The Church and CHILDREN

DECEMBER 1971

home missions

The Promise of the Aged

Baptists can give meaning to "twilight years"—if they act to reorder attitudes toward growing old. It's time to start, for the denomination is rapidly aging

She was gray-haired and leather tan, as dark as maple. She smiled and exchanged small talk. Yes, she liked living there; yes, she went swimming often; no, she didn't miss friends and children still in the North.

As I turned to walk away, she jacked-up her voice level a couple of notches and, for my benefit, told the people in the chaise-lounges beside her:

"He's Southern Baptist . . . doing a story on old people . . . I've been a Baptist all my life, but I'd rest in hell before I'd be a *Southern* Baptist. What have *Southern* Baptists ever done for old people?

I was glad she tossed her bitter challenge to my back as I drifted out of earshot, rather than slapping me in the face with it. For I had no answer—or at least none I wanted to give an angry 70 year old.

I knew, of course, of Southern Baptists who were working with the aging—but they were doing it as individuals; and I'd visited churches—First Southern Baptist, Denver; Tower Grove, St. Louis; First Baptist, San Francisco; Cliff Temple, Dallas—that had programs. I was aware of state-sponsored Baptist homes.

I even knew of one Baptist group—in Louisville, headed by Wayne Dehoney's Walnut Street Baptist Church—that was constructing a low-rent, high-rise apartment for the elderly.

And I knew William L. Howse III of the Christian Life Commission had Convention-wide "responsibility" for the aging.

But the only answer I had for this little, old, bronzed and belligerent lady in the swim suit and shower shoes was another question: "On what level do you want to know? Personal? Church? Convention level?" The answers would be different, and the difference was important.

On the Convention level, there is growing concern about the lack of emphasis placed on work with the aged. The issue has suddenly erupted everywhere, and no one is programmed to deal with it.

At its annual meeting, the Southern Baptist Association of Executives of Homes for the Aging urged that "more time and support should be given to the aging in all aspects of work in Southern Baptist life."

"The biggest problems we have," says Bill Harris, administrator of the Washington, D.C., Baptist home, "is the rejection of the aging by society and by the churches; the lack of day-by-day practice of Christian love by church members for the aging; the failure of society, the churches and church leaders to give necessary consideration to death, disabilities and limitations often preceding death.

"The SBC leads the major denominations in its rejection of the aging," adds Harris.

Echoes A.W. Brickle of Bethea Baptist Home, Darlington, S.C.: "Southern Baptists as a whole are years behind in facing up to the privilege and responsibility of aging people. The great majority have never been given the facts and needs, and the opportunity to magnify Christianity in action."

"We want some Southern Baptist agency to show greater concern," concludes Charles Neal, executive director of the Virginia Baptist Home, Inc., and newly-elected president of the group.

Bill Howse of the CLC agrees. "We need to make the aging a priority," he argues. "They're not now."

Howse's "responsibility" is to serve as liaison between the denomination and the Homes for the Aging organization and the Southern Baptist Social Services Association. In this role, he coordinates meetings and plans conferences. But because of other duties with the Commission, he spends no more than 25 percent of his time in work with the aging.

The Home Mission Board's Department of Christian Social Ministries has developed programs for the aging, and Sunday School Board literature has provided for the aging.

The Brotherhood Commission and Woman's Missionary Union have produced *Mission Action Guide: Aging* their programs sometime deal with

But nowhere in the Southern Baptist Convention is anyone making plans for work with the aging in ten years:

"Old age" isn't synonomous with "helplessness." The aged have skill and experience that make up for biological slow-downs. Churches are rediscovering old people's promise.

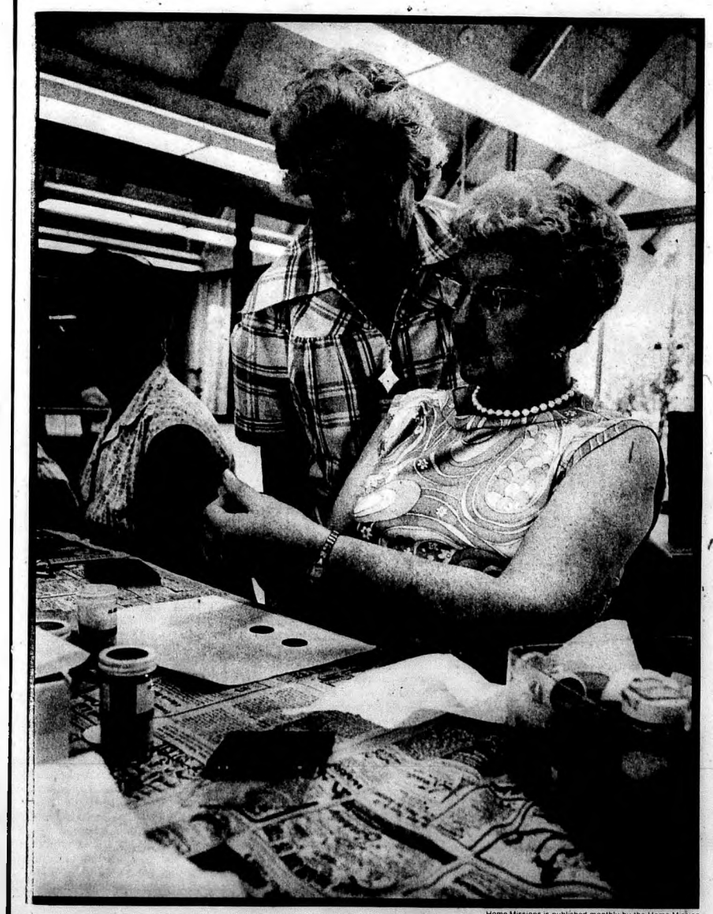

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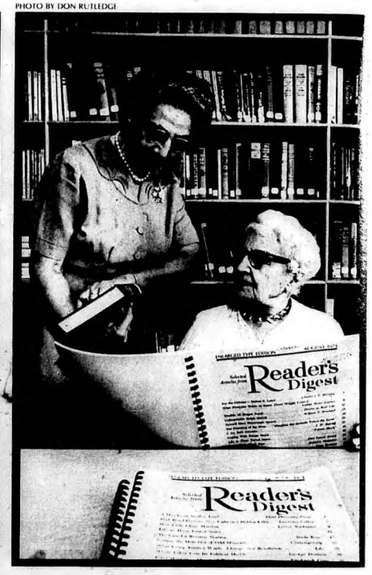
PHOTO BY DANA DREVER

PHOTO BY DON RUTLEDGE



one is projecting the aging's needs 20 years hence, and no one researching the possibilities and potential—or the disadvantages—of a Convention membership that is aging more rapidly than the population as a whole.

Howse does what he can as coordinator, but he's obviously limited.

"I'm under the conviction we need someone working full-time with the aging," says Howse: "I believe the denomination is going to come to this in time. We need to discover ways to relate the aging to the local church, to develop programs for the aging, and to reach the elderly outside the Southern Baptist constituency.

"We need to keep aware of government programs for the aging, and know how they affect us," Howse adds. "Finally, the work with the aging needs greater visibility—our people are generally ignorant of what we are doing, and we're doing a fair amount already.

"The aging have real problems that they themselves and society in general are not able to meet," Howse contends. "Problems of health, fixed income, lack of meaningful involvement; psychological factors come into play.

"Society puts them on a shelf. Someone needs to show the love and concern for them that their age demands. If for no other reason than that we have a biblical injunction to 'honor your father and mother' and 'cast them not off in their old age.'"

"Cast offs" are exactly what the aged are becoming in the Convention, believes Paul Adkins of the Home Mission Board. "We have almost two million Southern Baptists over 62," Adkins says, "and no one from the Convention level is making any preparation for this group.

"I believe there should be a SBC-level commission that would operate in the area of aging and child care," Adkins says. "It would do research in both areas and disseminate information; it would act as a clearinghouse of information from federal and state governments and private sources; it would have input for legislation being considered, and keep Southern Baptists fully informed about certain bills and their implications."

Until such a commission is formed or other action taken—the hodge-podge approach to aging problems will continue at the Convention level. No national design or strategy will be implemented, and Convention-wide planning will remain spasmodic and sporatic.

Churches can do many things for their elderly. Prescott, Memphis, set up an elaborate TV room for old people who couldn't negotiate the sanctuary stairs (upper left); others have added special library books (above) and craft programs.

The Baptist-sponsored "homes" in 16 states operate on another level. Although they offer an alternative to a few aging Baptists in their states, they are overwhelmed by sheer numbers, and habitually operate at or near capacity. And as remote havens, the homes encounter critics too. [See story, page 20.]

In view of the elderly housing shortage, government funding has been a viable option for many churchmen. Sixty-five percent of the nation's 523 projects for moderate low-income elderly—340 houses with 48,147 apartments—are sponsored by church groups.

Churches and associations interested in housing for the elderly form private corporations to receive the funds. Government officials have been pleased with the churches' response.

"There's no question about it," says Robert P. Ruff, elderly housing specialist for Housing and Urban Development's Southeast regional office. "I'd rather have a good bonafide church sponsorship for housing for the elderly than any other type sponsorship."

Regulations make all government-financed public housing physically similar, admits Ruff, "but there's a difference between church sponsorship and private, because churches are person-oriented; they're concerned with the people in the project.

"Next to a person's family," he adds, "the church is the thing an elderly person will turn to. It's a normal, natural type of situation for a church to sponsor a project of this type, and they do make the best sponsors."

Protestant denominations most active in this program are United Church of Christ, Presbyterian Church in US, American Baptists and United Presbyterian Church in USA. Lutherans also sponsor a wide range of programs that involve public housing projects.

Government cutbacks have scuttled some phases, but a loan program will continue. Ruff remains optimistic about the future involvement of churches in meeting the increasing needs of aged people.

The churches have enthusiastically accepted this role because once they built a few projects, they saw the contribution they could make.

"In this eight-state region we don't have a single church sponsorship that hasn't been successful, and most nationwide have been successful," Ruff concludes.

But the government may have curtailed that program before many Southern Baptists are able to take full advantage of its possibilities.

Church of the Saviour in Washington, D.C., has set an example of an alternative church involvement in housing. The church itself is buying private homes in a deteriorating inner-city section, rebuilding them, and then renting them at low rates to elderly. [See story, page 13.]

An offshoot of this program involves renting the multi-unit homes to both young and old; or rent alternating houses to young and old, with a common dining/recreation room.

Although it sounds radical, such a plan has proved highly successful in the few experiments in which it's been tried. The showcase is Toomey Abbott Towers, a 24-story public-housing development in Syracuse, N.Y.

On the edge of Syracuse University, the Towers connect with a student housing project to create a unique "community" designed for inter-generational living.

"To encourage the two age groups to get together," says reporter Laurie Kassman, "numerous programs have been coordinated by the Towers' residents council and the university's school of social work student volunteers.

"Next to a person's family," he adds, "the church is the thing an elderly person will turn to. It's a normal, natural type of situation for a church to sponsor a project of this type, and they do make the best sponsors."

"There is always something happening for both young and old: a weekly film series, bridge tournaments, chess meets, bingo nights, free legal counseling by law students, resident-sponsored volunteer projects at nearby hospitals. There's a regular university-staffed lecture series for elderly residents, and student volunteers have cooperated with the senior citizens to publish a biweekly project newsletter."

The residents, regardless of age, endorse the arrangement, and encourage other developers to follow suit. "We've got a good thing here," one student told Kassman, "and we know it."

Paul Adkins of the HMB's Department of Christian Social Ministries believes such contact is healthy and should be stimulated by church groups.

"It helps the generations break down their stereotyped views of each other," he says, "and the advantages are enormous for old people. They're not shuffled off into a corner to die, but offered incentive to live—and a great many opportunities to keep active."

For several years, Adkins has been trying to interest Baptist colleges in similar intergenerational living projects, but he's had no takers.

Probably Southern Baptists' most immediate solution to the aging crisis comes at the local church (and/or association) level and with individuals.

"We Baptists neglected our ministry to the aging," says Tom Drewett of Buckner Siesta Homes, Austin, Tex. "We need more established work in all states. We need more participation of our churches in aging programs. There are many services that local churches could render to senior citizens."

A number of churches are engaged in meaningful programs, from sponsoring "senior citizens clubs" to involving the aging in activities at church. And while they may be more palliative then remedial, these programs do offer a beginning.

Perhaps the most elementary step is to consider the aging in physical facilities: steps, hearing aids in pews, nonskid wax on floors.

When an upstairs sanctuary became difficult for the old people to reach, Prescott Baptist, Memphis, Tenn., set up closed-circuit TV. A downstairs viewing room, complete with soft chairs and refreshments, overcomes the stairs.

Old people have social, recreational and educational needs. First Southern Baptist, Denver, Colo., found a way to satisfy all three needs with its senior citizens club. At monthly luncheons, speakers discuss topics of special interest to the aging. Recreational and social activities keep numerous old persons active and involved in life.

And under the direction of Christian social ministries missionary Mildred Streeter and Pastor James Latimer, the program reaches all aging people in First's neighborhood.

The church also has a responsibility to educate its members to the special problems of the elderly. And the people best able to do this may be the elderly themselves.

The trend, in fact, is greater use of elderly in all church programs and processes. Who has more time to give, and who has more experience and expertise to offer than the elderly?

Churches can challenge the aging to

participate in many areas of service, from day-care to visitation to active political involvement. Mary Hoff of Tower Grove Baptist, St. Louis, Mo., remembers having doubts about plugging old people into a community program for children.

"A 77-year-old woman came to me with tears in her eyes," Mrs. Hoff says. "She said, 'I don't have anything to do and I'm so unhappy.' She'd never worked with kids before, but we put her with day-care and it's fantastic what she's done. We're very pleased with the way our old people have responded."

Tower Grove's old people have been pleased, too.

Other churches have been politically active in organizing their old people. A senior citizens group from Glide Methodist, San Francisco, picketed the state capital for better old-age benefits; others have marched, and demonstrated for "senior power."

Churches may want to sponsor experimental educational projects for the elderly too. "Life would be richer, students of aging agree, if a wider repertory of activities were encouraged throughout life," says *Time* magazine. "Almost everyone now marches together in a sort of lockstep." *Time* quotes Psychiatrist Robert Butler: "Perhaps the greatest danger is being frozen into a role that limits one's self-expression and development. We need Middle Starts and Late Starts as well as Head Starts."

Churches should explore such programs as Operation Green Thumb, which hires retired farmers for landscaping and gardening; International Executive Service Corps, which arranges for retired executives to use their management skills in developing other countries; "Foster Grandparents," which pays low-income "grandparents" to care for underprivileged children; Vista and Peace Corps; and the Home Mission Board's Christian Service Corps. The Foreign Mission Board also uses aged volunteers.

For most old people, 65 doesn't signal life's end. Emma Collis, a resident of Wesley Manor, Jacksonville, Fla., is an active gardener who enjoys pointing out plants to Jenny Boen. Tod Lindenmuth, an 82-year-old New England artist (far right), stays busy in retirement by continuing his painting.

Not only may older members find opportunities to channel their skills through such programs, but churches may also be able to adapt such programs to their own needs and interests. Certainly with changes in longevity and retirement years, churches must examine diverse ways of motivating their elderly members to continued meaningful service.

Outreach is another aspect of the church's changing role in ministry to old people. The attitude that there are no "profits" in spending time and money on the aging is much too common. Many programs — Meals - on - Wheels, telephone contacts, visitation, pre-retirement planning—are options to challenge concerned congregations. (See story, page 13.)

(Churches interested in programs for the aged should write for HMB Department of Christian Social Ministries' factsheet, "The Church and the Older People.")

Families and individuals also play important roles in the happiness and well-being of the elderly. Families should attempt to include old members in special events and celebrations; they can help them feel loved and needed—not rejected—with visits, calls and letters.

Says Bill Harris, administrator of Baptist Home of the District of Columbia: "Mail is very important to the residents of our home. Every letter or card —even 'junk mail'—is treasured. But all too often for all too many, there isn't any mail.

"Most of the residents at the home have outlived their peers and have no one who cares or remembers them"

This situation is typical.

Individuals alarmed by the lonely years facing the elderly in their areas can group together to stay informed local and national government programs and actively seek solutions to problems. Laymen are often ignorant of local and national government programs and community activities for the aged. How much old-age assistance is paid by the state? What medical care is provided? What are the community social and recreational facilities for the aged? What transportation is needed? Is low-cost housing available?

In each case, inadequate answers demand action.

But action is slow coming. Too many people—including the old themselves—have been programmed to accept the dehumanizing aspects of old age as "fate." Efforts to alter the conditions of the aging are rare; society's attitude, if not its words, begs: "Go and die in peace, old man; Leave us alone."

Perhaps that is one responsibility of age—the affirmation that life is a continual process with death merely one phase; "the noblest role," says *Time* magazine, may be "to show the next generation how to face the ultimate concerns."

The trouble is, it seems, the aged have been brainwashed to believe that is their *only* role, that old age is a period of disengagement during which inner processes make the loosening of social ties natural.

Harvard sociologist Chad Gordon disagrees: "Disengagement theory is a rationale for the fact that old people haven't a damn thing to do and nothing to do it with."

"My seventies were interesting and fairly serene," writes Florida Scott-Maxwell in *The Measure of My Days*, "but my eighties are passionate. I am so disturbed by the outer world, and by human quality in general, that I want to put things right as though I still owed a debt to life."

It may take generations to recondition people, to transform society's view of the final third of life from the "declining years" to the age of victory. "The twilight of life" is often a mental farce.

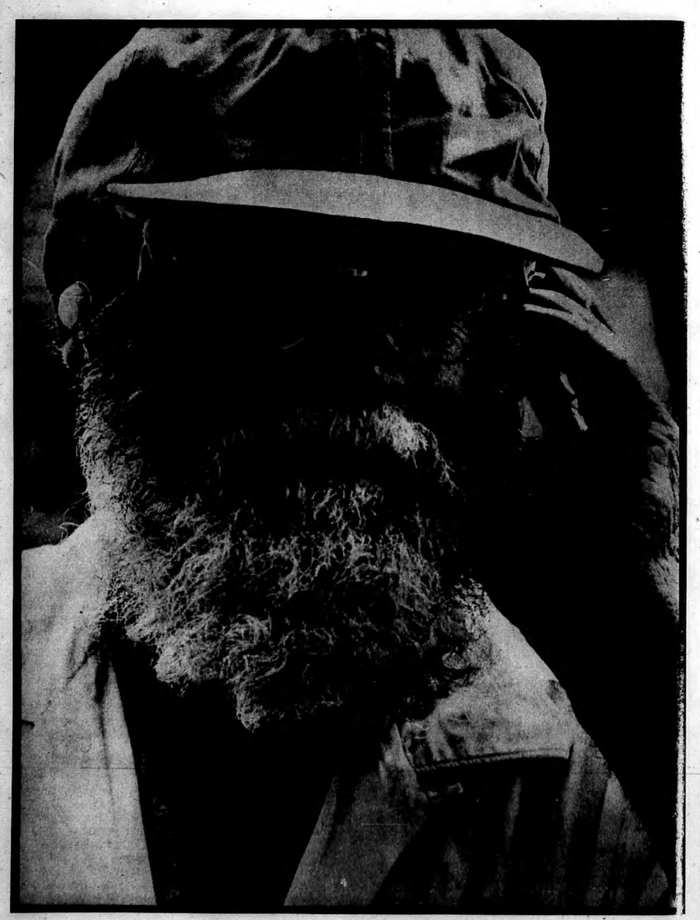
Society must reexamine its fundamental concept of aging, recognizing the potential contributions of the aged and the reservoir of courage, insight and faith they offer.

Today we push the obsolete generation into a dreary, debilitating old age. But we have a choice for tomorrow. Churches—individual Christians—can play a vital role in the reordering of attitudes about the aged. But will they?

Wrote poet Dylan Thomas, "Old age should burn and rave at close of day." It's not a command, but a recognition of truth.

—*a. hullum*

This article and "The Agony of the Aged" (Nov. HMI) includes selections from a Christian Life Commission resource paper by Clyde Fant Jr., Thor Hammer and William Pinson Jr., a team of writers from Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, Fort Worth, Tex. Additional material was gathered by the staff of HOME MISSIONS.



You Should Live So Long

In a youth-oriented society, 79-year-old Will Whitkamper, a vigorous, classic communitarian, proves 'there must be something to this growing old'

By Dallas M. Lee

Photography by Don Rutledge

Will Wittkamper, at 79, shares his wisdom with more people and cocks his hearing aid toward more diverse opinions than he has at any other time in his life.

Something tells you, when you see this old man sitting under a chinaberry tree teaching the Gospel of John to a group of people 55 to 60 years younger than he is, that Wittkamper has somehow kept mentally fit and has maintained purposeful relationships.

In part, of course, this vitality is due to the unique chemistry of the man. But it also has to do with the fact that for nearly 20 years Wittkamper had been part of a fellowship that allowed him to discover the unique gifts he bears in old age.

He is part of a community of Christians at Koinonia Farm in southwest Georgia. Koinonia at one time was an experiment in Christian communal living, and Wittkamper joined it in 1953. Now, however, the people gathered at Koinonia Farm—some 50 adults and 20 children—are participants in Koinonia Partners, which exists to provide jobs for the rural disinherited through low-overhead industries and farming, and to provide low-cost housing that is built and sold at cost with no-interest loans.

Many elderly never realize the opportunity to explore the special gifts that compensate for the wheezes and wrinkles of old age. At 79-year-old Will Wittkamper has found such a chance at Koinonia.

Koinonia also is involved in an extensive ministry of Christian communication that stirs the interest of some 2,000 visitors a year—most of them young people.

Most elderly don't experience the opportunity to learn about any special gifts that compensate for the wheezes and creaking pressures of their old age. Often, they are simply directed to the nearest shuffleboard and left to sink into a time warp of random memories and deteriorating flesh.

Rather than living in destructive "isolation," Wittkamper actively participates in a fellowship that includes people of all ages. In community with the others, he works as he is able—which is a lot—and he is able to participate in study and entertainment within the fellowship. Music is a major part of the spirit of Koinonia, and Wittkamper electrifies the place on rare occasions when he plays hymns on a saw.

When you see his hunched figure stride through a dew-heavy field just after sunrise, pushing a wheelbarrow toward his organic garden; or when you see him after supper in the evenings, as he stands in the yard with freshly washed head and beard, watching the young people cavort around him; or emerge from the fascinating old fun barn that for years has accumulated the tools and utensils and keepsakes of his life; or stand in a sloping pasture beside a lake in early summer, performing the wedding of one of his sons—when you see all this and more in the rhythms of this old man's existence, you think there must be something to this growing old.

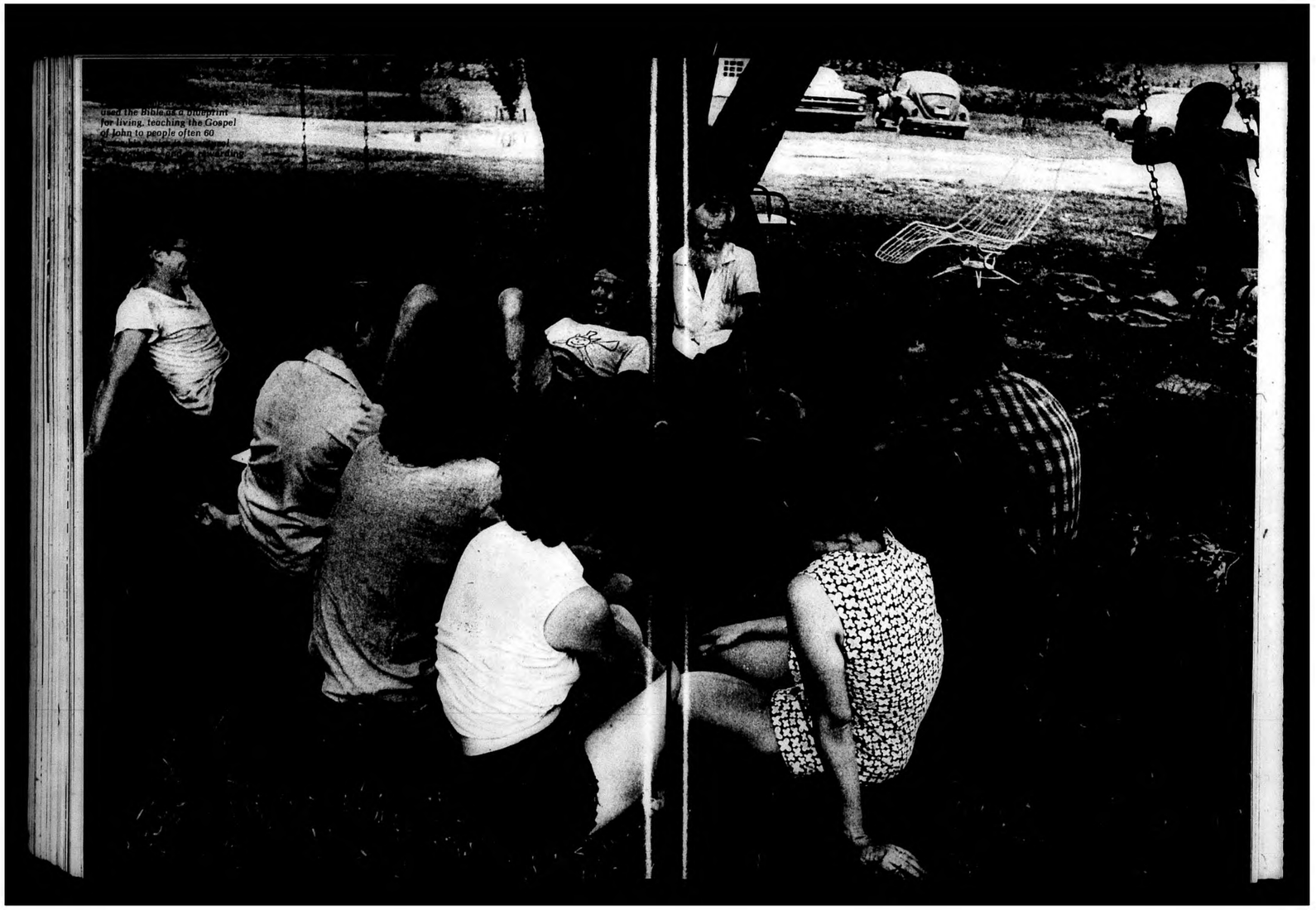
He is a thin, wiry little man with huge, thick-skinned hands that have been in the earth, that have planted and tended and picked. His difficulty in hearing gives him a style and quiet presence and a powerful gift of listening intently and observing.

He has a style and character pounded out through the years that makes you think of the unique beauty of an ancient oak tree that has leaned into the elements for a century or more, and provides more pleasure to the eye and to the touch than a forest of juicy, cocky young scrub oak.

There's something to this growing old. You can see it in the leathery lines of this old man's skin, feel it in the strength of his crusty hands, sense it in the gentle patience of his spirit. And it was all 79 years acoming.

The opportunity to live and work and study and play with such a man is the gift of his presence. And he is part of a corporate life that makes it possible for him to receive the vibrant gifts of the young, and the almost young, and others who used to be young.

At Koinonia, Wittkamper has a chance to come together with hundreds of young, on-the-road spirits who are searching for truth and purpose in life. And when you see him with his tattered, ancient Bible on his knee talking


Using the Bible as a blueprint
for living, teaching the Gospel
of John to people often 60

In the Koinonia community, Wittkamper works as he is able—which is a lot. With calloused, leathered hands, he hoes in the organic garden, keeping pace with bow-backed youngsters, or discusses plans for the corn crop with other participants in the farm.

intently with a group of these young people, who are eagerly thumbing through dog-eared paperback New Testaments, the idea of a generation gap becomes something less than a weary cliche. The scene is strangely prophetic: an old man dreaming dreams aloud, young people seeing visions—of who they can be, of what they can do.

When Wittkamper talks about peace and resistance to the war machine, he speaks from the depths of thought and study and experience that go back to a World War I work camp for conscientious objectors. In fact, his outspokenness on that particular subject got him dismissed from church after church across the midwest and west before he decided after 30 years to give up the pulpit ministry in the Disciples of Christ congregations, and seek community.

He is a classic communitarian who believes that when Christ's followers come together to live as a family—to share with and care for one another, and to unify their desires to experience the Kingdom of God—then they are in fact experiencing to some degree the loving rule of the King, or the Father.

"We're all one family here," he says. "Jesus said for us to pray, 'Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven.' That's present tense. If God wants his will done now in my life, I've got to do something. Seek first the Kingdom of God and his justice, and these other things will take care of themselves."

That seeking, to Wittkamper, involves the common life and commitment of a "family of the Father"—a community of like believers.

"Community is a matter of brotherly love among people wanting the Kingdom," he says. "It is a group-seeking that gives you strength and gives the others strength. Community is like a family, a demonstration of the Kingdom of God.

"If it can't save the world, nothing will."

So Wittkamper is part of a life-style that more often makes room for him. It is a style of simple living that incorporates him and draws heavily on its spiritual resources, providing him not only with the comforts of being cared for but also with the purposefulness of being able to care.

The Hand of Hope

With a variety of programs and projects, Washington, D.C. churches offer the aged a sense of community and the security of fellowship

By Warner B. Ragsdale Jr.

Photos by Don Rutledge

"We lived in a row of houses on a terrace. Those steps kept getting higher as we got older. And the whole neighborhood was going downhill. We didn't get out very much. It wasn't safe after dark. It wasn't all that safe in the daytime, either."

This has changed for Mr. and Mrs. Harold Quivers. In November, 1970, they moved into Friendship Terrace, an attractive new apartment house for the elderly in a nice section of Northwest Washington, D.C.

"We didn't really want to leave our house that soon, but we knew it wouldn't be much longer before we would have to move," explains Mrs. Quivers. "When the chance came to move here, it was too good to pass up."

Mr. and Mrs. Quivers are black, in their late seventies. Their two daughters are grown and married. Like many elderly couples and individuals, they have a small, but steady income.

Although they are Episcopalians living in a project built by their church with a government subsidy, the Quivers are part of the Baptist ministry to the elderly in the nation's capital.

In a sense, they may symbolize this expanding ministry as many Baptists see it. The ministry is to both whites and blacks. It is not limited to Baptists. It involves cooperation with the government in various ways. It represents a sharp break with some ideas of the past. And it is extremely diverse in its scope.

The ministry to the aging in Washington ranges from social activities offered by individual churches one day a week or month to the full nursing care available for sick residents at the Baptist Home of the District of Columbia.

Many churches have some sort of senior citizens activity. Some are deeply involved.

All the efforts so far have one thing in common—they barely begin to meet the needs of the many thousands of elderly in or near the nation's capital. Officials involved in the program see an enormous need both for housing the elderly and for helping those who live alone to care for themselves.

As plans for an expanded ministry to the old people of Washington mature, they include two projects which should be showcases for the Baptist witness in this area. These are:

- A 1,000-unit residential project combining low-income housing, elderly housing and intermediate and full nursing care in one facility built on a six-acre site close-in to downtown Washington.

When complete, the project is expected to cost $30 million. It will be financed under a combination of government subsidy programs. American Baptist Service Corporation, one of the nation's largest sponsors of non-profit housing, has an option on the site and will develop it in cooperation with the local Baptist Housing Foundation. Construction is expected to begin before the end of 1972.

- An innovative health care facility for the aged at the New Town of Columbia, Md., located between Washington and Baltimore. It will cooperate with the Johns Hopkins University School of Medicine in developing new techniques to restore patients to self care, delay the onset of senility and development of degenerative diseases. Major emphasis will be on rehabilitation of the elderly and those with serious illnesses such as strokes.

Still in the planning phase, the facility would be built and operated by a separate board affiliated with the Baptist Home. It would be financed under a combination of government and private grants and subsidies.

The Baptist Home also helped organize the Baptist Housing Foundation, a non-profit corporation which has three member churches—Capitol Hill Metropolitan Baptist, National Baptist Memorial and Zion Baptist. All are members of the D.C. Baptist Convention. Zion is one of a half-dozen predominantly Negro churches that now belong to the convention.

Eventually, the Board of Trustees of the Baptist Home hopes to develop a flexible system of elderly care which will serve the very poor and well-to-do alike, regardless of whether they can care for themselves or need nursing care. Through volunteers from individual churches, it is planned to provide friendly visits, help with shopping, even meals, for those who do not need residential care.

First step in the overall plan was an

HOPE *(cont.)*

William P. Harris, administrator of the Baptist Home of Washington, D.C., and Friendship Terrace, a government-financed public housing unit for the elderly, talks with two residents, Mr. and Mrs. Harold Quivers. Harris was asked to run the 200-unit project when Friendship, Inc., the Episcopalian group that owns Friendship Terrace, was unable to find suitable management. Baptist Home and the Terrace also share some expenses.

agreement with Episcopal Church Home, Friendship, Inc., the board created by the Episcopal Church to build Friendship Terrace.

Friendship Terrace opened in the fall of 1970 and filled up in three months. It now has a waiting list. Because it was built under a government subsidy, it offers housing for the elderly at reasonable rates. Because it is operated by a church group, it is able to offer some elements of care and concern not available in privately run projects.

Many church groups in the Washington area are sponsoring both elderly and family housing projects under the government subsidy plans. Direct involvement with the government is avoided because the projects are run by a non-profit corporation. Yet the church often finds the project a fertile mission field where volunteers can help the old people or low income families living in the project.

The projects are financed either by a direct government loan or a government-guaranteed loan with an interest subsidy which helps make lower rents possible. Only a limited cash outlay by the church is required to get the project going. It must, according to federal regulations, support itself by its rental income.

Residents at Friendship Terrace, under government rules, can have incomes of up to $5,000 or so a year for an individual, $6,000 for a couple. They pay $98 a month for an efficiency apartment, $130 for a one-bedroom apartment. It costs $65 a month for the evening meal, but only $15 more if you have lunch, too.

Experts say the elderly often live alone, lose contact with the world and often don't bother to eat properly. Social contacts and nutrition are crucial problems of old people, they say.

"We have a former neighbor living here," says Mrs. Quivers. "Her husband died and she was left alone in a big house. She wasn't fixing enough food for herself without her husband to cook for. And she was a diabetic who needed regular, balanced meals. She lost weight, sort of dwindled away, said she just didn't want to eat. Now, she is eating regularly. She likes it fine here and has gained back the weight she lost."

At Friendship Terrace, the evening meal is something of a social event.

"We take only one meal a day—I don't want to get too lazy," says Mrs. Quivers. "I fix the other two. Going out to dinner at night—going downstairs—gives us something to do. We meet other people. It is just like having to dress and go out. I think that's good for old people."

"We enjoy dressing for dinner," says Mrs. William Koller. "Everybody looks like they are going somewhere, and, you know, old people often get careless about the way they dress."

Where the Quivers learned about Friendship Terrace through their church, the Kollers found out about it through a daughter living nearby.

"We lived in Philadelphia and made regular trips down to see our daughter," says Mrs. Koller. "We both have health problems and our daughter felt it made more sense for us to live in Washington, because if we got sick we would have to come down and stay with her. The problem was a place to live that we could afford. We watched this building go up. On a visit last December, we saw it was finished. We moved in last January."

Koller, 80, a retired bacteriologist, says, "I like to fish. I am very much an outdoors person. Now I go only when somebody takes me. Most of the time, I have to settle for reading magazines and books about the outdoors."

However, he still takes occasional fishing trips with a son in Ohio. When he does, says his wife, "the beauty of the arrangement here is that I can get regular meals which I probably would not fix for myself."

Not everybody in Friendship Terrace is completely retired. For example, Quivers still works as a pharmacist two days a week. Several others of the 206 residents have part-time jobs.

For those whose incomes are very low, there are rent supplements. Under this federal program, a person pays only one-quarter of his income for rent. The government pays the rest.

About a dozen persons receive rent supplements at Friendship Terrace. This makes it possible for one elderly lady from a local Baptist church with a total monthly income of $110 to live without scrimping too painfully. She pays only $30 rent on an efficiency.

Although the costs are a good deal less at Friendship Terrace than at the Baptist Home—only $210 a month for a one-bedroom apartment and two meals a day compared to a $350 a month charge at the Home—there are substantial reasons for the long waiting list at the home.

There are 63 residents at the Baptist Home. More than twice that number are on the waiting list, even though it has been trimmed significantly since Friendship Terrace opened.

A resident at the Baptist Home does not have to move if he becomes feeble or senile, or ill. He only leaves if he has to go to the hospital. Otherwise, there is a medical and dental care program available at the Home. Once admitted, the resident is assured care for life, regardless of his income.

There are a wide range of activities—arts and crafts, trips, a gift shop run by residents selling articles they make themselves, social events and regular courses taught in the building, both for residents and outsiders, by the Institute of Lifetime Learning of the American Association of Retired Persons—National Retired Teachers Association. There is even a beauty parlor.

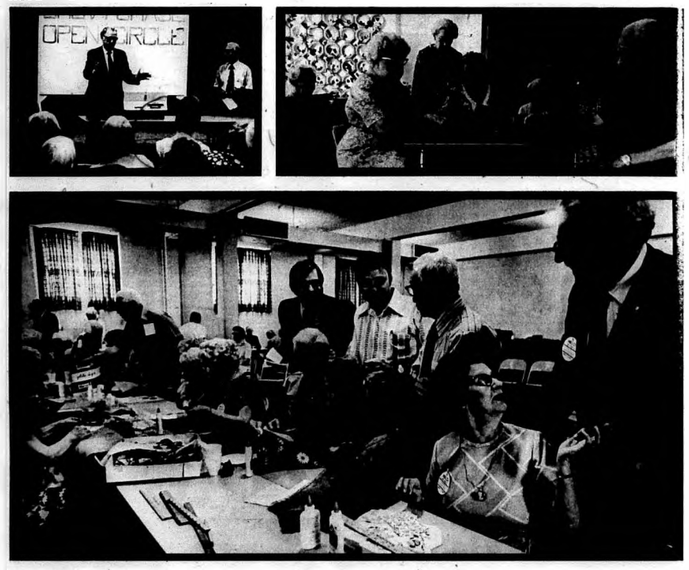
However, because of the relatively small number of occupants, costs have been climbing steadily. Without the broad base needed to spread operating costs, there has been a severe squeeze. At present, over a third of the residents pay less than the full monthly charge. A number are on welfare. As a result, the Board of Trustees has had to require that only those on the waiting list who can pay the full charge can be admitted in the foreseeable future.

In an effort to broaden the base to permit a lower charge in the future, plans have been drawn to build an addition to the present building that will enable the Baptist Home to care for a total of about 240 persons. So far, however, the effort to get necessary zoning has been stalled for over two years. Even if present efforts are successful, it would be early 1972 before expansion can proceed further.

It was partly because of this delay, partly because of economic difficulties that make it harder and harder to help very poor persons, that the Baptist Home joined with the three churches last year to organize the Baptist Housing Foundation.

In addition to the 1,000-unit facility being developed in cooperation with the American Baptist Service Corporation, the Foundation is proceeding with plans for a 200-300-unit combina on

Many churches sponsor activities—such as bridge games—that bring together neighborhood old people.



Chevy Chase Baptist offers old people many programs: Thomas Walters, National Association of Retired Federal Employees president, reports on lobbying efforts in Congress (top right); others enjoy fellowship in games or spend time working on crafts.

housing and nursing care project to be built near National Baptist Memorial Church along the 14th Street Corridor, wrecked by the 1968 riots. It is in an urban renewal area.

A number of other projects are under study, including one for a nursing home in Southeast Washington.

But more than bricks and mortar are needed for the aged. Another type of ministry is the feeding ministry. In the Washington metropolitan area, five Meals on Wheels programs take hot food into shut-ins. A number of projects provide meals for those who can get out.

One of the group meal projects is operated jointly by National Baptist Memorial Church and the Church of the Saviour. It provides five meals a week in the evening and has been operating for more than a year.

The Church of the Saviour, an ecumenical congregation, also operates the nearby "Potter's House," possibly the first church-run coffeehouse in the nation. Its members pledge a regular mission effort every week. Another mission project is For the Love of Children (FLOC) which finds foster homes for homeless children. Through its efforts, it has cut the population of D.C. Children's Village in half and stimulated a drive resulting in a recent vote by the D.C. City Council to close the institution within a few years.

Under the elderly meals project with Memorial, the Church of the Saviour provides most of the money and its mission volunteers staff it, and the meals are served at National Baptist Memorial.

"We have been feeding about 40 people a night, on the average," says Ms. Edith Hayden, who directs the project for the Church of the Saviour. "We don't charge for the meals, but those who want to can pay a quarter a night."

She adds, "We are trying to get a federal grant, so we can expand it, but haven't had much luck yet. I would love to start a Meals on Wheels program. There are so many people in this area who are home bound. People must be able to walk here because I don't have transportation."

Because National Baptist Memorial Church is located in an inner-city area, the old people don't like to be out after dark. The church has been robbed many times. So, dinner time is early—about 4 p.m., or so.

"The old folks like to eat and get home before dark," explains Mrs. Hayden.

Another approach for the elderly by the Church of the Saviour involves buying up old houses, renovating and redecorating them and renting them to groups of the elderly. This has been done with five houses so far.

Mrs. Hayden, a widow, lives in one herself. She explains:

"Most of them have five bedrooms. Everybody has his own room and we share the living room, dining room and kitchen. We charge $60 a month rent. I shop once a month. All of us chip in $10. We share the food and take turns cooking."

Both men and women live in the houses in a family-like atmosphere.

Out near the suburbs, in a well-to-do neighborhood, is Chevy Chase Baptist Church. For a dozen years, until recently, its membership has been declining.

Two years ago, a study of church and its community was made. The finding: "The image of the church in the community was that of a narrow, insulated, isolated, uncaring congregation which was far more interested in its building than in people."

Says the Chevy Chase pastor, Joseph Wortman:

"This church was so insulated and ingrown, the members couldn't think of anything but their own problems. We couldn't do anything but quarrel among ourselves."

This has changed, he says, as the church opened the doors of its large, attractive buildings to the community to such things as pre-school programs, dance classes, a coffeehouse for teenagers and young adults and "The Chevy Chase Open Circle," a weekly gathering of elderly persons. Attendance averages about 50 of the 100 old folks on the rolls of the "Open Circle."

In cooperation with Pilgrim Baptist Church, a Negro church in Northeast Washington, Chevy Chase operates "The Open Eye," a church-centered community youth program in a black area.

"Every time we have done something that opened our arms to the community, we have grown richer by it," says Wortman. "It is a great experience for all of us. A church has to be open to the world. The world has more to offer us than we have to offer it, in some instances."

The elderly program began last April under Mrs. John Kiracofe, a retired government worker. She is assisted by Louis Mancuso, another retired government worker who is president of the D.C. Chapter of the National Association of Retired Federal Employes.

"They do it themselves," says the Chevy Chase pastor. "The staff offers some support, not much. We try to provide an educational effort in each meeting, along with some form of non-denominational spiritual uplift. We don't use it for evangelism, only to develop a relationship with the individual in a helpful way."

The D.C. Recreation Department provides leadership and materials for crafts, art and recreational programs for the elderly conducted by the church. Says Wortman:

"This has become a sort of classic example of how church and government can cooperate to do something neither could do alone."

There are plans for a broader program soon.

"Part of our original planning," says Wortman, "was to have a visitation program for the elderly along with some kind of hot meals program. We have found many people in this northwest area who are relatively affluent, but undernourished. They just don't fix the proper food. We want to develop volunteers who will go in and have lunch with these people. The big hang-up is seed money. The D.C. government has promised it, but hasn't delivered. The program will support itself financially if we can get it going. The people around here, for the most part, can afford to pay for it."

About the time Chevy Chase Baptist Church was taking a hard look at itself two years ago, the National Capital Housing Authority bought Regency House, a high rise luxury apartment a few blocks from the church and turned it into public housing for the elderly. A big controversy erupted almost immediately.

There was a great deal of hostility at first, says Wortman, explaining, "you had white tenants being pressured out of Regency House. You had low rent paying, aged, mostly black tenants coming in. There was a lot of hostility from former tenants and from the community. It was the first big breakthrough of blacks west of Rock Creek Park.

"The ministers in the Chevy Chase area feared the tenants might be the recipients of all that hostility. A few of us got together to form the Chevy Chase Ecumenical Center. We rented a first floor apartment in Regency House and set it up as a hospitality center.

"We encouraged people to come by and ask our help. We tried to show them where they would be received well—ease their way into the community. It wasn't a handout, although we helped where we could. The goal was to help them learn more about a strange community."

The small group of churches operating the ecumenical center soon grew to about 15, some from well outside the immediate area. Each day the center was staffed by volunteers from a different church.

"It was an eye-opening experience for most of the volunteers," says Wortman. "It was our church's first experience in the black, ecumenical kind of thing. Most residents were Baptist. Out of our involvement in the center grew a Bible study group and weekly prayer service by our church at Regency House."

For the tenants, the result has been a sense of community, and an easier introduction into the community.

"At one point," the Chevy Chase pastor says, "Regency House was deteriorating rapidly. The proper screening job was not being done. Undesirable tenants were coming in. We helped the tenants get together. They formally protested to the National Capital Housing Authority and got it straightened out. Now, our program has grown into a sort of tenants' organization."

For Chevy Chase Baptist Church, Wortman says, all its community programs have paid off, both in a new spirit and in new members.

"We have had a sharp upturn in our membership since we began our community ministries," he says. "We haven't tried to use them that way, but that is how it turned out. We have found that the simple act of showing you care in many ways."

Ragsdale, vice-president of the American Baptist Convention, is a Washington-based correspondent for a national news magazine.

A Visit to Grandma's House

Critics call them 'flesh factories'; admirers say they're 'havens of hope.' But remember, a house isn't a Baptist home unless a lot of love is there . . .?

By Everett Hullum Jr.

On the grounds of Waycross Baptist Village stands an awesome oak tree. Its base is three-dozen feet around, its spreading branches—like a beautiful, symmetrical mushroom—dip down almost to child-height.

Bob Shaw stopped along the walkway and squinted at the tree. The bright sun bled out the colors of the buildings in the background.

"They tell me that tree's 1,500 years old," Shaw said.

"When you look at it, you don't feel so old, do you?" He laughed. His 73 years seemed insignificant beside the majesty of that ancient oak. But it wasn't the age of the tree that made Bob Shaw feel young; it was the stimulation of Baptist Village life.

"I really like it," Shaw said of his home for the past two years; "I'm crazy about it, I'll tell you the truth.

"I like the Christian atmosphere, the treatment you get from the help—they're all just wonderful." Shaw, as one of the Georgia home's "unofficial" tour guides, had just jostled and joked with the kitchen staff while pointing out dining facilities to me.

He knew most of their names—and they all seemed to know his. A widower since 1963, Shaw had found a place at the village, his new friends assuaging the loneliness of old age.

"I'm tickled to death with this place," he insisted.

Shaw's feelings are echoed by many old people in the 20 Baptist homes in 11 states and the District of Columbia. For most of the 2,336 residents of state-convention-sponsored homes, their new cooperative life-style offers a better alternative. As 77-year-old Aletha Bergman of Waycross put it, "When my husband died, the intense loneliness was too much for me. I needed someone around me." The Baptist home was her answer.

Unfortunately, such answers are limited. Baptist homes run more than 90 percent occupied; most vacancies are filled from long waiting lists; turnovers take two to four months. "The waiting list tears the heart out of us," says Robert Herring of Dallas' Buckner Baptist Homes. "We never have enough room for all who need us."

One answer to the problem of inadequate space—for some denominations—has been government financing of new buildings. Baptists openly cringe at the thought, but privately admit it's an option they must consider.

Most Baptist homes already accept federal and state aid—in the form of welfare and Medicaid payments. Even though the money is paid directly to the homes, it is justified as funds given them for care of individual residents.

Yet the decision to reject federal monies for buildings denies the same sort of care for hundreds of others.

"People complain that the federal government will start telling you what you can and can't do," says one Baptist home administrator. "That's nonsense. All Baptist homes are licensed by the state; we couldn't be any more controlled. The state could close us down in a minute."

Public funding would require that homes be opened to everyone—erasing most homes' "Baptists-only" admission requirement. But many critics of Baptist homes believe this would be healthy.

Cecil Underwood of Peachtree-on-Peachtree, a downtown Atlanta Baptist home, feels "we are shortsighted in not being permitted to use federal funds on long-term loan basis for building.

"Because we are unable to secure funds for building, we are failing to meet the needs of many of our Baptist people and other people who look to us for a home in their late years."

Like it or not, the government is in the aging business. As another state home administrator admitted, "The camel's not only in the tent, he's about to stomp me to death."

"A guy with the government housing authority sat in my office and told me, 'We'd rather give you the money than use it ourselves. You'd do a better job and it would cost less,'" confesses one Baptist home director who requested anonymity because of pressure in his state.

"We think we can do a better job," he adds. "We can offer all they do, plus Christian love and compassion."

"I'm in favor of using federal funds to care for the aging," says the HMB's outspoken expert, Paul Adkins. "I believe a time may come when we will find a Scripture verse that will permit us to take federal funds. I hope it comes soon."

Other denominations—especially Baptists—have gone heavily into public housing for the elderly. But Southern Baptists, steeped in the tradition of church-state separation, have moved slowly. Only two groups—one in Atlanta and one in Louisville, Ky.—have formed private corporations to secure government funding.

A few others are considering it.

Baptist homes, meanwhile, are among the nation's best: modern, efficient, well-run. Yet they have drawbacks in addition to lack of space.

They are largely self-supporting. At least 50 percent of homes' budgets come from residents' fees. State conventions kick in perhaps 10 percent, or a national average.

Special offerings, gifts and foundations provide the rest.

The lack of financial support angers many administrators. "Financial problems plague our ministry," says Raymond Gaudet, Arcadia Baptist Home, La. "The need for ministry to the aging is growing, yet we are receiving less in terms of Cooperative Program dollars to support our ministry.

"Our state contributes $13,000 annually, which goes to retire building indebtedness. This does not give us one thin dime to use for caring for our people's needs."

Consequently, most homes handle few indigent residents. Except for North Carolina homes, which report 80 percent of their residents are financially needy, Baptist aging facilities cater to middle-class [or better] clientele.

As Underwood candidly admitted, "Our objective is to provide a Christian home for elderly people in the middle-income bracket."

"The concern of Southern Baptists for the aging should be at least as great as that for young people," insists Tom Jackson of Buckner Baptist Haven, Houston.

By comparison, Baptists have 35 children's homes in 20 states and the District of Columbia. About one-sixth of their annual expenditures of $12

PHOTO BY E. HULLUM

On a sunny afternoon, Bob Shaw and Aletha Bergman enjoy sitting on the patio of Mrs. Bergman's apartment in Waycross Village. In Baptist homes, women outnumber men 10 to one; not only do women outlive men, they move into the homes more readily. "Males," says HMB's Paul Adkins, "seem better able to live with relatives. Women have depended on husbands; they transfer this dependence to the home."

PHOTO BY DON RUTLEDGE

million is Cooperative Program dollars; special offerings contribute heavily.

Total value of children's homes exceeds $51 million, versus below $25 million for old age homes. Per capita, Baptists spend twice as much on children as on aged people, when one considers older people provide about half their own financing.

Another aspect of Baptist homes that draws criticism is the all-Baptist constituency. Some argue that the homes should reach out to help any aging person in need; instead, the homes are an ecclesiastical closed shop.

To the contrary, Paul Adkins says, "There's not much chance to use them as an evangelistic ministry. Sociologically, groups form in the homes. When a member dies, it is hard for a newcomer to break into the group.

"It would be even worse if the individual didn't have a common religious background. He'd have two strikes against him when he entered the home."

That limits homes to aging Baptists—at least until Baptists are re-educated to think of the whole of life as a Christian witness.

In addition, it means the homes—like most Baptist churches—are marble-column-white. Only two report residents of another race; Kentucky had a Negro; Oklahoma an Indian. No Negroes were in any Deep South homes and no Mexican-Americans in any Texas home; "none have applied for admission," was a common answer.

Another home reported it was open to "all races and faiths," but had no residents who were not white Baptists.

The isolation of many Baptist homes stimulates controversy. Only a few are in areas easily accessible to church, stores, restaurants, etc.

"The tranquil pastoral settings are just quarantining old people," says the HMB's Adkins. They are separated from friends and acquaintances—as well as from other age groups.

Some argue an effort should be made to bring together the generations. "In our experience, the elderly have really been delighted when the young people take an interest in them," says George Torney of First Baptist, San Francisco. "To artificially keep them apart is to do injustice to both young and old."

"The ideal place for an old person to be is in the community where he has lived," says Adkins. "If an individual is sick, that's different."

At Waycross, Baptist home officials urge people to stay in their homes as long as they can. "We advise them to stay at home until they really need our services," says assistant administrator Olin Jones. "Whatever may cause the need, it's not chronological age. I recently told a man of 70 he was too young to come here. He was working a five-and-a-half-day week at a hardware store. 'You'd be lost in a place like this,' I told him. It's a mistake for a man that active to come here.

"This will never be home. Not really."

The "old folks home" stigma—basically an attempt to force mature adults to accept roles as dependent as children—still plagues Baptist retirement centers.

"When the average person hears the word 'home,'" says Buckner's Herring, "he sees a poor farm where old people are shut up like a herd of cattle. But it's not like that any more. We're in a whole new ballgame today."

Baptist administrators have worked hard to follow new trends and take advantage of recent studies concerning treatment of the aged. Dehumanizing practices—such as giving residents an "allowance" which is a mere pittance—have been abandoned in all but a few places.

"The philosophy today is to keep a person active and responsible as long as possible," says Herring. "We want him to make his own decisions, to work out his own plans, as long as he's able. Even in skilled nursing care, we want the patients to do as much for themselves as possible."

Buckner has a resident council, with committees for hostess duties, food advisory, flowers, maintenance of the "country store," arts and crafts, and other activities.

Physically able residents work with others in Buckner Village, including those in custodial care in Ryburn, the nursing home.

"We try to give a person a sense of continuing worth," says Herring.

"If they're nothing more than dignified places to die," says Paul Adkins, "then Baptist homes are just flesh factories. If they can't provide more than two clean white sheets and three meals a day, they should get out of the business. Old people need more than that.

"The aged are making difficult adjustments. They feel threatened; they need someone to listen to their problems, someone to help them work through the changes of aging.

"Motivation is important. Old people need to be challenged."

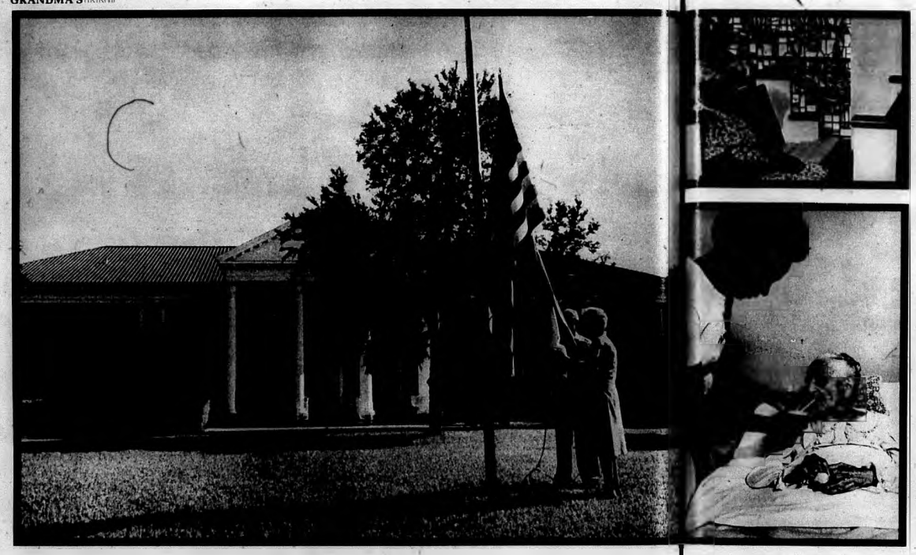
Most Baptist homes concentrate on community living. Newcomers must adjust to a semi-private life-style. After initial wariness, most seem to welcome the openness and sense of "family." Bob Shaw didn't hesitate to rap on a door while opening it, but the gesture was too natural to be intruding. Residents in apartments along the long halls at Buckner often leave their doors open.

Cafeteria meals in a central dining room encourage mixing, and various activities, scheduled during the day, help break down barriers.

"It's our hope to reflect the love of God as we provide aging persons with a meaningful place to live and not merely a comfortable place to die," says Bill Harris of Baptist Home of the District of Columbia. One way is to involve many residents in worthwhile activities, not busywork.

A typical day for residents of Bill Harris' home may be atypical of other Baptist homes, but it does represent a common directive and favored ap-

The Baptist Home in Washington, D. C., residents planned, organized and operate a gift shop, which sells their own handwork. Proceeds are used to purchase new supplies for other projects.



Dallas' Buckner, like many Baptist homes, encourages activity, with residents' committees handling everything from food to crafts to flag.

proach. As such, it deserves a closer look:

Residents begin the day with an early morning walk, followed by a large breakfast. Afterwards, a devotional period draws many. The worship committee—one of 20 at the home—enlists guest speakers.

Morning activities—the home has a full-time activity director—may include ceramics, sewing and needlepoint, painting, decoupage, silk screen, artwork and films. Outings to shop, visit historic sites or the library are planned.

After dinner, activities may be continued, but most residents rest. Free time follows supper. Many residents watch television (daytime soap operas are popular), while others visit friends.

Despite the heavy slate of activities, not all residents participate. "Far too many tend to withdraw and the activity director has to constantly encourage, interest and persuade residents to take advantage of the offerings," says administrator Harris. But the overall program is successful.

Yet in many cases—despite the best efforts of Baptist home staff—old people turn to a home as a last resort rather than a first choice.

"When I was young, married children moved in with parents," says Ben Schultz, administrator of the Methodists' Wesley Manor in Jacksonville, "it was an accepted way of life.

"But it just doesn't work today. Many times grandparents in the home just cause confusion. Grandparents and parents and children can't all live under one roof; today's houses aren't designed for multiple family dwelling.

"So old folks stay in their own homes as long as they can mow the lawn, get their groceries—take care of themselves. When they reach the point where they can't do this, where do they go? To homes like this."

Most must still be ambulatory. One-half the Baptist homes, for instance, admit invalid patients, even though more than two-thirds have skilled nursing care facilities. The majority, however, provide for residents who become sick and require long-term care.

Part of the reason old people are driven into the homes, says Paul Adkins, is that churches abdicate their responsibility.

The technological age has destroyed traditional living patterns, making it

Most Baptist homes do provide for the physical and spiritual needs of their residents. At the Baptist Home, Washington, D.C., a small chapel is set aside for private use. The Home also has facilities to care for elderly who become invalid.

ility a necessity. But old people have oots that make them much less mobile han their children. In this situation, xplains Adkins, "the church is the table organization in the community. t has a responsibility to maintain peole. Where it's not doing this, it needs o be more aggressive."

George Torney, whose First Baptist, San Francisco, recently began a program for the elderly, calls it "the theology of window washing."

"We went into the neighborhood and washed windows and cleaned yards nd cleaned houses of old people," he says, "and their response was beautiful. They were ecstatic. Maybe for the first time, they really believed we cared."

"If the churches were meeting their responsibilities," insists Adkins, "there would be no rationale for Southern Baptists being in nursing home care. What we need is private nursing homes in church communities, where people—the total membership of the church—can get involved."

Given the failure of the churches to accept this role of engagement, however, most critics feel the Baptist home provides an important service to the aging.

It disrupts their living patterns and uproots them, but in return, it offers security and protection and a feeling that someone—at least someone—cares.

At this season of the year, we sing a carol: "Over the river and through the woods, to Grandmother's house we go. The horse knows the way to carry the sleigh, through white and drifted snow..."

The final question is one of priorities: do Baptists think enough of their aged to spend what it takes for adequate care, both on local and on state levels? Or do they...?

Except...

Well, today the woods are threatened by the papermill, the horse is only one of hundreds ka-throbbing under the hood of the car, the snow is sooty-gray, and Grandmother's house—alas—is a home.

Perhaps it's the best option Grandma had. At least until churches and individuals get personally concerned about the injustices and indignities suffered by America's "obsolete generation."

The Anxiety of Death

It is of doubtful ethical and theological integrity to provide for the physically able, while the helpless struggle alone

By Wayne E. Oates

One does not have to be elderly to be faced with death. The combat soldier in Vietnam, the "cop" on the beat, the fireman, the airline pilot, all live with an awareness of the brink of life at hand.

Yet the onset of the "retirement years" makes this sense of the end of life more "sneakily" real to us. In old age we are not doing daring and adventurous things; rather we have that strange feeling of fearing to look back lest something be gaining on us. What that something is, we are not quite sure. This anxiety is special in its own right. Jesus said, "Which of you by being anxious can add one cubit to the span of his life?" The answer is obvious, because none of us can add one second. However, all of us try to deny our humanity. We think we are immortal, we play gods.

Anxiety may begin at marriage. Some people think of themselves as "old" when they get married, calling themselves "old married people."

But that anxiety is mild when contrasted with the feeling a person gets when he realizes that he has a chronic illness—diabetes, arthritis, early arteriosclerosis, or coronary heart attack—that will affect him "for the rest of his life." The individual learns he can live and do well if he "changes his way of life" and takes his condition philosophically. But the chronic disorder remains a daily reminder of the "end of things." Paul Tillich, I think, called this the "anxiety of finitude"—the anxiety of being able to see the end of life.

New evidence of this anxiety looms when a person retires from his work. From his job he has gained his main claim to importance, to being an acceptable human being, even to belonging to the human race. Mentally he kicks and screams at the idea of retirement. He may, in fact, withdraw permanently in self-pity; or, happily, discover a new set of interests.

The next reminder of death comes when a person decides whether to depend on younger relatives to "carry" him or find a new life in a community of other people his own age. The decision is difficult, with complications from sentimental younger persons who, feeling over-obligated to their parents, try to repress harsh and negative attitudes. Much gamesmanship goes on when guilty-feeling brothers and sisters seek to place responsibility on each other for "looking after Pa and/or Ma."

With the excellent housing facilities provided for older persons, and opportunities for part-time work, there is no real excuse for a person to be dependent as long as his health is good. If busy he will live longer and more happily, maintain his independence, and let other people do the same.

The real crunch comes, however, when the person becomes senile, unable to think lucidly or control basic body functions. At this time he needs intensive care.

Baptists have been slow in developing facilities for caring for people who cannot care for themselves. The typical church home for the aging is really a retirement home; it will not take a person unless he is fully capable of "taking care of himself." But people capable of taking care of themselves are loath to go into such a home. The result is that Baptist homes help people who can help themselves, and at the same time can help the Baptist homes by turning over all their worldly possessions to them.

Baptists should help the aged when they need help. It is contrary to the Baptist principle of autonomy of the human spirit to insist that a person be completely capable of caring for himself before he can enter a home for the aged. This policy is of doubtful theological integrity; God intended human life to be useful and meaningful as long as possible. Furthermore, Christ himself is the help of the helpless; for Baptists to sponsor institutions that require aging people not only to help themselves but also to turn over their property to help the institution is of doubtful ethical integrity for even the children of darkness, much less the children of light.

The anxiety of facing death is itself a threat to one's being, to one's basic concepts of life. And Baptists have a right to have fellow Baptists act to reduce the anxiety of these years—not increase it.

Oates is professor of psychology and religion, Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, Louisville, Ky.

Comment

by Walker L. Knight
Editor

Risking Creativity

One of the good words of life (a white hat group of letters if there ever was one) is creativity. Here is the Ah-Ha of existence, the *Eureka!* of discovery, the *What If* answer.

Man's basic drive to create is godlike and God-given. Erich Fromm calls it the ability to see (or to be aware) and to respond, a definition that should characterize the Christian's life—his living as a man for others.

How do we maximize our creativity? Where do we strike this spark? How do we discover the "Land of the Ah-Ha's"?

Everyone agrees that creativity, which is nothing more than a state of mind, is most widely expressed by very young children. Their existence is a succession of discoveries and inventions, but social pressure and experience freeze their responses. Thomas Harris, a Christian student of behaviour (*I'm OK, You're OK*) likens the mind to a computer tape on which three patterns of reality are programmed: the child, the parent, and the adult. One of these is usually in command of our actions. But the point here is that most creativity occurs when the child-mind is in command. If we are to journey through the Land of the Ah-Ha's, we will be led by our child-mind in wide-eyed wonder, seeing our world without preconceptions, unprogrammed as to how to react, filled with questions and excitement.

"Except you become as little children . . ." Christ said, you will not be a part of the Kingdom. It has been said that the creative person is essentially a "perpetual child." The tragedy is that most of us grow up.

No wonder. Children are easily hurt. They are exposed in their innocence to manipulation, to exploitation, to being used by others. But to live for others demands risk and personal courage. The Christian has no higher example than that of our Lord.

The Christian need not fear failure, or being laughed at. He can afford this risk because what is important is not what others think of him, but what he thinks of himself, and above that what God thinks. In fact, he knows victory has been achieved in Christ.

Living with risk, freedom and creativity is a worthy goal. Instead we find ourselves as church communities often operating upon what Wayne Oates calls "a morality of safety" which inevitably is a legalistic community. Oates writes (*Anxiety in Christian Experience*) that the church thus "quickly breaks communication with its members at the slightest appearance of rebellion, excommunicating the sinner in order to defend itself. Jesus operated far out beyond the boundaries of the safe confines of Pharisaism, risking destruction from both the sinful and the righteous."

However, such safety is really not safe at all, as the German pastor Martin Niemoller confessed: "They came first for the Communists and I didn't speak up because I wasn't a Communist. Then they came for the Jews, and I didn't speak up because I wasn't a Jew. Then they came for the trade unionist, and I didn't speak up because I wasn't a trade unionist. Then they came for the Catholics, and I didn't speak up because I was a Protestant. Then they came for me, and by that time there was no one left to speak up.

Someone has defined creativity as problem solving, and again this definition perfectly fits the Christian's posture in the world. Only he need not spend his time solving his own problems, but the problems of others. Rousseau said nations are judged by what happens to the man at the bottom of the ladder. If nations are so judged, Christians are even more harshly indicted.

This is the season of remembering Christ's incarnation. God's response to man's need. Christ's giving of himself for others. What's our response?

"Man, this's a weird 400 acres if I've ever been on 400 acres. In fact, it's spooky." As he spoke, Charlie Turner's smile erased itself—slowly, left to right—as if his words had crystalized into the most amazing concept he'd had in all his 47 years.

A question mark, then an exclamation point punctuated the little Britisher's tan, leathery face. His gesture encompassed the scene—the two-year-old Texas Soul Clinic, the main communal colony of the rapidly growing Children of God movement.

On that sunny August day amidst Texas cows and mesquite, Charlie's assessment might normally have seemed weird.

But I had come to the ghost town of Thurber prepared for anything and fearing the worst. That was one month before the Children of God vacated the Thurber site after a dispute with its owner, Fred Jordan, a Los Angeles Baptist television evangelist and president of the American Soul Clinic.

When the Children of God packed up to leave Thurber, claiming eviction by Jordan and trustees of the Americal Soul Clinic in Los Angeles, they departed amidst a dizzying swirl of contradictions, confusion and uproar—nothing new in their tumultuous, controversial three-year history.

Since the Children of God first appeared, their rapid growth and fanatical dedication have left confusing, paradoxical imprints on those they have touched—fear and joy, love and hate, holiness and unholiness and sincerity and deceit. But never apathy.

In fact, reactions to the enigmatic, apocalyptic, Bible-memorizing band of Jesus revolutionaries resemble those to buttermilk or licorice: They either leave a bad taste or they're like fried chicken that's "finger lickin' good."

With some 2,000 residents in 30 communes in the States and 10 communes in at least five foreign countries, their target has been disaffected teenagers. Often their casualties have been hand-wringing, grief-tormented, fear-struck parents who feel their offspring are being spirited off by a mysterious sect.

Christianity Today once tagged them "hate-trippers," and a leader in the Jesus movement labels them a dangerous "malice group with a Jesus front," producers of "bad fruit" and demon possessed.

Critics have told of brainwashing tactics, virtual imprisonment and "kidnapping" of young people into the movement, and a surveillance procedure that inhibits going and coming.

Other investigators, from reporters and researchers to casual visitors, have found peace, happiness, Christ-like love and an extreme, narrow, but certainly not sinister, dedication to proclamation of the gospel.

With little or no confidence in the institutions of society—religious, political, industrial or educational—they have set themselves aside to "follow Christ 100 percent" and prepare for the rule of the antichrist.

But even in their attempt to succeed where they think the institutional church has failed, they appear—despite their protests—to be building a denomination—or sect—of their own.

Whatever their motivation and beliefs, their withdrawal into communes, uncompromising beliefs and controversial growth has attracted an amazing amount of publicity.

Publicity, in fact, is welcomed. It helps them recruit new members and generates contributions of one type or another from the society they flee.

Documentaries by the British Broadcasting Company and NBC's "First Tuesday" unleashed a flood of attention from other media and the public.

While the Eden at the Texas Soul Clinic was still the Children of God's main training center, it attracted about 200 visitors a week, including newspaper, wire service, radio, magazine and television reporters and cameramen. For the most part, reports cast them in a favorable light.

Sifting through reams of notes, research and transcribed recordings, I wondered about the word "weird," a term attributed to the Children of God by both friend and detractor.

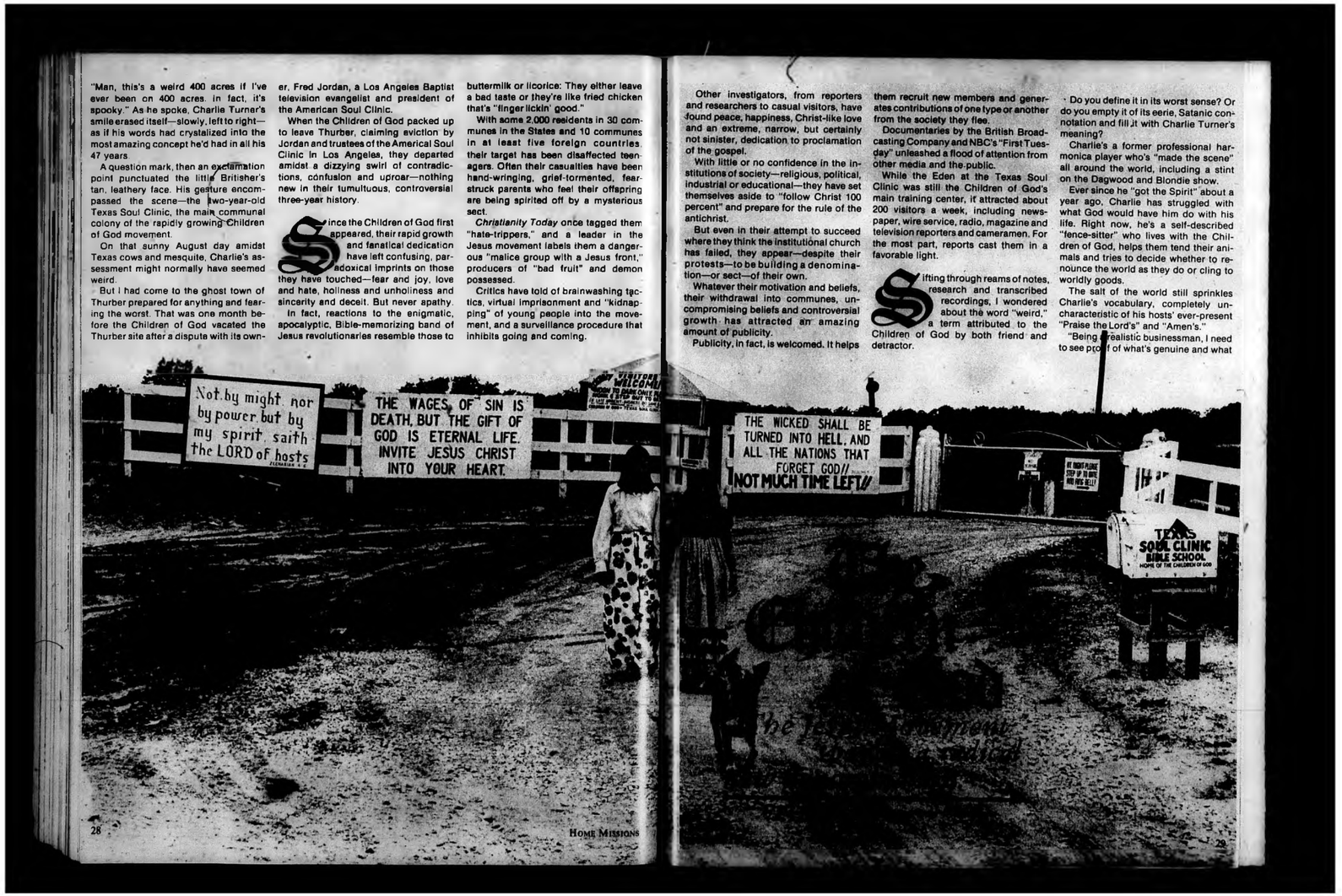
Do you define it in its worst sense? Or do you empty it of its eerie, Satanic connotation and fill it with Charlie Turner's meaning?

Charlie's a former professional harmonica player who's "made the scene" all around the world, including a stint on the Dagwood and Blondie show.

Ever since he "got the Spirit" about a year ago, Charlie has struggled with what God would have him do with his life. Right now, he's a self-described "fence-sitter" who lives with the Children of God, helps them tend their animals and tries to decide whether to renounce the world as they do or cling to worldly goods.

The salt of the world still sprinkles Charlie's vocabulary, completely uncharacteristic of his hosts' ever-present "Praise the Lord's" and "Amen's."

"Being a realistic businessman, I need to see proof of what's genuine and what



isn't," he says. "I've seen that proof here at Thurber.

"The Holy Spirit keeps things in order here," he marvels. "It's the only place I've ever seen that a girl can walk alone after midnight without being molested.

"It affects their little kids, who are happier than any kids I've ever seen. And it affects the animals. I saw a goat, a dog and a cat eat out of the same dish. Even the birds don't bother us. And notice how soft the wind speaks.

"And take me, a 47-year-old bachelor twice their age. They love me and accept me for what I am. They feed me and clothe me while I'm sittin' on the fence trying to decide which way to go.

"I've seen many spooky things on this 400 acres. I've seen scorpions bite people and an hour or two later, after prayer, there's no swelling and pain. Everything is harmony—it almost gives you the creeps."

"The Holy Spirit keeps things in order... Notice how soft the wind speaks," says Charlie.

What, then, are the Children of God? What do they practice and preach? Three years ago in Washington, D.C., six young converts, determined to stir up a spiritual revolution by 100 percent commitment to the Bible's teachings, held a silent vigil at the casket of the late Republican Senator Everett Dirksen.

Garbed in red sackcloth, with the mark of ashes across their foreheads, they paid homage to the sponsor of the ill-fated legislation to allow Bible reading in public schools.

They wore ox yokes around their necks and carried rough-hewn rods and large scrolls inscribed with Bible verses foretelling blood and doom for a corrupt America.

"Later," reported Helen Parmley in *Southwest Scene*, Sunday magazine of the *Dallas Morning News*, "those teenage prophets of doom descended, almost unnoticed, on the courthouse steps at the riotous opening of the Chicago Seven trial. They stood in silence at a rally for radical Jerry Rubin in California and then appeared in anti-war rallies.

"Moving about the country, they were joined by others, disillusioned by war, social gospel churches and the fraudulent promises of drugs, searching for someone to love and who would love them in return. They were soon dubbed 'Children of God,' a named that has stayed with them."

Evidence indicates, however, that the Children have no single "original" or parent group. A number of zealous Jesus groups merged to form the present organization.

High mobility between communes around the world and a large influx of new converts creates a lack of concrete historical knowledge on the part of current Children of God spokesmen.

About two years ago, a group called the Revolutionaries for Jesus surfaced in the Dallas-Fort Worth area and assumed the mantle of Old Testament prophets' warning of impending doom unless America turned to God.

The Revolutionaries' beliefs, utterances and life-style closely paralleled those of the present Children of God—with a major difference. Although both believe the church has failed to follow Christ, the Revolutionaries' tactics included disrupting church services with prophetic warnings. The Children of God have not done this, concentrating instead on Bible study and witness to young people.

A spokesman for the Revolutionaries said in an interview two years ago that the group (formerly known as "Teens for Christ") was founded in the late 1960's in Huntington Beach, Calif., by David Berg, then 55. He referred to him affectionately as "Uncle Dave."

Jordan claims that Berg, a Christian minister, is the power behind the scenes in the Children of God's world-wide program. He says Berg originally directed the Texas Soul Clinic in Thurber, at a salary of $1,000 a month. Berg, Jordan insists, is a major reason he lost patience with the Children of God.

As Jordan tells it, Berg, now rumored to be in London, came to him in early 1970 on behalf of a small band of teenagers who he said had no place to go and were freezing.

Jordan gave the group, then calling themselves "Teens for Christ," permission to stay for 60 days on the American Soul Clinic property near Thurber. The "lease" was renewed every 60 days, says Jordan, until the eviction in early October.

Amos, a Dallas Children of God elder and former Southern Baptist minister, says Berg plays no active role in the Children of God organization. "He's retired now and living somewhere overseas, writing a book. We seldom hear from him, and he certainly has no part in our operation."

The twisting dirt road leads through a time-space warp, into the Jerusalem of Pentecost.

Thurber reportedly was the original Children commune, but predecessor groups, if more than one existed, lived in similar communal arrangements.

In an interview with John Carter of Dallas, Revolutionaries said that their Dallas-Fort Worth group was part of a nationwide organization. If so, they would predate the Children.

Carter now surmises that the Revolutionaries either coalesced with other groups to form the Children of God or changed their name to Children of God to eradicate the image of church disruption.

The picture is murky, but the Revolutionaries can probably be credited with beginning the current Children of God. Amos substantiates that view. He says he traveled with the young people to the various locations mentioned by Mrs. Parmley's article in *Southwest Scene*. "We also went to churches to try to warn people, but they were not ready for our message. Then we turned to young people to concentrate on reaching them before it was too late for them to become true disciples."

Amos, formerly known as Jerry Nichols, indicates that church leaders had viewed the efforts as anarchy, while his group viewed them as spiritual assistance to the churches.

"Usually, we turned off preachers and parents, but turned on the young people," he says. Nichols, then 25, was one pastor not turned off. He joined the movement after Revolutionaries appeared in his church in Texarkana, Tex.

"We love the people in the churches," Amos says, "but we don't love their ways. We feel they won't listen but that young people will."

As for Amos' version of the origin of the Children of God name, he says, "During our travels from city to city, the news media started calling us that and the name stuck."

Until recently, their main commune sat on one of Texas' historic sites. Thurber, built by the Texas and Pacific Coal Company in 1888, boomed when thousands came in to work the rich mines. Discoveries elsewhere turned it into a ghost town by 1933.

A few miles south of the town's sparse remains the Texas Soul Clinic is located. New converts spent six months there before relocation to other areas of the nation and world.

In a figurative sense, leaving Highway 80 and starting up the long, twisting dirt road was like passing through a time-space warp onto the road to Jerusalem in the days following Pentecost.

You recognized the countryside as 20th century Texas, but the mind-set was first century Jerusalem where newly turned-on Christians, swept by the "rushing mighty wind" of the Holy Spirit, feverishly prepared for Christ's return.

An unbending and relentless application of Acts' "communism" to every facet of life, permeates the entire Children of God network from East Coast to West Coast.

Communes such as the one at Thurber grow by duplicating themselves—spreading in the manner of the early Christian church.

Members of strong mother colonies establish "outreach" points in many areas, much as a church establishes missions.

Abel (all Children take biblical names), a member of the Thurber group's council of elders, says two types of communes usually result from the outreach efforts.

Most are directed from a mother colony until they become strong enough to support themselves and have their own leaders, he says.

Others offer supporting services, such as procurement, advanced Bible study and specialized witnessing efforts. A mother colony in Cincinnati, for example, has two such satellite colonies on farms near Elizabethtown, Ky., and Rocky Creek, Ohio, according to Amos.

A satellite colony in downtown Dallas, at first located in the back of a dark, shabby former nightclub, was set up to help procure food for Thurber and teach various skills, such as repair of the HAM radios that link about half of the Children of God colonies.

Printing, mailing, photography and taping operations also center in Dallas, which now has about 120 Children of God members and six buildings housing living quarters, storage and office space and other facilities. Sets of tapes are sent not only to radio stations but also to colonies for use in Bible study classes.

With the closing of Thurber, the Dallas location now serves as main Children of God headquarters.

Amos says Dallas may continue as the main center even if another location similar to Thurber is found.

Each mother colony is independent in support and government, Amos says, but they keep in touch for "advice and counsel" with each other and the leadership at the main headquarters. They communicate by mail, telephone, HAM radio and personal visit (obeying the injunctive in Hebrews 13:16 "... and to communicate forget not ...").

A council of elders, similar to a board of directors, governs each colony in spiritual and other matters. Often one elder will serve as a sort of overall director. The council consists of at least one leader from each of 12 tribes into which colonies divide. Assistant tribe leaders are similar to deacons in a Baptist church.

Leaders in the far-flung network discuss major decisions with 12 elders in Dallas, and file weekly reports. The main colony leaders evaluate reports "through consultation, prayer and the leadership of the Holy Spirit," and give advice and direction.

Dallas also keeps tabs on colonies by sending elders around to visit and evaluate. Leaders can be promoted or demoted in responsibilities depending on their "proven commitment and faithfulness," Amos says, and shifted about as needed.

Lynn Dillard feared for her sister's safety, until she visited the Children's commune.

At the end of the dirt road that winds to the former missionary training grounds, a lookout in an old car, parked on a hilltop, signaled the approach of visitors.

Before long, a greeter began the 50-yard bicycle trip to the gate from the nearest building in the fenced-in compound. An attractive, young gatekeeper in a long, flowing maxi smiled and asked, "Have you met the Lord?"

Soul Clinic visitors waited in a guest house while the greeter jumped on his bike and set out to round up the person they came to see.

Anxious parents sought some glimpse of a son or daughter who left home to come to this strange place, and they desperately tried to grasp the meaning of it—to understand.

In some areas, such as Atlanta, parents have complained that they're unable to speak to their children alone, that telephone calls are monitored, that their children's responses are quarterbacked by an "older brother," that their mail is censored.

Atlanta leaders denied it—as did Thurber residents. And none of that type of behavior was in evidence at Thurber.

Parents sat and talked quietly to their children, who constantly witnessed to them from an open Bible—the hallmark of members of the Children of God, who systematically commit the Bible to memory against the day when it will be removed from the world by the antichrist.

Lynn Dillard of Atlanta spent time with her sister alone during a visit to

Thurber and came away no longer fearful for her sister's well-being.

Bouchim, a leader in an Atlanta Children of God house, told Aaron Taylor of the *Atlanta Constitution*:

"It's completely up to them (the parents). It's up to the individual," he added, explaining that there are no restrictions in the colony on talking to or visiting parents.

However, Naaman, a new convert in the Atlanta residence, said, "I don't want to talk to them unless I have an elder there. I'm a babe in the Lord. A lot of times the Devil has a lot of little subtle ways of ripping people off."

Naaman then paraphrased Matthew 10:36, "Jesus said a man's worst enemy is going to be his family."

The conflicting reports are difficult to resolve. Inhibited conversation with parents could involve a fear of outsiders, programmed into new converts' minds, or depend on individual parent-to-child communications; a high percentage of the Children of God come from estranged family situations. Or perhaps a factor could be the level of training which an individual in a commune has undergone.

Jordan, once a strong supporter of the Children of God, says he used to accept at face value their claim that they discourage visits in the early indoctrination stages. "It's that way in the army," he says. "A new recruit shouldn't be distracted by family and friends. But with the kids in California, that type of thing went on too long, often six months to a year."

Another paradox centers around claims that a tight security system imprisons commune dwellers, evidenced, perhaps, by how they greet parents and other visitors at various communes.

The answers may hinge on perspective—how a person views the activities of the Children.

No proof has turned up that any kind of physical restraints hold converts. That, of course, doesn't take mental restraints into account.

Jack Roach, an 18-year-old who has seen both Thurber and Atlanta colonies, told the *Constitution* that he left after about a month.

But Jack, who ran away from an Atlanta house during a break in daily routine, said he was "scared" to do so. "They say if you're away from the Children of God, you're out of God's will. They tell bad stories of how God struck people dead for leaving the Children of God," he said.

A distraught youth from the Gainesville, Fla., commune reached Atlanta friends after working through the ordeal of leaving the Children of God. While no physical restraint detained him, he was told again and again that if he left, God would strike him dead. Finally, in a leap of faith (or disbelief) he made the break and reached Atlanta alive, relieved if not surprised.

"The security system scares a lot of people who've never felt security before," says David.

Children of God leaders deny anything sinister about their security system, which they admit exists. For one thing, they say, "We don't want anyone here who doesn't want to be here because we're out to be 100 percenters for Christ, who may come back at any time. We don't have time to be distracted by undedicated members."

David Hoyt, formerly a leader of Christian house ministries in the mainstream of the Jesus movement, explains the Children of God security system:

"A lot of people have made hasty judgements about us," he says. "They do not understand the security. We have security in practically all our colonies because we believe the best way to prepare for a Communist takeover is to live as though it has already taken place."

The Children of God, ironically labeled Communist by some detractors, feel a Communist takeover may well be part of the rule of the antichrist, and somehow involved in the tribulation at the end of time. They believe Christians have to be prepared to live through it.

"We want to know what's going on and not just anybody walks in the gate," Hoyt says. "The security system applies to outgoing people in a measure," he adds, "but it's primarily for incoming people. This scares a lot of people who never felt security before and so they feel people are being held here or something."

Reports from both the East and West coasts say the Children of God are arming themselves with knives and guns against the day when there was be a Communist takeover. "If Christians had been armed in China, they could have bought a month or more of time, and that many more people could be saved," they rationalize.

Part of the security system screens prospective members. Children of God leaders subject them to intensive Bible study and explanation of "what it really means to follow the Lord"—which is to have no secular job, give up all and join the movement.

"At Thurber, newcomers sleep down in the greeting room," says Hoyt. "They may spend three or four days or whatever, and we don't force them at all. We want them to decide concretely for themselves whether they really want this. We believe we're forerunners and pioneers in what God is really doing and saying right now and that the overall Christian church has become corrupt and has fallen away from its first love."

Others have commented, especially in Atlanta, that prospective converts go through what amounts to "brainwashing" and hardsell by the Children of God; and at least in the early stages, they are constantly attended by someone. Some have complained they can't even go to the bathroom alone.

Those visiting Thurber, including Lynn Dillard, could find no evidence of this. Residents, questioned separately and at random, echoed Hoyt's view.

Some have commented that the "brainwashing" description of witness has been used by Children of God members and detractors—though not, of course, doubtedly, with the same connotation.

Jordan says the Children of God's intensive Bible study and memorization is "both their strength and their weakness. Even the word of God," he says, "can be used to brainwash, to make zombies who can't think for themselves—just quote Scripture."

These youth desperately need exactly what the commune offers: acceptance and brotherly love.

Part of the Children of God mind-set could involve the type of kids attracted to membership. Guy Greenfield, head of the sociology department at Hardin-Simmons University, a Baptist school in Abilene, Tex., researched a small commune at Merkel, Tex., and visited Thurber.

"The ideology of the commune has a pulling effect and the family life of many of them had a pushing effect," he says.

Of 32 kids at Merkel, 24 previously attended church occasionally or never, 22 said parents "fought a lot" or were divorced, 20 were middle children in the family, 22 had anywhere from only one to four close friends before joining the Children of God, and 28 came from lower- or middle-class environments.

On the basis of this research by two of his students, Bruce Gammil and Linda Ulmer, Greenfield drew some conclusions.

These kids, he says, come mostly from fragile families where strife drowned out life. The family emphasis in their class of society was on material gain, success and achievement to overcome deprivation. That repulsed the children. Often, he said, middle children do not feel accepted by families. They feel squeezed out and unloved. The oldest has more privileges; the youngest has more attention.

Interviewers have found that most of the Children of God were hooked hard on drugs before they accepted Christ, turned over all worldly possessions (as all members must do) and joined the movement.

Even detractors concede that they no longer have a drug problem. "I've never seen them smoke a cigarette or take a drink," says Jordan.

Put all these things together, says Greenfield, and you've got a young person who desperately needs love and affection and acceptance—just what they find in the close-knit, dedicated, communal family which thrives on brotherly love for each other and real or imagined persecution from the "corrupt system."

Greenfield, of course, adds that his sociological assessment does not encompass the spiritual aspect of the young people's relationship with Christ and is based on a small sampling.

During the visit to Thurber, visitors sat on the upholstered couches and chairs in the greeting room, talking with the young Children of God members before taking an extensive and unencumbered tour.

With some, the conversation waxed hotly theological, with the young communers seven leagues ahead when it came to proof-texting from a seemingly inexhaustible King James memory bank.

You quickly learned—because you're guilty of it—that they disapprove of holding a job in society. That, they believe, violates Christ's commandment to forsake all and follow him. It's one of the two masters you can't serve.

But they never could explain, much to their discomfort, why Paul, who wrote their "blueprint for world evangelism," took time out to make tents for a living.

John Drakeford, a professor at Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, Ft. Worth, confronted them with the question.

"Finally, one of them said that Paul must have been out of the will of God," Drakeford chuckled. "That was amazing—a liberal interpretation of the Scripture from a professed literalist. That led me to believe that when practice doesn't fit the Scripture, they may bend the Scripture to fit the practice."

Detractors have expressed the same opinion—that the Children of God use their great store of Bible verses to prove what they want. However, except for the isolated comment on Paul and their insistence that communal living is the only New Testament life-style, Drakeford feels that they use biblical references in context.

He echoed sentiments of a number of interviewers who found no substance to hate-group charges. "We can't read hate into what they are doing. Pre-eminently, they practice love. They have a good concept of witness and emphasize the personal, experiential aspects that we Southern Baptists unfortunately so often miss."

Other visitors to Thurber peered about curiously, perhaps hoping to see "one o' them naked hippies" that allegedly cavorted in the woods around the compound.

But it didn't take long to realize you'd find no stereotypical hippies. Clothes were old and well-worn but clean and "plain vanilla."

In some communes, boys reportedly have long hair, but not at Thurber. The happy, shining eyes, the expressions, the conversation, revealed no trace of drug dependency.

Sex regulations were super-strict. Unmarried boys' barracks were on one side of the camp, girls lived on the other. Girls wore no cosmetics and avoided anything "provocative."

"After all, this is the Jesus movement, not the sexual revolution," reported Jack Brown, newsman for WBAP-TV, Ft. Worth (Children of God, however, don't view themselves as part of the Jesus movement. They shun it, fearing that fad elements might endanger it.

And there was absolutely no mixed swimming in nearby bodies of water. You'd have thought you were at Ridgecrest or Glorieta Baptist Assemblies.

Offspring of commune members may stay with parents at night, but they usually live apart.

Marriage, performed by commune ministers, occurs fairly regularly. About 40 children, ranging from infants to high school age, were included in the 250 residents at Thurber.

Continued

CHILDREN (continued)

Although younger children may stay with their parents at night, children usually do not live with parents, but in separate nursery facilities. During the day they attend a Montessori-method school, such as the one at Thurber, or come under the supervision of the Benjamin tribe, one of 12 tribal units into which the commune is divided. (The school at Thurber was one of seven regional Children of God schools which use state-approved textbooks and conform to state law, according to spokesmen.)

Parents, who spend most of their time in Bible study and witnessing, visit their children from one to two hours a day, but they insist the relationship is not as cold as it sounds.

They point out that children and parents "actually talk to each other." They don't watch television, shut out the world with a stereo headset or bury themselves in the newspaper. The visits, they say, allow more actual communicating time than in family situations in the outside world.

Jordan claims that after the age of six months, many children are left in the care of a commune nursery while parents involve themselves in Children of God outreach in other parts of the states or in colonies in England, Canada, Mexico, Germany and Holland.

Abel, the Children's 27-year-old "publicity man," says children are placed in nurseries only when parents set up communes in areas where no school and nursery is organized. "We unite them as soon as possible," he explains. "It's no worse than Mr. Jordan sending his son to private school."

Independent observers have noted that the children at Thurber smiled and laughed often, played happily and seldom cried. They appeared to love the girls who tended their needs in the commune's "kibbutz" system of child care.

Mrs. Parmley, religion editor for the *Dallas Morning News*, visited the Soul Clinic school. "Children, from two-and-a-half through high school, attend the school," she noted. "Emphasis is on phonics and subjects which provide a foundation for Christian witnessing and Bible reading."

But Children of God view education as "so much garbage." They only condone as much as absolutely necessary, considering worthwhile only spiritual knowledge gained through prayer and long hours of committing the Bible to memory. For all practical purposes, the Bible is their *only* book.

Education, beyond their own training, is pure folly akin to holding a secular job. It doesn't allow time to be a "100 percenter for Christ" and it fills the mind with "worthless" information.

"We're the only people we know of teaching that Christ must be followed 100 percent," says David Hoyt.

Some accuse the Children of a double standard of morality for "ripping off society."

But even the 100 percenters must dress, eat, keep commune equipment repaired, care for and teach children and take time out to conceive and bear them.

Critics have wondered how the Children of God finance food and clothing and extensive travel, purchase second-hand buses and trucks (used in witnessing and transportation of goods and personnel from commune to commune) and secure radio and video equipment used in communications.

Every convert turns over all money and goods when he joins the group. Items are sold or converted to use for members of the commune. Donations come from merchants and other outsiders, reportedly including parents grateful that the commune family helped a son or daughter kick the drug habit.

Some accuse the Children of God of a double standard of morality when confronting society. One who left the group said his assignment in Atlanta was to contact merchants for food, and he was expected to tell the businessmen that the commune was retraining street people for fruitful roles in society. "None of that was going on, and I left," he said.

The fact that the goods that sustain life come from the "wicked" society from which they have withdrawn does not bother them.

"The Lord provides for all our needs in his wisdom," says Hoyt. "Walking in the spirit is completely contrary to human security. When you start relying completely on God, there's twice as much security as before."

Donations from merchants often include food in damaged containers, produce too ripe to ship and other items. One week, a Dallas merchant gave 6,000 eggs every other day and 3,000 pounds of butter.

When the Children of God left Thurber they said Jordan was forcing them out because they and members of two California communes he housed questioned him about funds he allegedly owed them.

The funds, they said, included reimbursements for improvements at Thurber and the two California communes (also vacated) and money he solicited for them over his Church-in-the-Home television program in Los Angeles.

Jordan insists money isn't the real reason for the rupture. He cited practices and attitudes of commune dwellers and their leaders which culminated in his decision to evict.

He also claims he has records to prove he's paid them $98,000 over the past two years.

"Thurber and the other communes certainly don't look like that kind of money was spent on them," countered a leader for the Texas site.

Physical facilities at Thurber and reportedly at other locations are sparse. Thurber, for example, lacked indoor plumbing and residents lived in bleak, block houses and a scattered trailer or two.

"It's not easy," says Jeremy Spencer, a former British rock vocalist converted by the Children of God during a musical tour of the States. "But whatever is easy is not necessarily what God wants you to do."

Children of God communes, with variations depending upon size and scope of individual locations, are divided into 12 work and interest groups analogous to the 12 tribes of Israel. Each tribe has its own task and leader. At Thurber, five tribes of girls included Ephraim, Manasseh, Napthtali, Asher and Benjamin, which varied from one 100 percent long enough to care for laundry, sewing, table serving and child tending.

Although nine tribes of men pushed the total to 14, they rotated as needed and only 12 operated at a time. The tribe of Zebulum, for example, specialized in farming and shut down when ungracious weather and soil in that part of Texas defeated efforts to raise crops.

Other tribes included Issachar (mechanics), Dan (maintenance), Simeon (kitchen), Reuben (all-around work), Gad (printing and photo), Joseph (procurement), Judah (carpenters) and Levi (administration).

Often a tribe member goes by a double name (biblical and tribal), such as Antioch Dan and Zaretha Asher, a married couple with an 18-month-old baby. Dan said their decision to join the Children of God salvaged their troubled marriage.

At the "Free Store," clothing—donated by outsiders—is given to Children in need.

A "free store," one of the primitive block buildings lined up along Thurber's dirt "main street," contained clothing donated by outsiders and brought in by new recruits. Similar facilities exist at other communes.

A leather shop turned out such items as sandals, leather pouches with shoulder straps for carrying Scripture memory cards and ever-present King James Bibles. A high priority item is the Children of God's handmade emblem—a small yoke of brass or some other metal, backed with a piece of wood or heavy leather, and hung about the neck with a leather thong.

The yoke symbolizes two yokes described in the Bible, the yoke Christ asks his followers to wear in followship, and the yoke of bondage Jeremiah says will fall upon a nation which has forgotten God.

Jeremiah's condemnation of the society of his day weaves itself inextricably into the warp and woot of Children of God theology, affecting the way they view modern society.

The theology centers around a strong doctrine of last things and the judgement of a wrathful God on a corrupt society. "Jesus is coming. Time is running out. America must repent or it will be too late."

"We know the spirit of the antichrist has been in the world for thousands of years," Hoyt says. "We believe that world governments are like idols that have robbed the affection of men's hearts from God.

"Society has always been corrupt," he says. "Jesus wept over it. Jesus and his disciples spoke against the world and so did all the apostles. The world is mentioned 90 times in the New Testament. Most of the references are negative.

"We believe policemen are ordained of God," he concedes. "There would be twice as much crime without them. We will obey any law that doesn't interfere with preaching the gospel. But we must set ourselves aside from wicked society and prepare for the rule of the antichrist and the tribulation."

Jordan says one incident leading to the break with commune dwellers was refusal of the Children of God to salute the flag. "They said they couldn't worship something like that," he said, "and I just can't buy that attitude."

The Children of God, says Abel, have no policy about flag saluting, although he did comment that it's debatable whether this nation is "under God," as the Pledge of Allegiance says.

Strongly premillenial, they feverishly prepare for the second coming of Christ and hold a post-rapture view that Christians must prepare to weather the end.

Faith healing and speaking in tongues also play minor roles in the Children of God beliefs.

Prayer takes the place of an aspirin or a phone call to the doctor when a baby has a 104-degree temperature. And it works, they say, because of "true faith." They also claim most Children of God mothers undergo natural childbirth with little or no discomfort because of reliance on God.

Some, however, elect to call a doctor with no apparent stigma attached.

As for speaking in tongues, they view it as a lesser gift, not necessary for salvation or an in-filling of the Holy Spirit. "It's simply for personal edification," says one.

Concentrated witnessing efforts have produced converts, but some have feared that the Children of God slant on salvation may be too closely linked with the decision to give up all and accept the communal way of life.

A 17-year-old long-hair, witnessed to by the Children of God in Lee Park in Dallas, said, "I dropped them like a hot potato. They seemed more interested in my personal belongings than my soul."

However, Drakeford, and even Jordan, believe that while witnessing for the communal way of life is emphasized early, it's not entwined with salvation.

Children's eagerness to gain commune dwellers is exceeded only by their desire to win souls. "The fruit of an apple tree is apples and the fruit of a Christian is other Christians," said one.

But they do believe that their way of life is the only way to live completely in God's will, and they zealously proselytise for it.

The supreme irony would be for this counter-culture group to become "The Establishment."

Christ's warning that Christians will suffer persecution in his name saturates their theology, often to the point of a persecution complex. In fact, they expect persecution, rejoice in it and, according to detractors, thrive unhealthily on it.

They accepted the departure from Thurber, a traumatic upheaval, as inevitable persecution and viewed it as a modern re-enactment of the scattering of Christians abroad to multiply their witness as recorded in Acts.

The same evils afflicting society, they believe, have rendered the institutional church unworthy of their support. They say they have no time for Sunday Christians who divert themselves from full-time service to Christ by over emphasis on institutions, programs and secular interests. But they will accept invitations to sing and testify in churches.

"By the grace of God," says Hoyt, "we will never become a denomination.

(Continued)

We're a mobile, flexible group without institutional ties."

Abel notes that the group "is keenly aware" of the historical trend of other groups of revolutionary Christians to solidify into a structure.

"We will avoid that by minimizing institutions and keeping our eyes on Jesus," he declares.

But outside observers can already discern a trend toward solidifying of the Children of God into their own brand of "church."

All the elements are there—worship, witness, education, theology and ministry. Even buildings, finances, vehicles, equipment and a clergy of sorts play important roles in their ability to spread the gospel.

"The supreme irony," says one observer, "would be for a counter-culture group like this to become an 'establishment' in its own right, but that's unavoidable if they are to grow and accomplish their goals."

Greenfield indicates that unless the Children of God sink roots and establish some institutional permanence, they will sow the seeds of their own downfall.

"Observation and research have shown that man has to have a territory to claim as his own if he's to survive as a group over a period of time. It's a territorial imperative. A commune, especially one which de-emphasizes territorial identity, is a temporary situation.

"It's a type of psychological crutch which will work for the short range but not the long range. They and their children will be unprepared for society when the commune situation ends."

Greenfield also believes that this lack of preparation will cause Children of God offspring to rebel against their parents' values and desert their lifestyle and lose their vision.

"Despite opinion to the contrary, research has shown that most youngsters don't reject their parents' values when they are well prepared for life. But unprepared ones will rebel, just as the present Children of God have rebelled against their parents' society."

The Children of God have a simple answer for Greenfield's observations. They have no long range plans. Christ is coming soon. And they quote Bible verses, their method of answering most questions, that tell us to take no thought of tomorrow and to raise up a child in the way he should go and he won't depart from it.

While Children of God members actively evangelize the non-believer, one of their specialties seems to be the ability to win over members of budding Christian communes springing up throughout the nation.

Hoyt, founder of a string of Christian house ministries in the Southeast, led most of his followers in Atlanta—about 80—to join the Children of God. Spokesmen at Thurber said it represents the largest single influx of new members in the movement's history.

Hoyt and his followers left amid charges of Satan-influenced brainwashing, super-sell, and creation of confusion and divisiveness. Some who oppose Hoyt claimed he used the Children of God's life of prayer, Bible study and isolation as an escape from the administrative problems of his institutional ministries.

In a strongly worded letter, Hoyt, who had spent some time in retreat at Thurber, had denounced his former role in the "worldly" ministries in Georgia, Florida and Tennessee. He said he had become a Pharisee and failed to follow God 100 percent.

Hoyt invited Children of God representatives to come to Atlanta and present their concepts. Reports indicate they moved in with a hardsell, using video tape replays of their national ministries, an uncompromising call to total commitment and near-brainwashing techniques of chants, yells, study and prayer that often had the kids near exhaustion with emotion and no sleep. (One girl said she lost track of days.)

At the right time, the Children purchased a bus and carried the entire group to Thurber, closing most of the house ministry communes, a restaurant and a coffeehouse. (They were later reopened by the Children of God.).

Hoyt dismisses criticisms as Satan-inspired efforts to damage the ministry of the Children of God. He says rumors have been spread by dropouts not dedicated enough to measure up to 100 percent commitment and by sour-grapes leaders in the house ministries who became personally insulted by his charges against their failures.

"What I said in the letter was very convicting," Hoyt declares. "I said I was turning into a worldly Pharisee and if I was, so were they.

"People say the Children of God cause confusion and divisiveness. That's not Satanic, as they claim. It's true because of the word of God we proclaim. Jesus and Paul caused an uproar. People got uptight all through Acts when Christians followed the word of God," Hoyt emphasized.

"When a ministry begins to stand on the word of God, everyone starts to freak out. But nothing is said when it starts to become social. That's really heavy, man."

So the controversy swirls about the Children of God. Love or hate? Truth or deceit?

I found love—way out, perhaps, too often internalized, but not counterfeit. And I discovered there were at least two sides to every controversial charge.

For example, is single-minded, fanatical hardsell spiritual piracy or genuine Christian discipleship? "We should be honest with them and not judge them until we have felt their pulse," says Drakeford. "The early Christians were looked on as odd balls by society. I think they're in a cycle similar to the early church."

"By their fruits you shall know them," but sometimes it's hard to recognize the nature of the fruit when it's a different hue, taste or odor from what you expect.

Certainly the Children of God are cloaked in question marks. Who can answer all the riddles surrounding them? Who can judge their role in modern Christianity? Or who can gauge the depth of their love for Christ, when that love is directed toward friends and potential converts—not toward the enemies Christ commanded his followers to love?

Perhaps the best approach is friendly caution, a liberal sprinkling of agape love, and application of this advice from Acts 5:38-39:

"And so in this case now I tell you, do not take any action against these men. Leave them alone, for if this plan and work of theirs is a man-made thing, it will disappear. But if it comes from God, you cannot possibly defeat it."

The Controversy Continues

Just before HOME MISSIONS went to press, the Children of God paradox deepened in an emotion-charged meeting called by leaders of an organization known as the Parents' Committee to Free Our Sons and Daughters from the Children of God.

The group was headed by William Rambur, a retired naval officer from San Diego, Calif., and accompanied by Ted Patrick, a representative from California Governor Ronald Reagan's office.

The parents' group, citing their own children as examples, said that Children of God recruiters "kidnap" children into the movement by "on the spot hypnosis and use of drugs." They said they are a subversive group and are taught to hate parents and society.

Patrick, a black community relations specialist on Reagan's staff, charged that the youths are "brainwashed with fear." He said attempts to file complaints on the state and local levels in California have failed but that he would try to get charges filed by U.S. Attorney General John Mitchell.

Meanwhile, Children of God leaders were conferring with attorneys and making plans to fly in from other communes the Children that the parents claimed were kidnapped. Attorneys for the Children of God countered with a $1.1 million suit, alleging the parents "maliciously and falsely defamed" the Children of God.

Rambur charged he had visited his 22-year-old daughter Kay, a registered nurse, (known to the Children of God as Comfort) in Thurber. He said someone was always with her, whispering in her ear.

"When I did get her alone," he said, "She agreed to go with me, but when she was back in the presence of the other Children of God, she refused, screaming, 'Dad, if I go out that gate I'm dead.'" He said the Children of God locked the gate and drove a car in front of it to block his departure with her.

Comfort denied her father's charges. A soft-spoken brunett with an ever-present smile, Comfort explained she had been living away from home about three years before the Children of God talked to her in San Francisco.

"I had never read the Bible," she explained. "They showed me the Scripture and I believed and accepted Christ. During my nursing career, people would pour out their hearts to me, but I had nothing to give them. Now I have something to give them—Jesus. I talk with people and I travel. I'm with the Children of God to do missionary work."

She denied claims she hated her father; "I really love my parents. I think I love them more than I ever did before I became a Christian. I can't understand why they're against it.

"All of a sudden they were at Thurber," Comfort added. "I told the Lord didn't want to come home. They said to come home and prove to them this was what I wanted. I said I could prove it by staying. My father said he couldn't leave without me. They forced me into the car (the Children of God back up the claim with photos). I called for help. That's when the Children of God drove a car in front of the gate."

Rambur, a Roman Catholic, said he could not understand the radical change that has taken place in his daughter's life. "She must have been forced to make changes like that."

The eyes of the Children of God play a role in various evaluations of their alleged hypnotic powers. Patrick began investigating them after his 14- and 15-year old sons reported Children of God tried to get them to join their way of life.

He said one of his sons told him " 'The Children of God took hold of us by each arm and tried to get us to look them in the eyes. They had real strange eyes. Like they had a star in each eye, real strange and glassy.' "

Rambur described Comfort's eyes as "mere pinpoints of light," and a parent from New York, said "Have you ever looked into their eyes (the sect's leaders)? I can spot them every time."

Two mothers and two couples with children in the movement defended the Children of God.

Mrs. Sylvia Bolinger of Dallas, with 18- and 20-year-old daughters both in the group, said, "If the parents would enter with the clear minds and hearts the children have, they'd soon find their accusations were groundless.

"My oldest daughter (Ava, 20) has been with the group eight months. I just met my new son-in-law, Festus.

"I can sympathize with the parents," Mrs. Bolinger said. "I fought it at first. Parents don't understand it. They feel such a great loss. For a little while a wall is there. But the children do not hate their parents."

Mr. and Mrs. M.J. Dupuy, Roman Catholics from Houston, have 15- and 20-year-old sons in the sect.

"Our oldest son," said Mrs. Dupuy, "was on LSD, speed and marijuana and we'd spent a great amount on doctors and pyschiatrists to no avail. After he met the Children of God, it made all the difference in the world. It's also made us closer to God, more religious.

"We've had no trouble visiting our children. There's more love in this group than I've seen anywhere else. Many are rejects of society and here they're accepted for what they are.

"To say they're using drugs or hypnosis is completely false. I would certainly rather have my 15-year-old with me, but when I can see what the ultimate might be, I'm proud to have him associated with the Children of God."

Mrs. Dupuy added, "I've been reading a lot of adverse reports but I've heard no one say what was right with the Children of God. Plain and simple, these are a group of young people who love the Lord."

O'Brien is with the Public Relations Department, Baptist General Convention of Texas, Dallas.

Executive's Word

by Arthur B. Rutledge
Executive Secretary-Treasurer, HMB

Griffith, Cummins Retire

Time marches on, and year by year valuable men and women reach the age of retirement. At the close of 1971 two Home Mission Board staff leaders—directors of divisions—reach this milestone. They are L. O. Griffith of the Division of Communication and Geo. W. Cummins of the Division of Chaplaincy.

Griffith came to the HMB staff in 1951 from his native state of Kentucky where he had served as pastor and as associate executive secretary of the Kentucky Baptist Convention. Eight years later he became the first director of the newly formed Division of Education and Promotion, renamed the Division of Communication in 1967. From three departments and five staff members in 1959 the division has grown to four departments with nine staff members, plus twenty-one office workers, artists, technicians and writers. He has been instrumental in drawing into the division outstanding specialists in such communication fields as art, photography and editorial services.

A prodigious worker throughout these 20 years, even in the face of physical limitation the past few years, Griffith is committed to missions. He loves Southern Baptists. He loves the Lord. He loves the church. He loves the Bible.

One of Griffith's most significant achievements has come within the past few years in the initiating of a Bible distribution effort. As the HMB liaison representative to the American Bible Society, he was in frequent close contact with this outstanding agency. Starting with an interdenominational Bible distribution project in Atlanta four years ago, through which approximately one million New Testaments were distributed, Griffith's office became the center for accelerated nationwide Bible distribution through Southern Baptist missionaries, home missionaries among various ethnic groups, workers in Christian social ministries and evangelism leaders.

The Home Mission Board insignia—with the name of the agency encircling an inset of the United States and adjacent home fields and the motto, "Our Land for Christ" printed on an open Bible—is familiar to many. It may not be so well known that L. O. Griffith, working with the Board's Committee on Promotion, led in developing this inspiring insignia in 1955.

"Griff," as we know him, is a quiet, modest, warmhearted, thoroughly committed Christian; his wife, Mary, hampered by ill health during recent years, is a worthy Christian companion and helper.

The work of L. O. Griffith will continue to bear fruit in the years ahead as the communication efforts which he helped to set in motion are carried on and expanded by others in this exciting effort to help claim "Our Land for Christ."

Geo. W. Cummins, soon to complete 11 years as the second director of the Division of Chaplaincy, came to the Board's Atlanta staff in 1955 as associate director, working beside Alfred A. Carpenter until 1960. Cummins had previously served as pastor in his native Kentucky and as a U. S. Navy chaplain during World War II. He came to Atlanta from a 15-month stint with the Board in Utah, where he served as superintendent of western missions.

Cummins has been a tireless traveler. He has visited military chaplains throughout the U. S. and overseas. He has made seven around-the-world trips in the interest of Southern Baptist military chaplaincy ministries, assuring chaplains everywhere that Southern Baptists remember and support them. He has sought to keep the chaplains in touch with their denomination.

The current cutback in troops in Vietnam and the reevaluation of our military commitments abroad are reducing the need for new military chaplains, but a sizeable military chaplaincy force will continue as challenges multiply and doors open for chaplaincy ministries in hospitals and penal institutions, and in newer industry and business ministries.

Though Cummins' background gave him a strong orientation toward the military chaplaincy, during his tenure as director the chaplaincy staff has doubled in size and expanded into the fields of hospital, institutional and industrial chaplaincy ministries.

Those of us who work with and who know Geo. Cummins have often heard him insist that "the chaplain is a missionary." This view of the chaplain has impelled this vigorous, earnest man of God throughout these 16 years with the HMB's Chaplaincy work.

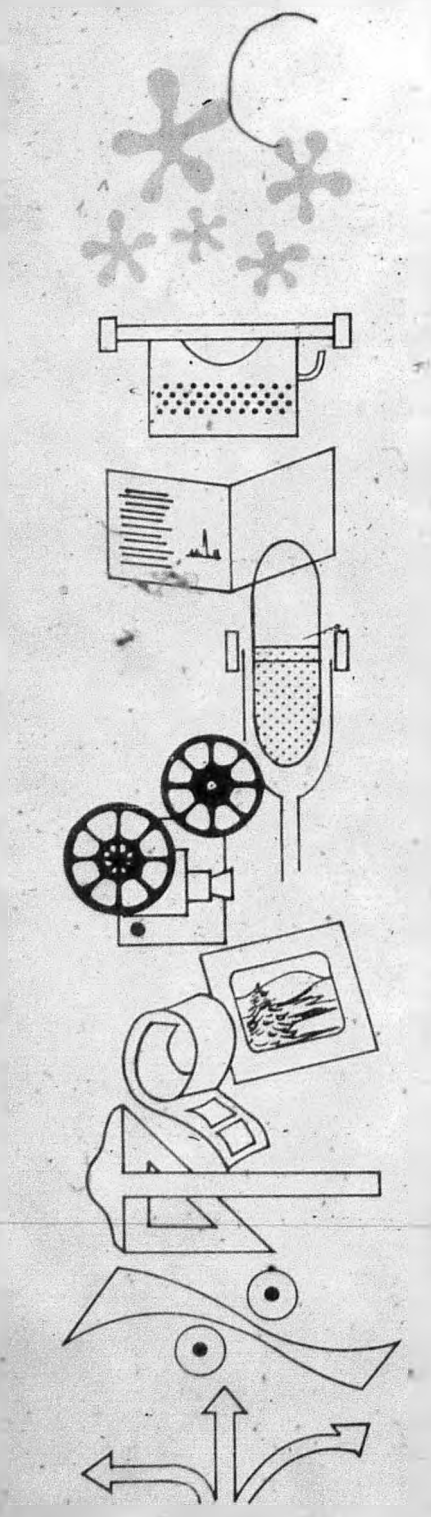
Alongside Cummins has stood his devoted wife, Bess (Bess Cummings before her marriage—she lost a "g"), who has traveled extensively with her chaplain-husband throughout America by car, and has made two overseas trips with him. In doing this she ministered to the wives and families of chaplains as her husband ministered to the men in uniform.

The diligent work and Christ-honoring vision of this faithful Christian who now comes to retirement will continue to bear fruit through the labors of those who serve through the Chaplaincy Division in the years before us.

We are grateful for these men and their companions. We are grateful for their work and their devotion to Christ. We trust that the years ahead will provide each of them with continuing opportunities of Christian service, though at a slackened pace. We look to God for continued leadership in these important areas of home missions, and for blessings upon those who shall take up the challenging load which these "good and faithful" servants will soon lay down.

L.O. Griffith

A Sense of Accomplishmen



For 20 years, L.O. Griffith has spent his life promoting the mission work of the Home Mission Board. On January 1, 1972, he will retire.

"I do have a deep feeling of gratitude for living 65 years," Griffith says quietly. "The Lord has given me so many unique mission opportunities. I really don't plan to retire. I plan to do some of the things I've been wanting to do. I used to supply and preach in revivals; I'm far behind on my preaching. And I already have a garden demanding my time."

If Griffith finds time to "take it easy" in the months ahead, it will be the first chance in years. Since 1966, he has been director of the Board's Division of Communication. That's "communication"—singular—because as Griffith explains it, the singular form of the word means "the message and the medium, whereas the plural form means only the means. For Griffith, there is no separating the message of God's love and the means to carry this message.

A graduate of Georgetown College, Ky., and Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, Griffith came to the HMB in 1951 as secretary of the department of promotion. In 1959, when the Board was reorganized, he was named the first director of the Division of Education and Promotion.

Griffith has been honored often, including an honorary doctorate from his alma mater, Georgetown.

For 20 years before coming to Atlanta, Griffith had served pastorates in the Kentucky mountains, where he obtained his start in communication with a camera, photographing mountain people eager to have their children "in pictures."

"In mountain missions I discovered I could take motion pictures, slides and photographs, and not only get more people, but also break down barriers," remembers the silver-haired Griffith.

"I would sometimes show pictures of the children; I've seen some 'modern-day miracles' with these mountain people," he adds.

Griffith's love for the mountains—and for people—is apparent each summer as he helps instrument programs during home missions weeks at the Baptist assemblies at Ridgecrest, N.C., and Glorieta, N.M.

During the week, more than 200 missionary families visit the communication office and have their photograph taken by HMB photographers. Many more stop to say hello to their friend "Griff." Standing with one arm around the missionary laughing and talking, Griffith is a familiar sight.

At other times, he speaks more seriously. "I am very interested in promoting Scripture distribution through promoting the use of various types of Scriptures in churches," he says slowly. (See Executive Word, page 39.)

When "Griff" came to the Board, the division had only HOME MISSIONS, a home mission study books and a few black-and-white tracts.

Today the division produces literature and materials for world mission conferences through the Department of Missionary Education; photography, recordings, filmstrips and motion pictures through the Department of Audio-Visuals; more than 280 printed pieces, inincluding manuals, brochures, pamphlets, through the Department of Art Services; and home mission study books and HOMES MISSIONS through the department of Editorial Services. A picture service that distributes more than 10,000 photographs a year is also under Griffith's direction, as well as the circulation service which handles all mailing lists.

Griffith has been influential in building a distributing plan for packets of materials to local denominational leaders to keep them informed of home mission activities.

"We have been very much complimented on these packets. This thrilled me beyond words," says Griffith.

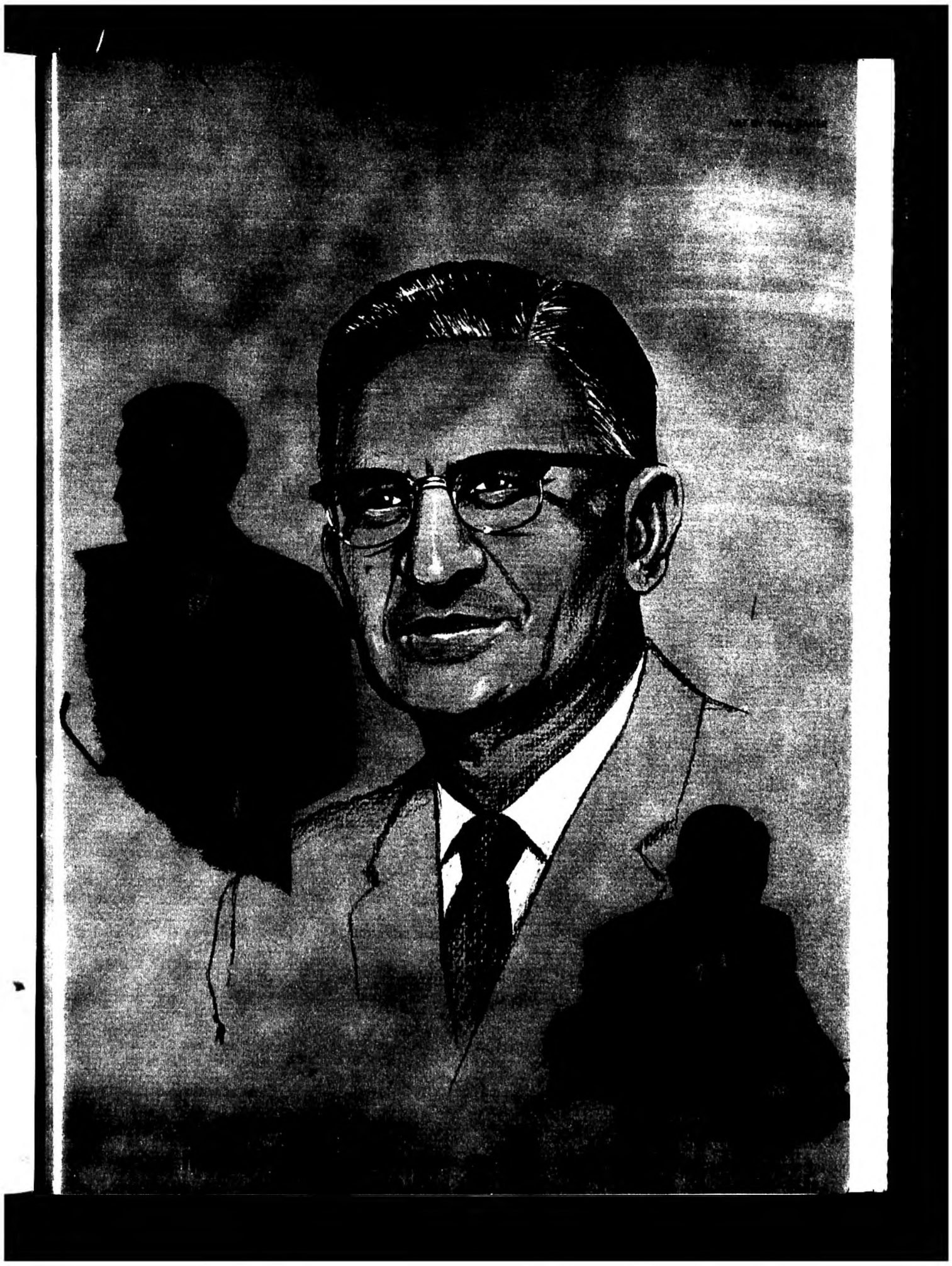
"The growth isn't because of what we did," he adds, "but because Southern Baptists made funds available to do these things. So many people have had a part in everything I've been privileged to do. The results have come because of prayers and the support of others."

One of Griff's biggest supporters is his wife of 43 years, Mary, who has been ill recently.

"There has been a change in my attitude about retirement," says Griffith, smiling. "It is refreshing. A number of years ago there was tremendous resistance. But I could shut that door today and walk out satisfied.

"But I will miss the daily opportunity to work with people dedicated to missions."

—*Sandy Simmons*



Geo. W. Cummins

"It Has Been Satisfying . . ."

As director of the Home Mission Board Division of Chaplaincy for the past 10 years, Geo. W. Cummins has traveled all over the world, preaching on military bases and in hospitals and prisons.

He plans to continue preaching all over even though he retired from the Board in January. Cummins is 65.

"I will visit military bases, preach in evangelistic revivals and perhaps serve as a supply or interim pastor," Cummins said. Through these efforts, he plans to continue to spread the "principles of the chaplaincy."

"The philosophy and principles of the chaplaincy can mean much to the accomplishment of our mission task in the days ahead," Cummins said.

A graduate of Georgetown College, Ky., and Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, Cummins received a doctor of laws degree from Atlanta, Ga., Law School. In 1960, he was awarded an honorary doctorate from Georgetown College.

Cummins assumed his position as director of the Division of Chaplaincy in 1961. Before 1961, he was for six years associate director of the division under the leadership of Alfred Carpenter.

Before coming to Atlanta, he served with the HMB as superintendent of western missions, in Salt Lake City, Utah, and as associate missionary in the San Diego, Calif., County Association.

In 1942, Cummins went into the US Naval Reserve as a chaplain. His experience in the chaplaincy is immense. He has served as hospital, correctional, industrial and staff chaplain.

"I've actually worked with the Home Mission Board 30 years, not just 17," the white-haired Cummins said of his years of service. "It has been satisfying to see what the chaplains and military personnel have contributed to the cause of the Kingdom of God. This is particularly evident in the early developments of work in Alaska, Hawaii and the establishment of English-language churches in large cities around the world.

"Chaplains and military personnel have been 'guilty' of starting eight percent of the English-speaking churches around the world," Cummins added.

"During this period of some 30 years, I have had the privilege of working wi outstanding ministers of the gospel wi the greater majority of these men havi become chaplains who have served a are now serving in their chosen area the chaplaincy. The Chaplains Commi sion, during this past 30 years, has dea with some 7,000 Southern Baptist ministers. How thrilled and pleased I hav been to see these individuals livin preaching, teaching and communicatin this great gospel of redemption to thos who have come under their care an guidance."

During World War II, Cummins wa among more than 1,200 Southern Baptis ministers serving in the military a chaplains. Because Southern Baptist expressed such an interest in chaplaincy work, in 1941 the Convention instructed the Home Mission Board to assume re sponsibility for this ministry.

Chaplains Commission of the SBC was created. In 1959 the Board established the Division of Chaplaincy as a unit of administration to carry on chaplaincy work.

Cummins is a native of Kentucky, and served pastorates in Louisville, Simpsonville, and Shelby County before entering active duty in the Navy in 1942.

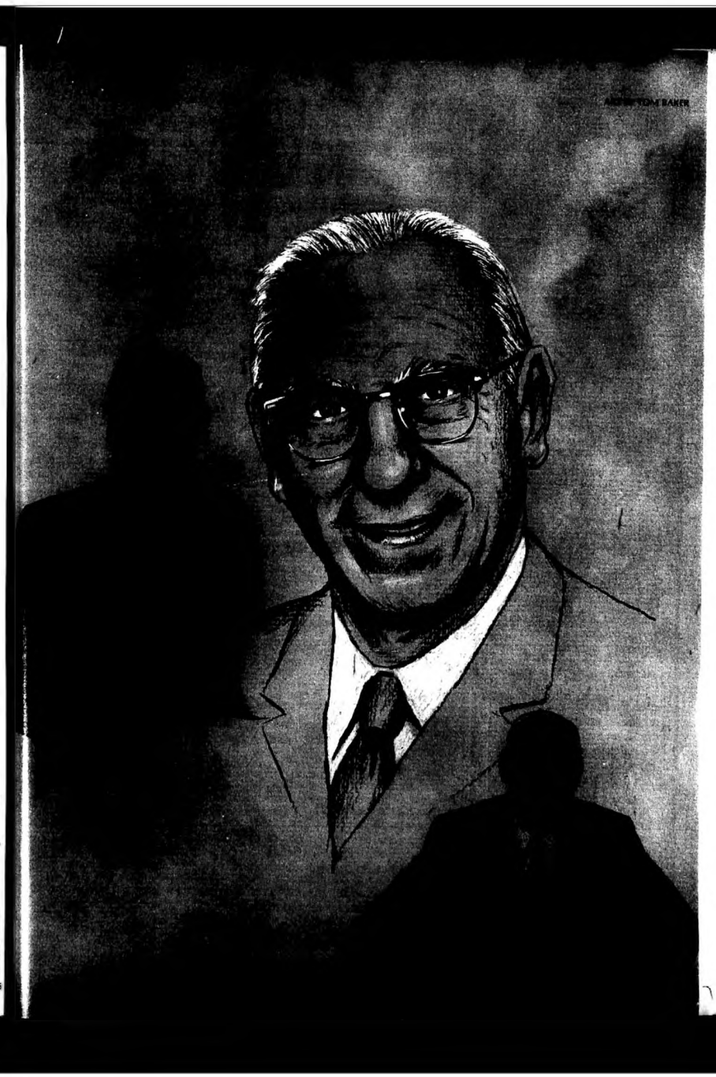
Cummins and his wife, Bessie Mae, were married in the Blue Grass State. They have two children, George Jr. and Shirley, and five grandchildren.

During his military service, he received numerous awards and medals, including a Presidential Citation during the Korean Conflict, the U.S. Army Distinguished Citation, and a Bronze Star Medal.

Since he assumed the responsibil ies of the division, the two-man staff has grown to a man to fill each phase of the chaplaincy—military, institutional, hospital and industrial, in addition to an associate director.

Today there are 3,500 active chapl ins (including wives)—or missionaries as Cummins calls them—working throu h out the world. The basic objective is to render a spiritual ministry to pe ple wherever they are found."

And after retirement, Cummins h ns to be "doing the same thing I have b en doing for 30 years—ministering to people." —*Sandy Simp ns*



Happenings

Dance of a Blind Eagle

Mike Naranjo Jr., son of HMB missionaries Mr. and Mrs. Michael Naranjo of Albuquerque, N.M., recently gave President Richard Nixon a 35-pound sculpture, "The Dance of the Eagle," which Naranjo fashioned from memory of Indian dances he'd seen as a child.

Naranjo, a Vietnam veteran, was blinded by a hand grenade while serving in the Mekong Delta in 1967.

After the presentation, Mr. Nixon declared the experience "very moving." "You helped our day very much," the President told Naranjo.

A Hopeful Sign

Neal and JoAnn Peyton, associate missionaries to the deaf in North Carolina, have started a class at O'Berry Institute for children who cannot talk.

O'Berry is a state institution for the mentally retarded. The Peytons felt the children could learn to communicate through the use of sign language, even if they could not speak.

The class is still evolving, but the Peytons already report they teach "a small group of deaf, retarded patients and their cottage parents, plus a few of the social workers."

International Jaunt

Eva Kennard, director of International ministries for the Northwest Baptist Convention, took an international bus ride to San Francisco recently.

The bus was on a "missionary jaunt" and on board were students from 14 nations and seven Oregon college campuses. Every major faith had its spokesman.

During the trip, the group attended the Billy Graham crusade. One girl made a decision for Christ, and two others became "inquirers."

On the long bus ride, Miss Kennard reported much "exciting, provocative dialogue" and many students reading their new copies of the New Testament.

Miss Kennard, an HMB missionary, lives in Eugene, Ore., but works with students in the two-state convention area.

Mission in NayTauWaush

A new Baptist mission has been started on the (Chippewa Indian) White Earth Reservation in NayTauWaush, Minn.

W. J. Hughes, pastoral missionary in Grand Forks, N.D., makes a two-hour drive each Sunday to preach. High attendance has been 24.

The mission was first held in the yard of Jim Guy, an Iowa Baptist who's building a resort on a nearby lake. Romerio Alverado, a Baptist who's married to a Chippewa, instigated the mission by inviting Hughes to speak.

New Britain Crusade

Norwood Waterhouse says he found it hard to believe, but E. L. Golonka, associate in the HMB Language Department, whispered throughout an entire sermon at Slavic Evangelical Baptist Church, New Britain, Conn.

But there was a good reason, the Connecticut pastor-director adds quickly. Golonka wasn't being rude; he was translating the sermon from Polish into English for missionary-to-the-deaf Rodney Webb, who was, in turn, translating it into sign language for a Russian woman who was deaf.

"The joy that lighted her face as she 'heard' the gospel in her silent language was wonderful to behold," says Waterhouse. "She went home a happy person that night."

The service was part of a multi-language crusade held in New Britain. Each night services were held in Slavic languages, English and sign language. In addition, a visiting choir from Tyler, Tex., held vacation Bible schools (with more than 100 in daily attendance), witnessed in the afternoons, and did a 30-minute TV show on Connecticut's largest station.

The choir, from Green Acres Baptist Church, also held a special open-air concert in a city park. hm

Chaplains Prayer Calendar

Jan. 1: Herman M. Kincaid, Tex., Army; William H. Mattox, S.C., Air Force; Andrew A. Bratcher Jr., Tex., hospital. **Jan. 2:** Emmett Solomon, Tex., institutional. **Jan. 4:** Carl B. Case, Tex., hospital; Aubrey Neal, Ark., Navy. **Jan. 6:** Edward Carl, S.C., Navy. **Jan. 7:** Harold F. Menges, Kans., Army; Wendell T. Wright, Va., Army; Harry W. Clifton, Mo., institutional.

Jan. 8: Milton Lamar Trawick, Ala., Navy; Vernon Wall, N.C., hospital; Ralph E. Medlock Jr., Ga., Army. **Jan. 9:** LeRoy C. Bearce, Mo., Army; George M. Coaker, Ala., hospital; Robert R. Whiteside, S.C., Air Force; Douglas Dexter, Miss., institutional. **Jan. 11:** Charles E. LeClair, Okla., Army; Jay D. Peterson, Fla., Navy; Ralph Bryon Orand, Tex., hospital. **Jan. 12:** Harvey L. Lilly Jr., La., Navy; Jack C. Randles, Ga., Army. **Jan. 13:** John E. Rasberry, Ala., Air Force. **Jan. 14:** Marion K. Kelly, S.C., Army. **Jan. 15:** Delton Collins, Ga., Army; John T. Collins, S. C., Navy.

Jan. 16: Albert B. Parsons Jr., S.C., Air Force; Joseph W. Vetter, Ky., Army; Harold D. Wright, La., hospital. **Jan. 17:** Lewis F. Allred, Miss., Navy; Donald C. Hancock, Ga., hospital. **Jan. 19:** Cammid O. Arrendell, Tex., Air Force; Roy A. Baxter, Tenn., Navy; John M. Dickson, Fla., institutional. **Jan 20:** Robert F. Gunter, Calif., hospital; Joe E. Luncefore, Miss., Air Force; William H. Reed, Ky., Air Force.

Jan. 21: Clarence L. Hopkins, Okla., Army; Homer E. Keen Jr., Miss., Navy; J. V. Porter, Okla., hospital. **Jan. 22:** John T. Goad, Tenn., Navy; Newton Hardin, N. C., Air Force; William E. Haltom, N.C., hospital; Hugh R. Kensey, Fla., Air Force.

Jan. 23: Bell Reaves, Ala., Army; Dewey D. Underwood, Tex., hospital; William Marvin Stricklin, Mo., Air Force. **Jan. 24:** Paul R. Fine, Fla., hospital; Glenn Jude, W.Va., Air Force. **Jan. 25:** Nathan L. Robinson, La., hospital. **Jan. 27:** Harry C. Hubbard, Ohio, hospital; Willis L. Saunders, Okla., hospital; Deyo J. Williams, N.C., hospital. **Jan. 28:** Roy Riddle, N.C., Air Force; Frank A. Renfro, Okla., hospital.

Jan. 29: Roger E. Williams, N.C., institutional. **Jan. 30:** James F. Agnew, S.C., Navy. **Jan. 31:** Charles George Campbell, Ga., Army; Pat H. Davis, Ala., Army; Richard Hopkins, N.C., hospital; David M. Jost, Okla., institutional; Frank A. Rice, La., Air Force.

Everything's Going Up! Zoom!

Like rockets. And tempers. And pollution. And prices. Especially prices. Even our prices. Right, folks, we can't keep printing HOME MISSIONS for the same thing we did in 1952, which is when we had our last price increase. Come January 1, 1972 (barring a sudden windfall of umpteen zillion dollars), we are raising our one-year subscription to $1.50; our three-year subscription will be $3.50; church budgets will be 90¢; club rates $1.10. But, you say cleverly, this is only December. If I act now, may I still get the old rates? Sharp thinking, we say. The old rates are still in effect. Subscribe now and save, save, save.

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Art Director ..... Tom Baker
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Director of Photography ..... J.C. Durham, Audio-Visuals Department

Cover Story: Of all the controversies springing from the Jesus Movement, the Children of God are the most controversial. Why? Ask any two people, and get two answers. We asked several. Our report, "defused and de-confused," begins on page 28.

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Letters

Keeping Informed

I would like to thank you for the great work the Home Mission Board is doing in our land.

I am GA director in our church and find I will be able to keep better informed as to the work being done and needs of our land through HOME MISSIONS....

Mary Lou Galloway
Golathwaite, Tex.

• I'm not usually a "letter writer to the editor"... but I had to this time. HOME MISSIONS seems to get better each time. As I read the October issue I was filled with excitement. Our church just began a bus ministry and it is growing... we are also involved in a WIN program. God is on the move in our Convention in a new way. I'm glad to respond to your efforts by saying, "praise the Lord!"

Robert L. Moore
Glen Burnie, Md.

Regular Refresher

HOME MISSIONS arrives monthly in our office here like a regular refresher course in outreach evangelism. HOME MISSIONS helps us stay up to date, helps us retool for new approaches in our Lord's ministry.

It's an invaluable, indispensable tool for our work here.... I pray that you continue to plow fresh ground in Christian journalism.

Bill Greenwood Jr.
Lexington, N.C.

• I praise God for the September issue. For one of the first times, I read through the entire issue in a sitting.

I guess the first article got me really interested ("The City's Challenge" by William M. Pinson Jr.). This was particularly inspiring to me, because I pastor a Southern Baptist church in southeast Los Angeles....

Paul O. Cheek
Downey, Calif.

Jesus Movement Returns

As a Southern Baptist pastor on one of the greatest home mission fields in our country, I want to personally thank you for the great work done by your staff of writers concerning the Jesus movement and all of its many facets. I appreciate because it is as fair and objective an analysis as possible of what God is doing in our country.

Many of those things which were written about have taken place in our town and church, and we are praying that many of them will yet take place. I am convinced that whether this movement is that of the charismatic concept or of what we might call the basic Southern Baptist spiritual movement, we can truly see God working in his own way.

I find that this movement is helping to lessen the generation gap, both religious and race prejudice, and is attributing to a great awakening in our churches and in our total Southern Baptist work. From deep within me I can say, "Praise the Lord for his unspeakable riches."

Keep up the good work. We are praying for you.

Charles R. Cutts
Kenosha, Wisc.

• I trust it is not too late to say "Praise the Lord" for that outstanding June/July issue of HOME MISSIONS. This has been a profoundly influential tool to encourage me to hope for early revival, and to seek God more earnestly for my own life.

All our church members receive the magazine through the budget plan, but many other persons want to see and have copies.... In your survey of the current spiritual awakening I believe you might also be aware of the rather significant contribution being made by Bill Gothard and his Institutes in Basic Youth Conflicts which are drawing large "paying" crowds in a dozen key cities across the USA including Dallas and Atlanta. The most recent seminars in the northwest saw 6,000 attending in Seattle in April and 2,000 in Portland in May.

I rejoice in the relation of your publication to Broadman's rush-issue book on the "Jesus Revolution" and Jack Taylor's book. These are helping fan the flame of revival—or certainly up this way. I noted also your June issue had promised further coverage in the August issue of "Eternity."

Our small suburban church in metropolitan Vancouver (46 members) has seen a splendid new opportunity with young teen-agers in the past 6 weeks. But even more significantly, a number of adults in our church have been finding victory in the Holy Spirit in the past 2 or 3 weeks ...Better still, God is stirring and opening many other hearts along these lines of spiritual hunger and seeking. Mt. Baker Baptist Association and Capilano Association (here in Vancouver area) conducted a first—a joint "Spiritual Life Retreat" at Mt. Baker Baptist Assembly. More than 70 youth and adults participated...

Yesterday, the pastors from all five brands of Baptists in Vancouver met at a Bible campground at Point Roberts, Wash. for their "second annual Baptist pastor's retreat." There were 35 or 40 men there, and we felt the touch of God vividly. There was more openness and love and a deep sense of unity in Christ than we have ever experienced in this setting....

The first appearance of the Jesue revolution among the hippies two or three years ago was marred by lack of discipline and fell into some disrepute, even though many saw God had been working in it. (I am speaking of Vancouver.) In Aug., 1970 the "Jesus People's Army" arrived in Vancouver and established a stable, growing, well-disciplined, ministry among the street people, led by a "straight" young Pentecostal minister named Russell Griggs. They operate a bakery and a print shop as employment for some of the youth, as well as several hostels and communal dwellings and other ministries. They are gaining steadily a wider circle of acceptance and respect to the glory of Christ both among the churches and public. They have attracted extensive newspaper coverage in the dailies here.

Thank you for what your magazine has been doing for several years now in keeping us informed of vital ministries of God's people, and evidences of God's workings both within and without the Southern Baptist denomination.

Jim Yoder
Richmond, BC, Canada

Valuable Resource

I am compelled to write you to say how grateful I am for the HOME MISSIONS magazine. I have used the magazine for years in GA work, and now have found another use for it.

A daughter, who is a senior sociology major in a small Baptist college (Wayland) here in Texas, finds them very valuable in her studies for reports, term papers, pictures for pastors, etc. The Christian Life Commission resource papers have been excellent for her studies.

We had thought about subscribing for her own magazine, but then she wouldn't come home as often to use mine! Again thanks....

Mrs. Audrey Glynn
Ozona, Tex.

• I admit I do not enjoy the magazine as much as former years but I am retired and enjoyed the stories about the work being done. I realize the necessity and prudence in the change and hope it can be used for the furtherance of home mission work and informs us of the necessary changes of the work and the change from rural to urban living....

Mrs. Waldrop
Spiro, Ohio

"Too Old..."

It seems I am too old to be given even a Christian "hello" from the "young group of women" of my church. Some may say "Oh, she is just hurt because she doesn't have an office, or is not asked to participate in the program." That is far from the truth. I am glad younger women are taking over, but I feel anyone, young or old, should be given a Christian greeting....

I have experienced the same "pay no attention" attitude in the church choir. I am 83 years old now, and still sing with the congregation, and solo now and then for my age S.S. opening assembly on Sunday morning.

Recently we had a retired minister as our adult superintendent, who was also a singer who had had the same treatment ...After one of my solos, he said, "You have a nice voice; you should be in the choir."

I said, "I'm too old."

"No, you're not. But it can happen to all of us," he said. "I can work six days a week at hard labor, but am 'too old' to pastor a church."

...Since my dear helpmate of more than 50 years has been gone for eight and a half, I have a piano song service quite often all alone.

I have a very good collection of old hymnbooks and I am always brought back so many years, first to my own family...

I remember very distinctly seeing my father, three older sisters and two older brothers singing in our little one-room Baptist church, in the country in Western Kentucky.

Then my own home. I have memories from that too, and remember the friends of those days. Will you please not think I am bragging, which I don't mean at all to do....

Mrs. L.C. Feldman
Compton, Calif.

Evangelism Breakthrough

I have just finished reading the entire October issue. It was an exciting and motivating experience. Exciting to see how God is working in all of life today and motivating by understanding the tremendous dedication and commitment the Division of Evangelism is putting to the task of relating the Gospel to all people....

Stoney W. Shaw
Lakeland, Fla.

• The October magazine is the most exciting of all the issues you have ever published that have come to my attention! The breakthroughs in evangelism, the spirit of conquest and enthusiasm, the portrayal of the charismatic and creative and dynamic leadership of Kenneth Chafin—all of this causes me to read it and get excited about our denomination and the days that lie ahead as never before! The challenge of TV evangelism is before us, and a hardhitting, effective gospel appeal backed by the resources and the leadership capacities of Southern Baptists is long overdue.

Thank you for launching out in this field and be assured of my full support for not only this program—but for the basic philosophies set forth in HOME MISSIONS' presentation on "Evangelism on the Attack!"

Wayne Dehoney
Louisville, Ky.

Last Chance

To Stock Up on **HOME MISSIONS,**
And Get a Christmas Gift Too!

Jesus People Come Alive is a revised and updated version of the June/July issue of **HOME MISSIONS.** Together, *Jesus People Come Alive* and **HOME MISSIONS** will be a perfect gift for a friend or a permanent addition to your library—and they are gifts that keep on giving through the years...

And you don't have to be a new subscriber to take advantage of this special offer. [illegible] MISSIONS can get the book plus 36 issues of the magazine [illegible] just our way of saying,

Thanks, and Merry [illegible]

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Please send me a three-year subscription to HOME MISSIONS and a copy of the book, Jesus People Come Alive. Enclosed is $3.

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