

Liberal Catholics, Protestants unite against Christmas stories

By Richard N. Ostling
THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

There has been ample tumult about efforts by businesses, cities and schools to avoid the label "Christmas" or downplay seasonal observances, and much of the protest has come from secular rather than church sources.

To many parishioners, perhaps the more important Grinch is Protestant and Catholic scholars who doubt the entire Christmas story as recorded in the Bible and regularly get attention in TV documentaries and news articles.

Various historical details are involved, but the central, long-running issue is the report in the Gospels of Matthew and Luke that Mary was a virgin who miraculously conceived through divine intervention and gave birth to Jesus.

That debate is revived in "A Feminist Companion to Mariology," edited by Vanderbilt University's Amy-Jill Levine. Though liberal Protestants at the United Church of Christ's

Pilgrim Press published this anthology, the lead skeptics are liberal Roman Catholics from church-related campuses. Jane Schaberg of the University of Detroit Mercy and John Dominic Crossan, a retired professor at Chicago's DePaul University.

Meanwhile, popular-level defense of the Nativity stories are included in "The Case for Christmas: A Journalist Investigates the Identity of the Child in the Manger" (Zondervan) by evangelical writer Lee Strobel.

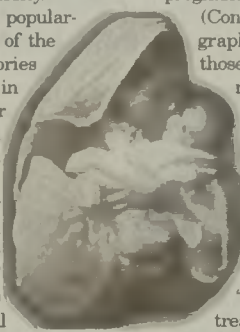
In the feminist anthology, Schaberg updates her "The Illegitimacy of Jesus," issued in 1990 by Crossroad, which specializes in Catholic and other religious titles.

Schaberg dismisses miraculous virgin conception (what Protestants call the "virgin birth") so she figures

Mary was impregnated by someone other than Joseph before the couple married. That raises three possibilities: The unknown biological father raped Mary, he seduced her, or she chose to have sex with him and got pregnant.

(Conservatives protested graphic references to those scenarios by Dennis Leary in a scheduled Christmas weekend special on TV's Comedy Central, and the U.S. Catholic bishops' president denounced the network's "ugly" and "especially offensive" treatment of Mary on the "South Park" show.)

Schaberg theorizes that the story about Mary's pregnancy outside wedlock was making the rounds, so the early church invented the virginal conception idea "under pressure" from the existence of this scandalous "illegitimacy tradition."



Muslims seek order against searches

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

BUFFALO—A group of Muslim-Americans has asked a federal judge to allow them to travel to a religious conference in Canada later this month without being fingerprinted, photographed and held at the border, like they were on the way home from last year's gathering.

In a case that weighs the government's anti-terrorism efforts against the rights of its citizens, the New York Civil Liberties Union argued on the group's behalf for a court order prohibiting border agents from stopping and searching Muslim-Americans based solely on their attendance at the annual "Reviving the Islamic Spirit" conference in Toronto Dec. 23-29.

Homeland Security officials acknowledged subjecting those who attended last year's conference to lengthy security checks upon their return to the United States, but said they had reason to believe that people associated with terrorism planned to attend the conference or others like it.

NYCLU attorney Christopher Dunn accused the government of trampling the plaintiffs' right to practice religion in the name of homeland security.

"We fully respect the government's concerns about terrorism. That does not mean, however, that the Constitution disappears at the border," Dunn said.

An attorney for the govern-

ment said that while the stops may have taken too long, border agents did what was necessary to protect the country in light of credible intelligence.

"The concern was not that they went to a religious conference. The concern was that individuals, money, documents or weapons were going to get smuggled across the border," said Anthony Copolino, who argued against the group's request.

The five plaintiffs, all New York residents, are among at least three dozen Muslim-American men and women who were corralled for as long as 6 1/2 hours at two western New York border crossings while trying to re-enter the United States by car.

Take care of business

Expand your customer base by advertising in The Post
(704) 376-0496

ADVERTISEMENT

The Prophet's Column, Inc.
9626 Feldbank Drive
Charlotte, NC 28216-2131

December, 2005 Newsletter - Part III
J.M. Little, Teacher

A Bible teacher said years ago: "That is the Xmas Tree!" She was right. And what did the Lord say about it? "LEARN NOT THE WAY OF THE HEATHEN." The heathen, old Nimrod, the great-grandson of Noah, started this celebration. You ask: "Bro. Little, do you think I am a heathen because I celebrate Xmas?" Well, that is what the heathen did, and it is a good sign you are. You may say you don't bow down to the idol. Hold it! When you place that gift under the tree, you bow down. See, you didn't know that you were bowing down to the heathen god, did you? The Jews were in Babylonian captivity during this time. You look forward to the Xmas celebration, but you do not look forward to the Coming of Christ. A person will talk about what or whom he loves. Now, what are you talking about in your daily life? For more than three decades I've been making it personal how Christ is real to my heart and I long for Him to be real to your heart. I would you wanted Christ instead of the Xmas Tree. There is no salvation in your heathen customs. How dare you link the Name of our blessed Lord in the muck and mire, the idoltry of Nimrod! I plead with you to depart from it. The Lord's Command is: "Come ye out from among them and touch not the unclean thing." What will you do about it? You may say like a co-worker of mine years ago when I was playing the radio at the office and Bro. Shelton asked that question. My co-worker said sarcastically: "I'm going out and buy me a Xmas present." My answer was then and now: "Go on and buy it and go to hell."

Weeping Willow AME Zion Church
"Moving From Salvation To Discipleship"
2220 Milton Rd. • Charlotte, North Carolina 28215

Morning Worship: 8:00 AM
11:00 AM
Sunday School: 9:30 AM
Wed. Praise & Prayer: 7:00 PM
(704)532-9125

"THE CHURCH THAT CARES"

Pastor Wendell Houtness & wife Myrtle

First Mt. Zion Baptist Church
1515 Remount Rd. • (Tel.)332-8335 (Fax)372-7548
28208

Sunday Morning Worship Services... 8:30 - 9:30 - 11:00am
Sunday School..... 9:45 - 10:45am
Singles Ministries (Mon.)..... 6:30 - 7:30pm
Senior Citizens (Mon.)..... 10:30 - 4:00pm

Office Hours: Mon. - Fri. 9:00am - 4:00pm
You are cordially invited to worship with us!

Dr. C.V. Owens

GREATER MYERS CHAPEL
PENTECOSTAL FELLOWSHIP MINISTRIES

- You're Invited to Worship With Us -
Intercessory Prayer.....8:30am
Victory in The Word.....9:15am
Worship.....10:30am
Sunday Evening Total Praise.....7:00pm
Hour of Power/Tutorial avail. Wed...7:00pm

Bishop, Nathan J. Anderson, Pastor
Visit our WebSite: www.greatermyserschapel.org
600 Jordan Place, Charlotte, NC 28205
"WAR Fellowship Ministry Covenant Partner" 704-377-1799

Greenville Memorial A.M.E. Zion Church
"A Teaching Ministry Making Spiritual Disciples"
Sunday Worship Service 10 A.M. Sunday School 9 A.M.
Bible Study: Tuesday 7 P.M. & Wednesday 12 Noon
Child Development Center
6116 Monteth Dr. Charlotte, NC 28213
(Ph) 704-596-4742 (Fax) 704-597-8314

"A Word of Hope" Television Ministry
Wednesdays @ 8 p.m. Channell 21 (Public Access TV)
Rev. Dr. Sheldon R. Shipman, Senior Pastor

Greater Gethsemane A.M.E. Zion Church
"The Church with the Community at Heart"
531 Campus Street • Charlotte, NC 28216
(704)375-3900 • Fax 372-0614

Worship Services: 8AM & 11AM
Sunday School: 9:30AM
Bible Study: Wed. 10:30AM & 7PM
Daycare & Afterschool Available

The Reverend Calvin L. Miller - Pastor
Reverend Karen Roberts Miller - Spouse
E-mail: gamez531@bellsouth.net

Come Share the Vision and Share the Journey
Sunday Worship Services
8:00 am and 10:45 am
Sunday School 9:30 am

His last commandment is our first assignment.

MISSIONARY BAPTIST CHURCH
www.stlukembc.org

Sunday Worship Services... 8:00am • 11:00am • 6:30pm
Sunday School... 9:45am
Wednesday... Noon Day Worship Study... 12:00
Evening Worship Study... 7:00pm

Rev. Clifford Matthews, Jr., Pastor • 375-9650
1800 Norris Ave. • Charlotte, NC 28206 • FAX: 375-8397

St. Michael & All Angels Episcopal Church
"Christmas Service"
Sat., December 24th, 11:00 P.M. into Christmas Day
"Watch Night Service"
Sat., December 31, 11:00 P.M. into New Years Day
No Sunday 10:30 service December 25, 2005, or January 1, 2006
4228 Hovis Rd., Charlotte, NC 28208 • 704-399-3151
~ Rev. Wendell Phillips, Pastor ~

Reeder Memorial Baptist Church
3725 Beatties Ford Road
Charlotte, North Carolina 28216
www.reederchurch.org

MACEDONIA BAPTIST CHURCH of CHARLOTTE, INC.
"A Ministry of Love and Excellence"

Dr. John H. Walker, Pastor & Minister, Rosie Walker

New Sunday 10am Worship Experience
"Family First Worship"
"As For Me and My House We Shall Worship The Lord"

SUNDAY
* Physical Food - (serving breakfast).....8 a.m.
* Spiritual Food - Christian Education School.....9 a.m.
* Main Course - "Family First Worship".....10 a.m.

WEDNESDAY
"Hour of Power" Midday Worship.....12 Noon
W.O.W. - Word On Wednesday Bible Study.....6:30 p.m.

TV and RADIO BROADCAST MINISTRY:
CMPAC 21 - This 4pm • Rejoice Radio 1370am • Wed. 10:45a

704-392-8496 • 1300 Hatteras Ave. • www.macedoniaofcharlotte.org

SIMPSON-GILLESPIE UNITED METHODIST CHURCH
"Open Hearts. Open Minds. Open Doors"
• Join Us For Service •

Sunday School, 9:30am • Sunday Worship, 11am
Wednesday: Bible Study, 7pm
1st & 3rd Saturday: "Contemporary Worship," 6pm... "Jeans Allowed"

Rev. Walter Pegues, Pastor
3545 Beatties Fd Rd, Char., NC 28216 • 704-399-2717 • Van Ministry
"We Can Do All Things Through Christ Who Strengthens Us"

PARKWOOD INSTITUTIONAL
Christian Methodist Episcopal Church
802 Tom Hunter Road • Charlotte, NC 28213
704-921-4915 (Ph) • 704-921-4917 (Fax)
Website: www.parkwoodcme.com

Sunday Worship 8:00 & 11:00 AM
Sunday School 9:30 AM

Bible Study
Wednesday 12 Noon Thursday 6:30 PM

TRANSPORTATION AVAILABLE

Roderick D. Lewis, Sr. Pastor

Mayfield Memorial Baptist Church
"A Church Putting Love Into Action"
700 SUGAR CREEK ROAD, WEST CHARLOTTE, NORTH CAROLINA 28213

Sunday Church School 9:30a.m.
Worship Service 11:00a.m. and 6:00p.m.
Baptist Training Union 5:00p.m.
Prayer Meeting & Bible Study Wednesdays 7:30pm
Office (704)596-7935 • Fax (704)596-1204
Residence (704)597-1249

St. Paul Baptist Church
Our Purpose: "To convince the unconvinced to be convinced and make disciples"
Sunday Worship at 7:30 A.M. and 10:30 A.M.
Sunday Morning Breakfast 8:45 A.M.
Sunday School at 9:25 A.M. - 10:25 A.M.
Radio Broadcast Sunday 11:00 A.M. (1370 A.M. Dial)
Bible Study Wed. 12 Noon - 6:45 P.M. - 8:00 P.M.
Youth Church 2nd & 3rd Sunday 10:30 A.M.

1401 North Allen Street, Charlotte, NC 28205
Office: 704-334-5309

Gregory K. Moss Sr. Pastor