



# WESTERN RECORDER

December 17, 1996  
Vol. 170, No. 50**FOR THE RECORD****Lewis legacy**

As he prepares to step down as president of the Southern Baptist Home Mission Board this month, Larry Lewis cites doctrinal integrity and numerical growth as accomplishments of his tenure. *Page 2.*

**Executive Board**

During meetings last week the Kentucky Baptist Convention Executive Board named Monty Carter director of communications and Jim Hawkins interim executive secretary-treasurer. The board also authorized further study of a plan to make Brotherhood an affiliate rather than a department. *Page 3.*

**Family Forum**

How do we protect our teenagers from all the violence in the world today? *Page 4.*

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What will you have left after Christmas? *Page 5.*

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A historian explains that manger scenes tell as much about culture as about the Nativity. *Page 6.*

## More teens are volunteering more time, say charity groups

WASHINGTON (RNS)—A rising number of America's teens are giving a larger amount of time to volunteer activities, according to an umbrella organization of the nation's charities.

According to Independent Sector, the total number of teens giving time to volunteer activities has risen by 7 percent since 1992, from 12.4 million youths to 13.3 million.

Additionally, the group said, the total number of hours given to volunteer activities by teens between the ages of 12 and 17 rose from 2.1 billion hours to 2.4 billion.

It said 1.8 billion of those volunteered hours were in formal commitments to organizations and 600 million were in the less formal patterns of helping neighbors or assisting organizations.

The report was based on in-home personal surveys with 1,007 teens by the Gallup Organization. It had a margin of error of plus or minus 4 percent.

"The major reasons for volunteering, according to the teens surveyed, remained consistent with the reasons cited in 1991: they felt compassion for people in need; they could do something for a cause that was important to them; and they held a belief that if they helped others, others would help them.

"As in the 1992 survey, the highest rates of volunteering were found among teens who ranked as high personal goals the giving of time to voluntary, religious or community organizations, being active in their communities, making a strong commitment to their spiritual lives and making a contribution to charities," the report said.

Independent Sector President Sara Melendez, however, noted that teens reported they were four times as likely to volunteer if they were asked than if they were not asked. Among the 51 percent who were asked to volunteer, 93 percent responded. Among the 49 percent who were not asked, 24 percent volunteered.

While there was little difference in the percentage of teens who were asked to volunteer by gender, there were differences by race and ethnic group, with Anglos far more likely to be asked to volunteer than others.

"The young people of our minority populations are an untapped resource," Melendez said. "Organization leaders, teachers, religious leaders and parents must cultivate all our youth equally to contribute their talents and time to helping others."

## Unchurched tell pollster: Too busy to go

By Marv Knox  
*Texas Baptist Standard*

ATLANTA (ABP)—Most people who don't attend church stay away not because of hostility toward organized religion but because they are simply too busy to attend, according to a report by the Southern Baptist Home Mission Board.

Almost four in 10 participants surveyed said unchurched Americans "are 'too busy' to attend church," the agency's research division reported in its newsletter, *Research Review*.

The report was based on a regional survey conducted by four Baptist groups in the Washington, D.C., area. HMB researchers said survey results correspond with similar na-

tional surveys.

Four out of 10 people say they are not actively involved in a congregation, synagogue or other house of worship, the survey found. The study also showed unchurched Americans "tend to be younger and disproportionately male," the newsletter reported.

People polled in the survey were asked to explain why they believe people don't go to church. "Too busy" was the No. 1 answer, cited by 37.5 percent of respondents.

"People have a fixed amount of time and thus choose to spend their time in activities or interests other than church," HMB research analysts said. "Participating in church does not offer enough value com-

pared to competing interests."

The next most common response was "don't know" (32.5 percent).

The third reason, cited by about one in six of the people polled (15.8 percent), indicated a specific problem with the church. Responses included such reasons as "they are just after the money" and "they are full of hypocrites."

"Either these unchurched people have had a negative experience with church that hinders them from current participation, or they developed a negative impression of church that is a stumbling block to them," researchers theorized.

Apathy ranked fourth, with 8.8 percent of respondents saying un-

□ See *Most non-churchgoers ...*, page 8



**JOURNEY TO BETHLEHEM** Members of Pleasant Hill Baptist Church in Somerset prepare for their annual "Journey to Bethlehem." For the third consecutive year, more than 200 adults and children will re-create scenes of Bethlehem at the time of Jesus' birth. This year's presentation is scheduled for Dec. 19-22, 6-9 p.m. nightly. More than 20,000 people have seen the dramatization.

## First Noel was no simple trek to Bethlehem

WASHINGTON (RNS)—Think about walking through New Jersey in December and one gets a little clearer vision of what Joseph and Mary went through that first Christmas, say scholars and clergy who've researched the event.

The world of Mary and Joseph was a difficult and dangerous place, one whose harsh conditions were not fully chronicled in the Gospels themselves.

"Matthew and Luke are so laconic about the (Nativity) event because they assume the reader would know what it was like," said James Strange, a New Testament and biblical archaeology professor at the University of South Florida in Tampa. Today, he added, "we have no idea how difficult it was."

Joseph and Mary's hardships would have begun more than a week

before Jesus' birth when the couple would have left their home in Nazareth to register for the census in Bethlehem.

The 90-mile journey would be similar to walking almost halfway through Pennsylvania from north to south: over the hills surrounding Allentown in the north, then east to the Delaware River, and south to Philadelphia.

"It was a fairly grueling trip," Strange said. "In antiquity, the most we find people traveling is 20 miles a day. And

this trip was very much uphill and downhill. It was not simple."

Strange estimates Joseph and Mary traveled only 10 miles a day because of Mary's due date. "I would be reluctant if my wife were that pregnant to press it more than that," he said.

The trip also would have been trou-

blesome because it occurred in winter, Strange said. And what's the Judean desert like during winter?

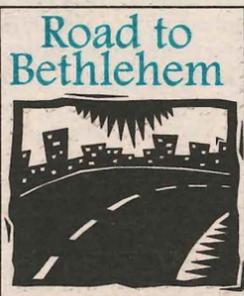
"Sort of like New Jersey," he said. "It's in the 30s during the day, rains like heck. It's nasty, miserable. At night it would be freezing."

To protect themselves from the elements, the ancients wore a heavy woolen cloak one and a third times larger than the human form. Afterward, it was shrunk to size. The shrinking process helped the cloak shed rain and snow, Strange said. Under cloaks, people wore long robes, belted at the waist. Tube-like socks and enclosed shoes protected the feet, he said.

Unpaved, hilly trails and harsh weather were not the only hazards.

One of the most terrifying dangers in ancient Palestine was the heavily forested valley of the Jordan River, Strange said. The woods there were populated with flesh-eating beasts

□ See *Original journey ...*, page 7



## BAPTIST BITS

■ **Fred Wolfe**, former chairman of the Southern Baptist Convention's Executive Committee, has resigned as pastor of Cottage Hill Baptist Church in Mobile, Ala., and plans to begin a "ministry of encouragement" to pastors and churches. Wolfe, 58, was a candidate for SBC president in 1994, losing to Jim Henry.

■ **The Annuity Board** of the Southern Baptist Convention has announced sweeping internal organizational changes. Gordon Hobgood, executive vice president, said the changes will be "largely transparent" to Annuity Board customers and will mainly impact board employees.

■ **Gary Aylor**, associate pastor of administration and evangelism at Champion Forest Baptist Church in Houston, has been named director of church stewardship and capital fund-raising at the Southern Baptist Sunday School Board. This is a new assignment the Sunday School Board has received as part of denominational restructuring.

■ **Al Riddley**, Sunday school director for Illinois Baptists, has been named national strategist for new Bible study units with the Southern Baptist Sunday School Board. The board has a goal of helping Southern Baptist churches start 100,000 new Bible study units during the next five years.

■ **Joseph Early** of Cumberland College has been named to a 15-member board of directors for the Association of Southern Baptist Colleges and Schools, which is assuming many of the functions previously handled by the Southern Baptist Education Commission, which is being dismantled.

## Lewis cites growth, doctrinal integrity as hallmarks

By Bob Allen  
Associated Baptist Press

ALPHARETTA, Ga. (ABP)—Retiring Southern Baptist Home Mission Board President Larry Lewis listed numerical growth and maintaining "doctrinal integrity" as accomplishments of his 10-year tenure in his final report to trustees Dec. 11.

He also called on Southern Baptist leaders to maintain the HMB's strong emphasis on church-planting, ministry and missions after the agency's merger next year with the Southern Baptist Radio & Television and Brotherhood commissions.

Lewis, 61, retires Dec. 31 to become national facilitator for Mission America's Celebrate Jesus 2000, a multi-denominational effort emphasizing prayer and evangelism. Southern Baptists are among more than 100 denominational and para-church groups involved in the effort.

HMB trustees adopted two resolutions of appreciation for Lewis in a meeting Dec. 11. A day earlier, trustees and colleagues honored Lewis at a banquet, at which he was presented a new car, a 1997 Mercury. The car

was part of a severance package approved earlier.

Also at the meeting, trustees elected Ernest Kelley as interim president, effective Jan. 1. Kelly is executive vice president for planning and finance. He will preside over the agency until its dissolution in June.

A former pastor and college president, Lewis became president of the Atlanta-based HMB in 1987.

Under his leadership, the agency reported increases in baptisms, new church starts and the number of missions personnel. Under Lewis' leadership, the board also appointed a record number of chaplains and voluntarism in missions increased.

He led the agency in planning and building a new \$14 million headquarters in Alpharetta.

In his final report to trustees, Lewis said he differed with appraisals that Bold Mission Thrust, a set of goals adopted in 1978, has been a failure.

"Frankly, I believe Bold Mission Thrust has been a great achievement and especially so in those areas that relate to the Home Mission Board," he said.

In 17 years since adoption of Bold

Mission Thrust, Southern Baptist membership has grown more than 18 percent, while every mainline denomination posted annual declines, Lewis said.

The number of congregations grew 13 percent, to more than 40,000, Lewis said. Baptisms, while short of goals, have increased by 57,000 a year.

The number of home missionaries has increased 57 percent and is near a goal of 5,000 by 2000, he said. Short-term missions by volunteers has surpassed a goal of 75,000 per year. Last year, volunteers in missions reached 81,000, he said.

Receipts for the Annie Armstrong home missions offering have more than tripled since 1978, far exceeding the rate of inflation, he said.

Lewis, the first agency head to be elected by conservatives who gained control of the SBC during the 1980s, said "doctrinal integrity," while not a stated goal of the convention, has been a "major concern" of Southern Baptists for two decades.

"From the outset of my tenure as president, ensuring doctrinal integrity has been a major objective," Lewis

said. "No one has been employed or elected to a staff position, no one has been approved as a missionary, who did not affirm the inerrancy of the Scripture, the reality of the miracles, the validity of the biblical narratives or the divinity of Jesus."

Lewis challenged the North American Mission Board to continue Home Mission Board emphases of church-starting, ministry and missions.

"I believe the best strategy for reaching America for Christ or for ministry is establishing Bible-preaching, soul-winning churches throughout the land," Lewis said.

He urged the agency to continue to reach out in starting new black and ethnic churches, where he said most of the SBC's numerical growth has taken place during the last decade.

"If Southern Baptists deprioritize church planting, we will not continue to grow," Lewis said.

Lewis said helping people in need is a key element of church-based evangelism. "A ministering church will never run out of prospects. I believe the best way in the world to win people to Christ is to minister to their needs."

## Hemphill cancels Southwestern Journal; authors cited

FORT WORTH, Texas (ABP)—The spring issue of Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary's scholarly journal has been canceled "in the best interests of Southwestern and the Southern Baptist Convention," according to seminary President Ken Hemphill.

The journal was to examine "The Baptist Faith and Message" statement and was scheduled to include articles by William Hendricks, Molly Marshall and Bill Leonard, all Baptist scholars who left Southern Baptist Theological Seminary after the Louisville school came under control of conservatives.

Hemphill said the presence of those writers—all identified with the moderate Baptist movement—had a bearing on his decision.

But, he said, the need for "an improved format and design to enable us to feature our faculty and other authors" was the overriding factor in canceling the spring issue of the

Southwestern Journal of Theology.

Hemphill said he had not read the disputed articles but did not believe Southwestern's journal should serve as a forum for former faculty members of Southern Seminary without a "balanced response."

In the perception of the SBC, he said, "these do not stand for a strongly conservative view of 'The Baptist Faith and Message' statement."

But Jeff Pool, Southwestern professor and editor of the spring issue, said the articles were both balanced and sensitive. "The content of the articles was very balanced," he said. "They were fair assessments in light of the broader history of the SBC. The authors knew the sensitive nature of the (journal) and were careful not to be offensive."

Both Marshall and Leonard said their articles were balanced. "I have never tried to write about history in terms of one side or the other," said Leonard, a church historian.

Critics called Hemphill's decision a blow to academic freedom.

"The policing of theological discussion will consign Southern Baptists to obscurity," predicted Marshall.

Leonard said the journal episode is evidence of "academic and intellectual dysfunction" among Baptists. "Given the dysfunction that is rampant in Southern Baptist life in general and the seminaries in particular, I'm not at all surprised" by the decision.

But Hendricks was more forgiving. "I understand the president's position," he said. "This would have presented a problem for any of the Southern Baptist agencies to produce at this time. ... I bear no ill will."

William Tillman, the journal's managing editor and professor of Christian ethics at Southwestern, said the topic for the spring issue usually is the same as the annual spring doctrinal study sponsored by the Baptist Sunday School Board. The upcoming doctrine study examines "The Baptist

Faith and Message," the SBC's 1963 confession of faith.

Among those who wrote articles for the spring issue are Hendricks, who formerly taught at Southwestern and later at Southern before moving to Brite Divinity School at Texas Christian University in Fort Worth; Marshall, formerly of Southern but now at Central Baptist Theological Seminary in Kansas City, Kan.; Leonard, formerly at Southern and now dean of Wake Forest University's divinity school; Larry Baker, pastor of First Baptist Church in Pineville, La., and former-executive director of the SBC Christian Life Commission; and Warren McWilliams, a professor at Oklahoma Baptist University.

At least Hendricks, Leonard and Baker are Southwestern graduates. Two other authors are Southwestern professors: Pool, assistant professor of systematic theology, and William Estep, distinguished professor emeritus of church history.

## Georgia extends Godsey query

ATLANTA (ABP)—Georgia Baptist leaders decided Dec. 10 to prolong their investigation into writings by a controversial university president, authorizing two committees to study issues raised by Kirby Godsey's book "When We Talk About God ... Let's Be Honest."

One committee will identify passages in the book that trouble conservatives, discuss those passages with Godsey and ask him to explain them in writing. Godsey's explanation, written in consultation with the committee, will be published in the Christian Index, the Georgia Baptist newspaper.

The other committee will study the relationship between the Georgia Baptist Convention and Mercer University, where Godsey, 61, has been presi-

dent since 1979.

Both actions, conducted in executive session, came five days after the university's trustees affirmed Godsey in response to an earlier resolution by Georgia Baptists raising concerns about the book.

That resolution, adopted by the executive committee in September and endorsed by the Georgia Baptist Convention in November, said Godsey's book "departed significantly" from Baptist teaching and injured the state convention, which sponsors Mercer, the nation's second-largest Baptist university.

Among controversial issues are Godsey's view that the Bible should not be taken literally and questions he raises about original sin and the Virgin Birth.



## Carter given new role; Brotherhood study continues

By David Winfrey  
News Director

The election of Monty Carter as Kentucky Baptist Convention communications director and a study of the Brotherhood department's status highlighted actions taken last week by the Kentucky Baptist Convention Executive Board.

Carter, a KBC youth evangelism specialist, will become director of communications and media, a position that has been vacant about six years.

A two-year employee of the KBC, Carter's undergraduate degree is in radio and television. He previously worked with WHAS radio in Louisville and two radio stations in Indianapolis. He also has served Southern Heights Baptist Church in Lexington as pastor and Memorial Baptist Church in Frankfort as youth minister.



Carter

In recommending Carter, the board's administrative committee stated he already had good relationships with Kentucky media and brings to the job perspectives of both clergy and laity.

Among Carter's accomplishments with the evangelism department has been coordination of the annual youth evangelism conference, which has had record attendance the past two years and was reformatted last summer.

The position Carter will fill beginning Jan. 1 is an existing position that will require no new expenditure of funds, explained KBC Executive Secretary-Treasurer Bill Marshall.

The Executive Board also approved a second study committee for making the KBC Brotherhood department an affiliate of the convention, similar to Woman's Missionary Union.

Already a committee of state Brotherhood leaders and members of the Executive Board's missions and

evangelism committee has recommended the change.

Brotherhood Director Bob Simpkins said the change would position Brotherhood to raise more funds for missions projects such as construction crews and disaster relief work.

The independence also would allow Brotherhood to respond more quickly to such missions opportunities as disaster relief, he said.

Uncertain is whether Brotherhood as an affiliate would relocate its offices, which Simpkins described as too cramped to house the extra volunteer staff to facilitate more missions work.

Simpkins said he would hope the KBC would continue to fund Brotherhood at its current level if the change is approved. "At some point we would hope we could give back more than we receive, as WMU presently does," he said.

The new study will be conducted by either the Executive Board's administrative committee or a special group appointed by KBC President Floyd Price. A recommendation is expected at the next Executive Board meeting in May.

Among the other actions taken by the Executive Board:

■ The KBC stewardship department was authorized to begin offering capital fund-raising consulting services to churches on a simple fee basis. The program to be offered, "Challenge to Build," is similar to the "Together We Build" program but costs significantly less.

■ Two changes were made in the way KBC funding is given to ministers who are terminated. The maximum monthly income a family can earn and still receive assistance was increased from \$1,000 to \$1,500. Also, the maximum assistance (for two months, at most) grew from \$400 per month to \$500 per month.

■ A two-year KBC matching fund agreement for a Temperance League of Kentucky endowment was extended two more years. The maximum contribution by the KBC is \$20,000. About \$3,000 has been matched in the past two years.

■ A town and country missions fund was established with \$5,000 to receive funds for such projects as the Mississippi River Ministries or work in Appalachian ministries.

■ \$495,000 was appropriated from unused Executive Board funds and investment income. Funding went to the Russia partnership (\$100,000); church starting through Mission Kentucky II (\$100,000); repairs at Baptist Student Union centers (\$110,000); New England partnership (\$50,000); Executive Board special program projects (\$45,000); equipment replacement (\$20,000); and the Temperance League's matching endowment fund (\$20,000).

Since this was the first Executive Board meeting of a new year, new members were integrated into committee assignments and new committee chairs were named by KBC President Floyd Price.

The Executive Board committee chairs are Jay Robison, pastor of First Baptist Church in Paris, agencies and institutions; Bob Owsley, a layman from Cecilia Baptist Church in Cecilia, business and finance; Odis Weaver, pastor of Rineyville Baptist Church in Rineyville, church growth and administration; Chris Johnson, pastor of First Baptist Church of Russell, minister/church support; and Jim Holladay, pastor of Clifton Baptist Church in Louisville, missions and evangelism.

Also, a new Executive Board administrative committee was constituted. Members include all the committee chairs, plus Charles Barnes of Louisville, Ray Acree of Greensburg, Dorothy Crace of Ashland, Tyre Denney of Lawrenceburg, Timothy Lang-

ford of Hickman, Bill Patterson of Henderson, Michael Watts of Hopkinsville and Anna White of Versailles.

### Price: Let's turn page together

By Mark Wingfield  
Editor

Kentucky Baptists must "turn the page" on the 21st century together, Kentucky Baptist Convention President Floyd Price told the KBC Executive Board Dec. 9.

In his first convention address since being elected president in November, Price said: "We are three years from the 21st century. Our resolve and determination must be that when we turn the page we do it together."

Price, pastor of Scottsville Baptist Church in Scottsville, listed three things that will make this goal possible.

"First, we must do what we do through prayer and fellowship," he said. "We can never kneel at the altar and take communion and be enemies with the person beside us. We cannot kneel in prayer before God together and arise from that holy posture and be anything but common servants."

Second, Kentucky Baptists must "engage in positive communication," Price suggested. He challenged Executive Board members to go back to their churches and associations and report the good things Kentucky Baptists are doing together.

Third, Kentucky Baptists must face the new century with "a resolve to be one in the Spirit," he said.

Price recounted growing up in Baptist churches in Kentucky during a time when "everything we did in this state was done in trust."

"I hate to say this, but it needs to be verbalized," he continued. "There are at least two states that are coming apart—divided—because of the breach in the Southern Baptist Convention. There are some in Kentucky who would like to withdraw. Some would like to take over."

"However, we must all come to the agreement that we will never satisfy everyone all the time," he said. "We are a diverse group. But in our diversity we can still spread the gospel to Russia, encourage the growth of ministry to New England, support missions in our mountains, evangelize our college campuses and do ministry in our cities."

"Let's use our diversity to lead mankind to Christ," he urged.

### Benefits for ministers to increase

The Southern Baptist Annuity Board will increase its life insurance-type and disability benefits for eligible members on Kentucky church staffs—a change that could occur by Jan. 1, 1997.

The Kentucky Baptist Convention Executive Board approved the changes during its December meeting.

Currently, benefits range from \$5,000 for survivors of an annuitant age 71 and older to \$67,500 for annuitants age 25 and younger.

According to the changes, survivors of annuitants age 71 and older would receive \$10,000, and those 35 or younger would receive \$100,000.

Also, maximum monthly disability benefits were raised from \$3,600 to \$4,800.

The Annuity Board's experience with distributing these funds and the board's management of the funds "has enabled them to en-

hance these benefits at no cost to the states," said Don Spencer, director of the KBC annuity department.

The Annuity Board's agreement is a contract with all state conventions and therefore had to be approved by the Executive Board. The changes should occur before the end of the year, Spencer said.

The changes will take place automatically and require no action by participants, Spencer said.

Eligible participants include all ministers with active contributions going to the annuity plan and serving in churches meeting the KBC requirement for being a cooperative missions church.

Church employees working at least 20 hours per week also may be eligible if they meet the requirements for ministers and have three years of employment with a Southern Baptist affiliated church or agency.

## Hawkins named KBC interim

Jim Hawkins, executive associate with the Kentucky Baptist Convention, will become interim executive secretary-treasurer of the KBC after Bill Marshall's retirement Feb. 28.

Hawkins was named to the interim post by the KBC Executive Board Dec. 10. He will carry the additional responsibilities until a new executive secretary is hired to replace Marshall.

The Executive Board has asked Hawkins to fulfill only the administrative responsibilities of the executive secretary during the interim period, which is predicted to last at least three months and possibly longer.

Hawkins, a Bowling Green native, is a veteran KBC administrator. He and his wife, Rose Marie, are active members of Highland Baptist Church in Louisville.

Also during last week's Executive Board meeting, the chairwoman of the search committee seeking Marshall's successor gave a brief progress report.

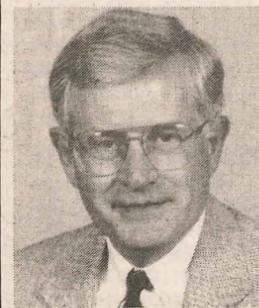
Peggy Hicks described the committee's work as "harmonious." She reported the committee has met with several groups to glean information.

Those groups have included KBC department and division directors, heads of KBC agencies and institutions and a representative group of associational directors of missions.

Hicks said the committee recently completed work on a profile of the candidate they are seeking. However, that profile was not released. She said the committee will follow the current job description for the executive secretary when talking with candidates but also will share their observations about future directions for the job.

The committee had agreed not to begin reviewing resumes until the profile and procedures for the committee's work had been voted on, she said. With those two tasks now done, the committee is beginning to seriously evaluate resumes.

The search committee will nominate a candidate to the full Executive Board, either at a scheduled meeting or a called meeting. The Executive Board's next scheduled meeting, and presumably the earliest the search committee would bring a nominee, is May 5-6.



Hawkins

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

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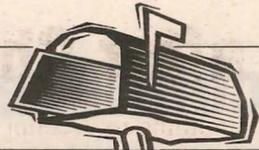
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## BAPTIST FORUM

### Heed own advice

I just finished reading your editorial in the Dec. 10, 1996, Western Recorder. I didn't like it. Although I agree that we must be careful of what we say and how we say it, it appears to me you could heed your own advice.

Your message could have been just as effective had you not attacked Jerry Falwell and questioned (implied) his motivation. You, too, could have done as Nathan and expressed your concern to these two men in private, leaving the "innuendo" and "vilifying" to these types.

Many of us feel that this nation is in moral decay. Let's endeavor to teach everyone to express their opinions in positive ways. Let's not stoop to that level ourselves.

Surely "all" Hollywood gossip columnists don't have higher ethical standards than Falwell. Since I haven't met him, I'll not comment. See I learned something.

Kevin McPherson  
Elizabethtown

### Merritt responds

I felt it necessary to respond to a recent editorial (Dec. 10, page 5), as it specifically named me as a sinner (which I am not) and a mud-slinger (which I am not). I simply want to make several observations:

1. First, to attack Mr. Clinton's policies and to vilify Mr. Clinton's person are two different things. To say that "vetoing a ban on partial-birth abortion is evil" vilifies no one. It is simply stating a fact. I challenge anyone to point out anything I said that was either untrue or unkind. Incidentally, I would say the same thing if Mr. Clinton had been a Republican.

2. If the editor can arrange a personal appointment with Mr. Clinton, I will be happy to take the next flight to Washington and deliver my biblically based message personally. Unfortunately, I do not have the liberty that Nathan did with David, and from all accounts, Mr. Clinton carefully guards himself from any Nathans.

3. I am amazed at the fact that the editor evidently has forgotten the role of the prophet. Among myriads of prophets I could name, I refer to just two. Amos publicly denounced the evil of King Jeroboam, even predicting his violent death because of it (Amos 7:10-11). Jeremiah publicly proclaimed judgment on Judah and her evil kings, using the court of the

Lord's house as a public pulpit (Jeremiah 26:2).

4. I find it ironic (though not surprising) that the editor violates the thrust of his own article, attacking me by name publicly, rather than having the courtesy or courage at least to confront me privately beforehand. In the spirit of Matthew 18:15, brothers and sisters, this ought not be.

5. I will go on record stating that I did not vote for Mr. Clinton. With God as my help, I would never vote for a pro-abortionist, nor someone who favors homosexuality as an alternative lifestyle. It would be very interesting to know who the editor voted for.

James Merritt  
Snellville, Ga.

*Unlike Dr. Merritt, I make no claim to be a prophet. Nor do I claim to be his Nathan. As a general rule, when someone freely addresses a public forum he opens himself to public criticism. Just as he has the right to publicly criticize my editorial, I have the right to comment on what he has said publicly. We both have the right to criticize the president's public statements and actions as well. The point of the editorial was not that it's wrong to criticize but that the Bible teaches us to show respect for government leaders even when we disagree with them. — Editor*

### Seize the day

Existentialism is a philosophy of living, and I certainly am no authority on the subject. However, that big word means something important for Christians, for it focuses on the importance of "existence for today."

Though we know the significance of the past and future, we also know that the Christian faith has an important message about today.

"Now is the accepted time, now

is the day of salvation" is how Paul underlined today.

The Psalmist said, "This is the day the Lord has made; let us rejoice and be glad in it."

### MINISTERIALLY SPEAKING

Jesus warned about "being anxious about tomorrow" and mentioned the value of living one day at a

time. In fact, he promised to help us but he taught us to pray for "daily bread."

The Bible has much to say about the importance of today.

Be an existentialist, at least in the

biblical frame of reference. Don't waste today because you made a mistake yesterday. Don't miss today while you dream of tomorrow. Today is God's gift to you; that is grace. Be a good steward of that grace. Use today to glorify God, build up his church and make someone's life better.

You may have seen it many times, but it's still true: "Yesterday is a cancelled check. Tomorrow is a promissory note. Today is the only cash you have. Spend it wisely."

Bob DeFoor  
Harrodsburg Baptist Church

### Into the darkness

On our final partnership journey to Idaho, we discovered we were to pass near the site of the grave of Ernest Hemmingway. We stopped there late one afternoon. It is a modest, earth-level stone in a small cemetery just outside Sun Valley.

As an outside literature major in college, I had found Hemmingway's writing exciting and romantic. I was at an age when his "For Whom the Bell Tolls" stirred the fires of a young man's imagination.

Standing over the grave of this once-famous romantic, I asked the question that his historians, I suppose, will forever ask: Why did he take a shotgun and kill himself, nearly a decade before he would have reached the age of 60?

Was it his way of dealing with boredom, having been everywhere and done everything? Or was he, like King Saul, wounded, not from

a sword but from cancer, and wanted to finish the job right then and there?

For the "romantic," as he was, his suicide was seen as courageous. For others a selfish disappointment, believing that he perhaps had another literary masterpiece within him which the world would never see.

### ON MISSION TOGETHER



William W. Marshall

Perhaps the world was deprived of another great book. Perhaps, more significantly, Ernest Hemmingway deprived himself of his opportunity to experience the rest of his life, however painful.

One wonders if the disciples of Jesus knew that their soon-to-take-his-own-life companion, Judas, was so fragile; that he wouldn't be able to handle his failure when he finally realized he had betrayed Jesus rather than create the circumstances which would force Jesus to exercise the kind of power Jesus consistently rejected. Poor Judas. He never seemed

to know the real Jesus.

Christmas has become for many Americans a dichotomy—a time of great loneliness and depression contrasted with a time of great hope and promise.

In our nation, perhaps in our own families, are those for whom the Christmas season only deepens the pain of living; they are having a terribly difficult time handling life.

It is no insignificant thing which churches do across our nation in this season; whether in the pealing of the bells; the hanging of the greens; the helping of the poor; the singing of the Messiah and carols; the nativity reenactments.

For in all of these and more, Christians must continue to shout and sing into the darkness of depression and hopelessness: "Unto you is born this day, in the City of David, a Savior, which is Christ the Lord!"

And in him there is hope; in him there is reason for living; in him there is light for the darkness; in him there is life ... everlasting!

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



## FAMILY FORUM

### Protecting our teenagers

By Wade Rowatt

**Q.** How do we protect our teenagers from all the violence in the world today?

**A.** Peace on earth is not a reality on the global or local level. The brutality of people against others has increased over the past 10 years. The reasons given range from increased poverty, the spread of drugs, the breakdown of the family, the failure of churches and the mobility of people away from their hometowns.

One way to protect your teens is to reduce the causes of chaos and crime. Your community can respond at several levels: crime watch areas, increased law enforcement levels and training and increased security. That all costs money and public support.

More personally, you can educate your youth about personal safety. Many juveniles carry a false sense of security and a "bad things happen to other people" attitude. Consequently, they take unwise risks, walk blindly into dangerous situations and play into the hands of evil abusers.

Teach your teens to become wise about unsafe, dangerous and threatening situations.

Talk with your youngsters and discuss what they would do in specific situations. Would they accept a ride home with someone they did not know? Do they walk alone in unlighted areas? Do you know when and where they will be at all times? How long before they would be missed by someone? How would they respond if they had car trouble? Do they associate with people who are questionable in character? How would they respond in a threatening situation?

Open communications between you and your youth strengthens their resources for protecting themselves. Do they know how to discuss these issues with you?

Practical suggestions from a group of teens includes: Get a loud whistle for your key chain; consider a self-defense course; carry a portable phone if possible, stay with a crowd, run with a good group and don't take silly chances.

The bottom line is, you cannot be with your teens like you could when they were tots. The best way to protect them is to teach them to protect themselves and to make their homes, communities and world a safer place.

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

## HE SAID/SHE SAID

### Emotions run high at Christmas, giving plenty of reasons to cry

#### HESAIID



Mark Wingfield

While normally the sentimental type, I've had to face emotions of another kind this Christmas season. I've been our designated shopper for the tough stuff: kid toys that have been sold out for weeks.

No room for sentimentality on this job. You've got to be tough as fruitcake, hard-hearted as the Grinch and as prepared as the elves. Christmas emotions run high among shoppers in the toy department.

My mission has been to find a talking Buzz Lightyear. So I developed a morning ritual: Every day on the way to work I drove straight to Target and then to Toys R Us, hoping to be the first person to discover a Buzz Lightyear placed on the shelf by night-time stockers. Every day it was the same: Empty shelves and clerks who had no idea when or if Buzz would be landing again in their stores.

And then last Wednesday, it happened: Peering through the stock room window on an early morning run to Target, I spied two Buzz Lightyears in a cart. A clerk came and moved the precious cargo into a dark corner. I was tempted to lunge through the "Employees Only" door and snatch one, but instead waited for another clerk to come by.

"I'm desperately looking for a talking Buzz Lightyear," I explained. "Did you get any in overnight? I think I just saw some in a cart back there."

Seconds passed, then minutes. My heart pounded. Then the patron saint of all Target stores reappeared from the bowels of the stock room, Buzz Lightyear in hand. She didn't say a word; she didn't have to.

I thanked her profusely and ran to the checkout lane. I had to get out of the store before one of the other emotionally distraught parents saw my prize or before the clerk returned to tell me she had made a mistake and snatched Buzz back.

In my euphoria, I nearly flew right out the door: To infinity and beyond!

#### SHESAID



Alison Wingfield

Now that we've gotten over our toy-shopping tramas, we can concentrate on other aspects of Christmas.

Christmas brings out the sentimental in me. Things I would laugh at or ignore any other time of the year get to me during the Christmas season.

The classic Coca Cola commercial, where they sing "I'd like to teach the world to sing in perfect harmony," makes me cry every time. I even get weepy at some McDonald's ads.

And the old movies and shows are sure heart-grippers, year after year. We recently watched "How the Grinch Stole Christmas" with our children and the minute the Whos in Whoville came out and sang, even though the Grinch had taken all the trappings of Christmas away, my eyes started dripping.

Watching "It's A Wonderful Life" can't be undertaken without a huge box of tissue at hand.

Church services provide the most touching moments for me. I never get tired of singing "O Come, O Come, Emmanuel," during Advent. And participating in singing "Silent Night" during a candlelight service in a darkened church with everyone holding up their beacons of light is so powerful and moving.

Perhaps God uses the emotions we are more apt to feel at Christmas to sensitize us to the deeper spiritual meanings that are hard for us to fathom.

Emmanuel. God with us. We might not understand how it could possibly be, but we can be astounded when we ponder God's awesome love for us. Now that's something to cry about.

## What will you have after Christmas?

"Nothing's over like Christmas," some modern wise man has said.

It's true. For all the anticipation that leads up to Christmas Day, when it's finally over, it's over. No more suspense about what's in the packages; only crumpled wrapping paper. No more preparation for the big meal; only pangs of guilt for having eaten so much. No more waiting for family to arrive; only wondering when they'll go back home.

But now we find ourselves in the heady anticipation of Christmas. This is hardly the time to worry about what we'll be feeling the day after. Yet in reality, how we anticipate Christmas determines what will be left after Christmas.

All the hustling and bustling to fill stockings may create a moment of excitement, but that does

nothing to account for the remaining 8,760 hours of the new year to come.

What will you have when Christmas is over this year? The answer depends on how you've prepared.

#### EDITORIAL

Wrap yourself in anticipation only for the packages, turkeys and parties and you'll be left holding an empty bag well before New Year's. But dig deep into your soul to plant true seeds of Christmas hope and you'll have fruit to last the whole year.

Take time to strengthen your faith this Christmas. Celebrate the birth of Jesus the Messiah, but don't leave him in the manger. Make room for him in your heart. That's the greatest gift you can give—and it's the only one that will last.

— Mark Wingfield

### Christmas gift ideas

Give yourself a gift that you will receive anew each day of the new year. A gift customized to your fit. A gift possessing dynamic power. A gift accompanied by a lifetime warranty. A gift with minimum dollar investment and maximum results. A gift that will enthrall your mind. A gift that will stir your heart. A gift that will strengthen your body. A gift that will renew your spirit.

What is this gift? An experience with God that keeps on ticking. Only the giver of all good gifts can deliver on the above promises, so here are some suggestions before you conclude your 1996 Christmas shopping.

Give yourself the continuous gift of:

■ Being with God without a personal agenda. Write yourself a gift invitation to be daily with God in

1997 for 15 minutes for the purpose of simply feeling God's presence. Richard Foster's "Prayer: Finding the

Heart's True Home" may help with ideas.

■ Letting God turn right side up one habit that's been turned wrong side down. We sin for a reason, and through awareness of that reason God will help you meet that need in a way that brings long-term happiness. Developing a trustworthy

#### MINISTERIALLY SPEAKING

friendship will help you help God turn the habit right side up.

■ Participating with God to correct one social injustice. Praying for insight while reading the Gospels will show you the way.

■ Sharing the salvation hope of Jesus with a seeker. You will give that person an eternal gift. That person will be revealed to you by being aware of whom in your sphere of relationships is seeking.

■ Study the Bible weekly for an uninterrupted 90 minutes.

■ Give a tenth of your money beyond yourself and you'll find yourself immeasurably blessed.

May your gifts keep on giving

Les Hollon

Pastor

Saint Matthews Baptist Church

Louisville

### The truth shall make you odd

By Dale Hanson Bourke

It is more than ironic, I fear, that one of the lowliest births of recorded history is commemorated this time of year with Nativity sets crafted from porcelain, fine glass or precious metal.

These little scenes that often decorate our homes are supposed to remind us of Jesus' birth. Instead, they serve as commentaries on what we pretend Christianity is and what we hope will be required of us if we follow the one who was born in a manger.

Jesus' birth couldn't have been easy. Anyone who has spent time on a farm knows that the sights, smells and sounds of a barn full of animals is hardly a fitting setting for childbirth. The circumstances were terrible, but they were an appropriate beginning for someone who was to spend his life in downward mobility, challenging the prevailing culture.

The ministry of Jesus is a perfect example of how not to succeed in life. He confronted and offended the power brokers of his day and spent time with the outcasts and losers.

He never courted the wealthy or the leaders, but was delighted to draw his following from the poor, sick and oppressed. The miracles he performed were never for effect and were often spent on those who would have been happy simply to receive a handout or a kind word.

When, despite his efforts, he was lauded and called a king, he turned even on his own followers, finding fault with their adoration when it was centered on his human image instead of his godly representation.

The faith to which he called people promised little earthly payoff. He told the rich to give everything to the poor and follow him. He offered no return on investments in this life, preaching instead about another kingdom to come.

Many thought he was crazy. Others saw him as a threat. Those who chose to follow him had little in common except an open heart and a willingness to walk away from everything they had treasured before. The faith they embraced became all-consuming and lifestyle shattering.

Followers of Christ were weirdos or worse in their culture.

In our society, one can be a

#### COMMENTARY

Christian and be accepted at every level. There is little discrimination because of the label. In fact, in some professions, Christianity is worn as a guarantee of character.

But the Christianity embraced by most of us is like the china mangers sitting in our living rooms. It has been cleaned up and set on a shelf to be admired as we scurry after the other things of life. It has little to do with the lowly, messy birth of Jesus or his radical, counter-cultural life.

Following the example set by Christ, if we were really serious about it, would make us just as strange today as those first Christians were in their society. As Flannery O'Connor wrote in her paraphrase of John 8:32, "You shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you odd."

It is easy to spot Christians during this season by their decorations. But it should be easy to find them during the rest of the year, too. They would be the downwardly mobile, culturally insensitive oddballs who care more about the poor than the powerful. They wouldn't need a symbol or a label to identify themselves. Others would just point and call them weird. (RNS)

Dale Hanson Bourke is the author of "Turn Toward the Wind"—and publisher of Religion News Service

# CHRISTMAS

## Manger scenes tell Christmas story with symbolism

### Graham offers Internet response to Christmas special

MINNEAPOLIS—People who find new computers or computer modems under their Christmas trees this year might also make a connection to the true meaning of Christmas.

Billy Graham's Christmas television special, "A Joyful Christmas in a Fragile World," will offer viewers more than a toll-free number for spiritual help. For the first time, the Graham organization also will direct viewers to an Internet site.

"Using the Internet to expand Mr. Graham's ministry is a logical step in his progressive use of emerging technologies," said Stan Jackson, director of administration for Billy Graham Evangelistic Association. "This will enable individuals to hear from Mr. Graham immediately after making a commitment to Christ and obtain our traditional follow-up materials at their convenience, 24 hours a day."

In addition to follow-up material for those who have made spiritual decisions, the web site includes information about how to accept Christ as Savior and answers to frequently asked questions about Christianity.

This special web site will be active for only three weeks, beginning Dec. 16. The Internet address is <http://www.billygraham.org>.

By Michael Paquette  
Religion News Service

WASHINGTON (RNS)—The scene might be the ruins of an old castle or an ancient temple. Sometimes it's a village, bustling with activity. It could be a cave, or a rich landscape of mountains and rivers and stars. At other times, it's a simple barn.

No matter how it's depicted, the Nativity of Jesus remains the central symbol of the Christmas season. But the type of creche, and the figures represented in it, tell more than just the Christmas story. These icons have much to say about the spirit, psychology and cultures in which they were created.

Nativity sets first became popular among 17th-century European priests, who used them as missionary tools to tell the story of Christmas to potential converts in such far-flung places as South America, Africa and Asia, according to Johann Roten, a scholar at the University of Dayton. And in post-Reformation Europe, Roten said, Catholic priests used Nativity figures to "confirm and reaffirm the faith of their own people."

Like stained-glass windows, Nativity sets were considered the "Bible of the poor," said Roten.

But as time went on, in the old world and the new, Nativity scenes also found favor in homes and village squares. And the setting artists chose to tell the Christmas story reflected the ways in which European Christians interpreted the events surrounding the

birth of Jesus.

By the 18th century, three centers of creche culture emerged in Europe—Naples, Italy; Provence, France; and southern Germany and Austria. And the Nativity scenes of each region were rich in unique religious symbolism.

Italian creches, for example, usually place Joseph, Mary and the Christ child among the ruins of an ancient temple or an old castle.

Also rich in symbolism are the types of animals found at the manger. Italian creches, like most, always include a donkey and an ox.

"The donkey usually has two lines in the form of a cross on its back," said Roten. "The cross means that the donkey has been baptized. Why? As an animal, the donkey represents the pagans present at the manger. And what is pagan can become Christian through the birth of Christ."

"The ox was complementary to the donkey," he added. "The ox represented the Jewish people." In ancient Judaism, Roten noted, the ox was commonly used as a sacrificial offering to God. In Christian theology, the death of Jesus on the cross represents the ultimate sacrifice for all humankind.

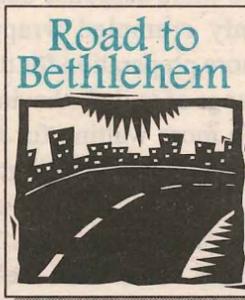
Early French Nativity scenes generally place the holy family atop a hill, surrounded by the entire village. This signifies that the birth of Jesus affects the "entire community, the mayor, the

pastor, the policeman, the thief and the lady who sells fish," Roten said.

But to Roten, the most fascinating figure in French creches is the Ravi, or "exalted one," who is depicted on his knees with his arms reaching heavenward. "He is the fool of the village," said Roten, "the dumb kid who doesn't know what's going on. But it takes someone like him to understand the miraculous event that's occurred."

Germans and Austrians usually set the birth of Jesus within a sweeping natural landscape, complete with a star-dotted sky, mountains and rivers, typical of most art from the Baroque period, Roten said.

"Baroque art was a reflection of heaven on Earth," said Roten, a native of Switzerland. "In everything you did and showed, there was some kind of presence of the divine."



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# CHRISTMAS

## Original journey to Bethlehem had no express lane

Continued from page 1  
such as lions and bears.

Brutes of a two-legged variety also posed risks.

"Bandits, pirates of the desert and robbers" were common along the major trade routes, said Peter Vasko, a Catholic priest and director of the Holy Land Foundation, an organization that works to retain a Christian presence in Israel and promotes the restoration of sacred Christian sites there.

The threat of outlaws often forced solitary travelers to join trade caravans for protection.

"It was like the pioneer days with wagons and coaches," Vasko said. "Traders took a number of people with them as passengers, and they (Mary and Joseph) probably had to pay something for protection."

If the hardships of spending more than a week on the road at nine months pregnant would not have been taxing enough, Joseph and Mary could have arrived in Bethlehem to find "10,000 other people from the house of David

there for the census," Strange said, referring to the descendants of ancient Israel's King David.

Under normal circumstances, he said, the pair would have expected to stay in the spare bedroom of a relative or another Jewish family.

However, an overcrowded Bethlehem would have forced Joseph and Mary to seek lodging at an inn that night.

"An inn was regarded as emergency accommodations," Strange said. "They were not really desirable places."

Scholars may disagree on exactly what an ancient inn was, but they do agree it was a crude facility.

Typically, an inn was a rectangular-shaped building divided into small rooms and "most likely loaded with vermin," said Strange. The inn was built around an outdoor courtyard, which may have been

partially covered with a slanted roof, he said.

In his Gospel, Luke writes that Joseph and Mary were assigned a bed with the beasts. "In a way," Strange said, "it was not such a terrible place to be because at least they had cover and it was better than staying out in the courtyard."

It is widely agreed that Jesus was born in a cave used for housing animals. But how realistic are the Renaissance images of Joseph, Mary and the newborn Jesus surrounded by a menagerie of camels, oxen, cows, chickens, pheasants and peacocks?

Not very, according to Strange. Since the stable was part of the inn, the only animals likely to be found there would have been donkeys, used for travel, and perhaps a few sheep, he said.

Both Strange and Vasko believe overcrowded conditions in Bethlehem on the night of Jesus' birth would have resulted in others being close at hand during Mary's delivery.

"There were others present at the

birth of Jesus," Vasko said. "It's human nature to help somebody. If there was another woman there, I am sure she would have helped Mary."

Added Strange: "There's another account of the Nativity ... where it says that when it was time to have the baby, Joseph went out looking for a midwife." Strange was referring to a non-canonical gospel written either by James the apostle or another James, known as the brother of Jesus.

Even though Mary could have had help and the cave may have provided some protection from the elements, the "noisy and dirty" conditions under which Jesus was born would have made the event anything but "warm and wonderful and sweet and comfortable," Strange said, referring to 20th-century misconceptions about the Nativity.

"Sleeping in the cold, on the ground, trying to keep the baby from getting an infection, keeping the mother from infection—childbirth was a major hurdle in antiquity," Strange said.

"You might lose the child, you might lose the mother, you might lose both. ... It was a very trying circumstance."

## Yes, Kentucky, there was a St. Nick

NASHVILLE (BP)—There was a real-life Saint Nicholas, but he lived nowhere near the North Pole.

Nicholas was born about 280 A.D. in the town of Patras, located in modern Turkey. He was raised in a wealthy and well-educated family and was named the Bishop of Myra as a young boy. He was well regarded for his extreme kindness and generosity.

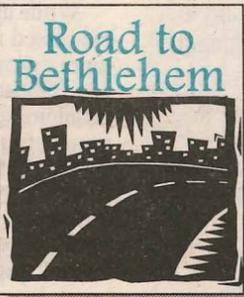
According to legend, three unmarried daughters from a good but poor family in Patras could not get married because they had no dowries. Their father planned to sell them when they reached a marriageable age.

Nicholas heard of the girls' fate and was quite distressed. He secretly delivered a bag of gold to the oldest sister of marrying age. Her family was ecstatic about her good fortune, and she was happily married.

When the next daughter became old enough to marry, Nicholas delivered a bag of gold to her, too. Legend says Nicholas tossed the bag through an open window, and it landed in one of the stockings hanging by the fire to dry.

When the youngest daughter reached marrying age, the father was determined to identify the mysterious gift giver. The father kept watch all night and discovered Nicholas was the generous donor.

Similar stories of Nicholas' charity and kindness spread across the land. From that time on, anyone receiving an unexpected gift thanked the good Saint Nicholas. The English word Santa Claus derives from the Dutch words Sinter Klaas, which is what they call their favorite saint, Nicholas.



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### The reason for the season

As you travel back to Bethlehem down that time-worn path lined with wisemen, shepherds and angels, may you ponder anew the birth of Jesus, God's Son, our Savior. May you discover for the first time or rediscover what his birth, life, teachings, miracles, death and resurrection mean to your life and to the future of the world.

I stand far within the mark when I say, "... all the armies that have ever marched, all the navies that have ever been built and sailed, all the parliaments that have ever sat and all the kings that have ever reigned, put together, have not affected the life of man upon this earth as has that one solitary life."

One way to celebrate the "reason for the season" and to rejoice in the season is to make a generous and lasting gift for the benefit of your favorite Baptist cause(s). Not only will you be making a lasting difference by extending Christ's mission in the world, but also you will be bearing a personal testimony that will extend perpetually beyond your lifetime.

Your church, your association and these Kentucky Baptist Convention-related entities are worthy of your support: Campbellsville

University, Cumberland College, Georgetown College, Clear Creek Baptist Bible College, Oneida Baptist Institute, Kentucky Baptist Homes for Children, Kentucky Baptist Healthcare System, Western Recorder, Kentucky Baptist Historical Commission and Kentucky Woman's Missionary Union.

**KENTUCKY BAPTIST FOUNDATION**



Barry Allen

The Kentucky Baptist Foundation exists to serve your church, association and these related entities. Perhaps you would like to contribute to an existing endowment fund(s) for one or more of these, or perhaps you would like to establish your own endowment fund and designate the cause(s) you want to receive the perpetual income benefit.

Please give Laurie Valentine, our trust counsel, and me the opportunity to assist you in making a special gift for a special cause(s) in this special season of giving. Our telephone number is (502) 244-6466.

May you know a special sense of God's presence in your life during this Advent season, and may you know it is the presence of the King.

Barry Allen is president of the Kentucky Baptist Foundation, 10605 Shelbyville Road, Louisville, KY 40223.

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## Most non-churchgoers say they're too busy to attend

### Study suggests tips for churches

ATLANTA—Based on their recent study of unchurched people, the Southern Baptist Home Mission Board's research analysts offered several implications:

■ **Churches exist amidst unchurched people.** "Churches will generally find themselves in the midst of a significant number of unchurched people," the researchers said. "While national surveys show that most people have a religious preference, a large portion are unchurched."

Whatever their religious background, "their present non-participation in church should make them prospects for Southern Baptist outreach efforts," they added.

■ **Most people think the church is irrelevant.** "The major implication from all this data is not that most people fail to attend because of hostility toward the church," the research analysts said. "It has more to do with people perceiving that the church has nothing particularly interesting or important to offer them—at least not as much as competing interests."

"This could be an indictment of the quality of worship experiences available in churches, the lack of meaningful relationships, shallow spiritual development, few opportunities for significant service or ineffective outreach by churches."

■ **Concerns about safety matter.** Churches

would do well to take seriously the concern for public and personal safety," they said.

Asked "What are some of the greatest needs, issues and concerns of people living in your community?" the far-and-away dominant answer was "safety and crime."

Concerns about crime, violence, personal security and community safety were cited almost four times as often (43 percent) as the next-highest answer, "don't know" (12.9 percent).

"In order to make contact with people in their communities, (churches) could offer seminars on personal and home security, begin neighborhood watch programs, develop alliances with police and other community or governmental organizations and provide opportunities for people to meet their neighbors and discuss community issues," the researchers said. "Churches could emphasize spiritual security as well."

■ **Unchurched people don't care about church issues.** Topics that are important for many church people—abortion, the lottery, prayer in school, racism and politics—are "not being mentioned as concerns" by unchurched people.

"While a word needs to be spoken about these moral issues, Southern Baptists often fail to speak to those areas that concern people most," researchers said.

*Continued from page 1*

churched people just don't care about church. Next came a lack of belief in God, cited by 4.8 percent of the people polled. Another 2.4 percent claimed not being raised in a church as reason enough not to attend now.

While about half of those surveyed expressed neutral feelings toward religious groups, researchers said Southern Baptists have a public relations problem when compared to other denominations.

Presbyterians topped the list of groups generating favorable attitudes among unchurched people, with a 45.2 percent favorable rating. Next came United Methodists (44.5 percent), Roman Catholics (44.3) and all types of Baptists (43.2).

Southern Baptists came in eighth out of 15 groups, with a 37.0 percent favorable rating among the unchurched. Black Muslims came in last in that category (16.8 percent).

Conversely, Black Muslims ranked at the top of groups who are perceived unfavorably, with a 22.7 percent unfavorable rating among the unchurched.

Next were Mormons (17.3 percent), Muslims (15.0) and Southern Baptists (12.2).

Lutherans generate the fewest unfavorable feelings (2.4 percent), followed by United Methodists (2.8) and Presbyterians (3.8).

The regional focus of this particular study could reasonably make a greater difference on this question than on others.

"Compared to other Christian groups, Southern Baptists had the highest percentage of negative opinions expressed and were among those with the lowest favorable ratings," the researchers noted. "While not critical, Southern Baptists do have a public relations problem that is not shared by Baptists in general."

This PR problem may be accentuated by secular media coverage that "highlights negative reactions to some issue or event," they speculated. "Southern Baptists should intentionally communicate the positive values of love, concern, caring, forgiveness and grace that make up their Christian faith."

Let's not let children go hungry any longer!



## Help the Children

P.O. Box 1511  
Pikeville, KY 41502

\$20 will feed a family for one month

### A Christmas thought

By Robert Dunston

Each year for the past six years, Kenneth Faught, associate professor of religion at Cumberland College, has edited a booklet of daily devotions for the Advent season. Faught enlists both students and faculty to write devotional thoughts for the booklet, and each year the booklets are made available to students, faculty and friends of the college. In this way, we can share together in preparing our hearts for Christmas.

This week and next, I want to allow you to enjoy two of the devotions our students prepared. This week's Christmas thought comes from Jason Mitchell, a sophomore from Frankfort. Jason's devotion is based on Luke 1:46-47.

"Once again we pull out those huge boxes of Christmas decorations. We bustle about trying to find the perfect gifts for our loved ones. We dash to and fro making sure all of the finishing touches have been put on the dinner table. The house is whipped into shape for the visit from grandmother. The children are rushed to the church to practice for the pageant that is to take place in a few days.

Yet another practice is required for the beautiful Christmas cantata that is to be held after the children finish their pageant.

"All the while the Christmas season passes us by, and we are left with the same routine that has followed us from year to year.

"What is the joy in being so busy that we only have a few

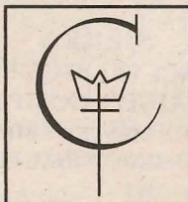
fleeting moments in which to truly enjoy the holiday? Can there be any joy found in scurrying about the malls and bakeries in a futile attempt to make the holiday experience perfect?"

"This holiday season, take a step back. For Mary and Joseph the conditions were not

perfect to have a child. "Look at the shepherds. They came and worshipped Christ without worrying about preparations. The wise men presented their finest to the child with the simple heart of giving. The true joy of Christmas is found in the silent peace of our hearts when we realize the true meaning of why we celebrate Christmas."

*Robert Dunston is chairman of the religion department at Cumberland College, 6000 College Station Dr., Williamsburg, Ky. 40769*

CUMBERLAND COLLEGE



### Central region report

A lot of exciting things are happening in Kentucky Baptist Homes for Children's central region as we reach out to young people with the compassion of our Lord. Let me share with you a little of what is going on these days.

The work at Glen Dale Children's Home in Glendale continues to touch the lives of young people in significant ways. We recently added two staff positions there, which are enabling us to help the children in care even better while at the same time helping to position the agency for the future in central Kentucky.

Bob Coons, a former pastor, Glen Dale chaplain and most recently an administrator at the Baptist youth ranch in Elizabethtown, has now come on board at Glen Dale as campus administrator. In addition, Mary Lynn Thieneman, who has served in various treatment roles at Caritas Medical Center, is Glen Dale's first clinical director.

While I continue to serve as director of Glen Dale, the addition of these two fine individuals to our staff is enabling me to devote more time to ensuring the high quality of all of our central region

programs and to developing additional services for the children of this area. I'm truly excited about this opportunity.

We are also continuing to serve young men through the Baptist youth ranch in Elizabethtown. This is an exciting ministry that works with young men who have emotional and other problems

stemming, in most cases, from severe abuse and neglect. C.A. Brown continues to provide excellent leadership for that program.

The young people at both Glen Dale and the Baptist youth ranch are having a wonderful Christmas season thanks to the support of our Kentucky Baptist churches. Thank you for caring and reaching out to our children not only at Christmas but throughout the year. Because of you, young people are finding hope, healing and the love of the Savior.

HOMES FOR CHILDREN



Buckley Carlin

*Buckley Carlin is central region administrator for Kentucky Baptist Homes for Children, 10801 Shelbyville Rd., Middletown, Ky. 40243. Call (800) 456-1386. The World Wide Web address is: <http://www.iglou.com/kbhcl>*

# MISSIONS

## Rankin: SBC meeting goals on God's time

By Louis Moore  
SBC Foreign Mission Board

JACKSON, Miss. (BP)—Bold Mission Thrust is gaining momentum and is well on its way to being fulfilled in God's time frame, Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board President Jerry Rankin told the agency's trustees during their Dec. 8-11 meeting in Jackson, Miss.

And trustees called on the Southern Baptist Convention Executive Committee to rework the SBC Cooperative Program allocation formula "as a tangible demonstration" of its "heightened focus on missions."

While their resolution did not spell out how Cooperative Program receipts ought to be divided, it clearly signaled a desire for an increase in foreign missions funding. Currently, the board receives 50 percent of all funds that arrive undesignated at the Executive Committee from states, churches or individuals.

Rankin's comments challenged critics who claim Bold Mission Thrust is a failure because several numerical goals established more than 20 years ago have not been achieved.

"Those who, with pessimism, announce the failure of Bold Mission Thrust from a statistical analysis are absorbed with human programs and plans and are out of touch with a sov-

ereign God who is moving in providence and power 'that repentance and remission of sins should be preached to all nations,'" Rankin said. "They are locked into a narrow denominational view that has traditionally commended ourselves by ourselves and measured ourselves by ourselves rather than seeing divine activity through a filter of faith.

"God does not work in 2 percent or 5 percent annual increments, but he unleashes his power and fulfills his purpose in a 'kairos' of time," Rankin said. "The spiritual results of Bold Mission Thrust are not something that can be planned and programmed in man's time frame. We can only come to him with prepared and submissive hearts and focus on the objective of an evangelized world and trusting God to work through what we offer to him."

During their meeting, trustees also approved a proposal creating a new category for missionary appointment—an apprenticeship—that eliminates one of the hurdles some have felt detoured potential missionary candidates from the field.

The new apprenticeship program allows candidates to go straight to the mission field from seminary without the required two years of full-time work experience in the United States. Proponents of the change have argued

that the two-year requirement diverted attention away from the mission field to other forms of ministry in the United States.

Seminary graduates intending to go to the mission field sometimes accept church assignments in the United States to meet the two-year requirement, but then get involved in that work, start families and move away from their original calling to international missions, explained Lloyd Atkinson of the FMB's office of mission personnel.

Under the new program, missionary apprentices will use their four-year term to meet the requirement for appointment as career missionaries. Trustees also voted to place a maximum age of 45 on those seeking appointment as career missionaries.

Trustees also participated in a Dec. 8 service in which 51 new missionaries were appointed.

During business sessions trustees also approved a recommendation from a location study committee that the FMB's headquarters remain in Richmond, Va., where it has been based since its beginning in 1845. The committee said it would cost \$40 million to \$50 million to relocate the board and such a move would divert energies and funds away from international missions.

## Fellowship sends 4 missionaries anonymously to 'hostile' areas

HOUSTON (ABP)—It could be called the missionary's version of the witness protection program.

Two couples were appointed missionaries anonymously Dec. 6 by the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship in a ceremony at a Houston church. They are being sent to witness in regions so hostile to the Christian message that their work and perhaps their lives would be endangered if identified, Fellowship officials said.

As the two couples sat almost unnoticed in the audience, surrogates stood in for them on stage and gave their testimonies by proxy to the estimated 600 people gathered for the missionary commissioning service.

Five other couples stood in the spotlight—names and identities intact—as all joined the ranks of Fellowship missionaries who now number 140 worldwide.

The two unnamed couples, who will serve in the Middle East and North Africa, were the first missionaries appointed anonymously in the Fellowship's five-year history. One night earlier, the four had participated in their own private commissioning ceremony.

One of the four compared the surrogate ceremony to an "out-of-body experience." Another admitted to some sadness over loss of public identity in ministry.

"It will be hard not to tell people what we do," said one. "But as long as we can rally individual and family prayer support, the loss of public identity won't be so hard. Please tell Baptists to pray for us."

At the close of the appointment service, all four joined the congregation in prayer huddles around the "public" missionaries.

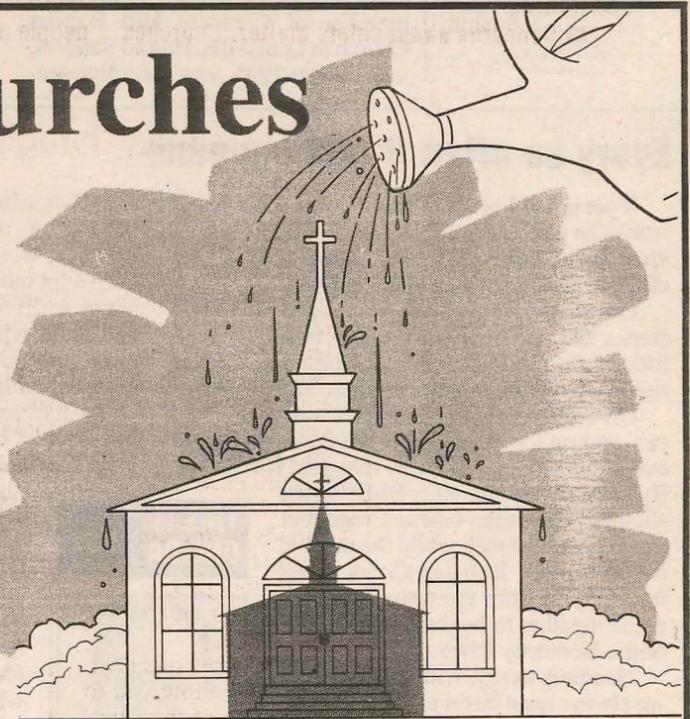
## Growing His Small Churches

### The Small Church Growth Tour

You are invited to join us for a one-stop seminar that teaches simple and effective ways to start growing your church *today!* Designed for all church and Sunday School workers, this exciting event will show you how to:

- Increase Attendance
- Increase Missions
- Increase Baptisms
- Increase Quality
- Increase Contacts
- Increase Enrollment
- Increase Stewardship
- Increase Ministry

Don't wait until next season to reap the rewards of a healthier church—make your plans to start growing today! There's no charge for admission.



January 20	<b>Ashland:</b>	Rose Hill Baptist Church	7:00-9:30 p.m.
January 21	<b>Lexington:</b>	Highlands Baptist Church	7:00-9:30 p.m.
January 23	<b>Frankfort:</b>	Crestwood Baptist Church	7:00-9:30 p.m.
January 24	<b>Hardinsburg:</b>	Hardinsburg Baptist Church	7:00-9:30 p.m.
January 25	<b>Sullivan:</b>	Sullivan Baptist Church	8:30 a.m.-Noon

Sponsored by the Kentucky Baptist Convention Sunday School Department

502/245-4101 ext. 300

## PRAYER PARTNERS

Pray for these specific needs related to Kentucky Baptist partnerships with Russia and New England:

■ Kentucky partnership missionaries in Russia: Bob and Nancy Walden and Larry and Joy Lindsey.

■ Kolpino Baptist Church near St. Petersburg, Russia.

■ Second Baptist Church in Nizhney Novgorod, near Moscow.

■ Kingisep Baptist Church in St. Petersburg, Russia.

■ First Baptist Church in Chelsea, Mass., as the church seeks a pastor.

■ Pastor Hanna Ibrahim, who recently celebrated 20 years as pastor of Arabic Evangelical Church in Boston.

## Mountains to the Mississippi

Compiled by Ann Tatum

■ **BASKETT**—Advance Church called **Chuck Pollard** as pastor. He began his new ministry Nov. 17.

■ **CAMPBELLSVILLE**—**Tim Najavor** resigned as pastor at Salem Church to become pastor at Liberty Church in Pekin, Ill.

■ **Charles Harris**, minister for 48 years and pastor at Fairview Church for 11 years, will retire Dec. 29.

■ **FINCHVILLE**—**Ken Murphy** resigned as pastor of Finchville Church Nov. 30 to become associate director in the KBC partnership department.

■ **HENDERSON**—Bethel Church called **Joe McKissick** as pastor. He will begin his new ministry Dec. 22. He previously was pastor at Blue River Island Church in Irvington.

■ **LOUISVILLE**—**Michael Barley** resigned as pastor at Franklin Street Church.

Parkwood Church ordained **Rick Pryor** to the gospel ministry Nov. 3.

■ **OWENSBORO**—**Dan Hughes**,

pastor of Union Church in Hawesville and director of Schafer Baptist Camp for more than 25 years, died Oct. 22.

■ **Harry Coons**, retired bivocational pastor of several churches in Daviess-McLean Association, died Oct. 29.

■ **PRESTONSBURG**—First Church called **Dee Dee Callis** as music director. She previously was music director at Mayo Methodist Church in Paintsville. She will begin her new ministry Jan. 1.

■ **SHELBYVILLE**—Buffalo Lick Church called **Tara Clark** as minister to youth and children.

■ **WADDY**—Graefenburg Church ordained **Rick Blackaby**, **Jim D'Arcy** and **David Harrod** as deacons Oct. 20.

Pigeon Fork Church called **Ron Nordan** as pastor.

■ **WINCHESTER**—Northside Church ordained **Danny Bush** and **Robert Booth** as deacons.

## June Holloway Sanders, 69, dies

LOUISVILLE—June Holloway Sanders, 69, wife of former Kentucky Baptist Convention executive secretary Harold Sanders, died Dec. 6 at Baptist Hospital East.

Mrs. Sanders was a retired teacher in the Jefferson County Schools and a member of Crescent Hill Baptist Church in Louisville. Harold Sanders, who died in 1986, was executive sec-

retary-treasurer of the KBC from 1961 to 1972.

The funeral for Mrs. Sanders was held Dec. 9 at Crescent Hill Baptist Church, with burial in Tallahassee, Fla. She is survived by two daughters, Margaret Sanders and Susan Adkins; two sons, Harold Sanders Jr. and Ronald Sanders; a brother, Ronald Holloway; and six grandchildren.

## Every so often it just happens

If we could live in an ideal world, there never would be any "storms." But we do not live in an ideal world; there will be the "storms of life." One of those storms we face daily is flooding.

Oneida is located in the exact spot where two creeks and one river converge to form the south fork of the Kentucky River. Goose Creek runs right through the middle of our school property.

On one side of Goose Creek is our main campus, and on the other side is the farm. On the far end of the school's property runs Red Bird River.

By most accounts Red Bird is just slightly larger than Goose Creek, but one is called a creek while the other is called a river. Bullskin Creek flows into Oneida from the east. The three come together to begin the south fork of the Kentucky River.

Needless to say, with all this water we always must be on guard for flooding. When the weather man or woman gives the forecast, we pay more attention than most people when they mention rain. In a 24-hour period we usually do not worry about a forecast of an inch or so. But if they are talking about three or four inches, we get concerned.

This past weekend was one of those times when we were paying a lot of attention. It started raining Friday night and continued to rain through Saturday night. I was sitting in the living room about 2 a.m. when I heard a car in the driveway. It was my son, Harold, who had come to check my rain gauges. It was pouring at the time, and he was getting concerned. He told me the river had come up three feet during the past hour and was at 20 feet. In less than 10 minutes I was dressed and out the door. I knew we only had an hour or so before water would be in several buildings.

At 23 feet, the water would come into Holder-

man Hall, where we store the tools and equipment our students use for the work program. At 24 feet, the water would enter another building where we keep a lot more equipment used in our work program. At 25 feet, we would have water in Campbell Hall, where we have four classrooms and more equipment. Finally, at 26 feet, water would enter the athletic field house.

At 2:15 a.m. the call went out to get about 15 boys out of bed and help move everything. We keep four older buses, donated by churches, for just such occasions. We remove the seats and keep them ready for times just like this. While the students and two or three staff began to fill the buses, three of us started to move other equipment; three other buses, a backhoe, a garbage truck, a fire truck, a 24-foot box truck and the emergency bus, where we keep generators, pumps and other emergency equipment.

Our track and field mats also had to be moved. Sports equipment stored in the field house was moved to the second level. Fortunately, the river slowed down for the next four hours and only came up about two feet. But then it took another surge, and by 8 a.m. water came into the first building. About 30 minutes later it entered the second building. The floors in the third building had just been coated, a job that took several hours. We held our breath and watched. Would the water get onto the floor? We waited and waited as inch by inch the water kept coming up. Finally about 2 p.m. Sunday, the water crested about one inch short of getting onto the floor.

Monday morning we washed the floors and began to put it all back.

W.F. "Bud" Underwood is president of Oneida Baptist Institute, P.O. Box 67, Oneida, Ky. 40972

### THIS IS ONEIDA



W.F. Underwood

## CLASSIFIED ADS

**NEEDED:** Full-time secretary/treasurer (strong computer experience required). Send resumé by Dec. 20 to South Jefferson Baptist Church, 6505 Pendleton Road, Louisville, KY 40272.

**WANTED:** Interior design firm needs part-time office manager. Clerical, bookkeeping, customer service and computer skills. Call (502) 637-5608.

**NEEDED:** Pulpit chairs and office desk with chair for young church. Donated or reasonably priced. Can transport. (502) 885-2088.

**FOR SALE:** First Baptist Church of Owensboro, Ky., is accepting bids on 11 pews, 13 feet, eight inches long with cushions. Please fax your bid to (502) 683-8067 or call the church administrator for details at (502) 683-3505.

**SEEKING:** Full-time minister of youth/education. Our church averages in the 180s for Sunday school. Please send resumé or referrals to: Les Willson, Personnel Committee chairman, First Baptist Church, Box 161, Amelia, OH 45102, or call (513) 753-5761. David Prather, pastor.

**SEEKING:** Women on Mission Associate, Kentucky Woman's Missionary Union. Send resumé to: Kay Trisler, Kentucky Woman's Missionary Union, P.O. Box 436569, Louisville, KY 40253-6569.

**FOR SALE:** 22 12' pews, blue cloth; one pulpit; two clergy benches; one altar bench; excellent condition, call (502) 866-2089.

**SEEKING:** Meta Baptist Church is presently in the process of searching for a full-time minister of youth and music. Send resumé to: Search Committee, Meta Baptist Church, 8807 Meta Hwy., Pikeville, KY 41501.

**NEEDED:** Nursery worker, approximately 7 hours a week (Sunday morning and evening and Wednesday evening. Chevy Chase Baptist Church, Lexington, Ky. Call (606) 266-2601 if interested.

**SEEKING:** Part-time church secretary (25 hours); desktop publishing, financial records, receptionist, general office. Send resumé to: Personnel Committee, Midlane Park Baptist Church, 6500 Six Mile Lane, Louisville, KY 40218.

**HIRING:** Part-time church secretary. Salary negotiable. Send resumé to: Calvary Baptist Church, 36 School House Road, Frankfort, KY 40601, Attn: Personnel Committee.

**WANTED:** Permanent, part-time director/minister of youth. Send resumé to: Search Committee, Oak Ridge Baptist Church, 6056 Taylor Mill Road, Covington, KY 41015. Resumé should include applicant's experience and/or education for the position.

**SEEKING:** Minister of music/outreach for Northern Kentucky Southern Baptist church. Call (606) 635-2444. Grant's Lick Baptist Church, 175 West Clay Ridge Road, Alexandria, KY 41001. Dr. Paul E. Broyles, pastor-teacher.

## God is so good

*I hope these words of praise from our students encourage you also. In this season of giving, God already has given us so very much.*

"Our move to Clear Creek seemed impossible. People said we were crazy coming with four children and my wife at home caring for them. Now we can say, God did it. The abundance of blessings has been amazing. We've paid only about \$300 this semester, and yesterday I received \$100 in the mail. I'm very humbled because I know we don't deserve it." — *Ted Tenney, first year, Virginia.*

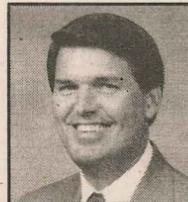
"What a privilege for God to call, and for us to listen. I didn't want to listen at first. Now, I wouldn't trade places with anyone I can think of. You are so precious. These 'old' teachers are the greatest. I was so scared the first semester; I think I walked the floor and cried. Everybody would say this teacher is so hard, but I've enjoyed each of them. I'm learning from Dr. Ditty's hard tests. I don't know what (grade) I'm making, but I'm learning. Thank you for accepting me here. It is a great privilege. Most of all, I thank God he called me. He knows each of us by name. Think of that." — *Florence Dingus, second year, Jenkins, Ky., "grandmother" in the dormitory.*

"Thank you for putting up with me for four years. You prayed for our granddaughter. Our son is a recovering alcoholic and is doing great right now. We have a new great grandson. If I were a writer—which I'm not, and Ms. Murdock knows my husband is not, we could write a book. It has been a challenge, but I thank God for leading us here. I wondered what he was doing at our age, but when I said yes, everything fell in place." — *Barbara Everly, senior, Central City, Ky.*

"God has blessed me to be here and be a servant of his. The night before I came, I couldn't pay my bills, even though I was working full time. I knew there was no way I could make it financially here. Everything is paid for. I haven't missed one bill since coming. I have a job in the library and wonderful prayer partners. I even came with the attitude I didn't need a man. I didn't want a man in my life. God has blessed me with a wonderful Christian man. I don't deserve this; I don't understand the timing. I just can't praise God enough." — *Christal Dixon, first year, Kentucky.*

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

### CLEAR CREEK CHRONICLE



Bill Whittaker

## Chick-fil-A founder says Bible, business go together

By Marcia Bost  
Georgia Christian Index

JONESBORO, Ga. (BP)—In his 50 years of feeding people, Truett Cathy has found no conflict between biblical principles and business practices.

"They go hand in hand," said the 75-year-old. "The scripture tells how to operate a business."

Beginning with the Dwarf Grill which he built with scrap and surplus material in 1946 in Hapeville, Ga., Cathy used those principles to expand to 691 Chick-fil-A units in shopping malls, college campuses and free-standing Dwarf Houses.

"As far as we can determine, I'm the only person living who's been operating a restaurant in the same place for 50 years," Cathy said.

"God called me into the restaurant business as surely as he called other people in their professions," he added. "To me, it's a ministry."

People often are seeking more than food, he said. He pointed out Jesus Christ often taught his disciples around the dining table.

Well-known for closing his restaurants on Sundays, Cathy said he made

that decision 50 years ago, when he was keeping the grill open 24 hours a day. "The Lord has blessed us because of our stand. People respect that stand even though some don't even go to church," he said.

The company's policy is consistent, and leases specify that units are allowed to stay closed regardless of where they are located.

Closing on Sunday gives the company an added edge, Cathy pointed out. "We're able to attract the caliber of employee who appreciates Sunday off," he said.

A member of First Baptist Church of Jonesboro, Cathy has taught 13-year-old boys in Sunday school for 40 years. Despite his success, Cathy sees material things as secondary.

"The important things are your relationship with Jesus Christ and your relationships with family members, loved ones and friends," he said. "I've found joy sharing God's blessings and being a channel to others, particularly to young people."

With a foster home opening soon in Henry County, Cathy will support 10 such homes for youngsters with difficult circumstances. One is located in Brazil, where his daughter and

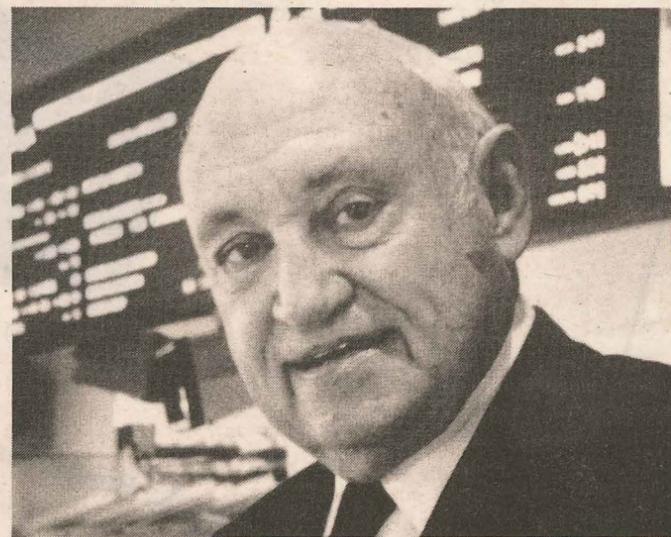
son-in-law served with the Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board for more than 10 years.

Chick-fil-A maintains a partnership with Berry College in Rome, Ga., and provides half scholarships for 90 students through the WinShape program. (The college provides the other half of the scholarship.) More than 1,500 boys and girls have participated in two-week summer camps by the same name, held at the college during the last 10 years.

Every young person who works two years for Chick-fil-A also receives a \$1,000 scholarship. More than 11,000 scholarships have been awarded to young people attending 1,200 universities nationwide.

Cathy said he feels an obligation to the more than 30,000 young people who have worked at Chick-fil-A "to see that they are properly motivated and trained to be successful." Their job with the company is often their first, he pointed out.

Success is one of his favorite topics. "In my opinion, we glorify God in our successes not in our failures," he commented. "I'm persuaded that it's true that God intends all of us to be successful."



Cathy estimates 60 percent to 80 percent of workers don't enjoy what they're doing, but added that he can't relate.

"There's always a solution to the problem, you just have to find the right one," he said. "As my pastor, Dr. Charles Carter, says, the problem is only temporary. It's how you handle the problem that makes the difference."

**THE HEAD ROOSTER**  
Chick-fil-A founder Truett Cathy supports 10 foster homes and his company has awarded more than 11,000 scholarships for its employees. "I've found joy sharing God's blessings and being a channel to others, particularly to young people."

### Christian songs belong outside the church

NASHVILLE (BP)—Church musicians must take their songs outside the church to meet the needs of today's people, a national church music director said.

Music ministry today may be too focused inside the walls of churches, said Mark Blankenship, director of the Southern Baptist Sunday School Board's music ministries department.

While early Christian musicians led in battle, ministered in prison and soothed sufferers, Blankenship said he wonders if today's singers "are on the battlefield as we engage the enemy in spiritual warfare."

"When is the last time the imprisoned have heard your voice or mine singing of God's love and grace?" he asked.

"I fear that most of the time we are content to sit in our reinforced edifices of spiritual fellowship and rarely venture out with our music to confront the bastions of apathy, poverty, war, racial tension, amoral laws or the misinterpretations of sound moral laws," he said.

The bulk of music evangelism efforts and music spiritual warfare often are tied to corporate worship, he said. "Or we relegate our evangelism efforts to the contemporary Christian recording artists and their ministries."

The message of God's peace, he added, can be taken to political arenas, nursing homes, war zones, mass communication outlets, to the homeless and the poor, among others.

## Adoptees hope to find answers & identities

By Michele Leslie  
Religion News Service

CLEVELAND (RNS)—They approached the long table one by one, tentatively, as if answers lay somewhere among the pastel pamphlets or in the understanding faces of the volunteers.

"That's all I know," Steve Hoffert said, with an almost apologetic shrug. He handed his scantily filled-out form to one of the young women, who assured him that a few scattered facts is all it takes sometimes.

The 32-year-old Avon Lake, Ohio, father smiled, but did not look encouraged. He has been searching for his biological parents since the birth of his first child three years ago.

"I had no desire to find them before that," Hoffert said. "But when he was born, when I looked down at him. ... I don't know how to describe it. I saw myself. I actually saw some bond to me."

"I never felt that before, like I'm part of a line," he said. "It's just hard to go through life not knowing."

It is nearly as hard to explain what "not knowing" means. The more than 20 people who signed up recently in Cleveland with International Soundex Reunion Registry are not really looking for people. They're looking for pasts.

"I used to wonder why I tanned so easily," said Theresa Emerson, 33, of Brooklyn, Ohio. "People asked, 'What's your nationality?' ... You get tired of saying, 'I don't know.'"

Emerson was matched earlier this month with her birth mother, half brother and five half sisters.

"My sisters told me they had actually put ads to me in the newspaper, like 'Happy 32nd birthday. Wish we knew who you were,'" said Emerson, still overwhelmed by their persistence.

"I can't describe to you how happy I was," she said. "Oh, by the way, it turns out my father was Greek and my mom is German."

Adoptive and biological parents who fear the fruits of searching must understand this, adult adoptees say: The love they feel for the people who raised them has nothing to do with their desire for—some say their right to—a heritage.

"My (adoptive) parents couldn't have been more wonderful," said Renee Arnold, who met her "biomom" in 1994 after five years on the Soundex registry. "But once you know you're adopted, you do feel differently."

Interestingly, physical reunion with biological relatives isn't necessarily the goal, said Arnold, a television producer who volunteered to assist with the Cleveland area registry. Soundex also offers the Reunion Registry at other sites around the country.

"It's a drive. It's innate," she said. "You want to know who you are and where you came from, for better or worse, because even if you get a door slammed in your face, that's better than not knowing."

Arnold, 32, said she felt the urge to know more fiercely when she was pregnant with her daughter, born six weeks before a Soundex representative called to say her biological mother was waiting to hear from her.

"It was a pretty emotional time," she recalled. "I had always asked myself, 'Where did I get these green eyes?' And the first thing she said to me on the phone was, 'Do you have green eyes? Do people notice them right away?'"

Steve Hoffert seeks only the answers his birth mother can provide. A reunion is secondary.

"My (adoptive) parents are my parents, and I love them," he said. "It

doesn't even matter if I meet my biological mom. The only thing I would say to her is 'Thank you for my life.' I don't blame her for giving me up. I feel blessed just to be alive."

Only another person who has been separated from his or her past can truly understand the need to search, said Anthony Vilardi, who founded what would become International Soundex Reunion Registry with his wife more than 20 years ago. Emma Vilardi, an adoptee, died in 1975.

The private, nonprofit organization, based in Carson City, Nev., registers birth parents, adult children, siblings and other biological relatives regardless of the cause of separation, he said.

It is often very difficult, he said, especially when adoption records are sealed and adoptees have only reissued birth certificates with little vital information.

The passage of years and loss of documents may also cut off a search.

Two older women registering in Cleveland were looking for their mothers. "I just always wondered," said one of the women who, at 72, understands her search will most likely take her to a cemetery.

"It does just come up sometimes, doesn't it?" asked the volunteer who took her application, because the older woman was close to tears.

"It comes up big time," she whispered.

The second woman, born during World War II, scanned an out-of-state road map and jotted down names of county seats. Like many adoptees who fear disturbing family members, she declined to be identified. Why, after 50 years, was she still searching for the mother she never knew?

She stopped writing but did not look up from the map. "I'd just like to tell her I've had a nice life."

**"It doesn't even matter if I meet my biological mom. The only thing I would say to her is 'Thank you for my life.'"**

Adoptee Steve Hoffert

# KENTUCKY BAPTIST FOUNDATION

HELPING YOU MAKE A LASTING DIFFERENCE

TO: Kentucky Baptist Pastors and Directors of Missions  
FROM: Barry Allen  
RE: January Emphasis: Make Your Will Month

It is estimated that \$10.5 trillion will pass from one generation to the next over the next twenty years—the largest generational transfer of wealth in history!

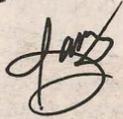
We believe our Kentucky Baptist family of churches, associations, institutions, agencies and causes deserve a share of this wealth—and—we believe our people deserve the opportunity to share it.

The Kentucky Baptist Foundation exists to facilitate Christian estate stewardship, and because one's Will is the cornerstone of estate planning, it is the subject of this January emphasis. Estate planning is not about death and dying, but about living, dreaming, creating and fulfilling an ideal of making a lasting difference for the cause of Christ.

Laurie Valentine, our trust counsel, and I are available at no cost or obligation to speak, lead a seminar and/or consult with your members collectively or individually about Christian estate stewardship.

Thank you for all you do in developing Christian financial stewards. Let us hear from you how we can assist you, whether in January or some other time.

Fraternally,



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