

# RELIGION

## Moslem cleric condemns cloning

Egypt's highest-ranking Islamic official said on Sunday that cloning humans was the work of the devil but was acceptable only if used to provide healthy organs for people in need of transplants.

Speaking at a symposium on cloning held at the doctor's syndicate, Grand Mufti Nasr Farid Wassil said scientists should concentrate on ways to combat more pressing issues such as poverty rather than on cloning research and called on legislators to severely punish those who practiced it.

"There are in the religious scriptures indications that this (cloning) is the work of the devil, that he is behind all corruption and cloning aims at changing Allah's (God's) creation and the order of society," Wassil told the symposium.

"This issue is taboo but not if it

deals with aspects that can help humanity, as in cloning an organ such as a liver or a kidney to solve a problem... and not weaken a healthy person."

The controversial subject of human cloning hit the headlines recently after scientists in Scotland introduced the world to Dolly, a lamb cloned from an adult sheep. But scientists have not said whether it is possible to clone just organs.

Egyptian scientists told government newspapers over the weekend that they did not perform any cloning research because it was expensive and needed sophisticated technology.

Making hybrids and artificial insemination was as far as they got, the scientists added.

But the issue has managed to divide Egypt's cabinet, with Religious

Endowments Minister Mahmoud Hamdi Zakzouk quoted as saying that cloning was so taboo that it was not even up for discussion. But Health Minister Ismail Sallam said it was a purely scientific affair.

Wassil, whose office is responsible for issuing religious edicts, said: "Why are scientists dealing with cloning when there is desertification, poverty and other issues that need our efforts more? We don't need this."

"Officials should ban research in this field and impose strict punishment on those who perform it, as it will lead to corruption the extent of which only Allah can know."

An Islamic theologian at the prestigious Sunni Moslem Al-Azhar institute has also called for an end to research on cloning, saying it did not meet Islamic requirements.

## Black Jesus causes stir

The three elementary school girls giggled as they imagined what Jesus looks like. He's tall, one said. With a flowing white robe, said another. And he is nice.

The Jesus the girls from the Church of the Incarnation in Jersey City were describing was a lot like the one they were watching on stage at America's oldest continually running Passion Play.

What none of the girls thought to mention was that this Jesus - like the three of them - was black.

Not everyone has been so transcendent in their imagination. An uproar followed the initial announcement that the Park Theatre decided to cast a black actor as Jesus for the first time in the 82-year history of the Passion Play in this poor, culturally diverse community.

Five tour groups canceled their reservations. Others wanted to reschedule to a show when a white actor played Jesus. After a couple of vague death threats were phoned into the theater, two church schools canceled out of fear for the safety of their students.

After centuries of seeing Jesus portrayed in art and film and Sunday School books as a white, blue-eyed European, the idea of a black Jesus still jars many Christians.

Eric Hafen, the director of the Passion Play which runs weekends

through April 20, said while there was no excuse for the overt prejudice, he could understand the apprehension of many prospective theatergoers.

Once people give it some thought, however, the idea of a black actor portraying a man from first-century Palestine "makes more sense than the blond-haired, blue-eyed Jeffrey Hunter," who has played Jesus on screen, he said.

The casting decision - and the resulting publicity and controversy - have forced people to re-examine the racial characteristics they attributed to the founder of Christianity.

For the most part, the answers coming back have been encouraging, said the Rev. Kevin Ashe, the play's producer.

In the first days after it became known that Desi Arnaz Giles would play Jesus, the theater received hundreds of calls and faxes from South America, Hawaii and everywhere in between expressing support.

On opening day, the audience of 700 gave Giles a standing ovation for his charismatic portrayal of Jesus.

"I was looking at him and I couldn't see color," said 73-year-old Mary Wengenic of St. Michael's Church in Germyn, Pa. "Yes, I knew he was black, but it didn't make any difference. He was Jesus."

Joseph Bukovec, who alternates

the role of Jesus with Giles, said he knew intellectually Giles was going to be good, but he was not prepared for the emotional impact of a Christ that transcends race.

"That's the message, point blank," Bukovec said. "It says... 'If you're a Christian, and you have any problem with this, you've missed the message.'"

For his part, the 34-year-old Giles said he is thankful the racial feelings have surfaced.

"It really gave me an opportunity to put my Christianity to the test, dealing with those who hate me," he said.

By turning the other cheek, "It's allowed me to testify to the true meaning of being a Christian. ... Now is a chance to show Christianity in a positive light."

Dressed in an "Eracism" T-shirt before his opening performance, Giles said his hope was that the Holy Spirit would shine through him on stage.

"The color of Christ has no bearing on what the true message of Christ is about," he said.

That message was not lost on John Behrend, an older member of the Immanuel Lutheran Church group from Bristol, Conn.

"I never considered him black until this here came up," Behrend said of Jesus. "And he could be."

## Talking religion on springbreak

Temptation is everywhere. Bars beseech students to drink all day for \$5. Bikini-wearing women beckon. Thong-clad boys cajole.

Into this Gomorrah wades the Baptist Student Union and the Campus Crusade for Christ with a weapon of their own - pancakes and beach games.

"We're not going to push God down your throat," said Rachael Elrod, 19, a sophomore at Campellsville University in Kentucky.

But it can't hurt to grease the skids with flapjacks.

Baptist students spread across the hot beach sands of this spring break mecca every day inviting students to a free pancake breakfast. As they eat, they listen to talk about the Bible and Jesus in the hope they leave with more than just a full stomach.

About 3,000 young adults, some former spring break sinners, offer succor to the estimated 500,000 college students who annually make

the pilgrimage to Panama City Beach. Called "Beach Reach," it preaches without getting too pushy.

"It's a confrontational type of evangelism, but it's done in a way that it's not confrontational," said the Rev. Darren Tipton, of Nashville, Tenn.

Tipton, a student evangelism assistant with the Southern Baptist Convention and leader of "Beach Reach," said revelers need a little reminder of morality.

"They are confronted with something they thought they left at home, a lot of them, or that they didn't expect to find on the beach," he said.

Traditional spring breaker Rob Pavis, 23, a University of Buffalo senior from Staten Island, thought he would be drinking his breakfast.

Instead, he found himself eating pancakes and talking religion with William Stacy, a Baptist sophomore at the University of North Texas.

"I pretty much believe what they believe and I think they believe what I believe," said Pavis, a Roman Catho-

lic. "It's nice to meet good people."

Stacy, 20, of Kerrville, Texas, said he's just trying to point people in the right direction.

"I'm not trying to convert anyone," Stacy said.

The Baptist students also offer free rides to students, hoping to get in a little talk along the way.

One van crew had difficulty getting its message across to a handful of University of Louisville students, some of whom appeared drunk. After playing a game of guessing majors, the van arrived at its destination before anyone mentioned religion.

As the students got out they were invited to a pancake breakfast the next morning at an amusement park parking lot.

Pancakes are not the only way to draw a crowd. The Campus Crusade sponsors volleyball tournaments and each evening its members gather in a huge blue-and-white striped tent for singing, Bible lessons and Christian rock and roll.

## Buddha carved into mountain

A noisy quarry in eastern Thailand is being turned into a site of wonder and reverence, as the finishing touches are being put on a giant Buddha image carved into the side of a mountain.

The \$5.92 million project in Chonburi province was launched 18 months ago to celebrate the 50th anniversary of the accession of King Bhumibol Adulyadej to Thailand's throne in 1996.

The official opening of the project,

which is paid for by public donations, awaits the king's reply to an invitation. Only a bit of landscaping work remains to be done. The carving was

the brainchild of an abbot of a nearby temple who saw a worldly bonus to such grand work - the incessant racket from the quarry would cease.

Join our diverse parish family as we observe Holy Week and celebrate the Resurrection of our Savior, Jesus Christ!

<b>Maundy Thursday</b>	7:00 p.m. — Foot Washing and Holy Communion
<b>Good Friday</b>	12-1:00 p.m. — Meditations 7:00 p.m. — Good Friday Liturgy and Communion
<b>Easter Sunday</b>	8:00 and 10:00 a.m. — Holy Communion

**St. Philip the Deacon Episcopal Church**  
120 NE Knott St. at Rodney Ave. 281-5802  
The Rev. Alanna Bauger, Rector

## Mother Teresa recovers

For the first time in months, Mother Teresa stepped out unaided to visit a charity home in the city, her doctor said today.

The 86-year-old nun, who has been hospitalized repeatedly and confined mostly to a bed or wheelchair, climbed down a flight of stairs from her quarters without help Tuesday and was driven to a religious ceremony a couple miles away, said Dr. Ashish Kumar, her personal physician.

She was accompanied by Sister Nirmala, the new head of Missionaries of Charity, the order founded and, until last week, led by Mother Teresa.

"I am very happy to be able to go out on my own. I want to be active again as I still have lots of work to do," Dr. Kumar quoted Mother Teresa as saying.

Mother Teresa had said she no longer wanted to lead the order because she was too ill. She has been in an out of hospitals since April 1996. First it was a broken collar bone, then in July, she became ill with malaria and a chest infection. A month later, she was back in the hospital after a fall.

In November, Mother Teresa was readmitted with heart problems. She underwent an angioplasty to remove blockages from arteries after a mild heart attack, then fought a lung infection and kidney problems.

Since her release in December, she mostly has been confined to bed or a wheelchair, rarely even seen on the balcony of her home.

## Obituary

### Jesse Douglas Williams

Jesse Douglas Williams was born August 29, 1929 in Crockett, Texas. He passed away on March 17, 1997 at his home in Portland, Oregon at the age of 67 years old.

Mr. Williams grew up in Texas. He joined the U.S. Army on June 15, 1948 until June 15, 1953. He was a Staff Sgt. and was living in Fort Lewis, Washington prior to coming to Portland after the service. He attended the Jehovah Witness Church. He worked as a custodian Supervisor for the Portland Public Schools and he retired in 1992 after more than 10 years of service. His last school was Chief Joseph Grade School.

7th Annual  
**RiverPlace Tulip Festival**  
for Easter Seals  
presented by K103

RiverPlace Esplanade

Fri. - Sat., March 28 - 29 at 10 am

thousands of colorful tulips for sale  
live jazz and youth performing arts groups  
children's coloring contest sponsored by Haggen  
On Saturday: a visit from the Easter Bunny  
accessible candy hunt for children with disabilities, noon  
children's candy hunt, 12:30

Easter Seals thanks our sponsors:  
BBS International, Haggen Food & Pharmacy, OURTOWN, Portland Observer, Pacific Gas Transmission, RiverPlace Athletic Club, Talking Rain and The Oregonian

## Easter Morning Services

March 30th - Pastor Richard Probasco Speaking  
8 a.m. 9:30 a.m. 11:00 a.m.

Special Music with the R. P. Vocal Band

### Good Friday Candlelight Service

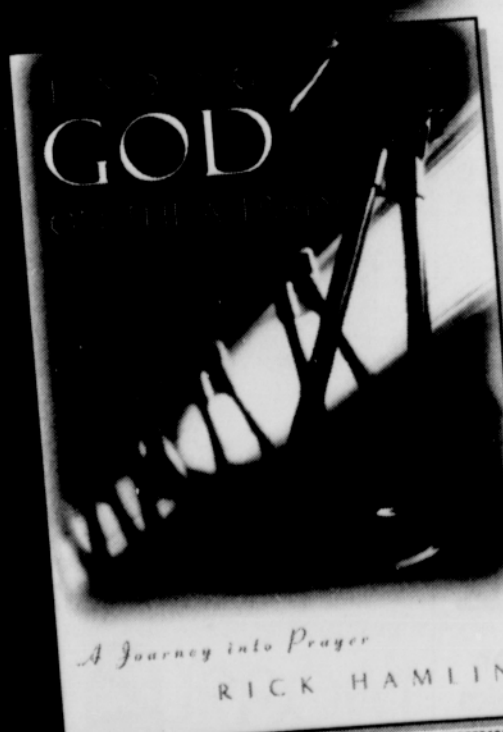
March 29th 7:30 p.m.

\* New Song Church Choir

\* RP Vocal Band

\* Desperate Measures Vocal Ensemble

\*Special Presentation "He Is" by Childrens Church



"How should I pray?"

Rick Hamlin offers an engaging, funny, and touching tale of one man's lifelong pursuit of the answer to the question, "How should I pray?" in *Finding God on the A Train*. A fresh and fluent new voice on the Christian writing scene, Hamlin offers the candid story—sure to appeal to the millions today rediscovering the joy of prayer—of his search for an authentic spirituality.

**POWELL'S BOOKS**  
• 1005 W Burnside, downtown Portland 503-228-4651 www.powells.com  
• 8725 SW Cascade Avenue, Beaverton 503-643-3131