

# THE GLOBE

Winter 2009

News for the Passport World



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## Planning for *The Blues* this Christmas?

by Paul Byrd

Rocking around the Christmas tree, joy to the world, have a holly jolly Christmas? *From rock and roll to country to Christian... it seems every station and every style is obsessed with Christmas joy...* so I'm wondering what to do when my Christmas has the Blues? If we who are Christ followers are not careful, we can get caught up in the push for the "ideal Christmas" and buy into the idea of Christmas as a one emotion holiday... that of perfect bliss. The only problem is that many folks are far from happy during this season. For many, loss during the year may seem overwhelming, or depression may be the cause of suffering.

Whatever we may be going through, we need to remember that, just like rock and roll grew out of the blues... our Christmas celebration is really the observance of some truly painful events. It may be that the somber feelings are much more appropriate an observance of this holiday than the jingle bell rock. No matter where you look in the Christmas story... whether it's at the teen pregnancy,

or the pauper's journey across country to pay taxes; whether it's the birth among livestock or the death of innocent babies at the hands of Herod's soldiers, poverty, desperation, and grief are a huge part of the story.

Perhaps it's time for us who are charged with bearing salt and light, to bear this message too... the joy of Christmas is the same as the joy of singing the blues. We retell stories of hope and brokenness, whether our own or that of those around us, and somehow in the honest telling we find hope against hope and begin to feel just a little better.

As you settle into this holiday season, take some time to reflect on the deep and difficult emotions of the Christmas story and see how this story relates with your own or that of those around you. If you or someone around you is having a difficult year, sing a little blues and consider some of these tips from *The Season of Light*, by Darcie Sims, Ph.D. [From the Nov/Dec 1995 issue of Bereavement Magazine]

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# MK at the Holidays.

What is it like to celebrate the holidays as a Missionary Kid?

by Alyssa Aldape



To me, Christmas in America means cold weather, long coats, nativity scenes in a front yard, and houses lit up with small twinkling lights. In India, Christmas means flip-flops and maybe a light jacket. Maybe. One might see the occasional Christmas tree in a store window, but most of the time Christmas is not emphasized. However, there is one house in the Hills outside the city limits that

shines bright. The Aldape house is the brightest house in the neighborhood and I am not kidding when I say that you can see our house from about two miles away. The days leading up to Christmas are spent shopping for the 20+ little boys who live in the children's home that is part of my parent's ministry. Each year after we have had our family time at home, we head to the children's home and spend time with the Banjaras and with the boys. The boys receive something different each year as a Christmas gift; usually it is a pair of shoes or an article of clothing, but no matter what it is, their faces light up brighter than any house decorated for Christmas. The rest of the day is spent singing Christmas songs and eating Christmas dinner with the boys.

In July, I had the opportunity to attend Passport camp as a chaperone with my church and was so happy to see that the Passport counselors encouraged teenagers to give to missions. This year at Passport, the missions emphasis was on my parents and their ministry for the Banjaras. On the last night of camp, it was great to see kids from ages 12-18, adults, and college students, offer what they could to a missionary couple they would probably never meet. I was and

## Helping students INTENTIONALLY Celebrate the Season

### Children

A word from Mark McClintock,

Coordinator for PASSPORTkids! programming

There are a lot of conversations about the sacred and secular aspects of Christmas when it comes to children. Actually, there are good, solid reasons for separating the mythology surrounding St. Nick from the biblical truths about Jesus. Our culture often mingles and mangles the two.

Young children don't distinguish between the sacred and the secular. Visions of Santa Claus laying a gift at the foot of the manger seem perfectly natural. For many of us who work with and/or raise children, it is a question of balance. Rest assured that the eyes, ears, and minds of youth in the USA will be saturated with North Pole perspective. *It is up to us to bring our children back to the heart of our faith—the coming of God into the world in a vulnerable and mysterious way that is infinitely more powerful and life-changing than stockings and tinsel trees.*

Consider practical ways to help re-focus children's attention on the sacred this Christmas. Sing songs of faith at bedtime. Involve the children in Advent services—helping hang the greens, placing the people and animals in the Nativity crèche, providing child-appropriate materials such as interactive bulletins. Celebrate Jesus' birthday in relevant ways—letting them help bake a cake to share on Christmas or bring a present for the church nursery as a gift to Jesus.

Teach our children the Good News by de-emphasizing the consumerism of Christmas. Instead of sending long wish lists to Santa, make a list of ways a child can show love to family and friends this season. Help children make presents. Bake cookies and share them.

Personally, I don't advocate a "board up the chimney" approach. I do recommend having and teaching a healthy perspective on the holy-day. We teach our children most by what we do. What we do reveals what is important. What is important to us? That our children enjoy a few hours of pleasure playing with new toys? Sure, why not? Even more, though, that our children know God's love through our love, and that they learn to share that love with others.

#### Suggested Resources:

- Forbid Them Not series by Carolyn C. Brown (Abingdon Press) has valuable worship-planning resources for every Sunday, including those in Advent.
- Unplug the Christmas Machine by Jo Robinson & Jean Coppock Staeheli (Harper Paperbacks) is a classic that never gets old. It includes a pledge to maintain the beauty and simplicity of Christmas.

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am very thankful for every person who gave that night and all the other nights of Passport camp. The money given at Passport will go to school supplies and clothes for the boys who attend the school. To see those little boys jump for joy because of a new pair of shoes or a plastic airplane, or new school supplies, means so much more than before.

**This year, I am spending my Christmas in India and when I get to see the precious little boys light up on Christmas, I will remember the kids at Passport, the Bible study leaders, and I will be thankful to God for the body of believers here stateside.**

I have experienced both sides of missions and it truly is a beautiful blessing to see fellow believers give for the purpose of furthering God's kingdom.

*Alyssa is a senior majoring in Religion at Samford University. Her parents are CBF field personnel living in India.*



## October 29th Update



On Oct. 29th, over 18,000 people celebrated the life of Maggie Lee Henson by doing something good on what would have been her 13th birthday. Watering Malawi was designated one of the recipients of funds raised on October 29th. Maggie Lee For Good T-shirts were sold and resulted in over \$1,200 donated to clean water projects in Malawi.

Passport staff proudly sported their MLFG shirts and spent a day away from their normal tasks working in the warehouse to reorganize and prepare for the upcoming year.

*Front Page Story Continued.*

***Be patient with yourself.*** Know that hardly anyone is as happy as you think they might be.

***Be realistic.*** It will hurt, but don't try to block bad moments. Be ready for them. Lay in a supply of tissues.

***Be kind and gentle to yourself.*** Figure out what you should do, balance it with what you are capable of doing and then compromise.

***Plan ahead.*** Grieving people often experience a lack of concentration. Make lists. Prioritize everything. Decide what is really important to you.

***Listen to yourself.*** As you become aware of your needs, tell family members and friends.

***Take care of yourself physically.*** Eat right. Exercise.

***Understand*** That heartache will be unpacked as you sift through the decorations, but so, too, are the warm loving memories of each piece. Don't deny yourself the gift of healing tears.

***Ask for help when you need it.***

***Share your holidays*** With someone, anyone! There are lots of lonely people who could use your love and caring.

***Work at lifting depression.*** Take responsibility for yourself. We cannot wait for someone else to wrap up some joy and give it to us.

***Hang the stockings.*** Place a wreath on the grave or do whatever feels right for you and your family.

***Light a special candle.*** Not in memory of a death, but in celebration of a life and a love shared.

***Learn to look for joy in the moment.*** Get a pair of rose colored glasses and change the way you look at things. Joy happens when we look for it!

***Find the gifts of your loved one's life.*** Think of all the "gifts that your loved one gave to you - joy, safety, laughter, companionship, etc. list these "gifts" on strips of paper and keep them somewhere close to you.

*Paul Byrd is Chaplain at Children's Health System in Birmingham, Alabama.*

## Youth

A word from Marnie Fisher-Ingram,

Coordinator for PASSPORT youth programming

Helping our youth understand the meaning of Christmas can sometimes be a daunting task. They are surrounded by a secular world that is pushing them to have this next gadget, clothing item, etc. Many of our youth are pressured to spend their weekends at the mall or movie theatre or Starbucks throwing their money away because that is what everyone else is doing. Being a youth minister is a challenge all the time, but being a youth minister during the Christmas season can be especially hard. How do we get our youth to think beyond themselves? For those of you looking for assistance to help your youth do just this, here are some ideas and resources.

### Ideas:

- Do your traditional Christmas party, but include a missions element with it.
- Teach Bible Studies or Sunday School lessons about the real meaning of Christmas\*
- Challenge them not to spend any money on themselves in December
- Adopt a family as a youth group
- Serve at a Soup Kitchen
- Set up 25 Days of Volunteering – Rake leaves, sing carols, write letters to Soldiers, etc.

### Resources:

- \*The Thoughtful Christian: [www.thethoughtfulchristian.com/New%20Site/Main/StudyPack.asp#1](http://www.thethoughtfulchristian.com/New%20Site/Main/StudyPack.asp#1)
- Devotional Resource: [www.d365.org](http://www.d365.org)
- Middle school resource: Celebrating Advent a five session study by the Mennonite Publishing Network: <http://store.mpn.net/productdetails.cfm?PC=596>
- Advent Conspiracy: Do Christmas differently. [www.adventconspiracy.org](http://www.adventconspiracy.org)



# What Counts?

*Four reasons why sending youth and children to a Christian camp is not a discretionary expense.*

By David Burroughs

With the economy in recovery mode and unemployment rising, will leaders support the expense of sending students to church camp or mark it as discretionary spending? Churches need to prayerfully consider this question. Does a decision about paying the bills today borrow from investment in a congregation's most valuable asset? Does it borrow from the children?

Here are four reasons why attending camp is vital to a young person's spiritual journey and an investment in future congregations.

**Peace is possible:** God's voice is always accessible, but only available when we are quiet enough to listen for it. Unlike anywhere else in their lives, campers unplug from the daily realities full of noise, stress, technology and constant peer pressure. Though far from quiet, camp allows young people the opportunity to experience silence, calm, nature, dirt, adventure and the voice of God in real ways. Camp mandates soul silence.

**Hope is renewed:** At camp, a student can shed old habits and try new things. Out of their routine, and a day or so into the week, something odd happens – they wake up. You can see it on their faces as they participate in Bible study or as they linger around the dinner table instead of bolting. It is in these moments, when they 'wake up,' that deep and lasting connections are made. Internally, lifetime memories form that shape thought for the future. Physically, they connect faith to sweat, singing to freedom, and prayer to deep inner peace. They grow friendships that transcend geography and allow connections around the country and around the world. They begin to see they can make a difference. Hope is renewed.

**Community is restored:** Youth and children's groups are no longer all from the same school. Finding time to really be together outside Bible study and Sunday school, as **one group**, is rare if not impossible. But, at camp students are together for days. The older youth become nicer, remembering when they looked



up to the seniors. The younger youth slow down and begin to believe that this group might just like them for who they are beneath their awkward surface. The adults remember how hard it was to be a teenager, and just how good their youth really are. Those shared memories help to hold them together when they get home and live so separately.

**Spiritual Bookmarks are placed:** I read this every year over and over again as potential summer staffers send us their testimony. Almost without exception, they reference an experience at camp as a part of their testimony of faith. It's like a bell going off as I read them. "There it is. Camp." I'm not just talking about a Passport experience. We talk to hundreds of applicants who are from all over the map and from multiple Christian camping traditions. Their stories inevitably refer back to moments when life offered for them the chance to hear the voice of God. They refer to camp staffers, by name, who modeled community for them and encouraged them to think creatively about God's direction in their lives. They talk about camp because that "mountain top" experience is a clear spiritual bookmark in their life.

Do I think camp can singly take credit for that growth? Absolutely not. Camp is simply the setting that provides an opportune moment to harvest what church ministers and adult leaders have gently been

teaching children and youth all year long. But I do believe that camp is a unique, sacred space that is not easily replicated anywhere else in the lives of our students. And that space holds earthshaking potential and the unique opportunity for students to safely put all the puzzle pieces of their faith on the table, in one long string of days, and begin to see what their spiritual picture is beginning to look like.

For many ministers, camp is a pivotal hinge on which the church year can rest. It can set up the routine of the coming school year, or be the grand finale of a year of work and focus and study. Sure, the economy is tough on everyone - churches, non-profits, families. But I am praying that church families will set the thermostats of their budgets at a challenging level in order to continue to provide sacred space for their children and youth at camp in the summer. It is a sound investment in the future.

*David Burroughs is the President of Passport, Inc.*

**Disclaimer:** *Not all programs are created equally. Many churches who adamantly claim specific theological issues (i.e. the role of women) as foundational, continue to send their students to programs that do not reflect those guiding principles. Camp is an investment in young lives. Choose programs that respect and celebrate your congregation's theological convictions.*

# Celebrating God's Call

Passport is designed to be a safe place for all students to discover new ways to use their gifts to be the presence of Christ in the world. And by students, we don't just mean elementary school through high school. Passport hires multiple teams of college and graduate level students every year. And we have been doing it long enough now (seventeen years) to watch those students grow into an amazing new generation of church leaders.

It is an intentional and exciting opportunity to provide young professionals and potential ministers the training ground to hone skills in communication, teaching, administration, counseling, preaching and worship leadership.

Here is a list of the baptist staffers who invited us to their ordination services, in 2009. We asked them to share something about serving on a summer team. Passport is so thankful these men and women would choose to share their gifted leadership with us for a season or two. We celebrate the ministries in which God has placed them to serve.



## **Erin Spengeman**

*Associate Pastor*

Westover Baptist Church  
Richmond, Virginia

"Passport really helped shape my calling by giving me an enormous opportunity to use and nurture my gifts, to practice the things I'm good at."



## **Alice Cates**

*Associate Pastor*

Biltmore Baptist Church  
Richmond, Virginia

"My summer with Passport served as an overwhelming affirmation of my call to ministry. It challenged me to consider areas of ministry that I never thought myself equipped to handle and gave me confidence to fully embrace my call."



## **Walt Windley**

*Pastoral Resident of Community Ministries*  
First Baptist Church  
Dalton, Georgia

"In a time when my own community of faith said no to the tugging of my heart, my new adopted family at Passport (staff, workers, youth pastors, etc....) said yes and affirmed something in me--a literal laying on of a journey that allowed me to experience God at work in new and incredible ways. Now, I get to wake up every morning and do something that I love."



## **Kate Perry**

*CBF Resident*

Providence Baptist Church  
Charlotte, North Carolina

"Summer of 2004: Wake up. I was standing at the front of the auditorium on a Thursday night to receive any of my Bible study students who may have wanted to come forward. We were singing "Here I am, Lord" and I meant it. I decided that summer in the midst of teaching Samuel's call story to students that my love for God and passion for people would be best served through vocational ministry."



## **Rebecca Caswell-Speight**

*Minister with Children and Families*

Broadway Baptist Church  
Louisville, Kentucky

"I'd never met any one person so passionate about justice let alone a group of them trying to take the message of hope and joy to all God's people. It was here that Passport helped to develop me most. They taught me to look at the world with compassion. Passport gave me a new lens with which to read the Gospel."



## **Drew Collier**

*Minister to Youth and Young Adults*

Derbyshire Baptist Church  
Richmond, Virginia

"I have a lot to thank PASSPORT for. It was the first place where I learned my love for missions as a youth and it taught me valuable lessons in practical ministry as a summer camp staffer. Not only that, it was where I first experienced my call to ministry."



**Emily Hull**

*Minister to Young Adults*  
Highland Baptist Church  
Louisville, Kentucky

“My Summer of working Passport as a Bible Study Leader gave me the first chance as a collegian to practice ministerial leadership ... to be that voice or face of God to someone, even if only for a fleeting moment at camp. I realized profoundly both the great joy and the great responsibility that accompanies leadership with young people and realized I wanted to do this for the rest of my life.”



**Ashley Gill**

*Associate Minister of Family Life*  
University Baptist Church  
Hattiesburg, Mississippi

“Working for Passport surrounded me with an absolutely amazing team of people who helped draw out gifts I didn’t realize I had, encouraged and even celebrated my calling, and in turn helped me fully embrace God’s calling on my own life.”



**Gregory Harrell**

*Youth Minister*  
Blacksburg Baptist Church  
Blacksburg, Virginia

“After I had recognized God’s call to ministry in my life, working with Passport gave me a place to test and grow into my calling. Passport placed their trust in a young college student to teach, lead and mold youth during a summer of ministry. This trust helped me gain the confidence I needed to be in ministry.”



**Laura Wheeler**

*Interim Minister to Students*  
First Baptist Church  
Marietta, Georgia

“Passport was my first outlet for truly getting my hands and feet dirty in ministry as a college student. We are all called to be holistic ministers on staff, learning about our gifts through teaching, creative arts, administration, worship leadership, and pastoral care. As a Passport staffer, I found myself in an environment that honed all of these skills, not just one. It was challenging, but has provided me with invaluable tools that I can now take into the church, and that is a true blessing.”



**Renee Kenley Purtlebaugh**

*Minister to Children and their Families*  
Highland Baptist Church  
Louisville, Kentucky

“Being part of the Passport family has served to strengthen my faith and development in leadership and in ministry, and it has provided opportunity after opportunity and blessing upon blessing, as I’ve followed my calling and embarked on this journey.”



**Lauren Colwell**

*Associate Minister for Spiritual Formation and Families*  
First Baptist Church, Savannah, Georgia

“Passport allowed me to find my voice. Though I possessed leadership potential, few gave me the opportunity to organize, speak, coordinate, lead others, and make decisions all in the same setting. Passport helped transform a shy introvert into a confident introvert that could be a functional extrovert in ministry.”

**Ways we are praying this season.**  
*You are invited to join us.*

Pray for the students who are currently in the application process for next summer’s teams. Pray for wisdom in placing ministers that may one day serve in your congregation.

Pray for **PASSPORTLiberia**. Two of last summer’s directors are Student.go teachers there this year (Ann Elizabeth McInvale and Holly Wegman). They will help make a great week of camp happen for Liberian students.

Pray for Mike Young, Tennessee CBF; Walt Windley, FBC Dalton; Josh Brooks, St. Andrews UMC; and Josh Speight, Kentucky BF who are joining Liberian leaders to form that Passport staff.

Pray for funds needed to feed the Liberian campers who will be experiencing their first ever week of camp!

Pray for the families and congregations in the Passport world who have lost youth and children this year. We know the holidays can be especially hard.

Thanksgiving for: autumn leaves, plenty of clean water, music, friendship, and life in relationship to Christ.

*Joy to the World!*

Share a smile  
with a child  
this Christmas.



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