



# Giving Is a Godly Trait

Matthew reports in his gospel narrative that wise men came to Bethlehem of Judea in search of the Holy Child Jesus. They came bringing gifts (Matthew 2:11). Perhaps one can safely presume that the tradition of giving or exchanging gifts at Christmas time harks back to the three wise men. The wise men came bringing gifts suited for a king. The babe whom they came to visit was indeed a king.

The gospel record reflects that the wise men brought, “gold, frankincense, and Myrrh.” The gifts that the wise men brought represented the best that the wise men had to offer. That is Godly giving. God will not accept anything other than the giver’s very best. God, on the first Christmas gave us his very best; He gave us his only Son.

Legend holds that Casper brought gold to the babe. Gold represents material substance. Gold for many years was esteemed as our most precious metal. Platinum is valued more highly than gold according to present day standards. Material is necessary and needed in our daily lives. However, we may easily overvalue materials. Should this even occur one might easily become victimized by greed. God blesses us with gifts to share with others. We must aim to share with those whose circumstances in life are inferior to ours.

The legend further states that Melchior brought frankincense. Frankincense is a fragrance; it carries a sweet smelling odor. Fragrance can represent the inner thought of a person, which may typify character. Scripture teaches, “For as he thinketh in his heart, so is he”....(Proverbs 23:7). Worshipers must approach God with a spirit of humility and honesty.

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Abraham obeyed when he was called....And he went out not knowing where he was going (Hebrews 11:8).

As we stand on the threshold of a new year, may this prayer of faith and anticipation be ours.

“O Lord God, who has called us. Your servants to ventures of which we cannot see this ending, By paths as yet untrod-den, And through perils unknown, Give us faith to go out with good courage, not knowing where we go But only that your hand is leading us And your love is sup- porting us. Amen.”

—Excerpted from *Our Daily Bread* (January 1, 2006)



## APOLOGY

*It was our intention to publish this issue before Christmas. Please accept our apology for the delay.*

—*East End Circle*

## Maxwell Visits The Torchbearers

by Dr. Oscar Tucker

**Bill Maxwell**, author, newspaper columnist, and head of Stillman College's journalism department, entertained the Torchbearers and guests on 28 November 2005. **Mrs. Ida Hobson** presided and made preliminary remarks before **Mrs. Gladys Stringfellow** introduced the speaker.

Professor Maxwell's presence silences a room. His firmly set jaw, stiff upper lip and penetrating brown eyes suggest a restlessness forged early in life by the hardships of his poor, proud, migrating farm family. He is plain-spoken and provocative, and spent twenty-five minutes giving an extemporaneous accounting of his rich and varied life as a world traveler, journalist, and educator. A question and answer session ensued for more than an hour.

He recounted stories of poor farm families migrating from farm to farm and state to state, living in horrible conditions, trying to eke out a living picking fruits and vegetables and other seasonal crops. Such conditions rendered schooling almost nonexistent. Nonetheless, he spoke lovingly of maternal and fraternal grandparents, who surrounded him with reading materials and encouraged him to get an education. Toward that end, he learned early in life to love

books and reading. He developed a sharp intellect, superior writing skills, and eventually earned a Master's Degree from the University of Chicago.

His yen to travel takes him all over the world, and helps to hone his keen sense of observation. This intelligence and his ravenous appetite for things intellectual give him insights into the forces that drive the political, social, and economic systems of peoples and countries in Europe, the Middle East, Africa, and other parts of the world.

Professor Maxwell came to Stillman from St. Petersburg, Florida, where he spent ten years as a member of the editorial page board of the *St. Petersburg Times*. Contrary to local Tuscaloosa lore, he was not fired nor pressured to leave *The Times*, but left voluntarily and took a pay cut to, in his words, "...Help Stillman College establish a journalism major and to publish the student newspaper weekly. My long term goals are to

help produce competent African-American journalists who can land good jobs with the nation's mainline and minority media outlets and to transform Stillman into a center for journalism excellence, where companies, such as the *St. Petersburg Times*, can come to recruit."

Maxwell describes himself politically as a "yellow dog Democrat," meaning he would rather vote for an old cur yellow dog running against a highly regarded Republican. He finds no redeeming qualities in blacks, including Colin Powell, Condoleezza Rice, and Clarence Thomas who align themselves with the Republican Party. "Blacks," he said, "have hardly any reason to get in bed with Republicans. The modern Democratic Party expresses our values, our goals, our aspirations. The Democratic Party has done more for us."

See *Maxwell*, page 5

*Acquiring knowledge and using our intellect to better ourselves are the most powerful and most useful acts we can commit to subvert a system that has kept us down.*

## Pages of Life Book Club

by Danielle Hargrove

**Pages of Life** is blessed with starting our third year by engaging in a financial Bible study. In previous years, we have discussed various books such as *Prayer of a Praying Wife*, *Prayer of a Praying Husband* and *Your Best Life Now*, and the esteemed author, **Vanessa Davis Griggs** gave a book review of her novel *Wings of Grace* at the Murphy-Collins African American Museum. Now this year will be our best year yet!

Kicking off the year, we will begin a three month book review of **Larry Burkett's** book *How to Manage Your Money*. This study is biblically based and designed to shed God's promises about money and wealth. We invite you to please come and join our Christian fellowship and be prepared for God to reveal His desires and His plans for your finances and financial success.



## Church News

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### CONGRATULATIONS

The First African Baptist Church family salutes two members who are graduated in December 2005:

**Keira Ellis** graduated with a Bachelor of Science degree in Public Relations and Political Science. Keira will continue her studies by pursuing a graduate degree at Auburn University beginning this Spring 2006.

**Alfreda White** graduated with a certificate in Administration. Sis. White currently teaches mathematics at Northridge High School.



Best wishes and congratulations are extended to **Dr. Emily Yvette Melton** and **Attorney William Anthony Bell, Jr.**, who were married on November 26, 2005 here at First African Baptist Church.

Congratulations to **Rev. and Sis. Oscar J. (Shana) Rivers** who celebrated their first wedding anniversary on Sunday, January 8, 2006.

*Congratulations!*

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### DEATHS

Funeral services for **Dr. Harold L. Bishop, Sr.** were held on October 26, 2005 in the Concert Hall of the Moody Music building on the University of Alabama campus, with Dr. James C. Carter, officiating.

Funeral services for **Sis. Altheria Jackson Harkness** were held on December 30, 2005 at First African Baptist Church with Dr. James C. Carter, officiating.

Funeral services for **Bro. Samuel A. Gray Sr.** were held on January 14, 2006 at Weeping Mary Baptist Church with Dr. James C. Carter, officiating

*Please continue to pray for our families.*

## Church Events

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The District Crusaders' Leadership Conference under the direction of **Bro. Levert Hedgeman, Jr.**, the NAB District Counselor, convened at Plum Grove Baptist Church on December 10, 2005, where **Rev. Tyshawn Gardner** is pastor.

Crusaders from all over the District attended. Several interesting workshops were presented including "Interview Skills and Dress for Success" by **Bro. Kenneth Lawson** and "Health and Education" by **Sis. Georgia White**.

The project "Sharing Good Shoes" was coordinated by **Bro. Ben Horton** of Second Baptist Church, Holt. Each Crusader was asked to bring a pair of shoes to be donated to the Salvation Army. This was a huge success and we wish to thank persons in our congregation who contributed shoes for the project.

# Missionary Society

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## OFFICERS

### PRESIDENT

*Sis. Georgia L. White*

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*Sis. Lillie C. Lawson*

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*Sis. Vera M. Key*

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### ASSISTANT FINANCIAL SECRETARY

*Sis. Jean Wells and Sis. Irene Smith*

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*Sis. Betty W. Lawson*

### CHAPLAIN

*Sis. Willie M. Carter*



## CIRCLES

Sunbeams  
Red Circle/YWA  
Crusaders  
Matrons  
Lott Carey  
East End  
West End  
Good Neighbor  
Ministers, Deacons, and Trustee Wives  
Nurses Guild

## THE MISSIONARY PLEDGE

True to the faith which I possess, that the Lord Jesus Christ desires Christians to be an essential factor in the elevation of fallen humanity, and that she should render a reasonable service in the salvation of lost souls by giving of her time, talent and her means, I hereby promise to be faithful and punctual in attending the meetings of the Women's Baptist Home and Foreign Mission Society, to take part in same, to perform cheerfully the duties of saving souls and bring someone to each meeting as far as possible for me to do so, to contribute of my own money for missionary work in the home and foreign fields, to read the Bible daily and continue steadfastly in prayer for the success of missions, both at home and abroad.



As we start the New Year, each person is urged to start taking a "Health Inventory" to determine exactly where they are in terms of their health and wellness. Start with these five very basic questions:

1. **How is your blood pressure?** If it is elevated, what are you doing to get it under control? High blood pressure (hypertension) can lead to heart attacks, stroke, kidney disease, and other ailments.
2. **How is your cholesterol?** There are dietary and lifestyle modifications you can make to help lower your cholesterol. If these do not work, there are very effective prescription medications you can take to help you lower your cholesterol.
3. **Are you at your goal weight?** Overweight and obesity are epidemics in the United States and the problem is very significant for the African American community. Read as many articles for some helpful hints on weight loss.
4. **Do you have diabetes, and if so, is it under good control?** Poorly controlled diabetes can have devastating health consequences and the African American community is at particular risk.
5. **Are you ready to make some sacrifices for improved health and wellness?** It will take a little work to live healthier, but it is well worth it!

—Submitted by **Sis. Linda O'Rourke** from an Internet Source

# The Tate Family

## Do you know them?

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Do you know the many members of the TATE FAMILY belong to your church? There is old man DIC-TATE who wants to run everything, while Uncle RO-TATE, tries to change everything. There is sister AGI-TATE who stirs up plenty of trouble, with help from her husband IRRI-TATE. Whenever new projects are suggested, HESI-TATE and his wife VEGE-TATE, want to wait until next year. Then there is Aunt IMI-TATE, who wants our church to be like all the others. DEVAS-TATE provides the voice of doom, while POTEN-TATE wants to be a big shot.

But not all members of the family are bad. Brother FACILI-TATE is quite helpful in church matters. A delightful, happy member of the family is Miss FELICI-TATE. Cousins COGI-TATE and MEDI-TATE always think things over and lend helpful, steady hands. Of course there is the black sheep of the family, AMPU-TATE, who has completely cut himself off from the church.

How about it—do you know anyone in the “TATE” family?

—Submitted by **Sis. Georgia White**

## Maxwell (continued from page 2)

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Maxwell took to task black churches, for adopting the homophobic attitudes of Rev. Pat Robertson, and Rev. Jerry Falwell. These preachers are representative of the far right wing of the Republican Party. “Their attitudes are driven,” according to Maxwell, “by raw hatred, ignorance, illegality, irrational fear, and politics.”

He lashed out at blacks, who are anti-intellectual nonreaders and who loathe learning for the sake of learning. “Being intellectually capable is black people’s most important possession,” Maxwell responded to a question about the woeful state of black education, “Acquiring knowledge and using our intellect to better ourselves are the most powerful and most useful acts we can commit to subvert a system that has kept us down.”

His dry wit and worldly perceptions kept all engrossed and hanging on his every word. Mrs. Hobson, because of time constraints, had to bring the very lively exchanges to a close. Professor Maxwell consented to visit FABC again, if invited. All agreed that an invitation is most assuredly forthcoming.

## Giving Is a Godly Trait (continued from page 1)

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The third Wise man, Balthazzar brought myrrh. Myrrh is an ointment which has a bitter sweet fragrance. It is quite costly. Myrrh is an ointment which symbolizes life’s sorrow. Myrrh in early civilizations was used for embalming. The gift of myrrh pointed to the pain, sorrows and the eventual death of God’s blessed Son who would bear the burden of sin for the whole world.

The legend of the three wise men, Casper, Melchior, and Balthazzar is not reported as fact. What is learned from their gifts is the fact that they offered the Holy Child their very best. Offering the best that one has is Godly giving. Godly giving is right. Godly giving is just. Godly giving earns for the giver a good report. Godly giving is also done reverently. Let us remember that God gave us His best; and He will accept nothing less from us in our labors or our offerings.

—Rev. J. C. Carter

FIRST AFRICAN BAPTIST  
CHURCH

## FABC COMMUNICATOR

### EDITOR

*Sis. Dorothy Richardson*

### CONTRIBUTING WRITERS

*Sis. Danielle Hargrove*

*Sis. Linda O'Rourke*

*Sis. Ruby Petagrew*

*Sis. Gladys Stringfellow*

*Bro. Oscar Tucker*

*Sis. Georgia White*

## HAM 'N CHEDDAR BROCCOLI QUICHE

1 (15 oz) pkg. Pillsbury Refrigerated Pie Crust

1 cup milk

4 eggs slightly beaten

1/8 teaspoon pepper

1 cup cubed cooked ham

1 1/2 cups shredded Cheddar cheese

1 cup frozen broccoli cuts, thawed

1 tablespoon chopped onion



Prepare pie crust according to package directions for filled one crust pie using a 9-inch pie pan (Refrigerate remaining crust for later use). Heat over to 350° degrees. In medium bowl, combine milk, eggs, dry mustard and pepper; set aside. Layer ham, cheese, broccoli and onion in pie crust-lined pan. Pour egg mixture over ham, cheese, and broccoli. Bake at 350° farenhit for 50-55 minutes or until knife inserted in center comes out clean. Cool for 5 minutes, cut into wedges. Refrigerate any remaining quiche. 6 to 8 servings.

WE ARE ON THE WEB!

[WWW.FIRSTAFRICANCHURCH.ORG](http://WWW.FIRSTAFRICANCHURCH.ORG)

## A Church had problems with outsiders parking in its parking lots, so they put up a sign:

Church car park—For members only, Trespassers will be baptized!



### CHURCH SIGN BOARDS:

No God—No Peace. Know God—Know Peace.

Free Trip to heaven. Details Inside!

Try our Sundays. They're better than Dairy Queen's

Searching for a new look? Have your faith lifted here!

People are like tea bags—you have to put them in hot water before you know how strong they are.

Looking at the way some people live, they ought to obtain eternal fire insurance soon.

This is a ch\_\_ch. What is missing?— (U R)

In the dark? Follow the Son.

Running low on faith? Step in for a fill-up.

If you can't sleep, don't count sheep. Talk to the Shepherd.

Come work for the Lord. The work is hard, the hours are long and the pay is low. But the retirement benefits are out of this world.

There are no luggage racks on hearses.

An ad for one Church has a picture of two hands holding stone tablets on which the Ten Commandments are inscribed and a headline that reads, "For fast, fast, fast relief, take two tablets."

When the restaurant next to another Church put out a big sign with red letters that said, "Open Sundays," the church reciprocated with its own message: "We are open on Sundays, too."

### AND THE WINNER!

On the Pastor's Parking Spot—  
Pastor's Spot  
YOU PARK, YOU PREACH.

Fight truth decay Study the Bible daily.

How will you spend eternity? Smoking or Nonsmoking?

Dusty Bible lead to Dirty Lives.

It is unlikely there'll be a reduction in the wages of sin.

Do not wait for the hearse to take you to church.  
If you're headed in the wrong direction, God allows U-turns.

If you don't like the way you were born, try being born again.

—Submitted by **Sis. Ruby Petagrew** from an Internet Source