

Kathy Hillman: Black Friday, Cyber Monday, #GivingTuesday

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This is a sample of one of our [Texas Baptist Voices](#) columns, usually only available to Baptist Standard subscribers.

My husband, John, doesn't shop Black Friday except under duress. Usually, our daughter Holly and I target gifts on family wish lists. However, one year, we had three stores to visit with too-good-to-be-true deals, so we pressed him into service. He assured us he could buy one simple Dallas Cowboy Cheerleader doll.



Kathy Hillman When we returned home, John smugly said, "Mission accomplished." A quick survey of the parking lot sent him home to purchase the cherished doll online for just \$2 more—a real bargain.

This year, we pressed him into service again—only this time for his expertise and muscle to select a massive "portable" basketball goal that would be safe and sturdy for grandchildren. We went together, and he came through like a champ. As we treated ourselves to breakfast, we reflected on the commercialism encroachment on Thanksgiving.

And then came Cyber Monday with its influx of email deals, free shipping

and last-chance-to-get-before-Christmas online bargains. In the midst of the deletes, something caught my eye. The message titled “A day of unselfies” promoted something different, #GivingTuesday.



Choosing items for the food pantry. I learned that in 2012, the 92nd Street Y in Manhattan announced the Tuesday after Thanksgiving as #GivingTuesday as a response to the consumerism of the season. The United Nations Foundation and other partners quickly joined them, but the movement gained momentum with Washington Post coverage.

This year, more than 10,000 charitable organizations participated, including some Texas Baptist ministries. I personally received requests from the *Baptist Standard*, Baptist University of the Americas and Literacy Connexus. Even though #GivingTuesday passed on Dec. 2, it's never too late to remember our Baptist colleges and universities; student ministries; child, family and aging care institutions; medical centers; camps; disaster recovery; hunger offering; and other partners.



Delivering and reading books to

preschoolers. However, Baptists designated a giving Tuesday more than 125 years ago, only it wasn't just a day. It was a week. In 1888, Lottie Moon called on Baptist women to take a missions offering at Christmastime. Miss Moon traveled to China in 1873 as the first fully appointed Southern Baptist female missionary.

She wrote: "Need it be said why the week before Christmas is chosen? Is not the festive season, when families and friends exchange gifts in memory of The Gift ... the most appropriate time to consecrate a portion from abounding riches and scant poverty to send the good tidings of great joy into all the earth?"



Random Act of Christmas Kindness for the trash collector. In 1903, women added a week of prayer and in 1918 named the offering in her memory. Today, we continue to contribute to the Lottie Moon Christmas Offering and observe a week of prayer for missions around the world. Our missionaries count on us to give and pray.

But God wants more than our treasures and prayers. He desires that we worship him as the wise men did by demonstrating love. "And when they were come into the house, they saw the young child with Mary his mother, and fell down, and worshipped him: and when they had opened their treasures, they presented unto him gifts; gold, and frankincense and myrrh" (Matthew 2:11).



Giving children's books as a Random Act of Christmas Kindness. In 2011, when our grandson Sawyer turned 3, our daughter-in-law Jennifer planned Scriptures and "Random Acts of Christmas Kindness" for each of the 25 days leading up to Christmas to show God's love to family, neighbors, the community, the world and, ultimately, our Savior. Each day, Sawyer, Jennifer and our son Michael touched friends, neighbors, the trash collectors, the mail man, nursing home residents, needy children, missionaries and a host of strangers.



Taping quarters on washing

machines in a laundromat. The acts ranged from visiting and delivering a poinsettia to the hospital patient the nurse thought needed it most, to baking snickerdoodles for neighbors, to taping quarters on washing machines in a Laundromat, to adopting a soldier overseas, to giving a gift to the gas station attendant working on Christmas. Each recipient received a “RACK” card sharing the message of Christmas. The tradition continues as Tucker joined his big brother, and now their 1-year-old sister, Chandler, tags along.

Jennifer chronicles their experiences, complete with photos, so the children will remember the true meaning of the holiday season and the greatest gift of all. Her sentiments echo mine: “I hope this month is filled with joy as you celebrate with your family and friends and stand in awe of the wonder of Christ and his gift of love at Christmastime!”

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