

Accommodating

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"Unless you're in a boat or a plane, the free exercise of religion requires land on which to practice," Leland said. "This is not an attempt to seize power from local government."

The federal act is just a bargaining tool to bring both parties to the table, he said.

Winston-Salem city attorney

ney Ron Seeber sees the law as an example of the federal government overstepping its bounds.

"What business does the federal government have with what local governments do with land-use regulations?" Seeber asked. "Local government is best suited to make local land-use decisions."

Phrase pulled from governor's mansion

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

ATLANTA—When it comes to Christmas, political correctness apparently only lasts about a half-hour in Georgia Gov. Sonny Perdue's office.

A press release sent by Perdue's office Friday afternoon announced plans for a "holiday tree" lighting ceremony at the governor's mansion.

Thirty minutes later, a second release went out reading:

"It is, in fact, a Christmas tree."

That release blaming the earlier wording on "a politically correct staff brain-freeze," and said, "The staffer responsible can be contacted at P.O. Box 432, Anchorage, Alaska, 99501."

Religious conservatives have objected to the use of the term "holiday tree," saying it seeks to minimize the Christ-

ian origins of Christmas. Jerry Falwell, founder of Liberty University and the defunct Moral Majority, emailed 500,000 followers urging support for the "Friend or Foe Christmas Campaign" aimed at public officials, schools and retailers.

Perdue spokesman Dan McLagan said there's no doubt where the Republican governor comes down on the

issue. "When the governor learns that one of my staffers even inadvertently used the words 'holiday tree,' I am probably going to be in trouble," McLagan said. "It does go to show the pervasiveness of the media influence that that word would even occur to someone to use in that context."

Angelou's Christmas party philosophy celebration televised

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ing Christmas spirit out of season at the Winston-Salem party shoot.

"It's her spirit. You just gravitate to her. That's why I call her my angel," beams Ashford.

"There is no word that really encompasses all that she is, but what she encompasses is the fact that we should be everything we can be," says Simpson when asked how she might sum up Angelou's

myriad accomplishments—poet, writer, teacher, historian, dancer, singer, actress, Grammy winner, civil-rights activist. "So many of us cut our possibilities down ... She embraces everything and does it well and is not afraid."

Born Marguerite Johnson, Angelou's 13 books include the autobiographical best-seller "I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings," and the current cookbook "Hallelujah! The Welcome Table." She has acted on Broadway, in the

TV miniseries "Roots," and will soon be seen playing "I think myself ... sort of one of the older, wise women" in the movie comedy "Madea's Family Reunion." She has won three spoken-word Grammys, and teaches humanities at Wake Forest University.

Asked if there is a collective noun that might encompass her abilities, Angelou replies, "I am a human being. I think everybody born is born with talent. We all come from the creator trailing wisps of

glory."

With so many outlets for her talents, how does Angelou choose where to focus her energies?

"I try not to wear myself out, though usually expending energy gives me energy. That old saying, 'If you want something done give it to a busy person.' It's just that I'm selective, and I'm careful, and by that I mean when I came into this room I brought all of myself, so I could be completely present with you."

The presence is formal, dignified but not standoffish. She asks to be addressed formally—Dr. Angelou—and returns the respect to a reporter. Her sentences are thought

through, but often contain a self-teasing kick of humor amid their blend of poetry, common sense and spirituality.

BIBLE LESSON

Justified by faith – Galatians 2:14-21

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Jerusalem conference.

There is only one way to be justified, states Paul, and that is by the faith of (or in) Jesus Christ. The word translated as justified comes from the language of the courtroom. It literally means, "to declare innocent." The law of Moses could never produce such an outcome. For one

thing no one can ever keep the law perfectly. Second, it is possible for someone to keep the law outwardly, yet without any inner love, faith or commitment to God. On one occasion, Jesus noted the Pharisees' failure to observe the "weightier matters of the law" while paying close attention to certain external details (Matthew 23:23).

This does not mean that


works are unimportant. Good works are meant to be a sign of our love for Christ and evidence of a living faith. Paul tells us in Ephesians 2:10 that Christians are "created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them."

What Paul is specifically dealing with in Galatians is depending on the Old Testament law as a


means of salvation. He asserts that keeping the law can never make someone good enough to enter Heaven. His teaching on this point is the same as that found in the early chapters of Romans.

Thought to Remember: We are not saved because of how good we are. We are saved because of how good God is.

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