages being blocked just because the sender had inadvertently included a banned word.

“It would be a great inconvenience to our subscribers if their SMS was not delivered due to the wrong choice of words,” he said.

In May 2010, Pakistan blocked Facebook for

two weeks after some participants held a competition to draw pictures of the Prophet Mohammed — which is forbidden under Islam. YouTube was blocked temporarily in 2008 images from a similar competition appeared on the site.

The Vatican in Rome and the Pakistan Episcopal Church have both asked the government to reconsider.

John Shakir Nadeem, Secretary of the Pakistan Episcopal Conference’s Commission for Social Communications said his office would “do all it can to put pressure on the government to eliminate Christ’s name from the list of banned words.

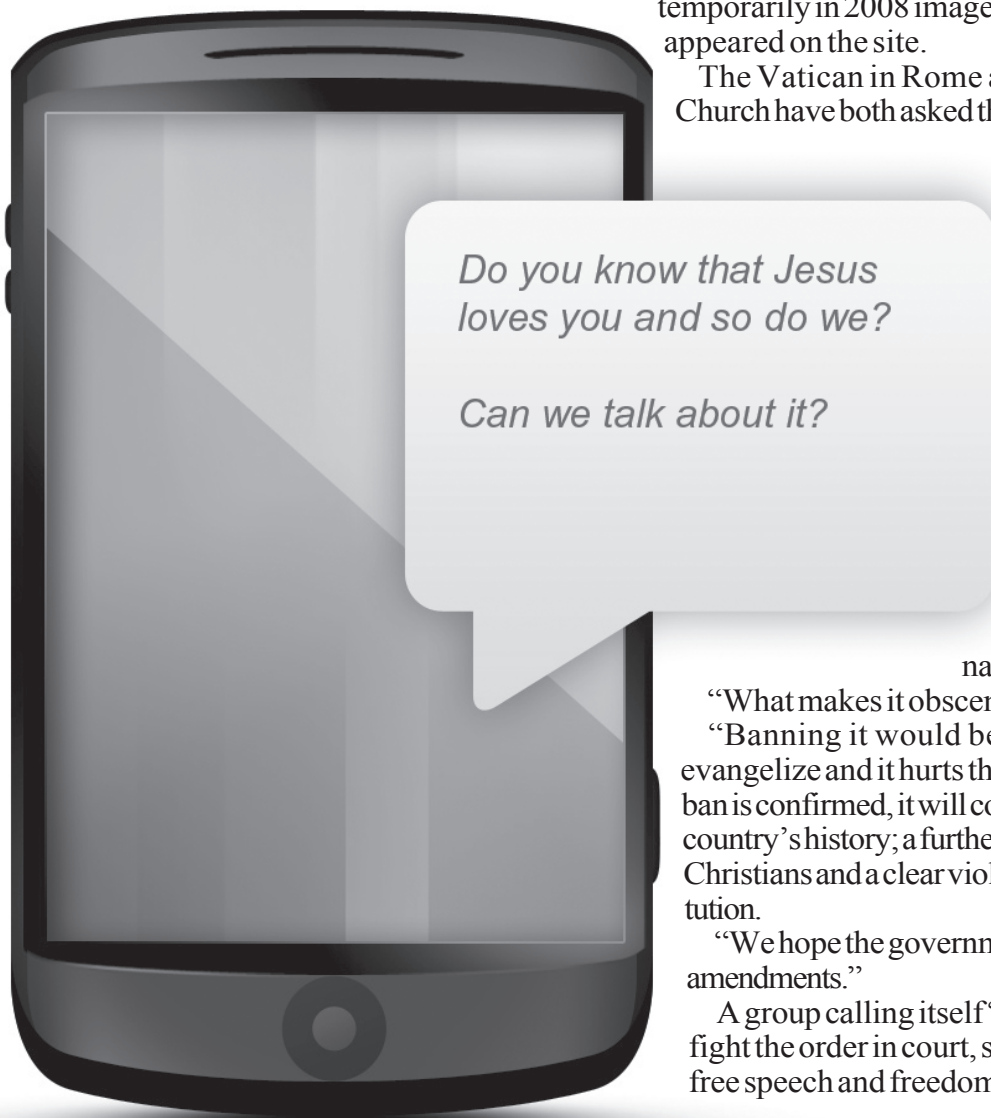
“We understand the desire to protect the minds of young people by creating a list of obscene words. But why should Christ’s name be included?

“What makes it obscene?

“Banning it would be a violation of our right to evangelize and it hurts the feeling of Christians. If the ban is confirmed, it will constitute a dark moment in the country’s history; a further act of discrimination against Christians and a clear violation of the Pakistani Constitution.

“We hope the government will make the opportune amendments.”

A group calling itself “Bytes for All” has vowed to fight the order in court, saying it “violates the right to free speech and freedom of expression.”



Libyan victors say they’ll impose Islamic law

compiled by the *Christian Crusade Newspaper* staff

Mustafa Abdul Jalil, the chairman of the National Transitional Council, has a message for Libyans: *Fear not, Sharia law is on the way.*

In a broadcast on the Arabic cable channel al-Jazeera, he assured a cheering crowd that the new rulers of Libya are neither secular nor liberal, but will establish an Islamic republic.

In this speech delivered in Tripoli’s Martyrs’ Square, Jalil proclaimed:

“We are seeking to establish a state government by law and welfare — and Sharia, Islamic law, should be the main source of law.”

“We must be united and not divided. We must

condemn hatred and envy,” he said. Al Jazeera claims that Jalil’s reinforcement that Sharia is going to be instituted may be rooted in an effort to brush off criticism, as some have dubbed Libya’s new leadership as liberal and secular — charges that could hurt leaders’ prospects of setting up a viable governing structure.

However, he also declared that Libya would not be an extremist state, either:

“We will not accept any extremist ideology, on the right or the left.

“We are a Muslim people, for a moderate Islam, and will stay on this road.”

Agostino Miozzo, an Italian doctor and veteran of

humanitarian emergencies who is the EU’s international crisis manager, told the British newspaper the *Guardian* that the leaders of transitional council were determined to resist international pressure and to decide the fate of their country themselves. According to the *Guardian*:

“Tripoli seems to be moving fast towards normality, but they need time to fight the internal political struggle,” Agostino said, after spending more than a week in Tripoli establishing contact with the new rulers.

“We have no idea of the southern part of the country. That will be most problematic in the coming months. This part is totally out of control.”



Is Egypt about to disintegrate into the new Pakistan?

by Sherif Melika, spreial to *Christian Crusade Newspaper*

A few days ago, I was watching a popular Egyptian talk show, *Fil Midan*, or “In the Square.” It had a very interesting guest, a leader of a salafi Islamic political faction. He maintained a pleasantly tranquil smile and a relaxed appearance throughout the program, wearing his typically Pakistani outerwear and hat.

The host, Amr Al-Leithy, was pretending to be eager to corner him, asking tough questions, but it was obvious to me as time went on, that he was not serious about laying a glove on him. It was pretentious.

The host constantly maintained a neutral grin to all kinds of extreme responses from his revered guest. Even though I had not seen this “leader” before, I found out as the interview continued that he was a prominent Islamic figure, with his own show on a satellite TV channel; Sheikh Mahmoud Al-Masry, a.k.a. Abou ‘Ammar, who formerly served as an imam in Saudia Arabia and other Gulf states mosques, and participated in an official series of sermons at the Islamic Center in Brooklyn, NY during the aftermath of the 9/11 attacks.

Sheikh Mahmoud Al-Masry was saying truly horrific things.

For instance, he said that the 9/11 attacks turned out to be a blessing in disguise because they drew the attention of hundreds of thousands of Americans toward Islam.

When some approached him for answers regarding this Muslim aggression, he introduced them to Islam’s holy commands, which led to scores of conversions.

Of course, he never mentioned the countless funds that were spent to convert those mostly inner city folk, and those in confinement, nor did he disclose their source.

When it came time to discuss non-Muslims, he used the usual line that real Muslims carry no animosities towards non-Muslims, in Egypt or abroad.

After being confronted by the show’s host about the repeated attacks, burnings and destruction of Coptic churches, he reluctantly admitted that there are—of course—exceptions in every group but that actions of a few should not blemish the majority.

The Sheikh then proceeded to discuss tourism. He softly said that Egypt should enforce a strict dress code for everyone, Egyptians and foreign tourists alike, and prohibit all religiously forbidden actions, like drinking alcohol.

There were two reasons why he believes these measures must be taken.

First, based on his interpretation of *shari’a* Islamic law, a Muslim is forbidden from attending to someone inappropriately attired, or from serving the banned alcoholic drinks.

Second, he believed that foreigners would be enticed by this modest behavior, to ask questions about the cause behind those restrictions, and thus be introduced to Islam.

He jovially affirmed that stricter laws will lead to more converts to “the rightful religion.”

The host was left speechless, obviously in admiration and not discontent. Coincidentally, the day after this program, a large statue of Pharaoh Sesostris I (Senusret III), standing in the middle of a square in the Delta city of al-Mansoura, was toppled overnight. The Supreme Council of Antiquities accused salafis of

knocking down the statue, but the Daqahlia governor said erosion and wind were responsible. He added that the statue was a replica anyway so it was not really significant.

However, we all remember how the Taliban in Afghanistan destroyed countless archeological treasures—claiming they were offensive to Islam.

So, what is next? The Sphinx? There has actually been a call for the faces on all Egyptian historical treasures be covered with beeswax—in obedience to strict Islamic rules against any depiction of human faces in art.

There have also been calls that all nudes on the 5,000-year-old frescos in the tombs, museums or monument, be covered with beeswax so as to prevent the public from being sexually compromised.

Alarmingly though, this rapid trend towards Islamization of the society is sweeping Egypt without any hint of a substantial opposition.

The Supreme Council of the Armed Forces (SCAF), who have been ruling the country ever since the fall of President Mubarak on February 11, 2011, has freed prominent Islamist figures from jail and even allowed exiled extremists to return to the country.

SCAF appointed a committee to change the Egyptian Constitution headed by an overtly Islamist thinker Judge Tariq el-Bishri, and a leading Muslim Brotherhood (MB) figure (Sobhi Saleh, Lawyer and MB leader).

SCAF authorized a popular referendum on the new temporary constitution opposed by revolutionary and secular forces. SCAF never blinked at the MB’s or salafis’ overt propaganda that voting “Yes” on the referendum was the Islamic way and voting “No” was thus non-Islamic.

When the government appointed a Christian governor in Qena, located in Upper Egypt, the Islamists refused.

They sabotaged the railroad tracks and blocked the highways to the province for two weeks. SCAF did nothing and the governor never took office. Even while the current constitution forbids the formation of political parties based on religious indoctrination, there exists today more than a dozen Islamic parties, and thousands of candidates ready to take on parliamentary elections due to start this month.

Muslim leaders announced that they expect the Muslim Brotherhood to win 50 percent of the seats with an additional 30 percent of the parliamentary seats going to a coalition of other Islamic parties. They added that an Islamic constitution would eventually follow.

With the multiple incidents of assaults on churches openly carried out by Islamists, SCAF timidly pleaded with the Islamists to end their aggression, even brought their own religious leaders to appease them, and on only one occasion had to rebuild a church de nouveau.

Yet, no one was ever tried or punished for this reprehensible conduct. Christians are being killed all over Egypt at an alarming frequency since the revolution.

There has not been one investigation carried out that led to the incrimination of any of the salafis who have openly bragged about their aggression in footage available online.

After the latest massacre of Christians in front of the Maspero building, where more than 27 were killed and 250 injured, SCAF is



investigating the military’s involvement while vehemently denying any wrongdoing.

Video shows the military taking part in this massacre, using armored vehicles to crush Christians.

In today’s Egypt, liberal, secular and Christian political forces are being treated with fists—recall the imprisonment of some twelve thousand protesters after very short trials. Islamist leaders are being caressed with a soft hand despite their documented violence evidenced by the destruction of church buildings and killing of Christians.

The temporary government either fears igniting the extremists’ animosity, or simply endorses their behavior but is too cautious to openly support it.

SCAF makes sure to announce after each violent incident that they support democratic change and favor the transition of Egypt into a secular state. However, their actions do not support their declared intentions, which may imply that they are wary of the reaction of the less senior ranks within the armed forces themselves, or the openly declared Islamic political and popular forces in Egyptian society.

In any case, it’s only a matter of time until we find out whether the January 25th, 2011 Revolution will bring about a new Egypt that looks more like Pakistan, with an unbreakable alliance between the army and the Islamists in defiance of democratic and progressive values.

Or will Egypt be like Turkey, where the Islamists are watched over by the army (or were at least until recently), and there is a fairly democratic political system.

We hope that Egypt will be like Spain, where the removal of an army dictator led to a strong religious background.



Saudis demand “Mecca Standard Time” replace Greenwich Mean Time

The new tower on the skyline in Mecca, Saudi Arabia, looks incredibly like London’s Big Ben — and there’s a good reason.

A number of Muslims are calling for Greenwich Mean Time — the standard by which the world sets its clocks — be replaced by official Mecca time.

“This summer, the world’s largest clock began its first official duty: marking time during Ramadan in Mecca—Islam’s holiest city,” reports Salman Hameed writing for Religion Dispatches. “This colossal clock bears a striking resemblance to Big Ben, and the tower that hosts it is six times taller than the British landmark, making it the second tallest building in the world, visible for 16 miles.”

And as it began service, calls from Muslims came to for Mecca Standard Time to replace GMT — also called “Zulu” time by the military as well as astronauts in space. GMT has been the world standard for 125 years.

However, notes Hameed, some are claiming that GMT is an archaic hold-over from colonial times — and it’s time to find a better standard.

“Surely, there is nothing special about where the Greenwich Observatory is located,” says Hameed.

“The reason that the meridian is zero at Greenwich is because the British figured out how to calculate longitude at sea first, so they got to make a part of England the main reference point. Names associated with science are often, if not always, symptomatic of political power of the time.

“This is why many of the elements discovered in the 20th century—like berkelium, americium, and californium—have American names (though some-

times there were competing claims from Soviet laboratories also).”

Similarly, because Arab astronomy was dominant in the late medieval period, and Arabic atlases played a key role in the development of modern astronomy, more than half of the brightest stars in the sky have Arabic names.

But for some Muslims today, that’s not enough.

But what would justify Mecca to be the replacement reference point for the entire world?

“There is now a widespread belief amongst Muslims that one can prove ‘scientifically’ that Mecca is really the true ‘center of the world,’” writes Hameed.

“This line of reasoning has been heavily promoted and popularized by a prominent Egyptian cleric, Sheikh Youssef al-Qaradawy, who claims that, unlike other longitudes, Mecca is in perfect alignment with the north magnetic pole.”

Hameed is an astronomer and assistant professor of Integrated Science & Humanities at Hampshire College in Massachusetts.

Currently, he is studying the rise of Koran-based creationism in the Islamic world. As to the claims about Mecca.

“Some Arab scientists have also lent their authority to these claims,” adds Hameed. “For example, Abdel-Baset al-Sayeed of the Egyptian National Research Centre claims that Mecca is a ‘zero-magnetism zone.’”

“In fact, he goes on to say, ‘That’s why if someone travels to Mecca or lives there, he lives longer, is healthier, and is less affected by the earth’s gravity. You get charged with energy.’”

Such claims are open to debate, Hameed admits.

“Mecca matters deeply to Muslims because of its religious importance,” he writes.

“Building such an enormous clock may make it all the more a source of pride to the religion of over a billion people, though I can also imagine some objecting to the presence of such a large structure next to the holy grounds.

“Nevertheless, the efforts by some to seek religious legitimacy of Mecca with bad science do a disservice to both religion and science, and perhaps diminish the dignity of the very place they seek to glorify.



Cross in churchyard tree trunk inspires workers

compiled by the *Christian Crusade Newspaper* staff

As landscaper Salvador Maya sawed into a large pine tree on the lawn of Escondido, California's First Congregational Church, he stepped back in awe, then spontaneously said a prayer.

He yelled at his boss, Jim Rants. "Look at this," he exclaimed. "It's a cross... something sacred!"

Rants and his crew from Star Landscaping had been called in by the staff to cut down the pine, which was leaning dangerously toward a neighbor's property — along with some other brush and small trees.

But they did not expect what they all saw: a stylized Greek-style cross formed within the rings of the big old pine.

"With it being on church property, you come across a cross," Rants told local TV 10News, "it's like, I guess, divine intervention, something like that."

Within hours, word had spread. Even the Los Angeles Times sent out a reporter.

"A tree cut down at an Escondido, Calif., church is causing a stir among the faithful," wrote reporter Tony Perry. "Landscapers made the discovery on Monday. One of the workers, Salvador Maya, was the first to see the image."

"Salvador yelled at me, 'Look at this, it's a cross!'" Rants told Perry. "So I looked at it and thought 'Holy moly, we've got something here."

"It's just amazing, and to be on church



property, it's definitely something divine."

Soon television stations and newspapers from San Diego and Tijuana, Mexico, and radio stations from Texas and North Carolina, had checked in.

"It's been phenomenal," Debbie Cummings, the church's office manager, told the *Christian Post* newspaper. "To people of faith, it's very comforting."

People have called the church asking to buy the stump, Cummings said.

Pastor Phil Corr said he plans to discuss the wood cut, which is safely stored in the church sanctuary, during his Sunday sermon titled "The Joy of Surprise." He also will display the log and talk about what the church plans to do with it.

"People of faith have eyes to see this, but skeptics do not," Corr said.

The rest of the wood from the downed trees is being chopped into firewood. Some may also be handed out to any attendees who are needing firewood and attend Alcoholic Anonymous and Narcotics Anonymous meetings at the church.



Judge orders NY to OK "Choose Life" car tags

compiled by the *Christian Crusade Newspaper* staff

A panel of federal judges has ruled that New York violated the First Amendment rights of car owners who want their tags to declare "Choose Life."

The U.S. 2nd Circuit Court of Appeals had already ruled in 2006 that a lawsuit between anti-abortion activists and New York's Department of Motor Vehicles could move forward.

However, the new decision ends seven years of legal sparring.

"This court has found the sole basis for defendants' denial of Children First Foundation's license plate application was viewpoint discrimination," reads the decision. "Accordingly, the court finds that defendants' restriction was both discrimination based on viewpoint and unreasonable."

"New York has run afoul of the First Amendment by giving the commissioner unbridled discretion to engage in viewpoint discrimination," the court noted.

By blocking any "Choose Life" license plates since 2002, New York is in the minority of states, notes the Children First Foundation's website, "given that a solid majority of 28 other states have already approved 'Choose Life' plates."

The court ordered New York to approve the specialty plate, which features a child-style crayon drawing of smiling children and the words "Choose Life" across the bottom. The head of the state DMV had called the design "offensive."

The foundation is a non-profit organization that promotes adoption as a choice for women with unwanted pregnancies or newborns. The group first applied for

a custom plate through the DMV's specialty plate program in 2001.

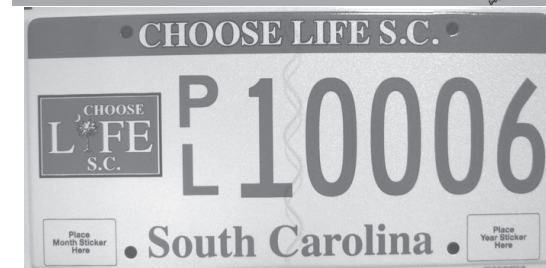
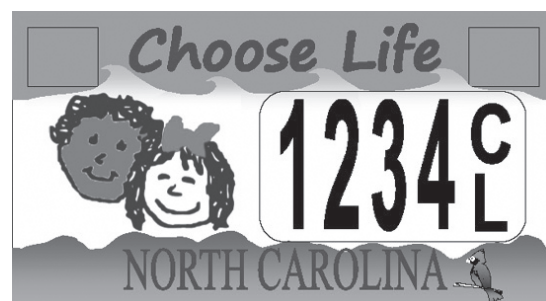
Like other states, New York allowed vehicle owners to display specialty license plates promoting a message or cause.

However, DMV's then-Commissioner Raymond P. Martinez denied the application. He referred to a previous denial in 1998 when DMV said car owners could not "promote or display politically sensitive messages" on New York license tags — which could provoke "road rage."

The foundation, which was assisted in the lawsuit by the Alliance Defense Fund, complained that his decision was illegal "viewpoint discrimination."

Again in 2002, a new application was rejected because DMV found the message "patently offensive and could provoke outrage from members of the public."

The foundation submitted a new design in 2003, which was also rejected.



CHRISTIAN CRUSADEDept. 198 P.O. Box 21228
Tulsa, Oklahoma 74121-1228**An Open Letter from our publisher****January-February 2012****DEAR FRIEND:**

Happy New Year! How inspired we were by our cover story this month—which tells about a young man who had lost his faith, but nevertheless was asked by a prominent

to pose for her as she created beautiful oil paintings of Jesus.

He wasn't tall that interested, but finally agreed.

And it has changed his life. I hope you will be touched by his story.

And as we go to press, the presidential primaries have begun. We're only weeks away from Super Tuesday—which could determine who the Republican Party will select to run against Barack Obama.

Read our main article, starting on Page 1, which tells how pollsters were told by everyday Americans that they expect the President of the United States to be a solid Christian.

We've endeavored to bring you "good news" along the hard news stories that so many newspapers choose to

ignore.

Almost 60 years ago, my father, the late Dr. Billy James Hargis, founded this newspaper and began sending it out free to whom-ever asked for a subscription. The need still exists. The truth must be proclaimed.

So, my friend, will you give this newspaper away?

By such a simple act, you can be a Watchman on the Wall! And will you write to me?

Will you tell me what you think of this edition? What do you think of the Wisconsin atheists on page 1 who have vowed to keep children in Florida from praying?

I want to hear from you!

I will be so grateful if you can send us a gift of \$5, \$10, \$25, \$50, \$100 or whatever you can so that we can publish a January edition! Help us to warn America!

The need is so ur-

gent! And I cannot do it without your help.

God bless you!
Go with God!

Billy James Hargis II,
PUBLISHER AND PRESIDENT



Hold on Tight by Liz Lemon Swindle

A dad takes his child to a patriotic parade

Christian Crusade

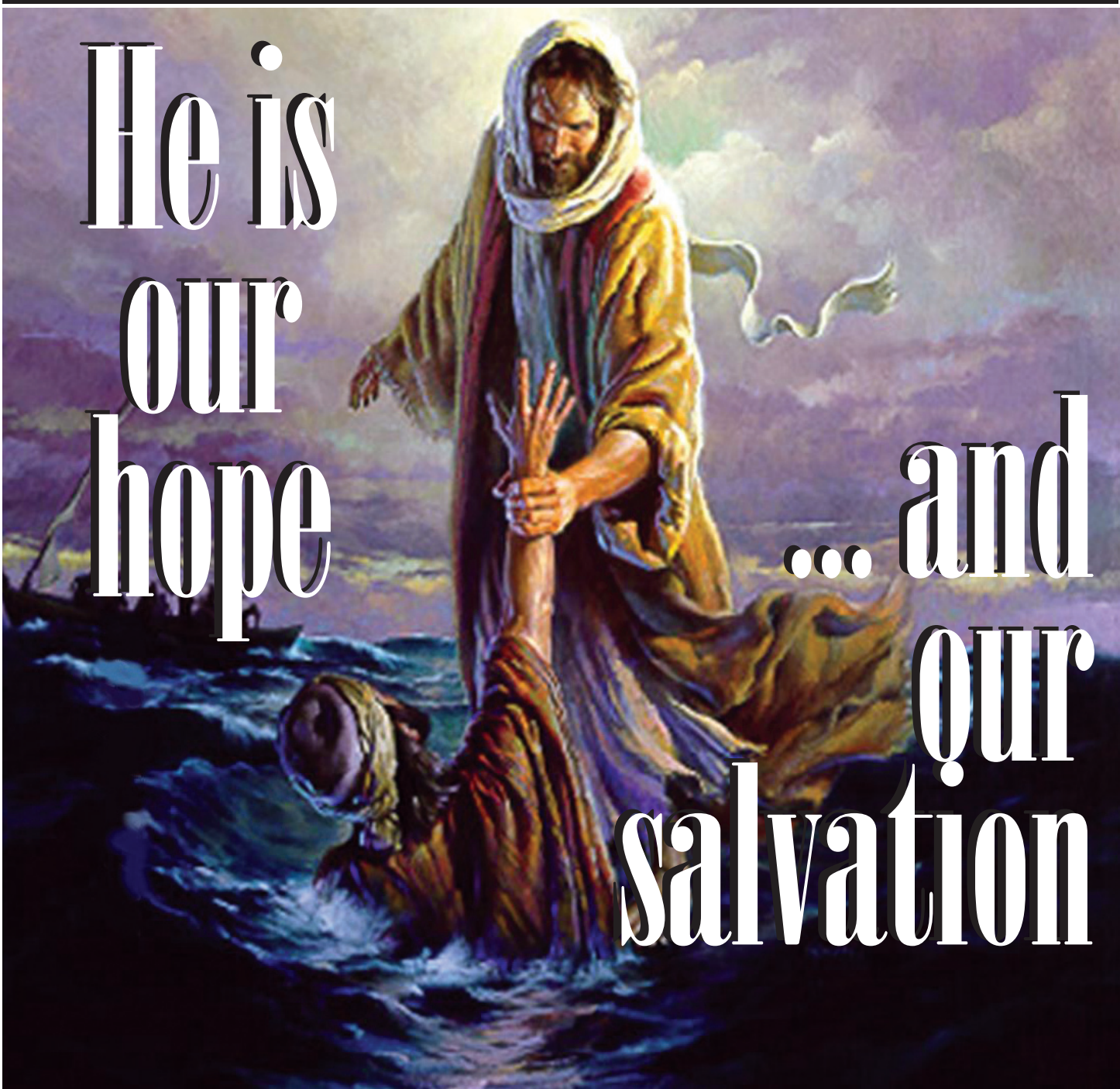


The late Dr. Billy James Hargis with
Mrs. Betty Jane Hargis and
Publisher Billy James Hargis II

Volume 60

January-February 2012

Number 1



Peter Walks on Water by Liz Lemon Riddle

The Nativity by Unknown Master

Rest on the Flight into Egypt by Angelo Caroselli

Adoration of the Shepherds by Giorgione