



A look back

2007 was full of surprises, tragedies, triumphs, achievements and innovations. Many of this year's events taught us about the human condition — sometimes we are weak; other times we are strong. They also served to remind us that life is fragile and short. Following are insights into some of the year's most noteworthy events.

2007 — A look back Technology

By Wade B. Mumm



Sleek in design and smooth to the touch, with a screen that incorporates graphically pleasing images, and we've just "gotta have it!" — to the tune of \$111 billion. That's what Americans spent on consumable technology in 2006, according to the NPD Group.

But what does all the technology mean to the average Christian? It may mean, if you attend my saturdaychurch.us service, you are able to text message questions to me via an iPhone during my sermon. Or, it may mean you are somewhat "controlled" by your iPhone since it contains your music library, an irreplaceable contact list,

pictures of the kids, phone, text messaging and more.

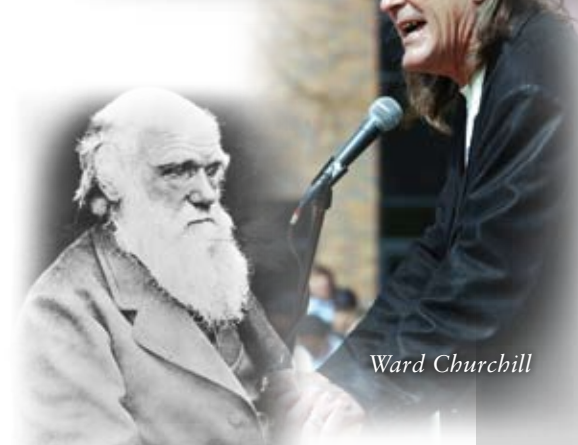
Bottom line, for the Christian, technology is best handled by asking the right questions; however, for a nation built on impulse, asking any question, let alone the right question, is tough.

Consider the iPhone. There's probably nothing wrong with the technology, but what of the motivation to own one? If a person really needs all that the iPhone offers, great, but if they simply need "the latest and greatest" then the right questions were probably not asked.

When it comes to asking the right questions about technology



Virginia Tech



Charles Darwin

Ward Churchill

purchases and use, try using the "i-P3" model.

i — Investigate the product. Do I really need it? Am I getting the best deal?

P — Will it be problematic for me? Am I going to be breaking the law with this device? Can I afford this product?

P — Will using this product enable others to violate my privacy?

P — Will using this technology pull me away from what is important — God, family and other relationships?

So, do you really "gotta have it"?

WADE MUMM, Ph.D., is pastor of Greene Way Church (AG) in Orlando, Fla.

2007 — A look back Education

By Gail Wood
An emotionally disturbed 23-year-old college student went on a shooting rampage on the Virginia Tech campus in April, killing 32 before killing himself.

The shooter, Cho Seung-Hui, wrote in a suicide note, "I hate all the frauds. I hate my life." His outrage stunned the nation.

A University of Colorado professor who compared victims of the 9/11 terrorist attacks to Nazi bureaucrats was fired in July for plagiarism and lying.

The controversial professor, Ward Churchill, is a frequent critic of the United States, making him a symbol for many conservatives of the political biases in higher education. A panel found Churchill revised history to fit his own theories. When confronted, Churchill argued, "I'm not responsible." His claims and defense angered the nation.

A school district policy in Dover, Pa., requiring biology students to hear a disclaimer stating that Darwinian evolution is a theory, not a fact, ended up in Federal court and was declared unconstitutional in September. The court decision angered and divided the people of Dover and an observing nation.

In at least 18 school districts na-

tionwide, state legislatures debated how evolution should be handled in public schools.

These three events from 2007 involving education all point to a growing problem in the United States.

Increasingly, as a culture we have shied away from holding people responsible for their behaviors. Instead, we look for blame, an explanation for why. Cho was a victim. Churchill was merely misunderstood. Advocates for evolution as a proven truth shout foul when challenged.

The common defense is, "I'm a victim."

Admitting, "I'm wrong," or as Christians say in their petition to God, "I've sinned," is necessary in understanding and receiving forgiveness. In a day when self-esteem is the golden calf of education, there is a growing disconnect between actions and consequence. As disturbing as these three issues are, an overarching spiritual truth about our culture ties these events together. As a country, we're moving further away from some basic principles of Christianity.

Cho, Churchill and evolution all grabbed national attention in the past year. Each story stunned us. But each event should heighten Christians' awareness of their responsibility to pray for our nation's educational system — which is daily shaping our future.

GAIL WOOD is a freelance writer and lives in Washington state.

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2007



In the running

Though the presidential election is nearly a year away, John McCain, Hillary Clinton, Barack Obama, Mike Huckabee, and others want you to know they want your vote.

For sale

Selling a home gets much tougher this year as the real estate market plummeted in many states.



Temperature rising

The theory of global warming has its day in the sun.



Iraq

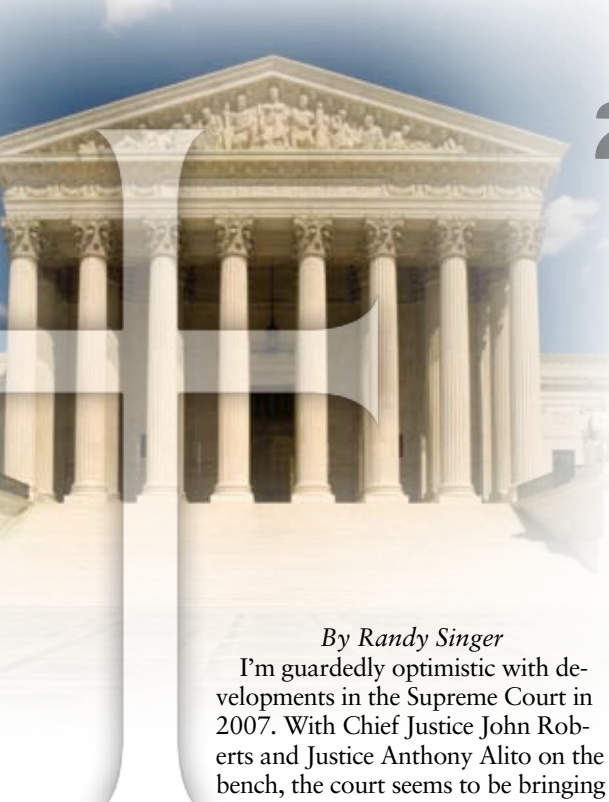
Americans are reminded there is no quick fix to problems in the Middle East.



Hand up

Convoy of Hope, AGRelief, HealthCare Ministries and other Assemblies of God outreaches continue to provide relief to countless victims of man-made and natural disasters throughout the world.





2007 — A look back

Religious freedom

muddled. I didn't want to see a decision in this case create an opportunity for school administrators to keep students from passing out tracts or organizing a Bible study or a See You at the Pole observance.

The court upheld the principal's right to discipline the student but was careful to distinguish this situation. This student's message promoted drug use.

Of concern is a continuing trend of homosexual activists to silence Christians, particularly in public school environments. Many cases continue to challenge Christians'

right to even speak out with regard to their views on homosexuality. Increasingly, Christians who put forward a biblical view on homosexuality are accused of being oppressive and discriminatory.

Related to this trend, I am troubled by lower courts making decisions that attack a state's position on the sanctity of the family. This year in Iowa, a state often viewed as solidly conservative, the Polk County District Court ruled that restrictions against gay marriage in the state were unconstitutional.

Christians in America can get

caught up in symbolic court cases related to issues like a display of the Ten Commandments or dealing with prayer before legislative sessions. Those are important, but I will be watching much more carefully the free speech cases that arise.

More critical than the issue of whether we can put up a cross on city property is the issue of whether we will be able to speak biblical truth into our culture.

RANDY SINGER is an attorney with Willcox and Savage in Virginia Beach, Va.

By Randy Singer

I'm guardedly optimistic with developments in the Supreme Court in 2007. With Chief Justice John Roberts and Justice Anthony Alito on the bench, the court seems to be bringing a pragmatic, common-sense approach to the First Amendment that could bode well for Christians.

In *Hein v. Freedom From Religion Foundation*, for example, the court decided 5 to 4 in favor of President Bush's funding of faith-based entities that can make a difference in people's lives through good secular work. The court basically said that just because taxpayer dollars are involved does not mean any taxpayer can challenge the program. This creates some boundaries so that a program cannot arbitrarily be targeted just because it involves a religious group.

Another case that gained a lot of attention, and caused some concern, was *Morse v. Frederick*, in which a student displayed a sign reading "Bong Hits 4 Jesus" and was disciplined by his principal.

I believe in the saying, "Bad cases make bad law." A bad set of facts can generate an emotional response from a court rather than a rational one. In this case, a drug use message and a religious message were

2007 — A look back

Sports

By Kirk Noonan

"It's not cheating unless you get caught," according to the old sports adage. Tell that to former National Basketball Association referee Tim Donaghy, New England Patriots coach Bill Belichick, or Olympic gold medal winner Marion Jones.

This year all of them got caught cheating. This past summer it was discovered Donaghy had bet on basketball games he refereed. A few months later the Patriots were caught videotaping signals New York Jets defensive coaches were sending their players during a game. And then Jones admitted she had used performance-enhancing drugs during her hallowed career.

Cheating may put Donaghy in prison, forced Jones to return the five gold medals she had won at the 2000 Olympics in Sydney, Australia, and cost Belichick half a million dollars.

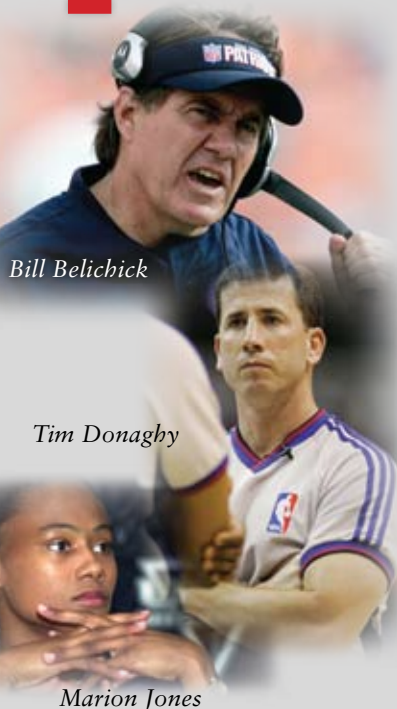
But cheating is not just contained to fields and courts of play. There were many other lesser-known cheat-

ers making headlines. Some California schools banned iPods from their campuses after students were caught using them to cheat on tests. In Massachusetts officials asked would-be teachers to give their fingerprint before the state teacher's exam after five people sent substitutes to take their tests last year. Even developers of a popular video game had to deal with cheaters who took their cheating ways into cyberspace.

Numbers 32:23 says your sins will find you out. How true. God was talking to the Gadites and Reubenites, but the verse serves as a warning for anyone who is tempted to bend the rules or blatantly cheat. Sure, it may not feel like cheating unless you get caught. But that's a lie. Belichick, Donaghy, Jones and countless other cheaters this year learned the cost of cheating the hard way.

KIRK NOONAN is managing editor of *Today's Pentecostal Evangel*.

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Bill Belichick

Tim Donaghy

Marion Jones



Hollywood meltdowns

Britney Spears, Lindsay Lohan and Paris Hilton prove fame and fortune do not equal peace and happiness.

Top it off

Gas prices hit all-time highs in the United States.



Who said that?

Radio personality Don Imus gets the boot after using racial slurs.



Campus massacre

Cho Seung-Hui goes on a rampage at Virginia Tech.

2007

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Opening CLOSED Doors

2007 — A look back Entertainment



CSI

Mortal Combat: Deceptions

By Gail Wood

TV's "family hour" once had programs like *The Waltons* and *The Cosby Show*. Now, it includes programs like *My Name Is Earl*, a show criticized for foul language.

For years, TV executives voluntarily reserved the first hour of primetime during the week for programs suitable for children. But in 2007, sex and violence during the prime-time slot increased significantly.

In the theater, the family film is on a roll, with movies like *Ratatouille* and *Shrek* proving that G and PG ratings can draw huge audiences.

Yet Hollywood in 2007 produced a string of violent movies that were box office successes. *Disturbia*, *Saw 4*, *30 Days of Night*, and *Resident Evil 3* — all with raw, course violence — were among the top draws for the year.

TV stuck with the violence theme in programs like *CSI*, *The Shield* and *24*, which regularly features graphic torture scenes.

Violence on TV has increased 75 percent over the last six years, according to a study by the Parents Television Council. The TV industry has been warned the govern-

ment might take action if violent programming is not reduced.

NBC topped the four major broadcast networks last year with 6.79 violent incidents per prime-time hour. TV programs like *CSI*, with its graphic details of murders, and movies like *Saw*, which depicts gruesome scenes of escape, continue to push the envelope.

In the video games market, violent and sometimes demonic-styled video games earned tens of millions of dollars this year.

What does all this violence and gore from TV, movies and video games say about our society? How does it impact children and families? Does it encourage violence?

God made mankind with wants and desires, with a capacity for pleasure. Christians must be careful in their choice of entertainment. What's good and pure, think on these things (see Philippians 4:8). That's good advice in a day where TV, movies and video games are filled with images that would pollute the mind and spirit.

GAIL WOOD is a freelance writer and lives in Washington state.

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Changing of the guard

George O. Wood becomes the 12th general superintendent of the Assemblies of God as Thomas E. Trask retires.

Foul ball?

Despite much controversy, Barry Bonds breaks Hank Aaron's all-time home run record.



Falling dollar

U.S. dollar's buying power shrinks in Europe, Great Britain and beyond.



Today's Pentecostal Evangel
Web site weekly drawing winners
 August - October 2007

Aug. 2 — Amy Polzin
 Colorado Springs, Colo.
Questions and Answers About the Holy Spirit

Aug. 9 — Patti Pohlman
 Mechanicsville, Va.
50 Tough Questions

Aug. 16 — Brenda Dixon
 Gautier, Miss.
The Write Way: A Believer's Guide to Effective Communication

Aug. 23 — David C.
 Clearwater, Kan.
Q&A: Conversations With 50 Inspiring People

Aug. 30 — Erin N.
 Crown Point, Ind.
Write the Vision

Sept. 6 — S. Bruse
 Rapid City, S.D.
Revival Sermons

Sept. 13 — Martha B.
 Whately, Mass.
Living Like Jesus

Sept. 20 — David P. Morse
 Rapid City, S.D.
A Quiet Escape

Sept. 27 — Steve Jordan
 Paulsboro, N.J.
Times of Refreshing

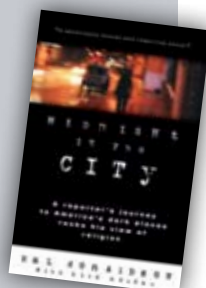
Oct. 4 — K. Watson
 Elberfeld, Ind.
Trusting God

Oct. 11 — Juanita Roth
 Boring, Ore.
Silk Road Stories

Oct. 18 — Georgia Reed
 Paoli, Okla.
Midnight in the City

Oct. 25 — Caroline Rutledge
 Ozark, Ala.
Jesus and You

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 Web site (tpe.ag.org) regularly to enter
 our weekly drawings.
 You can enter once each week.



2007 — A look back
Deaths



By John W. Kennedy
 Several high-profile Christians who shaped American evangelicalism in the late 20th century died in 2007, signaling a departure of some of the biggest names in televangelism.

Jerry Falwell died of a heart attack in his Liberty University office on May 15 at the age of 73.

Falwell founded the school in Lynchburg, Va., in 1971. Fifteen years earlier, Falwell started Thomas Road Baptist Church, which now has 22,000 members. Falwell was also known for leading the Moral Majority, which rallied conservatives to enter the world of politics. He became a voice on national talk shows for decency and traditional values.

Tammy Faye (Bakker) Messner died at age 65 on July 20 after a three-year bout with lung cancer, which she contracted eight years after being diagnosed with colon cancer.

With her then-husband, Jim Bakker, Tammy Faye became a national figure after attending North Central University (AG) in Minneapolis. The onetime Assemblies of God evangelists hosted a children's program for the Christian Broadcasting Network, helped launch the Trinity Broadcasting Network, and went on to start PTL.

D. James Kennedy died Sept. 5, only 10 days after announcing his retirement as pastor of Coral Ridge Presbyterian Church, the Fort Lau-

derdale, Fla., megachurch he led for 48 years.

Kennedy, 76, became a well-known conservative Christian voice via his weekly *Coral Ridge Hour* that aired on more than 400 TV stations and his *Truths That Transform*, a daily broadcast heard on nearly 750 radio stations. But Kennedy may best be remembered as the founder of Evangelism Explosion, an evangelistic lay ministry used by thousands of churches.

Ruth Bell Graham, 87, wife of the world's most famous evangelist, died June 14. Born in China to medical missionaries, she met Billy Graham at Wheaton (Ill.) College.

Ruth gave birth to five children, all of whom went into ministry.

Rex Humbard, whose televangelism ministry once reached more parts of the planet than any other religious program, died Sept. 21 at age 88. The independent Pentecostal recognized the power of television in the pioneering era of the 1950s.

By the 1970s Humbard appeared on more than 650 TV stations via *Cathedral of Tomorrow* from his Akron, Ohio, megachurch. In 1976 he became the first religious broadcaster to be carried internationally by satellite. **tpe**

JOHN W. KENNEDY is news editor of *Today's Pentecostal Evangel*.

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Tube-less
 Television writers go on strike.

Now boarding
 After months of delays, overbooked flights and congested air traffic, airliners are given orders to shape up — just in time for the holiday rush.

2007