

December 2006
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Simple Christmas: Northside Kids and Adults Shift Focus to Those in Need

by DARCY WILEY

Operation Christmas, an annual outreach of the Metropolitan Baptist Center in downtown Indianapolis, opens the door for us to bless Indianapolis families with food and gifts during the holiday season. Get involved in prayer, donating soup cans and shoe box gifts, organizing a Christmas party, volunteering at the Baptist Center or delivering food to families.

Shoe Box Gifts:

Originally, we thought we'd challenge each of Northside's Connection Groups to provide 10 shoe box gifts for Operation Christmas, but then we thought better



Look for these shoe box gift labels in Operation Christmas brochures available at church.

“ My name is Chloe Kennedy. I am in the first grade at Fall Creek Elementary. Last month I had a new idea. I went and told it to my family. I said that we should not buy presents for ourselves and buy some for kids without toys. I'm okay without any presents under the Christmas tree. I think it would be fun to see other kids get toys instead. I am saving my money to buy toys for them. ”

of it. Why put a limit on your generosity? We can't wait to see how Northside's Connection Groups respond to this opportunity to serve! Look for the Operation Christmas brochure in the church lobby for instructions on putting together your shoe box gifts.

Chicken Noodle Soup Competition: Connection groups will rake in 10 points for every soup can donated by December 10. The three winning groups (one from Main Campus, one from North Campus and one from Northside Student Ministry) will get dinner at a staff member's home. See Bill and Kathy West for more details.

Collection Spots: Drop off soup cans and shoe box gifts at the Main Campus CLC east doors or preschool west doors from now until December 10. North Campus attendees can bring shoebox gifts and soup cans to HSE on Sunday morning, December 10.

Christmas Parties: Connection Groups are stepping up to plan Christmas parties for the week of December 11-14. Bring joy to a child this holiday season by presenting shoebox gifts and sharing the real meaning of Christmas through fun activities, songs and testimonies. See Bev Whitely for more details on how you can get involved.

Food Delivery: Bless local families with a box of food and a friendly visit on Saturday, December 16. Meet at the Baptist Center at 9 am for directions to specific clients' homes.

Looking for a Christmas Special

'Tis the season- and therefore, people are looking for a Christmas special. According to Pastor Alan Wilkerson's survey of holiday viewing last year, the two week period between December 2 and December 16 featured 62 holiday programs. Fifty-five percent dealt with Santa, reindeer or snowmen. Seventeen percent were "feel good" love stories. Eleven percent had spiritual themes. Only six percent (4 shows) had any direct reference to Jesus Christ.

For others, the search for a Christmas special means fighting the mob at the malls. A woman in the mall, tired from a day of bargain hunting, shifted her weight from side to side to comfort her exhausted feet as she waited for an elevator. Her hands were filled with packages. The doors opened and the elevator was overflowing with shoppers. "Great!" she muttered sarcastically. The occupants of the elevator tightened ranks to allow a small space for her and her load. As the door closed, she blurted out, "Whoever came up with this Christmas junk ought to be strung up and shot!" A few shook their heads or grunted in agreement. Then, from somewhere in the back of the elevator came a lone voice, "Don't worry. They already crucified Him."

Perhaps we shouldn't be looking for a Christmas special, but rather should be looking for the "special" in Christmas. Bill Keane's "Family Circus" comic strip had the children setting up a Nativity set. Dolly held up the baby Jesus and declared, "Look! The star of Bethlehem." May you experience the "special" in Christmas this year.

Pastor's Corner

by DR. MARK HEARN
Senior Pastor



First and Second Graders Learn to Live Like Jesus

by ANNICA COOK

What does it mean to live like Jesus? In October, the first and second graders in Children's Worship at Main Campus learned it means to love, care, forgive, serve, and be kind like Jesus. They decided to put that learning into practice.

The boys and girls collected a special offering to support the International Mission Board World Hunger and Relief Fund. Through this fund, 100% of the money is sent directly to feed and care for people around the world. The funds are distributed through the missionaries who are serving in the field.

During the month, they studied about missionaries Randy and Robin Covington who minister to the reindeer herding peoples of Kamchatka, Russia and learned about the extreme needs of the poor in Kazakhstan. Then the children chose to donate to "Project

Pass It On". This project provides pigs, chickens, roosters, feed and livestock housing so Russian families can start their own small farming businesses. This enables them to learn a new skill and eventually

support their family. It also gives them a sense of confidence as they grow to understand how important they are in God's sight. By helping meet the physical needs of these people, we are giving the missionaries an opportunity to share Jesus.



Drew Michael, Matthew Manner, Hunter Menser, Samuel Watkins, and Annica Cook (back row) and Peyton Smith, Allison Harrington, and Carlie Westrum (front row) hold their rice bowls during a recent exercise in living like Jesus. Maddie Comer, Derek Kohn, Luke Schroeder, and Sophia Sutton are not pictured.

In five weeks the children collected \$34.36, with each cent going to help Russian families feed and support themselves while they learn about Jesus. These kids chose to live like Jesus. Won't you choose to love, care, forgive, serve, and be kind like Jesus too?

Season Brings Week of Prayer for International Missions

by BEV OLONOH

More than 5,200 – that’s how many missionaries we support around the world through the International Mission Board. That’s a lot of missionaries to pray for by name each day! But each year around the holiday season, we get to “meet” and pray for eight missionaries and the people they have been sent to reach by name and specific prayer requests.

The 2006 Week of Prayer for International Missions prayer guide will be distributed in Northside’s Sunday bulletin sometime this month.* This year’s focus is West Africa. There are West African Christians, but they are few. Many West Africans still have never heard the name of Jesus. Traditional religion (worship of created things) continues to be a stronghold, but Islam is even stronger and rapidly growing in influence in this region. This is a fierce spiritual war for the souls of people God created and loves. We have an opportunity to join our hearts with His for just a few minutes each day and touch lives around the world for eternity! Do you believe your prayers make a difference? We may or may not know the final results until heaven. I can’t wait!

Here’s a little preview from Revelation 7:9-10: “... There was a vast multitude from every nation, tribe, people, and language, which no one could number, standing before the throne and before the Lamb. They were robed in white with palm branches in their hands. And they cried out in a loud voice: ‘Salvation belongs to our God, who is seated on the throne, and to the Lamb!’”



West Africa Demographics:

72.6% of the region is under 30 years of age

45% of the population is 14 or younger

The region has 1,612 people groups

22% of groups haven’t heard about Jesus yet

In a recent report for 9 West African countries, the HIV/AIDS rate was estimated at 6.5% in 1999 and is projected to reach 9.3% in 2010

By 2010, it is estimated that there will be 3,288,000 AIDS orphans.

Go West Africa: Week of Prayer Preview

Each people group listed here is part of the Week of Prayer focus this year. Pray for the millions who have yet to trust Christ. Pray also for the few Christians living among them.

SONGHAI

Location: Senegal, Gambia, Guinea
Population: 1,800,000
Christians: ~270



BAMBARA

Location: Cote d’Ivoire, Mali, Guinea, Senegal
Population: 4,000,000
Christians: ~280



TUAREG

Location: Niger, Mali
Population: 1,400,000
Christians: ~180



FULAKUNDA

Location: Mali, Niger
Population: 1,600,000
Christians: ~320



WOLOF

Location: Senegal, Cote d’Ivoire, Mali, The Gambia
Population: 4,500,000
Christians: ~70



HAUSA

Location: Nigeria, Niger
Population: 28,000,000
Christians: ~1,890



*You can find the prayer guide information and more at <http://ime.imb.org/wpim>.

Exploring Celebrate Recovery's Principle 6:

Make a List, Make Amends 'Tis the Season to Give and Forgive

by MARY CARVELLE

Can you believe it's Christmas time again? It's the season of lists: things to do, parties to attend, gifts to give, and even the grocery list for fruitcake ingredients! I'm sure that John Reeder has already made a list of his favorite Yuletide songs and has sung them twice. I wonder if I remembered everyone on my Christmas card list.

Speaking of lists, number 6 on the list of principles for Celebrate Recovery is to "evaluate all my relationships, offer forgiveness to those who have hurt me and make amends for harm I've done to others..." This Christmas, I am recommending two more lists based on this principle.



Celebrate Recovery Principle 6:
"Evaluate all my relationships, offer forgiveness to those who have hurt me and make amends for harm I've done to others."

For the first list, you'll want to prayerfully consider your relationships and write down the names of people you need to forgive. Ephesians 4:32 says, "Be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God in Christ forgave you." Ask God to reveal the grudges you are holding against others and then ask for a tender heart that can give the gift of forgiveness in the same complete way that you are forgiven by God. When you pray this way, you may realize an offense that you have carried with you for years, or you may discover a new root of bitterness

that has just sprung up. Either way, be kind and forgive.

The second category is the list of people from whom you need to seek forgiveness. Once again, ask the Lord to aid you in this process. He will! I know because He helps me with my list and gives me the courage to seek forgiveness from those that I have harmed. Jesus says in Matthew 5:23, "Therefore, if you bring your gift to the altar, and there remember that your brother has something against you, leave your gift there before the altar and go your way. First, be reconciled to your brother and then come and offer your gift." Once again, you need to seek reconciliation

with that person. It's interesting to note that whether I have offended or am the one who has been offended, it is always my responsibility to take the initiative in reconciliation. I cannot wait for a move from the other person.

So, Christmas is here, the season of giving. We go to great lengths to celebrate that God gave us his only Son and offers to us complete forgiveness. To what length will you go to forgive or to seek forgiveness? Let reconciliation be at the top of your list this year. You will find that it is just as blessed to give as to receive when the gift is forgiveness.



**Nativity Story
Finds Room
in Theaters**

by BARBARA CROSS

When you consider seeing the theatrical release of *The Nativity Story* on December 1, you may wonder (as I did) "Why has no one done this before?" Screenwriter, Mike Rich (who also wrote the biographical scripts *The Rookie*, *Radio*, and *Miracle*) felt the weight of responsibility when he tackled the project. There is a big difference between producing a film about the obscure, historical characters of his previous works and producing one about the most significant birth in human history.

Following a year of research, Rich spent a month writing the screenplay. The script is faithful to both Gospel accounts in Matthew and Luke, and includes all the detail available leading up to the birth of Christ. Rich admits to taking a bit of artistic license in that the shepherds and the wise men appear together at the nativity scene - something he calls, "that quintessential moment that millions of individuals still put out on their fireplace mantels in December."

ChristianityToday.com has dedicated a section of their website to information about this landmark movie. Their review offers more insight for those who are interested. When they asked Mike Rich what his hopes were for the movie, he responded, "We live in a time where the month of December goes by in a heartbeat because of the hectic nature of the season. There's very little time for families to talk about this story. If this movie can serve as a two-hour window in that season to get families talking about this remarkable, amazing story of faith, then that will be a great thing."

Coalition Looks Past Trivial Things to Discern God's Vision for Northside

by JEFF SIMMONS

This summer, a few Northside members came together in response to an extended time of trial and testing in our church body. James 1:3-4 was heavy on my heart when I thought of the issues our church has dealt with in recent months. The verses say, "...because you know that the testing of your faith develops perseverance. Perseverance must finish its work so that you may be mature and complete, not lacking anything." Those of us that came together had a common desire to see the church's internal barriers removed. We felt that God has greater plans for this church and wants us to play a greater role in His Great Commission. We felt that to fully realize the vision of "Gather, Connect, Serve" we were going to need to create a coalition during the final months of 2006.

After much prayer, we were led to act. We involved the church leadership, deacons, and other active members. Our goal was to help create internal positive change so "Northside would fully realize God's potential for this church and its members. I see Northside Baptist Church being blessed with great teaching, worship, and fellowship that is centered on Christ. My concern is that we get so consumed about our internal trivial issues, that we forget what it is all about- Christ, the cross and reaching those who don't yet know Jesus.

The group of leadership, deacons and several active members agreed to have a focused effort during the final

months of 2006. We decided to dedicate ourselves to prayer and a series of efforts that would further establish positive change in the areas of gathering, connecting, and serving. One fruit of this coalition has been the "Song of the Redeemed" testimonies that we've heard from the mouths of fellow church members each Sunday morning for the last several weeks. Each testimony has shed light on how God has used Northside Baptist Church to impact lives. "De-Caf with the Staff" and "Deacon De-Caf" has provided a monthly opportunity for members to spend some casual time catching up with those in church leadership.

You can take part in this coalition, too! Pray for Northside, that we as a church body would see what God has planned for us. Pray that each of us would look past the small, trivial things so we can unleash our church's potential for the advancement of God's kingdom. When you are spending time with fellow church members, make a special effort to focus on counting your blessings and celebrating what God is doing in the life of our church. Want to feel even more connected? Giving creates engagement. We encourage you to give your time and talents in any of our many opportunities for service and ministry. Your financial giving facilitates Northside's ministry to you, other church members and our surrounding

Two locations, one
CommUNITY
gather connect serve

Mark your calendars for upcoming CommUNITY Gatherings!

Connection Group Super Bowl Parties
Sunday, February 4, 2007

Rib Fest & Cornhole Tournament
Sunday, March 25, 2007

Family Retreat at Highland Lakes
May 4-5, 2007

(Contact Rusty if you'd like to help plan these events by serving on the Fun Team.)

community. As always, do as our Lord leads. As II Corinthians 9:7 says, "Each man should give what he has decided in his heart to give, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver."

When we are tested, it is critical that we realize we are being tested, turn to the LORD, and then act on it in a positive manner. In doing these things, Northside Baptist Church will persevere, grow toward maturity and glorify the Lord. Join with us as we rise up and respond to the tests in front of us. My prayer is that the Lord bless each of you during these final days of 2006. May HE lead our hearts individually, and our church as a unified whole, to fully realize God's vision for this wonderful church and the community that surrounds us!

December 2006

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday																																																	
December Highlights December 2: Belles' Brunch December 3: Churchwide Christmas Party December 9: Northside Choir at Clay Terrace December 13,14: Upward Coach and Referee Meetings December 10: Last Day for Soup Can and Shoebox Gift Donations December 11-14: Operation Christmas Parties December 16: Deliver Operation Christmas Food Boxes to Families December 24: Regular Services in Morning; Candlelight Service at 6 pm December 22, 25, 26, 29: Office Closed for Christmas and New Year's Break December 27: No Activities					1	2																																																	
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