

Saints and sinners: When a baby dies on Christmas Eve

What do you say to a mother and father whose 1-year-old son dies on Christmas Eve?

What do you say to yourself if you are a clergyman who has been telling people that Christmas means God loves us?

These were the questions haunting the young priest.

“When I finished speaking, the family rose and came down the aisle and stood by the casket. Then the father, the mother and each of the children bent over, kissed the baby and turned and walked to the back of the church.

“And through blurred vision, I followed the server back to the sacristy.”

And the question stuck like a hard lump in his throat:

“Why, God, of all times, on Christmas Eve?”

He thought of what the Church would say — that “God is taking baby Robbie to a happiness even greater than he had known in his family.”

But right now, although he may have believed that, he couldn’t buy it.

“Why, God, on Christmas Eve?”

And through countless Christmas Eves after that, the question always came back.

Now, older and wiser, the priest still has no answer. But he feels that the question itself was wrong.

“We spend too much time asking questions about the meaning of life and the meaning of our own existences. The meaning, “he has discovered, “is in living itself.”

And that, no doubt, is true.

Studdert-Kennedy said that when he stood



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before the eternal judgment seat, he expected God to ask him just one question: “Well, what did you make of it?”

Not “How did life treat you?” so that those who didn’t do so well on earth would have it made up to them in heaven. Not that, but, “What did you make of it?”

What did you make of the suffering and sor-

rows? Did they remain sufferings and sorrows or did you change the quality of them so that, in the end, they blessed your life?

Did you bring your best to life — “courage for the conflict, patience for the long striving, love enough to forgive and to begin again”?

The meaning of life is in living it.

And what does Christmas say to us about these things? Mainly this — that no matter what befalls us, we are not alone, do not have to manage for ourselves by ourselves.

The road may be steep and lonely at times, but God is with us. We can always go to him and be helped by him.

He will give us all we need to face life — and more than that, to come through with honor and a crown.

What shall we say on Christmas Day — this Christmas Day?

Only the old story in the old way — God’s love is with us still.

And wander as we will, and far as we may stray,

Oh, never doubt, His love will search us out On Christmas Day.

Though faith may falter, with her banners furled,

Still, still across a grim and darkening world, He follows there.

So take your Father’s hand, you will not lose the way.

Love will be near — and love will understand On Christmas Day.

— Virginia Tunstall

Portable chaplain kit simplifies support for American troops in the field

By Jay Lindsay

Associated Press Writer

NATICK, Mass. — In 17 years as a military chaplain, Lt. Col. Ben Richardson has turned truck hoods into altars and Iraqi hotel balconies into pulpits. Loose cartons have served as office furniture.

Now he has all a chaplain could need in one plastic box.

Looking something like a footlocker, the 30-by-28 1/2-inch case is meant to be an all-in-one portable kit for chaplains. Those who’ve tested it say it makes work easier for chaplains and worship services a better experience for soldiers of all faiths during deployment.

The box, developed at the U.S. Army labs in Natick and expected to go into service next year, can transform into an office or altar and is good for storing linens, books and other tools of the chaplains’ trade.

Chaplains say it’s important to the military to make spiritual comfort more

accessible to troops, and the new kit is part of that effort.

Worship matters to troops who now face uncertainty in the tumultuous times after the Sept. 11 attacks and rely on faith to get past their fear, said Maj. James Caraway, a Protestant chaplain in Ft. Hood, Texas, who has tested the box.

“When you’re fearing your mortality and bullets are flying, people get real religious,” he said.

The durable plastic kit has handles on each side and weighs 80 pounds when empty — loaded it weighs up to 150 pounds and takes two people to carry. With a couple of turns and twists, parts detach to make a chair and workstation table, complete with padded drawers that can hold files, laptop computers and small printers.

A few more turns and the telescoping legs turn the table into a 40 inch-high altar.

The box can also hold Muslim head

coverings, communion wine and wafers, and sacred books of all religions. A pouch stored under the table carries altar linens colored red, green, purple and white for the seasons of the Christian year.

The Army plans to add woodland camouflage and desert camouflage to the package of religious linens and items to make sure the brightly colored altars don’t serve as enemy targets, said Richardson, now the chaplain at the Natick facility, about 15 miles west of Boston.

The package enables chaplains in remote locations to perform the liturgy and rituals important to different faiths in ways that simply aren’t possible when the items can’t be easily carried.

“It’s all about the quality of services you provide,” Richardson said. It also makes the chaplain’s administrative tasks a lot easier, he added.

The package was developed over two

years and built to withstand harsh field conditions, according to project engineer Bob Granny.

Rain was poured on the box at a rate of 4 inches per hour in winds of 40 miles per hour to ensure it was waterproof. It was also blasted with a fine silt to make sure it was sealed from the dust whipped in desert winds, he said.

Caraway was one of two dozen chaplains worldwide who tested the kit, using it when he was stationed in the desert at the National Training Center in Fort Irwin, Calif., this spring.

“Wind and sand kind of go together with Army training,” he said. “It kept stuff out.”

Caraway said the handles were a bit low and made carrying awkward. He also needed to find a cord to secure some of his items in the box. But overall, Caraway said, the package was an asset because it made life and worship more convenient.

A couple years ago, the Army introduced a “containerized chapel,” with a tent, folding chairs for 100 worshippers and generator-powered heat, air conditioning and lights. The 8-by-20-foot container even contains Bibles, Muslim prayer mats and Jewish prayer shawls — in camouflage, no less.

Now, combined with the portable chapels already in use, the chaplain kits move worship services in the field a step closer to services back in the States, Richardson said.

“When are soldiers are deployed, we have something that sustains them and feels like a church at home,” he said.

Bin Laden edges Bush in survey

PROVIDENCE, R.I. (AP)—A survey of North American religion reporters, issued Wednesday, named Osama bin Laden the year’s top religion newsmaker, edging out President George W. Bush.

Bin Laden demonstrated how easily religion “can be hijacked to serve political ends, substituting hatred and intolerance for the compassion encouraged by all of the world’s wisdom traditions,” one writer commented.

The top three events in 2001 stemmed from Sept. 11: The resulting upsurges in

worship and religious questioning; U.S. Muslims’ fears of a backlash giving way to non-Muslims’ friendship; and, Bush saying the war is not on Islam but on those who distort it, though many Muslims overseas disagreed.

Other events, in order: the stem cell debate; increasing Israeli-Palestinian violence; Bush’s “faith-based” charity plan; Americans’ new interest in understanding Islam; Pope John Paul’s visits to Syria, Greece and Ukraine; pop books like; and missionaries freed in Afghanistan.

Bible Baptist Church
Pastor: Don Crutcher
Fifth & Broadway
899-7368
Sunday: Sunday School: 9 am
Worship Service: 10 am
Evening Service: 6:30 pm
Wednesday: Evening Bible Study: 7 pm


Calvary Gospel Church
Pastor: Rev. Steve Rains
Fourth & College • 899-3605
Sunday: Sunday School: 9:15 am
Morning Worship: 10:30 am
Evening Worship: 6:30 pm
Wednesday: Family Night: 7 pm
Adult Bible Study and Youth Group
Saturday: Prayer Meeting: 5-7 pm
If you would like to receive a free newsletter, please call the church office.

Church of Christ
401 Caldwell
899-6185
Sunday: Bible Study: 9:45 am
Worship Service: 10:45 am
Evening Service: 6 pm
Wednesday: Bible Study: 7 pm

Church of the Nazarene
Pastor: Matthew Delp
Third & Caldwell
899-2080 or 899-3797
Sunday: Sunday School: 9:45 am
Worship Service: 10:50 am
Evening Service: 6 pm
Wednesday: Evening Service: 7 pm

First Baptist Church
Pastor: Bud Chester
Fifth & Center • 899-3450
Sunday: Sunday School: 9:15 am
Morning Worship: 10:30 am
Evening Worship: 6:30 pm
Tuesday: Mens’ Prayer Group: 6:00 am
Thursday: Night Bible Study: 7:00 pm

Seventh Day Adventist Church
1160 Cattletrail
Pastor: Arlin Cochran • 785-332-2888
Saturday: Sabbath School: 9:30 am
Worship Service: 11 am



Pleasant Home Church

First Christian Church
(Disciples of Christ)
Pastor: Loren Strait
Eighth & Arcade • 899-5233
Sunday: Worship Service: 10:30 am
Sunday School: 9:15 a.m.
Activities: Junior High & High School Youth Groups, Adult Bible Study, Choir, Men’s and Women’s Groups, Devotions Study, Monthly Fellowship
Special Notice: Handicap Accessible, Hearing Assistance Equipment and Infant and Toddler Nurseries Available

First United Methodist Church
1116 Sherman
899-3631
Pastor: Rev. Carol Moore-Ramey
Sunday: Sunday School: 9:15 am
Worship Service: 10:30 am

Sonrise Christian Church
Ninth & Caldwell • 899-5398
Minister: Tony Kafka
Youth Minister: Doug Bean
Sunday: Worship Service: 9:30 am
Sunday School: 10:45 am
Wednesday: Junior/Senior High Meeting: 7 pm
Adult & Children’s Classes: 7 pm

Emmanuel Lutheran Church
13th & Sherman • 899-6161
Pastor: Scott Grimshaw
Sunday: Sunday School: 8:45 am
Worship Service: 10 am
Wednesday: Confirmation: 6 pm

Kanorado
United Methodist Church
Pastor: Leonard Cox
399-2468
Sunday: Sunday School: 9 am
Worship Service: 10:15 am

Goodland Bible Church
109 Willow Road • 899-6400
Pastor:
Sunday: Sunday School: 9:45 am
Morning Worship: 11 am
Evening Worship: 6 pm
Wednesday: Call for location

Grace Fellowship Church
104 E. Hwy 24 • 899-6423
Pastor: Bob Snyder • Residence: 899-0134
Sunday: Sunday School: 10 am
Worship Service: 11 am

St. Paul’s Episcopal Church
13th & Center
899-2115 or Rectory 899-2114
Priest: Father Charles Schneider
Deacon: Gretchen Talitha
Adult Forum: Sunday : 8:30 am
Morning Prayer: 9:30 am 1st & 5th Sundays
Holy Eucharist: 2nd, 3rd, & 4th Sundays: 9:30
Sr. Warden for emergencies during the week 899-2067

Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints
1200 15th Street • Burlington, CO • (970) 664-2470
Sacrament Meeting: 9:30 am
Sunday School: 10:45 am
Priesthood/Relief Society: 11:30 am

Word of Life Foursquare Church
223 E. 10th
899-5250
Pastor: John Coumerilh
Sunday: Worship Celebration & Kids’ Church: 10:30 am

United Methodist Church
Brewster:
Pastor:
Worship Service: 10:45 am CST
Sunday School: 9:45 am CST
Winona:
Minister: Rev. Bob Winters
Worship Service: 9 am CST
Sunday School: 10:15 am CST

Iglesia Del Dios Vivo
La Luz Del Mundo
Spanish Speaking Church
Minister: Esteban Ortiz B.
1601 Texas • 899-5275
Daily Prayer: Sunday thru Saturday: 5 am & 6 pm
Sunday: Sunday School: 10 am

Our Lady of Perpetual Help
Pastor: Father Daryl Olmstead
307 W. 13th • 899-7205
Sacrament of Reconciliation: 4:30-5 pm Saturday or by appointment
Mass Schedule:
Saturday: 6 pm
Sunday: 8 am and 10:30 am
Spanish Mass: 1st & 3rd Sunday: 2 pm

Pleasant Home Church
Serving the rural community for over 100 years
Rt. 1, Box 180 • 694-2807 • 3190 Road 70
Pastor: Jim Cress
899-5784
Sunday: Worship Service: 9 am
Sunday School: 10 am
Evening Service: 6 pm

The following sponsors urge YOU to attend your chosen House of Worship this Sabbath:

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