

**WESTERN RECORDER**  
DECEMBER 23, 1976

## A Christmas of Thanksgiving

The American tradition associates thanksgiving with November and merriment with December. Both celebrations are appropriate but maybe the themes of the days should be exchanged putting merriment with the harvest celebration in November and thanksgiving with the Christmas season in December.

The American thanksgiving has some spiritual dimension in that God is recognized by many celebrators as the generous provider but the main focus is on material blessings. Every civilization of history has instituted some kind of annual harvest festival in recognition of the provision of the physical needs of life. But many of these festivals are purely pagan from our standpoint and are celebrated with all kinds of excesses and orgies. For that matter, there's too much of that kind of celebration in our American



Thanksgiving observance.

Christmas, on the other hand, focuses on spiritual blessings in spite of American Christmas materialistic merchandising that is well nigh sacrilegious. Reflective people at Christmas time remember an event involving God and his infinite love for mankind instead of concentrating on expensive gifts, fat paychecks and food laden tables.

## A Meeting with the Christmas Spirit

The spirit of the season was reflected in the Dec. 13-14 meeting of the executive board of the Kentucky Baptist Convention. The peacefulness, unity and generosity which prevailed would grace any Christmas season. In thanking the board members Executive Secretary Owen said, "It's been a good meeting," and everyone agreed.

Some observer suggested the spirit of the sessions was so harmonious that the meeting was in danger of becoming dull. There was no dullness but the absence of questions and debate on any issue might have made it appear that way, especially to veteran committee members who remember many stormy sessions of the board in other days.

There might have been other board meetings but I remember none in 20 years when not one negative reaction was heard on any issue. This could hardly happen in every meeting nor would it be proper when matters on which good men differ are under consideration.

Some obvious factors contributed to the unusually harmonious meeting. One is the overall fine spirit prevailing at this time among Kentucky Baptists in all sections of the state. Another is the positive response of Baptists in the pews as reflected in Cooperative Program giving which

The blessing of Bethlehem can but set our sensitive souls to praise and thanksgiving. We never had more to sing about and more for which to be thankful and so we join the shepherds of the Judean fields in wonder and the wise men from the east in pilgrimage to the manger.

The annual Bethlehem pilgrimage brings us together spiritually as the family of God though distances separate us geographically. In this experience we are not only blessed by God but we also bless one another and therefore we thank not only God but also one another.

And so Christmas for the *Western Recorder* family is an experience of thanksgiving to God and to all the Kentucky Baptist family. Surely we wish every reader of these words a blessed and merry Christmas, but more than that we want to communicate our sincerest gratitude for the exciting experience of serving the Lord together.

It's been a wonderful year with countless undeserved blessings. It's been a challenging year with enough difficulties to cultivate character. The Lord's goodness is evident on every hand and enough of his grace has found lodging in our hearts to let us love one another purely.

What more could we ask for Christmas? What else could make this holy season such an experience of thanksgiving?

We join you, then, in a Christmas of thanksgiving.

is considerably above that of this time last year which, itself, was a good year.

The manner of presiding always affects the spirit of a meeting and Convention President Sisk's presiding was impeccable, never too many nor too few words and the right words at the right time.

Background work by staff personnel and careful deliberation in subcommittee meetings constitute another key to smooth sailing in the sessions of the full board. Recommendations which come out of open and full treatment in subcommittee meetings always are easier to deal with.

The most obvious factor contributing to the happy atmosphere of the meeting was the appearance and performance of Executive Secretary Owen. After missing the November convention due to a stubborn virus and doing the intense preparation for this meeting while still on the mend, he appeared to be at full strength again. His "state of the convention" message set the tone that prevailed throughout the sessions.

It is always exciting and reassuring to see and to welcome new members of the board in the December meeting. About one third of the committee membership is new each year and this year seemed to bring an especially

outstanding crop of new members. Some of these are returning after serving in earlier years and some are complete newcomers. It's amazing how many talented ministers and laymen among Kentucky Baptists are available for denominational service.

The comfort afforded for such meetings at Cedarmore and the hospitality of Manager Arlis Hinson and his helpers could not be excelled.

This meeting had special significance for *Western Recorder*. The response to an appeal for help in meeting the current financial crisis of the paper was reassuring and comforting. To those of us involved directly in the ministry of *Western Recorder*, it was more than we could have hoped for and all we prayed for.

It was truly a meeting with the Christmas spirit.

## Baptist Forum

### RIGHT ON

My comment as to "An Open Letter to President-Elect Carter," Nov. 11, 1976 edition of *Western Recorder*, is that same is GREAT.

Fuller Harding, Campbellsville

### VOLUNTEER ALERT

Editor, I want to express my appreciation for the coverage you have given Foreign Mission Board news about medical volunteers serving overseas. This coverage has helped many outstanding men and women recognize an opportunity to serve for short terms overseas.

Right now, we are in desperate need of more medical volunteers, especially surgeons. Our Baptist mission hospitals depend upon volunteers to supplement the work of missionary physicians. The situation is critical in many of our Baptist hospitals and the workload on missionary personnel almost unbearable. Missionaries turn away many patients each day for lack of time and personnel. In one hospital 15 operations are performed daily and the surgical schedule is back-logged through February with no relief in sight except volunteers.

Physicians, dentists, lab technicians, nurses and other medical personnel can be used immediately and for the next 12 months. Volunteers have already served well in Bangladesh, India, Jordan, Gaza and Africa. There are more openings in each of these places and other countries.

We thank you again for the excellent news coverage and for this opportunity to let others in the medical profession know of service needs and opportunities. We ask you and other Southern Baptists to join with us in prayer that these needs may be met.

Harold E. Hurst, Richmond, Va.

[Those wishing to respond to this appeal should contact Harold E. Hurst, Foreign Mission Board, SBC, Box 6597, 3806 Monument Avenue, Richmond, Va 23230. —Editor]

### CORRECTION

We read, with interest, the article "Missions & Ministries" which was published in the Aug. 5 edition of *Western Recorder*.

The purpose of this letter is to call your attention to the portion of the article that read "Bethlehem Baptist Church has the largest single gathering of Alcoholics Anonymous in the state." This statement tends to imply that Alcoholics Anonymous and the Bethlehem Baptist Church are affiliated in some way. Many A. A. groups meet in churches. The members of the group rent space from the church for their

weekly meetings, but they are in no way affiliated.

From the beginning of our fellowship we have had splendid understanding and cooperation from the communications media. Many people sober in A. A. today first learned of the fellowship, and the possibility of recovery in it, from reading an article in a newspaper or magazine. Because of this, we felt you would appreciate our bringing this misconception to your attention.

(Name withheld)

### LETTER FROM THE EDITOR

Five donors, contributing for more than two years to the Norbert Roberts family in Louisville, have been thanked again by Mr. Roberts who says the help saved the family from financial ruin and made it possible for the family to try to make it on its own.

The story of Mrs. Roberts who has a rare and incurable ailment known as Huntington's disease was shared with *Western Recorder* readers in March 1974. A flood of response brought several thousand dollars to pay medical and nursing home bills and provide for clothes and other needs of a teenage daughter.

Mrs. Roberts is still alive in a nursing home but continues to deteriorate. Mr. Roberts has been able to keep his job and now says he wants to try to make it on his own. He suggests that the gifts of the five donors still sending help might be more greatly needed by others in unfortunate circumstances.

C. R. Daley, Middletown



## Ivory Coast Crusades

The first Baptist-sponsored simultaneous evangelistic campaigns to be held in Abidjan, Ivory Coast, resulted in 461 professions of faith, with 285 presenting themselves for baptism.

The crusades held in 16 Yoruba-language Baptist churches were led by local pastors and several visiting pastors from Nigeria.

## Miss Churchill to WMU

Sheryl Churchill, a Ft. Worth, Tex., native, has accepted the position as Baptist Young Women consultant for Woman's Missionary Union (WMU), SBC, effective Dec. 1.

Miss Churchill, Acteens director for Texas WMU since 1970, graduated from Mary Hardin-Baylor College and Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary.

She will plan, conduct, and evaluate Baptist Young Women promotion for WMU, SBC.

## Turkish Survivors Aided

The Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board has released \$10,000 of world relief funds to aid victims of the Nov. 24 earthquake in Van, Turkey.

Clothing, food and tents are being

distributed to survivors of the quake which registered 7.6 on the Richter Scale and left at least 3,600 dead, according to news reports immediately following the disaster. Thousands were homeless in driving snow and 10 degree temperatures.

W. L. (Wimpy) Smith, associate consultant for laymen overseas and disaster response, has been in contact with the U. S. State Department offices of disaster response. The U. S. government is also responding with financial aid.



Visa problems behind him, Larry Witten is on the job of managing business for the Baptist mission in Ethiopia. Larry is a missionary journeyman from Vine Grove, Ky. The business administration graduate of Western Kentucky University is the son of Mr. and Mrs. Thurman Witten. He will be keeping books on expenditures of \$80,000 earmarked for Ethiopia in the Lottie Moon Christmas offering.

## Double Exposure

Even in early December the radio blared forth its promotional pitches for expensive, self-gratifying New Year's eve parties at exclusive supper clubs, cocktail lounges, hotels and other establishments offering a chance to run away from reality before a day-long hangover. All of this, before we celebrate the birth of Jesus in a humble manger. This old world never seems able to get its priorities in logical order.

*I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the ending, saith the Lord, which is, and which was, and which is to come, the Almighty.* (Rev. 1:8).

Vol. 150, No. 50



## KBC Employees Honored For Lengthy Tenures

Five employees of the Kentucky Baptist Convention's executive board were honored on significant tenure anniversaries by the elected board at its Dec. 13 meeting.

Honorees included Calvin D. Fields, 10 years; Rae Ann Dunaway and Dwight Lyons, 15 years each; Eugene F. Quinn, 20 years; and Doris B. Yeiser, 25 years.

Fields, associate director of the Brotherhood Department, was termed by executive secretary-treasurer Franklin Owen as "probably known and admired by more boys and young men in Kentucky than any other single member of a Baptist church."

Mrs. Dunaway, secretary to the business manager, according to Owen, "typifies many of the workers . . . not seen a great deal but our work would quickly come to a halt without their faithful loyal service."

Lyons "represents a group of employees scattered over the state who are having a tremendous influence . . . in the future of Kentucky Baptists," said Owen. He is Baptist campus minister at the University of Louisville.

Quinn, director of the Church Music Department, "in his quiet but persistent way means much to our denominational work here in Kentucky and around the world."

Miss Yeiser, administrative assistant to the executive secretary-treasurer, "continually goes beyond the call of duty in serving Kentucky Baptists." She has been secretary to the last three executive secretaries of the board.

Each of the five employees was recognized by his immediate supervisor and presented a gift in appreciation of his years of service.

## Last Recorder for '76

Postal regulations limit *Western Recorder* to 50 issues per year. The issue you are reading is No. 50 for 1976. The next issue, beginning our 151st year of continuous service, will be dated Jan. 6, 1977.



These Kentuckians participated in a Bible teaching-learning institute in St. Louis with Ken Dean [right], consultant in the Baptist Sunday School Board's Sunday School Department: [L to R] Allen Black, Bill Simmons, Rebecca McCoy, Ken Griffin. Other Kentuckians involved were Mrs. Camille Hamilton, Mrs. Charles Wade, Terry Hamrick, Mrs. Helen Smith, Rick Chaffin and Mrs. Betty Moore. The workshop was similar to one set for Louisville Apr. 11-12 to improve Bible study and increase teaching skills.

## Carden Edits Bible Line

Luther Carden, pastor of First Baptist Church, Hartselle, Ala., since 1957, has been named editor of the Bible Book Series for adults, a new curriculum line to be published by the Baptist Sunday School Board.

The series, to be available for the October 1978 quarter, includes a systematic study of the books of the Bible for Southern Baptist Sunday schools.

Carden is a Florida native and a graduate of Samford University, Birmingham, and Southern Seminary.



Carden

## Bramlette Back at BSSB

After an absence of several years W. Howard Bramlette has returned to the Baptist Sunday School Board's National Student Ministries, currently as design editor of student materials.

A Texas native, he was in the board's Student Department earlier. He then was director of placement and

promotion of the SBC Education Commission and consultant in mission education for the Foreign Mission Board.

## HMB Names Photo Editor

Mrs. July Touchton has been named photo feature editor for the Baptist Home Mission Board, Atlanta, succeeding Tim Nicholas, who resigned in September to become associate editor of the *Mississippi Baptist Record*.

For the past five years she has been photo librarian for the Home Mission Board.

## Rosalynn at Ridgecrest

Mrs. Rosalynn Carter, wife of President-elect Jimmy Carter, will deliver the keynote address Dec. 28 at the four-day winter youth celebration at Ridgecrest (N. C.) Baptist Conference Center.

Accommodations for the sixth annual celebration for high school youths are filled. Additional guests are welcome for any of the services, although they must make their own arrangements for meals and lodging.

Entertainer Grady Nutt of Louisville will be on the celebration program.

## Western Recorder

"Earnestly contend for the faith which was once for all delivered to the saints."—Jude 3.

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### SUBSCRIPTION RATES

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# Kentucky Baptists at Work

## Executive Board Grants Western Recorder Relief; Changes Cedarmore Rates; Promotes Allen, Stricker

by Jim Cox, Associate Editor

Two motions to bail out one of Kentucky Baptists' financially troubled agencies met with unanimous approval by the 159-member state executive board at its annual winter session at Cedarmore last week.

*Western Recorder*, plagued with several months of unpaid bills as a result of sharply rising production and printing costs, was awarded immediate financial relief.

The recommendations to the full board came from the finance committee of the board.

The first motion called for \$9,641 now allocated to *Western Recorder* in the challenge section of the current Cooperative Program budget, payable in September 1977, to be distributed immediately.

A second motion appropriated an additional \$20,000 from unrestricted funds. The \$20,000, or any part thereof, is to be repaid, if possible, by the board of *Western Recorder* by the end of the current fiscal year (Aug. 31, 1977).

Executive Secretary-Treasurer Franklin Owen had earlier alluded to *Western Recorder's* financial ills in his own report to the board. "*Western Recorder* has to be seen as beneficial to all of us," he said. "We have separate boards to protect the editorial freedom, but our concern is as one and we all stand ready to help."

Responding to the board's financial assistance, Editor C. R. Daley declared, "Your act of compassion and comradeship would soften the heart of the most hard-hearted editor. We are overwhelmed with the spirit with which you have done it."

Several references were made throughout the two-day sessions to the need for placing *Western Recorder* in every Baptist home in Kentucky.

### 61 New Members

In his report Owen announced that 61 new members of the board were eligible to attend these sessions for the first time. He reported that \$156,949.29



Allen



Stricker

additional Cooperative Program receipts have been received in the first three months of the 1976-77 fiscal year over the same period a year ago, through Nov. 30.

He also indicated that his primary concern now is to elect a successor to T. Hicks Shelton, retiring Dec. 31 as director of the KBC's Evangelism Department.

Fred A. Livingood of Waco was elected to fill the only vacancy on the executive board, as representative from Tates Creek Association.

In other actions, the board adopted a new rate structure for Cedarmore Baptist Assembly, approved a policy on employe housing at Cedarmore, made two personnel changes, accepted an overall theme for the next three years and heard reports of the convention's agencies and institutions.

### Assembly Rate Plan

The rate structure calls for elimination of the present \$3 registration fee for guests at the convention-owned assembly Jan. 1. It provides a graduated flat rate for individuals based on number sharing a room, which includes insurance coverage provided in the current registration fee. The daily rates drop in each category by \$1.50 per person beginning the second day of a person's stay. Formulas for camp rates, group rates and reservation procedures were also approved.

The housing policy provides that Cedarmore employes who are required to live on the premises may do so at certain rates, while other employes who also choose to live on the property do

so at higher rates.

In major personnel action, the board approved two recommendations of its administrative committee.

### Allen, Stricker Upgraded

Barry G. Allen, current KBC business manager, will fill the vacancy created by the death last year of J. Chester Durham. Effective Jan. 1 Allen will become assistant to the executive secretary for business management and coordinate business related departments. This includes responsibility for the Business Office, Annuity Department and Kentucky Baptist Foundation.

Allen, 32, a native Mississippian, is a graduate of the University of Mississippi and Southern Seminary. He served in the convention's Business Office part time beginning in 1971. Since Aug. 1, 1973 he has been a full time employe, as assistant to the business manager until he was named to replace retiring Garnett B. Morton as business manager July 1, 1975.

Jesse C. Stricker, director of the convention's Department of Stewardship and Public Relations, was given the additional responsibility of Christian education coordination. This promotion grew out of a Christian education in-depth committee's recommendations to the board last month.

At the recommendation of the board's program committee, Kentucky Baptists' theme for the years 1977-79 will be "Bold Mission: Let the Church Reach Out."

The Board of Child Care, Woman's Missionary Union, *Western Recorder*, Kentucky Baptist Hospitals, and five educational institutions all reported briefly on programs and activities.

The executive board's Christian life committee announced plans for several one-day regional seminars on "Christianity and the Law" scheduled for next fall.

The next meeting of the executive board will be May 2-3, 1977, at Cedarmore.

Night had come to Ocean Springs! Across the bridge, the bay, beyond Biloxi, the sun began to sink. Like a great glob of gold it sank lower and lower until the whole western sky was tinged with a golden glow. Then it all began to change rapidly — red and yellow and crimson and all manner of sunset hues. The Master Painter was at work! Quickly and skillfully he painted the horizon until it seemed that the whole earth was gilt-edged with glory. And then night came!

The sky which had been filled with color became streaked with gray and after that came the dark. Here and there lights came on in the houses. In the heavens those ageless stars appeared and to the unheard music of the spheres commenced their journey across the sky. In the East the full moon glowed like a huge white cameo tinged with yellow gold on the sky's full bosom.

At First Baptist Church a group of young people were preparing to go caroling. The chimes from the lofty steeple had heralded across the town the good tidings about which the youth would sing. As they piled into their cars down the street came a young boy. He walked on crutches. "Wait for me," he called. "Oh, let's go," insisted a young girl. "We don't have room and, besides, he can't be getting in and out. He will foul up everything!" So with a shout and screech of tires the group was on its way. The crippled lad made his way to the steps of the church and sat down dejectedly. He so very much wanted to go.

Not far away in a bar a man lurched up to the counter and asked for more drink. Problems and pressures were such that he could only lose himself to liquor. "What's the use?" he mumbled to himself. "Who cares?" And the owner of the liquor store only smiled greedily as he took his money.

In a very elite and fashionable section of town lived some who, judged by the world's standards, had it made. A man and his wife were preparing for the evening's entertainment. Nervously

the wife put on her best, as she thought of the importance of the social hour. Contact with influential people, a promotion and prestige for her husband. The door slammed with a reverberating jar as the man stalked in from the patio angrily decrying some last minute mistake on the part of the servant. He gulped down a cocktail, glanced at his watch and hastened to the door to answer its ring.

Instead of the invited guests there stood a shabbily dressed man. "Could you take my child to the hospital? My car is broken down and my baby is sick. Would you help me?" Guests were expected at any moment. Why on earth did this happen now?

Across town was a little old frame shack. The people who lived there were poor. Could there, would there be any Christmas for three little chubby-cheeked tykes now tucked between faded and patched blankets? Torn between desire to do for little ones not yet experienced in life's hardness and the fact of no money, the mother stirred restlessly about the house. Only a miracle would bring Christmas to these.

Not only to these but to multitudes came this night and how it came! Those watching television listened as the announcer broke in with a news release — "Don't be afraid! For I am here with good news for you, which will bring great joy to all the people. This very night in David's town your Savior was born — Christ the Lord." By radio came the same news. "Glory to God in the highest heaven! And peace on earth to men with whom he is pleased!" A spirit which entered and captivated hearts moved like a shadow across the town.

There was a sudden squeal of brakes and the car carrying youthful carolers came to a halt! "We have room for Sam. Why, he has the best voice of all. What made us ever think of leaving him behind?" So back to the church was sped the group and then with great exuberance they set forth to sound the

gladsome news — with Sam singing louder and better than all. All felt so good!

The man lifted the glass to his lips and caught a glimpse of himself reflected from the liquid! "God," he said, "if you can help me I trust you to do so now." He set the glass down and stepped out into the brisk and refreshing night air with a determined set to his jaw! Deep inside he knew there was help and was on his way to claim it.

The couple who had planned this night for weeks looked at one another. "... to you is born a Savior," they heard the man announce on television. "My car is out in the back," said the man as he began taking his coat out of the closet. "And here take this," said he tucking a folded bill with double numerals on it into the father's shirt pocket. "It will help with the medicine." His wife looked lovingly at her husband. Forgotten for the moment were guests, meals and the importance of the meeting. How wonderful to be really needed and what a thrill to help.

There was a knock on the door of the little frame house. Undisturbed, the three little children slept on. The mother hastened to the door and drew back in surprise. There on the steps stood men bearing baskets of food and there were toys. "Oh God," inwardly said the woman as tears of gratitude trickled from her eyes, "This is the miracle."

And all over Ocean Springs there was the hush and wonder of a night of miracles. For this was Christmas night — marking the birth and gift of God's best — Jesus Christ. Here and there as people meditated on the night some tears stole down cheeks which had long been strangers to them. Thoughts of innocence and childhood happiness came back to those whose hearts had long been hardened in life. Many a heart grew soft with recollections of yesterday and how God loved them and from many a breast came a sigh which was dangerously near to a prayer. All knew that Emmanuel had come! God was with us!

## Christmas Comes to Ocean Springs!

by Paul D. Aultman, First Baptist Church, Ocean Springs, Miss.

# Christian Education



Biggs



Blair



Bradley



Butler



Combs



Dyer

## 25 Kentuckians Included Among 150 December Graduates at Southern



Gilbert



Hawkins



Hensley



Marsh



Mathis



Seitz



Simpson

Over 150 students, including 25 Kentuckians, received degrees from Southern Seminary, Louisville, on Dec. 17.

James L. Sullivan, president of the Southern Baptist Convention, was the commencement speaker. Seminary President Duke McCall presented degrees to graduates from the seminary's schools of Theology, Religious Education and Church Music.

Kentuckians receiving degrees included: Master of Divinity: David A. Butler, Louisville; Carl Salyer Combs, Lexington; Joel Henry Hawkins, Magnolia; James E. Hensley Jr., Manchester; James Hildabrand, Russellville; Charles R. Kessler, Florence; John E. Owen, Middletown; John T. Simpson Jr., Louisville; Bill Lee Wellman, Greenup.

Doctor of Ministry: Ronald Howard Bradley, Waddy; Arthur E. Christmas, Louisville; Don R. Mathis, Princeton; Paul R. Wright, Anchorage; John A. Wood, Paducah. Doctor of Philosophy: Thomas Henry Graves, Louisville.

Master of Church Music: Deborah R. Decker, Marion; John Emil Gilbert, Louisville. Doctor of Musical Arts: Robert Carl Smith, Louisville.

Master of Religious Education: William Thomas Biggs, Louisville; Paul Everett Blair, Williamstown; Michael Lanny Dyer, Woodburn; Michele Darlene Hall, Bowling Green; Robert Wesley Roy, Louisville; Laverne Seitz, Louisville.

Diploma in theology: Thomas William Marsh, Nortonville.

(According to the seminary news office individual graduates were responsible for providing their pictures for publication.)



Hall



Hildabrand



Kessler



Owen



Roy



Wellman



## Turkeys for Theologians

A ton of Christmas cheer that cost almost \$4,500 arrived at Clear Creek Baptist School, Pineville, Dec. 16. Christmas turkeys, grocery baskets, and \$5 bills were given to student families at the theological school for adults.

Bill Whittaker, pastor, First Baptist Church, Murray, representing Clear Creek's alumni in 29 states and five foreign countries, headed the huge project. He distributed the turkeys, fondly called "gospel birds" by the students, baskets of holiday foods valued at \$10, and \$5 bills to the student preachers' families.

The popular Christmas project was begun by the late Donald Burnett, former Kentucky pastor and mountain missionary. He recalled that during his student days at Clear Creek he knew student families who were without meat on their tables for weeks at a time — including Thanksgiving and Christmas. Burnett died suddenly of a heart attack on Thanksgiving Day, 1970. Since then Whittaker, a close friend of Burnett, has annually rallied former Clear Creek students and their churches to underwrite the expensive project.

Sonny and Gwen Maraj, from Trinidad, West Indies, declared, "We did

not think that we could have turkey during the holidays, but for the two years we have been students at Clear Creek, thoughtful friends have seen to it that we have had turkey and all the trimmings at Christmas. We thank God for those friends 'out there' who love us."



Michelle Maraj shivers in the snow as she holds her family's Christmas turkey at Clear Creek Baptist School, Pineville. Her parents, Sonny and Gwen Maraj, Trinidad, West Indies natives, are students at the school.

## Southwestern Seminary Graduates 4 Kentuckians



Bayles



Harris



Rucker



Threlkeld

Four native Kentuckians were among the 230 fall graduates at Southwestern Baptist Seminary, Ft. Worth, Tex., on Dec. 17.

Robin D. Bayles, Burkesville, received a Master of Church Music degree and Richard Hugh Harris, Nancy, received a Doctor of Ministry Degree. Linda Stovall Rucker, Eddyville, and Robert F. Threlkeld, Ledbetter, received Master of Religious Education degrees.

Seminary president Robert E. Naylor conferred the degrees to the largest December graduation class in the seminary's history.

Warren Hultgren, pastor of First Baptist Church, Tulsa, Okla., was the commencement speaker. He is a past vice president of the Southern Baptist Convention and serves on the Executive Committee of the Baptist World Alliance.

## Homilists Elect Cox

James W. Cox, professor of preaching at Southern Seminary, Louisville, has been elected president of the Academy of Homiletics at its annual meeting in Princeton, N. J.

The organization includes teachers of preaching in a number of Protestant and Catholic schools around the world.

## "Is Santa a Sin?"

by Nancy McGough

"Is it all right for our children to believe in Santa Claus? Does he take away from the real meaning of Christmas?"

These are questions concerned Christian parents ask at this time of year. A few have chosen to condemn the "pagan custom," others have endorsed him and most don't really know what is the Christian thing to do.

Several students and professors interviewed recently at Southern Seminary said they did not feel it was harmful for youngsters to have a childlike belief in Santa Claus — as long as the Christian observance of Christmas was also observed.

One student wife said both she and her husband believed in Santa Claus when they were young, "and it didn't hurt us." Another seminarian said he wouldn't rob his little son "of the childhood myth of Santa Claus."

At the Child Care Center, where many seminary children stay while their parents work or study, most of the pre-schoolers believe in Santa Claus but are also aware that Christmas is Jesus' birthday, according to Joyce Munro, executive director of the center and assistant professor of childhood education at the seminary.

The policy of the center is to emphasize the birth of Jesus. She added they do not want to "over-emphasize" this observance. She said children have a difficult time "equating the babe in the manger with the adult Jesus" and thinking of him only as a child would make him appear weak instead of strong in the child's eyes.

"We do not leave out Santa Claus or Frosty the Snowman either. It is important for children to have fantasy."

# Mountains to the Mississippi



First Baptist Church, Lawrenceburg, has dedication services for a newly remodeled sanctuary Nov. 28. Robert Mills, president of Georgetown College, was dedicatory speaker. The renovating consists of a completely new lighting system and audio equipment, additional pews, new carpeting, new ramp entrance, marble window sills, radiator covers and an additional rank added to the pipe organ. The balcony has been extended and Sunday school rooms have been removed from the main floor. Left to right are Bob C. Jones, pastor, and renovation committee members: Kenneth Mann, Wendell Bruce, Miss Frances Garrison, Walter Sparrow and Dave Disponett.

## WR Employes Retire

Two employes of *Western Recorder* have scheduled retirements at the close of 1976. Mrs. Myrtle Clark, subscription bookkeeper, is completing 11½ years of service. Mrs. Florence Thornton, associate bookkeeper, has been in her position 13 years.

## Coronation at Eastwood

Eastwood Baptist Church, Bowling Green, presented a coronation service recently. The service included recognition of the Girls in Action and junior and senior high Acteens.

The girls who passed their queen step are: Janet Bradford, Kendra Compton, Nan Holderfield, Robin Manning, Nancy Price, Donna Williams and Michele Wood.

A special award was presented to the senior high Acteens named for Miss Cornelia Ruth Graham, Journeyman nurse to Tanzania. The award from the convention's WMU was presented by Mrs. Frank Todd, Eastwood's WMU director, to Mrs. James Britt, director of the senior high Acteens.

## Hay and Searcy Will Tour Brazil

Two Kentucky ministers of music — members of "The Centurymen," the Southern Baptist Radio and Television Commission's men's singing group — will participate in a 15-day mission tour of Brazil in February and March.

Participating in the tour will be Albert Hay of Harlan Baptist Church and Doyle Searcy of Boone's Creek Baptist Church, Lexington.

## Crosby to D. C.

D. Wayne Crosby of Louisville will become director of Baptist child care for the Washington, D. C. Baptist Convention Jan. 1, 1977. For the past two years he has been director of Spring Meadows Children's Home, a residential facility of the Kentucky Baptist Child Care Program in Middletown.



Crosby

## Anderson Retires

P. Harris Anderson, assistant to the president of Mercer University, has retired and will continue living in Macon, Ga., at 2056 Vineville Avenue, Apt. 58. His time will be devoted to preaching, reading and writing.

Anderson is remembered with profound appreciation by many Kentucky Baptists for his ministry as president of Bethel College in Hopkinsville.

Christmas Is For Sharing

## Deaths

Elmer R. Cunningham, 67, died Nov. 24 at Veteran's Hospital, Lexington. During his 29-year ministry Cunningham held nine pastorates in Kentucky and two in Florida.

Funeral services were held Nov. 26 at Immanuel Baptist Church, Lexington.



Cunningham

# Sunday School Lessons

Lessons for January 2, 1977

by H. C. Chiles, Murray, Ky.

International Series

Life and Work Series

## Jesus Affirms His Sonship

Luke 2:39-52

Even though Joseph and Mary were poor and lived many miles from Jerusalem, they were regular in their attendance at the Feast of the Passover. When he was 12 years of age they took Jesus with them to the Passover. It was a custom among the Jews that at this feast the boys who had attained 12 years of age were recognized as "sons of the law."

When this feast was over Joseph and Mary started home in company with their relatives and friends. In the caravan the women were in front and the men followed. The children went with the group they preferred and played together as they went along. Joseph and Mary were free from anxiety about Jesus, even though they did not see him during the first day's journey.

At eventide Joseph and Mary discovered that Jesus was not with them. They decided to return to Jerusalem and seek him. On the third day they found him. Instead of playing with the children about the courts of the Temple, he was inside listening to the wise teachers, answering their questions, and surprising them by his marvelous understanding.

Of course, Mary and Joseph were astonished that he should venture into such an august presence and converse with them. Mary reproved Jesus for his seeming lack of thoughtfulness in remaining behind and causing such anxiety and inconvenience.

Without any attempt to excuse himself, Christ gently reproved their inordinate solicitude about him, indicating Mary should have realized his mission. His supreme task was to do the will of his Father. His statement in verse 49 was the first recorded words of our saviour and Lord. Christians should see to it that the Father's business has priority in their lives.

From Jerusalem Christ went down to lowly Nazareth with Mary and Joseph. He voluntarily set a worthy example for all of filial subjection to parents. He yielded a ready obedience to their commands while living with them and working under and for them.

During the 18 years of Christ's obscurity in Nazareth, he increased in wisdom, in stature and in favor with both God and men. We, too, should grow physically, intellectually and spiritually.

## Mary—Faithful in Life's Perplexities

Mary, the mother of the Lord Jesus, had a closer and more meaningful relationship with him than any other individual. She faced numerous perplexities in her life but remained faithful and true through all of them.

Luke 1:38

The angel Gabriel, acting upon the direction of God, approached the lovely young lady, Mary, and announced to her that she would have a child who would be the Son of God. When she expressed her doubt that such a thing was possible, due to the fact that she was unmarried, Gabriel assured Mary that this great event would take place through the working of the Holy Spirit. Accepting Gabriel's explanation, Mary concluded that nothing was impossible with God. Unhesitatingly Mary consented to be the "handmaid of the Lord" and placed herself in God's hand to be used in the accomplishment of his expressed purpose, whereupon Gabriel took his departure. By her response Mary proved that she was a woman of great faith, tremendous spiritual depth and ready obedience.

Luke 2:41-51

For the writer's comments on this passage, kindly read the column on this page in the International Series.

Acts 1:14

In obedience to Christ the followers of our Lord returned to Jerusalem after his ascension from Mount Olivet. Their return was a splendid demonstration of their obedience, faith and courage. Eleven apostles, certain women, "Mary, the mother of Jesus," our Lord's half-brothers, and enough others to total 120 went into the "upper room," which was a place of many hallowed memories. There they gave themselves with the same mind or spirit to prayer and supplication. Not only had they assembled for the same purpose, but there was also a wonderful spirit of unity among them. They were agreed as to the blessings which they needed and sought. They participated wholeheartedly in united, earnest, believing and persevering prayer.

Even though Mary had been honored greatly in giving birth to the Saviour and in rearing him, she occupied the position of a disciple only, and prayed to God along with the rest, and no prayers were made to her by anybody while she lived. Perplexed at times about the mission of Christ, Mary remained faithful and obedient to her heavenly Father. And so should we.

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# Runaways — Why Do They Run?

by Liz Skillen

The door slammed. "You never listen to me," Sheila screamed over her shoulder. Her parents, used to the screaming by now, didn't answer. They figured she'd come back. She didn't.

In 1940 white suburban teenagers on the run numbered less than 100,000. Last year the same national runaway estimates bordered on one million. And today, at least half of them are girls.

State and national runaway centers, shelters, counselors and hotlines are cropping up to meet the needs of this mobile generation.

Why do they run?  
William Springs, psychologist for the Baptist Children's Home (BCH) of

North Carolina, says the majority of runners take off because they are unable to verbalize feelings in their home situation.

According to Springs, individuals may have one of three basic predispositions — a child can react to a problem by fighting back, might decide to throw a monkeywrench into the home or school system, or escape.

"The psychologist's word for running is psycho motoracceleration," Springs explained. "Actually, this form of flight is no different from escaping through drugs, sex or drinking."

"But there are different kinds of runaways," he added. "Not all of them desire to escape."

In his thesis, a "typology of runaways," Mike Lantz, a graduate student in social work at the University of North Carolina, divided runaways into four categories — driftaways, marginal runners, non-runners and the crisis kids.

The driftaway, Lantz explains, is the child with no close family ties; he just gradually moves out.

The marginal runner is the youngster who takes his bike to the corner and waits for someone to come get him.

The child who "runs into himself," who withdraws from those around him, is the non-runner.

The crisis kid puts distance between himself and home.

The National Runaway Switchboard (NRS) in Chicago adds to the list. The hotline received 200 calls last year from "throwaways."

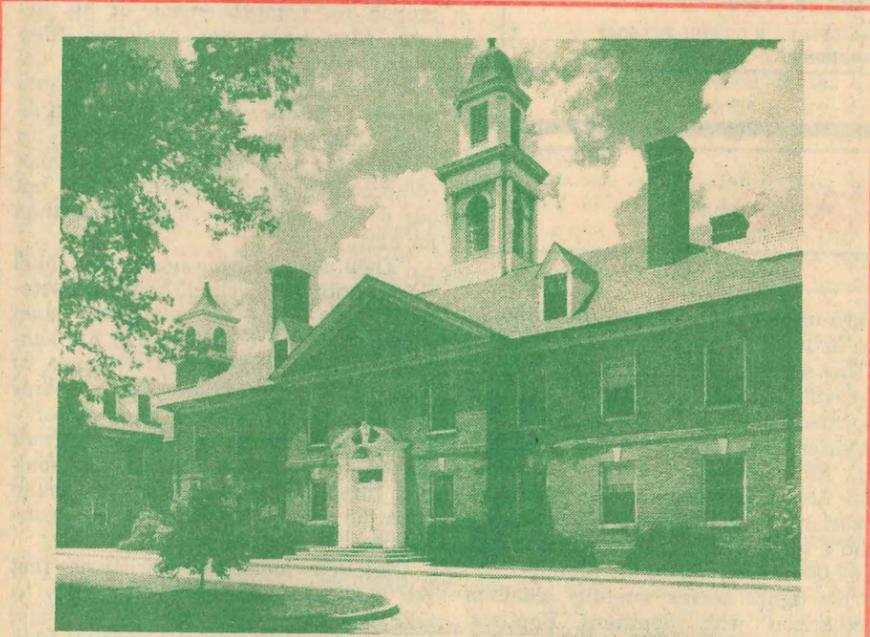
Kicked out of the house by his parents, the throwaway is cut off. Lantz's crisis kid, then, is the one who actually takes off with a purpose.

The purpose, however, can be confusing. Is he running from something or to something?

"I don't think any child wants to disappear from the face of the earth," Springs said, "but I think in a lot of cases, the child runs to get out of an intolerable situation at home."

Springs cites as an example the heyday of the hippie, when large numbers of young people congregated in places like San Francisco. They were simply moving into another society, he says, hoping for the love and acceptance they couldn't find at home.

"Running is a fad," Lantz stated. "It's the cool thing to tell your friends that you took off one day. It's also becoming a culture. I think a whole underground runaway society has developed. How else can a North Carolina child, inexperienced and without money, disappear for months and be living in California undetected?"



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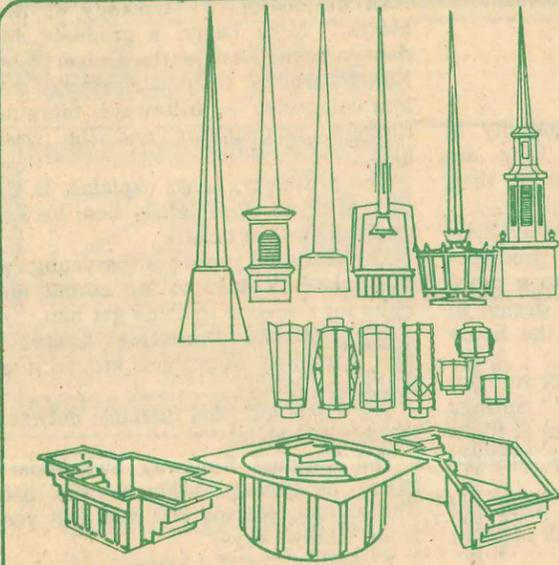
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## Our Baptist Heritage

Christmas means so many things to so many of us: trees, presents, family get togethers, church activities, manger scenes, the Christ child. But for years now, for Baptists, Christmas has also meant the Lottie Moon Christmas offering, named for the great missionary to China. No Baptist missionaries labor in China now, of course, but the courage and dedication of Lottie Moon and others is well remembered among Baptists. Since the early days of the convention, in fact, China held the most interest for Baptists interested in missions.



Jack  
Birdwhistell

This was especially true of Baptists in Kentucky, primarily because of the work of The Roberts Fund and China Mission Society, later called the China Mission Association, then the China Mission Society of Kentucky. Founded in the late 1830's by a minister, Issachar J. Roberts, the society maintained headquarters in Louisville until it was absorbed by the Foreign Mission

Board of the Southern Baptist Convention in 1851.

The society published a monthly at Louisville, the *Chinese Advocate*, which informed subscribers of the needs and activities of the society's only missionary, Elder Roberts himself — along with his native helpers. According to historian J. H. Spencer the society "did a good work," raising an average of \$1,000 a year during its lifetime.

This figure seems woefully small in comparison with Southern Baptists' goal of \$29 million for this year's Lottie Moon Christmas offering. Many churches in Kentucky will raise over \$1,000 for the offering alone.

But the brief history of the China Mission Society of Kentucky reminds us of our forefathers' deep concern for spreading the gospel, a concern which caused them to "put their money where their hearts were" in the hopes that the Chinese would know of God's love through Christ.

This Christmas, as TV commercials urge us to give such "necessary" items as shower massages, CB radios for bikes, and telephones shaped like Mickey Mouse, it's a reminder we need!

## Frank Owen



### CHRISTMAS EVIDENCE

The meaning of the Christmas story to the Christian is simply that we have heard from our God. He has not left us groping entirely in the darkness of our own imaginations. He has broken through the curtain. He has spoken and we have heard. He has acted and we are the beneficiaries of his actions.

Men of all ages, everywhere, have had an appetite for God and have groped for comprehension of his nature. Men have ever exercised their imaginations in seeking to fill the "God-shaped empty place" in their nature. Christmas means, to Christians, that we have met up with him for whom men have searched. We cannot comprehend all his mighty works, but our search now is in him rather than for him.

"Thou shalt call his name Immanuel — God with us." Think how completely he has come to us! More than through the mere evidence of his handiwork. More than mere evidence of his power. "The Word" came nearer than handiwork, nearer than power — "The Word became flesh and dwelt among us" (John 1:14). God personified himself in the coin of the realm when he was revealed in his son Jesus Christ.

Christmas means, to Christians, that our God was not satisfied to leave us with the mere hope that he is; "and that he is the rewarder of them that diligently seek him," (Heb. 11:6) but he has been here to prove it. We no longer cherish a mere imagination but he has presented us with the evidence of his love in the cross of Christ.



## Sunday School Lessons

Lessons for Jan. 9, 1977

by H. C. Chiles, Murray, Ky.

International Series

Life and Work Series

### Jesus Faces His Calling

Mark 1:4-13

God chose, called, equipped and commissioned John the Baptist for the important task of preparing the way for the coming of Christ. His preaching attracted the multitudes and he proclaimed the Word without fear or favor.

John the Baptist not only preached repentance but he also baptized the penitent as a sign that they had repented. He urged them to produce fruits proving the reality of their repentance.

This genuinely earnest man of God dressed like a prophet, clothing himself with a garment of camel's hair tied around him with a girdle or leather belt. He denied himself the ordinary comforts of life, subsisted on the locusts, which were probably dried and palatable, and wild or mountain honey, both of which were available in large quantities.

Quietly and deliberately Jesus Christ came from his home in Nazareth to be baptized by John. Very likely, though not certain, it was late in the afternoon, after all the other candidates for baptism had been immersed, when our saviour approached John the Baptist requesting to be baptized. Considering himself unworthy to baptize Christ, John the Baptist hesitated before granting the request.

As Christ sank beneath the baptismal waters, he prefigured the death which he was to die upon the cross, and as he arose from beneath the water our Lord symbolized his resurrection from the dead. The Spirit came upon Christ in a dove-like form, symbolizing peacefulness, meekness, gentleness, tenderness and love — those qualities which were to characterize the ministry of our Lord. When he was baptized Christ received the audible and visible approval of God the Father, Who said, "Thou art my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased." Thus the Father testified that his Son was the object of his love and the one in whom he took a great delight.

From the waters of baptism our Lord was led immediately by the Spirit into a more remote, desolate and forlorn part of the wilderness to contend with Satan. Evidently it was a place of great desolation and extreme solitude, for Mark wrote that he "was with the wild beasts."

In that horrible solitude, without the sympathy of friends or any possibility of human assistance or encouragement, Christ Jesus was subjected to 40 days of terrible assaults by Satan. With subtle craftiness and tremendous appeal, the adversary tried to get Jesus Christ to waver in his allegiance to the Father. The tempter exercised all of his devices but it was all in vain. Satan was foiled at every point and our Lord won a complete victory over him, just as he did on every other occasion that an attempt was made to get him to do wrong.

### John: A Believer Who Doubted

Luke 3:16-17

In the light of their expectation of the imminent coming of the Messiah, and of what they had heard John the Baptist say, it is not at all strange that some people began to wonder if John himself were not the Messiah. Unwilling to allow himself to stand in the way of Christ, with unhesitating affirmation and absolute certainty, John prophesied the coming of Christ. With commendable humility he declared that Christ would be so far above him that he was not worthy to perform the menial act of a slave in loosing the latchet of his shoes.

John had baptized many in the waters of the Jordan River as a symbol of a new life and a new allegiance. He predicted Christ would baptize them with the Holy Spirit and with a fire which would consume the worthless and leave the imperishable.

Luke 7:20-28

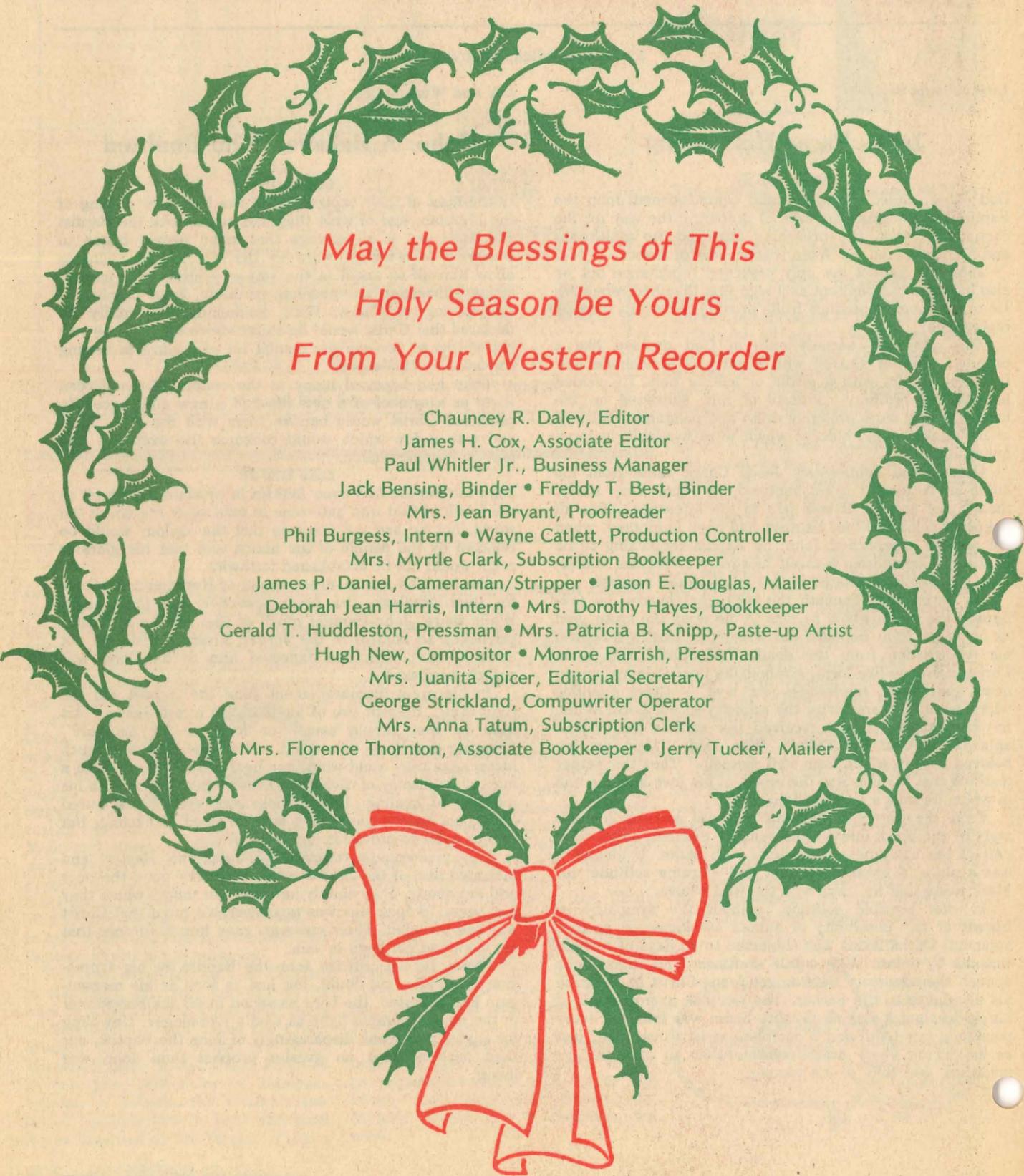
John the Baptist had been faithful in proclaiming Christ as the Lamb of God who had come to take away the sin of the world, but he had not foreseen that the saviour would be rejected by the people of the nation and that his glorious reign would not be established forthwith.

For his bold and fearless reproof of Herod and Herodias for their adultery, the great preacher was imprisoned. While there, John thought much of that one he had been privileged to baptize in the Jordan River. Christ had not done all that John had expected him to do. John was greatly perplexed.

In his great discouragement John the Baptist did the right thing. He sent two of his disciples to ask Jesus, "Art thou he that should come? or look we for another?" Knowing that these men could relate what they saw much better than they could what they heard, Christ gave them a marvelous display of divine miracles by keeping on with his ministry of healing. Before their very eyes Christ cured many, not only because they were in need of healing, but also in order to prove his identity.

The messengers returned to John the Baptist and informed him of the Lord's works of mercy upon the poor and the needy. They simply narrated the things which they had seen. To John this was unanswerable proof that Christ was the Messiah. Their message gave him assurance that his work had not been in vain.

Christ did not criticize John the Baptist for his expression of wonder and doubt, but just as soon as his messengers had departed, the Lord hastened to set the Forerunner in the most favorable light as God's messenger. Unwilling for anybody to speak disparagingly of John the Baptist, our Lord declared that no greater prophet than John was living.



*May the Blessings of This  
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