

The Charlotte Post

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WEEK OF DECEMBER 18, 2006 - JANUARY 1, 2007

newsmaker of the year | rev. claud alexander

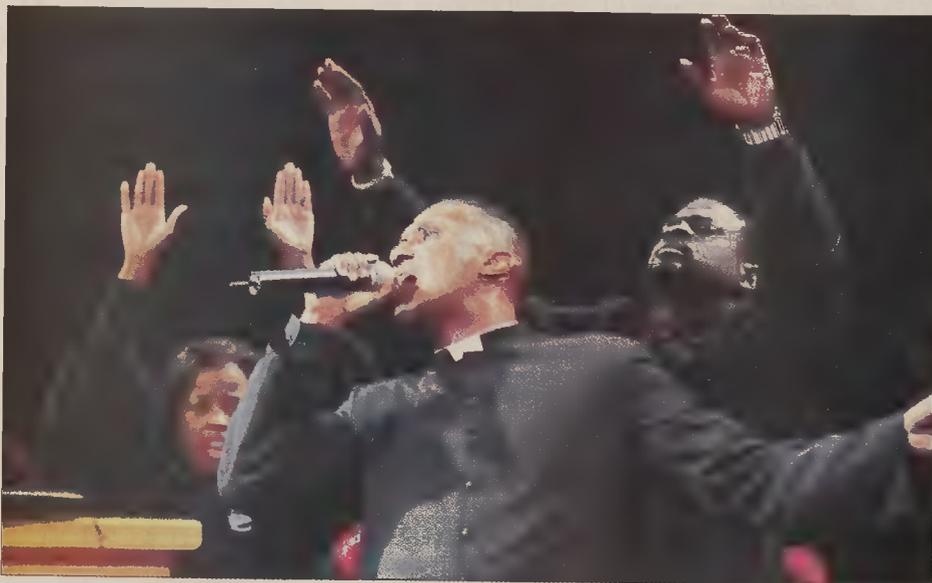


PHOTO: PAUL WILLIAMS III

The Rev. Claude Alexander leads worship at University Park Baptist Church's Beatties Ford Road campus. Last month, the church closed a deal to acquire the Charlotte Merchandise Mart (below) as headquarters of the 8,000-member congregation.



PHOTO: CALVIN FERGUSON

James Brown, photographed at a 2001 concert in Charlotte.

'Godfather' changed more than the music

James Brown created undeniable legacy with funky flair for dramatic

By Winifred B. Cross
FOR THE CHARLOTTE POST

James Brown's legacy as a singer, songwriter, producer, dancer and band leader was set decades before his death Christmas day, yet there is at least a generation that doesn't know about his influence on current music.

Many may only remember the jail sentence in the late '90s, the much publicized police chase in South Carolina and drug and domestic violence charges.

That would be a shame if true. Brown's musical influence runs through decades and genres like a rain-soaked river.

Hip-hop certainly owes "Soul Brother No. 1" a great deal. When it and rap was a fledgling culture, Brown's seminal hits were sampled and became the basis for new recordings by Public Enemy, LL Cool J and others that sold millions. It took lawsuits to get Brown and other artists such as George Clinton paid, but that didn't stop him from being embraced by a generation that knew of him only through its parents' old 45 records.

Please see MUSIC/2A

the box

NEWS, NOTES & TRENDS

Panel: Boost juvenile age in sentencing

By Sommer Brokaw
THE TRIANGLE TRIBUNE

DURHAM - "I was 14 and my brother 17, when he got a Class H felony conviction for drug possession that he would have to carry with him the rest of his life," said Charmaine Fuller, assistant director of the Carolina Justice Policy Center.

Fuller told the personal situation to shed light on her argument that the juvenile sentencing age for adult convictions should be increased from 16 to 18.

Fuller made the presentation at a Dec. 15 luncheon hosted by the
Please see ACTIVISTS/3A

Reaching out through faith

The Rev. Claude Alexander leads evolution of The Park Ministry as spiritual and community force

By Erica Singleton
FOR THE CHARLOTTE POST

What a difference a year makes.

If you'd asked University Park Baptist Church pastor Rev. Claude Alexander Jr. in 2005 if he thought the congregation would be moving to the Charlotte Merchandise Mart, he would have told you no chance.

Yet, in 2006, that is exactly what is happening.

"Doing the due diligence, continuing to see the potential of the site, finding the right partner," said Alexander, "all of that happened within that year."

In an unprecedented \$11.5 million deal, the church, led by Alexander, acquired the 529,000 square foot facility in November in order to expand the 8,000 member congregation into what will be referred to as The Park.

This "was the year of working through the beginning of a vision," said Alexander. "It was the year of first steps. It was the year of seeing God move in unusual and unexpected ways."

For Alexander, the Merchandise Mart deal was more than a real estate transaction for the ministry. It represented another chapter in University Park's out-

reach locally and internationally.

"In 2006 the church itself was involved in so many different things," said Alexander.

The church sent missionaries to Kenya, Malawi, South Africa, and Brazil. It hosted gospel music concerts with artists like Yolanda Adams, John P. Kee, Donald Lawrence and a fund raiser to aid the victims of Hurricane Katrina.

University Park also offered HIV testing and Hepatitis C screenings in conjunction with Roche Labs, a partnership they hope to
Please see MINISTRY'S/7A

Rev. Claude Alexander

Age: 42
Born: Waterloo, Iowa.
Occupation: Senior pastor, The Park Ministries
Education: Bachelor's, Morehouse College, Atlanta; master's Pittsburgh Theological Seminary; doctorate, Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary.
Family: Wife, Kimberly, daughters Camryn and Carsyn.



PHOTO: CURTIS WILSON

Family fare highlights New Year's celebration

By Shari Tillman
FOR THE CHARLOTTE POST

Charlotte Center City Partners is holding its third annual Noon Year's Eve celebration Dec. 31.

Noon Year's is a celebration for families who want to celebrate the New Year in a safe environment. Children of all ages can join in on the fun by enjoying free live music, food and ice skating at the Wachovia Plaza, 310 South Tryon 1-4 p.m.

Tryon Street will be blocked off between 2nd and 3rd to give children plenty of room to enjoy the fun. According to Moira Quinn,

senior vice president of communications of Charlotte Center City Partners, the WBT Holiday in the City Ice Rink will be open at The Green, located next to the Plaza.

"We encourage families to encompass The Green and the wonderful ice skating rink," said Quinn. "It will all be family fun."

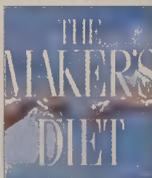
Performers at Noon Year's will include singing group sensation Myxx, the Danger Rangers, Seemore Goodstuff and Charlotte's Hunter Jumper from Radio Disney and the Disney Fun Squad. But the main event
Please see NEW YEAR'S/2A



PHOTO: CURTIS WILSON

ICE-CAPADES Basia Collins lends a hand to Mia Johnson during a skate at the Green in Center City last week. The rink is growing in popularity as a winter attraction uptown.

Faith-based books help feed body and soul/5B



SOME HELP, PLEASE

Carolina Panthers need a win and outside assists to make the NFL playoffs/1C



CLASS IS IN

Disney's "High School Musical" is an energetic romp for entire family/1B



Technological advances help improve energy efficiency for homes./6D

INSIDE

Life 1B
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Sports 1C
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