


PRACTICAL RESOURCES FOR CHRISTIAN LIVING
WESTERN RECORDER

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FOR THE RECORD

Firing upheld
Trustees of the Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board have upheld the firing a missionary couple on charges related to charismatic practices. *See page 2.*

Russian vision
A Kentucky Baptist ophthalmologist has a vision for helping a Russian Baptist pastor's family next month. *See page 3.*

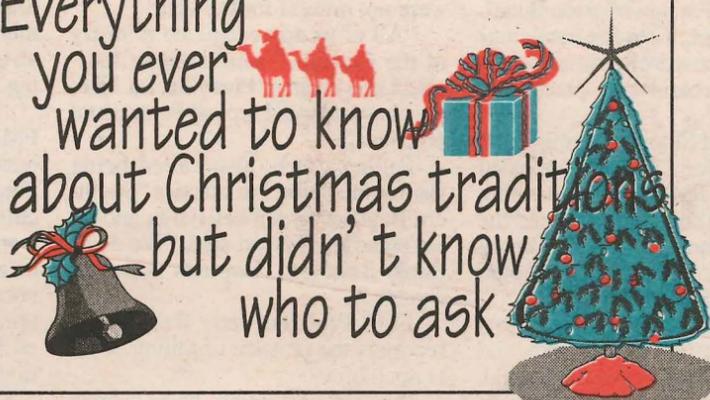
Executive Board
The Kentucky Baptist Convention's Executive Board took the first step toward implementing a KBC motion regarding Cedarmore and Jonathan Creek assemblies last week. *See page 3.*

Editorial
Are you like Linus, trapped in belief you can't get out of? *See page 5.*

\$10 investments
A North Carolina pastor gave church members \$10 bills as seed money to invest on behalf of the Lottie Moon Christmas Offering, and the congregation returned \$34,000 in gifts. *See page 9.*

Reminder
This is the last issue of the Western Recorder for 1995, since no paper will be published Dec. 26. The next issue will be dated Jan. 2, 1996.

Everything you ever wanted to know about Christmas traditions but didn't know who to ask



By Bob Allen
Associated Baptist Press

Christmas is Jesus' birthday. Any child in Sunday school knows that, which is unfortunate, because it almost certainly is wrong.

The modern celebration of Christmas combines a number of traditions so ancient that their origins have become lost to all but historians and trivia buffs. So, just in case you were wondering, here is all-you-ever-wanted-to-know survey of traditions related to the celebration of Christmas.

Followers of Jesus celebrated his death and resurrection early in church history, but Jesus' nativity was not celebrated until 300 years later. While Dec. 25 eventually came to be associated as Jesus' birthday, no evidence remains about the exact date of Christ's birth.

Luke's gospel tells of angels announcing Jesus' birth to shepherds in the fields, keeping watch

over their flocks by night.

Winter in Judea was wet and chilly. It is unlikely that shepherds would spend the night in their fields in December. More likely, scholars say, Jesus was born in the spring lambing season, when nights were balmy and shepherds would need to be awake to tend their ewes.

Early Christians were more likely to celebrate the day of a person's death than the birth. Very early in the history of the church, Christians held an annual festival commemorating the death of Jesus, as well as honoring many of the martyrs on the day of their death.

Before the fourth century, churches in Egypt, Asia Minor and Antioch observed Epiphany, the manifestation of God to the world, celebrating Christ's baptism, birth and the visit by the magi described in the Gospel of Matthew.

Early in the fourth century, Christians in Rome began to celebrate the birth of Christ. At the

time, the church was embroiled in a controversy over the nature of Christ—whether he was truly God or a created being. It is likely an emphasis on the doctrine of the incarnation, the idea that "the word was made flesh," in John 1:14, was a factor in the spread of the celebration of Christmas.

The term Christmas, a contraction of "Christ's mass," did not come into use until the Middle Ages. Another term used to describe the event, Nativity, is from the Latin word for "birth."

Christmas appeared at first to have been observed at different times during the year. There is some evidence that the earliest Christmas festival was held in May.

In the fourth century, Pope Julius I designated Dec. 25 as Christmas, probably to coincide with pagan celebrations of the winter solstice, which many ancient religions observed as signaling the return or rebirth of the sun. The Feast of the Invincible Sun was celebrated across the Roman Empire.

Rather than trying to eradicate pagan holidays, church leaders sought to replace them with Christian observances.

Another tradition says Jesus died on the same date as he was conceived, March 25, placing his birth nine months later on Dec. 25.

When the Julian calendar, established by Julius Caesar in 46 B.C., was replaced by the Gregorian calendar—ordered by Pope Gregory XIII in 1582—11 days were dropped. Some Christian sects refused to accept the redating and continued to celebrate See page 6

Stockings put feet to gospel for inmates

By Melanie Childers
Staff Writer

LOUISVILLE—Stuffed stockings provide much more than holiday hosiery for 2,000 prisoners and their children, thanks to Kentucky Baptist layperson Renee Price.

Under her direction, more than 2,000 18-inch stockings will be handmade, stuffed with surprises and distributed to prison inmates, to have a gift to give their children this Christmas.

Price, a member of Shively Baptist Church in Louisville, has been coordinating the stocking ministry for about eight years.

The ministry has grown tremendously since the first year, when a woman asked Price—then president of Baptist Young Women at Shively—if the group would make and stuff 150 stockings for Marion Ad- See Stockings put ..., page 6



NICKELS FOR LOTTIE Children from Handsboro Baptist Church in Gulfport, Miss., examine some of the 22,700 nickels (\$1,135) they collected for the Lottie Moon Christmas Offering for foreign missions. Members of the church's Royal Ambassadors and Girls in Action groups placed the coins up and down the church driveway, forming a line nearly 500 yards long. Next year they hope to place a mile-long line of quarters along the Gulf of Mexico shoreline. (BP photo by Sandy King)

Fort Thomas men offer 'full service' in ministry

By Joyce Sweeney Martin
Staff Writer

FORT THOMAS—"Full service" has taken on new meaning down at Clarence's Chevron, on the corner of Highland and Grand avenues.

A string of tragedies in owner Clarence Moermond's family almost put the station out of business. But a group of men from Highland Hills Baptist Church pitched in to keep the station open.

It all began when Moermond died suddenly of a heart attack Nov. 17, 1994. Then in January 1995, Moermond's widow had to have emergency quadruple bypass surgery while visiting a daughter in Atlanta. In March, son Roger, 39, who had bought out the family business after his father's death, also suffered a heart attack and was unable to work. And to top it off, in April, while Roger was still in the hospital recovering from angioplasty, his 34-year-old sister also had a heart attack and died in the same hospital.

That's when the men from Highland Hills Baptist Church demonstrated what "full-service" really can mean.

Gerald Sharon, pastor of the church where Roger Moermond has been a member for more than 25 years, suggested that fellow church members might help keep the station open until Roger could return to work.

Parishioner Dick Johnston quickly organized a group of volunteers from both Clarence and Roger's Sunday school classes.

For three months, most of the 11 men worked at least one day each week. They pumped gas, put air in tires, washed windshields and answered the phone.

They continued their hands-on ministry until Roger was able to return to work in June. And then, when in August Roger had to go back to the hospital for heart bypass surgery, the volunteers went on duty again. Each worked a half day each week until Roger returned to work in October.

This "full-service" ministry was a life-saver for the entire Moermond family. "I can't say enough for them," Roger Moermond said. "Because of them, I was able to keep the doors open. Without them, I would have lost the station."

Moving? See page 4 (12/19)

BAPTIST BITS

■ **New Orleans names interim.** Billy K. Smith has been named interim president of New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary. President Landrum Leavell announced his resignation one year ago, and a trustee search committee has been unable to nominate his successor yet. Leavell stayed on for the past year but declined to continue any further. Smith, a faculty member since 1976, is the seminary's provost.

■ **Evangelism top priority.** Telling others about Jesus Christ is the priority of the Southern Baptist Convention's restructuring plan, Morris Chapman told evangelism leaders Nov. 30. "Evangelization is its priority, not one of its priorities," said Chapman, president of the SBC Executive Committee.

■ **Golden Gate gets \$5.25 million.** Golden Gate Baptist Theological Seminary in Mill Valley, Calif., will begin a school of intercultural studies with a \$5.25 million gift from California residents David and Faith Kim. It is the largest gift ever received by the seminary.

■ **Graduate student publication moving.** Paradigms, an interdisciplinary academic journal on religion, has published its 10th anniversary issue and announced plans to move from Louisville to an undetermined location. The student publication has been self-sustaining and never has had any formal ties to Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, although its editorial staff has been composed largely of seminary students. The journal's current staff cites a changing pool of doctoral students at the seminary as a reason for its impending move.

■ **Turner to Arkansas.** Emil Turner, pastor of First Baptist Church of Lake Charles, La., has been elected executive director of the Arkansas Baptist State Convention. Turner, 45, succeeds Don Moore, who is retiring.

■ **Webb to edit Word & Way.** Bill Webb, editor of the Illinois Baptist, has been named editor of Missouri's Word & Way. He succeeds Bob Terry, who left the Missouri paper to become editor of the Alabama Baptist.

■ **Missouri Fellowship elects coordinator.** The Cooperative Baptist Fellowship of Missouri elected its first full-time coordinator Dec. 2. Harold Phillips, minister of education at Second Baptist Church in Liberty, Mo., and former staff member of Deer Park Baptist Church in Louisville, will assume the job Jan. 1.

■ **Vickers named to HMB post.** Former Kentucky pastor Robert Clayton Vickers has been named director of military chaplaincy for the Southern Baptist Home Mission Board. Vickers is a Lexington native who previously was pastor of Gilead Baptist Church in Richmond, Burk's Branch Baptist Church in Shelbyville and David's Fork Baptist Church in Lexington, as well as associate pastor of Latonia Baptist Church in Covington. He has been a chaplain in the U.S. Army since 1975.

■ **Escobar to HMB.** Donoso Escobar, former social work professor at Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, has been named associate director of church and community ministries for the Southern Baptist Home Mission Board. Since leaving Southern, he has been teaching at Mississippi College in Clinton, Miss.

■ **Merrell to Executive Committee.** After serving less than one year as chief communications officer for the Southern Baptist Christian Life Commission, former associational director of missions Bill Merrell has been named vice president for convention relations for the Southern Baptist Convention Executive Committee. Merrell, 52, succeeds Mark Coppenger as the convention's public relations director. A primary responsibility will be editing SBC Life, a monthly publication produced by the Executive Committee.

FMB trustees uphold couple's dismissal

By Greg Warner
Associated Baptist Press

MEMPHIS, Tenn. (ABP)—"Falling down in the Spirit" is outside the bounds for Southern Baptist missionaries, says the Foreign Mission Board, which voted Dec. 12 to fire a missionary couple accused of promoting the controversial charismatic practice in Singapore.

Charles and Sharon Carroll, FMB missionaries for 13 years, appealed their firing to FMB trustees meeting in Memphis, Tenn., but were told the practices of their Singapore church are "outside of generally accepted practices of Southern Baptists."

The FMB trustee committee that oversees work in southern Asia and the Pacific, which heard the appeal, expressed appreciation for the Carrolls' service but told the couple "it is no longer appropriate for you to represent the Foreign Mission Board of the Southern Baptist Convention."

Charles Carroll serves as pastor of Community of Praise Baptist Church in Singapore, a 400-member church which the couple founded in 1990. "Falling," in which a worshiper falls to the floor apparently in an unconscious or semi-conscious state, is not a major element in worship at the Singapore church, Carroll said, but it has been seen more frequently in recent months.

FMB officials could identify only one other Southern Baptist missionary ever fired for doctrinal reasons—Michael Willett, a seminary teacher appointed to Venezuela who was dismissed in 1988 for doubting miracles in the Bible.

The Carrolls were asked to resign but refused.

The area committee met with the Carrolls in private for three hours Dec. 11 and then conferred among themselves for two more hours before adjourning after 1 a.m. They voted without opposition to recommend that the full trustee board terminate the couple Jan. 1 "for failure to perform duties in keeping with the expectations for missionaries of the For-

eign Mission Board."

The full board adopted the committee's recommendation Dec. 12 without debate and with no votes in opposition. The Carrolls did not ask to address the full trustee board and were not present for the vote.

"All of us appreciate the ministry of the Carrolls," said trustee Chairman Leon Hyatt of Pineville, La. "But they have adopted typical Pentecostal practices."

Falling down, also called being slain in the Spirit, is a practice "Southern Baptists do not believe in and do not stand for," Hyatt said. "We don't think Southern Baptists want to change."

FMB President Jerry Rankin told reporters the practice of falling down is not biblical.

"Southern Baptists have a great deal of flexibility, diversity, latitude in many areas, including spiritual gifts and manifestations of the Spirit," Rankin said. "Where we would come down representing Southern Baptists is on the basis of sound biblical justification."

There is "no evidence" in the Bible for falling down, he said.

Before his election as FMB president, Rankin was area director in Singapore and supervised the Carrolls' work in the early 1990s, when some charismatic practices—but not falling down—were in evidence. Rankin said he had to admonish Carroll about possible excesses.

Carroll's church reportedly saw an increase in the "falling" practice after Wallace Henley, pastor of a charismatic Southern Baptist church in Houston, preached there on recent mission trips.

Carroll acknowledged "falling down" is not common among Baptists, but he defended the practice as biblical. "While the Bible does not teach that this experience is a normative encounter with God (that every person who encounters God must experience falling), the practice is not excluded from Scripture," he wrote in a 24-page written appeal to trustees.

Carroll's appeal cited biblical ac-

counts said to depict the practice (I Samuel 19:23-24; II Chronicles 5:14; Acts 26:14; Revelation 1:17 and 19:4). He also cited examples from Christian history, including John Wesley in the 18th century and the Shantung revival involving Baptist missionaries in 20th century China—all of which he said experienced "falling."

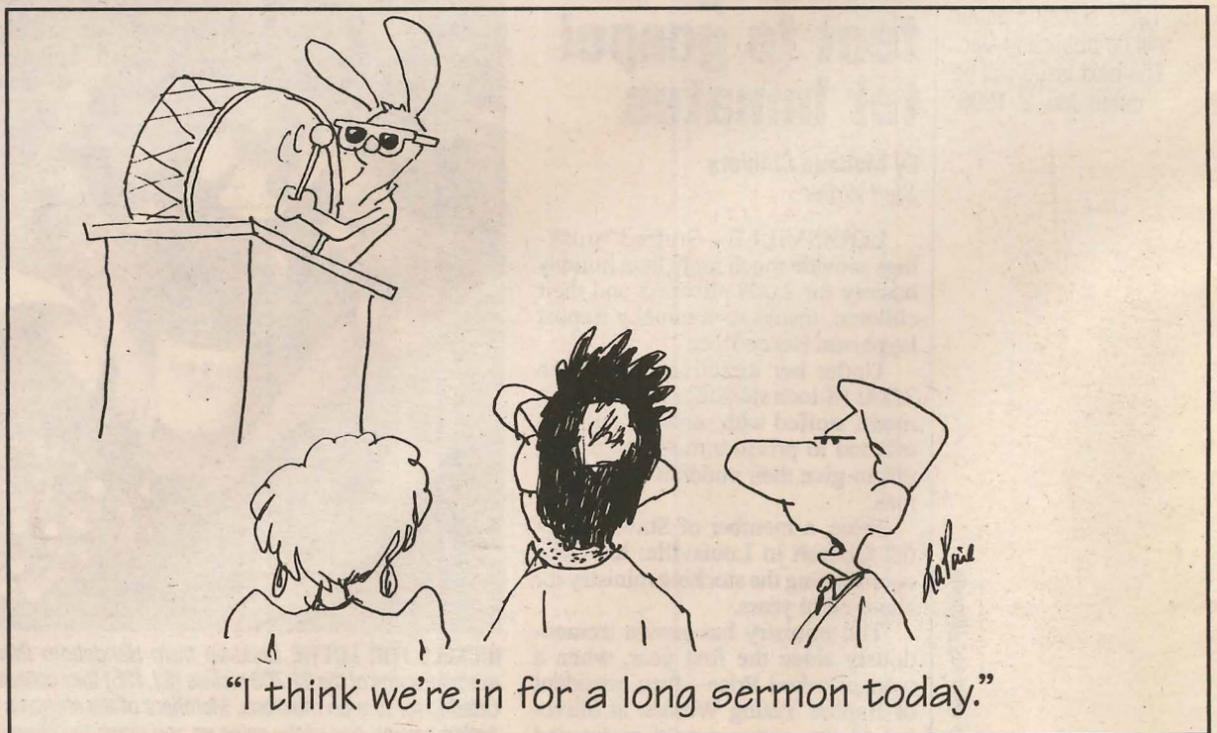
"Furthermore, we believe that the FMB's determination that falling is outside the boundaries of traditional Southern Baptist practice is based on culture, a style of ministry and a worldview that is basically Western," he added. "That is, such a practice is not a traditional part of typical Southern Baptist ministry styles in the United States. However, this should not invalidate the experience."

"Since we are encouraged as missionaries not to impose our Western worldview in cross-cultural communication, we would like to encourage the FMB to allow missionaries more freedom to practice the gospel (including its expression in signs and wonders) beyond the boundaries of what is traditionally acceptable in the USA."

Rankin noted: "We would not infringe on the autonomy of a local church, but we would expect our missionaries to teach and practice doctrines and manifestations ... in a way that is compatible with Southern Baptists."

Carroll, 41, the son of Southern Baptist missionaries, said he opened himself to the Holy Spirit and experienced a "spiritual renewal" in 1989. When he started Community of Praise in Singapore, he said, "we wanted to just step out of the way and see what God could do."

From a beginning of 24 people, the church grew to 200 in weekly worship in the first year—large for a Baptist church in Singapore. Now averaging 400 worshipers a week, the church ministers to people from 20 countries and has started 63 churches and missions in India and other nations. Carroll hopes to remain as pastor of the Singapore congregation.



Ophthalmologist has vision of helping Russian family

By Melanie Childers
Staff Writer

LOUISVILLE—Ophthalmologist Morris Nacke has set his sights on helping a Russian pastor's family suffering from severe eye problems. He's looking for a way to bring them to Kentucky in January for surgery.

Nacke, a member of Parkland Baptist Church in Louisville, first met the family in September 1994 during a Kentucky-Russia partnership project in Nizhny Novgorod, where he and other volunteers set up a medical clinic.

Alexi Markin is pastor of Central Baptist Church, which hosted the Kentucky medical team. Markin's wife, Maria, and their daughter, Elena Osminan, both suffer from congenital cataract disease.

During a return visit last October, Nacke and other physicians renewed their relationship with the family.

The women "both have very far

advanced cataracts," Nacke said.

"Both probably would be considered legally blind, although they can see enough to function," he added, explaining that 20/400 vision—wherein patients cannot read beyond the largest letter on the eye chart—constitutes legal blindness.

"Surgery would open up their world and allow them to function much better," he added.

"We were not able to do any (cataract) surgery on our visits in '94 or '95" due to multiple factors, Nacke explained. Given the unstable economy and Russia's government-provided health care, funds are insufficient to provide cataract surgery for all who need it. Furthermore, modern equipment and lens implants are difficult to secure there, Nacke said.

"We felt that since they would not be able to have the surgery there, we would volunteer to provide funds for bringing them to Kentucky and have me do the surgery here" at Caritas

Medical Center, Nacke said.

The procedure—allowing time for healing and follow-up—could be completed in three months' time in Kentucky, Nacke estimated.

Nacke and two other physicians from the trip—M.A. Winchester from Whitley City and Marshall Johnson from Elizabethtown—currently are collecting funds and ironing out details of the trip.

They're in the process of trying to get visas approved for Maria Markin and Alexander and Elena Osminan to travel to Kentucky in January. Alexander Osminan served as chief interpreter and coordinated the Russian church's hosting efforts during the partnership project in Nizhny Novgorod.

Many other details, such as housing and travel needs, still are to be finalized. Anyone interested in assisting with the project is invited to do so, Nacke said.

"Kentucky Baptists can contribute

money to help defray costs, and to help buy clothing for while they're here," he suggested.

The trio may also benefit from a brief tour of the state, in which case volunteers around Kentucky may be needed to provide housing, the physician added.

Caritas has agreed to provide the operating room and staff and supplies for the surgeries.

Nacke said he plans to return to Nizhny Novgorod next year, hopefully bringing donated equipment and lenses with him. He and other Kentuckians have developed positive relationships with physicians at the university clinic there, where they were invited to give lectures and perform surgeries alongside Russian doctors.

To help with this project, contact the Kentucky Baptist Convention's partnership missions office at (502) 245-4101, or write to the partnership missions office at Box 43433, Louisville, Ky. 40253.

BLUEGRASS BURGEO

■ **Campbellsville** College has announced plans to develop a campus radio station. The college hopes to begin airing live radio shows Jan. 22 through TeleScripps Channel 18.

■ **Veronica Marie** Duka, a Campbellsville College freshman, won the first Miss Campbellsville scholarship pageant Dec. 9. The pageant is a preliminary to the Miss Kentucky pageant.

■ **Irene Corey**, who gained fame as costume designer for the children's television character Barney, and her husband, Orlin, were inducted into the Maskrafters Hall of Fame at Georgetown College. The Coreys are former faculty members at Georgetown.

■ **Correction:** Last week's Recorder carried an article about Bob Jones retiring from the Kentucky Baptist Convention staff. The article and headline incorrectly implied Jones had only worked for the KBC 20 years, when in fact he has been employed by the KBC for 27 years. His first seven years of service were as mountain missions director before moving to the Louisville staff.

Executive Board begins work on Cedarmore motion

By Mark Wingfield
Interim Editor

The administrative committee of the Kentucky Baptist Convention's Executive Board will recommend how to implement a motion on Cedarmore and Jonathan Creek assemblies adopted by messengers to last month's KBC annual meeting.

That motion called for the KBC to maintain ownership of both assemblies but to make them "separate bodies with their own boards of trustees." Currently, the assemblies operate as departments of the Executive Board's business division.

During the KBC annual meeting in Owensboro, messengers authorized the Executive Board to implement the motion.

In the opening session of the Executive Board's Dec. 11 meeting, KBC President Bill Tichenor charged the administrative committee with recommending how to do that. The full board unanimously affirmed his decision.

The administrative committee is scheduled to report back to the full

board at their next meeting, May 6-7 at Cedarmore.

The 14-member administrative committee is chaired by Charles Barnes, a Louisville layman who is a retired banking executive and member of Clifton Baptist Church.

Other committee members are Douglas Anderson of Hopkinsville, Scott Kilgore of Bowling Green, Drew Martin of Paintsville, Ray Acree of Greensburg, Dorothy Crace of Ashland, Harley Dixon of Paducah, Robert Lowery of Barbourville, Stephen Thompson of Morganfield, Anna White of Versailles, Herbert Booth of Burlington, Floyd Price of Scottsville, Bill Shoulta of Louisville and Tichenor.

In other action last week, the Executive Board:

■ Approved the nomination of Barry Allen as president of the Kentucky Baptist Foundation. Allen has been the KBC's business manager for the past 25 years.

■ Agreed to allow Bill Marshall, KBC executive secretary-treasurer, to nominate a person to replace Allen as KBC business manager using a mail

ballot, if he finds a candidate prior to the May Executive Board meeting.

■ Terminated the Executive Board's Cedarmore transition committee, which had been working on recommendations about the assembly's future prior to last month's vote by the KBC to make Cedarmore and Jonathan Creek separate institutions.

■ Determined to name the soon-to-be-renovated space for the KBC archives in honor of Doris Yeiser, long-time KBC employee and archivist.

■ Hired Romanian native Alexandru Farac as ethnic ministries consultant, a part-time position previously held by Renato Santos, who moved to Florida.

■ Awarded a \$10,000 undesignated gift from partnership missions funds to the Baptist Convention of New York.

■ Accepted a gift of 48 acres of land adjacent to Cedarmore in Shelby County.

■ Distributed \$579,000 in unused Executive Board funds, unrestricted investment income and state missions fund year-end excess. Almost half of this money, \$250,000, was set aside

for the Kentucky-Russia partnership. Another \$100,000 was set aside for in-state missions projects. Other uses include work on Baptist student centers, KBC archives development, special KBC projects and equipment replacement.

■ Approved establishment of two new scholarship funds to benefit qualified students attending the KBC's three liberal arts colleges.

■ Approved a request from the Western Recorder's board of directors to change the terms of board members' service from three years to four years. The change would bring the Recorder board's terms of service in line with all other KBC agencies and institutions. The proposal must be approved by messengers to next November's KBC annual meeting.

■ Confirmed action regarding trustees of Campbellsville College taken at last month's KBC annual meeting. One nominee was omitted from the list approved by KBC messengers. Henry Huff of Mars Hill, N.C., had been nominated for an out-of-state position on Campbellsville's board.



NEW ART BUILDING Officials of Georgetown College break ground for a new art building, the first construction of an academic building on the campus in 30 years. The Dec. 13 ceremony was held on the construction site, at the corner of College and Mulberry streets. Construction of the \$1.8 million building is scheduled for completion before the fall 1996 semester begins. In addition to classrooms and studios, the facility will include an outdoor sculpture area and one of the largest galleries in central Kentucky. The current art building will be razed to make way for a new Learning Resource Center.

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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BAPTIST FORUM

EDITOR'S NOTE: This week's Baptist Forum is devoted to letters and commentaries with a Christmas theme.

Hope without greed

When I was teaching school, I loved to read a favorite Christmas story to my classes every year during the holiday season. The story, "Why the Chimes Rang," took place in a city in a far-away country. In this city was a great church that had a beautiful chime of Christmas bells in its tower.

Every Christmas Eve, people flocked to the church to bring their gifts to the Christ Child. When the greatest and best offering was laid on the altar, the chimes would ring. They could not be rung by people, and no one had heard them for many years. Some thought the offerings had not been great enough to deserve the music of the chimes.

At the close of a particular Christmas Eve service, the rich and the great marched proudly down the aisle of the church to lay jewels and baskets of gold on the altar as their gifts. They selfishly wanted to win for themselves the chime of the Christmas bells. Everyone thought the chimes would surely ring after the king of the country took the jewel-studded crown from his head and placed it on the altar as his offering to the Holy Child. But only the cold wind was heard blowing through the church's tower.

Even so, the chimes did ring that night after Little Brother crept softly down the aisle when no one was looking and placed older brother Pedro's little piece of silver on the altar.

"Why the Chimes Rang" is another reminder of how God often chooses innocent children and common folk to accomplish God's purposes—people who have no desire to be rich

or famous. Ralph Waldo Emerson once said, "The greatest man in history was the poorest."

Christ's humble birth, simple lifestyle, support of the poor and willingness to die for all humankind are significant to all who want to follow the Giver of every good and perfect gift. Jesus, the reason for celebrating Christmas, is the antithesis of the greed that is slowly, subtly corrupting and destroying America. We need the hope that Christmas offers; it is hope devoid of greed.

*Paul Whiteley Sr.
Louisville*

Thanks for Allen

My prayer for the hour is, Lord God, you love me so much that you will not leave me alone. I neglect you but you remember me. You come during Advent and at all times to give compassion, not criticism. You come to include, not exclude. You come with your most precious revelation at Christmas through Jesus Christ who came to do for me what I could not do for myself.

You come through the daily wonder of your creation and reveal yourself through my extended family, friends and co-workers. Today, I thank you for your revelation through my friend Barry Allen, KBC business manager for 25 years, who never sought duties equal to his strength, but strength equal to his duties, who approached all things with integrity, patience and understanding.

I pray that through this unique revelation, and all your revelations that I may stand with my sisters and brothers at the end and give a good account of my stewardship, through Jesus Christ. Amen.

*Douglas D. Hays
Louisville*

Joy in Jesus

The church sanctuary had never looked lovelier. Beautiful green wreaths with red velvet bows hung from the balcony. Mounds of poinsettias

adorned the choir loft. Garlands graced the pews. Everywhere I looked that cold New England morning, I saw the trappings of the joyous Christmas season.

Everywhere, that is, with one exception. At the front of the sanctuary sat a tiny white casket with the body of a beautiful 7-year-old girl—the pastor's daughter—who had lost a valiant battle with leukemia.

Why, I wondered, hadn't someone removed the Christmas decorations before the funeral? Why should reminders of joy be allowed to invade our sorrow? How could we who mourned maintain a faith perspective in the midst of the harsh reality of the death of a child?

Where was Christ this Christmas? The trappings of Christmas and the joy they represented, and that little casket and the sorrow it symbolized warred in my mind. "Death," I thought, "has invaded Christmas."

But then, as I prayed, the wreaths and bows and poinsettias which a few minutes before had seemed so inappropriate seemed to encircle me, bearing comfort and strength. They became reminders of the eternal; they tempered my confusion and sorrow with hope and peace. "No," I thought. "Christ has invaded death—and won."

Seven years have come and gone. Little did I know how personal the lesson learned that day would become, how the lesson would keep me firmly planted in my faith in Christ when my mother died on Dec. 23, 1993.

Now, it's Christmas 1995. Once again, amid the greenery and the poinsettias sneak life's harsh realities: Bosnia, the homeless, dysfunctional families, disease, unemployment.

"Do not be afraid," the angel told the shepherds that night long ago. "I bring you good news of great joy that will be for all people. Today in the town of David a Savior has been born to you; he is Christ the Lord."

This year, lay claim to that joy.

*Joyce Martin
Louisville*

tude—for undeserved blessings, acceptance, the presence of the Holy Spirit in each Christian life.

"It is this tension between the unfaithfulness of the 'created' and the unwavering faithfulness of the Creator that makes the holiday more than just a sentimental season. The manger is an ever-present reminder of our need for a Savior and Lord. It is a tender reminder that we are not equipped to live this life in our own power, nor are we required to do so. It is a reminder that we have been given the only gift of eternal consequence, and that we have the power to either withhold it from others or to introduce them to it.

"Like Oskar Schindler coming to the end of a war, the Christian comes to the conclusion of each year with the heartfelt confession: 'I could have done more.' It is that confession that brings hope for the next year, for confession and recommitment are brothers.

"Merry Christmas."

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

I could have done more

Bill Webb is editor of the Illinois Baptist and a former Foreign Mission Board colleague of mine. His 1994 Christmas editorial struck me as one which needs retelling over and over.

"World War II entrepreneur Oskar Schindler, who parlayed contacts within the Third Reich into lucrative war contracts using Jewish concentration camp labor, came to the war's close a different man.

"A womanizer known to exploit any person and any situation for his own selfishness, Schindler stood outside his munitions 'factory' surrounded by his grateful Jewish workers. His wealth was gone, literally spent to buy the estimated 1,200 Jews selected for his industry, a plant which he secretly designed to produce only defective shells for the Nazi war effort.

"It was an epic moment in the Schindler saga. 'His' Jews presented him a gold ring crafted from the fillings of their teeth, the only gift they

had to give. Finally, Schindler realized the true horror of the war and the significance of his heroic efforts—his risks—to save these people.

"All he had left was his luxury sedan, engine running, ready to speed him away before Allied troops came to rescue concentration camp victims and arrest Nazi collaborators. But even his car, his last possession, convicted him. 'I could have done more,' he sobbed, realizing his car could have been traded for more Jewish lives. His confession is heard by the entire silent throng of grateful Jews: 'I could have done more.'

"It is perhaps fitting that the Christian community celebrates the birth of the Savior as a climax to every year. It is a time to look into the face of that Savior, ever mindful of both hurts and joys, losses and victories, of the year nearly past. It is both a time of regrets—for bad choices, laziness, unfaithfulness—and a time of grati-

ON MISSION TOGETHER



William W. Marshall



FAMILY FORUM

Angry neighbors

By Wade Rowatt

Q My 13-year-old son cut across the backyard of the neighbors, and the husband ran out and yelled in his face. My son came home in tears. Then the man called me and said that they were tired of kids killing their grass every fall. Now that I stop to think about the situation, I am upset he treated my son so rudely. What should I do?

A You have a right to be upset. The man had a reason to be upset and angry; however, he seems to have overreacted. His verbal abuse and threats to your son were way out of line. No adult should treat a teen in such a fashion.

It appears he did not attempt to talk in a civil mode. He must have had problems in previous years and dumped a lot of pent-up anger and frustration on your son. Your teen was in the wrong place at the wrong time.

You do not want to repeat your neighbor's mistake and overreact. Nevertheless, you do need to confront that man. Read Matthew 18:15-22 and go as a Christian. Possibly a phone call would be best since he called you. Tell him as kindly as possible how you see the situation. Request that he not behave in such a manner toward your son. You might suggest that in the future, he contact you before he says anything corrective to your son.

If he listens to your approach, then you have made your point. If he does not hear you, try working through another friend in the vicinity who knows both of you and can serve as a go-between or peacemaker.

If all else fails, make it a matter of prayer with your church. Do not give the details, but say something like, "pray for our relationship with one of our neighbors."

After that, try again. Tell your son to observe the man's wishes and not walk across that yard. Teach your son to recognize verbal abuse and to avoid such situations. Whenever possible, just walk away. No youth should have to tolerate emotional abuse.

Your son and his friends may be tempted to get even. Caution them about the trap of seeking revenge. They will become victims in an escalating uproar. No one wins such a skunk fight.

Wade Rowatt is director of the St. Matthews Pastoral Counseling Center in Louisville.

HE SAID/SHE SAID

Stand in awe of Mary's journey; recognize Joseph's silent strength

SHE SAID



Alison Wingfield

One of the ways I prepare myself for Christ's coming each year is to read the book "Two From Galilee" by Marjorie Holmes.

The story of Mary and Joseph comes alive in this tale. Granted, the author uses a great deal of license, but it serves the purpose to make the reader realize that Mary and Joseph were real people with hopes and dreams for the future.

When I was younger, I found myself thinking about what it would be like to be Mary, engaged and expecting a child whom both you and your fiancée knew was not his. Her faith had to have been strong, but I'm sure her doubts were just as strong. I would have been terrified. Here God had given her the highest honor—to bear the Savior, the Messiah—but in the eyes of everyone around her she was a fallen woman who had committed a grievous sin that would become apparent as time passed.

Going through childbirth has given me another perspective on the whole story. When I was pregnant with our twin boys, I reached the beached whale stage long before they were born. Getting in the car was a feat in itself, so I can't imagine riding on a donkey or walking all the way to Bethlehem! If I were Mary, I think God and I would have had some very serious discussions on that long journey. She probably was grateful for any place to lay down and could have cared less if it was a stable or a place at the inn.

The miracle of Jesus' birth is an incredible event. As a woman, I have to say I am proud and in awe of Mary, an incredible woman/girl who could proclaim, before all she was to face: "My soul glorifies the Lord and my spirit rejoices in God my Savior, for he has been mindful of the humble state of his servant."

HE SAID



Mark Wingfield

If men were smarter, we'd sit down and shut up a lot more during the Christmas season. No male, regardless of how sensitive he may be, can comprehend or comment on the miraculous birth of the Christ Child better than a female.

It is no wonder the Bible records so little of Joseph's words or thoughts. He apparently had the good sense to stand in awe of God's work and avoid the temptation to explain

how everything was going to work out. That's a common male gift, of course—pretending to be experts on any subject of conversation, regardless of whether we know anything about it or not.

Yet Joseph wasn't the absentee father or out-of-touch spouse he often gets portrayed to be these days. Remember that he set a new standard in male-female relations for his day. According to the law, he could have had Mary stoned when she announced she was pregnant out of wedlock. He demonstrated grace by sacrificing his own reputation for the sake of protecting Mary.

Although little of Joseph's thoughts or words are recorded in the Bible, his presence is noted at key events along the way. For as long as we know Joseph lived, he stood beside both Mary and Jesus, supporting them. That's far more than many women and children can say of their husbands and fathers these days.

In the end, Joseph demonstrates for all that there is wisdom in silence, steadiness and sacrifice.

Mark Wingfield is interim editor of the Western Recorder.
Alison Wingfield is a freelance writer.

'Trapped in a belief he can't give up'

Charlie Brown may be one of the greatest theologians of our time.

His creator, Charles Schulz, is a Christian man who subtly works into the comic strip bits of profound theology.

Schulz recently was interviewed on National Public Radio's Morning Edition, where he was asked if the Great Pumpkin ever will show up, since Linus still waits expectantly each Halloween.

"No," Schulz replied, "the Great Pumpkin is fictional," something Linus dreamed up and now can't admit is of his own making.

"There's some theology in that," the cartoonist added, explaining that Linus has confused Halloween and Christmas, the real holiday of waiting expectantly for a visitor from on high.

"He's got himself trapped in a belief he can't give up," Schulz said.

Aren't we just like Linus?

We may not carry a literal blanket with us, but we do wrap ourselves in the warm comfort of all kinds of errant theology—theology we've dreamed up and now can't admit isn't true.

Too often, those who charge that modern, progressive Christians are changing God's message to fit the current culture can't see that their own theology is rooted as much in an earlier culture as

it is in the Bible. They're trapped in a cultural theology they can't give up.

Too often, those on the extreme vanguard of Christian theology take a past injustice of the church and attempt to swing the pendulum too far the other direction, often driven by their own personal needs. They're trapped in a self-serving theology they can't give up.

Too often, those who think they've found the ultimate theological system

or experienced the ultimate spiritual gift begin to look with disdain on all who haven't discovered the same revelation. They're trapped in an arrogant theology they can't give up.

Too often, those who feel the insecurity of the world around them cling on to any rigid rule an author or television preacher puts forth, disregarding the truth that the Bible doesn't always give easy answers to complex questions. They're trapped in a quick-fix theology they can't give up.

This Christmas, let us give ourselves the gift of honesty and courage to examine the Scriptures with an open mind. Let us not confuse holidays and attempt to import the scariness of Halloween into the joy of Christmas. Let us gladly anticipate the coming of the liberating Christ Child, who truly has come and will come again.

— Mark Wingfield

EDITORIALS

Fear not: God wants to work through you

Amid the merriment of the modern Christmas season, most of us forget that the events of the first Christmas initially struck fear in the hearts of its primary characters.

This was so common a pattern that the Bible records angels repeatedly beginning their message-delivery services with the words "Fear not."

Zechariah, Mary, Joseph and the shepherds all required the same reassuring words before they could hear the news of how God would use them to prepare the way for the Messiah: "Fear not."

Our society has perfected the fear thing and turned it into many multi-million-dollar industries: car alarms, car phones, home alarms, radio talk shows, bottled water, even the Weather Channel. Americans—most Christians included—are scared stiff of everything in the world except God.

We have lost the paradoxical insight of John Newton's text: "Twas grace that taught my heart to fear and grace my fears relieved."

Indeed, it is misplaced fear that keeps the church from being the true incarnation of Christ in our modern world. Fear of people of another race kept most Southern Baptist churches on the sidelines of the civil rights movement, when they should have been on the front lines. Fear of the inner cities has caused churches to evangelize the suburbs but not the cities. Fear of sacrificing ma-

terial possessions keeps most American Christians from exercising true stewardship. Fear of being offensive keeps us from bearing witness to God's good news for our neighbors and coworkers.

The futurist/theologian Leonard Sweet asks two penetrating questions in the latest issue of his "Soul Cafe" newsletter:

■ "Are you, like Mary, afraid of birthing our Savior for this postmodern world?"

■ "Are you afraid, like the shepherds, of a true visitation from God in your life?"

We live our lives and plan our worship with little or no expectation that God might actually come among us. After all, God's arrival might not fit the carefully planned order of worship. And, believe it not, God's Spirit might lead us to see things and do things not deemed kosher by the Baptist brethren.

Christmas is about the miraculous incarnation of Jesus Christ—God come down to earth in human form. That should strike a healthy fear in our hearts.

Yet we must fear even more the harsh reality of our own unwillingness to let God come to earth through us today.

Hear the message of the angels this Christmas: "Fear not."

— Mark Wingfield

CHRISTMAS

Stockings put feet to gospel for inmates

"Some of these kids have nothing positive in their lives," but when they receive the stockings, "their faces light up, they smile."

Prison chaplain John Ramsey

Continued from page 1
justment Center.

Inmates in eight prisons and two jails—from Eddyville to Eastern Kentucky Correctional Center—will receive stockings to give their children this year, thanks to Price and the dozens of people assisting her.

Ironically, Price said, she doesn't sew. Yet all the stockings are handmade.

She sends patterns cut out of newspaper to any church that volunteers to make stockings. Other than the consistent shape and size, volunteers are free to try creative decorating styles.

Stockings often are made of felt, cotton or quilted material, and they may be decorated with iron-on appliques, fabric paint or even jingling bells, Price said.

The ministry quickly expanded beyond Shively's church walls to other Baptist churches, and later to an ecumenical array of area congregations.

"We have at least 22 churches helping this year," Price said, adding up her list of Methodist, Episcopal, Assembly of God and Church of God congregations, as well as Baptists from as far away as Lexington.

Churches participate in various ways, Price explained. One church hung a six-foot stocking in which members could place gift items they collected.

Most churches or church groups contact Price to let her know how many stockings they will make, or what items they will be collecting. She keeps careful records in a notebook.

Items not collected or donated by stores are bought with donated cash, she said.

This week, about 150 people were to gather at Shively Baptist Church to fill the stockings. Chaplains representing each of the prisons also were to participate and take their allotment back with them to distribute.

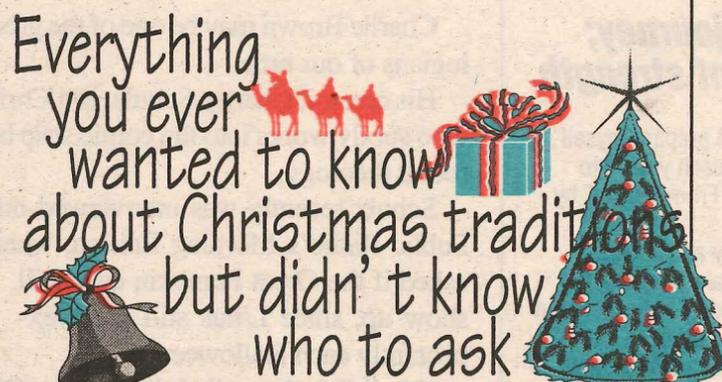
In addition to a New Testament, each stocking includes an orange, apple, coloring book, crayons, candy bar, comb or toothbrush, candy cane, pack of snack crackers and individually wrapped candy.

Chaplain Fred Coburn at Northpoint Training Center in Burgin had high praise for Price and the stocking ministry. "She has made possible an unbelievable opportunity for not just our institution, but several others," Coburn said.

Chaplain John Ramsey at Eastern Kentucky Correctional Complex in West Liberty applauded the opportunity for chaplains to minister to inmates' families.

"Some of these kids have nothing positive in their lives," Ramsey said, adding that visiting a parent in prison, which entails metal detectors and body searches, often can be a traumatic experience.

But when they receive the stockings, "their faces light up, they smile—there's always a thank you," he said.



Continued from page 1

Christmas on the old Dec. 25, which is Jan. 7 on the new calendar. Protestants also were slow to accept the Gregorian calendar, which became official in 1752.

The Christian calendar purports to date history from the year of Jesus' birth, but it is based on a miscalculation. The census by Quirinius cited in Luke 2:2 was dated by the Jewish historian Josephus in 6-7 B.C.

Herod the Great, mentioned in Matthew's gospel as the jealous king who tried to murder the Christ child, died in 4 B.C., according to Roman histories. That leads scholars to pinpoint the year of Jesus' birth as sometime between 4 B.C. and 1 B.C.

Christmas became a public holiday by order of the Roman emperor Justinian in the sixth century. St. Francis of Assisi introduced devotion to the Christmas crib, or manger, in the 13th century.

Martin Luther, the Protestant reformer, expressed devotion to Christmas in sermons. English Puritans, however, tried to do away with the holiday in the 17th century. It was revived with the restoration of the English monarchy in 1660, but as a more secular holiday than it had been before.

Some pre-Christian traditions became associated with Christmas and continue today. For example, in the first millennium in what is now Scotland, Druids celebrated the winter solstice by a festival honoring their sun god. Called "Yule," the celebration included dragging a huge log into an opening and starting a bonfire. The Druids would dance around the yule log in a noisy celebration designed to wake the sleeping sun.

The Druids also hung mistletoe in hopes it would bring peace and good fortune. Use of plants like holly comes from an ancient belief that such plants blossomed at Christmas.

The Christmas tree is a fairly recent addition, developing in the early 17th century in Strasbourg, France, and spreading through Germany and into northern Europe. The evergreen tree trimmed with lights and other decorations was derived from the so-called paradise tree, symbolizing Eden, in German mystery plays.

The use of candles on Christmas trees developed from the belief that candles appeared miraculously on the trees at Christmas.

The Christmas tree was introduced in England in 1841 by Prince Albert, consort of Queen Victoria. From there it accompanied immigrants to the United States.

The figure of Santa Claus, which arguably overshadows Jesus in secular celebrations of Christmas, stems from a historical character from the fourth century, Saint Nicholas.

The patron saint of Russia, Saint Nicholas lived in Asia Minor, now Turkey. He also came to be viewed as the patron saint of children, scholars, virgins, sailors and merchants. In the Middle Ages, thieves also viewed him as their patron saint as well.

The Saint Nicholas legend tells of surreptitious gifts to three daughters of a poor man, who, unable to give them dowries, was about to abandon them to a life of sin. From that story grew the custom of secret giving on the eve of St. Nicholas Day, Dec. 6. Because of the proximity of dates, Christmas and St. Nicholas Day became merged in many countries.

Colonial settlers on Manhattan Island introduced the name Santa Claus, a corruption of the Dutch "Sinterklaas," a modification of "Sint Nikolaas."

The Twelve Days of Christmas, popularized in the carol, refers to the 12 days between Christmas and Epiphany, Jan. 6. Epiphany celebrates the manifestation of Jesus as the Son of God, represented in the adoration of the magi, the baptism of Jesus and the miracle of turning water to wine at Cana.

Use of the abbreviation "Xmas," often criticized as an attempt to secularize or remove Christ from Christmas, actually has Christian roots. "X" is a Greek letter transliterated into English as "ch." It is the first letter in the biblical word "Christos," which is translated as "Christ."

Spring Meadows children send giant greetings

LOUISVILLE—Residents of Spring Meadows Children's Home in Louisville are giving an extra big greeting to their community this year.

Each of the six cottages at the Baptist children's home has created a giant plywood Christmas card to display on the front lawn of the Shelbyville Road campus. Creating the cards has been a tradition at Spring Meadows since 1987.

The children see their artwork as carrying an important message to the community.

"We want to persuade them that Christmas is not just about Santa Claus," said one resident of Hunter Cottage. "It's about the birth of Jesus Christ."

"It's not just about presents," said a resident of Herndon Cottage. "People need to know that God loves them."

The project offers a good way to introduce the children to art, and to boost their self-esteem, said Vicky Nallia, a teaching parent at Hunter



ART LESSON Teaching parent Vicky Nallia (center) assists two Spring Meadows youth in making this year's Christmas card for Hunter Cottage.

Cottage. "The kids are real resistant to it at first. They're afraid they'll make a mistake or mess up. But once they get started, they see they can do it."

So what do the children want drivers to think as they pass by the display of giant cards?

"That ours is the best," said one of the artists.

Largest charity paints 'dismal' view of poverty

WASHINGTON (RNS)—Despite an improving economy and falling unemployment, the number of people seeking help from the nation's largest private social-service organization rose in 1994, painting a "dismal" picture of poverty in America.

Catholic Charities USA said 11.1 million people sought emergency and social services from its agencies nationwide in 1994, up 500,000 from 1993. Half those receiving emergency services were members of working families who are not on welfare, the group said.

"Look at the face of poverty in America," said Fred Kammer, president of Catholic Charities USA. "Families—millions of families—are clinging to the private charity life preserver in an economic and political tidal wave. Their picture gets even more dismal as they are joined by millions of working families also grasping at that same charity life preserver."

The survey was compiled by the Urban Institute, a Washington-based non-profit research organization that specializes in economic and social analysis.

Kammer and other Catholic Charities officials said they fear proposed federal cuts in social programs will only make matters worse for the working poor.

"If current trends continue, the new working poor will compete for low-paying jobs with no health care benefits against an oncoming tide of unskilled workers who will be thrown off welfare," Kammer predicted. "That, we believe, is a formula for a national social catastrophe, and no one in this country will be spared the consequences."

Man becomes Christian, confesses crime

BURNSVILLE, Minn. (EP)—One Sunday last September, a church member told Pastor Roger Thompson he wanted to confess something.

"He approached me after our third service on Sunday morning, when we have a time for prayer and dealing with personal issues," said Thompson, pastor of the 1,500-member Berean Baptist Church in suburban Minneapolis. "He said he wanted to confess a crime he committed many years ago, and he wanted my help in talking to the authorities and making it right."

Then John Claypool, 34, told Thompson that 20 years ago he murdered a man and his wife.

"It was a big surprise," Thompson noted. "I was naturally pretty shocked, but on the other hand I was gratified. We're in the business of

wanting God to change people radically, and it's very humbling and gratifying to hear someone who has taken to heart the gospel and his own personal walk to such a depth.

"He fully understood that he didn't need to confess to me to get forgiveness, that God has forgiven him and washed away his sins and made him clean," the pastor said. "But he also knew that God had been nudging him to make this right."

Claypool was 14 at the time of the killings. He told authorities he had experimented with LSD just weeks before the killings and had been high on drugs and alcohol the night before the shooting.

He lived in Lake City, Minn., at the time, next door to the city's mayor, Wilmer "Tony" Strickland, and his wife, Verona. He said he mur-

dered them on impulse, just to see what it felt like to kill someone.

Authorities suspected Claypool but had no evidence on which to charge him. In the next few years, Claypool dropped out of school and ran away from home. He has worked for various boat companies.

But his life changed when he became a Christian after starting to attend Berean Baptist Church about two years ago. Claypool confessed the crimes even though his attorney and investigators agreed that without his testimony it would be impossible to convict him.

During his court appearance Nov. 30, Claypool offered a statement read by his attorney, in which he apologized to the Strickland family, his own family and the people of Lake City.

Vineyard ousts 'Toronto Blessing' church

TORONTO (RNS)—The Canadian congregation that gave birth to the ecstatic Pentecostal worship style known as the "Toronto Blessing" has been asked to leave the Association of Vineyard Churches for placing "extra-biblical" meaning on the animal sounds and other "exotic" occurrences that are the hallmark of its prayer meetings.

For two years, Toronto Airport Vineyard Fellowship has been the focus of worldwide Pentecostal interest because of the dramatic expressions of faith that have occurred there.

Six nights a week, worshipers laugh, weep, groan, fall to the ground

and utter sounds described as animal-like. In the past year, 750,000 people from around the world have visited the congregation to participate in the "renewal" meetings.

Pentecostals consider such events to be signs of the Holy Spirit. However, the activities at Toronto Airport Vineyard have become too much for its parent church body.

In a Dec. 13 letter, Vineyard Churches' international director John Wimber said the Canadian congregation had lost the association's "endorsement" because it had encouraged and showcased the animal sounds and other such "exotic" ex-

pressions to draw attention to itself.

"We cannot at any time endorse, encourage, offer theological justification or biblical proof-texting for any exotic practices that are extra-biblical—whether in Toronto or elsewhere," Wimber wrote.

"Though we understand that when the (Holy Spirit) is manifest among us there may be phenomena that we do not understand, it is our conviction that these manifestations should not be promoted, placed on stage, nor used as the basis for theologizing that leads to new teaching," he added in the letter, sent to the association's 600 churches worldwide.

Religious women achieve more educationally

WASHINGTON—Religious commitment boosts educational achievement among women but not necessarily among Baptist women, according to a recent study by the City University of New York's Graduate Center.

"There is a relationship between religion and the education of white women that is maintained beyond other socio-demographic factors," the researchers report in the Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion.

The random telephone survey of more than 19,000 white women asked

them to identify themselves in one of 12 religious categories, including "no religion." The study found women in nine of the religious categories out-ranked women with no religion in level of education attained.

Researchers said they were surprised that "the secularized, liberal no religion category, which we expected to be the most positive form of feminism," lagged behind the others, even behind the "traditional conservative Protestant category, which we might have expected to be the most negative toward women's advancement."

Compared to non-religious women in the 18 to 24 age group, Jewish women were nearly three times more likely to go to college. Episcopalians were more than two-and-one-half times more likely to go to college, Methodists were 50 percent more likely to do so, Presbyterians 40 percent, Mormons 30 percent, Lutherans 20 percent and Catholics 10 percent.

Only Pentecostal and Baptist women attended college less often than non-religious women, the study found.

NATIONAL NOTES

■ **Billy Graham falls.** Billy Graham, in New York City to receive an award, slipped in his hotel room Dec. 13 and broke a rib. Doctors have limited the 77-year-old evangelist's activities and advised him not to make any appearances for the rest of the month. They expect him to recover completely from his painful injuries, which also included a bruised shoulder.

■ **Bad news for gospel singers.** The American Academy of Otolaryngology has weighed in on the battle between gospel music and classical music. A recent study presented to the academy demonstrated that gospel singing, like rock singing, places much more strain on the larynx than classical-music singing.

■ **Billboard notes DC Talk.** The Christian rock trio DC Talk debuted at No. 16 on Billboard magazine's "Top 200" with its new album, "Jesus Freak," setting a record for first-week sales of a Christian album. More than 85,000 albums were sold during the first week of sales. "Jesus Freak" was one of 13 Christian titles on the "Top 200" in Billboard's Dec. 9 issue.

■ **Repeal of assault weapon ban opposed.** A new campaign in Congress to repeal the year-old ban on the manufacture and sale of assault weapons has drawn the opposition of Jewish and Protestant religious leaders. "It would be a nasty, vicious thing to do at any time of the year," Rabbi David Saperstein, director of the

Religious Action Center of Reform Judaism, told a Dec. 13 news conference called to respond to the new effort. "But to do so now, during this season of peace, is especially obscene."

■ **Parents' guide released.** The Freedom Forum First Amendment Center at Vanderbilt University and the National PTA have released a new parents' guide on religion in public schools. The guide describes for parents what religious practices are allowed in public schools.

■ **Courts won't rule on pension battle.** Courts lack jurisdiction to determine whether the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America was wrong to apply social and

moral investment standards to its pension plan, the Minnesota Court of Appeals ruled. Several pastors sued the pension fund after church officials changed investment policies in 1988 to protest apartheid in South Africa.

■ **Reform Judaism OKs gay rabbis.** Reform Judaism's synagogue umbrella group has declared a rabbi's sexual orientation should have no bearing on whether he or she is hired. More than 1,000 delegates to the biennial convention of the Union of American Hebrew Congregations overwhelmingly backed a resolution that promotes "equal employment and leadership opportunities" for gays.

Contraceptive plan didn't deter teen pregnancies

WASHINGTON—A \$2.5 million program in Philadelphia designed to lower teen pregnancy rates by increasing contraceptive awareness had little impact, according to a recent study published in *Family Planning Perspectives*. Sociologists extensively surveyed teens both before and after the two-year program to measure its impact. By expanding contraceptive services in clinics, targeting neighborhoods with teens especially at risk for pregnancy, the program intended to reduce pregnancy rates. Despite initial evidence that pointed toward success, a final analysis showed no improvement in the target areas in comparison to the rest of the city. In fact, pregnancy rates actually increased slightly during the two-year period among the target area and the city at large. "Our results suggest that devoting increased resources to teenage clinics ... is ineffective in ... reducing pregnancy rates in the teenage population," the authors reported. The authors suggest the best strategy for reducing the U.S. teen birth rate is a drive to make sexual abstinence the norm. "One strategy, consistent with our data, is to focus on changing what is considered normal behavior for teenagers through intensive public health campaigns akin to those focusing on smoking," they noted. With such a strategy, over time behavioral norms could shift "toward abstinence and safer sex," they added.

Divorce rates jumped with 'no-fault' laws

WASHINGTON—Divorce rates nearly doubled in some states when no-fault divorce laws were enacted, according to data from the National Center for Health Statistics.

In this study, researchers examined the divorce rate per 1,000 people both three years before and three years after a no-fault law was passed. In 44 of 50 states, the divorce rate increased substantially after the passage of the law.

No-fault divorce was designed to lessen the adversarial process by no longer requiring a spouse to be proved innocent or guilty of vio-

lating the marriage commitment through adultery, cruelty or desertion. It also permitted one spouse to divorce without the consent of the other.

All 50 states currently have no-fault divorce laws, enacted from 1953 to 1987.

Other research has found large numbers of difficulties often result from divorce, such as impoverishment of women and children, increased physical and mental health problems, and increased teen pregnancy, drug and alcohol abuse, educational problems and suicide.

Hughes named police chaplain

LEBANON JUNCTION—Tom Hughes, pastor of First Baptist Church in Lebanon Junction, has been named the first police chaplain of the Lebanon Junction police department.

The city council created this new voluntary chaplaincy position in an effort to extend the "philosophy of community-oriented policing," according to Lebanon Junction Police Chief Bob Brian.

As chaplain, Hughes will perform an array of services to the community, Brian said. Hughes will assist the department with delivering death notices, counsel officers and provide care in times of community disasters. He also will accompany officers on patrol.

Hughes is no stranger to law enforcement or professional ministry.

He was a deputy sheriff with the McCracken County sheriff's office for two years and a Kentucky state police trooper for 10 years. He holds a bachelor of science degree in police administration from Eastern Kentucky University.

He has been a pastor for the past 11 years. The last five years he has served First Baptist Church in Lebanon Junction. He holds the master of divinity degree from Southern Baptist Theological Seminary.

As chaplain, Hughes expects to be "an advocate and friend to the officers" as well as "a liaison between the department and the community," he said. He is endorsed by the Southern Baptist Home Mission Board's industrial chaplain division.

FBI asks help from Baptists

LOUISVILLE—The FBI is seeking help from Kentucky Baptists to apprehend a man suspected of kidnapping, raping and assaulting a 9-year-old girl.

Rickey Allen Bright, 41, is known to have been active in Baptist churches, but his current involvement in any church is unknown. He enjoys playing drums and keyboard instruments.

Bright has been charged with unlawful flight to avoid prosecution in connection with the 9-year-old's kidnapping and assault in North Carolina. The FBI has determined Bright was in Johnson County, Ky., immediately after the incident in October. At the time, he was driv-

ing a silver 1987 Chevrolet Cavalier, with North Carolina license plate HVC-9159.

In 1979, Bright was convicted of the kidnapping and attempted rape of a 7-year-old girl. He is among the FBI's 10 most-wanted individuals and considered to be armed and dangerous.

He is a white male, 6 feet tall, weighing 175 pounds. He has brown hair and blue eyes, wears prescription eyeglasses and at times has worn a mustache.

Anyone with information about Bright's whereabouts—either now or at any time since October—is asked to call the FBI in Pikeville at (606) 432-1226.



Rickey Allen Bright



HOMES FOR CHILDREN



Curtis C. Mooney

Challenges ahead

With Jan. 1 coming in just a few days, I find myself thinking about the challenges the new year will bring to our work to help children and families. At Baptist Homes for Children we are looking at 1996 as a time of faith-testing. With major policy changes in Washington, a new governor in Frankfort and the legislature in session, we know life for children and families will be different. We just don't know how. We also know, however, that our mighty God is in charge and that we can look confidently ahead as we stay grounded in him.

It is my dream that despite an uncertain world, this ministry will be able to focus in an even greater way this year on helping families. I believe strongly that God created the family as the ideal way to rear children. But right now there is no greater endangered institution than the family. We see the results of family stress every day in increased alcohol and drug use, clinical depression, child and spouse abuse, and ultimately separation and divorce.

What can we do about it? I do not pretend to have all of the answers, but I do believe that the

only way we can truly address the problem is by focusing on providing help to families before the crisis point has been reached. Right now, our laws are such that many families can get help only after a child has been abused.

It is my dream for our ministry to begin focusing increased resources and energy on helping families stay together. I dream of expanding Cornerstone Counseling and of adding resources to provide ongoing practical help for families in crisis. I dream of investing many more resources in working with the families of the children in care so that they can go home to a healthy environment. I dream of doing more family

preservation work, creating more foster homes, and encouraging more relatives to care for children when possible.

Please pray for this ministry in the days ahead. Pray for wisdom for our board and administration as we seek his leading to find the best ways to help children!

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

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BAPTISTS

Lottie offering reaps \$34,000 on \$10 seeds

NEW BERN, N.C. (BP)—The \$10 bills a North Carolina pastor gave his congregation in October have come back multiplied—all for the cause of Southern Baptists' foreign missions offering.

Pastor Jack Hinton of Tabernacle Baptist Church in New Bern, N.C., preached a sermon on the parable of the talents and then told church members he had a \$10 bill for every person present at least old enough to attend junior high school.

"What good is a sermon if you don't apply it to your life?" Hinton asked.

"This is seed money to be planted on behalf of the Lottie Moon Christmas Offering," he said, challenging Tabernacle members to invest in their own fund-raising projects.

The Lottie Moon offering supports roughly half of Southern Baptists' foreign missions effort.

Hinton's plan was to entrust up to \$4,000 from a personal loan to the ingenuity of his members. He asked them to return the seed money, along with profits, Dec. 17.

Hinton expected the 450 active church members to exceed this year's Lottie Moon offering goal of \$24,000—a 2,900 percent increase from the \$800 they gave in 1982. That was the year Hinton came to Tabernacle—and members began catching his vision for foreign missions.

But the final tally exceeded the offering goal by a whopping \$10,000. On "ingathering Sunday," Tabernacle members gave \$34,000 from their investments.

The pastor's challenge sparked members' imagination. The youth group pooled their money to fund a drive-in on the church parking lot. With '50s music blaring, the kids-turned-carhops strapped on rollerblades and served \$4 hamburger lunches.

Four couples combined their \$10 bills and bought groceries for 13 consecutive Wednesday night suppers, each averaging \$200 in profit. And two enterprising women used their two bills to buy advertising, offering Saturday baby-sitting for Christmas shoppers.

Even a visitor from South Carolina took part. The man wrote Hinton a letter saying he took the seed money envelope thinking it contained play money. But when he discovered the money was real, he bought a dilapidated bicycle, put some pedals on it, fixed the flat tires, and sold it for \$25.

Foundation raises reorganization issues

NASHVILLE—The Southern Baptist Foundation, facing a clouded future under the proposed restructuring of the Southern Baptist Convention, has experienced a "dramatic halt in growth of assets," President Hollis Johnson III told trustees Dec. 6.

Foundation trustees voted unanimously to authorize their executive committee to "develop and share its concerns about the assimilation of the Southern Baptist Foundation into the Covenant for a New Century plan"—the restructuring approved by messengers to the 1995 SBC annual meeting in Atlanta. That plan calls for the Foundation's work to be transferred to the SBC Executive Committee.

Foundation trustees cited several concerns about the proposed change, especially two:

■ Ascending liability, legal terminology describing how the Founda-

tion, as a separate legal entity, would face any potential litigation involving trusts or annuities given for Southern Baptist causes. Ascending liability is when one corporation inappropriately controls another corporation, allowing the controlling corporation to be held liable for the wrongs and debts of the controlled corporation.

■ Donors' faith in the Foundation's autonomy and expertise in managing funds, now totaling more than \$183 million. Under the new plan, the Foundation would be directly controlled by the SBC Executive Committee, which donors doubt has the expertise to guide the specialized investment operation.

Meanwhile, the "implementation task force" assigned to coordinate the restructuring held its first working meeting Nov. 15-16 in Nashville.

The sessions were closed, and the

task force made no public reply to an earlier request from Historical Commission trustees that the task force open its meetings to a representative of the agency, which is among several scheduled for dissolution.

"The task force is moving forward to carry out its responsibilities in concert and harmony with the wishes of the SBC," said Chairman Bob Reccord, pastor of First Baptist Church of Norfolk, Va.

"Each affected agency president has been requested to submit their suggestions and perspectives regarding the transition so that they may be given due consideration by the task force," Reccord reported.

He added that the task force "will be working with SBC agencies in order to fully understand the unique needs and issues of each entity in the implementation process."

Compiled from Baptist Press reports

New Orleans approves social work degree

NEW ORLEANS—New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary has approved a new accredited program in social work in conjunction with Louisiana State University.

Officials at New Orleans Seminary and LSU hailed the agreement as a forward-looking response to the needs of churches in the future.

New Orleans Seminary's expansion in the area of social work runs counter to the position being taken by another Southern Baptist Convention seminary, Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in Louisville. Southern Seminary is seeking to transfer its Carver School of Church Social Work to another institution, citing in part philosophical differ-

ences between social work and Christian theology.

"We in the Christian education division are excited about the development of this dual degree program with LSU," said Jeanine Bozeman, professor of social work at New Orleans. "The joint degree will be a professional advantage for ... students who wish to serve Christ through the profession of social work."

The agreement also was lauded by Kenneth Millar, dean of the school of social work at LSU.

"Our profession's foundation rests on a Judeo-Christian ethic that believes in the inherent worth of all persons and the notion of responsi-

bility for others," he said. "In addition, as more and more people turn to their church for help and assistance, the advanced training provided by the master of social work degree will make clergy and church-based counselors more effective in their work with individuals, couples, families and groups."

New Orleans Seminary has offered classes in Christian social work since 1955 but has not been able to offer the accredited master of social work degree. Under the new plan, students will earn two degrees simultaneously—the master of arts in Christian education from New Orleans Seminary and the master of social work from LSU.

Baptist groups agree on racism statement

WASHINGTON (BP)—Leaders of the major Baptist conventions in the United States have issued a condemnation of racism and a call for Baptists of all races to work for racial harmony.

In a meeting Dec. 14 at the offices of the Baptist World Alliance, leaders from the Southern Baptist Convention, American Baptist Churches U.S.A., National Baptist Convention USA Inc. and Progressive National Baptist Convention adopted a statement calling on their members "to repent of racism, to forgive one another

and to work actively for the eradication of racism from our churches, schools and society."

The statement included a five-part call to action:

■ "To take concrete actions that demonstrate the authenticity of our repentance.

■ "To move beyond polite and politically correct language to engage each other in open and frank discussion about the sins of racism and prejudice in our society and in all levels of our church life.

■ "To disavow race-based eco-

nomical and political exploitation and call upon Baptist corporate, business and political leaders to embrace and implement a biblical vision of justice.

■ "To use the collective influence of Baptist communions to call America to prayer and repentance for the sins of racism and to seek for spiritual healing in the spirit of Jesus the Christ.

■ "That the leadership of Baptist communions meet again in the next six months in order to develop specific plans for the implementation of the above actions."

Scholars see little hope for Baptist unification

PROVIDENCE, R.I. (ABP)—A hundred-fifty years after Baptists in America split over slavery, there is little prospect for reunification, according to a consultation of scholars.

New divisions—over such things as openness to gays and whether the Bible is free from error—threaten to further fragment the Baptist family, said speakers at a fall colloquium on "Division, Diversity and Dialogue."

"We have ended slavery as an institution, but we are still slaves to separation," Thomas McKibbens, pastor of First Baptist Church in Newton, Mass., told the gathering at First Baptist Church in Providence, R.I., the

first Baptist congregation established in America.

The church also was site for a fateful meeting on Aug. 28, 1845, when members of the Baptist Home Mission Society officially refused to appoint slaveholders as missionaries and suggested that Baptists sympathetic to slavery withdraw.

Baptists in the South did, meeting a week later in Augusta, Ga., to form the Southern Baptist Convention, now the nation's largest non-Catholic faith group.

At its sesquicentennial convention in June, the 15 million-member SBC adopted a resolution repenting for

past racism and asking for forgiveness from African-Americans.

But that doesn't mean Baptists in the North and South can expect to get back together soon, said speakers at the meeting. The two bodies have become increasingly estranged as the SBC has grown more conservative and the 1.5 million-member American Baptist Churches in the U.S.A. has moved to the left.

Two progressive splinter groups have emerged from the SBC's conservative swing—the Alliance of Baptists in 1986 and the larger and more-centrist Cooperative Baptist Fellowship in 1991.

Fellowship not biggest threat to CP, Lewis says

ALPHARETTA, Ga. (BP)—Southern Baptists' cooperative missions funding is threatened more by changing attitudes in local churches and state conventions than by competitive mission causes, said Larry Lewis, Home Mission Board president.

Speaking to HMB trustees Dec. 13, Lewis praised the year's record giving for the Annie Armstrong Easter Offering for home missions but said he is concerned about the Cooperative Program, the Southern Baptist Convention's unified budget.

"Many have lamented the divisive and competitive efforts of groups like the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship, and we deeply regret the millions of dollars that have been diverted from the Cooperative Program to fund such competitive causes," Lewis said.

"However, an even greater threat to CP comes from ... state conventions that have been for some time in a pattern of reducing the funds that go outside their state to SBC causes in order to fund expanded programs and increased personnel within their states.

"An even greater threat than that is local churches which have lost their vision to be part of a world strategy for sharing the gospel," Lewis continued. "The typical Southern Baptist church now gives less than 7 percent to CP, and it's getting smaller every year even though the needs of the world are constantly expanding."

PEOPLE

PRAYER PARTNERS

Pray for these specific needs related to Kentucky Baptist Convention partnerships in Russia and Boston:

- Russian children who will receive the Christmas gifts from Kentucky Baptists.
- Russians who will hear the gospel for the first time during this Christmas season.
- Campus ministers who serve on 10 of the 80 Boston-area campuses where more than 300,000 students are studying.
- Vera Woods as she works with two mission congregations in Medford and Somerville, Mass.,
- Pastor John Lee and his wife, Sara of New Life Fellowship Church, Korean, in Boston.
- Pastor Edward Waldron and his wife as they work with Family Fellowship Church in Randolph, Mass.

Mountains to the Mississippi

Compiled by Ann Tatum

■ **BOWLING GREEN**—Burton Memorial Church called **Tim Miles** as pastor. He began his new ministry Dec. 3.

■ **BRODHEAD**—First Church ordained **David Pensol, Bill Adkisson, Everett Harper** and **Howard Saylor** as deacons. Also, a debt-free educational facility was completed, and a live TV ministry was started, which services more than 500 homes through the local cable service.

■ **BURGIN**—**John Penick** retired as pastor at Burgin Church. He can be reached at 187 Candlewood Dr., Danville, Ky. 40422, (606) 238-4108.

■ **GEORGETOWN**—**Jim and Ruth Heizer**, after a total of 63 years teaching at Georgetown College and traveling, studying or teaching in 60 countries, have been appointed for a two-year term with the Foreign Mission Board International Service Corps in Russia. Their primary duty will be supervising people who volunteer to teach English as a Second Language throughout Russia.

■ **LEXINGTON**—Southside Church called **Larry Day** as associate pastor.

■ **LOUISVILLE**—Third Avenue Church called bivocational pastor **David Green** as full-time pastor.

The American Cancer Society's Louisville office urgently needs volunteers to transport cancer patients back and forth to their treatments. Various schedules are available, but most of the volunteer work is done

between 8 a.m. and 4 p.m. Mondays through Fridays. For information, call (502) 584-6782.

Greg and Julie Jones have been assigned to Louisville by the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship as mid-term missionaries. They are working in the offices of Passport and Youth Mission Exchange, two summer missions programs for youth.

New Salem Church ordained **Joe Butler** and **Bill Landrum** to the deacon ministry Dec. 3.

■ **NICHOLASVILLE**—Mount

Pleasant Church called **DeWayne Brewer** as pastor.

■ **PHILPOT**—**Joe Thomas**, pastor for 17 years at Dawson Church, will retire Jan. 1. A reception for Thomas and his wife will be Dec. 31 at 2 p.m. Call (502) 729-4202 for information.

Missionary update

■ **Ruth and Bill Clark Thomas** have returned to Kentucky after 32 years of service as Southern Baptist missionaries in Singapore, Malaysia, Taiwan, Thailand, Germany and France. They may be contacted by calling (502) 885-6155 or writing in care of First Baptist Church, 1400 S. Main St., Hopkinsville, Ky. 42240.

Reminder

This is the last issue of the Western Recorder for 1995. No paper will be published the week of Dec. 26. The next issue will be dated Jan. 2.

Church newspaper users should have their materials to the Recorder office on Friday, Dec. 29, by the normal deadline times. The Recorder office will close for Christmas at noon Dec. 22 and reopen at 8:30 a.m. Dec. 28.

The office also will be closed Jan. 1.

CLASSIFIED ADS

WANTED: Permanent/part-time minister of music; predominately Southern Gospel music. Send resumé to: Cloverleaf Baptist Church, 4401 Manslick Rd., Louisville, KY 40216. Telephone: (502) 367-0218.

SEEKING: 25-year-old exurban Southern Baptist congregation with 150 members (25 miles from Washington D.C.) prayerfully seeks senior pastor having minimum of 5 years experience, master's degree from Southern Baptist seminary preferred. Candidate should be Bible-based, family-oriented and possess the abilities to coordinate current staff including a strong, vibrant music program. Send resumé by Feb. 14, 1996, to: P.O. Box 326, Poolesville, MD 20837.

FREE: 200 1975 Baptist Hymnals are available for your church or organization. Contact: Scott Pastore, Watson Lane Baptist Church, Henderson, Ky. (502) 827-3921.

SEEKING: Full-time early childhood minister (children, birth-8). Reply to: Early Childhood Search Committee, 230 JR Miller Blvd., Owensboro, KY 42301.

SEEKING: Part-time minister of youth. Please send resumé to: First Baptist Church Broadway, P.O. Box 132, Danville, KY 40422 Attn: Youth Minister Search Committee.

FREE: Report: Eight secrets clergy need to know to minimize their tax obligations and maximize their financial well-being. Act now! (800) 823-7864, 24 hours.

SEEKING: Full-time minister of family life for ministries of a new Christian life center. Third Baptist Church, Owensboro, Ky. Please send replies to: Shannon Roberts Bailes, P.O. Box 8003, Owensboro, KY 42302.

SEEKING: First Baptist Church in Lawrenceburg, Ky., is seeking a full-time youth pastor. Send resumé to: Youth Pastor Search Team, c/o First Baptist Church, 111 North Main St., Lawrenceburg, KY 40342.

URGENT: Teachers for two-year-olds for a two-days-a-week mothers' day out program. Call for information: Rockford Lane Baptist Church, (502) 447-2591 or 448-4817.

Christmas 1995

As 1995 comes to an end, I think of the many things God has provided during the past year. Nearly every day is like Christmas at Oneida, from the standpoint of receiving gifts. God has chosen to bless us in so many wonderful ways. In my December 1994 thank you letter to contributors, I listed some of the things God had impressed people to give to Oneida. I would like to share with you a partial list of our 1995 blessings:

More than 8,000 assorted fruit pies, library books and magazines, an organ, two accordions, three clarinets, a violin, a trumpet, four new typewriters, six hives of bees and feeder boxes, two used school buses, 19 General Motors engines and transmissions, 96 Briggs & Stratton lawn mower engines, four used cars, several used refrigerators and ranges, a grain dryer, grain bins, many pieces of farm equipment, electric motors, electrical wire and cable, irrigation pipe, three pick-up trucks, a 15-passenger van, supplements and nutrients for our cattle and hogs, thousands of soup labels, tons of clothing, shoes, paint, money, over 10,000 hours of volunteer labor, new friends, words and letters of encouragement, many new prayer partners, new students, five full-time volunteer faculty/staff, one nearly full-time volunteer support staff worker, one nearly full-time volunteer electrician, quilts, school desks, a tractor, furniture, craft items, subscriptions for Reader's Digest and Guidepost, thousands of honey buns and doughnut sticks, popcorn, candy, flour, crackers, fruit drinks, butter, cheese, school supplies, soup, soap, shampoo, toothpaste, work and rain boots, peaches, Avon products, toys, Bibles, hundreds of hymnals, janitorial supplies, 156,000 foam cups, paper plates and cups, 120,000 band aids, baking ovens, 35

tickets to The Living Christmas Tree at Southland Christian Church; sleeping bags, winter coats, tons of paper for the print shop, copier paper, six calves weighing 600-800 pounds each, four used computers, computer hardware, 30,000 pounds of pizza and much, much more.

One of the great blessings I have personally experienced this past year has been seeing how God can provide miracles. I confess that for most of my life, I have lived as a Christian who has never really learned to depend on God to meet all of my needs. As long as I had good health, a job and my family, I thought I could pretty well take care of myself. However, I did not need much "on-the-job training" in leading this school to discover that all of my talents, efforts and dedication would not provide for our many needs. They would have to be met by a Higher Power than myself.

In fact, if it were not for the miracles God provides every day, I feel sure I would go home some nights in tears. And I am sure there would be many sleepless nights.

I must confess that there are some sleepless nights, but most of the time it has come from being so excited about the many blessings God has provided. When I lie in my bed and think of the ways God has provided, it is almost unbelievable.

I am sure God has used many who are reading this article to be a blessing to us. God has inspired you to donate some item, give a financial gift, donate your labor or do something else. I hope you have been as excited about giving as we have been about receiving. May God bless you during 1996.

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

THIS IS ONEIDA



W.F. Underwood

We too must give

"The way I grew up made it unlikely I would be a missionary." Oakie Blevins, missionary to Namibia, said in a world missions chapel. "We lived in a West Virginia hollow. Our family was so poor my mama took in washing, and we kept the clothes. We never went to church and lived among Primitive Baptists who didn't believe in hell."

Oakie and Bob married at age 18 and moved to Ohio where work was available. They had three children during the following six years. "Facing surgery and possible cancer, I began to search and question. I found a little Southern Baptist mission and ended up in Sunday school with 4-year-olds." The pastor, Orville Griffin (now Ohio Baptist executive secretary), made a visit, and Oakie was saved; Bob came to the Lord six months later.

The call to ministry brought them to Clear Creek, and Bob graduated in 1973. They first went to Namibia as volunteers in 1979; Foreign Mission Board appointment came in 1984. The work has grown from four churches to 47 churches and 26 missions. They rejoice in Sunday school work increasing from four churches to 38 congregations with 1,100 in attendance. Material are translated into

six languages and Bibles are distributed in 12 dialects.

African Christians often kiss their hands or bow at their feet. "We Africans have always been told to believe in God, but we thought we could never know him. You came and told us about Jesus."

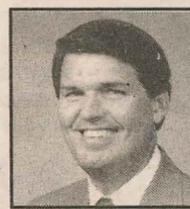
The Blevines left us with unforgettable scenes of world need and commitment. "We had waited

two hours in 100 degree heat for the service to begin. A young man told me it couldn't start until 'our mother of the church arrives.' Then I saw an elderly lady slowly making her way on crutches and a wooden leg. In an August vacation Bible school we distributed balloons, and the children played a game that involved bursting the balloon. A little girl stood in the corner holding her balloon. She wanted to keep it until Christmas so she would have something then."

Grace Nowell said it well. "Because I have been given much, I too must give. Because of thy great bounty, Lord, each day I live, I shall divide my gifts from thee with every brother that I see, who has the need of help from me."

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

CLEAR CREEK CHRONICLE

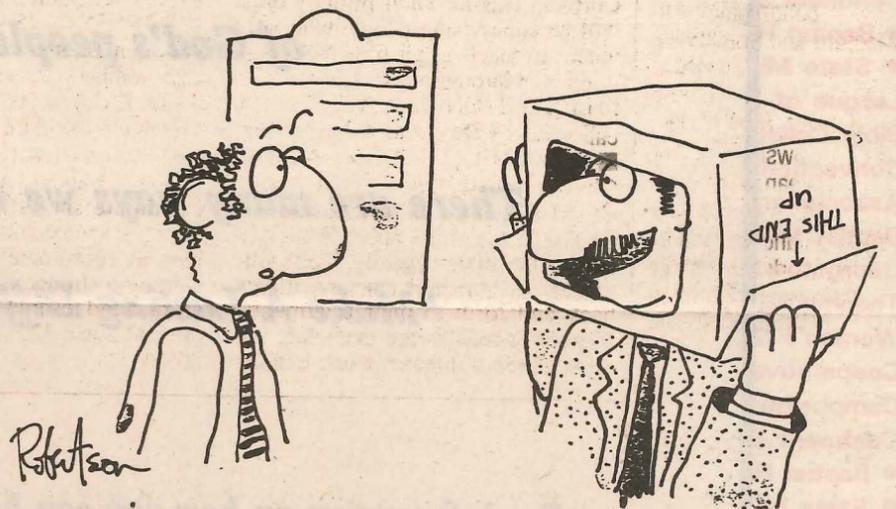


Bill Whittaker

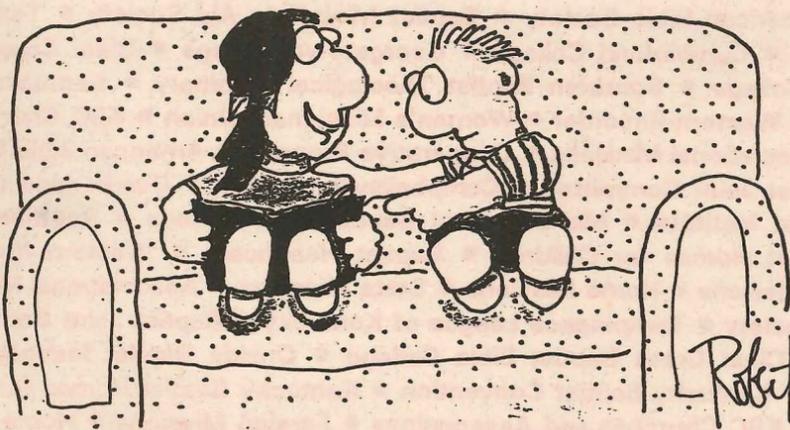
Signs of the times



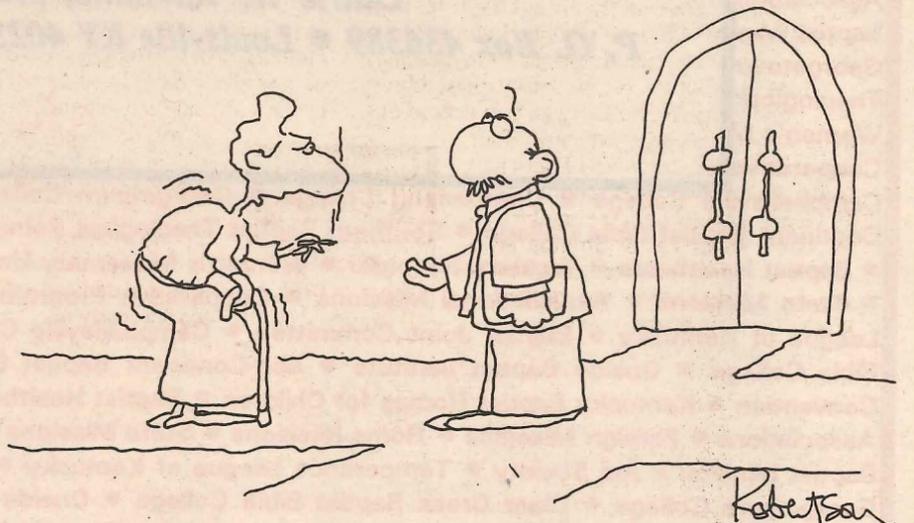
"Clapping or non-clapping?"



"NO IT'S NOT... BUT IF YOU HOLD IT LIKE THIS WHEN YOU TEACH, IT LOOKS A LOT LIKE A VCR MONITOR."



"AND THOSE ARE MY GREAT-GRANDPARENTS. THEY LIVED BACK WHEN EVERYTHING WAS BLACK AND WHITE."



"YOU SEE PASTOR... GRANNY STARTED SMOKING BEFORE IT WAS A SIN."

