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Web of faith: New online ad site caters to Christians

A new Web site has launched from Jackson that hopes to create a Christian marketplace in cyberspace. Called BuyFromAChristian.com, the site advertises local churches, Christian-owned businesses and goods for sale.

Advertising costs

God's doorkeepers: Ushers welcome service role



At first glance, it seems like a simple job: smile, seat, repeat. But as parishioners walk into Bethel Baptist Church in White Plains, N.Y., the greeting they receive from any one of the neatly attired ushers is so much more than a formulaic welcome.

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Briefly

MEMPHIS - Bishop Charles E. Blake, an influential Southern California pastor, has been named presiding bishop of the Church of God in Christ Inc., the world's largest predominantly black Pentecostal denomination.



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"Truth is one; the wise call it by many names." - Rig Veda, 1.

News from the pews

• Millsaps College religious studies department chairman James E. Bowley will sign copies of his new book, Introduction to Hebrew Bible: A Guided Tour of Israel's Sacred Library (Prentice Hall, \$55), at 1 p.m. today at Lemuria Books, 202 Banner Hall, 4465 I-55N, Jackson.

Pulpits and Pews

• Central Community Church of God, 2305 Saint Charles St., Jackson; health fair and seminar, 9 a.m. to noon today; details, (601) 353-8678.

Make a note ...

• Moonlight and Magnolias, New Stage Theatre, 1100 Carlisle St., Jackson; 7:30 p.m.; \$22; details, (601) 948-3531 or www.newstagetheatre.com.

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April 21, 2007

Web of faith: New online ad site caters to Christians

By Jean Gordon

jmgordon@clarionledger.com

Vickie D. King/The
Clarion-Ledger

BuyFromAChristian.com launched from Jackson in March. The Web site aims to promote Christian-owned businesses while spreading the Gospel. Its creators hope the cyber directory will one day rival such online shopping sites as eBay.

ON THE WEB

• www.buyfromachristian.com

A new Web site has launched from Jackson that hopes to create a Christian marketplace in cyberspace.

Called BuyFromAChristian.com, the site advertises local churches, Christian-owned businesses and goods for sale. Though the site may help Christians make money, its backers said its real goal is to spread the Gospel.

"The whole point is that people may go to the site, get exposed to Christianity and the Christian faith," said Buy From A Christian CEO Dr. Philip Chustz, a Ridgeland physician. "Our goal all along is to educate people and have a positive impact."

Along with business listings and craigslist-type classified ads, the site includes daily devotionals, a prayer request link and a Bible verse search engine.

Buy From A Christian also hopes to raise money for churches, Chustz said. Based on the concept of tithing, the site donates 10 percent of the money it generates to churches.

Each advertiser, whether it be a business or a person posting individual items for sale, registers the church beneficiary.

"Giving back to the church was a huge thing for us," said Rebecca Phelps, co-owner of MonogramIt in Ridgeland, which advertises on the site.

The business directory includes categories from accounting to wedding services.

Each listing is accompanied by a logo containing a crucifix and the words "I'm a Christian."

Chustz said his company cannot verify whether an advertiser is truly a Christian. Rather, it accepts a business owner's profession of faith. The site also can't regulate a person's business ethics, he said.

"We hope we're going to be a company that attracts people with Christian ideals to come to our site to buy and sell," he said.

Advertising fees range from \$2 a month for a local listing to \$200 monthly for national exposure. Churches list for free.

Oscar Miskelly of Miskelly Furniture in Jackson decided to advertise on the site to reach Christian customers.

"It's a niche advertising vehicle," he said. "People, I think, in the Christian community like to buy from other Christians."

Bob Montgomery of Traditional Jewelers of Ridgeland said he's willing to take the risk that non-Christian customers may feel excluded by his advertising on the site because he wants to promote Christianity.

"I have Jewish and Hindu friends," he said. "They're good people, but yeah, I'd like to see them become Christian."

Since the site launched in mid- March, it's registered close to 33,000 page views, Chustz said.

So far, about two dozen local businesses have bought advertising space.

"The way we're going to have to make this work is where Christians all over the country use this on a daily basis," Chustz said. "They can use it like eBay because we'll have thousands and thousands of products on there."

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Advertising costs

- Local listing: \$2 a month. Additional \$3 to add logo and Web site link.
- Regional listing: \$5 per month. Choose the states that your business operates in to create regional territory.
- National listing: \$200 a month. List business in all 50 states.
- Other: Three month minimum. Six-month package gets 10 percent off. Twelve-month package gets 15 percent off.

Source: www.buyfromachristian.com.

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