



# WESTERN RECORDER

December 20, 1994  
Vol. 168, No. 50

## CHURCH LEADERS

See Events insert for news & help

### FOR THE RECORD

#### Leavell retiring

Landrum Leavell has announced his retirement as president of New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary effective Dec. 31. See page 2.

#### Rudolph named

Bryant Rudolph has been named campus minister at Western Kentucky University. See page 3.

#### Editorial

Give yourself a gift this week: Seek solitude and spend a few moments contemplating the stupendous surprise of that first Christmas. See page 5.

#### Point-Counterpoint

Should Christian parents let their children believe in Santa? See page 6.

#### Holiday in Haiti

A group of Kentucky volunteers found unexpected joy during the Thanksgiving holidays through missionary work in Haiti. See page 7.

**Reminder:** This is the last issue of the Western Recorder for 1994, due to the Christmas holiday. Our next issue will be dated Jan. 3, 1995.

## Urban churches join hands to support needy families

By Melanie Childers  
Staff Writer

LOUISVILLE—The grinch of poverty steals Christmas from destitute families every year, but two Kentucky churches are combining resources to help restore comfort and joy during the holidays.

Volunteers from St. Matthews Baptist Church and Baptist Tabernacle in Louisville have become partners in Christmas Connection, an annual ministry offering clothing, food and toys at Christmas to families in the Portland community.

St. Matthews is a suburban congregation averaging about 500 in worship; Baptist Tabernacle is an inner-city church of about 90 in weekly attendance.

Christmas Connection "fulfills a need in both churches," explained John Willingham, youth minister at St. Matthews.

Sam Roberts, pastor at Baptist Tabernacle, agreed: "Both churches realize ... there are some things we could not do alone."

While Baptist Tabernacle has facilities and resources in the Portland area and knows families who need assistance, St. Matthews is a larger church in a stronger financial position to fund such a tremendous venture, Roberts explained.

For St. Matthews, "it's the greatest part of our Christmas now," Willingham added. He and volunteer Ron Tucker coordinate St. Matthews' participation in the event.

Christmas Connection began 10 years ago when the St. Matthews church worked with Westside Baptist Church in Portland. Since Westside closed its doors in the 1980s, St. Matthews and Baptist Tabernacle have been ministry partners.

Baptist Tabernacle works with family resource representatives at several schools in the Portland neighborhood to distribute Christmas Connection applications to interested families.

Last year, 175 families—including 525 children—received assistance. This year's goal was to help 200 families, including 600-800 children.

Both churches prepare for Christmas Connection. During the annual "hanging of the greens" service at Baptist Tabernacle, members bring unwrapped toys and clothing and place the items under the church's Christmas tree.

St. Matthews members donate gifts throughout the early part of December; these items are placed under a Christmas tree in the church's foyer. In addition, both churches solicit corporate funding.

Each year, volunteers from both churches gather for a grand shopping spree.

"We buy all our toys at Target," □ See Urban churches ..., page 13

## Mountain church spreads love with food baskets

By Marv Knox  
Editor

WHITESBURG—If nothing says "I love you" quite like food, then First Baptist Church of Whitesburg is spreading tons of love around Letcher County this Christmas season.

First Baptist is delivering at least 250 large baskets of food—enough for a Christmas feast and another week of meals—to needy people throughout the mountain hollers of Eastern Kentucky.

"We try to reach the whole county with the message of Christ through the social gospel," Pastor Tom Stokes said of the Christmas food project, now in its fifth year.

Church members collect and distribute the food out of love for Christ, whose birthday they celebrate, and love for their neighbors in one of Kentucky's poorest counties, said Gene Smallwood, a local attorney and deacon whose vision launched the project.

"We live in Eastern Kentucky, where abject poverty surrounds us" Smallwood noted. "The Lord tells us if we provide food for them, it is

the same as providing food for him. We don't want to go before the Lord and learn we have failed to meet his need."

The ministry has been increasingly important during a time when the government has cut back on its help for people in need, said Connie Fields, co-chair of the project with Smallwood.

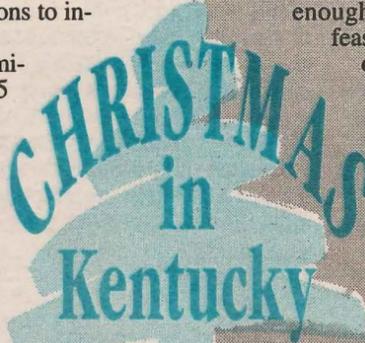
Fields, who has worked for the government's social services for 17 years, described the change: "Previously, our agency could pull together food or money to provide about 300 (food) baskets in the community. But with the cutbacks, that got harder and harder to do. Fortunately, First Baptist began preparing the baskets."

She estimated the church will spend about \$12,000 to \$14,000 on Christmas boxes this year. And that only covers part of the cost, Stokes added, noting a deacon who is a grocer helps with the food.

Spending that kind of money, plus donating the hundreds of hours needed to pull off the project, is vital for the congregation to communicate the Christian message effectively, Stokes said.

"We live in a county that is poverty stricken. Before they will listen to us, especially if they view us as well-to-do, they've got to see we love them," he explained.

Christian love has been a First Baptist hallmark, noted Smallwood. □ See Food baskets ..., page 13



**CHRISTMAS GREETINGS** Two residents of Spring Meadows Children's Home show off giant Christmas cards they and other residents made for display during the Christmas season. That's only one of many spiritual emphases at ministries operated by Kentucky Baptist Homes for Children. In addition to Christian houseparents, both the Spring Meadows and Glen Dale children's homes have chaplains on staff. Children's home residents also are involved in local churches. Homes for Children reports that 65 residents of their facilities made professions of faith in Jesus Christ or rededicated their lives to Christ during the last fiscal year.

Moving? See page 4 (1220)

## KBC to end ownership of Cedarmore

By Mark Wingfield  
News Director

The future of Cedarmore Baptist Assembly remains uncertain, but one thing is now clear: the Kentucky Baptist Convention's Executive Board won't continue operating it for long.

The Executive Board voted 105 to 36 last week in favor of terminating the KBC's ownership and operation of the campground in North Central Kentucky, perhaps as early as next December.

In other action, the Executive Board allocated \$321,000 in year-end funds, adopted a unified funding plan for church and community missionaries in the state and authorized negotiations with Northern Kentucky University that could move the Baptist Student Union there to a new location.

The Cedarmore issue was by far the most-watched action of the Dec. 12-13 meeting at the Baptist Building in Louisville.

The Executive Board acted on a □ See Executive Board votes ..., page 11

# BAPTISTS

## Leavell announces retirement from New Orleans

**The trustee chairman said he was so surprised at Leavell's announcement that he would retire Dec. 31, 1994, that he later asked Leavell, "Did you mean to say 1995?"**

By Greg Warner  
Associated Baptist Press

NEW ORLEANS (ABP)—Lan-drum Leavell, president of New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary since 1975, stunned trustees and administrators alike Dec. 13 by announcing he will retire at the end of 1994.

Leavell, 68, told the seminary's trustee executive committee of his decision during their regular December meeting. "We had no idea it was coming in December," trustee Chairman Ed Johnson said afterward.

The seminary's administrators likewise did not know the announcement was coming until moments before the meeting, and Leavell reportedly told family members only the night before.

"He wanted to be in control of the situation," said Johnson, pastor of First Baptist Church of Ocala, Fla. "He wanted to announce it on his terms."

Johnson said Leavell was upset

last March when word leaked out that Leavell and the trustees had agreed he would retire by December 1996, soon after he turns 70. He has been discussing his retirement plans with trustees for some time.

"You have known for three years of my intention to retire before age 70," Leavell said in his statement to the executive committee Dec. 13. "You sent a committee to ask me to stay till age 70, and then go on a year-by-year basis. I was deeply gratified by this encouragement, but I am presently convinced that I am making the right decision today. This retirement will be effective Dec. 31, 1994."

Johnson said he was so surprised he later asked Leavell, "Did you mean to say 1995?"

Leavell agreed to the trustees' request to stay on as interim president until his replacement is found. He told the trustee committee he would be available "to continue as needed until you name a new president and will be pleased to help my successor become indoctrinated, if desired, for a stated

period of time in his transition."

Johnson said he hoped to appoint the search committee by Dec. 19. The 11-member committee will include nine trustees, including the trustee chairman, plus one faculty member and one student. It is unlikely a nominee could be selected in time for the trustees' next meeting in March, Johnson said, but a special board meeting could be called once a recommendation is ready.

Among those frequently mentioned as possible successors to Leavell are Timothy George, dean of the Beeson Divinity School at Samford University; Jim Henry, pastor of First Baptist Church of Orlando, Fla., and current president of the Southern Baptist Convention; Charles Kelley, professor of evangelism at New Orleans Seminary; and Richard Land, executive director of the SBC Christian Life Commission.

Henry, Kelley and Land are graduates of New Orleans Seminary, which now has 1,800 students.

Johnson said nobody has an inside

track for the position. "I don't feel anybody on our board is committed to anyone at this point," he said.

Both Leavell and Johnson have insisted Leavell has not been under any pressure to retire.

While other Southern Baptist seminary presidents have had contentious relationships with their trustees, Leavell and New Orleans' board have been spared any major flare-ups over the years.

The SBC's six seminaries have been at the heart of the 15-year struggle for control of the denomination. Since conservatives gained the upper hand in the battle in 1979, they have been able to remove or replace four of the six seminary presidents.

Now the final two schools will be seeking new presidents at the same time. Milton Ferguson, president of Midwestern Baptist Theological Seminary in Kansas City, Mo., plans to retire in July 1996. Once the positions are filled at New Orleans and Midwestern, the transition of seminary leadership will be complete.

  
**Here's Hope.**  
**Share Jesus Now.**

Southern Baptists' nationwide emphasis on personal evangelism, "Here's Hope. Share Jesus Now," begins Jan. 9. To support this effort, the Western Recorder will produce a special "Here's Hope" section in each week's paper during January, February and March. Watch for the first special section in the Jan. 3 issue.

### BAPTIST BITS

■ **Texas editor retiring.** Presnall Wood, editor of the Texas Baptist Standard since 1977, has announced his retirement for Dec. 31, 1995, when he will be 63. With 250,000 subscribers, the Standard is the largest state Baptist newspaper in the nation. The newspaper's board of directors is expected to appoint an editor search committee after the first of the year.

■ **Church raises \$23.5 million.** Saddleback Valley Community Church in Mission Viejo, Calif., raised more than \$23.5 million in cash and commitments in a single weekend Nov. 19-20. The money will help the church build its first permanent facility. With an average Sunday attendance of nearly 9,000, Saddleback has attracted national attention as one of the 20 largest churches in America—without owning a building. The church has met in 57 locations during its 15-year history. Pastor Rick Warren began the innovative church in his home in 1980. The recent offering is believed to be the largest ever for any church. The congregation's children gave more than 1 ton of coins, about \$12,000.

■ **Baptisms projected up.** After two years of decline, Southern Baptists can expect a 2 percent increase in baptisms in 1994, according to an estimate by the Home Mission Board's research division. The estimate, based on information from state evangelism directors, projects 356,000 baptisms in 1994, up from 349,073 in 1993.

■ **Literature change delayed.** The Southern Baptist Sunday School Board has delayed plans to change the quarterly release dates for its Sunday school, discipleship training and church music dated curriculum. The board had planned to switch to a seasonal cycle in September 1995.

However, due to financial restraints, a decision has been made to postpone the change at least until the 1996-97 fiscal year, said Vice President Gene Mims.

■ **Arizona executive retiring.** Dan Stringer has announced his second retirement. Stringer has been executive director of the Arizona Baptist Convention since 1990, a post he assumed 18 months after retiring as executive director of the Florida Baptist Convention.

■ **Chaney named editor.** Ron Chaney, a former intern with the Western Recorder, has been named editor of "Baptist Life," news journal for the Baptist Convention of Maryland/Delaware. Chaney, 31, has been associate editor of the paper since 1991 and has served as acting editor since November 1993.

■ **Northcutt dies.** Jesse Northcutt, preaching professor and former administrator at Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary in Fort Worth, Texas, died Dec. 13 at age 80 at All Saints Hospital in Fort Worth due to complications of Parkinson's disease. Northcutt was a member of Southwestern's faculty from 1939 until his retirement in 1984. He served as the seminary's vice president for academic affairs from 1973-79 after 20 years as dean of the school of theology.

■ **World Changers goes gray.** In 1995, the popular World Changers coeducational missions program for youth will add a new phase geared toward senior adults. World Changers is a missions education program that includes hands-on experiences in repairing or building homes for needy people. The first senior adults World Changers project is slated for Savannah, Ga., April 22-29. Adults 55 and older are invited to partici-

pate. For information, call (901) 272-2461.

■ **Sehested honored.** Ken Sehested, executive director of the Baptist Peace Fellowship of North America, will be honored at next summer's biennial meeting of the American Baptist Churches in the U.S.A. He will receive the Edwin T. Dahlberg Peace Award, presented to individuals who have "worked constructively for peace with justice and freedom." Previous recipients include Martin Luther King Jr. and Jimmy Carter.

■ **Dunaway elected.** John Dunaway, pastor of First Baptist Church in Corbin, has been elected vice chairman of the board of directors of the Baptist Center for Ethics, an independent ethics agency based in Nashville.

■ **Pastor ruled in contempt.** A judge in Sanford, Fla., ruled Dec. 7 that a member of the Southern Baptist Executive Committee and his church were in contempt of court for resisting an order to allow inspection of the church's giving records. Circuit Judge O.H. Eaton gave the defendants, First Baptist Church of Markham Woods in Lake Mary, Fla., and Pastor Bob Parker, 10 days to make giving records and other documents available to a former church clerk who accuses Parker of wrongdoing. After Dec. 19, a \$500-a-day fine will be assessed until they comply with the court order.

After losing a lawsuit last January, the church opened some of its records to Ann Haynes, a charter member who alleges Parker wrongly usurped control of the congregation, used its non-profit status to avoid paying taxes on his \$285,000 home and kept jewelry for himself that was left to the church as part of a \$416,000 bequest.



"Memorable candlelight service, Pastor."

## Bryant Rudolph elected campus minister at Western

By Marv Knox  
Editor

Bryant Rudolph, an area Baptist campus minister in West Kentucky for the past five years, has been named campus minister at Western Kentucky University in Bowling Green.

Rudolph was elected to the WKU post by the Kentucky Baptist Convention Executive Board's administrative committee. He will begin Jan. 1.

Rudolph's election was among 11 personnel moves taken by the board, but the only one involving a full-time permanent position.

Rudolph has been based in Owensboro since 1989. He has been the Baptist Student Union director at Brescia College, Kentucky Wesleyan College and Owensboro Community College in Owensboro, as well as Henderson and Madisonville community colleges.

He is a graduate of Bluefield College and Virginia Commonwealth University in Virginia and Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in Louisville.

He and his wife, Hilda, have two

children, Sara, 15, and Jonathan, 13. The Rudolphs are members of Lewis Lane Baptist Church in Owensboro.

In other personnel actions, the administrative committee:

■ Employed Lincoln Bingham as the KBC's consultant for black church development.

Bingham will have three primary functions, said KBC evangelism Director Bill Jagers. He will help begin new churches in predominantly African-American communities, assist the development of the 35-40 black churches currently affiliated with the KBC and strengthen the cooperative ministries between the KBC and the General Association of Kentucky Baptists, the state's major black Baptist denomination.

Bingham, who has preached in churches and at associational meetings across the KBC, has been superintendent of the General Association for many years. In that capacity, he has been employed jointly by the KBC, the General Association and the Southern Baptist Home Mission Board. He will resign that post effective Dec. 31.

His new job will begin Jan. 1, and

he will work exclusively for the KBC and the Home Mission Board and devote more of his attention to church development. He also will continue as pastor of St. Paul Baptist Church in Louisville.

■ Hired Dan Davis, a student at Southern Seminary with experience in community ministries and chaplaincy, as the Metro Louisville multi-housing consultant.

Davis will work with Long Run, Shelby County and Sulphur Fork Baptist associations to provide ministries to people who live in apartments, condominiums, trailer parks and other multi-housing facilities.

Davis' new ministry will place Kentucky Baptists on the cutting edge of ministry within the Southern Baptist Convention, said Bob Jones, director of the KBC direct missions department. Ninety-five percent of people who live in multi-housing do not attend church, so this ministry is wide-open, he said.

Davis was director of community ministries in Rocky Mount, N.C., from 1987 to 1993. In Louisville, he has been a chaplain at Ten Broeck Hospital.

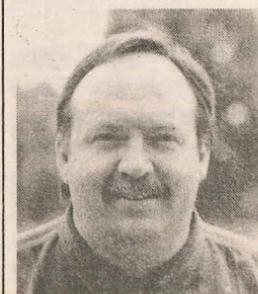
■ Ratified the selection of Delbert Fann to be a consultant to work with KBC associations to establish and maintain seminary extension centers.

Fann is a retired Southern Baptist home missionary who spent most of his career ministering with Native Americans in the Southwest. He also has been a Southern Baptist seminary extension consultant, with more than 20 years of experience.

■ Hired seven area consultants to promote the church annuity plan across the state.

They are Earl Bell, a retired pastor from Frankfort and current interim pastor of Clover Bottom Baptist Church in Versailles; Denzel Dukes, a retired pastor from Paducah; and Steve Fegenbush, associate pastor of Calvary Baptist Church in Danville.

Also Wallace Morris, a retired pastor from Bowling Green and current interim pastor of Hawesville Baptist Church in Hawesville; Lester Nash, a retired pastor and tax consultant from Henderson; Ron Sholar, minister of music at First Baptist Church in Hazard; and Keith Tingle, pastor of Owingsville Baptist Church in Owingsville.



Bryant Rudolph



**MEET THE MISSIONARIES** Bud and Martha Underwood (left) greet Southern Baptist missionaries Bob and Eddie Fields during last week's meeting of the Kentucky Baptist Convention Executive Board. Underwood is president of Oneida Baptist Institute. The Monday night session of the December board meeting traditionally includes testimonies from missionaries furloughing in Kentucky and a reception in honor of the missionaries.

## Marshall projects a year of construction

The coming year will be a time of construction, Bill Marshall, the Kentucky Baptist Convention's executive secretary-treasurer predicted.

He provided a glimpse into 1995 during the KBC Executive Board meeting last week in Louisville.

The convention will undertake two building projects. It will construct a student center for the Baptist Student Union at Northern Kentucky University in Highland Heights. It also will build an annex to the Baptist Building in Louisville, to house the Kentucky Baptist Foundation, Western Recorder and Woman's Missionary Union. Plans also call for expansion of the existing building to accommodate the

KBC archives.

In addition, the coming 12 months will be a year of caring, he noted.

The Executive Board will invest \$250,000 in the "Here's Hope" simultaneous evangelism campaign in order "to reach our state for Christ."

The KBC also will focus on "care of those who care for souls," he said, explaining the board's staff is working on several projects to secure adequate retirement funds for Kentucky Baptist ministers.

In addition, 1995 will be a year of conflict, Marshall predicted. "The Cedarmore issue will exert conflict," he said of the board's plan to conclude its ownership and management

of the statewide assembly it has owned for 40 years.

Despite the challenges, Marshall called for a spirit of optimism.

"Let 1995 be a year of building confidence," he said. As an example of reasons for confidence, he cited the rapid growth of the Kentucky Baptist Foundation, whose managed funds have more than doubled since 1991 and should top \$50 million in 1995.

Such increased contributions to the Foundation reflect Kentucky Baptists' confidence in the convention's agencies, institutions and Executive Board, Marshall insisted. "Confidence will continue to grow, and so will the kingdom of God."

### BLUEGRASS BURGEO

■ **Campbellsville gets \$300,000.** The James Graham Brown Foundation of Louisville has given Campbellsville College \$300,000 toward the renovation of Carter Hall. Once renovated, Carter Hall will become a new science and general academic building.

■ **Infant mortality declines.** Kentucky's 1993 infant mortality rate fell to 8 deaths per 1,000 live births, down from 8.3 deaths per 1,000 births the previous year. The infant mortality rate is the number of babies per 1,000 live births who die before their first birthday. It is considered a major indicator of a society's overall health status. Kentucky registered 52,895 live births in 1993 and 422 infant deaths.

■ **Jones invites all to prayer breakfast.** Gov. Brereton Jones has issued an invitation to all Kentuckians to attend his annual interfaith prayer breakfast Jan. 11 in Frankfort. Featured speaker will be Bob Russell, pastor of Southeast Christian Church in Louisville. The prayer breakfast is from 8-9:30 a.m. at the Farnham Dudgeon Civic Center. Doors will open at 7:15 a.m. To order the \$5 tickets in advance, write to Prayer Breakfast, State Capitol, Frankfort, Ky. 40601.

■ **Baptist Healthcare joins integrated system.** Baptist Healthcare System announced Dec. 15 that it has formed an integrated health delivery system for the Louisville area with Alliant Health System and the Sisters of Charity of Nazareth Health System. The newly formed organization includes Baptist Hospital East, Tri-County Baptist Hospital, Saints Mary and Elizabeth Hospital, Our Lady of Peace Hospital, Nazareth Home Health, Norton Hospital, Kosair Children's Hospital and Alliant Medical Pavilion. Although not a merger, the agreement will form a network of physicians, hospitals and health insurance plans to serve larger patient groups.

■ **KBC honored.** For the fourth year in a row, the Kentucky Baptist Convention has received the James W. Chatham Associational Sunday School Award from the Southern Baptist Sunday School Board. The award recognizes the state with the most associational Sunday school standards in the Southern Baptist Convention. The KBC reported 40 associations meeting the "standard" designation last year.

## WESTERN RECORDER

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

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## Appropriate gift

"The Chronicles of Narnia," written by C.S. Lewis, would make a wonderful Christmas gift for someone you know. In that great work, Lewis writes:

"It seems, then," said Tirian, "... that the Stable seen from within and the Stable seen from without are two different places."

"Yes," said the Lord Digory. "Its inside is bigger than its outside."

"Yes," said Queen Lucy, "in our world too, a Stable once had something inside it that was bigger than our whole world."

You know what Lewis meant, don't you? I have no idea whether the stable at Bethlehem was large or small, whether it had two mangers or seven, or whether it had a loft or not.

But I know this: Its physical dimensions are not feet or inches. Its true dimensions were measured in love and care and power. The baby in that manger was larger than the universe and all the love, and hate too, it contains.

Most of us are looking for something bigger than the problems we face. The mountains of the daily struggle to live and live successfully are high indeed. We often are discouraged because our problems and stresses loom so large. But Christ is larger than our problems.

Most of us are looking for something bigger than the ideas we have. Ours are so limited, so powerless, so tepid. And the ideas of others are the same. The treadmill of human ideas, even if they are decorated with three-dollar words and intricate philosophy, has led us to an intellectual pauper's house. Christ is bigger than our own selfish ideas.

He is bigger than your home, big-

ger than your crisis, bigger than your future and bigger than your fears. The stable held the biggest thing in all the world. When you celebrate Christmas in a few days, be sure you take it all in. Let it burst the confines of your world. Let it break the mold of the seasonal. Let it rise above everything else in your life.

Remember this: There is room in the stable for you and your family. You will be safe and loved and welcome. I hope you have a blessed Christmas.

*Richard W. Bridges, pastor  
First Baptist Church  
Bowling Green*

## Key of G

What key is your heart in these holy days of anticipation of and preparation for Christmas?

Mine is in the key of

G; G for gratitude. All of us this season are surrounded by blessings. And all our blessings but prepare us for the best gift of all—the Christ.

How then do I reply to this generosity of God and the gracious gifts of my worshiping and serving community of faith? Those of us studying the eighth century prophet Micah know the answer. It is spelled for us in Micah 6:8.

Does God want all the things, all the possessions of my life? Does God want the child of my heart? No, God simply, yet profoundly, wants me. My gratitude to God is to give myself. And I give myself in doing justice, loving tenderly and tenaciously, and walking humbly with God.

Christmas reminds us powerfully that God's best gift to us is God's very self—Jesus Christ. God shows us the way of giving self; and in gratitude, we give our best gift, our self, to God.

And in so doing, we catch the supreme spirit of Christmas, we address our stewardship question, and we embrace the way of Christ in living as outlined by Micah.

The key of G in our hearts beats not only for gratitude, but also for giving and for going the Way of Christ.

Come, Lord Jesus, and tune our hearts to receive and know and love and live Thee.

*Bill Johnson, minister of education  
Crescent Hill Baptist Church  
Louisville*

## One word

"Busy" is the word that describes life at the Hopper home these days.

Perhaps it is your word as well. Maybe your word is a nuance of "busy": "Frenzied." "Rushed." Or "nerve-wracked."

We have no problem trying to decide what to do. Our problem is that we have too much from which to choose. "Busy."

Others among us, however, live with different words: "Despondent." "Lonely." "Fearful." "Anxious."

These words bring a different kind of reality home than "busy" does. For these people, it is a series of questions about how to make it through another day. All kinds of people live in this wilderness. We meet them every day. They live right next door to us.

They need to hear another word from us. "Gospel." "Good news."

Here at Christmas, we have a wonderful opportunity to share this word with them and help them make it their word. God has come. Christ lives. Sins can be forgiven.

All of these words are summed up in one word: "Christmas!"

*Mark Hopper, pastor  
First Baptist Church  
Frankfort*

## SPIRIT OF CHRISTMAS

## The bell ringer

He stood there, ringing the little bell. Every year near Christmas time, someone stands there ringing a bell—sometimes a man, sometimes a woman.

I'm usually in a hurry when I shop at Kroger, and that day was no exception. But I noticed him, nevertheless, just outside the door, not quite in the way of customers but hard to pass unnoticed.

Dark had come before 6, I was a little hungry and a nip in the air had caught me without a topcoat.

I knew he was Salvation Army; he didn't have to tell me, but he did anyway. I dropped in the bucket a pocketfull of change and moved on with his "Merry Christmas" following me through the automatic doors. Soon his bell transitioned into the sounds of the check-out counters.

The huge "foodery" is commonplace to most folks, but not our Russian visitors. Such available abundance to them was as much a fairy land as a child's first Christmas.

I quickly collected the few food items I wanted, slid the credit card through the "gadget" at the end of the checkout and headed out again

through the doors.

The man with the bell looked at me as though he hadn't remembered! Or maybe I felt guilty for giving only pocket change.

As I put in some more change (and from then on determined I would say: "I have already given"), a little girl holding her daddy's hand passed by. He was looking away; she wasn't.

"Daddy," she said, "can we give the man something?" He stopped, put his hand in his pocket and gave her some coins. "Go put it in the bucket," he instructed. As she walked over, she chose instead to put it in his hand, looking up at the man with the bell. Taking her coins, he wished her "Merry Christmas" and dropped them into the bucket. They walked on toward the Christmas trees and I in the direction of the car.

Driving home, I was visited by the memory of a little girl in my life, many years ago; when the mother of my grandchildren was only 7 or 8.

During our years in Cyprus, there were only two Protestant English-language churches in Nicosia—St. Paul's Anglican and the Scottish Presbyterian Community Church. We often attended both.

At the gate of St. Paul's, an aged

man begged each Sunday morning. People had grown accustomed; having become so desensitized, they walked on by without really seeing him. But not Sharon. For each Sunday we attended, she stopped to give him a shilling—half her weekly allowance.

One Sunday when we had parked on the street behind the church, we exited the back gate. As I pulled away, Sharon yelled, "Daddy, I forgot the beggar." I stopped, let her out and followed her as she hurried to reach him. Already across the road in the front, she finally caught up to him. Tugging on his shabby coat from the rear, he turned around. Into his worn, old hands she placed a shilling and he cupped her hand in his.

And I saw in her innocent, merciful heart a glimpse of what I believe God must be really like.

But that was long ago. And now I wonder if I, too, have "grown accustomed"—hardened to all the pain and poverty in this world.

The bell ringer still rings in front of Kroger at Holiday Manor, reminding me that all is not yet right in the world and that I can still do something about it.

And Christmas tells me that I must!

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



## The good years

By Wade Rowatt

**Q** How can you stand to be around youth so much? What is so good about those awful teenage years?

**A** Beauty begins in the eye of the beholder. A neighbor restores old furniture. I see junk; he sees antiques and brings out the elegance of multi-patterned wood grains. My sister-in-law creates charming wall hangings. I see rotting wood and weeds; she sees "barnwood" and "lovely wild flowers." They create beauty from overlooked potential.

Attitudes about teenagers taint our understanding of their worth. Consider the positive side. You might call them unrealistic, but they are dreamers. Adolescents offer us a new way of seeing things. It is up to us to give their ideas a chance.

Teenagers move to the beat of a fast drummer. They keep us active and get us going. When was the last time you threw a party to celebrate anything? We can choose to watch from the sidelines of life or join the action.

Adults complain that youth talk back, argue too much and fail to see the ways of the real (adult) world. Youthful thinking aids adults who will see the other side of issues. "How would you feel if that happened to you?" is a favorite comeback of my 14-year-old.

Grownups gripe: "Teens take too many chances. They do not stop to count the cost." Courage has sent many young men and women in service for our nation. Young people get involved in causes that matter to them. Perhaps more adults should do the same. Let's help them change what needs changing and fix what needs fixing, even if it does cost. Whereas we see "the way things are," they see "the way it could become."

The Apostle Paul reminded Timothy, "Do not let people despise your youthfulness." Can we adults not despise youthfulness? Perhaps if we see clearly, we can value them.

A recent prophet, Grady Nutt, said youth should believe, "I am a person of worth, created in the image of God." When we see teens, do we see good-for-nothing trash or a work of art?

*Wade Rowatt is professor of psychology of religion at Southern Baptist Theological Seminary.*

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

# EDITORIALS

## May you know the full-scale surprise of Christmas

Give yourself a gift this week: Seek solitude and spend a few moments contemplating the stupendous surprise of that first Christmas.

Don't bother polishing your thoughts into picture-perfect images. No Neiman-Marcus mahogany manger. No Waterford crystal star. No Mary, Joseph, Babe and shepherd models hired from the William Morris Agency. And no stable designed by Ralph Lauren for a photo spread in the December issue of *Southern Living*.

Try for realism. If you've ever visited a barn, recall the smells—of fresh hay, to be sure, but also dust, grain and barnyard animals. Especially barnyard animals. If you've ever seen the faces of a teenage mother and a tired and worried father, remember them as Mary and Joseph. If you've ever been by the employment agency on a cold December morning and looked at the men standing in line to get a shot at a job working on a garbage truck, imagine them as the shepherds.

Helped along by advertisers and made-for-TV specials, we've become pretty adept at reinventing Christmas. That's not so bad when it comes to creating warm-fuzzy feelings about the holidays. It probably makes us act a little cheerier at the shop, office, school or neighborhood party. It causes the cash registers to ring like a truckload of xylophones bouncing over railroad tracks. Maybe it even prompts us to put a little something extra in the Salvation Army bucket.

Unfortunately, it doesn't do much to move us into the true spirit of Christmas. To grasp that feeling, we must contemplate outrageous audacity. We've got to jump in surprise and feel the tingle that runs down our spines when we're shocked out of our shoes. Because God's ways aren't our ways.

Try to imagine what you would do if you were God and you intended to save the world. Chances are, you wouldn't come as a baby, born to a young girl under circumstances that set the village gossips' tongues wagging. You wouldn't trust your young future to a common laborer from a has-been family. You wouldn't make your mama ride a donkey on her due date. You wouldn't decide to be born in a barn. And you wouldn't send your only birth announcement to a dirty bunch of animal tenders

who rank slightly above pond scum on the social register.

Because God's ways aren't our ways. That's why it's so important to go someplace quiet and try to imagine what it must have been like to be a shepherd on that natal night. Or to be Mary or Joseph.

The closest we come to God's ways is when we surprise someone we love with outlandish, unexpected generosity. In that Bethlehem stable, God defied all human calculation. That wouldn't be so important if it were only a Christmas surprise. But God has been busy surprising us with holy grace ever since. God chose an unfathomable method for leaving heaven to save people on earth. Throughout that Baby's life, Jesus kept on surprising everyone he encountered. His mother and brothers, who thought he should come on home and act like regular folks. His followers, who thought they'd eventually be generals in his army. Religious bureaucrats, who couldn't understand why he had such a hard time with them making up rules and making a buck in the temple. Prostitutes, tax collectors, lepers, cripples and grieving mothers, who never before had been touched by true love. And even women who stuck by his side to what they thought was the end, only to discover it was only the beginning. Surprise again.

Their surprise is ours as well. No matter how hard we try, we can't rationalize why we deserve for God to take on the vulnerability of the baby of a poor Jewish family in occupied Palestine. We can't understand how God would let that only Son slip from heaven's security down to cruel Earth, where nice people often finish last. We can't conceive of the love that would let both of them feel the hellish agony our sin created in this place.

Humanly speaking, nobody deserves Christmas. Jesus didn't deserve the crudest welcome our world had to offer. We don't deserve the love that sent him here; never have, never will. Fortunately, God's ways are not our ways. And fortunately, God's I-love-you gift of a Baby in a Bethlehem barn was the best surprise of all eternity.

May Jesus surprise you again this Christmas.

Marv Knox

**Humanly speaking, nobody deserves Christmas. Jesus didn't deserve the crudest welcome our world had to offer. We don't deserve the love that sent him here. Fortunately, God's ways are not our ways.**

### Giver & receiver

In the "Peanuts" TV special, Charlie Brown can't get into the Christmas spirit. His friend Linus tells him, "You're the only person I know who can take a wonderful season like Christmas and turn it into a problem!"

What about you? You don't have to be Scrooge to turn Christmas into a problem. It happens when you want the blessings of giving but not the obligation of receiving.

Look again at the manger where

God gave his greatest gift. Jesus, who came to give his life a ransom for many, began by receiving—adoration of shepherds and gifts from wise men.

Giver or receiver? Jesus showed us how to do both! Receiving is the only way to enter heaven and relate to a living God. Giving is a joy by which we bless others. Let Jesus teach you to be a giver and receiver this Christmas.

Chuck Darland, pastor  
Immanuel Baptist Church  
Elizabethtown

### The greatest gift

I've always been partial to this season, but for different reasons now as compared to my childhood.

Oh, I still love to receive gifts. But as I grow in Christian maturity, giving becomes more of a joy than receiving.

I look forward to wrapping gifts and placing them under the Christmas tree.

More important than the beautiful paper is the fact each gift is wrapped in love. Not just emotion, but the love of Jesus Christ.

The greatest Christmas gift I ever

have received was wrapped not in beautiful paper but in swaddling clothes.

The Christmas gift I cherish most was not found lying under a brightly decorated evergreen, but was nailed to an old rugged tree on Mount Calvary.

Although my gifts will never begin to measure up to the gift of God's only Son, Jesus Christ, I trust with each passing year that I can become a more cheerful giver and a more grateful receiver.

Grover Westover, pastor  
Burton Memorial Baptist Church  
Bowling Green

### SPIRIT OF CHRISTMAS

## Who'd expect to find the spirit of Christmas in the Longshot Tavern?

The spirit of Christmas crops up in the least-expected places. That happened last weekend, for a hardy band of Christmas carolers.

I never intended to join them as they sang along the street that runs past our church. We had invited friends for dinner that evening. And by the time illness forced our friends to cancel, I had forgotten about caroling.

So, I was up to my elbows in dirty dishes when the phone rang.

"Marv, I'm calling on behalf of your church," Rowan stressed. "We're trying to go caroling here, and we need another voice." This was an appeal to community pride, to loyalty to our beloved church, to the evangelistic spirit of Christmas present.

This was an opportunity to ditch those dirty dishes.

"Honey," I relayed to Joanna, "they need another voice to help them carol on Frankfort Avenue."

"Go," she said. She loves our church too. Or she was sick of hearing me carol to myself as I washed the dishes.

I caught up with the carolers down by the fire station. We sang in a laundromat and a pharmacy, and then we delivered Christmas blessing to the homes of scrumptious food. Like the Irish Rover,

Genny's Deli and Clifton Pizza. On the whole, we were received politely, and sometimes well. At Sweet Surrender, the waitresses stopped their waitressing and sang along. And the only place that threw us out was Taste of Seoul, where the manager thought we came to take and not to give.

We were almost done when we came upon the Longshot Tavern. "Should we carol here?" someone asked. I kept quiet, but inside I argued:

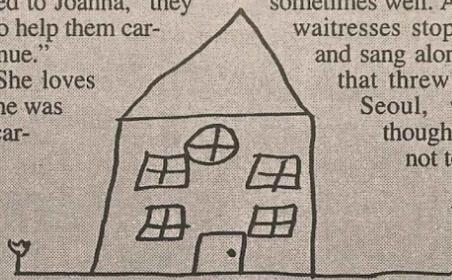
"No, no, no. People in a bar don't want carolers to interrupt their beer-drinking and

basketball-watching."

Zealotry prevailed over caution, and we sang loudly as we bolted through the door. I prepared for boos and flying beer bottles, and that's when I got surprised. The patrons of that smoky bar gave us the best reception of the night. They smiled and listened, and some sang along. They asked us to sing "Happy Birthday" to a guy named Mike, which we did. We caroled some more, and they wished us a Merry Christmas.

Some folks will say the booze loosened them up, and that may be true. But I think Jesus came for those people. And I'd like to think the spirit of Christmas touched hearts that needed to be reminded of the reason for the season. I know it did mine.

Marv Knox



down home

## Should Christian parents let their children believe in Santa?

**"Most Christian parents can probably afford to relax a bit about this whole matter. A child's eventual response to Christ does not totally hinge upon early beliefs about Santa."**

Carrie Beth Tonks

**YES**

By Carrie Beth Tonks  
Minister to children  
Calvary Baptist Church  
Lexington

■ Who is Santa Claus?

Saint Nicholas was born in Asia Minor—now Turkey—in the fourth century A.D., and it is believed he became a bishop in the church at a very young age. All his life, he was known for his compassion, kindness and generosity. Many stories were told of his good works throughout the villages in the area in which he lived. Some of them have been passed down through the ages.

The most familiar story involves a family with three daughters. In Nicholas' hometown lived a family so poor that the father could not afford dowries for his three daughters. Nicholas, unseen, dropped a bag of gold one night through an open window, thus providing a marriage dowry for the first daughter. In time, he dropped another bag of gold for the second daughter. Again, no one saw him. But when he tried to leave a bag of gold for the third daughter, someone saw him. Nicholas begged the person not to tell what he had seen, but the story of his generosity spread.

In the 16th century, after the Reformation, saints went out of favor in Europe. But someone was needed to take the place of St. Nicholas and give presents at Christmas. In England, it was Father Christmas who took over the job. In Holland it was Sinterklass. And in the United

States his name became Santa Claus.

■ Why is Santa important to children?

Why do children find Santa so irresistible?

First, because he brings presents. Everyone enjoys receiving presents.

Second, a large part of Santa's appeal lies in his extraordinary powers. Power and autonomy are important issues to young children. At a time when they hear the word "no" so much, they still want to believe they are in control, so they identify with various fantasy characters.

Third, the idea of pretend is an important aspect of a child's mental development. Children enjoy dressing up, creating great buildings and making supper with play dough.

Fourth, Santa is enjoyable to children. They wave at him when they see him in a parade just as they would Mickey Mouse at Disneyland.

■ When do you admit there is no Santa?

Parents who notice their child is growing suspicious should not try to continue the myth. Instead, they should realize their child is continuing to develop appropriately. Upon a child expressing, "Is there really a Santa Claus?" one might say, "Well, think about it a little—what do

you think?" Through this type of questioning, many children come to a conclusion on their own.

Parents should let the children take the lead in their beliefs about Santa. Don't push the notion, but don't take it away from them either. Most importantly, be sensitive and honest through the whole issue.

As you come to this point, you may want to tell them the story of Saint Nicholas and discuss how many families enjoy pretending or playing this fun game for young children. This is a good time to let the children continue Santa with younger siblings. This can help them to feel they are growing and maturing.

■ Honestly speaking.

Does the inevitable realization that magical characters do not exist shake young children's trust in parents? No. Too many other incidents prove the credibility of mother and father. Attentive, responsive parents—who keep their promises and are honest with children day after day—foster a feeling of trust that is hard to damage.

Rather than resent their parents' lying, most children, in fact, find ways to absorb the shock of reality. "Santa isn't real like you and me, but he is real like a person in a storybook," said a 5-year-old girl

after her parents verified her suspicions about Santa.

■ The heart

of the matter.

The heart of the matter for most parents is not whether to celebrate Santa but how Christian parents should keep the focus on the true meaning of Christmas.

Develop some practices that emphasize the true meaning of Christmas. Parents can purchase or make a nativity set the child can use to act out the Christmas story.

Sing carols such as "Away In A Manger" as you ride in the car.

Contact the Salvation Army to discover a low-income family who otherwise might not have a happy Christmas. Allow the child to make or select a gift to give and take to the family.

Emphasize "What are you going to give for Christmas?" Allow a certain amount of your Christmas budget for the child to spend on gifts or to make gifts.

Involve your child in planning and preparing a simple Christmas Eve supper for someone who may be spending Christmas alone.

■ Keep Christ in Christmas.

Most Christian parents probably can afford to relax a bit about this whole matter. A child's eventual response to Christ does not totally hinge upon early beliefs about Santa. The decision to include or exclude Santa is up to you.

Just remember that putting Christ in Christmas is essential—for your own sake as well as for the sake of your child. Do that and you surely will keep Santa in the proper place in your home.

**NO**

By Eula Lawrence  
KBC Sunday school  
special worker  
Corbin

"Then how about God?" a first grader asked his father, after he learned at school there was no Santa Claus. His father and mother had carried out all the pretense about the North Pole, reindeer and the chimney. They knew the time had come for them to tell the truth. They simply told their son there was no truth in the Santa Claus story. He then looked up and asked, "Then how about God?"

We need to help lay a good spiritual foundation, to help the child develop a good attitude toward God—things like God made the world (Acts 17:24); God is good to us (Psalm 73:1); God cares for us (I Peter 5:7); and God gives us things to enjoy (I Timothy 6:17).

Parents have an awesome responsibility in rearing their children. In Deuteronomy 6:6-7 we read: "And these words, which I am commanding you today, shall be on your heart; and you shall teach them diligently to your sons and shall talk of them when you sit in your house and when you walk by the way and when you lie down and when you rise up." Parents should understand they cannot shift their responsibility

for this training to someone else. This is not easy.

During the Christmas season, our children need to hear more about giving than receiving; how they can help one another (Galatians 5:13); love one another (I John 4:7); and work together (I Corinthians 3:9). The Santa story focuses on a more selfish way—"What am I going to get?"

My husband and I taught our children Santa Claus was an imaginary person like Donald Duck, and that their father played the part of Santa. Yes, we pretended, but the children knew it was pretense. We were not saying the game was real. We were concerned that our friends might get upset if our girls told their children there was no Santa Claus, so we asked our girls not to tell their friends, because they probably had another Santa Claus game.

On Christmas morning, our children looked at their presents then climbed up in their daddy's lap and said, "Thank you for my presents." This made Christmas a family affair. Attention was not given to Santa coming from a distant workshop at the North Pole, but to our own family. This made the giving of gifts a warm, intimate affair.

Attention also was given to fam-



ily finances. One legitimate objective to this policy is that the gifts

are limited to the family situation. One boy whose parents told him the truth about Santa at an early age asked his mother if they could afford a dump truck. "If you can," he said, "you had better get downtown and get one, because they are going fast."

Christian parents don't want their children to be different. They are concerned about what they teach their children, but they experience pressure to do what everyone else does. It is difficult for them to see the negatives in having a little fun over Santa.

The preschool years are the most impressionable time in the life of a child. During these formative years, is it wise to teach there is a Santa—one who will supply their wishes, sees all, knows all, is so magic he can fly through the sky with reindeer, enter the house through a key hole?

We would be emphasizing fantasy and magic instead of fact. Children need to know they can always get facts and truth from their parents. Mixing spiritual and fantasy is confusing to a child. We need to be up-front with them and

not contribute to the confusion. Let's be truthful and honest.

One of the ways a preschool child learns is through relationships. As parents, many things we don't plan cause a breakdown in the parent/child relationship. Saying Santa, a fantasy, is true surely will cause questions to surface regarding our trustworthiness and put a strain on the relationship.

What was the reaction of our children to our plan? They say today that they didn't feel different or unhappy and certainly did not experience disappointment or betrayal. Our grandson, who was taught the same way, said he felt "better off" because he had information his peers did not have.

We played the Santa game in part. We gave and received presents, decorated our home, enjoyed the element of surprise and the excitement of the season. We were spared the task of having to explain to our children we had not been telling them the truth.

We also were able to talk about the miraculous events around the coming of our Savior. The real Christmas story received the emphasis it should. The manger, the angels, the angel choruses, the shepherds, the magi and the special star gave us a real foundation for celebrating Christmas.

**"Children need to know they can always get facts and truth from their parents. Mixing spiritual and fantasy is confusing to a child. We need to be up-front with them and not contribute to the confusion."**

Eula Lawrence

# MISSIONS

## Kentucky volunteers find holiday joy in missions

By Mary Speidel  
SBC Foreign Mission Board

PORT-AU-PRINCE, Haiti—When he heard volunteers were needed in Haiti, Kentucky Baptist Don Jaynes said he didn't have time to go. "You don't have time not to go," responded his daughter, LaDonna.

Father and daughter earlier had done volunteer missions together in Kenya through a Kentucky Baptist partnership. They also worked in Southern Baptist relief efforts after Hurricane Andrew in Florida.

When the plea came for volunteers to help with a Southern Baptist feeding project in Haiti, LaDonna wanted to go. But she couldn't miss any days of student teaching.

It was easier for her father, a self-employed accountant in Richmond, to get off work. The trip was during Thanksgiving, and he had some vacation days planned then.

At first he wasn't too thrilled about spending them in Haiti. But he knew that's where God wanted him.

"I knew people are hungry here," said Jaynes, a member of Eastside Bethel Baptist Church in Richmond.

Once he made the commitment to go, Jaynes recruited a fellow layman from his church to join him. Allen Grant, a builder/contractor in Richmond, never had done volunteer missions before. But he was willing to give it a shot.

Grant and fellow volunteers—including 13 Kentucky Baptists—helped remodel the Haitian Baptist annex, base of operations for a Southern Baptist feeding project. An earlier team that included five Kentuckians started the renovations.

"I think everybody should try it," Grant said of volunteer missions. "I think they'll get a blessing from it. I would do it again."

So would Boyce Gregory, a factory production worker from Manchester. "I had said I'd go anywhere and do anything, as long as I didn't have to leave the United States," he said. "I definitely wasn't interested in coming to Haiti."

Gregory and his wife, Jeanette, members of Horse Creek Baptist Church in Manchester, never had traveled overseas. "But the Lord worked everything out so quickly and easily that we knew we were supposed to come," said Gregory, while his wife worked nearby fixing lunch for fellow volunteers.

"Once I made the commitment, not even knowing if the finances would be there—everything else just fell into place," added Gary Forman of Frankfort.

A member of Forman's church—Immanuel Baptist in Frankfort—first approached him about going. The member long had been burdened by the human needs in Haiti, but he felt he didn't have the stamina to make the trip.

"I can't go, but would you consider it?" he asked Forman.

When Forman later said "yes," that church member paid his way. Immanuel's missions committee, chaired by Forman, also donated funds to help meet needs he might see on his trip.

"I can't think of a better way to spend Thanksgiving than by showing my thanks to God for his blessings by helping somebody else," said Forman, who works in financial analysis for Kentucky's public service commission.

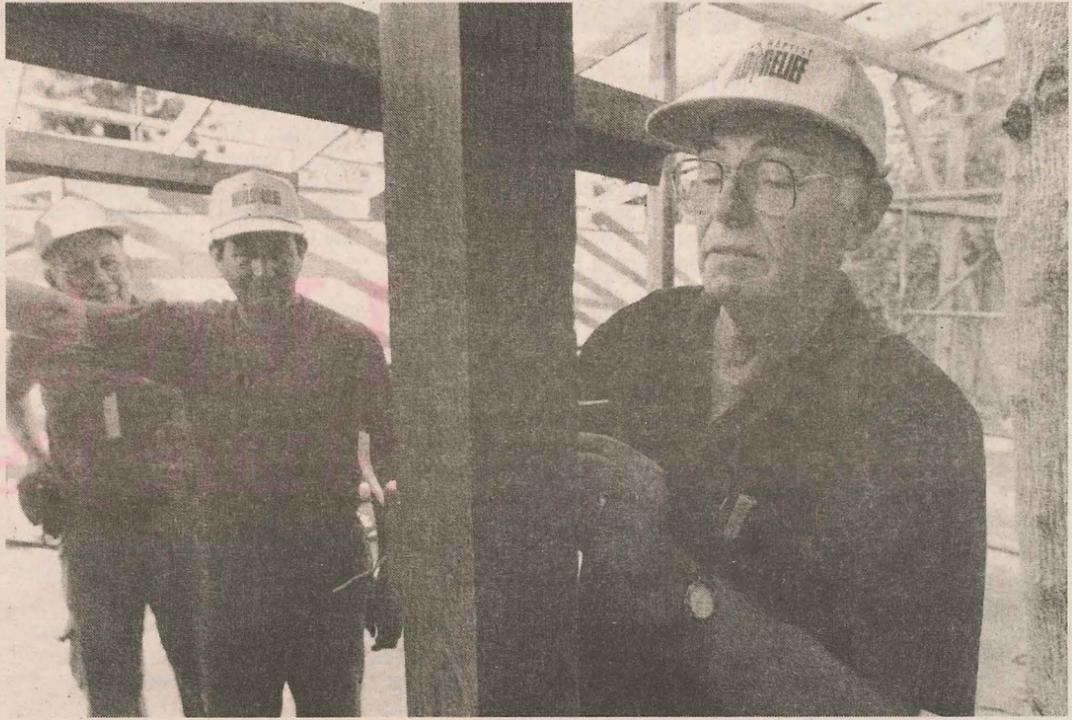
"Once you get started (doing disaster relief), it's addictive," added Barbara Sharp, a member of Louisville's Highview Baptist Church. "We've had a lot of opportunities to serve."

Sharp learned about the Haiti project while reading the Western Recorder. She told her husband, Paul, about it.

"Let's go," he said.

Dovie Smallwood of Mariba cancelled a vacation to Jamaica and used the money to fund her volunteer trip to Haiti. Some people told her she was crazy, but she was certain this was the right thing to do.

"Jamaica will be there later," said Smallwood, a member of Frenchburg Baptist Church.



**LENDING A HAND** Kentucky Baptist volunteer David Lyons (right) of Barbourville installs electrical wiring at the Baptist Convention of Haiti's annex building in Port-au-Prince, while Texas volunteers Gary Smith (center) and Milton Schmidt wait to assist. (BP photos by Warren Johnson)



**KENTUCKY VOLUNTEERS** ■ Center: After worship at Concord Baptist Church in Port-au-Prince, Haiti, missionary Peggy Rutledge chats with Kentucky Baptists Dovie Smallwood (center) from Mariba, and Barbara Sharp from Louisville. ■ Above: Jeanette Gregory from Manchester gets acquainted with Mary Brentham (left), an International Service Corps volunteer in Haiti. ■ Left: Volunteers James Clayton (left) of Benton and Mark Abernathy of North Carolina build rafters at the Baptist Convention of Haiti annex in Port-au-Prince.



**Here's Hope**  
The annual Kentucky Baptist Evangelism Conference is just around the corner. Plan now to attend this year's conference, which will support the nationwide "Here's Hope" emphasis, Feb. 27-28 at Walnut Street Baptist Church in Louisville.

**Deacon Retreat**  
Take advantage of an outstanding opportunity for refreshment and inspiration during the annual retreats for deacons, pastors and spouses at Cedarmore Assembly Feb. 10-11 or Jonathan Creek Assembly Feb. 24-25.

**Auditions**  
Get ready to audition for the Kentucky Baptist All-State Youth Choir and Orchestra. Auditions are slated for Feb. 25 in Bowling Green, March 4 in Lexington, March 11 in Louisville and March 18 in Madisonville.

**Singles Retreat**  
"Growing Stronger in Life" is the theme of this year's Single Adult Retreat, slated for March 17-19 at Cave City Convention Center. For a brochure, call the KBC family ministry department at (502) 245-4101.

**For Small Churches**  
The annual Small Church Growth Tour is headed your way in January. See the article in this Events section for the date and location best suited to serve you.

# FOR ALL KENTUCKY BAPTISTS

# EVENTS

PASTORS, EVANGELISM LEADERS, CHURCH STAFF, OUTREACH LEADERS

## Evangelism Conference: Here's help for Here's Hope

If you're looking for inspiration or information about the "Here's Hope" simultaneous evangelism campaign, be sure to attend this year's Kentucky Baptist Evangelism Conference.

"Here's Hope. Share Jesus Now" is the theme of the conference, scheduled for Walnut Street Baptist Church in Louisville Feb. 27-28. The theme ties directly into the national emphasis on 60-days of personal evangelism this winter sponsored by the Southern Baptist Home Mission Board and the Kentucky Baptist Convention.

A special Monday morning session will "Celebrate Hope" with an emphasis on vocational evangelists from Kentucky. Featured participants include Ron Wilburn, Dana Davidson, Joe Mobley, Cynthia Winfree, Stevie Reed and Steve Hardy.

The first session of the Evangelism Conference begins at 2 p.m. Monday with an emphasis on celebrating hope

in the church. Featured participants include the drama team from Little Flock Baptist Church in Shepherdsville; Thom Rainer, dean of the Billy Graham School at Southern Seminary; Ken Carter of the HMB's Atlanta staff; and Roy Fish, evangelism professor at

Southwestern Seminary in Texas.

Monday evening will focus on celebrating hope in the marketplace. Featured participants include the Celoria Family Singers; Jack Helton, a student at Clear Creek Baptist Bible College;

John Sullivan, executive director of the Florida Baptist Convention; and the Kentucky Baptist Chorale and Singing Women.

Tuesday morning will focus on celebrating hope in personal evangelism.

Featured leaders include James Blevins, New Testament professor at Southern Seminary; Squire Parsons, gospel musician; Roy Fish; Monty Carter, KBC evangelism associate; and John Sullivan.

Tuesday afternoon will focus on celebrating hope in exalting Christ. Featured participants include James Blevins; Squire Parsons; Ed Vaughn, president of Baptist Healthcare System; and Roy Fish.

The final session Tuesday evening will focus on celebrating hope through worship. Worship leaders include Ken and Lois Holland, vocational music evangelists; Squire Parsons; James Blevins; and Lincoln Bingham, KBC consultant for black church relations.

In addition, the Evangelism Conference will include special-interest sessions on several other topics.

For more information, call the evangelism office at (502) 245-4101.



## Here's Hope. Share Jesus Now.

### MINISTERS

## The tax conference cometh

All Kentucky Baptist ministers will benefit from this year's Ministers' Income Tax Conferences, to be held across the state the week of Feb. 13.

Conference leaders are Bruce Sides, vice president for member services with the Southern Baptist Annuity Board, and Don Spencer, KBC annuity department director.

The conference will cover ways to reduce your tax liability, how to file your 1994 taxes, why ministers are being audited by the IRS, how churches should report ministerial pay and how recent IRS ruling affect the ways churches should compensate their ministers.

The dates and locations of this year's conferences are:

■ **Louisville**, Feb. 13, Highland Park First Baptist Church, 10 a.m. to 12:30 p.m.

■ **Bowling Green**, Feb. 13, First Baptist Church, 6:45-9:15 p.m.

■ **Owensboro**, Feb. 14, Bellevue Baptist Church, 10 a.m. to 12:30 p.m.

■ **Paducah**, Feb. 14, Lone Oak First Baptist Church, 6:45-9:15 p.m.

■ **Somerset**, Feb. 16, Beacon Hill Baptist Church, 10 a.m. to 12:30 p.m.

■ **Prestonsburg**, Feb. 16, First Baptist Church, 6:45-9:15 p.m.

■ **Winchester**, Feb. 17, Central Baptist Church, 10 a.m. to 12:30 p.m.

■ **Erlanger**, Feb. 17, Erlanger Baptist Church, 6:45-9:15 p.m.

For registration information, call the KBC annuity department at (502) 245-4101 or write to Box 43433, Louisville, Ky. 40253.

### GIRLS & PARENTS

## Register now for girls' camp

Although it's cold outside now, it's time to start thinking about summer camps for Girls in Action and Acteens.

Registration forms for summer girls' camps at both Cedar Crest and Jonathan Creek assemblies are available from the Kentucky Woman's Missionary Union office.

The GA and Acteens camps are for girls in grade four through 12. Girls in grades one through three and their mothers are invited to attend mother/daughter overnights. Girls do not have to be members of GAs or Acteens to attend the camps.

These camps, sponsored by Kentucky WMU, offer missions education, spiritual growth and recreation, as well as opportunities for girls to grow in knowledge of God, self and the world. The camps are staffed by trained women who love youth and children and are committed to missions.

■ **Cedar Crest dates for GAs:** June 19-23, June 26-30, June 10-14, July 24-28 and July 31-Aug. 4. The July 5-7 camp will be for fourth-graders only.

■ **Cedar Crest dates for Acteens:** June 10-14, July 17-21.

■ **Cedar Crest dates for mother/daughter overnights:** July 7-8, July 14-15, July 21-22, July 28-29.

■ **Jonathan Creek dates for GAs:** June 12-16, June 19-23, June 26-30.

■ **Jonathan Creek date for Acteens:** June 12-16.

■ **Jonathan Creek dates for mother/daughter overnights:** June 16-17 and June 23-24.

■ **Cost:** \$76 for five-day camps; \$38 for three-day camps; \$19.50 for overnights.

■ **Registration forms and information:** Contact Kentucky WMU at Box 43433, Louisville, Ky. 40253.

### DEACONS, PASTORS

## Retreat helps deacons reach out and touch

"Touching and Being in Touch" is the theme of the annual retreats for deacons, pastors and spouses at Cedarmore and Jonathan Creek assemblies.

All deacons, pastors and their spouses are invited to attend.

Keynote speaker at Cedarmore will be Billy Compton, Kentucky Baptist Convention president and pastor of First Baptist Church in Mount Washington. Keynoter at Jonathan Creek will be Monty Carter, associate in the KBC's evangelism office.

Sessions will inspire you to see how your touch can free, cleanse, quiet, reassure and affirm others. Learn how God touches you and

how through his power you can touch others.

Additional sessions to be offered

based deacon ministry.

■ Deacon and spouse: a ministering couple.

■ The power of personal touch.

■ Drop-out track.

■ Touch through prayer.

The retreats will be offered Feb. 10-11 at Cedarmore and Feb. 24-25 at Jonathan Creek. Sessions begin at 6:15 p.m. on Friday and conclude with lunch on Saturday.

■ **Cost:** Rates for lodging and meals vary.

■ **Registration:** For registration information, contact the KBC church growth and administration office by calling (502) 245-4101 or writing to Box 43433, Louisville, Ky. 40253.



Compton



Carter

include:  
■ Reaching young adults through preschool ministry.  
■ Beginning and building a gift-

### LAYPEOPLE & MINISTERS

## January is a good time to make a will

Did you know that the state already has a will written for you?

Without a will, state law determines how your estate will be divided up and who will do it. This could be contrary to your wishes and could create hardship for those you most want to protect, according to Richard Carnes, president of Kentucky Baptist Foundation.

January is "Make Your Will Month" in the Southern Baptist Convention. The Kentucky Baptist Foundation supports this emphasis by providing information and resources to encourage all Christians to write wills.

For resources on making a will, contact the Foundation at Box 43433, Louisville, Ky. 40253, (502) 245-4101.

# EVENTS

## FOR ALL KENTUCKY BAPTISTS



### PASTORS, DEACONS & SUNDAY SCHOOL LEADERS

## Help offered for smaller churches

If you're tired of church growth conferences that only tell you what works in big churches, here's good news.

The annual Small Church Growth Tour sponsored by the Kentucky Baptist Convention's Sunday school department is coming your way.

This is a one-stop seminar that teaches simple and effective ways to start growing your church today. You'll learn tips to:

- Increase attendance.
- Increase missions.
- Increase baptisms.
- Increase quality.
- Increase contacts.
- Increase enrollment.
- Increase stewardship.
- Increase ministry.

■ **Dates and locations:** Jan. 16 at Hardin Baptist Church in Hardin; Jan. 17 at Wing Avenue Baptist Church in Owensboro; Jan. 19 at Eastwood Baptist Church in Bowling Green; Jan. 20 at North Side Baptist Church in Elizabethtown; Jan. 21 at Woodland Baptist Church in Louisville.

■ **Times:** All conferences are from 7 p.m. to 9:30 p.m., except in Louisville, 8:30 a.m. to noon.

■ **Cost:** Free.

■ **Reservations:** Pre-registration is important. Call (502) 245-4101, ext. 300 today.

### CHURCH INSTRUMENTALISTS

## Instrumentalists invited to KBC workshop

Church instrumentalists from across Kentucky are invited to the Church Music Instrumental Workshop April 28-29 at Immanuel Baptist Church in Lexington.

The annual event provides an opportunity for church instrumentalists to rehearse and play with a mass church orchestra and introduces both players and directors to new music and rehearsal techniques.

This year's guest conductor is John Gage, minister of instrumental music at First Baptist Church of Atlanta.



■ **Cost:** \$10 per person before April 10 or \$15 per person after April 10.

■ **Registration deadline:** April 24.

■ **Dates and times:** 7-10:30 p.m. April 28 and 9 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. April 29.

■ **Special feature:** A Directors' Roundtable discussion on "Training the Out-of-shape Instrumentalist" will be offered April 29, with an additional \$5 fee.

■ **To register:** Contact the KBC church music department at (502) 245-4101, or write to the church music department at Box 43433, Louisville, Ky. 40253.

### YOUTH CHOIR LEADERS

## State Youth Choir Festival slated for Bowling Green

Youth choirs from across the state are invited to participate in this year's State Youth Choir Festival sponsored by the KBC church music department.

Guest conductor will be Richard Joiner, chairman of the music department at Mississippi College and former professor at Campbellsville College. Accompanist will be Ron Boud of Southern Seminary.

Participating choirs will prepare five anthems in advance which will be performed as a mass choir. In addition, each church choir will have an opportunity to perform individually in a parade of choir, either for adjudication or without adjudication.

The final concert/worship service with the mass youth choir is open to the public at no charge. It will be at 6 p.m. Feb. 25 at Eastwood Baptist

Church in Bowling Green.

■ **Festival cost:** \$25 per church before Feb. 1 or \$30 per church after Feb. 1.

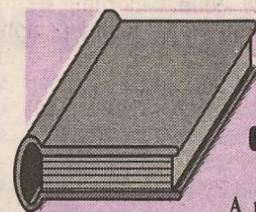
■ **Date:** Feb. 24-25.

■ **Location:** Eastwood Baptist Church in Bowling Green.

■ **Accommodations:** Each church is responsible for its own accommodations, but a list of nearby motels will be provided to all who pre-register.

■ **Festival music:** "Be Not Afraid," by Courtney; "Hush, Somebody's Calling My Name," by Denard; "A Jubilant Song," by Pote; "Shout the Glad Tidings," by Handel; "Wings of the Dawn," by Spencer.

■ **Registration or information:** Call the KBC church music department at (502) 245-4101 or write to Box 43433, Louisville, Ky. 40253.



## Book for deacons

A new booklet called "Gift Based Deacon Ministry" is now available from the KBC church growth and administration division.

The booklet was written by Vernon Cole and Monty Carter of the KBC staff, along with Dan Garland, pastor of Zion Baptist Church in Henderson.

The content helps deacons claim the gifts God has given them and become excited about their ministry as deacons by focusing on those gifts. The booklet also has a strong biblical base.

■ **Cost:** \$2.50 per booklet.

■ **To order:** Call the church growth and administration division at (502) 245-4101 or write to Box 43433, Louisville, Ky. 40253.

■ **Blow your horn**  
The Church Music Instrumental Workshop for Kentucky Baptists is April 28-29 at Immanuel Baptist Church in Lexington.

■ **Tax tips**  
Eight regional tax conferences for ministers are scheduled across the state in February.

■ **Summer camp**  
It's not too early to make plans for summer camps. Registrations are now being received for Girls in Action and Acteen camps at both Jonathan Creek and Cedarmore assemblies.

■ **MasterLife**  
A MasterLife certification workshop is coming to Kentucky Jan. 26-28. Participants will become certified to lead MasterLife groups in churches, associations, homes and prisons. Call (502) 245-4101 today to register.

■ **Youth Choir Festival**  
Youth choirs from across Kentucky will gather at Eastwood Baptist Church in Bowling Green Feb. 24-25 for the Kentucky Baptist State Youth Choir Festival. The deadline for pre-registration is Feb. 20.

■ **Audition deadline**  
Don't forget: Jan. 20 is the deadline for audition tapes to be sent to the Kentucky Baptist Convention church music department for the Kentucky All-State Children's Choir. Call (502) 245-4101 for information.

## KBC Calendar

### December 25

■ Christmas Day

### December 27-31

■ Mission '95 student conference at Galt House in Louisville

### January 1

■ New Year's Day

### January 2-6

■ Winter Bible Conference

### January 5-6

■ State Music Council meeting at Hurstbourne Hotel in Louisville

### January 8

■ Soul Winning Commitment Day

### January 9

■ Beginning of "Here's Hope. Share Jesus Now," 60 days of

personal evangelism

### January 15

■ Sanctity of Human Life Sunday

### January 16

■ Martin Luther King Day  
■ Regional Tax Conference at Prestonsburg  
■ Small Church Growth Tour at Hardin Baptist Church in Hardin

### January 17

■ Small Church Growth Tour at Wing Avenue Baptist Church in Owensboro

### January 19

■ Small Church Growth Tour at Eastwood Baptist Church in Bowling Green  
■ KBC committee on order of business meeting at Baptist Building

### January 20

■ Small Church Growth Tour at

Northside Baptist Church in Elizabethtown

■ KBC audit work group meeting

### January 20-21

■ Brotherhood steering committee

### January 21

■ Small Church Growth Tour at Woodland Baptist Church in Louisville

### January 22

■ Baptist Men's Day

### January 23

■ School of Discipleship at First Baptist Church of Prestonsburg

### January 26-28

■ MasterLife certification workshop at Florence Baptist Church

### January 27-28

■ Divorce recovery conference at Melbourne Heights Baptist Church in Louisville

### DISCIPLESHIP LEADERS

## Get certified in MasterLife

If you'd like to help others grow in the Christian faith and become better disciples of Jesus Christ, consider attending the MasterLife certification workshop.

Sponsored by the KBC discipleship training department and the Southern Baptist Sunday School Board, this event holds special appeal for pastors, directors of missions, associational discipleship directors, ministers of education and workers in prison ministry.

Participants who complete the three-day workshop will be certified to lead MasterLife training in churches, associations, homes and prisons. The workshop also will enhance individual spiritual skills such as keeping a prayer journal, singing Scripture songs and memorizing Scripture.

The first 10 Kentucky Baptists to pre-register for the workshop will be eligible for a scholarship worth \$95.

■ **Dates:** Jan. 26-28.

■ **Location:** Florence Baptist Church in Florence.

■ **Cost:** \$95 per person.

■ **Registration deadline:** Jan. 25.

■ **Registration or information:** Call the discipleship training department at (502) 245-4101 or write to Box 43433, Louisville, Ky. 40253.

## Baptist ethicists favor Elders' resignation

WASHINGTON (ABP)—Baptist ethics and public policy groups applauded the Dec. 9 resignation of U.S. Surgeon General Joycelyn Elders.

Elders was forced to resign after suggesting that public schools should promote masturbation as a normal sexual practice. That comment was only the latest in a long string of statements from Elders that infuriated the Christian community, especially religious conservatives.

Richard Land, executive director of the Southern Baptist Christian Life Commission, said he is delighted at Elders' resignation.

"Her positions on abortion and condom distribution were clearly on the left fringe of the American body politic," he said. "Her comments and bigoted sentiments were a disgrace to the office of surgeon general."

Robert Parham, executive director of the Baptist Center for Ethics, agreed that Elders' forced resignation "is good news for those of us who favor constructive health-care policy built on core values, common sense and community consensus."

"The moral from her resignation is that extremist positions only deepen divisions in our rapidly fragmenting

culture, ensuring an inevitable backlash," Parham continued. "Both the White House and the new Republican leadership would do well to remember this moral as they push away from the American core in pursuit of far-flung ideological agendas."

Elders, 61, will return to the University of Arkansas for Medical Sciences in Little Rock to teach and do research work, school Chancellor Harry Ward said Dec. 12. Elders was professor of pediatrics at the school 26 years before being appointed state health director for then-Gov. Bill Clinton in 1987.

## Court refuses case on Halloween symbols

WASHINGTON (ABP)—The U.S. Supreme Court refused Dec. 5 to hear a Florida man's claim that his sons' elementary school violated the First Amendment by using religiously offensive symbols to celebrate Halloween.

Robert Guyer objected to the depiction of witches, cauldrons and brooms, as well as to teachers dressing up as witches as part of Halloween festivities at Alachua County's Hidden Valley Elementary School. Guyer kept his children out of school on Halloween and later filed suit

seeking an injunction to bar future use of the Halloween symbols offensive to his religion.

Guyer's lawsuit claimed the symbols are connected to Wicca, a variety of witchcraft and a religion.

A trial court granted the Alachua County School Board's motion to dismiss the lawsuit, and a Florida appeals court upheld dismissal.

"Even assuming the symbols do have religious significance to some," the appeals court said, the Halloween celebrations do not violate the church-state separation required by the First

Amendment.

The Halloween practice clearly serves a secular purpose and does not foster excessive entanglement between government and religion, the appeals court said, leaving only the question of whether the activities endorse or promote religion.

The appeals court said they did not.

"By its participation in these Halloween festivities, the school board does not 'send an unmistakable message that it supports and promotes' Wiccan beliefs," the court said.

## 60 percent believe Jesus is coming back

WASHINGTON (ABP)—Six Americans in 10 believe Jesus Christ will someday return to earth and that a Judgment Day awaits, according to a recent survey for "U.S. News and World Report."

Of the 61 percent of Americans who believe Jesus is coming back, 34 percent expect it to occur within a few years or a few decades.

Thirty-seven percent think it will be longer than that.

Fifty-nine percent of Americans believe the world will come to an end.

Twelve percent of those believe the end is coming within a few years and 21 percent within a few decades. Sixteen percent do not expect the end sooner than a few hundred years from now, and 28 percent believe it will come even later.

Fifty-three percent of Americans believe some world events of this century fulfill biblical prophecy.

## NATIONAL NOTES

■ **Charities feeling pinch.** The nation's charities, which do the lion's share of their fund raising during the Christmas holidays, are feeling a financial pinch this year, according to a report from Religion News Service. "We have gone into the holidays in the worst shape we've been in for years," said Stephen Burger, executive director of the International Union of Gospel Missions, an umbrella organization for inner-city rescue missions nationwide. "Most of the missions we've heard from are going into the holidays with donations down 15 to 20 percent."

■ **Churchgoing declines.** Churchgoing has declined slightly among all age groups except senior adults, according to the Roper Starch Worldwide polling agency. The latest poll found 28 percent of Americans who said they attended a religious service in the previous week were age 60 or older, up 5 percent from 1976. Only 38 percent of those ages 30 to 44 said they attended church during the previous week, down from 42 percent in 1976.

■ **David C. Cook changes name.** David C. Cook Publishing Co. has changed its name to Cook Communication Ministries. The publisher produces a wide range of Christian literature, including Sunday school materials used in some Southern Baptist churches.

■ **Children lose with cohabiting couples.** Children living in homes headed by cohabiting, unmarried parents fare worse economically than children in families with married parents, according to an analysis of census data by researchers at Penn State University. The study estimates that 2.2

million children—about one-seventh of the children usually counted as living with a single parent—actually live with a single parent and his or her unmarried partner. Even when the income of this second potential breadwinner is added to family income, per capita income in cohabiting families averages \$7,200 annually, compared to \$10,800 annually for married-couple families.

■ **Creationism suit settled.** The Moon Area School District near Pittsburgh has agreed not to teach the Bible's story of the earth's creation in science classes, settling a lawsuit brought by two students at Moon High School. "Neither creation science nor any religious belief shall be taught as being true or correct because a deity, the Bible or a religious tenet so states," according to the settlement.

■ **This Bible calls God Father-Mother.** Critics are calling a new adaptation of the Bible being prepared by Oxford University Press an extreme version of political correctness. The new translation attempts to use gender-free language when talking about humanity and God. It also seeks not to offend Jews, blacks and people with disabilities. References to God the Father, for example, are changed to Father-Mother, and Jesus is called The Human One. The first copies of the translation—including the New Testament and Psalms—will be published in February.

■ **Billie Barrows dies.** Wilma Irene "Billie" Barrows, wife of Cliff Barrows, died Dec. 8 after a seven-year struggle with cancer. Cliff Barrows is a longtime associate of evangelist Billy Graham and formed the

first musical team related to the Graham organization.

■ **MTV won't play abstinence video.** The cable music channel MTV has refused to play Michael Sweet's latest music video, "Ain't No Safe Way," which calls for sexual abstinence before marriage. MTV says the video didn't meet its quality standards, but Sweet's record label says MTV refused because of the abstinence message.

■ **Bakker freed.** Former televangelist Jim Bakker was released from federal custody Dec. 1 after five years in prisons and a halfway house. Bakker plans to live in western North Carolina, but has not said what his plans are. Franklin Graham, son of evangelist Billy Graham, has offered Bakker a job with his ministry, Samaritan's Purse.

■ **Madonna stamp takes licking but keeps on sticking.** The U.S. Postal Service has cancelled plans to discontinue its popular Madonna and Child Christmas stamp. The Madonna and Child stamps have been a Christmas tradition since 1978 and were first issued in 1966. On a related note, the Postal Service issued a new regulation in October barring "symbols identified with a particular religion" in the nation's 40,000 post offices. Prohibited are crosses, stars of David, nativity scenes and displays with the words "Merry Christmas" or "Happy Hanukkah."

■ **ACTS network features Dino.** A television world premiere featuring Dino Kartsonakis' "Miracles" video will be broadcast on ACTS and FamilyNet on New Year's Eve at 10 p.m. ACTS and FamilyNet, operated by the Southern

Baptist Radio & Television Commission, are major sponsors of Dino's 1995 "Miracles World Tour" which kicks off Jan. 3 in Shanghai, China.

■ **Promise Keepers founder quits coaching.** Bill McCartney, founder of the Promise Keepers men's movement, has resigned as head football coach at the University of Colorado to devote more time to his family and personal development.

■ **Center for aging established.** Luther Seminary is home to the first center devoted to studying the spiritual needs and practices of the nation's elderly. Established through a \$150,000 grant from the Retirement Research Foundation, the Center for Aging, Religion and Spirituality will be supervised by Melvin Kimble.

■ **No bells ringing at Meijer's.** The Meijer's chain of retail stores has forbidden Salvation Army bell ringers from soliciting at its stores this year. The midwest chain, which plans to move into Kentucky soon, blames a labor union for the action. Striking union members would be able to picket on store property if bell ringers were permitted there, the chain said.

■ **Religious rights case pending.** The Virginia Supreme Court is considering a case in which a commercial print shop refused to produce materials the owners believe violate their religious beliefs. Catholics for a Free Choice sued Regal Art Press after the company's owners refused to print literature for the pro-abortion group.

## Kentuckian named Baptist Woman of the Month

By Marv Knox  
Editor

GUTHRIE—Even though Sheila Brown stands in the Woman's Missionary Union spotlight this month, she didn't get there on her own.

A couple of pals gave her a shove. Brown was halfway around the world—participating in Kentucky Baptists' missions project with Russia—when Suzanne Flowers and Bonney Wolfe nominated her to be a Baptist Woman of the Month, an honor bestowed by the Southern Baptist WMU.

Flowers and Wolfe, Brown's friends and co-workers in WMU at Guthrie Baptist Church in Guthrie, thought she would be perfect for the honor. And ultimately, so did a panel of judges at the WMU national office in Birmingham, Ala.

So, Brown became the Baptist Woman of the Month for December, only the third person to achieve the honor. She's featured in a profile in this month's issue of Royal Service magazine.

"Whether she's serving as a GA camp counselor, encouraging her church to meet their missions offering goal or going on a mission trip, Sheila Brown lives out her belief that 'missions is the heartbeat of the church,'" the profile begins.

Brown's life reinforces that assertion.

Her non-WMU responsibilities would be enough to keep most women more than busy: She's the part-time secretary at Guthrie Baptist Church in Guthrie and supportive wife of its pastor, Dave Brown. She's a full-time mom to Jamie, 12, and Matthew, 7. And she's a full-time, final-year student at Austin Peay State University in nearby Clarksville, Tenn.

She's also Guthrie Baptist's WMU director, WMU director for Bethel Baptist Association and a member of the Kentucky WMU executive board. She works with Acteens, the teenage members of WMU, to help them complete their Studi-Act mission projects. And she leads by example; besides Russia, she's gone on mission

projects to Texas and Florida.

While gratified by the Woman of the Month honor, Brown is quick to say she prefers doing missions to standing in the spotlight.

"I was happily surprised" when she learned she would be featured in the missions magazine, Brown said. "But I have difficulty with people putting me in the spotlight. I do things because I enjoy serving the Lord, so I get sort of apprehensive, but I was really happy about it."

One reason she was happy was because it gave her more opportunities to promote missions. Just recently, she spoke to the Baptist Women group at First Baptist Church of Clarksville, an invitation that came after the church's WMU director saw her in Royal Service.

Brown is an ideal person to receive the Woman of the Month honor, said Andrea Mullins, the Southern Baptist WMU Baptist Women specialist.

"We wanted to feature outstanding Baptist women, because this is the last year we will have the Baptist Women organization," Mullins said. Next Oc-

tober, Baptist Women and Baptist Young Women will be replaced by a new organization, Women on Mission.

"We wanted to show our Baptist Women how much we appreciate them and what they've handed on to us," she added. "Also, we want to develop role models and mentors that really represent that missions lifestyle and commitment to missions."

Brown was one of 12 monthly winners picked from among hundreds of nominees, Mullins said. Criteria for selection included evidence of prayer life, mission action, a commitment to lifelong learning about missions and concern about spiritual growth.

Brown's publicity has brought notice from longtime friends, family members and even her son's schoolteachers.

But as she stands in the spotlight, she tries to deflect some of the rays on others.

"My job has been made easy," she told Royal Service, "by the other women who were willing to serve and work."

**"Whether she's serving as a GA camp counselor, encouraging her church to meet their missions offering goal or going on a mission trip, Sheila Brown lives out her belief that 'missions is the heartbeat of the church.'"**

## Executive Board votes to end ownership of Cedarmore

Continued from page 1

recommendation from an assemblies long-range planning work group, which has been studying the KBC's ownership of both Cedarmore and Jonathan Creek assemblies. After extensive review of both camps, the work group recommended the KBC retain Jonathan Creek—a newer camp located in West Kentucky—but divest itself of Cedarmore.

The work group's recommendation was approved unanimously by the Executive Board's business and finance committee Dec. 12. The next day, the full board approved the recommendation by a 3-1 margin after lengthy discussion and a failed motion to postpone action.

Four primary reasons were cited in support of the work group's recommendation: Cedarmore never has proved to be as financially self-supporting as projected when it was acquired 40 years ago; the cost of operating Cedarmore places an increasing drain on the KBC's flat budget; attendance at Cedarmore is in decline, due in part to changing demographic patterns; and basic repairs and renovations to bring the aging facilities up to par would approach \$4 million. (For complete background on the Cedarmore study, see the Dec. 6 Western Recorder.)

Four primary arguments were cited in opposition to the work group's recommendation: Cedarmore is a sacred place where many lives continue to be changed; more could be done to promote use of Cedarmore; moving summer youth camps to college campuses as suggested in the study could create security problems; and such a decision shouldn't be made without additional time for study.

The work group recommendation, as approved by the Executive Board, requires KBC President Billy Compton to appoint a committee "to develop a plan to terminate the ownership and management responsibility of

Cedarmore."

The recommendation says this plan should include at least:

- A plan for operating Cedarmore during the transitional phase.

- Arrangements for summer camps to continue at Cedarmore or in other locations.

- Alternative plans "to dispose of all or parts of the properties and improvements to maximize the convention's return on their values."

- "Reasonable accommodations to assist affected employees."

This transition committee is required to report back to the full Executive Board in December 1995. Compton said he plans to name the committee members in a few weeks.

Neither the work group nor the Executive Board has made any specific proposal about what should be done with Cedarmore. Possibilities apparently range from selling all or part of the property to perhaps transferring ownership of the camp to another group or groups of like purpose.

During debate before the full board, David Jones of London offered a motion that would have delayed consideration of Cedarmore's fate an additional year. Jones said he didn't think Baptists across the state were fully aware of the situation.

Patricia Reaves of Louisville agreed with Jones, saying she would like to see "some really good PR work put out about Cedarmore." Also, she said, "If you pastors would encourage your people to use Cedarmore, we wouldn't face this problem."

M.A. Winchester of Whitley City spoke against postponement.

"I don't think another year's study will help it," he said. "If we do not do this ... we've got \$3.8 million of expenses that will be mandated to us. Whose budget do you want to take it out of? BSU? Schools? Executive Board?"

Ray Werline of Mayfield also spoke against postponement. "We've

studied this for six years and spent a lot of dollars studying it," he said. "We're just putting off the inevitable."

The motion to postpone failed on a voice vote.

Last week's action on Cedarmore has no immediate effect on the camping program operated there. Summer camps scheduled for 1995 still will be held there as planned, and Cedarmore's facilities still are available to church and associational groups until further notice.

Also during last week's Executive Board meeting, KBC Executive Secretary-Treasurer Bill Marshall was authorized to negotiate with Northern Kentucky University regarding a potential new site for the BSU there. The Executive Board already has approved plans to build a new \$650,000 campus ministry building at the university.

The authority to negotiate was granted because the university would like to have the current BSU property for other uses and has suggested other property nearer the heart of the campus could be available for the BSU.

The Executive Board allocated \$321,000 in year-end funds drawn from three sources: unused Executive Board funds, unrestricted investment income and an excess from the state mission reserve fund.

The funds were allocated \$100,000 to the Russia partnership; \$120,000 to Mission Kentucky II; \$7,000 to the 1995 "Here's Hope" evangelistic campaign; \$50,000 to special program projects of the Executive Board; and \$15,000 to the ministers in need program.

In other action, the Executive Board:

- Approved updates in the Convention Annuity Plan.

- Approved a basic financial agreement document between the KBC and the Kentucky Baptist Founda-

tion, which recently was granted full agency status.

- Noted the conclusion of the KBC's official partnership with Ohio Baptists.

- Heard a report from the committee that is supervising construction of an addition to the Baptist Building in Louisville. Due to excessively high bids on the \$1.5 million project as originally conceived, the committee has been working to achieve a new design that can be built within the budget previously established, reported Chairman Jerry Dooley of Louisville. The Executive Board authorized the building committee to proceed with a new plan, which would include a free-standing building on KBC property to house the Western Recorder, Kentucky Woman's Missionary Union and the Kentucky Baptist Foundation. The Kentucky Baptist archives would be housed in a smaller addition to the current Baptist Building.

### Text of Cedarmore action

Believing that "tried and true models" of the past are not working anymore, it is recommended that a committee of the Executive Board be appointed by the chairperson of the Executive Board to develop a plan to terminate the ownership and management responsibility of Cedarmore.

It is understood this plan should include at least:

- A transition plan of operation including which minor repairs to make to facilities and how much to increase the rates to the users to minimize the budget subsidy.

- Appropriate arrangements for the summer camp programs to continue.

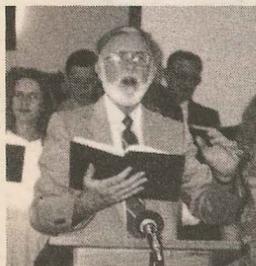
- Alternative plans to dispose of all or parts of the properties and improvements to maximize the convention's return on their values.

- Reasonable accommodations to assist affected employees.

That the transition committee report, with a possible recommendation, to the Executive Board at its December 1995 meeting.

## Volunteer music director serves same church 50 years

By Melanie Childers  
Staff Writer



Morton Stahl

ROCKFIELD—After a record half-century of directing music at Clear Fork Baptist Church in Rockfield, Morton Stahl is passing the conductor's baton to his son.

Stahl, 64, retired Oct. 1 after 50 years as volunteer music director at the church. His son, Barry, a dentist, has succeeded him.

Jim Cordell, director of the Kentucky Baptist church music department, said Stahl's lengthy tenure may be a record among Southern Baptist volunteer musicians. "Certainly, 50 years of service in one church sounds like a record," he said.

Stahl and his family were honored in a service and reception at Clear Fork Baptist Church Oct. 30, proclaimed "Morton Stahl Day" by the county judge executive and the mayor of Bowling Green.

Four former pastors, a director of missions and other special guests assisted in the celebration.

Although he plays the piano some,

Stahl didn't receive much formal training, he said. "I picked up most of it on my own ... and through singing schools around the state."

Actually, Stahl's was the case of not waiting for formal training. He began leading the church's music program at age 14.

"I always have liked music," Stahl explained. "We were a very small congregation at the time and didn't have a whole lot of people to lead it."

Since 1944, Stahl served the church faithfully, except for two years in the military, he said. The church "gave me credit for that, apparently."

Thirty years of work with the U.S. department of agriculture notwithstanding, Stahl devoted considerable time to building up the music ministry at Clear Fork.

Few Kentucky Baptist churches' music programs include a choir and an ensemble presentation every Sunday morning and Sunday evening. Yet, Clear Fork singers consistently add this dimension to weekly worship, Stahl said.

At the beginning of each year, he

prepared a schedule of choirs and ensembles to participate each Sunday morning and evening.

"We have a wonderful congregation and people that are easy to work with," Stahl said. "The choir is just wonderful. ... We have quite a bit of talent" in the church.

In addition to the sanctuary choir, Stahl led the Sunbeam choir for children, the Believers choir for 12 to 16-year-olds, and the youth singers—each of whom sang one Sunday each month.

Stahl has served alongside 15 pastors at the church, including current Pastor David Daugherty.

"I would describe him as a perfect

Christian," Daugherty said. "He's kind to everybody; he welcomes every visitor; he's always pleasant; he's gentle with kids; he's never met anybody like him in my life."

In addition to his music responsibilities, Stahl has served as deacon, church clerk and church historian. He is a faithful visitor; he has served on numerous church and associational committees, and he prepares each week's bulletins, Daugherty said.

"You'd like to have a church full of his kind," the pastor added. "God only made one, and we're glad he's here. ... I don't know what the church would be without him."

## Nurses Will Go to Nashville

The 1995 annual meeting of Baptist Nursing Fellowship will be in Nashville Feb. 23-26. Baptist nurses from all over the United States will meet at Loews Vanderbilt Plaza Hotel. The meeting will be in conjunction with the Baptist Medical/Dental Fellowship's national meeting.

Dr. Linda Garner, professor of nursing at Baylor University School of Nursing, will speak on "The Spirituality of Nursing." Nurses who participate will receive 4.8 CEUs.

Nurses interested in more information about the meeting or about becoming a member of BNF may contact the Kentucky Woman's Missionary Union office at Box 43433, Louisville, Ky. 40253-0433 or call (502) 244-6485.



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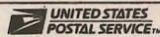
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## Children and Christmas

During the Christmas season, almost all of us are naturally drawn to children.

We remember our own happy childhood Christmases. We see the excitement in children's eyes as they anticipate the gifts and the magic of the time. We see the Christmas pageants and hear the special musical presentations at church involving children, and we're drawn to the ultimate reason for the celebration—the Christ child.

Working with children brings to all of us on the staff of Kentucky Baptist Homes for Children special joy.

Staff at all our programs around the state work hard to make the season special for children and young people. They are ever-mindful that this may be the first truly Christian celebration of Christmas that many of these young people have ever experienced. The season provides a wonderful opportunity for witness.

All of our programs plan special Christmas celebrations. All of our programs plan Spring Meadows, a reception is held, and children, family members and special friends from the community come to wish the children a Merry Christmas. At Glen Dale, a special

Christmas dinner is held. This is always followed by a performance by the Homeland Singers. Many visitors from the community come to make it a special night.

While the parties are being planned, home visits are also being arranged. We try to help each child spend Christmas with their own family or an approved visiting family.

Sometimes children will go home with staff members to celebrate Christmas.

During the holiday season, we are often blessed by individuals who want to help provide Christmas gifts for children. Some choose to buy gifts. Others send money so that staff can buy the gifts.

Parties are also planned by groups from all over who want to do something special.

As you make your plans for Christmas, remember the children around you and the children in our care.

Pray that this Christmas will be a special one during which they'll feel God's presence.

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

### HOMES FOR CHILDREN



Curtis C. Mooney

## Food baskets spread love in community

*Continued from page 1*

wood. "The church's concern has always been there. We're a big church in town, and people in the county tend to see city people as different and are uncomfortable with them."

So that's why First Baptist sponsors three missions—Colson, Eolia and Linefork—out in the county, he said. It's why the church operates a clothes closet and food pantry year-round. And it's why it conducts the Christmas project.

And the congregation isn't shy about communicating its message of love, especially at Christmas.

"We put it on the radio," Stokes said of local announcements about the Christmas baskets. "We tell them, 'We're here to help you.' We try to show that God loves them."

For the past couple of years, the church has taken applications for the baskets at its facilities in Whitesburg. When people came to complete an application for a box, volunteers helped them visit the church's clothes closet to see if they could find items they needed.

Church members use the opportunity to tell their guests about Christ's love for them, Stokes reported. "We're able to say: 'This basket will feed you, and you will be hungry again. But if you accept the Lord, your spiritual hunger will be satisfied forever.'"

The project involves "quite a bit of the church," he said. Volunteers—including the youth—are on hand the nights the church is open for applications, gather to put all the baskets together and then carry them across the county to recipients' homes.

Each basket contains a letter from Stokes explaining that First Baptist provides the ministry because of Christ's love. Also included are gospel tracts and an invitation to worship.

However, the church is careful not to try to "steal" members from other churches. "We don't even put an emphasis on coming to our church," Stokes said. "We invite them, but we want them to go to a gospel-preaching church. We notify another Baptist church in their area if they are away from our church."

First Baptist members feel they receive more than they give as they participate in the project, Fields and Smallwood insisted.

"This is one of the most wonderful things on earth," said Fields, chair of the church's year-round benevolence committee. "When I was in a smaller church, doing 25 baskets was a pretty big deal. But to take on the task of preparing and delivering 250 or more baskets, to me, it's unbelievable."

"The people see that the church is caring, not just sitting on Madison Street doing nothing."

"This really makes the spirit of Christmas present for our members," Smallwood added. "For those who give a week to preparation and delivery of these baskets, Christmas is a whole lot more real than 'It's a Wonderful Life.'"

## Church performs pastor's Christmas cantata

By Marv Knox  
Editor

MAGNOLIA—A special star shone on Magnolia Baptist Church this Christmas season.

Magnolia's adult choir presented "One Star," a Christmas cantata written and composed by its pastor, Jim Hill.

"'One Star' tells the story of mankind's search for real meaning in life and God's supplying mankind's needs through his Son, Jesus," Hill explained.

"It deals with the preparation, both cosmic and personal, God put into planning his Son's coming," the pastor/composer added. "It takes a brief look at the struggle, joy and awe which accompany Jesus' birth. It considers the kinds of response each individual may make to Christmas. Finally, it attempts to interpret what Christ's coming really means."

The cantata actually carries a double meaning, Hill said. On one level, it deals with "how the loneliness and darkness of our world was brightened up when Jesus came." On another, it focuses on how the famous Star of Bethlehem appeared to the wise men from the East, who brought gifts to young Jesus.

Although Hill has composed anthems previously performed by the choir, "One Star" is his first cantata.

He traces his musical background to his childhood. "I've been in church choirs ever since I was a little kid. And I went through high school band and chorus and was a member of the Seminary Winds" at Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in Louisville, he noted. "I just enjoy music. I've never felt I was good enough to do it for a living, but I get a lot out of it."

The Magnolia congregation has allowed him to draw upon the musical side of his personality and ministry. From time to time, he has doubled as choir director as well as pastor.

During one of those stints about seven years ago, he began working on a cantata and composed several songs for "One Star."

He shifted his focus to his pastor's role for several years, while others directed the choir. "But when I got the choir duties again this spring, I said, 'I'm going to do it,'" he noted.

Hill collaborated on "One Star" with Brenda Martin, who leads Magnolia's congregational singing. He wrote the words and music, and she arranged some of the score and accompanied the choir for the cantata.

The writing and conducting process has been rewarding, Hill said. "It's been a very good experience. Of course, it's frustrating when you write something and you want it to sound just right and then you begin to see the glitches. But things are turning out OK."

He credits the 27-voice choir and Martin's accompaniment for strengthening the cantata. "The choir has worked very hard and done a good job," he said last week,

just a couple of days before the cantata's Thursday night premiere.

Hill hopes preparing and performing the cantata has strengthened the choir far beyond the musical aspect of their experience. "They work on the music and maybe gain a few new insights," he explained. "A cantata is almost as much about discipleship as it is about evangelism."

Whatever they've gained, the choir members and Martin have made the cantata enjoyable as well as possible, he added.

"They have been very supportive. Some of it sounds stranger than most church

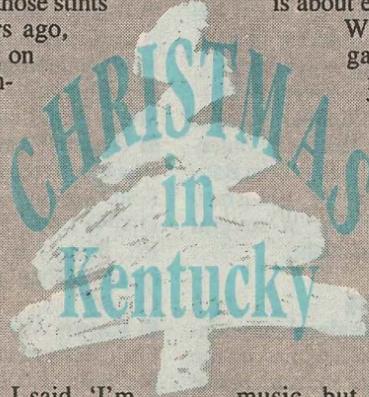
music, but it has grown on them," he laughed. "And Brenda will be playing notes I haven't written. You know how an accompanist can make a composer look good."

But mostly, Hill hopes "One Star" has made Christ look good to the citizens of Magnolia.

Presenting a cantata, especially one with the strong local connections of "One Star," is "a great opportunity to spread the gospel," he stressed.

"People who are not traditional church people are thinking about what's the real meaning of Christmas."

"They're more open to hear about Jesus this time of year, and it gives us in the church an opportunity to reach them."



## Urban churches join hands to help families

*Continued from page 1*

Tucker said, explaining Target provides Christmas Connection a 10 percent discount.

The day set aside to distribute the gifts becomes a grand celebration. This year, that date was Dec. 17. Although leaders alter and improve the event each year, Roberts said, the same basic structure is repeated.

Families are asked to come either to a morning or afternoon shift at Baptist Tabernacle. Each session begins with a brief vesper service.

From there, children gather in a separate area where they are entertained with puppets, refreshments and the magic tricks of David Garrard, children's minister at St. Matthews.

While the children are occupied, volunteers assist parents in "shopping" for their children. In the fellowship hall, toys and clothing are displayed on tables, organized according to children's age.

Parents choose two toys and two clothing items for each child. Each family also receives a Bible and two gift certificates—one for Target and one for a grocery store.

After shopping is completed, other volunteers assist parents with wrap-

ping the gifts and hiding them safely in the car. "We want to maintain the element of surprise for the children," Roberts said.

Before they leave, families enjoy refreshments and fellowship together in a hospitality room.

Baptist Tabernacle members dedicate another Saturday to visit families who indicate they would like more information about the church or a personal visit.

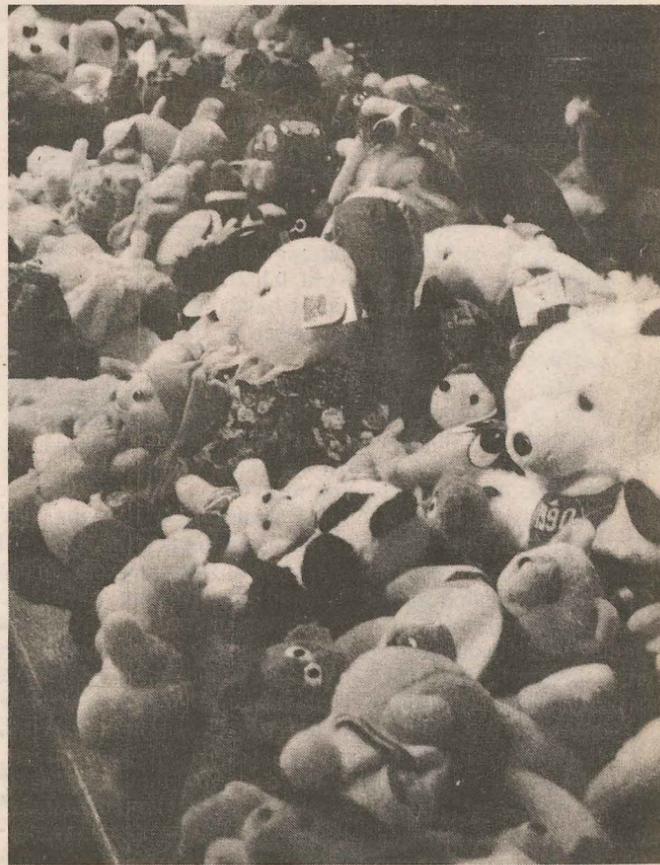
As of this year, the seasonal partnership between the two churches expanded to include "Thanksgiving Connection," a Thanksgiving Day meal.

Connecting with others is chief among aims of both Christmas Connection and Thanksgiving Connection.

"We talk a lot about cooperation in our denomination, and a lot of people do not know what that means," said Roberts of Baptist Tabernacle. "This is cooperation."

"When you take two different churches and two different communities to provide this type of ministry together, it lets you know there is hope for churches ... in cooperative ministry. That's what Christmas is about."

**TOYS GALORE** Stuffed animals ready to be chosen as free gifts fill a table at Baptist Tabernacle during Christmas Connection, a joint ministry of Baptist Tabernacle and St. Matthews Baptist Church.



# PEOPLE

## KENTUCKY KERNELS

The percentage of Kentuckians who live in multi-housing units such as apartments and condominiums is increasing rapidly. In 1980, about one-fourth of the state's population lived in multi-housing units. By 1990, the multi-housing population had increased to one-third of the state's people. Soon after the year 2000, one-half of Kentuckians are projected to live in multi-housing units. This is significant because additional research shows residents of multi-housing units are significantly less likely to be reached by traditional churches than are residents of single-family housing.

Source: KBC direct missions department

## Mountains to the Mississippi

Compiled by Ann Tatum

■ **LANCASTER**—Lancaster Church ordained **Mark Fyfe** and **Brian Smith** as deacons Nov. 6.

■ **LOUISVILLE**—**Dan Lawhon** resigned as minister of music at St. Matthews Church. He is moving to Birmingham, Ala.

**Larry Orange**, pastor of West Broadway Church for 10 years, has resigned to become director of missions in Gasper River Association.

■ **MOUNT WASHINGTON**—Evangelist **Phillip Bradshaw** was guest speaker at the Pastors' Conference of the Utah-Idaho Southern Baptist Convention Nov. 14. Bradshaw has scheduled revivals at several churches in Utah and Idaho.

### MISSIONARY UPDATE

■ **Ray and Leslie England**, missionaries to the Philippines, are in the States as missionaries, residence at Campbellsville College, 200 W. Col-

lege St., Campbellsville, Ky. 42718. He is a native of Campbellsville.

■ **William and Dena Harrison**, Southern Baptist representatives to Israel, have arrived on the field. Mailing address is 6/15 Kawkab Ed-Shamal, 16940 Reine, Israel. He is a native of Kentucky.

■ **David and Jennifer Hoglen**, missionaries to Belgium, are on the field. Mailing address is 202 Avenue Winston Churchill, 1180 Uccle, Belgium. She is from Louisville.

■ **Wendell and Betty Smith**, missionaries to the Philippines, are on the field. Mailing address is Box 7506, DAPO Lock Box, 1300 Domestic Rd., Pasay City, Metro Manila, Philippines. They are natives of Hardin County.

■ **Karen Wright**, missionary to Chile, is on the field. Mailing address is Casilla 1417, Concepcion, Chile. She is a native of Louisville.

## CHILDREN'S MINISTER (Full time)

Provide education and music leadership for preschool and children's divisions (birth through sixth grade). Appropriate education and experience required. Part-time bivocational staff may be considered for each division if full-time minister cannot be found. Send resume to: Personnel Committee, West Lynchburg Baptist Church, 3031 Memorial Ave., Lynchburg, VA 24501.



**THANK YOU** Jim (right) and Betty McKinley of Louisville receive a silver serving tray from Kentucky Baptist Executive Secretary-Treasurer Bill Marshall as a token of appreciation for three years of service to the KBC. The McKinleys joined the KBC in 1992 after completing 34 years as Southern Baptist missionaries to Bangladesh. In Kentucky, they have been promotion consultants for the Cooperative Program unified budget. McKinley averaged one Cooperative Program speech per day during his three years of travel across the state.

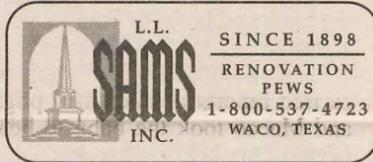
## CLASSIFIED ADS

**FOR SALE:** 1959 Allen church organ type T-15B, \$450. Call (606) 441-6184.

**FOR SALE:** Piano, \$500; organ, \$250. Call New Heights BC (502) 422-3033.

**REUNION:** Planning a reunion of BSU members of Western Kentucky University 1980-present. If interested in participating, please send your name and address to: BSU Alumni Association, P.O. Box 2, Russellville, KY 42276, or call (502) 542-7716, (502) 339-8792 or (502) 782-9054.

**RETREATS:** Bud's Lake, I-65, exit 81, Sonora, Ky. (502) 324-3036. Dormitories, kitchen, gym, swimming and campground. Year-round Christian fun.



## 'Where two or three shall gather together, ...'

Sunday, Dec. 4, was a very interesting day for our school choir and me. We left our campus at 7:30 a.m. on a trip that would take nearly three hours by bus. We left the interstate highway in Lexington and drove on a state highway, then turned onto a county road. Next, we turned onto another county road that was narrower, had more bumps and many potholes. As I looked in the rearview mirror, I could see the choir was beginning to wonder where we were going and whether or not we were lost.

We drove farther and farther on the crooked, bumpy, narrow road and finally arrived at a beautiful country church. It was a relief to see cars in the church's little gravel parking lot. This stately old church building appeared to be about 75 years old. It had been well cared for and must have been a very beautiful building when it was built.

After young people have been traveling nearly three hours on the bus, their first stop usually is the rest rooms. For the vast majority of these students, this was their first time to use "outside facilities." After stretching their legs, they made their way to the basement to put on their robes. We assembled in the sanctuary and were seated in the center section, as there was no choir loft.

This Sunday the church observed the Lord's Supper. As I was looking around the congregation, I was impressed with those who were there. There were only 26 in Sunday school and just a few more for church. As I sat there, I was reminded of the many people we saw that morning while we were on the way to the church. We saw many who were not attending any service that morning. We noticed a rather large crowd

attending a sale. Many had gathered at a flea market to buy and sell. Others were out getting the morning paper and were not dressed for Sunday school or church. I was impressed that even though these folks could also have found other things to do this Lord's day, they had chosen to come and worship.

We sang "Amazing Grace" after the Lord's Supper, and then our choir sang. It is such a joy to listen to them. They spend many hours in practice and have made much progress since the first of the year. I believe the small congregation was blessed as they listened attentively and applauded several times. These folks had come to worship and I believe they were "glad to be in the house of the Lord." The choir sang about 25 minutes, having memorized every word and note. I know that I am a bit prejudiced, but I think they are great.

When Pastor Tom Moore introduced me, he mentioned he knew a little about Oneida, and would like for me to share with the congregation about our ministry. I started by saying I have found that nearly everyone fits into one of three categories: either you know a "little" about Oneida, you know nothing about Oneida, or what you "know" is wrong. I confess I did keep them a little late, but only until 12:20. They were very kind; none of them looked at their watches, coughed, yawned or left.

After the service, Pastor Moore stated he had decided he was a part of the third group.

*Readers, please save this column—to be continued next week.*

W.F. "Bud" Underwood is president of Oneida Baptist Institute, Oneida, Ky. 40972

### THIS IS ONEIDA



W.F. Underwood

## On the road again

"I like to go and see new things, and sometimes Joan likes for me to go. Trucking suits both of us," Jeff LaPlante said about his weekend trucking job. Sometimes he puts in 32 hours covering 1,400 miles. Most trips are between Knoxville and Flint, Mich., to deliver automotive parts.

Born and reared in Anchorage, Alaska, Jeff met Joan in the Air Force. Both of them played trumpet in the base drill and bugle corps. They were married in 1981. After five years in the service, they moved near her parents in Clay County. Without adequate employment to support his family, he responded to an ad for truck drivers and, after attending a six-week school, started driving in 1988.

Converted at age 13, LaPlante "made more of an adult commitment at age 19." His mom, dad and sister became Christians shortly before his commitment to the ministry.

On his last drive before moving to Clear Creek, at a truck stop in Cookeville, Tenn., a man handed him an application for another trucking firm. "I told him I was going to school and only needed weekend work. I was able to land the job, and in the summers I drive

full-time. It meets our needs."

LaPlante tries to be an evangelist on the road: "I had been away from home two weeks and still had another week out. After that long you get disinterested in driving. I stopped at a Florida motel for a day in the sun. I went to the other side of the pool to be by myself. A divorced man there for a visit with his daughter struck up a conversation. Before it was over, he trusted the Lord Jesus."

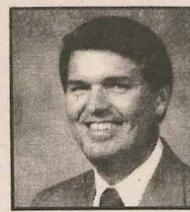
LaPlante appreciates the trucking ministries available at some truck-stops. "Truckers really need this. It is a tough job. Most of them do not get to go to church."

Clear Creek has been a growing experience for LaPlante's family. "The Lord led me here. The people I've come in contact with have changed me and helped me in many ways. The Lord has rounded me off and helped me especially to deal with some of my attitudes. I found out what I'm not supposed to be doing.

"I don't think I will be a pastor—probably a teaching ministry. I'm open to the future."

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

### CLEAR CREEK CHRONICLE



Bill Whittaker

## Child's story cuts red tape for orphanage in Macao

By Mark Kelly  
SBC Foreign Mission Board

MACAO (BP)—The baby's pitiful cry all but disappeared in the hubbub of a summer evening in Macao.

Cars speeded up and down the narrow streets of the tiny Portuguese colony south of Hong Kong on China's coast. The rattle of mah-jongg tiles filtered out of the casinos into the humid night air, which was heavy with the odor of fish and garlic. A slight breeze carried the sounds of singing and laughter from the open doors of karaoke bars.

Only when the hour grew late and the revelry died down did anyone notice the crying. As the plaintive wailing persisted, people became curious. And as the tiny voice rose in screams of pain, they became concerned.

They found the child—a newborn boy—lying in a trash can. The bone of his elbow lay exposed where rats had gnawed away the flesh.

At the hospital, social workers named the infant "Nicholas" and began the all-too-familiar search for a family to adopt him.

Abandoned infants are nothing new in Macao, according to Southern Baptist missionary Ruth Billett. Women from China come to the colony to work. When they want to return home, however, they have to leave their babies behind.

Finding adoptive parents usually isn't difficult for aid workers, but Nicholas' deformed arm made him almost impossible to place, Billett said. But he had no place else to go since the local orphanage didn't take children under 3 years of age.

Then one of the social workers remembered Marjory Venderamini, a Brazilian Baptist missionary serving in Macao. Venderamini had applied for a government license to open a home for abandoned babies, but the approval process was endlessly complicated. She agreed to keep Nicholas in her own home until the orphanage could be opened.

What happened next was a miracle.

Local newspapers and television



carried reports of Nicholas' plight, and Macao took the baby to heart. Civic groups held toy drives. Garment factories donated clothes. Grocery stores sent food and diapers. Chinese Christians and foreign missionaries from many denominations formed a board of directors for the orphanage.

Most remarkably, layers of red tape fell away and a government license was issued.

Cradle of Hope orphanage opened in May 1994 with Nicholas, four other infants and a broad base of support in the Christian community.

Southern Baptist missionaries in Macao played key roles in organizing the project, and local Baptist churches help support the orphanage with volunteers and donations, reported missionary Mary Dickey, training co-

ordinator for Hope Medical Clinic. The clinic, run by missionaries, provides medical supplies and vitamins to the orphanage. Dickey trains volunteers to care for the children.

Cradle of Hope is funded primarily by the Macao government, which also coordinates its adoptions, Dickey said. She hopes the orphanage eventually will be able to handle its own adoptions.

"We need people to pray that these babies end up with Christian families," she said. "Right now we have to pray them into Christian homes."

That's what happened to Nicholas. A Chinese Christian couple living in Sweden adopted him. Three other children also have been adopted, and four more now wait in the orphanage.

Because of its wide public support,

Cradle of Hope plans to relocate to a larger facility soon, Billett said. Another project, a home for unwed mothers, also is planned.

"With abortion so readily available across the border in China, there must be some spark of hope and love in a mother who chooses not to destroy her child but give him up for adoption," she said. "We want to offer a safe haven to these mothers and share with them the message of the God of love."

Cradle of Hope, the missionary added, stands as testimony to a God who can break down all barriers.

"And yet, for all his awesome power, he cares for each of us in a very real and personal way, even for one tiny baby screaming alone in the darkness," Billett said.

**PARENTS WANTED** John (left) and Lucas are waiting for new moms and dads at the Cradle of Hope orphanage in Macao. The orphanage was begun by Brazilian Baptist and Southern Baptist missionaries because of the large number of children abandoned in the Portuguese colony on China's coast. (BP photo by Roy Burroughs)

## Baptist missionaries overcome threat of fetish priests

By Craig Bird  
SBC Foreign Mission Board

ALLADA, Benin (BP)—Christians in Benin are celebrating a legal victory over hostile fetish worship leaders—and running out of evangelical tracts because of the resulting interest.

Twice in one recent week, a Baptist couple in Azoue'-Cada, a village in the west African country, found two pythons in their bed. Each time they released the snakes unharmed.

But when the pythons were found a third consecutive day, the worried couple called Francois, the church leader, for advice.

The snakes, each about 3 feet long, weren't large enough to crush an adult. But the couple suspected local fetish priests—angered by the Christians' refusal to join others in worshipping pythons as gods—had another

target in mind: their newborn child. So Francois killed both pythons and threw them outside.

"If he had secretly buried them, the fetishers wouldn't have gotten so upset," said Southern Baptist missionary Jeff Hale, who lives in the nearby town of Allada. "But then we wouldn't have seen the power of God at work either."

Enraged fetishists tore down the sign at Azoue'-Cada Baptist Church and publicly demanded that Francois reimburse them for the snakes. Failure to do so would mean his death and destruction of the church building, they threatened.

The Baptists reported the incident to the local police, who said they would convene a meeting if the issue couldn't be settled at the village level. Baptists spent an entire day at the Azoue'-Cada chief's house waiting to negotiate, but the fetishists never

came. So the police scheduled a joint session in the government office.

Confident fetish priests sent invitations to surrounding villages to what they were sure would be a victory celebration. Instead, government officials told the fetishists they had no right to do the things they had been doing to the Christians or say the things they had been saying. They were ordered to return the church sign and warned any additional trouble would result in police coming to the village to enforce the ruling.

The elated Baptists returned home and went immediately to the mayor's office for authorization to publicly show Christian films. They had delayed the evangelism effort until the conflict with the fetishists was settled, since the mayor favored the fetishists.

To their surprise, the mayor, who can't write, told the Baptists to write out the authorization themselves and

he would sign it.

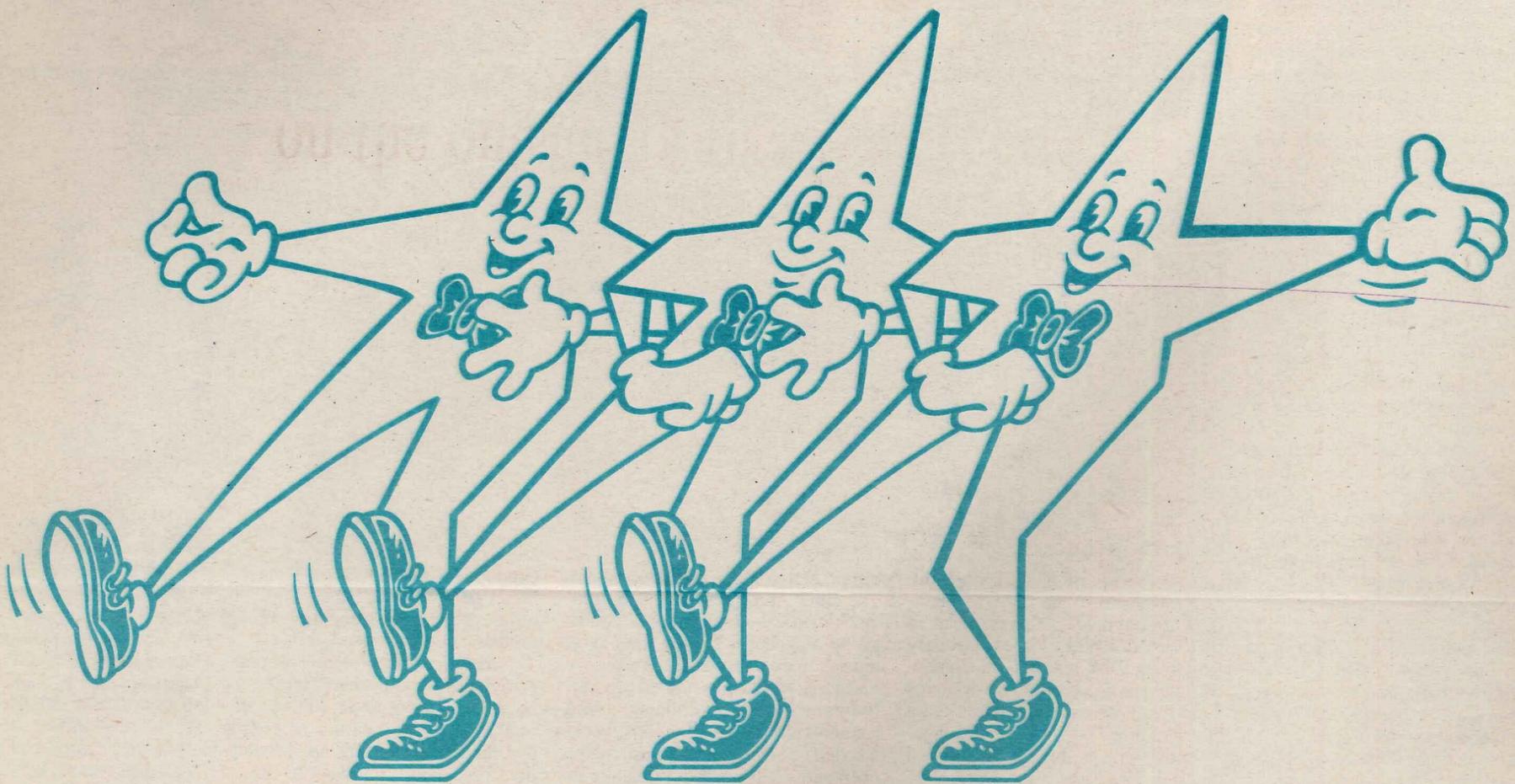
When the first Christian film was shown Nov. 20, more than 250 people showed up in the remote village, located in the bush more than four miles from the nearest road. After screening "The Return of Jesus to Nazareth," the Baptists were halfway through showing "Le Combat," a film about a confrontation between fetishism and Christianity in Ivory Coast, when the generator broke down. Another screening was scheduled.

The next day the church overflowed for a celebration of what God has done in the past year, which has seen the church grow from perhaps 40 members to more than 100.

Francois sent a message to Hale asking for more tracts.

"So many people have been coming to church members' houses asking for Christian literature that we have run out," he reported.

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