

FOR THE RECORD

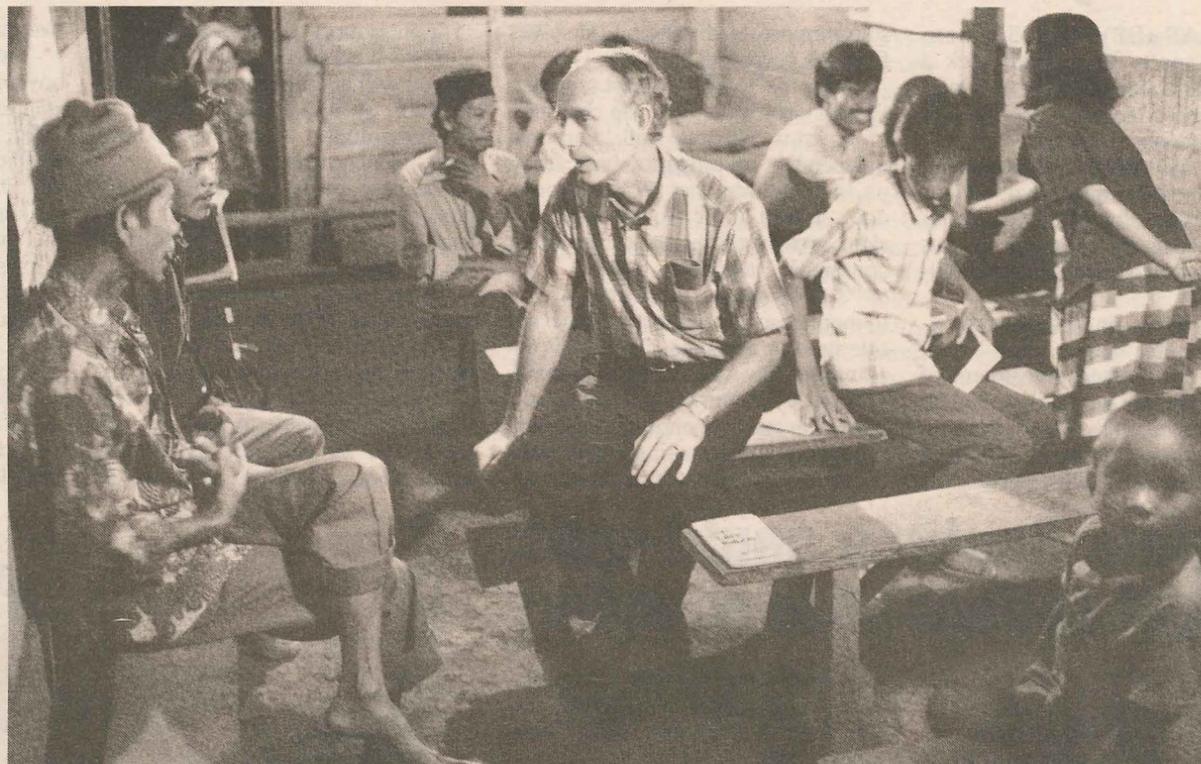
Kmart questioned
The Southern Baptist Annuity Board will seek shareholder action to confront Kmart over the sale of pornographic materials through its Waldenbooks subsidiary.
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Virginia split?
Some conservative Baptists in Virginia are talking about forming a new state convention, but others are urging caution.
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Family Forum
How should I select appropriate Christmas gifts for a child?
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Homosexual views
A new poll finds a majority of Americans believe homosexual behavior is "immoral" but an even larger majority believe what two people do in private is no one else's business.
See page 6.



MISSIONARY MOMENT Marvin Leech (center), a Southern Baptist missionary, talks with worshipers before a service at a nouse church in the countryside outside Bengkulu, Indonesia. Although Leech spends most of his time training church leaders, he works on weekends with churches being started in the area. Gifts to this year's Lottie Moon Christmas Offering for foreign missions will provide things such as tires for Leech's vehicle to travel safely across the region. (Photo by Warren Johnson)

Jail time makes impression on Baptist boys

By Melanie Childers
Staff Writer

EUBANK—After a sobering night behind prison bars, Royal Ambassadors from Bethel Baptist Church in Eubank decided the new prison in Manchester is a nice place to visit, but they wouldn't want to live there.

Voluntarily trading in a free Friday evening for handcuffs, shackles and 8-by-15-foot cells, 22 boys and 11 adults got a taste of prison life during an overnight visit to the newly-completed Federal Corrections Institute in Manchester Nov. 13-14. Rocky Farmer, one of the RA

leaders at Bethel Baptist, and also an employee at the prison, suggested the trip as a positive learning experience for his group. Pastor Jim McKinney quickly added his affirmation.

"Federal prisons don't open that often, and this was an opportunity for a once-in-a-lifetime learning experience," McKinney said.

The prison held open house Nov. 13 for interested citizens in the community to tour the facility.

But, McKinney said, Bethel's RAs were the only group to request permission to stay overnight in the prison cells.

The group arrived at 6:30 p.m., signed in and took a brief tour of the

central control area of the prison.

After an introduction to the facility, the boys spent several hours playing in the gym, "to give them a chance to work off some of their energy," McKinney said.

Around 11 p.m., the group was led to the segregation area, where they all were given identification numbers and taken five at a time to be handcuffed and shackled.

Spreading sleeping bags over prison bunks, the group settled in two-by-two for what many said they hoped would be their only evening ever behind prison bars.

Although the cell doors were not

□ See Jail time impresses ..., page 3

Parks will lead Fellowship mission effort

ATLANTA—Keith Parks announced Nov. 30 that he will direct the fledgling missions program of the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship.

Parks, who retired as president of the Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board Oct. 31 in a dispute with trustees, used a biblical illustration to explain his support for the splinter group of Southern Baptists.

Speaking to reporters in Atlanta Nov. 30, Parks said his decision was influenced by the New Testament account of Paul and Barnabas, who disagreed about whether or not to let fellow Christian John Mark join them.

"So they divided and had two mission teams instead of one," Parks recalled.

Parks said that Scripture and others from the book of Acts "sealed it for me," persuading him it was better for Southern Baptists to have two mission programs rather than one in which not all could or would participate.

But supporters of the FMB—particularly FMB trustees who disagreed with Parks and missionaries who are confused by the change—said they think Parks' decision will hurt missions rather than multiply the Christian witness.

"I personally feel it attacks foreign missions as it is now in operation across the world," said FMB trustee Chairman John Jackson. "I believe this will devastate missionaries, pastors, convention leadership and Southern Baptists as a whole."

Added Charles Hedrick, missionary to Nigeria currently furloughing in Lawrenceburg, "I believe in the long run it's going to have us in competition with two groups vying for money, for personnel.

"Any time you divide your contributing force to two different forces, there's bound to be a loss somewhere. I think it will result in some loss to the FMB in personnel and finances," Hedrick explained.

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Americans give despite hard times

WASHINGTON (ABP)—Americans have continued to give money and time to charities despite economic hard times, a survey found.

And, the survey said, religious affiliation has a direct impact on giving. People who identify themselves as religious and who regularly attend church are the most generous.

The biennial survey on giving and volunteering was conducted by the Gallup Organization for Independent Sector, a non-profit coalition.

Despite the current recession, only a small number of respondents stopped or limited their charitable giving, the survey noted.

Seventy-two percent of American households surveyed reported making contributions in 1991, compared to 75 percent in 1989. The average household contribution of \$899 was down slightly from \$978 in 1989.

Fifty-one percent of the respondents volunteered in 1991, dropping slightly from 54 percent in 1989. Volunteers gave a combined total of 20.5 billion hours in 1991.

Eighty-seven percent of respondents reported a religious affiliation, while 11 percent reported none. Nearly 75 percent of respondents with a religious affiliation reported contributing 2.3 percent of their average household income. Fifty-three percent with a religious affiliation reported volunteering 4.2 hours a week.

Frequency of church attendance was one characteristic that distinguished non-givers from "generous givers," those the survey defined as contributing 3 percent or more of their household income.

Eighty-four percent of generous givers, compared with 34 percent of non-givers, attend church regularly.

Church attendance also distinguished generous volunteers from those who did not volunteer (72 percent compared with 41 percent).

Another distinguishing characteristic was motivation to meet religious beliefs and commitments. Sixty-nine percent of generous givers, compared with 25 percent of non-givers, were highly motivated to meet those goals.

Giving patterns among religious groups varied. Protestants surveyed gave an average of 2.7 percent of their household incomes, compared with 1.7 percent given by Catholic respondents and 2.9 percent given by those affiliated with "all other religions."

The survey also found:

■ People with lower incomes give proportionately more than those with higher incomes.

■ More than a third of contributors said they do not give enough.

■ Minority groups are not asked to give and volunteer as often, but they respond at a higher rate when asked.

■ Deductions for those who itemize on their income tax forms encourage charitable donations.

For the survey, Gallup conducted in-home personal interviews with 2,671 adults from April 3 to May 17.

BAPTIST BITS

■ **Robert Hughes**, executive director emeritus of the California Southern Baptist Convention, died Nov. 25 in Little Rock, Ark., of a heart attack. Hughes, 73, is the father of Robert Don Hughes, a professor at Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in Louisville.

■ **Thomas Clark Bryan** has been named president of Truett-McConnell College, a Baptist school in Cleveland, Ga. Bryan currently is vice president for administration and planning at Carson-Newman College in Jefferson City, Tenn.

■ **Dan Martin**, former news editor of Baptist Press, has been elected executive director of Texans Who Care, a statewide anti-gambling coalition based in Austin. Martin, 54, has been a freelance writer and bivocational pastor in North Carolina.

■ **Cooperative Program** unified budget gifts received by the Southern Baptist Convention Executive Committee in November were \$11.73 million, 3.84 percent below the same month last year. However, designated gifts continued an upward trend, increasing 18.89 percent over the previous November.

■ **Contributions** to the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship reached \$653,764 in October, the second-highest monthly total ever and a 55 percent increase over the previous October. At the end of October, the Fellowship's year-to-date contributions totalled \$5.46 million, compared to total receipts last year of \$3.4 million.

Annuity Board wants Kmart to stop selling porn

DALLAS (BP)—The Southern Baptist Annuity Board will seek a shareholder action to confront Kmart over the sale of pornography through its Waldenbooks subsidiary.

Paul Powell, the board's president, said: "We could simply have sold our Kmart holdings, but selling stock has no influence on the company and has no effect on the company's profitability."

"Our trustees, in both the investment committee and as a full board, have twice discussed divestment of the stock, but that would have had no effect whatever on the sale of the publications. If we are not successful in our efforts, then we will divest for the

sole purpose of distancing ourselves from the corporate policy."

After the board's August meeting, Powell wrote a letter to the chairman of Kmart in which he said, "Our own independent investigation has caused us to conclude that Waldenbooks does, indeed, offer products we consider grossly offensive to prevailing community standards."

"It is obviously impossible for you to monitor every product, service and title in your corporate family," Powell wrote, "but when a title or publisher becomes identified with sexual exploitation and you choose to sell that product, you are making a conscious decision to pander to baser instincts."

In their most recent meeting Nov. 3, trustees approved a plan in which Powell will attempt to put together a coalition of like-minded investors to file a resolution at the 1993 Kmart shareholders meeting.

Because the date of the Kmart annual board meeting was unknown, trustees set two years as parameters for the effort.

"There is no intention to drag our feet on this," Powell said. "We are moving immediately. But the trustees realized there would be nothing accomplished by setting a time limit that might be impossible to meet. For all we knew, we could be 11 months away from a directors' meeting, or

two months away."

Kmart also has been a target of a boycott by Donald Wildmon's American Family Association since March 1990. Its Waldenbooks chain carries Penthouse, Gallery, Genesis, Playboy and Playgirl magazines.

The Annuity Board has a policy that prohibits investments in what are informally referred to as "sin stocks." It states, in part: "Investments are prohibited in the liquor, tobacco, gambling and pornography industries or any company whose products, services or activities are publicly recognized as being incompatible with the moral and ethical posture of the Annuity Board."

Virginia Baptists could split; budget options pose quandary

HAMPTON, Va.—Disillusioned over what they see as an abandonment of the Bible's teachings, Baptist conservatives in Virginia are considering splitting with their 169-year-old state convention.

While the gap between conservatives and moderates in Virginia has been widening for years, conservatives say this will be the first time they seriously discuss forming a group to counter the Baptist General Association of Virginia, which is controlled by moderates.

The potential split was triggered by a BGAV vote that some conservatives interpreted as explicit approval of homosexual behavior. Conservatives also are upset over what they see as a failure to condemn abortion and the funnelling of funds to the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship, a moderate rival of the national Southern Baptist Convention.

If the plan is realized, it would be the first state in which separate conventions represent opposing Baptist factions. That could cause a dilemma for the Southern Baptist Convention, which traditionally has associated with one body in each state.

"Since the SBC is autonomous, it could choose to relate to more than one state general body or it could choose between and among state general bodies," said SBC legal counsel James Guenther. In any case, messengers to an SBC annual meeting would have to adopt an appropriate change in the SBC's constitution and bylaws.

Conservatives recently discussed the idea of a split in a series of six meetings across Virginia.

T.C. Pinckney, a member of the SBC Executive Committee and leader in the Virginia conservative faction, said no votes were taken at the meetings. However, he indicated a majority of people present did not seem to favor a split.

"Some felt that conservatives should pull out," said Pinckney. "A large majority did not feel this. They feel conservatives need a more formal arrangement among ourselves for fellowship but don't want to leave the BGAV at this time."

The meetings were closed to reporters from the Religious Herald, the BGAV's weekly newsmagazine, but

a reporter from Norfolk's Virginia-Pilot was permitted to cover one session held in Hampton under background rules.

Though three regional meetings held Dec. 1 were attended by 100 or fewer people, approximately 450 attended the session in Hampton.

Information gathered during the six regional meetings will be evaluated, according to Pinckney, and a recommendation about the direction of the conservative movement in Virginia will be made at a statewide meeting Jan. 28 in Lynchburg.

Meanwhile, Virginia Baptists' new Cooperative Program budget plan allowing churches to send their world missions contributions to the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship has raised a new question: Will congregations choosing that option qualify for messengers to the SBC's annual meeting?

If the answer is no, it apparently would be the first time that a church which adopts a state Baptist convention's approved budget would be excluded from affiliation with the national body without making additional financial contributions.

The BGAV's 1993 budget, adopted Nov. 10, provides three tracks for churches to distribute funds for world missions causes. One track goes entirely to the SBC Cooperative Program, another entirely to the Fellowship, and a third to a combination.

At the heart of the matter is what constitutes a financial contribution to "the convention's work."

SBC membership is restricted to a "missionary Baptist church" in "friendly cooperation" with the convention, "sympathetic with its purposes and work and (which) during the fiscal year preceding has been a bona fide contributor to the convention's work."

No precise definition exists of "friendly cooperation," "bona fide contributor" or "convention's work."

Some observers speculate the SBC Executive Committee will tackle the issue at its Feb. 22-24 meeting in Nashville, possibly formulating a recommendation to be considered by messengers at the annual SBC meeting in Houston next June.

Compiled from Baptist Press and Associated Baptist Press reports



MIRACLE IN INDIA Nazir Masih, who miraculously survived a near-fatal accident to answer God's call to ministry, stands in front of the new \$200,000 building of Chandigarh Baptist Church in India, where he is pastor. Masih, who grew up as a herdsman, has persevered through difficult times to make a significant impact on Baptist work in Punjab. In addition to its own building, Chandigarh Church, with help from Southern Baptists, has built several other congregations in Punjab. (BP photo by Warren Johnson)

WMU committee ready to report

BIRMINGHAM, Ala. (ABP)—The decision by Keith Parks to lead the global missions program of the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship won't influence Woman's Missionary Union's deliberations about assisting the Fellowship, according to two WMU officials.

In fact, the task force appointed to study WMU's future completed its report before Parks' Nov. 30 announcement.

"Where we're coming from, Keith Parks' decision will not affect us," said Martha Wennerberg, WMU recording secretary.

"The topic of Keith Parks' future was not one we avoided talking about at all," added Joyce Mitchell, WMU associate executive director. But, she

added, the committee's final report was completed four days before Parks' announcement.

The report, which will be presented to WMU's executive board, is expected to propose how WMU should relate to the Fellowship, if at all.

The Fellowship, a two-year-old organization of Southern Baptists displeased with the more conservative direction of the Southern Baptist Convention and its agencies, has asked WMU to promote its new missions program and annual mission offering.

SBC leaders who consider the Fellowship a threat to the denomination's mission programs, have suggested the SBC might start a separate women's agency if WMU gives the Fellowship any support.

CLC calls for no Vatican ambassador

NASHVILLE (BP)—The Southern Baptist Christian Life Commission has asked President-elect Bill Clinton not to appoint another U.S. ambassador to the Vatican.

In a Dec. 2 letter to Clinton, CLC Executive Director Richard Land urged the president-elect to correct a "wrong" committed by former President Ronald Reagan when he appointed an ambassador to the Vatican in 1984.

"As a Southern Baptist, you are

quite aware of the strong commitment of Baptists in general, and Southern Baptists in particular, to the principles of religious liberty and the separation of the institutions of church and state," Land wrote. "The Holy See of the Roman Catholic Church is an ecclesiastical entity, not a civil state."

While it is appropriate for the government to communicate and interact with a religious organization, appointing an ambassador goes too far, Land explained.

Kentuckians find Ukraine crusade hard but fruitful

By Melanie Childers
Staff Writer

FRANKFORT—Despite airline strikes and inadequate language interpreters, Kentuckians visiting the former Soviet Union said they found thousands of people "hungering and thirsting" for the word of God.

Keith Key, pastor of Providence Baptist Church in Frankfort, and James Taylor, a lawyer and member at Providence, joined other pastors and lay leaders throughout the country to conduct a crusade in the city of Donetsk, Ukraine.

Until last August, no crusade had been held in that city of more than 1 million people.

Crusade organizer Jim Ponder, a full-time evangelist from Orlando, Fla., and former director of evangelism for the Florida Baptist Convention, invited 10 pastors to serve as team leaders during the crusade.

Each of the 10 teams led simultaneous revivals in various churches in

Donetsk during the three days prior to the city-wide crusade.

Key led the team at Calvary Baptist Church in Donetsk.

All the revival teams had to overcome great difficulties, he said. Airline-related strikes delayed some teams, causing them to miss the first evening of services. Also, since experienced interpreters were hard to find, communication problems sometimes seemed insurmountable.

"Much of our services were characterized by congregational singing" at first, Key said, suggesting that music sometimes translates when words alone do not.

"We did not have as much success in the local church as we did in street preaching," he added.

During the mornings and afternoons, teams preached and witnessed on street corners and in other public areas. Key said people always would come listen to what he had to say.

"The people almost revered us," he said.

One of the most exciting parts of the trip for Key was the open-air crusade meetings at the Ice Palace sporting arena. Several thousand people attended each service, he said.

Key said he especially liked the crusade because he saw great possibilities as people in the Ukraine made professions of faith in Jesus Christ.

He described powerful scenes, such as when he watched a philosophy professor known for teaching atheism walk down the aisle to make a decision for Christ. Also, Key remembered, a former Communist soldier ripped off his shoulder board and threw his red card on the ground during one of the services.

Crusade leaders estimated that more than 12,500 people made professions of faith in Jesus Christ during the crusade and revivals. "There were 3,000 responses from the live television broadcast alone," Key said.

"I'm struck by how much they're hungering and thirsting for the word of God," he said. "Their openness to

the gospel is more than what we see here."

But Key said he is "very concerned about follow-up" for those who made decisions for Christ. "People feared... signing commitment cards, and as a result, churches do not have (their) names and addresses."

Still, Key chose to concentrate on what the group was able to accomplish during the trip: "I am grateful for the opportunity to go. I pray that what God started through us might continue to spread."

Kentucky Baptists could have many more opportunities for ministry in the former Soviet Union if a proposed partnership project with Russian Baptists becomes reality. A three-member survey team recently returned from a visit to the country, where they checked on the needs of Baptists and potential ministries.

Details of any Kentucky-Russia partnership are likely to be worked out in the coming year, according to reports of that survey team.

BLUEGRASS BURGEOO

■ **Summersville Baptist Church** in Summersville has a new summer with the addition of a Schulmerich digital carillon. The \$10,600 system, a gift to the church, was dedicated Dec. 6. It will chime the hours throughout the day as a service to the community and play nine songs at noon and 6 p.m. In addition, the carillon will ring to announce the beginning of Sunday school and worship hours.

■ **Correction:** Due to a typographical error, a front-page article in last week's Western Recorder incorrectly identified Terry Lester as pastor of First Baptist Church of Richmond. Lester is pastor of First Baptist Church of London; Curtis Warf is pastor of the Richmond congregation.

Tri-County Hospital named, dedicated

LA GRANGE—A dedication ceremony was held Nov. 25 for the newly renamed Tri-County Baptist Hospital in La Grange, the latest acquisition of Baptist Healthcare System.

Formerly called Tri-County Community Hospital, the 120-bed acute care facility was purchased by the Baptist institution Oct. 1.

It became the fifth hospital in the Baptist system, joining others in Louisville, Paducah, Lexington and Corbin.

About 100 people attended the dedication, at which Stuart Collier, newly appointed director of pastoral care, led in prayer and Scripture reading.

William Cubine, seminary pastor at Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in Louisville, led the dedication. Remarks also were made by Edgar Vaughn, president and CEO of Baptist Healthcare System.

Charles Cox Jr., president of Baptist Healthcare Foundation, presented a plaque with Baptist Healthcare System's vision statements to James Hannah, chairman of Tri-County's trustee board.

Hannah is among eight trustees appointed to Tri-County's board, effective Dec. 1.

Other trustees are Dwight Short, vice chairman, medical director of the hospital's diagnostic imaging department; Don Belknap, medical director of emergency medicine; Jansen Diener, president of the hospital medical staff; Mark Waters, pastor of Ballardsville Baptist Church; Joseph McWilliams, principal of South Oldham High School; and Jean Taylor, vice president at Citizens Fidelity Bank in La Grange.

KBC & Executive Board chairmen named

By Mark Wingfield
News Director

New chairmen have been named for standing committees of the Kentucky Baptist Convention and KBC Executive Board.

KBC committees serve the convention in annual session. Executive Board committees relate to Executive Board programs and staff throughout the year.

KBC committee chairmen, named by KBC President Charles Stewart, are:

■ Mary Jane Boes, Cecilia Baptist Church in Cecilia, arrangements.

■ Chris Johnson, First Baptist Church of Russell, committees.

■ David Schott, East Bernstadt First Baptist Church in London, constitution and bylaws.

■ Steve Rice, First Baptist Church of Belfry, credentials.

■ Don Zuberer, First Baptist Church of Russellville, nominations.

■ Herbert Booth, Florence Baptist Church in Florence, order of business.

■ Rodney Burnette, Ninth & O Baptist Church in Louisville, public affairs.

■ Wayne Newby, Olivet Baptist Church in Paducah, resolutions.

Stewart also named Archie Oliver of Johnson Island Baptist Church in Madisonville as the new chairman of the Executive Board's nominating committee.

That committee met in Louisville Nov. 24 to work out Executive Board committee assignments. Each Executive Board member was assigned to one of six committees, and chairmen were appointed for those committees.

In addition to Oliver, the Executive Board committee chairmen are:

■ William Vallance, Wurtland Missionary Baptist Church in Russell, agencies and institutions.

■ Jerry Dooley, Broadway Baptist Church in Louisville, business and finance.

■ Randy Chestnut, Northside Baptist Church in Science Hill, church growth and administration.

■ Al Cobb, Highpoint Baptist Church in Mayfield, minister/church support.

■ Paul Blizzard, First Baptist Church in Fairdale, missions and evangelism.

Those six chairmen, along with seven other Executive Board members, make up the board's administrative committee, which is chaired by Floyd Price of Buck Run Baptist Church in Ekron.

The at-large administrative committee members are Dottie Lane, First Baptist Church in Hopkinsville; Eugene Siler Jr., First Baptist Church in Williamsburg; Ron Sholar, First Baptist Church in Hazard; Brodie Ambrose, Second Baptist Church in Madisonville; William Tuck, St. Matthews Baptist Church in Louisville; and James Hunt, New Hebron Missionary Baptist Church in Greenville.

Jail time impresses RA group

Continued from page 1

locked during the night, McKinney said they were locked for about an hour the next morning. A breakfast from McDonald's was served through the food slots before the doors were opened again.

"It's an eerie sound to hear a steel door slam shut," McKinney said. "It really made them think about how isolated they were."

Ricky Farmer, a 14-year-old who has "been in RAs ever since I can remember," said having the doors locked wasn't "too scary" for him. But he did admit he was relieved when they were opened again.

After a walking tour of the facilities Saturday morning, the group concluded its visit with a devotional thought about choices.

"We talked about the cost of wrong choices, and focused on facing choices as responsible people," McKinney

said.

That was the point of spending the night at the prison, the pastor added. "That prison over there is for a purpose. People are placed there and not let out after an hour and a McDonald's breakfast.

"Everybody can face temptation; everybody has to make tough choices."

At least some of the boys said they got the message.

"The basketball courts might have been nice, but I certainly wouldn't want to end up there," said Justin Hart, 13. "I'm going to try my best to stay away."

Ricky Farmer said other friends' inquiries about his experience provided opportunities to share what he learned from the trip.

"Hopefully, I can be a Christian witness and help influence others not to end up there," he said.

Babbage praises Campbellsville

CAMPBELLSVILLE—Campbellsville College offers students the advantage of looking at matters of both the heart and mind, Kentucky's secretary of state said.

Bob Babbage addressed students, faculty and staff Nov. 11.

"This is a wonderful college," he said, citing the mixture of education and theology students find there.

Babbage urged students to change their lifestyles by changing their attitudes. He also told them it is important to set goals, with the No. 1 priority of not being afraid to fail.

People who set goals and have a plan to achieve them will succeed, he said.

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

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Accept decisions; get on with our work

The Kentucky Baptist Convention is making a serious mistake in battling each year over an issue the convention made a decision about the year before.

There are two serious consequences resulting from rehashing previous decisions of a convention. We have seen this occur in the Southern Baptist Convention. These problems are: First, the convention will become more heavily politicized; and second, the strong feelings of this year's convention will be intensified, which will severely fracture the fellowship and unity of the convention. The tragic result of politicized and fractured convention is that our mission work through both direct missions and our

institutions will be seriously curtailed.

There was a deacon in our church who told me of the philosophy his father, who also was a deacon, passed on to him about protecting the unity and fellowship of the church. His philosophy was that if he disagreed with a recommendation of the deacons, then he would state his position both in the deacons' meeting and the church's business meeting, but once the church has voted, then agree or not, he would support the church. He felt the church was more important than his position.

What my friend said is the same thing every one of us wants practiced in our churches. I do not believe there is a pastor in Kentucky who wants a

church member to attempt to reconsider every action with which they have disagreed at the monthly business meetings. Then should we not practice that same policy in the convention because we believe that work God has assigned Kentucky Baptists is more important than our personal positions on issues such as the Baptist Joint Committee?

I pray that rather than continue to battle every year and politicize the convention, one can decide the convention has acted, whether we agree or not, and get on with the important business God has assigned us.

*John Dunaway, pastor
First Baptist Church
Corbin*

Sad situation

I note with sadness how Keith Parks has used his position and influence in the Southern Baptist Convention during the waning days of his Foreign Mission Board presidency.

Instead of endorsing and encouraging the efforts of one of the greatest vehicles for the kingdom of Jesus Christ in these latter days, namely the FMB, he has chosen to criticize the trustees and cast a pall of doubt over our missions efforts. Why, when he speaks of Christ-like love and grace at one turn, must he then renew his own accusations that the trustees have created an atmosphere of "suspicion, distrust, criticism and intimidation" (WR, Nov. 3)?

When Keith Parks gave the keynote address on the foreign missions evening of the SBC, he used that opportunity to once again impugn the trustees. It is sad that one who ostensibly served so well for so long is using his position as a pulpit of criticism

against his co-workers. I pray that this public airing of differences by Mr. Parks will not hamper the missions efforts of the many dedicated souls who work in and through the Foreign Mission Board of the Southern Baptist Convention. May the increase of the kingdom of Jesus Christ continue to be the sole purpose of our convention.

*John Carson, pastor
Pleasant Green Baptist Church
Cynthiana*

Vote on it

Kentucky's Supreme Court has overturned a 100-year-old law banning the act of sodomy between two consenting adults of the same sex. This is just another step in a series of blows against the family and healthy societal morals.

In a country where our Constitution was written by religious men, I find it ironic that freedoms meant to perpetuate moral growth have been

turned inside out to promote the perverseness of the "immoral minority." Godly people have sat idly by while the sodomites have fought hard to push their lifestyles on the majority. When the majority refuse to make a stand on these kinds of issues, this is the result. Practices once considered shameful and unlawful, when unopposed, move into the open, then develop momentum from the practitioners that demand the practice to be legalized. This was the case with Kentucky's Supreme Court decision.

First, we must realize that just because the courts say sodomy is a right doesn't make it all right anymore than the right of privacy for women makes murdering their unborn children all right. Because God judges a nation for what that nation allows, as he did in the biblical account of Sodom, the issue of the sodomy law must be placed on a ballot for all Kentuckians to vote on, for the rights of all people to be upheld and not just the rights of the "immoral minority."

*Tim McAlpin
Lexington*

'God bless the little ones'

"Imagine that you are 16 years old in New York City, and you can't go home.

"You can't go home because a parent will rape or sodomize you. You can't go home because you will be beaten within an inch of your life. You can't go home because your parents are in jail, or dead. You can't go home because you were told to get out forever: you're gay or lesbian; you're a financial burden; you took drugs; you're just no good.

"Where will you sleep tonight? How will you eat tomorrow?"

"There may be 15,000 throwaway adolescents living on the streets of New York City. Crack and AIDS make their lives precarious, since many find the only way to survive is to sell drugs and their young bodies. Too young to vote, they are either ignored by government or victimized by laws that neither protect them nor recognize their plight.

"To meet the urgent needs of these

neglected adolescents, the Neediest Cases Fund provides support for SafeSpace, a haven on West 46th Street in Manhattan for homeless youths. Since opening its doors last April, SafeSpace has helped 400 needy adolescents between the ages of 13 and 21 obtain food, shelter, clothing, medical help, education, job training, protection against AIDS—and self-respect. SafeSpace daily earns the trust of very lovable youngsters who have been incomprehensibly abused and abandoned.

"The need for private charity to help meet today's almost imaginable problems is past argument. Programs like SafeSpace cannot operate effectively without private support.

"The fund passes every dollar to the neediest through seven private social service agencies; no money is kept back for administration or solicitation. Any amount is welcome. Checks may be made payable to The

ON MISSION TOGETHER



William W. Marshall

New York Times Neediest Cases Fund and mailed to P.O. Box 5193, General Post Office, New York, N.Y. 10087."

My heart was warmed to read the above editorial written in the New York Times, Nov. 29.

It is encouraging to realize that in the midst of so much "horribleness" that a "secular" newspaper sponsors a ministry to hurting children.

Even more, it reminded me of the child-caring ministry provided by Kentucky Baptists through our Baptist Homes for Children.

Children in Kentucky, estranged and cast out, have their own "Safespace(s)" in Middletown, Glendale, and in the two temporary-care shelters across the state.

The Thanksgiving offering for children is one of the most caring things we do for needy children in our state. And while Thanksgiving has passed, the offering is still open and greatly needed.

We all have reason to be grateful to be part of a state convention which considers child-caring a strategic part of its mission and ministry.

William W. Marshall is executive secretary-treasurer of the Kentucky Baptist Convention.



FAMILY FORUM: AGING

Children's gifts

By John Lepper

Q. With Christmas right around the corner, I'm feeling the pressure of choosing appropriate gifts for my grandchildren. Do you have any suggestions?

A. First, let me say that gifts from an older person, whether a grandparent, other relative or a friend, can be very special for a child. You may feel that you cannot keep up with the "high tech" toys of today. My suggestion: Don't even try. Your gift has the potential of meaning far more than an electronic game soon to be tossed aside for another "latest thing."

Here are some considerations for you in selecting gifts: The gift needs to be age-appropriate. What are children this age interested in? If you are not sure, ask someone with children that age. The gift also needs to match the specific interests of your grandchild. Pay attention to what the child enjoys. Choose a gift that will not endanger the child nor encourage violence. Do not give a gift in order to buy love. Give the gift with no strings attached. As you contemplate what to buy, think about something that will maintain the child's interest for some period of time.

As a special gift, why not write a special letter of affirmation to your grandchild or young friend? This could be a modern version of the Old Testament blessing. It has the potential of meaning far more than a gift bought with money. This letter should contain no negatives. Also, focus strictly on the child and not upon yourself.

Include the following in your letter of affirmation: Express your unconditional love for the child. Affirm the child for who he or she is. Talk about your delight in the child's uniqueness. Express your hope for a positive future without pressuring him or her to do something for you.

Gifts given by older people are cherished by children. You may not be able nor want to shower your grandchild or young friend with an abundance of gifts. However, with the proper thought and care, your gift can bring particular delight.

John Lepper is director of the Kentucky Baptist Convention's family ministry department.

■ Send your questions about children, teens, marriage, singles or aging to "Family Forum," Western Recorder, Box 43969, Louisville, Ky. 40253.

Parks' decision provokes a variety of responses

How do you feel about Keith Parks' decision to become the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship's missions coordinator?

Most Baptists responded in one of three ways:

■ **Elation.** Fellowship supporters realized their fledgling organization just signed a franchise player, who can turn the team into a winner. The world's most famous franchise player is Michael Jordan. With Parks' experience and reputation, he's a missions Michael.

Parks is inheriting a 1-year-old missions program with 14 missionaries and a \$2.5 million budget. But his reputation has been built on a four-decade commitment to missions. For the past 13 years, he headed the Southern Baptist Convention's Foreign Mission Board. It's the largest missionary-sending agency in the world, with 3,900 missionaries in 126 countries and a \$180 million budget.

His influence also has spread far beyond the board and the national Christians with whom FMB missionaries work. He has pioneered the consolidation of missionary efforts of Great Commission Christians from a vast array of denominations. And he has led in efforts to evangelize "World A," the largely Muslim regions from North Africa, through the Middle East and into the Orient.

So, Fellowship backers have been delighted to inherit the vision, expertise and respect that will come with Keith Parks directing their missions efforts.

■ **Anger, disappointment and/or a sense of betrayal.** These emotions describe the people who wish to maintain the SBC missions status quo. Even before Parks' announcement last week, some of these people began questioning his motives, while others impugned his character.

They claim he has turned his back on not only his heritage, but also Southern Baptists'. They point to thousands of current missionaries who were appointed during his tenure as president and say he has let them down by signing on with a competitor. They insist he is imperiling the welfare and vitality of the SBC's mission enterprise.

These folks feel they and the FMB have a lot to lose with Parks' affiliation with another missionary organization. One close observer estimated Parks is "worth at least \$2 million" to the Fellowship, implying money would be diverted to the Fellowship at the expense of the FMB.

■ **Confusion.** Many—maybe most—Baptists feel this way. They just want to do the right thing. They've been raised on missions—praying for missionaries and giving to the Lottie Moon Christmas Offering for foreign missions. And almost all who have heard Keith Parks or read his columns have developed immense respect for his compassion, his integrity and his heart for missions.

So, what's a body to do? Where will Baptists place their support for missions? Some will give money to both causes; many will pick one over the other.

Parks himself has said he hopes the new Fellowship ventures won't compete with FMB funding and projects. His three primary conditions for joining the Fellowship—the new organization must remain within the SBC, it must focus on hiring new missionaries and not just siphoning veterans from the FMB ranks, and it must stress ministry to World A and

the vast numbers of people the FMB alone never could reach—evoke a spirit of cooperation, or at least non-competition.

In a perfect world, this might work out as Parks would like. But in a perfect world, Parks wouldn't have retired from the FMB in the first place. He and the trustees and the staff would have achieved a consensus, a plan that could have included everyone for a long, long time.

Unfortunately, this is not a perfect world. Moreover, Parks' departure from the FMB and the formation of another missions agency is merely a symptom of the SBC's malady. Our convention has lost and is losing a wealth of talented, committed people, even if they continue to label themselves "Southern Baptist." Because of the way the SBC controversy has played out and because of the litmus tests applied to potential denominational leaders, they feel unwanted and excluded. They believe people who see the SBC as they do have been denied meaningful participation in the national convention. Just last month, the president of the SBC Executive Committee, Morris Chapman, said Southern Baptists who affiliate with the Fellowship should leave the convention, for the sake of "integrity."

Such triumphalism rings hollow in the wake of Parks' decision. Parks was on the mission field while Chapman still was a child, and he has devoted his life to the cause of Christian missions. To paint Parks as a disloyal, Johnny-come-lately rabble-rouser is ludicrous. And Parks' vilification belies similar tarnish applied to others who gave their lives to Southern Baptist causes.

Some Baptists think Parks is a bellwether for what's to come. They—mostly Fellowship supporters—predict a massive migration of traditional Southern Baptist support to the Fellowship. God only knows if they're right. But if the SBC leaders want to stem that tide, they must understand the migration reflects a deeper problem.

If people shift their support from SBC causes to the Fellowship, they will do so for two reasons: First, because they will feel they have a part in the future and direction of the Fellowship. Second, because they will feel it is their spiritual home. The SBC will not reclaim many Baptists who already have cast their allegiance with the Fellowship. But if it is to maintain the loyalty of many moderate-minded Baptists whose first love still is the SBC, those people must be included in the SBC. Not with rhetoric about "broadening the tent," but with solid action, such as nomination to SBC boards and committees.

Meanwhile, we will wait to see what kind of an impact "franchise player" Parks will make on the Fellowship and its missions program. For his part, Parks is looking to the 15th and 20th chapters of the Book of Acts. "Paul and Barnabus (the first missionaries) split up when they disagreed and had two missions teams instead of one," he said. "The Lord led us to understand that he could use this situation to create another missions team which could do more work than one could do by itself."

If things work out as Parks envisions, then history once again will validate the truth of what that missionary Paul wrote to early Christians in Rome: "All things work together for good for them who love God and are called according to his purpose."

Marv Knox

When Southern Baptists heard Keith Parks had agreed to become the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship's missions coordinator, they responded with a range of emotions, from anger, to elation, to plain-old confusion.

Puppies don't 'toddle,' but our Betsy certainly acts like a little kid

We feel like we've got a toddler in the house again.

In fact, puppies never exactly "toddle." But Betsy sure acts like our girls did when they were toddlers.

Toys are the common denominator.

When the girls were toddlers, we lived in a split-level home, with a room off to one end that became the habituary of all the girls' toys. The only problem was that the den was at the other end of the house. Our kiddoes rarely wanted to play by themselves in peaceful solitude. (Is "peaceful solitude" an oxymoron when you're talking about toddlers?) They had to find Mama and Daddy. And they would bring their toys with them.

At the end of the day, the "toy room"

would sit almost vacant, while Barbies, stuffed animals, blocks and numerous small objects that could pierce human feet and cause intense pain would litter the den floor.

Now, basic circumstances have changed. The girls don't have as many little toys (and, alas, no blocks) to keep up with. And they're getting pretty good at keeping the stuff they have in their rooms or in the play area of the basement.

But Betsy is a different story. She's got a rope that looks

like a bone, a yarn ball that looks like it flew in from another planet, a purple squeaky thing that looks like a snail with porcupine quills and a day-glo orange plastic bone that looks like it ought to be condemned by the surgeon general.

These toys migrate throughout the house. From wherever Betsy was to where we are. The pup just can't stand to be alone, and she almost always has to bring her toys with her.

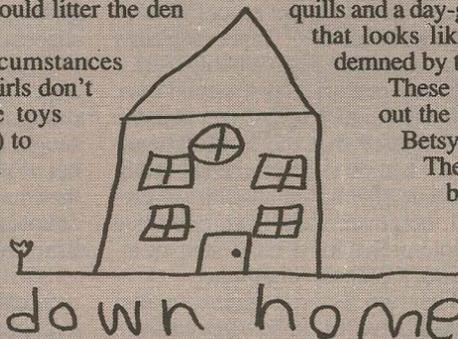
In the last couple of weeks, however, Betsy hasn't minded being alone, and her disposition reminds me of another common

denominator she has with our toddler girls of a few years back: The Christmas tree.

I remember years when all the fragile and lacy ornaments had to be hung at least three feet from the floor, so a child wouldn't break and/or chew them to bits. With a 1-year-old hound in the house, we're back to *deja-vu* all over again. The score is Betsy 2, Ornaments 0. Now, only industrial-strength ornaments hang at the bottom of Christmas Tree '92; fancy things have been elevated to limbs of safety.

When kids and puppies scatter toys and mangle ornaments, I sometimes wonder what God thinks when we scatter the stuff of our lives and break fragile but beautiful relationships.

Marv Knox



Poll: Gays 'immoral' but deserve privacy

By Mark Wingfield
News Director

GLENDALE, Calif.—A majority of Americans believe homosexual behavior is "immoral," but an even larger majority believe a person's sexual relations are nobody else's business, according to a nationwide poll.

The study, conducted among a random sample of American adults earlier this year, was funded and executed by the Barna Research Group of Glendale, Calif. The organization's president, George Barna, is a well-known Christian pollster and church-growth author.

The poll found 61 percent of Americans in agreement with the statement, "It is immoral for a person to have a sexual relationship with someone of the same sex."

Another 35 percent of those surveyed disagreed with the statement, while 3 percent didn't know.

However, 72 percent agreed with the statement, "Nobody has the right to tell someone else what kind of sexual relationships they can have."

The other 25 percent of respondents disagreed, and 3 percent didn't know.

On related questions, a majority of respondents said they don't think peo-

ple who are gay are born that way and that parents of gay children have not failed as parents.

Response to the question, "People who are gay are born that way; it is not a choice they make," drew the largest undecided vote of the six questions asked.

While the other five questions drew "don't know" responses from 3 percent or 4 percent of those polled, the question on what causes homosexuality drew a 13 percent "don't know" response.

Among those who had an opinion, 52 percent said they don't think gay people are "born that way" while 35 percent said sexual orientation is determined from birth.

But even though a majority said homosexuality is in some way learned or acquired, a majority also said parents do not fail if their children are gay. That view was held by 59 percent of those surveyed, compared to 38 percent who said they would feel they failed in parenting by raising gay children.

Despite the measure of privacy Americans believe they should have in sexual practice, a strong majority would prohibit homosexuals from marrying or adopting children.

Homosexual marriages are op-

posed by 61 percent of Americans, while the adoption of children by gay couples is opposed by 67 percent.

Attitudes on some survey questions varied by geographical regions and religious backgrounds, the Barna Group reported.

People in the Northeast and Pacific states were most accepting of homosexuality, while residents of the South, Southwest and Midwest were less accepting.

For example, on the question of whether homosexuality is immoral, only 39 percent of Pacific residents agreed, compared to 51 percent in the South, 57 percent in the Midwest and 62 percent in the Southwest/Mountain region.

Other findings include:

■ People who attend church or say they read the Bible were about half as likely to support gay marriage as were those not attending church or reading the Bible.

■ Evangelical Christians were among the most conservative on gay issues, with slightly less than half saying a person's sexual orientation is their own business and 84 percent saying gay sex is immoral.

■ No significant difference in opinions was found between generations.

Clinton won among most religious groups

WASHINGTON (ABP)—Bill Clinton found support from voters in almost every area of America's religious landscape except Southern evangelicals, a voter analysis shows.

Figures compiled by Voter Research and Surveys, a consortium of the four national TV networks, show Clinton won among Catholics, Jews, black Protestants and religious liberals and made sharp inroads among mainline Protestants, usually a Republican stronghold. He also won among voters with no religious affiliation.

George Bush won decisively among the 17 percent of the electorate that called itself "white born-again Christian," taking 61 percent of those voters to Clinton's 23 percent and Ross Perot's 15 percent.

Bush's two strongest states were Mississippi and Alabama, which are the two most heavily Baptist states.

In 96 heavily Southern Baptist counties in 11 Southern states, Bush won 46 percent to Clinton's 40 percent and Ross Perot's 14 percent. In suburban areas of the South, Bush appears to have won 55 percent of

Baptists. Bush also won 45 percent in heavily Mormon Utah, which was his banner state with 67 percent in 1988. But Perot cut into the Mormon vote and ran second statewide with 29 percent.

Clinton triumphed in all 12 of the nation's most heavily Catholic states—from New Mexico to Massachusetts—the first Democratic sweep of those states since Lyndon Johnson in 1964.

Court declines to rule on abortion case

WASHINGTON (ABP)—For the second time this year, the U.S. Supreme Court has signaled it will not permit states to criminalize or unduly burden a woman's right to abortion.

The high court announced Nov. 30 it will not review a federal appeals court ruling that struck down a Guam law that would have made most abortions a felony for the woman and medical personnel involved.

Guam's statute provided exceptions only for ectopic, or tubal, pregnancies and pregnancies in which two physicians agree that the woman's life is endangered or her health is gravely impaired.

The Supreme Court's action follows recent rulings that reaffirmed the constitutional right of women to choose abortion while permitting states to place some restrictions on it.

In upholding abortion restrictions in Missouri in 1989 and Pennsylvania in 1992, the high court generally reaffirmed the essential core of Roe vs. Wade, the 1973 decision that recognized the right to abortion before the fetus is able to survive outside the womb.

However, the court moved away from Roe's requirement that a state must show a compelling reason to restrict abortion as a fundamental con-

stitutional right.

The key factor, the court majority held, is whether a state unduly burdens a woman's right to abortion by placing a "substantial obstacle" in the path of a woman seeking an abortion before the fetus attains viability.

In striking the Guam law, the 9th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals said that "surely an outright criminalization of abortion places an 'undue burden' on the exercise of the woman's right."

Three Supreme Court justices voted to hear Guam's appeal, one short of the four votes necessary to review a case.

CLC & Joint Committee agree on 1 case, differ on another

WASHINGTON (ABP)—The Baptist Joint Committee and the Southern Baptist Christian Life Commission agree in a friend-of-the-court brief filed at the U.S. Supreme Court that the First Amendment bars discrimination against religious speech.

But, in another pending case, the two Baptist organizations disagreed on the breadth of the constitutional ban against government promotion of religion.

The Joint Committee and CLC joined seven other groups in asking the high court to strike down Suffolk County, N.Y., school district's policy barring after-hours use of its facilities for religious purposes.

The religious groups argued that the district policy, which permitted non-religious after-hours use of the facilities, violated the neutrality required by three clauses of the First Amendment—those promising the government will protect free speech and the free exercise of religion but

will not establish a religion.

Lamb's Chapel and its pastor, John Steigerwald, challenged the policy after Center Moriches Union Free School District refused the church's request to use school facilities to show the James Dobson film series titled "Turn Your Hearts Toward Home."

In October, the Supreme Court agreed to review lower-court rulings which sided with the school district. The case is Lamb's Chapel vs. Center Moriches Union Free School District.

In separate briefs in a second case, both the Joint Committee and the CLC argued that the First Amendment's ban on a governmental establishment of religion should not prevent the government from providing an interpreter for a blind student attending a Catholic high school.

The two Baptist agencies disagreed, however, on how government should judge such cases.

In Zobrest vs. Catalina Foothills School District, both agencies asked

the Supreme Court to require the school district to provide the interpreter for James Zobrest.

The Education of the Handicapped Act authorizes federal funds for special services such as sign-language interpreters for deaf students. Zobrest's parents challenged the district's decision to provide interpreters for students in public and non-religious private schools but not religious schools.

The Joint Committee asked the Supreme Court to reverse the lower rulings by holding that the benefit sought by the student in this case does not violate the three-part test used by the court to determine whether a government action amounts to an establishment of religion.

That test, known as the Lemon test, requires governmental actions to have a secular purpose, to neither advance nor inhibit religion and to avoid excessive entanglement with religion.

The CLC, however, asked the high

Catholics get new catechism

For the first time in four centuries, the Roman Catholic Church has issued a new universal catechism.

The new edition reaffirms some traditional tenets of the faith and clarifies certain issues of modern society.

Six years in the making, the document was prepared by a commission headed by Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger of Germany. The old catechism was developed in 1566 at the Council of Trent.

A catechism is a set of doctrinal guidelines adopted by the Catholic Church for instructing members.

The new catechism:

■ Calls homosexual acts "contrary to natural law" and instructs homosexuals to practice chastity. However, it calls on Catholics to welcome homosexuals "with respect, compassion and delicacy," explaining most do not willingly choose their lifestyle.

■ Retains the church's insistence that only natural contraception is acceptable.

■ Cites the Sixth Commandment—"Thou shalt not commit adultery"—as the basis for sexual purity. "Among the sins gravely contrary to chastity, one must cite masturbation, fornication, pornography and homosexual practices," it says. "Adultery and divorce, polygamy and free sexual union are grave offenses to the dignity of marriage."

■ Condemns terrorism, hostage-taking, drug abuse, drug-trafficking, genetic manipulation, artificial insemination as modern sins.

■ Continues the church's opposition to female priests with the explanation that the 12 disciples of Jesus Christ were all males.

Compiled from press reports

MISSIONS

Parks will lead Fellowship's missions program

Continued from page 1

missions career to the FMB—first as a missionary in Indonesia from 1954 to 1968, then as an administrator in the board's Richmond, Va., headquarters before becoming president in 1980.

"That is a substantial, fundamental change," noted Don Kammerdiener, Parks' former top assistant at the FMB and now interim president.

But Parks discounted gloomy predictions about his decision negatively impacting missions. While many Southern Baptists will continue to support traditional missions, others—particularly younger ones—are more inclined to a societal approach, he said.

"The new generation is showing a growing lack of excitement about or commitment to the big denomination," Parks said. "We've seen it in the megachurches where they have tended to express themselves directly. I really believe there are trends toward a societal approach."

Rather than drawing support from the FMB, he said, the Fellowship's program can encourage many who

"have lost their excitement and withdrawn from involvement" to renew their commitment to missions.

"I hope he's right," Kammerdiener said. "But my hard-nosed assessment is that the only source the Fellowship has to get money is the same source (the FMB has), and I think that's competition."

Helen Jean Parks, who participated in the Atlanta news conference with her husband, discounted such fears.

"There's more than enough room for all of us to work and give," she said. Some Southern Baptists elected to SBC leadership—including SBC president—have not carried their share of the load, she added.

"My feeling is if they are going to lead it, then they need to support it and not just count on ... people who will keep on giving out of inertia or commitment."

Kammerdiener and others have complained that the timing of Parks' decision and his criticism of the FMB will hurt the current Lottie Moon Christmas Offering, through which churches provide about half of the

FMB's budget.

But Parks said the timing of his announcement couldn't be helped.

"I really regret the coincidence," he said, explaining the decision had to wait for his October retirement but he couldn't put the Fellowship off any longer on its long-pending offer.

Parks said many Southern Baptists will continue to give through the Lottie Moon offering and he would "pray blessings on them and never try to discourage them from doing that."

But Parks said his mail, phone calls and contacts have given him "a great concern for churches and individuals who have lost their enthusiasm and involvement in missions. My hope and prayer is that this effort by the Fellowship will mobilize them and be an additional source of income that will expand the witness that Southern Baptists have."

Despite fears about competition between the FMB and Fellowship, there is no comparison between the two organizations right now.

The FMB, the largest agency of its kind, employs 3,900 missionaries worldwide and has an annual budget

of \$180 million. The Fellowship's one-year-old missions program employs only 14 missionaries—all former FMB appointees—and has a budget of \$2.5 million for 1993.

Fellowship Coordinator Cecil Sherman said many of the details of Parks' employment are yet to be worked out.

Parks is expected to start Jan. 18. And although he probably will work out of the Fellowship's Atlanta headquarters, the Parkses have not decided if or when they will move from Richmond.

The Fellowship has budgeted \$100,000 in salary and benefits for the job. But Parks, who turned down several raises at the FMB, said he will insist on a smaller figure more in line with missionary salaries.

Although Parks is leaving his FMB moorings, he said he is not leaving the Southern Baptist fold. "I will always be Southern Baptist," he told reporters. "That's who I am."

Reported by News Director Mark Wingfield, Art Toalston through Baptist Press and Greg Warner through Associated Baptist Press.

"The new generation is showing a growing lack of excitement about or commitment to the big denomination."
Keith Parks on why he thinks the time may be right for a societal approach to missions

Kentuckians sad & confused; Carter offers Parks help

By Mark Wingfield
News Director

Kentuckians most closely related to the Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board said they were shocked but not surprised at Keith Parks' decision to head the missions program of the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship.

The announcement by Parks, a 38-year missions veteran and recently retired FMB president, generated sharp criticism from FMB trustees and confusion among many missionaries last week. National Southern Baptist Convention leaders expressed disappointment with the decision.

However, at least one prominent figure threw his support behind Parks and the Fellowship's suddenly invigorated missions effort. Former President Jimmy Carter met with Parks Dec. 1 to offer his assistance in the Fellowship's missions work.

"This decision gives many Southern Baptists renewed confidence in the viability and effectiveness of a comprehensive foreign mission program that will remain true to our Christian principles and those of our Baptist forebears," Carter said.

Parks had lunch with Carter in Atlanta Dec. 1. Since leaving the presidency, Carter has spent much of his time working for the Carter Center in Atlanta, which runs humanitarian and social projects in 26 African countries, China and the former Soviet Union.

"He said he wants to be supportive of what we are doing ... and would like us to find a way he can be of assistance in the mission program," Parks reported.

All four of Kentucky's FMB trustees expressed disappointment with Parks' move to the Fellowship, a group of moderate Southern Baptists displeased with the SBC's new conservative leadership.

James Garland, FMB trustee from Paducah, said: "I'm not surprised he

did it. He's given indications he was going to. It's been pretty evident that his sentiments lie with them, that he's more in sympathy with them."

However, Garland said he deeply regrets the decision "because Dr. Parks has done a tremendous job through the years as head of the Foreign Mission Board."

Bill Hall, FMB trustee from Danville, echoed Garland's sentiments: "It was a foregone conclusion in our minds that that was what was going to happen from a long way back. Keith is a moderate. That's his crowd."

Hall said Parks "cannot work with conservatives" although "the conservative trustees tried to work with him."

Two of Kentucky's four FMB trustees are relatively new on the board.

Charles Gresham of Central City said Parks' decision will have a "detrimental effect on the convention" and pull money away from the Cooperative Program unified budget.

"His name will have a lot of influence with the churches," Gresham noted. "Even the conservative group has a lot of respect for Keith Parks."

Terrell Mays of Elizabethtown said he's sure Parks' decision will impact the FMB's work but he has no idea how much.

"I think it will just perhaps intensify some of the controversy that's been going on in the convention," Mays said. "No doubt, Keith Parks was very representative of the FMB to a lot of people."

That very fact—that Parks symbolized foreign missions to many—was among the reasons trustees didn't want him to retire early, said Bill Hancock, a Louisville pastor and immediate past chairman of FMB trustees.

He said Parks' decision leaves him "not at all surprised, but deeply disappointed. I know Keith could have stayed and was not forced out."

The impasse between Parks and trustees resulted from Parks' "failure to respond to our attempts to cooperate," Hancock explained.

Hancock said he now is concerned about missionary morale more than his own disappointment.

Parks' jump to the Fellowship "undermines missionaries' commitment, their support and their call," Hancock charged. "It is unethical to threaten the security of these missionaries with that action. It's like a pastor being at a church 12 years and then going across the road and starting another church."

For their part, furloughing missionaries interviewed by the Western Recorder last week most often expressed confusion about the future.

Daniel Hatfield, FMB missionary to Panama currently on furlough in Louisville, said: "I feel confused and betrayed. We had expectations that he would remain within the Foreign Mission Board family, and we presumed he would loyally support Lottie Moon and not any competing mission offering."

It is fine for Parks to find another place of missions service, Hatfield said, but aligning with the Fellowship "has usurped the support upon which we are dependent."

Hatfield said he thinks missionaries will continue to do their work, remaining focused on the needs of the mission field. "We'll go on, we'll be faithful to our task. Whatever Southern Baptists do at home, we'll be faithful to them," he said.

Interim FMB President Don Kammerdiener, FMB trustee Chairman John Jackson and Home Mission Board President Larry Lewis all released critical statements.

They, and others, expressed deep concern that this year's Lottie Moon Christmas Offering for foreign missions would be hurt by the timing of Parks' announcement.

The decision "comes at the heart of



our time for commitment to the Lottie Moon Christmas Offering," Jackson charged. "It appears it has been deliberately planned and orchestrated."

Kentucky trustee Garland said he hopes Baptists will remain "loyal to the board and ... to the Cooperative Program and not let a splinter group like the Fellowship pull them away."

"I urge all Southern Baptists ... to remember that the most important thing in all of this is the support of our missionaries," Garland said.

Hancock said he prays God will honor the Fellowship's missionary efforts, but he also wants Southern Baptists to realize they already have "the greatest mission organization of any group in the world."

"The windows of opportunity around the world are unprecedented," Hancock noted. "Therefore it compels us ... to call our people to the greatest sacrifice we've ever made to reach those lost people and to encourage our staff and missionaries and to provide for those who are waiting to be appointed to be able to go."

Additional reporting by Greg Warner through Associated Baptist Press and Art Toalston through Baptist Press

NEW DIRECTION Keith Parks, shown here presenting certificates to new missionaries appointed by the Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board in 1992, will now head the missions program of the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship. Although some say his switch will hurt missions funding, Parks says he believes Southern Baptists will respond better if given the option of two approaches. (FMB photo)

'Oprah' show boosts sales of New Age self-help course

By Sarah Zimmerman
SBC Home Mission Board

ATLANTA (BP)—Oprah Winfrey has given a big boost to one of the most influential teachings of New Age movements, according to a Southern Baptist interfaith witness specialist.

"A Course in Miracles," often referred to as "The Course," is gaining acceptance due in part to a book by Marianne Williamson, "A Return to Love: Reflections on the Principles of A Course in Miracles."

Williamson's appearance on the

Oprah Winfrey Show impressed the host so much that she bought a copy of the book for everyone in the studio audience. Williamson now has appeared on the show twice.

Exposure on the Winfrey show sparked "one of the biggest book selling wildfires of 1992," with 750,000 copies of the book sold, according to one book review. The book made the New York Times best-seller list, and Williamson appeared on the covers of People magazine and New Age Journal.

Williamson's book is based on her experiences in "A Course in Mira-

cles," a three-volume, 1,188-page set of books first published in 1975. The course is a New Age self-help program, according to Maurice Smith, associate director of the Southern Baptist Home Mission Board's interfaith witness department.

More than 800,000 people have purchased the book set, and about 1,500 U.S. groups meet each week to study The Course, according to Christianity Today magazine.

Contents of the books were supposedly channeled by a voice claiming to be Jesus Christ, Smith said. Channeling is the New Age term for

people receiving direct messages from spiritual entities.

Though the voice claimed to be Jesus, the course "is a radical denial of every basic biblical teaching," Smith said.

The primary focus of The Course "is that what you see is not real and you can change your own reality," Smith said. "The past and the future are not important. Only the present as you create it by your thoughts is important. Only what is pleasant is real."

A Course in Miracles teaches that people can save themselves and heal themselves by changing the way they think, Smith said.

According to the course, sin is not a transgression against God, Smith added. Instead, it teaches that sin is allowing anything negative to happen.

Christians can best deal with such teachings by equipping people to understand theological errors, Smith said.

TV fund-raising returns to lower levels

DES MOINES, Iowa (EP)—On-air fund-raising by television preachers has dropped to pre-PTL scandal levels, according to a communications professor who monitors the field.

After the PTL scandal, the average amount of airtime television preachers devoted to fund-raising increased, according to Stephen Winzenburg of Grand View College in Des Moines, Iowa. Fund-raising time peaked at 27 percent in 1988, then dropped to 25 percent in 1990, he said.

This year, average fund-raising time dropped to 22 percent—comparable to the years before the PTL scandal, Winzenburg said.

Dentist takes bite out of Donahue's funding

FORT WORTH, Texas (BP)—A Baptist dentist concerned about what his children view on television has taken a bite out of advertiser support for the Phil Donahue Show.

Through a one-man campaign, Richard Neill has persuaded 112 sponsors, including numerous national advertisers, to quit buying time on the program.

Among those who have withdrawn nationwide advertising are Albertson's grocers, Baskin-Robbins ice cream, Circuit City consumer electronics stores, Dole fruit packers, Dr. Pepper soft-drink bottlers, Hancock Fabrics, Hillshire Farms meat packers, Jenny Craig weight-loss centers, Keebler snack foods, Kmart department stores, Luzianne tea, Nestle foods, Orkin pest control, Rainbo bak-

eries, Sara Lee bakeries, S.C. Johnson household products, Star-Kist tuna and Wendy's hamburgers.

Neill believes many of the topics Donahue discusses on his show are unsuitable for the 300,000 children the A.C. Nielson ratings service says watch the show daily.

Neill readily cites several illustrations of "sleazy" topics on the show: strippers, homosexual marriages, group sex, penile transplants, masturbation, mother-daughter stripper teams and spouse-swapping orgies.

He first contacted sponsors who buy time only for ads to be shown in Dallas-Fort Worth. And then he moved to the larger, national sponsors.

In his letters and presentations to advertisers, Neill offers several pages

describing the content of daily Donahue programs. He also gives executives a 22-minute video showing clips of some of the programs.

Neill's campaign has brought him national media exposure, including an appearance on James Dobson's "Focus on the Family" radio broadcast.

The media exposure has had an impact on sponsors, Neill said, explaining that once he names a company on the air or in print, they usually respond by withdrawing support for Donahue.

Neill encourages others who are concerned about TV content to get involved. He has developed a packet of materials telling how to duplicate what he has done. The packet is available by writing him at Box 330128, Fort Worth, Texas 76163.

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Christmas miracles

This is the start of a joyous season. For many of us, it is the time of year when we turn our attention to giving, celebrating and remembering the blessings in our lives. As we count the blessings that are ours, I hope we will continue to remember those less fortunate than ourselves.

We remember children like Dennis, who at age 11 had decided no one really wanted him. He was placed in foster care. Dennis thought he could make it on his own; he was tough; he didn't need anybody. But all the time, Dennis was crying inside for someone to take the time to really care. After several years of living on the streets, skipping school and stealing, he found himself in court. A judge placed Dennis at the Baptist Youth Ranch in Elizabethtown.

Angry at the judge, Dennis insisted it was a mistake. Today he will tell you it was no mistake. It hasn't been easy for Dennis. He's had to work through so many obstacles.

One of those obstacles came last Christmas season. Dennis had looked forward for months to a visit to his grandparents, only to be handed a \$20 bill and sent out into the cold on Christmas Eve. Devastated, Dennis spent the night in an emergency shelter. When the director of our Baptist Youth Ranch heard what had happened to Dennis, he went to get him and brought him to spend Christmas with his own family. For Dennis, it was a miracle that someone did care.

Dennis has completed the Youth Ranch program and now lives with his uncle, who is a bivocational pastor. He is doing well in school, has an after-school job and is adjusting well. He was feeling a little "homesick" when he called a few

weeks ago to say thank you for all we had done.

Since 1869, Kentucky Baptist Homes for Children has opened its doors to care for children like Dennis, children who have known the tragedy of abuse, neglect and abandonment. Each one of these children deserves to know the love and attention that have been so lacking in their lives. Each one of them deserves to have their Christmas dreams come true. No child should be deprived of the security, love and care they so desperately need. This holiday season, you can help Kentucky Baptist Homes for Children make Christmas dreams come true. You can bring the miracle of Christmas to life.

HOMES FOR CHILDREN



Curtis C. Mooney

At the top of our Christmas wish list is the hope that more children will see those dreams come true. Together, we can bring these children hope. We can introduce them to God's family and show them a new way to live.

Christmas is a time of giving. It is a time of year when we offer the best of ourselves to others. As we remember the biggest miracle of all, the advent of our Lord's coming, let us join our hearts in prayer and our hands in unity, putting love into action and reaching the forgotten children of this world.

Please remember the children this year as your family celebrates the holidays together. If your family would like to do something special for a child like Dennis this Christmas, call us at (800) 456-1386 or 245-2101 to sponsor a child. And remember, miracles like the ones you make possible can change the course of a life forever.

Curtis Mooney is president of Kentucky Baptist Homes for Children, 10801 Shelbyville Rd., Middletown, Ky. 40243.

Paid Column

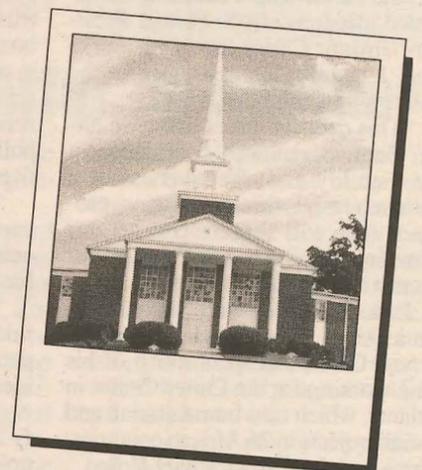
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FOR SALE: 1975 International school bus, very good condition, \$700. Contact: Pastor Mike Baker, Victory Memorial Baptist Church, 3805 Southern Parkway, Louisville, Ky. 40214. Phone (502) 368-2521.



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FIBERGLASS SPECIALTIES INCORPORATED

Campbellsville selects Whitt

CAMPBELLSVILLE—Marc Whitt has been named director of public relations, publications and sports information at Campbellsville College.

For the past five years, Whitt has been public relations director for Georgetown College, a sister Baptist school to Campbellsville.

During Whitt's tenure at Georgetown College, the school's public relations program received numerous awards from state and national organizations, including the Council for Advancement and Support of Education.

Prior to his work at Georgetown College, Whitt was communications director for the Louisville Convention & Visitors Bureau. He also previously worked as associate for church relations at Cumberland College.

Whitt earned the bachelor's and master's degree from Eastern Kentucky University. Both he and his wife, Jennifer, are Paintsville natives. They have one daughter, Emily Marie.

Group protests KBC resolution

The resolution on homosexual behavior adopted by messengers to last month's Kentucky Baptist Convention was a divisive and misguided action, according to a small group of Baptists who held a news conference to protest the resolution Nov. 30.

Five people representing Honesty, a group advocating full acceptance of homosexuals in churches, staged a news conference near the Kentucky Baptist Building in Louisville.

The resolution, adopted with no apparent dissension Nov. 11, says homosexual behavior is "immoral" but is not "the unpardonable sin."

Cindy Webber, pastor of Jefferson Street Baptist Community at Liberty in Louisville, explained she attended the news conference because she was disappointed with the resolution. While the resolution called on churches to express unconditional love, grace and reconciliation to homosexuals, the resolution itself was "very

unreconciling," she said.

Webber said she hopes the KBC will pass a different resolution next year that does show "love and acceptance" for homosexuals.

Quinn Chipley, a member of Crescent Hill Baptist Church in Louisville, said this year's resolution attempted to "shut down communication" between Baptists with different views.

Even though resolutions are non-binding actions, they are "very bullying," Chipley said. Resolutions express the opinions of messengers attending each annual meeting, while motions direct specific action.

While the resolution's tone was mild in comparison to what it could have been, it still wrongly accuses homosexuals, he added.

Further, Chipley charged the Scriptural basis used in the resolution to say homosexual behavior is immoral constitutes "gross religious malpractice."

Training offered for church secretaries

Training conferences for church and denominational secretaries will be offered during the annual meeting of the National Association of Southern Baptist Secretaries April 28-May 1.

The event at Ridgecrest Baptist Conference Center in North Carolina also will feature Esther Burroughs, assistant director of lay evangelism with the Southern Baptist Home Mission Board, and daily Bible study led by Dale Steele, pastor of Penelope Baptist Church in Hickory, N.C.

The registration fee is \$100 for association members, \$125 for non-members and \$15 for spouses. For registration information, contact Becky Brown, Box 457, Branson, Mo. 65616.

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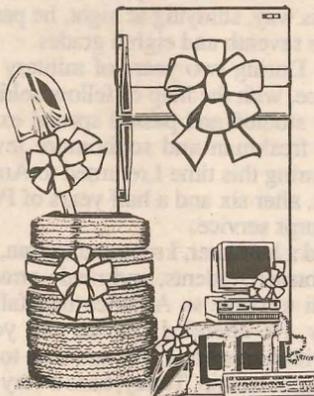
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All represent items Southern Baptist foreign missionaries use to bring hope to a lost world.

Pray for our missionaries as they carry the gospel into foreign countries despite difficult physical conditions and other limitations. Pray,

too, that more Southern Baptists will respond to God's call to foreign missions.

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Lottie Moon Christmas Offering
National Goal: \$84 million

KENTUCKY KERNELS

A total of 136 Kentuckians currently serve as missionaries appointed by the Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board. Only 10 other states claim more natives under FMB appointment. Also, Kentucky Baptists have given more than \$22 million to the Lottie Moon Christmas Offering for foreign missions in the last decade.

Mountains to the Mississippi

■ **BARBOURVILLE**—First Church called Jimmy Disney as minister of students. He previously served as minister of youth at Vine Grove Church in Vine Grove.

■ **BIG CLIFTY**—First Church called Tim Lucas as pastor. He is completing work on a master's degree at Southern Seminary in Louisville.

■ **CENTERFIELD**—Centerfield Church called Scott Hamric as its first pastor. Hamric has served churches in Mississippi and currently is pastor of Franklinton Church in Pleasureville.

■ **CORBIN**—Bacon Creek Church has called Max Cox as pastor. He previously served as pastor at New Mount Zion Church in Williamsburg. Recently he was ordained at Central Church in Corbin.

Greenland Church called Rodney Hale as pastor. Hale previously served as pastor of Immanuel Church in Jenkins.

■ **FLORENCE**—Florence Church will present an outdoor drama, "Journey to Bethlehem," Dec. 11 and 12 on the church property at 283 Main St. The drama will include live animals and a cast of about 60 youths. Performances are open to the public both nights at 7 p.m., 7:30 p.m. and 8 p.m.

■ **LAWRENCEBURG**—First Church recently held renewal services

led by Don Short, evangelist, and Bill Burkett, singer.

■ **LOUISVILLE**—Charles Bugg is serving as interim pastor at Crescent Hill Church. Bugg is the Carl E. Bates Professor of Christian Preaching at Southern Seminary.

Fern Creek Church will ordain two to the ministry in January. Angie Harrington, interim minister of music/organist, will be ordained Jan. 3. Keith Fidler, minister of youth, will be ordained Jan. 10.

■ **McDANIELS**—Rough River Church recently held a dedication service for additions to its facilities. The new space accommodates four Sunday school rooms, a kitchen and a fellowship hall. Also, the church has acquired nine acres adjoining the church property.

■ **MIDDLETOWN**—First Church called Byrd Ison as interim pastor. Ison is the retired director of the Kentucky Baptist Convention's annuity department.

■ **WILLIAMSBURG**—Watson's Chapel called Danny Elliott as pastor.

Lloyd Hale is pastor at Young's Creek Church.

Blair's Christmas Land has opened at the Cumberland College Museum. The electronic animals, snowmen and elves, as well as live portrayals of San-

ta Claus and Mrs. Claus may be seen from 10 a.m. to 8 p.m. Mondays through Saturdays and from 1-5 p.m. Sundays.

MISSIONARY UPDATE

■ **Norman and Martha Lytle**, Baptist representatives to Eastern Europe,

are on the field at c/o UEBC, Int'l Post Office Box 171, 101000 Moscow, Russia. She is from Louisville.

■ **Robert and Regina Morgan**, missionaries to Indonesia, are on the field at Tromolpos 1077, Jakarta Pusat, 10010, Indonesia. He is a native of Smithfield; she is from Irvine.

Church secretary retires after 40 years

DANVILLE—Mabel Gaines will retire as secretary at First Baptist Church in Danville next week—40 years to the day from when she first started work there.

The 76-year-old secretary has worked with eight pastors during her long tenure, which began Dec. 15, 1952.

If reports from current staff are any indication, each of those pastors had a dedicated, competent co-worker in Gaines.

"She never misses work. She gets a couple of weeks of vacation every year, but she seldom takes them," said Jerry Lester, minister of music and pastoral visitation. "She's the type person that when she hears negative talk, she never says anything. She never talks bad about her church or her ministers. I've not heard her say one negative word about anybody."

Gaines also has been highly proficient in her work, Lester noted, as well as being an exemplary church member.

Her daughter, Leslie Williams, said Gaines always has been careful to maintain the highest integrity in her work and in her family's presence in the church.

She was careful never to do anything that would reflect badly on the church or the church staff, Williams said.

"I felt like a pastor's child," Williams recalled of her youth. "She always said, 'You don't do this, and you don't do this because I'm the pastor's secretary.' I had to be very careful what I did."

Although Gaines is retiring, she won't be gone or forgotten, Lester said. She plans to come into the church office two or three days a week to help out.

How God wonderfully butters our bread

One of our earlier letters arriving before Christmas with a good donation is from one of our girls that I first worked with 20 years ago. She is a wonderfully mature Christian woman today, with husband and children, happily married and very faithful to her church, living in another state. She writes:

"This time of year brings back the many warm memories I have of what Oneida means to me.

"Mr. Moore, I remember in 1972 my mother was dying of cancer. I was a student at Oneida and had to drop out to take care of her. My younger sister and older brother were also attending school there. It was the saddest and hardest time in a young girl's life, seeing life gradually leave my mother each day.

"You visited my mother, and after she died, you encouraged me to go back to school. I did, and graduated in 1974.

"It was hard to get back to the reality of school with the pressure of just losing my mother. But you encouraged me: 'You can do it Pat.' I had no money and wondered how I would even pay for school supplies. You encouraged me not to worry.

"Through you and your staff I began to pick up the pieces. Thank God I did. Today when I look at the educational problems facing students throughout the country, I often wonder if they had leadership like Oneida provides if more students might get motivated and want to be successful.

"Thank all the staff for helping me through a difficult time in my life. My mother died 20 years ago. I felt this letter was long overdue.

My prayers will always be with this school I loved so well. It makes me so happy to hear of the great results. Just encourage your students to 'go on for education, something for time and eternity.' God bless you and Oneida always."

The day after Thanksgiving, another 1974 graduate made contact. He came from another

state to visit, and gave me a \$1,500 donation.

Ali is happily married, teaching in a college, and his wife is a medical doctor. They have a daughter and two sons. I first knew him as a young blacksmith in Iran working 12-hour days for the American equivalent of \$25 per month. That was in 1967. He dropped out of school after the sixth grade to help his family. He was the oldest child in a large impoverished family, and had to quit school when his father became too ill to work. He had been out of school for six years. He was very embittered because he had always been the top student of his class. He told me once that he cried every morning for two years as he saw his classmates passing by on their way to school, and he was too poor to go.

It was my privilege to encourage him. I got him interested in studying after his 12-hour workdays. I began to teach him English and hired a tutor to teach him other subjects in Persian. In this way, studying at night, he passed his seventh and eighth grades.

During two years of military service, with the help of fellow soldiers, he studied and passed special exams at freshman and sophomore levels. During this time I returned to America, after six and a half years of Peace Corps service.

A year and a half later, I returned to Iran, visiting many former students, and made arrangements for Ali to come to America that fall for further study. He attended Oneida two years, graduating with honors in 1974, and then to college on a full scholarship. Today, he is a very productive American citizen.

One of my favorite passages of Scripture is the promise: "Cast your bread on the waters, and it will return after many days." And when it returns, often how wonderfully God has "battered" it.

Barkley Moore is president of Oneida Baptist Institute, Oneida, Ky. 40972

ONEIDA JOURNAL



Barkley Moore

Paid Column

Twenty-third annual shopping spree

Twenty-three years certainly makes the Christmas Shopping Spree a Clear Creek tradition. Former president's wife Kay Aldridge was the first director of the project; my wife, Rebecca, now coordinates the event.

Beginning the week before Thanksgiving until Dec. 8, church groups deliver new toys and merchandise. On Saturday, Nov. 22, four church groups came with bags of gifts collected by members. One church gave seven bicycles.

The day before Thanksgiving, \$27,434 in cash had been received.

Several of the faculty/staff help with purchasing. Gifts are selected for all ages. Area merchants provide discounts for quantity purchases.

Mrs. Renie Hanking makes sure each item receives a number representing its value. On the night of the Shopping Spree, students exchange coupons for merchandise of their choice. Switchboard operators and student spouses Jenny McCain and Marcia Brooks have the job of preparing student coupons.

This is the second year for the Shopping Spree to be in the Family Life Center gymnasium. Dec. 7-8 the faculty/staff cover the floor, set up tables and arrange all the merchandise. Kelly Hall kitchen prepares soup and sandwiches for the workers. Banners and signs are placed noting children's toys, la-

dies' section, men's gifts, home supplies, electronics, games, puzzles. We also have a free table where stocking stuffers are bagged together.

The evening of Dec. 8 is the big moment! Some students begin lining up two hours before the doors open. Married men shop first for their wives. The wives, mothers and singles complete the shopping. Faculty and staff take the coupons as students make their choices.

What does the Shopping Spree mean to our students? Denise

Lewis, wife of senior student Tony Lewis of North Carolina, said, "It is fun, like a gigantic department store. First year students are always overwhelmed."

Second year Harrodsburg student Cleo Goodlett's wife, Patty, noted, "An exciting night! I don't feel we deserve it, but it certainly helps our families."

Third year Ohio student Mark Reece said: "I praise the Lord people give. Through the Shopping Spree God reminds us he always comes through people to help others. We must do the same."

A big thanks to all our friends for another extremely successful Shopping Spree. In the midst of receiving, may God keep us free from selfishness and make us a channel of blessing.

Bill Whittaker is president of Clear Creek Baptist Bible College, Pineville, Ky. 40977

CLEAR CREEK CHRONICLE



Paid Column

CHURCHES

Baptists gaining ground in 'sin city' of Las Vegas

By Sarah Zimmerman
SBC Home Mission Board

LAS VEGAS (BP)—Johnny Nantz voted against having the Southern Baptist Convention in Las Vegas every time he got a chance.

Despite protests from people like Nantz who felt Southern Baptists had no business doing business there, the SBC annual meeting was held in Las Vegas in 1989. And the city they were tempted to shun is now the home of rapidly growing Southern Baptist churches.

Although he objected to the convention site, Nantz went to Las Vegas early for the pre-convention evangelism effort. Then pastor of Memorial Heights Baptist Church in Claremore, Okla., he left Las Vegas hoping never again to see the city's flashing lights.

When a friend gave his name to a pulpit committee for a Las Vegas church, Nantz was sure he wasn't interested. Yet the church was persistent, and God showed Nantz and his wife all their reasons for not moving were really excuses, he said.

Six months after the convention, Nantz became pastor of Spring Valley Baptist Church in Las Vegas.

The church has since quadrupled in size, with average worship attendance reaching 400. Nantz estimates two-thirds of his church's growth is from new Christians.

Experiencing similar growth, West Oakey Baptist Church has an average worship attendance of 975, compared

with 240 in 1986.

"Some people stand in awe that there are even Christians in this city," said Pastor Michael Rochelle. "But I have never been in a city where people are more open to hearing the gospel."

Green Valley Baptist Church in Henderson on the outskirts of Las Vegas grew from 16 members in January 1986 to 590 members currently. Pastor Frank Lewis said the church now has three Sunday schools and

two worship services to accommodate the 400 people who attend each week.

The Las Vegas convention was the first time Southern Baptists went to a host city early to participate in door-to-door witnessing. Some of the area churches are still seeing results from that effort.

A woman who is now a Sunday school teacher at Highland Hills Baptist Church in Henderson was home on vacation the day Southern Baptist volunteers knocked on her door. She

was already a Christian but was not involved in a local church.

The woman began attending Highland Hills and eventually Pastor John Mark Simmons baptized her husband and their four children.

Another woman was given a "Here's Hope" New Testament during the convention. Two years later she came to Nantz' church asking for someone to explain the book to her. Nantz has since baptized her and her husband.

Jeff Wagoner, mission ministries director for the Southern Nevada Baptist Association, said one reason Las Vegas churches are growing is that the city is growing.

Some people come to Las Vegas for construction jobs that accompany such growth and for jobs in the tourist industry. Others come hoping to win a fortune.

But Nantz said he knows of several people who found their fortunes in Jesus Christ, thanks to the witness of Southern Baptists.

A singer at Caesar's Palace and her husband became Christians after Nantz gave her his business card. A cocktail waitress became a Christian, and four of her friends came to her baptism because they had never seen a baptism. One of them later became a Christian.

"I'm reminded of Romans 5:20 that says where sin abounds, there did grace abound much more," Nantz said. "This city of sin is also the city of grace."



STRIP WITNESSING Jeff Wagoner confers with Laura Lee Barksdale about ways to minister on the Las Vegas strip. Wagoner is mission ministries director for Southern Nevada Baptist Association based in Las Vegas, where Baptist churches are experiencing rapid growth. Barksdale is an evangelism consultant for the New England Baptist Convention. (BP photo)

"This city of sin is also the city of grace."

Pastor Johnny Nantz on the rapid growth of Southern Baptist churches in Las Vegas

Growth Spiral leader retires

RIDGECREST, N.C. (BP)—In the past 15 years, Andy Anderson has helped at least 2,300 Southern Baptist churches add as many as 100,000 new members to Sunday school rolls each year.

Anderson developed the "Sunday School Growth Spiral" from what he saw as the shortcomings of his "Action" enrollment plan which landed him at the Sunday School Board in 1975. This summer, he retired as a Sunday School Board growth consultant.

As pastor of Riverside Baptist Church in Fort Myers, Fla., for 20 years before coming to the board, Anderson developed the Action enrollment plan.

He initially was hired to implement that plan in churches throughout the Southern Baptist Convention.

"The Action plan focused on enrollment. When churches enrolled 100, 50 or even 25 new members, they didn't know what to do with them. They had never enrolled that many before," Anderson recalled.

Pastors didn't realize they needed to start new units and train workers to deal with the growth, Anderson said.

Anderson encouraged churches to follow the classic Flake formula of Sunday school growth based on building enrollment, discovering prospects, enlarging the organiza-

tion, providing additional workers, training workers, providing space and making contacts.

He developed the Growth Spiral as a simple, mathematical formula that shows the relationship between each of the principles.

The spiral provides a formula for Sunday school units, workers, worker training, space and contacts needed to achieve specific goals for Sunday school attendance, worship service attendance, offerings and baptisms.

Anderson receives reports from many of the churches which he initiated into the Growth Spiral process. From those reports, he has recorded enrollment growths of 100,000 per year.

In retirement, Anderson still trains churches about growth. He will spend 40 days per year leading Growth Spiral conferences for the Sunday School Board. He also has contracted with the Alabama and Tennessee state conventions to enroll 500 churches in each state in the Growth Spiral.

While the Growth Spiral has been identified with Anderson for 15 years, it also will continue as a national project of the board's Sunday school division, said Harry Piland, division director. "Anything that has been as successful in so many churches as the Growth Spiral won't just fade away. It will continue."

Pastor helps church develop unique hospitality ministry

PLAINS, Ga. (BP)—It's easy to spot visitors at Maranatha Baptist Church in Plains, Ga. They're the ones who aren't wearing badges.

Members wear bright yellow badges to identify themselves to the scores of visitors who flock to the 150-member church to hear former President Jimmy Carter teach Sunday school. Some Sundays, visitors outnumber church members 3-to-1.

Previously, visitors had no way of knowing who the members were and thus often felt the church was unfriendly, said Pastor Dan Ariail. Therefore, the church traded the common tradition of visitor badges for member badges.

Ariail, who received his doctor of ministry degree in May from Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in Louisville, wrote his ministry research project on Maranatha's ministry of hospitality.

"The project centers around the concept that this church is a mission station," Ariail said. "I don't know of another worship situation that parallels this."

Visitors, which average more than 50 per Sunday, come from across the United States and several foreign countries to attend Carter's Sunday school class. Many have little acquaintance with the Christian faith, Ariail said.

This presents Maranatha with an opportunity for "singularity evange-



lism," he said, explaining, "We only see our visitors one time. None of these people will be (membership) prospects."

Maranatha members now take intentional measures to welcome visitors. Greeters are stationed at each entrance and welcome each visitor with a verbal welcome.

After worship, while the former president and his wife pose for pictures with visitors, members mingle freely with the guests and offer to photograph them with the Carters.

Surveys of visitors reveal that an already positive perception of the church by visitors has been enhanced. One German couple was so impressed with their warm welcome that they mailed the church a contribution of 1,000 Deutsche marks, which at the time was worth \$642 in U.S. currency.

A PLAINS WELCOME Pastor Dan Ariail (right) and his wife, Nell (left), pose with former President Jimmy Carter and his wife, Rosalyn, outside Maranatha Baptist Church in Plains, Ga. Ariail recently completed doctoral work at Southern Baptist Theological Seminary on the subject of church hospitality—a practical consideration since his church sometimes averages three times more visitors than members in attendance. (RNS photo)

CLEAR CREEK

The Lottie Moon Foreign Mission Offering Supports These Clear Creek Baptist Bible College Graduates



James and Jenny Ditty Jr.

James and Jenny Ditty Jr., missionaries to Korea, have three school-age children. They reside in Pusan. He works in church music promotion; she is involved in a variety of outreach ministries.

James and Dorothy Ditty Sr. are missionaries to South Africa. His assignment is theological education in Edenvale; Mrs. Ditty is a church and home worker. They have six grown children. Their son, John, is Old Testament instructor at Clear Creek.

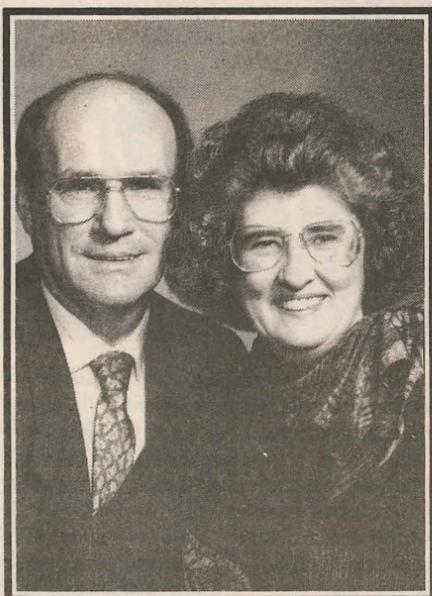
Bobby and Oakie Blevins are missionaries to Namibia. He is a religious education consultant in Tsumeb; she is a church and home worker. They have three grown children.

Timothy and Brenda Searcy are missionaries to Colombia. Now on furlough, he was a professor at the International Baptist Seminary in Cali. Mrs. Searcy is church and home worker. They have two school-age children.

Volunteers, John and Marge Wilson are assisting in Swaziland, South Africa while career missionaries are on furlough. Louis and Carolyn Jennings are associate missionaries to Lusaka, Zambia. He operates the mission's printing service; she serves as the assistant treasurer.



James and Dorothy Ditty Sr.



Bobby and Oakie Blevins



Timothy and Brenda Searcy



Lottie Moon Christmas Offering
National Goal: \$84 million

Your regular giving through the Cooperative Program also keeps them on the field.