

# Expanding today's faith and vision

**Continued from page 8B**  
ly 1,000 new members annually under Alexander's 15 years as pastor. The church has already outgrown its 2,500-person sanctuary on Beatties Ford Road less than five years after it opened.

Park Place will have 529,000 square feet, including 100,000-square-foot library

erly Hall, which will serve as the main worship center. The entire Beatties Ford Road campus includes 83,000 square feet of space. The new worship center will allow University Park Baptist to consolidate services and conserve church resources.

UPBC will also be able to expand its Christian educa-

tion programs, leadership development initiatives, and conference, meeting and banquet facilities.

"We feel this is a win-win situation for our members as well as the community," Alexander said. "Bringing our main campus to this central location will provide a sig-

nificant economic boost to this area of our city."

University Park has more than 80 specialized ministries. Park Place will serve as a hub for the Global Missions ministry, which is active in Kenya, South Africa and Brazil. Educational services include a School of Ministry that will focus on the develop-

ment of clergy and lay ministers as well as a specialized multimedia library.

UPBC has signed a purchase agreement for the Merchandise Mart, with plans to close on the property within 90 days. The church will spend nearly two years upfitting the center, with plans to relocate in 2008.

The main campus will remain on Beatties Ford Road until then. Park South, the church's south Charlotte campus, will be maintained as a regional campus.

UPBC will give worshippers a first look inside the future worship center on Dec. 31 at Watch Night services.

# Wal-Mart critics make shopping a religious question: WWJS?

**Continued from page 8B**

against Wal-Mart. The TV ad starts with a picture of a Bible-like tome and an off-screen narrator who says, "Our faith teaches us 'Do unto others as you would have them do unto you.'"

"If these are our values, then ask yourself should peo-

ple of faith shop at Wal-Mart this holiday season?"

Wal-Mart Chief Executive Lee Scott responded within hours with his own letter laying out what he called Wal-Mart's positive contributions—saving working families money, providing jobs and supporting charities.

"For that reason, we will

not be deterred from our mission, despite misleading statements from paid critics whose motives are less than pure," Scott wrote.

"Wal-Mart will continue to do those things that we believe are right for our customers, associates and communities: helping people put food on the table and clothes

on their backs; providing good benefits, providing career opportunity, and being a good citizen in the towns we serve," Scott added.

The letter from clergy members urged Wal-Mart to change its business practices. "Jesus would not embrace Wal-Mart's values of greed and profits at any cost, partic-

ularly when children suffer as a result of those misguided values," the letter said.

WakeUpWalMart said it recruited the clergy members, including Rev. Jesse Jackson, from a variety of faiths through its activists, who asked if they would be inter-

ested in signing the letter.

The group also plans candlelight vigils at selected Wal-Mart's in 19 states.

On the Net:  
WakeUpWalMart: [www.wakeupwalmart.com](http://www.wakeupwalmart.com)  
Wal-Mart Stores Inc.: [www.walmartfacts.com](http://www.walmartfacts.com)

# Two books make ideal Christmas gifts

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Shoppers seeking ideal Christmas gifts for religiously "fa-la-la-la" about two beautiful seasonal books and one oddly intriguing item:

- "Incarnation" (Fortress Press, \$15) by Oxford University theologian Alister McGrath interprets the meaning of Christ's birth. McGrath has important things to say and does so without fancy theological verbiage, favoring prose that's as clear and crisp as a December evening.

- "Johann Sebastian Bach: His Life in Pictures and Documents" (Fortress Press, \$25) by German biographer Hans Conrad Fischer is a lavishly illustrated, readable account of the life of history's greatest Christian composer — and arguably its greatest composer, period.

"Everything You Always Wanted to Know About God (But Were Afraid To Ask)" (WaterBrook Press, \$14.99 paperback) is something else. Eric Metaxas, a New York

City writer of humor, children's books and media scripts, zips through the issues in a quirky question-and-answer romp.

The two offerings from Fortress, a Lutheran publisher, fulfill both the heart and mind. One adds delights for the eye (color reproductions of seven paintings illuminate McGrath's points), while the other adds delights for the ear (Fischer's biography comes with a CD providing 17 examples of Bach's music).

McGrath, a one-time Marxist atheist turned orthodox Christian, is writing a series of brief books on "the truth and the Christian imagination." The first was the award-winning "Creation," and "Incarnation" is the second. Topics yet to come: redemption, resurrection, heaven, God.

For McGrath, the Christmas message of God becoming man through the humble Bethlehem birth is a theme that knits together everything else that's important for

Christianity.

He writes: "The nativity, as seen by the eye of faith, is about God choosing, out of love and compassion, to enter the dark, distant and lonely place that we call human history. Rather than summon us to meet him in the heavenly places, God chose to encounter us where we are."

The Bach book, a reissue of the 2000 German edition, depicts a man who ever sought to glorify God through his musical art and turned out some 200 cantatas, 480 keyboard pieces, chamber works, concertos, passions, Masses and oratorios —

including the great Christmas Oratorio, which premiered in Leipzig in 1734. In all, about 500 of his sacred compositions survive, compared with some 300 secular works.

The bulk alone is astonishing; the unfailing superb quality is simply unbelievable.

Bach's inexplicable genius aside, Fischer provides a fine sense of what life was like for a workmanlike musician in the employ of monarchs and then as a hard-pressed church musician and schoolteacher in the employ of the Leipzig city council. (Separation of church and state was unknown back then.

**The Charlotte Post**

Please Join  
**MEMORIAL PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH**

~ for ~  
*"Christmas Eve Service"*

Saturday, December 24, 2005  
7:00 P.M.

Rev. Edward B. Newberry, Pastor  
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Praise & Worship..... 10:45am  
Worship Service..... 11:00am  
Wednesday Bible Study..... 7:00pm  
Wednesday Prayer Service.. 8:00pm

Rev. Cuthbertson

**First Baptist Church - West**  
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Missions  
Discipleship  
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Sunday School..... 9:45a.m.  
Worship Service..... 11:00a.m.  
Wednesday Bible Study..... 7:00p.m.

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Sunday Worship 8:00am & Sunday School 10:00am

Worship Times At  
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Sunday Worship 7:00, 9:30 & 11:30am & Youth Church, 11:30am  
Women's Bible Study, Monday 6:30pm  
Men's Bible Study, Monday 7:00pm  
Bible Study, Thursday 6:30pm  
[www.theparkministries.org](http://www.theparkministries.org)

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Website: [www.friendshipgastonia.org](http://www.friendshipgastonia.org)

*Schedule of Services*  
Early Flow Worship..... 8:00am  
Church School..... 9:30am  
Spirit Flow Celebration..... 10:45am  
Wednesday Bible Studies..... Seniors, 10:00am  
..... 12 Noon and 6:30 pm  
Wednesday Interspersory Prayer..... 6-6:30 pm  
Spirit Flow Radio Broadcast, WGAS & WGR  
1540 AM, - Wednesdays at 9:30am  
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3001 Beatties Fd. Rd., Charlotte, NC 28216-3731  
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**The Charlotte Post CHURCH DIRECTORY**

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