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African Burial Ground Remembrance

The first day of Kwanzaa is celebrated in New York Thursday as spiritual healer Sam Taki raises a glass of water in remembrance of those buried at the centuries-old African Burial Ground in lower Manhattan. New York City Councilman Charles Barron (right) looks on. (AP photo)

Do You Know God?

BY ETHEL J. BATES
 Once again we are on the brink of a new year. Once again we raise our voices in thanks to God who gave His only begotten Son that we may have ever-lasting life and have it more abundantly. The end of 2002 finds us in almost the same condition that we were in at the time of His First coming. Men's hearts have not changed - except the blood of the Lamb of God has cleansed their hearts. We are just as bad as those who refused a woman full with child a place in which to bring the Savior.
 We say that there was no room for Him in the Inn, but the question raised is, "Is there any room in our hearts for the Savior?" Have we forgotten about Him, and the true reason for the season? Do we even know Him?
 Knowing God is not making an outward show of doing "church work." Knowing God is having a heart-changing experience with The Risen Savior. It is through the personal relationship with Jesus that our inner character is changed and we become like Him, portraying God in the flesh to a waiting and dying world. Paul prayed that Christ might enter through the open door of faith, dwell in our hearts and imprint His nature upon our minds, will and emotions. When Christ enters a life, He brings His life - the very soil in which we take root and blossom, the ground in which our lives are founded.
 Jesus Christ is concerned about the condition of our hearts. He came to renew our minds, and revive our spirits. Many children have lost their homes, destroyed by men who are cruel, hard hearted, angry without God in their minds, hunted by non-confessed sins. These children are cold and hungry; many of them do not know where their parents are. They have been separated by this chaos. Knowing Him will change our behavior towards humanity.
 Sure, many among us are suffering, discouraged, sick and tested by Satan's agendas; others mourn the loss of loved ones, while some bare heavy burdens. I say to you, "God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in the time of trouble." Surely, He is on His way back.
 In man's confusion he will take his own life. He is confused about the blessed event of Bethlehem, as well as the miracle on Calvary, and so we continuously nail Him to the Cross. God became what we are, that we might become what He is. He allowed the crucifixion, that we might be identified with Him. Because He rose from the dead we can live free from sin, shame and guilt. Because we are the King's children we are more than conquerors and we can do all things through Christ who strengthens us!
 The Prophet, Isaiah told of His coming when he wrote, "For unto



Minister Ethel J. Bates


us a child is born; unto us a son is given." Because of that the world should have known, should have prepared their hearts and should have been looking for Him, should have expected Him and should have recognized Him when He came as a little baby child, with no where to lay His head.
 In the coming year, 2003, let us show the world that we really do know Him, by taking Jesus off the Cross. Let us draw near to the Savior of the entire world! Let us give Him the gift of love and obedience, by walking in victory and by faith. Let the King of glory rule in our hearts and in our minds. Let us rejoice for the Savior has brought joy to this world. He says today, "These things have I spoke unto you that my joy might be in you and your joy might be full (Jn. 15:11)."
 Ethel J. Bates is a minister for the Allen Temple CME Church in Portland.

Impact of Iraq War Addressed

Commissioner Erik Sten's office, Ecumenical Ministries of Oregon and the Interfaith Council for Greater Portland will host a community forum and conversation entitled 'Local Impact of an Iraq War' on Sunday, Jan. 5 from 2 p.m. to 4 p.m. at the First Unitarian Church located at 1011 SW 12th St. For more information, contact Chris Hogness at 503-235-7643.

Breakfast With A Song

Sunday, Jan. 19, McMenamins Kennedy School will host a gospel brunch in honor of Martin Luther King Jr. Day in the historic gymnasium.
 The public is welcomed to enjoy traditional breakfast favorites, including classic eggs Benedict or French toast, while listening to spirited gospel music from The Disciples in Song.
 This popular brunch event begins at 1 p.m. and costs \$18 for adults and \$8 for children aged 12 and under. Reserve space by Friday, Jan. 17. Be sure to make reservations early by calling 503-249-3983.
 McMenamins Kennedy School is located at 5739 N.E. 33rd.

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