

## Editorial: Christmas is a time for giving not for getting

by Shannon Peterson

It is hard to believe that it is that time of year again—Christmas. As it creeps its way through the month of December, children are mesmerized with the thoughts of that old and jolly myth of a man known as Santa Claus who they think will come down their chimney with a sack full of toys thrown casually over his shoulder. The children's eyes are glassy and filled with excitement as they pull their parents' hands through the overly-decorated toy stores in the mall and make their demands for the toys that they want.

The parents feed the children's imaginations of that plump and pipe smoking man (who represents bad health and almost encourages cavities in the teeth of the little ones who receive candy in their stockings) by threatening them to be nice or Santa won't bring them anything. I must hand it to them, though; using that phrase is a nice little way to straighten

up the kids because as soon as the Christmas tree was up in our house, I never again saw my younger brother misbehave until he got his toys on Christmas Day.

Children think only of getting, never of giving. We naturally excuse their selfishness because, after all, they are just children. But why do adults play along with them and pretend that a cheerful, laughing man dressed in red, black and white really does grant their every toy wish and demand? It's the magic of Christmas, of course. This is what Christmas is all about, isn't it? Not quite.

I always knew the true meaning of Christmas, for I was blessed to have a mother who would read the original Christmas story to my bother and me every Christmas Eve. However, I was young and more concerned with getting gifts from family members instead.

It took growing older and tasting the bitterness of life to make me truly appreciate the real meaning of Christ-

mas. I had a bad habit of taking my family for granted years ago until our perfect family picture was shattered by divorce. I bit through all the anger and confusion that I took out on both of my parents and learned to love them more than ever while I prayed for their forgiveness. Christmas is so special to me now because it is a season of giving and loving. I am so thankful for my family and their unconditional love for me.

In today's society, people think that Christmas is a time for only exchanging brightly wrapped gifts between one another under a multi-colored lit Christmas tree. This is part of Christmas but only because it is tradition. Everyone needs to remember whose birthday we are celebrating. The ma-

jority of the Christmas carols that we sing from door to door while bundled up in winter clothing were written to rejoice the birth of Christ. Christmas is also a time for warmth, love and family; all of which tie in with Christianity and make survival so much easier. It is a time for thanking God for all the blessings He has granted us. Not everyone will have an elaborate meal with all the trimmings on her table. It won't hurt to discard your "bah-humbug" attitude and donate canned goods or clothing to the Salvation Army or local shelter for battered women. Christmas is a time for giving; after all, didn't God give us His only son?

### Letter to the Editor: Meredith and Baptists are fair

In response to the editorial Nov. 16 which was entitled "Meredith Needs to Acknowledge Lesbians in Policy," I would like to provide a contrasting perspective.

In my opinion, Meredith does not need to acknowledge lesbians in the non-discriminatory admissions policy.

How could the board discriminate when sexual preferences are unknown?

On the other hand, lesbians know when they apply that Meredith is affiliated with the Baptist denomination.

Hopefully they choose Meredith for reasons other than their sexual orientation.

The previous editorial prompts me to ask just what it is really asking heterosexuals to accept?

Open displays of sexual affection between lesbians on campus?

That would be another issue altogether.

If anything, current codes of conduct exist to promote educational goals without the distractions of possible sexual confrontations of whatever type.

Both heterosexuals and lesbians are privately responsible for their sexual preference and its expression outside of the realm of academics.

Contrary to the previous article

which alluded to a stereotypical view of Baptist, inherently they (with the obvious exception of extremist sects) are tolerant of dissenting opinions.

The image promoted by the media often distorts what really is going on with Baptists.

Study Baptist history for yourself.

While generally, Baptists still believe that the best policy is abstinence, they are tolerant of alternate lifestyles that may be against their beliefs.

That would be a violation of moral conscience and religious freedom.

As for the assumption that "good Christians" should compromise their moral beliefs, please note that Jesus (Christ) was not morally apathetic.

He made a distinction between accepting others as individuals who are all loved by God and accepting behavior that may have detrimental consequences for the individual and society.

We are all free to determine what that means for ourselves.

The argument that the issues of discrimination based on race are the same as those of sexual orientation is (I think) a fallacy of irrelevant conclu-

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The *Herald* reserves the right to place any other article submissions on file until needed or to choose not to print them.