



WESTERN RECORDER

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Note: This is the last Western Recorder of the year. The next edition will be dated Jan. 6.

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Not-so-little town of Bethlehem a major tourism site

By Mark Wingfield
Editor

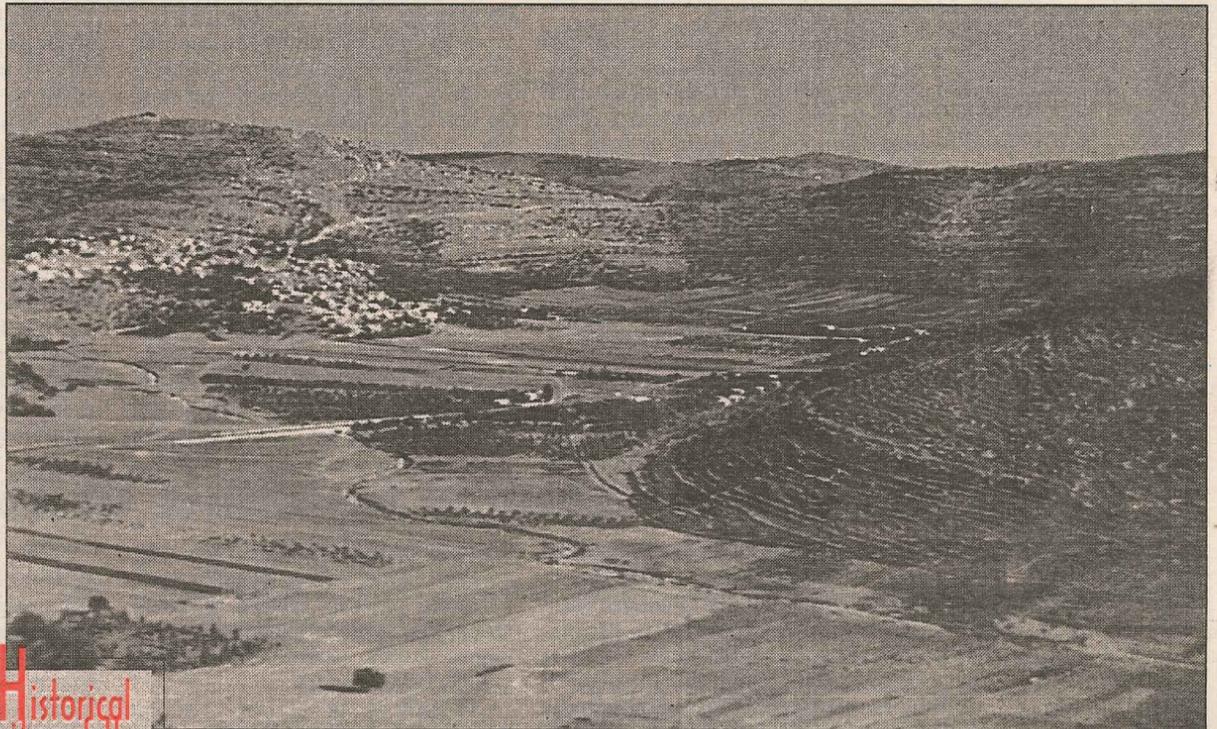
BETHLEHEM—This Christmas Eve, thousands of Christian pilgrims will descend upon the no-longer-little town of Bethlehem to mark the event that put this village on the map 2,000 years ago.

Bethlehem is more than a name in the Bible or the subject of Christmas carols. It is an actual place—a city of 50,000 residents on Israel's Palestinian-controlled West Bank. About 1.25 million tourists visit Bethlehem each year, with heightened interest at Christmastime.

Actually, make that Christmas times three, because Christmas Day is celebrated three times each year in Bethlehem. Catholics and Western Christians celebrate Christmas there on Dec. 25; Orthodox Christians mark the day on Jan. 6; and Armenians celebrate Jan. 18.

The focal point in Bethlehem is the Church of the Nativity, a Greek Orthodox Church built in 530 A.D. by the Byzantine emperor Justinian I. This church is built on the site believed to be where the inn of Bethlehem once stood, the inn at which the Bible reports there was no room for Mary and Joseph to stay when they journeyed to Bethlehem to register for the mandatory census of Caesar Augustus.

According to Luke's Gospel, Jesus was born in a manger, because there was no room at the inn.



SHEPHERDS' FIELD This is the traditional site believed by many to be the fields where shepherds were watching their flocks on the night Jesus was born in Bethlehem. If not in this exact field, it would have been another nearby field similar to this, biblical scholars say. (Photo by Wayne Dehoney/Dehoney Travel)



That manger most likely was a cave rather than the type of wooden stall depicted in most American nativity scenes, according to biblical scholars.

"In that day, inns were built around caves, usually enclosed in a big quadrangle with a courtyard area in the middle," explained Wayne Ward, senior research professor of Christian theology at Southern Baptist Theolog-

ical Seminary and a frequent visitor to the Holy Land. Animals often were kept in these limestone caves adjoining the inns, he said.

Ward is convinced the site marked by the Church of the Nativity is indeed authentic.

The site was first permanently marked by Helena, mother of the Roman emperor Constantine, in about 325 A.D., he noted. After Constan-

tine's conversion to Christianity, his mother traveled across Palestine picking out all the sites revered by the Christian community. She and others erected ornate church buildings on many of those holy sites.

"The oldest and surest site she picked out was the inn at Bethlehem," Ward said.

Biblical archaeologist Joel
See Not-so-little town ..., page 8

Evangelistic side of Salvation Army often missed

By Michael Paquette
Religion News Service

ALEXANDRIA, Va. (RNS)—Around here, ordained clergy are called "officers" and parishioners are referred to as "soldiers" who must sign the "articles of war" before enlisting for "active engagement." After their tour of duty—when officers and soldiers die—they are "promoted to glory."

Welcome to life in the Salvation Army.

Long familiar for its uniformed brigades that begin ringing bells beside red kettles at Christmas and running local thrift shops and soup kitchens, the Salvation Army quietly goes about doing good through a host of national and international social welfare programs.

With headquarters in the shadow of the Pentagon, these troops work tirelessly bringing comfort to the sick and aged, clothing and feeding the homeless, training the poor for jobs, housing convicted criminals, hosting summer camps for inner-city kids and aiding in disaster-relief efforts.

Just about everyone knows the

Salvation Army for its good works. According to a nationwide poll recently conducted by the Barna Research Group, 100 percent of Americans recognize the name, and 95 percent think favorably of the Army.

And for the fifth consecutive year, the Salvation Army raised more money through private donations—more than \$1 billion in 1996—than any other group, according to the Chronicle of Philanthropy. The American Red Cross ranked a distant second, raising less than half as much as the Army.

But what many may not realize is that the Salvation Army is primarily a church.

"Most people don't recognize the Salvation Army as an evangelical institution," said Diane Winston, a fellow at the Center for the Study of American Religion at Princeton University.

"Part of that has to do with the Army's work as a philanthropic organization and not promoting itself as a sectarian institution," said Winston, adding that the Army does not intentionally misrepresent itself to gain

supporters.

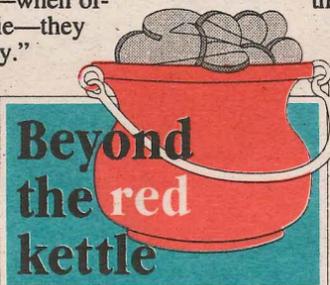
"I think they are eager for people to realize that they are a church," she said.

Indeed, the Salvation Army's mission statement, clearly printed on nearly all its literature, makes its purpose plain: "The Salvation Army ... is an evangelical part of the universal Christian church. Its message is based on the Bible. Its ministry is motivated by the love of God. Its mission is to preach the gospel of Jesus Christ and to meet human needs in His name without discrimination."

Commissioner Robert Watson, national commander of the Army's U.S. operations, makes no bones about the group's religious thrust: "We're a militant branch of Christianity with strong social outreach and strong evangelism outreach," he said.

To be sure, the national church's 450,000 religious foot soldiers believe they are engaged in an all-out war against society's ills. Never losing sight of their real mission, soldiers keep a keen eye focused on providing spiritual sustenance while meeting human need.

"The battle we're talking about is against sin and human hurts, all the evils in the world," said Watson. "It's the fiercest of all battles, requiring
See Agency seeks ..., page 10



Moving? See page 4 (1223)

Love takes Calvert City church outside its comfort zone

By Joyce Sweeney Martin
Staff Writer

CALVERT CITY—Hiring an African-American youth minister would push most any Anglo congregation beyond its comfort zone. But in all-white Marshall County, Tyra Lockey and First Baptist Church of Calvert City are trying to prove Christians are defined by love, not color.

Lockey previously had worked on short-term projects with First Baptist's youth, but church members voiced concern when the church considered calling her as part-time youth minister in the summer of 1996, Pastor Alan Thompson said.

In a county where the Ku Klux Klan regularly hands out promotional materials, many people feared hiring Lockey would "bring the wrath of the KKK on us," Thompson said.

At first Lockey, too, thought the idea was "crazy." As a stu-
See Love takes ..., page 7

BAPTISTS

Bengal Baptists end 25 years of fighting

CALCUTTA, India (ABP)—A seed planted by the Baptist World Alliance four years ago bore fruit Nov. 8 when three Baptist groups in the region of Bengal in India celebrated their reconciliation and unity after 25 years of bickering.

More than 500 guests from across Bengal participated in a joyful reunification service at St. Paul's Cathedral in Calcutta, which featured a choir made up of youth from each of the former factions.

In 1993, when Bengal Baptists celebrated the 200th anniversary of the arrival of pioneer Baptist missionary William Carey in Bengal, Denton Lotz, general secretary of the BWA, issued a call for the fighting factions to come together.

The clashes among Bengal Baptists were not over theology but property. Those conflicts led to court cas-

es before secular judges, as well as leadership conflicts, pitting two Bengal Baptist Unions—both affiliated with Carey's British Missionary Society—against the Bengal Baptist Fellowship, an independent group that is an offshoot of both of those unions.

After 10 meetings of the Ad-Hoc Reconciliation Committee formed after the Carey celebrations, the final process for reconciliation began a year ago in Calcutta. At that time, J.H. Mohanty, committee chair, said, "Unless we come together, we are not fit to work."

At the Nov. 8 reunification ceremony, Bengal Baptists leaders submitted their resignations and agreed to elect new leaders next March for the newly formed Bengal Baptist Union.

Lotz congratulated Bengal Baptists on their reconciliation and merger, Resu said. One of the goals of the BWA.

magnificent way in which the Holy Spirit has moved to bring it together," Lotz said. He said the worldwide Baptist family is praying that their unity "will be an impetus to further evangelize your great city and country."

"May the unity and reconciliation which is now being celebrated not only be a one-time event but indeed might be the aroma of Christ spread throughout the city of Calcutta," Lotz said.

Bony Resu, general secretary for the Asian Baptist Federation, one of six regional bodies of the BWA, reported Bengal Baptists who had overwhelmingly supported the move to attend the historic meeting. "Their faces were radiant with joy at the reconciliation and merger," Resu said.

One of the goals of the BWA.

Deadline extended for coats to North Korea

RICHMOND, Va. (BP)—More than 40,000 coats were collected during the first wave of a Southern Baptist effort to help North Korean children survive a harsh winter. Complications in shipping the coats, however, have extended the opportunity to show God's love for people in the reclusive socialist country.

Leaders at the Southern Baptist International Mission Board in Richmond, Va., have asked churches to continue collecting coats through Dec. 29 so the agency can honor a North Korean request for 180,000 heavy

coats to protect children from that country's bitter winter weather.

Three years of famine in North Korea have nearly doubled death rates among children under 5, international aid workers report.

Thousands of children whose homes were destroyed by floods earlier this year are left without adequate protection that can reach as low as 4 degrees below zero. North Korean officials, fearing children in several provinces will die this winter, asked Southern Baptists to collect the 180,000 coats.

IMB leaders notified Baptist churches of the need for coats in late November. Volunteers in Richmond worked Dec. 13-18 to prepare 40,058 coats sent by churches across the country. Difficulties in arranging for a cargo plane to carry the coats to North Korea, however, delayed the departure of the shipment until Jan. 12, giving churches more time to respond to the need.

Information about collection sites is available through a toll-free hotline—(800) 999-3113—and at the IMB's web site, www.imb.org.

South African Baptists plan own 'Truth & Reconciliation'

WASHINGTON (BP)—Continuing steps toward reconciliation are being taken in South Africa by the predominantly white Baptist Union and predominantly black Baptist Convention, according to reports received at the Baptist World Alliance offices in Washington.

Baptist leaders of the union and convention announced during a Nov. 6-8 meeting in Kempton Park, Tembisa, they will hold their own kind of "Truth and Reconciliation" event in April 1998, akin to the South African government's reconciliation proceedings currently under way.

And next July, a public rally is planned to celebrate the progress toward reconciliation when Baptist leaders meet in Durban, South Africa, for the BWA general council. Denton Lotz, BWA general secretary, said, "We look forward to the public rally where we can celebrate this with Baptists from around the world."

Of the "Truth and Reconciliation" event, Terry Rae, Baptist Union general secretary, said, "We are modeling this on Genesis 33 where Jacob and Esau were able to meet each other and reconcile, finding the face of God in each other."

At that time, Rae said, the union and convention hope to bring together "those who have been deeply hurt and affected" by the division between the two Baptist bodies "and give an opportunity for people to express their hurts and find forgiveness and reconciliation."

While the union and convention will remain as two separate organizations, Desmond Hoffmeister, convention general secretary, and Rae signed a resolution that allows individual churches to choose with whom they affiliate "with a minimum of friction and conflict." This had been a particularly difficult point as both organizations contain a sizeable number of black churches.

Convention and union leaders also agreed to share information about each other's future visions and affirm each other in public forums as well as at regional and church levels.

Hoffmeister and Rae, in the joint statement, said they had "experienced the presence and power of God" shown in the harmony and openness of their two delegations at the November meetings. "We thank God we have discovered a significant measure of common ground and we are anxious that the same spirit be experienced at regional and local levels," they said.

BAPTIST BITS

■ **Agee to head association.** Bob Agee, soon to retire as president of Oklahoma Baptist University in Shawnee, Okla., has been named executive director of the Association of Southern Baptist Colleges and Schools. The association is comprised of 65 Baptist-related seminaries, colleges, universities, Bible colleges and academies. Staff support for the association was formerly given by employees of the Southern Baptist Education Commission, an agency dissolved in a recent restructuring of the Southern Baptist Convention.

■ **Southern graduates 122.** Southern Baptist Theological Seminary awarded degrees to 122 students during its 180th commencement Dec. 12. Commencement speaker was President Al Mohler.

■ **Rainer honored.** Thom Rainer, dean of the Billy Graham School of Missions, Evangelism and Church Growth at Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, was among four recipients of this year's Washburn-Piland-Taylor Directors Award from the Southern Baptist Sunday School Board. Rainer was honored for promoting the board's Bible teaching-reaching ministry nationwide.

■ **Ouachita names president.** Andrew Westmoreland has been named president of Ouachita Baptist University in Arkadelphia, Ark. Westmoreland, currently executive vice president of the Baptist school, will succeed Ben Elrod, who is retiring.

■ **Belgian Baptists get recognition.** Baptists in Belgium now have official recognition, after having been classified as a "cult" for a number of years. The recognition was given Dec. 6 by unanimous vote of the Protestant Synod in Brussels. The Union of Baptists in Belgium includes 19 churches with about 850 members.



Kentucky conservatives form new organization

By Mark Wingfield
Editor

ASHLAND—A group of 42 unidentified Kentucky Baptist conservatives has formed a new organization to promote the Southern Baptist Convention's interests in the state, funding for the SBC's budget and support for the SBC's Kentucky-based seminary.

"We are not interested in breaking off from the Kentucky Baptist Convention," said Mike Routt, president of the new group called Southern Baptists of Kentucky. "We're not angry at anybody. We just feel very strongly about what we're doing."

"What we feel like we're doing is helping pave the way for the result of changes that are going to take place as a result of Southern Baptist Theological Seminary graduates entering Kentucky churches in the next several years," said Routt, pastor of Rose Hill Baptist Church in Ashland.

"Obviously the shift (in the seminary's direction) is pretty dramatic," Routt added. "What we're doing is through our publications and organization working side-by-side with these graduates."

Routt said that before conservatives captured control of the SBC and subsequently Southern Seminary's trustee board and administration the seminary taught "process theology and liberation theology." Now under the conservative leadership of President Al Mohler, the seminary is teaching "orthodox theology," Routt said.

Kentucky Baptist churches traditionally have relied heavily upon Southern Seminary graduates both as student pastors and as full-time pastors after graduation. Helping Kentucky churches adapt to the new type of student being produced by Southern Seminary, while at the same time supporting the new conservative direction of the SBC, will be a major part of the emphasis of Southern Baptists of Kentucky, Routt said.

Routt declined to identify individual participants in the organizational meeting of Southern Baptists of Kentucky. He did say seminary President Al Mohler was not present, but a seminary student and one unnamed seminary professor were present.

The Lexington Herald-Leader, in a front-page story Dec. 18, identified that professor as Hershael York, former pastor of Ashland Avenue Baptist Church in Lexington who last summer was hired as a preaching professor at Southern Seminary.

The 42 people attending the organizational meeting represented about 40 churches, Routt said. In addition to Routt, two other officers were elected: Terry Sammons, pastor of New Heights Baptist Church in Louisville, vice president; and Paul Blizard, pastor of Reidland Baptist Church in Paducah, secretary-treasurer.

Participants in the Dec. 9 meeting—a by-invitation-only event held at an undisclosed location in Elizabethtown—voted on four major recommendations, Routt said:

■ Naming the group Southern Baptists of Kentucky.

■ Adopting a purpose statement which says the organization exists "to

preach the gospel, help churches fulfill the Great Commission, maintain doctrinal heritage and integrity and promote the work of the Cooperative Program.

■ Affirmed launching of a new newspaper to "positively promote the unique relationship between the Kentucky Baptist Convention and the Southern Baptist Convention, tell the story of the good things that are occurring across the Southern Baptist Convention, highlight the exciting ministries taking place through the Cooperative Program and detail the wonderful news about the ministry of our flagship seminary, the Southern Baptist Theological Seminary."

■ Agreed to conduct "evangelistic rallies" across the state annually to focus on "prayer for our denomination, state convention and sister churches." At these rallies, which Routt said could number as many as 10 in 1998, "pulpit guests will be invited to preach in order to challenge and encourage sister churches in the fulfilling of the Great Commission."

KBC President Gayle Toole, who was unaware of the group's formation until faxed a copy of a news release Dec. 16, said he was saddened.

"I wish it was not going on," said Toole, pastor of Edgewood Baptist Church in Nicholasville and a self-described centrist in Baptist politics. "I'd really like for all of us to stay together and work out all our problems. If he's got a problem of some kind, I wish we could all sit down and talk about it."

Jim Hawkins, the KBC's interim executive secretary-treasurer, said it would be inappropriate for him to comment on the news, which he received by fax the same day media were notified. Newly elected Executive Secretary-Treasurer Bill Mackey does not begin his work until Feb. 1.

In an interview with the Western Recorder, Routt further explained the organization's purpose: "We just feel there needs to be an organization in the state that will help to encourage the state convention to maintain the unique relationship it's had through the years with the Southern Baptist Convention. We're concerned there is a drift in that relationship."

Asked to define what he meant by "unique relationship," Routt said: "Through the Cooperative Program Kentucky Baptists have been uniquely related to the Southern Baptist Convention."

The Cooperative Program is a unified funding mechanism by which churches make one contribution to the state convention, which is then shared in part with the SBC.

Routt said he and others were concerned in 1996 when the KBC voted to reduce by 2 percent the amount of Cooperative Program receipts passed on from the KBC to the SBC. And that concern was further heightened by a recommendation at the 1997 state meeting to add criteria other than Cooperative Program giving to the way churches gain representation to KBC annual meetings.

That motion, which would have inserted the words "or the convention's work" in addition to Cooperative Program when defining eligible

offerings, received a slim majority vote in favor but not the two-thirds required for adoption.

The major communication tools of the new organization will be its "evangelistic rallies" and newspaper.

The newspaper, which Routt said probably will be published quarterly, will be governed by a board of directors. Routt declined to name the members of that board, but said they would meet in January to determine a name for the publication and other details.

Those present at the Elizabethtown meeting pledged \$10,000 toward launching the publication, Routt said. Where further funding will come from is uncertain, he added, but said he hopes the publication can be mailed to every Kentucky Baptist pastor.

Asked whether Southern Baptists of Kentucky will run or support candidates for KBC elected offices, Routt replied: "Our organization will of course support those persons who are going to be nominated who support the unique relationship between the KBC and the SBC, who support and endorse the work of the Cooperative Program and are supportive of the ministry of Southern Baptist Theological Seminary. In those cases, yes."

Routt said Southern Baptists of Kentucky should not be seen as the opposite equivalent of the Kentucky Baptist Fellowship, a moderate group supportive of the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship.

"I don't know where on the spectrum you would put us, because there are a lot of centrists in our state who identify with us with regard to their concerns about the drifting of relationship between the KBC and the SBC. You couldn't put us at the opposite end of the spectrum because our organization is going to be pretty inclusive."

Bob DeFoor, moderator of the Kentucky Baptist Fellowship and pastor of Harrodsburg Baptist Church in Harrodsburg, took exception with that

description and predicted formation of the new group actually will help the Fellowship's cause.

"I think it will help us because I think it will help Kentucky Baptists see the intentions of Southern Baptist leadership to take over the state of Kentucky, to do here what they've done in the SBC," DeFoor explained. "I don't see it as somebody to fight with. Nothing's really changed. They've been meeting and doing their thing all along."

DeFoor agreed with Routt's assessment that Southern Seminary has begun producing a different type of graduate and that could impact Kentucky Baptist churches if they choose to hire those graduates.

"The difference is that the seminary of my generation produced a Bill Hancock (a former Kentucky pastor and conservative leader) and somebody like me. They didn't try to make folks into a certain mold. ... The future product may be pretty much where each one is a chip off the same cocky Calvinist block."

DeFoor also denied Routt's assertion that Southern Seminary previously taught liberation theology and process theology, two ideologies generally perceived as liberal, and now teaches orthodox theology.

"The seminary in the past exposed you to all kinds of theologies, but essentially taught biblical theology," DeFoor said. "I don't think it was ever the intention of the seminary to impose a particular theology on a student."

Nevertheless, Routt said highlighting the "wonderful news" about Southern Seminary's new administration and student body will be a focus of Southern Baptists of Kentucky's newspaper. He predicted the newspaper will include stories about the positive ministries of Southern Seminary students and perhaps articles by seminary President Al Mohler and other faculty members.



"What we feel like we're doing is helping pave the way for the result of changes that are going to take place as a result of Southern Baptist Theological Seminary graduates entering Kentucky churches in the next several years."

Mike Routt

Leaders' CP giving record mixed

A review of church contributions shows support for the Cooperative Program is mixed among the congregations lending leadership for a new organization that says it intends to promote Cooperative Program giving.

Southern Baptists of Kentucky cites as one of its primary goals the promotion of giving through the Cooperative Program unified budget, noting in a press release this has defined the "unique relationship" between the Kentucky Baptist Convention and Southern Baptist Convention in the past.

But in the past fiscal year, the church where the new organization's vice president is pastor gave nothing to the Cooperative Program and the church where the organization's president is pastor decreased its Cooperative Program giving through the KBC. Meanwhile, the church where the organization's secretary-treasurer is pastor significantly increased its Cooperative Program giving last year.

Terry Sammons, vice president of Southern Baptists of Kentucky, is pastor of New Heights Baptist Church in Louisville. According to records of the KBC Executive Board, Sammons' church gave nothing to the Cooperative Program during the KBC's fiscal year most recently ended.

New Heights gave only \$472 to the KBC from

Sept. 1, 1996, through Aug. 31, 1997. That one contribution was designated for the Lottie Moon Christmas Offering.

In the preceding year, 1995-96, Sammons' church gave \$300 to the Cooperative Program through the KBC.

Mike Routt, president of the new organization, is pastor of Rose Hill Baptist Church in Ashland. His church decreased its Cooperative Program giving to the KBC last year by 26 percent.

In 1996-97, Rose Hill gave \$40,372 to the Cooperative Program through the KBC. That's about 7 percent of the church's estimated undesignated receipts for the year. In the previous year, Rose Hill gave \$54,743 to the Cooperative Program through the KBC, about 9 percent of undesignated receipts.

Paul Blizard, secretary-treasurer of the new organization, is pastor of Reidland Baptist Church in Paducah. According to KBC records, his church increased its Cooperative Program giving last year by 40 percent.

In 1996-97, Reidland gave \$34,394 to the Cooperative Program through the KBC. That's about 9 percent of the church's estimated undesignated receipts for the year. The previous year, Reidland gave \$24,590 to the Cooperative Program through the KBC, about 6 percent of undesignated receipts.

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

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A Christmas gift from my dad

By Steve Dwinells

I have a special box. It's a little wooden box with two small, shiny handles and a tiny padlock. It's simple—no fancy engravings, no high-gloss finish, no felt-covered bottom. The edges don't fit together well, the hinges on the lid have begun to squeak.

But it's my box, and every now and again I take the small key and unlock the padlock. As I raise the lid, the box releases its special memories, and the memories take me back to another time and another place.

Inside the box are a few knick-knacks and a letter. Not much value in the world's eyes, maybe, but a priceless treasure to me. This box was a gift from my Dad.

One Christmas Dad made boxes for all three of us boys. He wasn't much of a carpenter. Some of the pieces aren't cut exactly right, and

the joints don't fit together well.

But to me, a master carpenter couldn't have made anything better. The box's perfection isn't in its form, but in the motivation behind the making of it.

The box was made by big, calloused hands that knew hard work; by a mind that understood what responsibility means; by a warm heart that loved me. Inside this box is a handwritten

letter addressed to me by my Dad. The letter never will be published or nominated for a literary award. It is just a simple letter expressing a tenderness that Dad didn't know how to say very well verbally. It is a note telling me how proud he was of me and that he loved me. In the only way he knew, he told me he was glad I was his son.

Dad died a few days after Christmas that year. He didn't leave much money or a big home. But he did leave me that box. With a simple

MINISTERIALLY SPEAKING

The Nativity through the eyes of a prisoner

By Tom Ehrich

The security vestibule at Forsyth County Jail in Winston-Salem, N.C., is like an air lock. You enter the vestibule, the door to freedom clicks shut and only then does the door to captivity click open.

The Christmas story sounds different on the other side of the air lock.

"O, little town of Bethlehem ..."

Inside prison, even if only for an afternoon of singing and gift-giving, one remembers that Bethlehem was a place of captivity. The inn was full because a dictator had exercised his power. Joseph and Mary weren't on a romantic trek; a nine-months-pregnant woman was on a forced march.

When an American pastor named Phillips Brooks sat on a hillside in Palestine and composed a gentle hymn, he wasn't "trolling a Yuletide carol." He was in despair over the American Civil War and was looking for hope in "dark streets" where light had once shone.

"O, come all ye faithful, joyful and triumphant ..."

The angels came first to shepherds—the not-too-distant cousins of these women wearing blue or white jumpsuits with prison lettering on the back. In those days, shepherds were rascals, outcasts, doing necessary work but not welcome in polite society.

Inside cell block 10D, where a two-story common room is ringed by cells, one remembers that Jesus was an outcast too, rejected by the polite and powerful. Before running the church became a source of worldly power and business contacts, the faithful were losers, the marginal.

"Angels we have heard on high ..."
Every performer records a Christ-

mas album. They tend to sound alike: angels "echoing glad refrains" amid cascading violins and trumpets. It isn't like that at Forsyth County Jail. Prison is a raucous place. These women aren't "singing sweetly through the night." They whoop, they cheer, they sing with fervor. And they pray from the depths.

No banked poinsettias, no twinkling candles. Just cell doors, plastic tables, and outside unbreakable glass, a guard room with TV monitors.

One remembers here that the law-abiding and upright had nothing to do with Jesus. Only the broken, the sinful and the outcast rallied to him. For him, iron bars didn't define worthiness.

"What child is this ...?"

I watch a young woman as she listens to a reading of the Nativity. She is someone's daughter. She bounced on someone's knee and was "laid to rest" on someone's lap. There was a time when all that stretched before her was hope and promise.

Her face relaxes as Luke's words wash over her. She is still a child. But the familiar routines of American youth are probably lost to her: no prom, no boyfriend bringing flowers, no white gown, no first job, no pushing a stroller along a suburban lane.

One remembers here that our grasp on the good life is tenuous. We are all one bad decision away from captivity, one snort away from addiction, one financial trough away from foreclosure. We cannot make our lives secure.

"Silent night, holy night ..."

The irony is overwhelming. It isn't silent here. I doubt that prison is ever silent. It wasn't silent in Bethlehem. That night in a Bethlehem homeless shelter wasn't "calm and bright." That wasn't a candle-light New England

church on a snowy Christmas Eve. Those were harsh days, probably more like this prison than a toasty-warm American church.

One remembers here that Luke opened the story of Jesus' birth by describing captivity.

"Merry Christmas ..."

I say those words by reflex. The prisoners smile and say in return, "Merry Christmas!" What in the world do we mean? This isn't a "merry" place. The world that waits for us beyond the air lock isn't a merry place.

In this concrete sanctuary, the phrase "Merry Christmas" sounds like the Jew's cry, "Next year in Jerusalem!"—a cry of longing, of hope beyond hope, a conviction that, by God's grace, life could be merry some day.

As we pass through the air lock and return silently to our cars, the aroma that lingers for me is the strong scent of Irish Spring soap. Thanks to the Salvation Army, we left behind a small bag for each prisoner. Practical gifts like soap and toothpaste. No \$70 Barbies. This is the world beyond Barbie. (RNS)

Tom Ehrich is an Episcopal priest in Winston-Salem, N.C., an author and former Wall Street Journal reporter.

Steve Dwinells is pastor of Belmar Baptist Church in Louisville. This article is reprinted with permission from the December 1997 issue of Decision magazine.

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MARRIAGE

'Joy to the World'

By John Lepper

'Tis the season when we sing of joy to the world and peace on earth. It's that time of year again when we recall the words of the angel who announced to the shepherds: "I bring you good news of great joy that will be for all people."

Husbands and wives who have heard and responded to the good news of the babe of Bethlehem have the



possibility of having great joy in life and in their relationships. A positive and growing relationship with the Christ child can help couples achieve joy, the second fruit of the Spirit Paul talks about in Galatians 5:22.

Couples who pay attention to cultivating the fruit of the Spirit have a greater possibility of growing in their relationships. But before we can cultivate joy we need to understand what the Bible means by this word.

Joy is more than laughter. It is more than attending Christmas parties or receiving a long-awaited Christmas present. Contrary to what advertisers would have us believe, it does not come in a bottle.

While happiness may be a desire of most couples, joy is not confined to happiness. Joy is more closely identified as one of God's gracious gifts to those who follow him. Joy is more than a mood. It is more than superficial celebration, more than emotional ecstasy generated by excitement over circumstances.

The word happiness comes from the same word from which we get the word happening. Good or bad happenings can significantly affect our happiness. Not so with joy. Joy is a gift of God given to those who cultivate their relationship with the Spirit of Jesus Christ. We achieve it as couples when we allow Christ to be Lord of our marriage.

Joy is God's gracious gift to individuals and couples in spite of circumstances. By celebrating the gift of Christ's presence we can possess a deep inner joy created by the Holy Spirit.

Couples live together "for better or for worse." Joy can be present even during those worse times because of the eternal spring of Christ's love providing us total well-being regardless of what happens. So as we sing and read about the joy brought to the world by a babe in a manger, let us remember this joy is also available to couples.

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

Family Forum changes

Beginning in January 1998 readers will notice several changes in Family Forum. First, Family Forum will be moving to page 6. That will make possible a second change, expansion of the column to include more than one topic per week.

Also, the end of 1997 marks the conclusion of Jewell Nelson's tenure as a Family Forum writer. Nelson recently retired from the Kentucky Baptist Convention Executive Board staff. We appreciate her outstanding contributions to Kentucky Baptists and wish her joy in her new retirement ventures.

— Editor

HE SAID/SHE SAID

New year's resolutions your spouse wishes you would make

Nobody is perfect. We can always find room for improvement. And since a new year is at hand, what better time to examine what men and women wish the other could do better, or at least work on to improve the quality of life, or just keep the peace.

Based on an informal poll, taken from comments (and we must admit, gripes) we hear and say all the time, here are a few new year's resolutions—some funny, some serious—on how to make this year a better one for the opposite sex. We first offered these two years ago, but they bear repeating because upon taking a second look, we see we still have plenty of room for improvement ourselves.

SHESAIID

What women wish men would resolve to do for the new year:



Alison Wingfield

1. Listen, listen, listen (to a whole sentence and not just the first half).
2. Talk, talk, talk, to each other. Let her know what you are thinking and feeling. Just sharing the events of each day can make a big difference in a relationship.

3. Give that special someone flowers or a card or some surprise on an average day that isn't Valentine's, her birthday or anniversary (although flowers on those occasions would be most welcome).

4. Ask directions when you get lost. Or better yet, ask directions before setting out for a new destiny.
5. Find out what your wife wants to do on Saturday or another day off before setting your own agenda for the whole family.
6. Call and set up a babysitter in advance and surprise your spouse by taking her out to dinner or a movie. (Be sure to give enough advance warning to get the hair, clothes and makeup in order).
7. Don't take everyday acts of kindness for granted. Acknowledging those acts wouldn't hurt either.
8. Clean the (fill-in-the-blank).
9. Fix the (fill-in-the-blank).
10. Accept your spouse just the way she is.

HESAIID

What men wish women would resolve to do for the new year:



Mark Wingfield

1. Realize that your worst fears are true—sometimes you do need to draw him a picture so he'll understand. Talk in complete sentences, and start from the beginning.
2. Be persistent. Sometimes we're slow to see the picture.

3. Acknowledge the good things he routinely does.
4. Humor him when he gets lost and won't ask for directions. It's genetic.
5. Don't take out your frustrations with the children on your spouse.
6. Ask about his work and listen to what he says. It's important to him.
7. Take the initiative and ask him on a date.
8. Help him clean the (fill-in-the-blank).
9. Give him time to fix the (fill-in-the-blank).
10. Give him more love and support than he asks for or maybe even deserves. We won't admit it, but the male ego is fragile.

And you think your family tree is odd?

Most families have branches of the family tree they'd just as soon keep hidden or at least not talk about—the relatives who are troublesome, crazy, mean or marked by some form of immorality or scandal.

So it is amazing that the Gospel of Matthew begins with a genealogy of Jesus' family line through his father, Joseph. Before we ever get to the baby in the manger or the visit of the magi, Matthew tells us about the family line into which Jesus was born. And what an interesting family line it is.

Of course, Matthew had a good reason for doing this: He wanted to show that Jesus was a descendant of Abraham and David, thus fulfilling the Scriptural prophecy of Isaiah that from the "root of Jesse" a Savior would come forth and fulfilling the promise to Abraham.

It's easy to skip over long lists of names when reading the Bible. But the genealogy of Matthew 1 is rich with significance, because Matthew doesn't hide the family skeletons in the closet.

Among Jesus' earthly ancestors:

■ Jacob, who stole his father Isaac's blessing from his elder twin brother, Esau, in a scheme he concocted with his mother.

■ Judah, the son of Jacob, who along with his brothers sold Joseph into slavery.

■ Tamar, who after the death of her first two husbands posed as a harlot to force Judah, her father-in-law, to impregnate her and continue the family line.

■ Rahab, a prostitute in Jericho who aided two of Joshua's spies, then was spared in the siege of Jericho and eventually become the mother of Boaz.

■ Boaz, who took pity on the Moabite widow named Ruth and became her kinsman-redeemer; their son, Obed, became the grandfather of King David.

■ David, who experienced a life of incredible highs

and lows, including being the best-known and loved king of Israel as well as an adulterer and murderer.

■ Solomon, the fruit of David's adulterous affair with Bathsheba, who also became king of Israel but through his selfishness and harsh administration set Israel on the course toward revolt.

■ Jehoshaphat, who as king of Judah restored worship of Yahweh rather than Baal idols, but also unwisely married his son to the daughter of the notoriously evil Jezebel.

And the list goes on and on.

Not exactly the family heritage one would expect the Messiah to have. Yet true to life and a source of encouragement for us today.

Too often Christians are guilty of sugar-coating the Bible and giving the impression that everything that is of God should have the appearance of a Norman Rockwell painting.

But the Bible is about real people and real life, real struggles and real failures. It is about God's miraculous work through the least-likely people to bring about a means of salvation for all creation.

Matthew reminds us in his own detailed way that God is about grace. God's salvation is in no way dependent upon human merit; if it were, the deal would have been blown long ago.

We can find hope in knowing that no matter what our failures or family history, we possess the potential to be used for God's good. It may not always be evident on the surface, or even within our own generation, but we know that if God can bring Jesus out of the family line from which he was born, surely God can do something good through our troubled lives as well.

Celebrating the birth of Jesus furthers this hope. Joy to the world—and to each of us God has created for a good purpose—the Lord has come.

— Mark Wingfield

Sleep well

By Carey Newman

I was dumbfounded. "This just can't be true. You're being transferred? This is terrible. To whom am I going to give advice? How will I write my column each week?"

My friend looked at me and smiled, "Haven't you learned anything in the last year? I sure have."

Eagerly, I said, "Really. What?"

"I've learned that no matter the question, you always seem to work your family into the discussion. Savannah or Eliza did this; Leanne did that. I may not remember what answer you offered or even my question, but I will always remember your family." He paused, then added, "You know, though, this may be justifiable since so much of what the Bible has to say is cast in terms of family relationships."

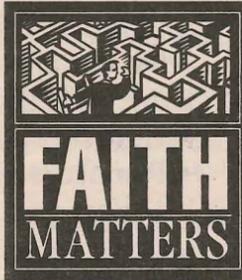
"Hmm..." More reluctantly I asked, "What else did you learn?"

"Well, I learned that sometimes

you never really answer the question that was posed. You seem to dance with the issue. In fact, you often gave me one of those infuriating both/and answers. You know, God is both merciful and just. The Kingdom is both here and not yet. We are fully responsible and God is sovereign. Again, this may be justifiable since at the very core what makes the Bible tick is a paradox—how is it that a dead man lives?"

Heading out the door and toward the car I said, "OK," and feeling a little gun-shy, "anything else?"

"Yeah, I learned that the complexities of the Christian life cannot all be dealt with in 500 words or less. Life with God means we hope, dream, fail and begin again. We go through periods of aloneness as well as moments of inexpressible peace. None of this can be simply described or triggered with easy phrases or pat answers. God and my life with him is so much bigger."



My friend got into his car to drive away. He rolled down the window, and said, "By the way and for what it's worth, you should sleep well, for the advice you give is far better than that lame stuff you find in 'He Said, She Said.'"

I knew that I would sleep well; but more than that I knew that I would miss my friend.

Editor's note: This week marks the final installment in the Recorder's 1997 doctrinal series called "Faith Matters." Carey Newman has done a superlative job in relating major concepts of the Christian faith to real life for our readers. His columns have been creative, insightful and helpful. He has shown us the importance not only of believing the right things but of combining that belief with a consistent Christian ethic, right living. Should you wish to contact him, write to him at 4214 Winchester Rd., Louisville, Ky. 40207.

The first week of January the Recorder begins a new inspirational series for 1998 called "Great Questions of the Bible." Fifty Kentucky Baptist pastors will write these columns over the next year.

KENTUCKY

Shooting victim says he was spared for God's plans

The Dec. 15 "Celebration of Life" was billed as a service of praise and worship to honor the shooting victims. It raised nearly \$4,900 to help the five survivors with medical expenses.

By Ken Walker
State Correspondent

WEST PADUCAH (BP)—Had the bullet traveled inches lower, Craig Keene might be dead or paralyzed.

The freshman from now-famous Heath High School said he believes surviving the Dec. 1 shooting spree at a morning prayer meeting means God has plans for his future.

Keene said the .22-caliber bullet entered his lower left ear and exited almost directly in the back of his head—an inch or two from his spine. He was one of eight students struck by bullets. Three classmates were killed, and another is paralyzed.

A member of Olivet Baptist Church in Paducah, Keene was one of four Kentucky Baptists shot.

Keene said coming through the ordeal with no major injuries has strengthened his faith.

"I feel God spared me because he has a specific plan for my life," he said. "I feel he chose (the victims) for a reason and he chose us to live for a reason. I don't know what it is yet, but I think we'll find out."

Fellow student Michael Carneal, 14, has been indicted in connection with the attack and will be arraigned in January.

A lot of good has resulted from the tragedy, said Keene, pointing to two transplant recipients receiving the heart and lungs of one of the slain students, Nicole Hadley. Many people have become Christians after the in-

cident, he added.

The converts included 22 people who professed faith in Christ as personal Savior at a "Celebration of Life" Dec. 15 at Paducah's Bible Baptist Heartland Worship Center.

A dozen family members of victims Hadley, Jessica James and Kayce Steger sat in the front center section at the service. James was a member of First Baptist Church of Kevil, and Steger attended 12th Street Baptist in Paducah, both Kentucky Baptist Convention churches.

(The others wounded were Holland Holm, 14, a member of Immanuel Baptist Church in Paducah; Missy Jenkins, 15, who attends North 32nd Street Church of Christ; Kelly Hard, 16, of St. Francis DeSales Catholic Church; and Shelly Schaberg, 17, of Grace Episcopal Church.)

The rally, organized by Chad Lamb, youth director for Graves County Baptist Association, featured nationally-known youth evangelist Dawson McAllister and singer Al Denson.

Billed as a service of worship and praise to honor the victims, it raised nearly \$4,900 to help the five survivors with medical expenses.

Keene mingled with many of his classmates after the event concluded, a testimony to his rapid recovery. A bass drummer in the high school band, he marched in the community's Christmas parade five days after the shootings.

A Christian since second grade,

Keene said the disaster has prompted him to give serious thought to mission work. Planning to join his church's youth group on a mission trip to Rhode Island next summer, he said he believes he will be bolder when talking about this faith.

"It's taken a lot (for me) to stand up for the Lord," said the shy youth. "It's easy for me to act Christian, but I've gotten a little nervous when I have to say something with my mouth. I think this is going to help me a lot in talking about Christ with other people."

Lamb said the idea of sharing Christianity with those who aren't Christians inspired him to organize the Dec. 15 rally.

A member of Trace Creek Baptist Church in Mayfield, he is a second-year student at Mid-Continent Baptist Bible College. Lamb said he felt God speaking to his heart after the murders.

"Chad, we need to do something," he described the message. "I can turn this mess into a miracle if the right things happen and if the right people are willing to take this upon themselves and go with this."

Soon after, he contacted McAllister and Denson, who waived their customary fee to come to Western Kentucky.

Believing the rally can help turn the Paducah area around by drawing more people to a closer walk with God, Lamb said God is continuing to move in the aftermath of the shootings.

"I believe God has shown he's still on the throne and still in control," Lamb said. "Through him we can do great and mighty things if we just rely on him. God's not through here yet. I think you'll be hearing a lot more stuff that's going on in Paducah."

McAllister agreed. The host of a nationally syndicated radio talk show, the youth evangelist from Nashville said the shootings have strengthened a youthful prayer movement that is spreading across the nation.

"If there's anything that will save this culture, it's prayer," McAllister said. "I (also) hope kids will say, 'I'm going to take Jesus Christ more seriously.' If they pray and take Christ more seriously, my third hope will take care of itself—that many kids will come to Christ."

Denson, a Dallas-based recording artist who appears regularly with McAllister, said the most significant element of the Paducah-area teens' actions has been their forgiveness of the accused.

"In places I've (traveled), the thing I've seen the most is people who don't have a relationship with God saying, 'How in the world could those people forgive that guy?'" Denson recounted.

"When I saw them putting a sign up in their school that said, 'Forgive him,' that made me want to come here and scream as loud as I could, 'Go get 'em guys, show the world what forgiveness is.' It's great for me to see students taking a stand."

Prayer group victims receive letters from across the country

WEST PADUCAH (BP)—Many members of school prayer groups nationwide were shocked at the Heath High School shootings, but letters from many students show they have no intention of retreating any time soon.

Their commitment—and sympathy—is reflected in more than 500 letters addressed to the families of the shooting victims and to the members of the prayer group peppered by gunfire before classes began Dec. 1.

The letters were written at the suggestion of First Priority of America, a non-profit organization based in Franklin, Tenn., which has nurtured a network of Christian clubs on 3,000 high-school campuses since its founding in 1984.

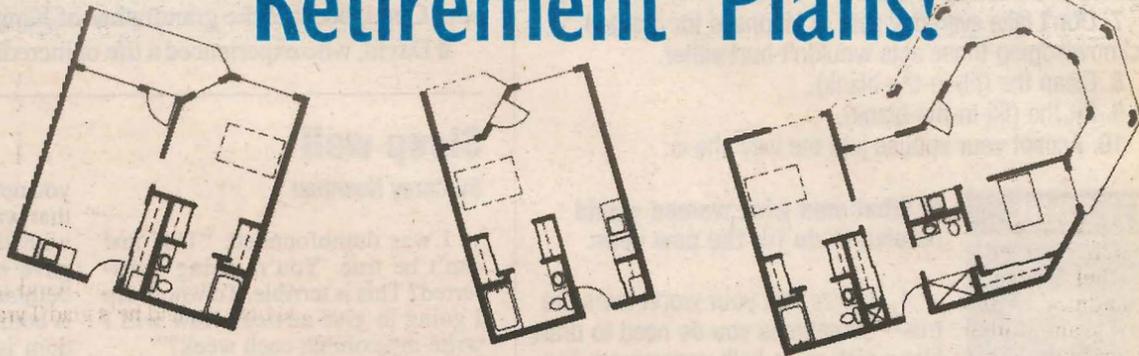
"After praying over the situation, I knew it would be good for the kids to express their feelings," said Benny Proffitt, First Priority's founder and president. "This was an intimidating thing for the kids. They realized that their faith is a big deal ... and that there's an underlying anti-Christian current in America."

Some school groups have even gone beyond writing letters. A prayer group at a school in Kansas City, Mo., is wearing bracelets with three white beads—one each in memory of the three who died in the shooting. A group from Huntsville, Texas, donated enough money to send two representatives to the girls' funeral Dec. 5. Another club made a video with personalized messages.

First Priority sent faxes to its coordinators encouraging them to write to the victims. The letters were mailed to First Priority and then forwarded to Paducah.

While many of the letters shared pledges of recommitment to Jesus, others promised continuous prayer support for the grieving families and community. "Out of the hundreds of letters we received, only one was inappropriate for forwarding. These kids have responded—not in fear—but in faith," he said.

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KENTUCKY

Cross-state gifts help make holiday a little brighter

By Joyce Sweeney Martin
Staff Writer

MARROWBONE—Christmas will be brighter for some children in Eastern Kentucky, thanks to Baptists who live on the other side of the state.

For the fifth consecutive year, Baptist women in Calloway and Marshall counties in West Kentucky have spearheaded a drive to collect clothes and toys to send to the Freeda Harris Baptist Center in Pike County.

This year, the women collected 128 boxes of clothes and 77 boxes of new toys. Another 20 boxes were filled with ceramic molds to be used in the center's ceramic classes.

This year, center director Greg Whitetree asked for 300 toys. Instead, he got 705. More than 175 families will receive the toys and clothes for their children this Christmas, he said. Another 125 families will be helped with donations from other churches in Tennessee and Kentucky, he said.

"It's the best (drive) we've had yet," said Ruby Fannin. She and her husband, Talmadge, have been involved in the cross-state ministry from its beginning.

A 1993 visit to the center sparked their interest in the ministry.

The stories Whitetree told "pulled at our heart strings," Talmadge Fannin said. He could not forget the story

of a little girl who kept returning to the apple barrel to bob for apples at the center's fall festival, he said. "She didn't eat the apples. She put them in her pocket to take home to her brothers and sisters."

The Fannins returned to West Kentucky burdened to do something for the children in the area where poverty is a way of life.

"All people have to do is go up there and see what the Whitetrees are doing with so little and they will want to help," Talmadge Fannin said.

Shortly thereafter, Whitetree told the Fannins that churches previously supplying toys for the center to distribute at Christmas had canceled.

That was the opening they needed.

It wasn't long before Blood River Association's Woman's Missionary Union went into action.

That first year, the women collected and packed the boxes. Whitetree and his wife, Alice, made the eight-hour trip to West Kentucky to pick up the gifts. The next year, Blood River's director of missions and his wife delivered the gifts to the center.

For the last two years, Overnite Trucking Co. in Paducah has shipped the boxes free of charge to Pikeville. The Whitetrees pick them up there.

This year, 52 churches in Blood River Association participated in the project.

Shively Church WMU brings a touch of home to youth ranch

ELIZABETHTOWN—This Christmas, for the fourth consecutive year, Woman's Missionary Union of Shively Baptist Church will bring a touch of home to the Kentucky Baptist Homes for Children's Baptist Youth Ranch in Elizabethtown.

The Shively women adopted the facility four years ago for back-to-school needs as well as Christmas. They bring lunch, homemade stockings and gifts, but more importantly, they spend time with the boys.

"It really makes Christmas start for us," said member Lourell Smith. "The boys are always so excited and so grateful for what we do."

Baptist Youth Ranch staff member Kay McGuire added: "When somebody comes in and shows them love it makes a difference."

"I think they sort of look on us as grandmother figures and that's how we feel about it," said Susie Heuke.

Roger, a resident at the ranch, agreed, adding that Rachel Witten, "talks like my grandmother and is short like my grandmother. I even call them both 'Shorty'."

Roger is going home "for good" this Christmas, but he has spent holidays at the facility. Even with peers and staff to be with and talk to, he said there is a feeling of being forgotten.

"That's why it means a lot to have people who would come from somewhere else to be with younger people in placement," he said.

That connection is what makes the tradition special, McGuire said. "The boys are excited when they know these ladies are coming and they're still excited even after they've left. I don't think it's the food or the gifts that makes them that way, but it's the thought behind it."

Love takes church beyond its comfort zone

Continued from page 1

dent at Murray State University, she had heard "awful stories" about the county," she said. She had concluded "Marshall County isn't a place for black people."

But Thompson and Lockey said God worked on both her and the church to bring them together.

As members wrestled with calling Lockey, Thompson reminded them that faith, not fear should motivate them.

And as Lockey wrestled with serving at First Baptist, she felt she had become "too comfortable," she said. She had been a member of Westside Baptist Church in Murray for seven years, where members "loved me, took care of me," she said.

Now, she faced the unknown.

"I wasn't sure what to expect (at First Baptist) because of all I had heard about the county," she said.

Lockey didn't "want to do anything to make people feel uncomfortable," said Greg Northcutt, a member of the youth minister search committee.

As Lockey prayed, "a burden came on my heart for the (First Baptist) kids." She realized she could help them mature in their faith in God as well as address racism, she said.

"God changed my heart," she said. "(He said), 'You need to be there.'"

The church called her with an overwhelming 95 percent positive vote, Thompson said.

But the first few weeks on the job were scary, Lockey said. When she mingled with First Baptist youth, she said she was comfortable, but when she mingled with adults, she was unsure. Some adults had voted against her, and Lockey didn't know who they were.

She learned "God has to deal with people the way he chooses, not the way I choose," she said.

She prayed: "If there are people here who have a problem with me,



YOUTH MINISTRY Tyra Lockey, left, youth minister for First Baptist Church of Calvert City, plays with member Adam Smith. The all-white church moved beyond tradition to hire the African American. The youth group has readily accepted her and grown from 20 to 40 teens. "Her exuberance for Jesus is contagious," said Greg Northcutt, a member of the search committee.

that is over my head, but you can reach down and pick up what's over my head and deal with it."

As youth minister and congregation got to know each other, their comfort levels grew, Lockey said.

"If you know her, you love her," Northcutt said.

Within six months, one of the people in the church who had most opposed Lockey did a total about-face, Thompson said. "He said God had opened his eyes and he's glad Tyra is here."

"Only God could do that," Lockey said.

The church has rallied around her on more than one occasion, Pastor Thompson said.

They have accepted her into their hearts and homes, Northcutt added. Now, he said, Lockey has "more advocates than anybody could ever need."

The youth group readily accepted her as their minister, Northcutt said.

The group has grown from 20 to 40 teens. "Her exuberance for Jesus is contagious," he said.

From the beginning, church members have seen her handle difficult situations with grace and love, Northcutt said. They don't just hear about Jesus from Lockey, "They see him in her," he said.

When some teens called her derogatory names at a soccer game, Lockey told her youth group that being called bad names doesn't bother her, he said.

"Being black, you're going to be called that a million times," she said. The soccer game incident was just one more time, she said.

Now, after more than a year on the job, she often speaks at local schools and civic clubs about another of her interests—ministry to the hearing impaired.

For Lockey, each time "lets kids in Marshall County see there are good black people out there," she said.

Baptist Foundation board elects officers, learns of growth

LOUISVILLE—The Kentucky Baptist Foundation's board of directors elected Bill Owen, a member of Immanuel Baptist Church in Lexington, as chairman Dec. 11.

Also elected during the meeting were: Vice Chairman Carl Kelley, a member of First Baptist Church of

Bowling Green; Secretary Leigh Jones, a member of Berea Baptist Church; Assistant Secretary Laurie Valentine, a member of Hurstbourne Baptist Church in Louisville; and Treasurer Barry Allen, also a member of Hurstbourne Baptist.

The board also learned that Foun-

ation investments had grown during the 11-month period ending Nov. 30, with equities up 32.7 percent and fixed income up 8.1 percent.

The total market value of funds managed by the foundation had increased \$4 million since Aug. 31 to \$84.6 million.

The first few weeks on the job were scary, Lockey said. Some adults had voted against her, and she didn't know who they were.

CHRISTMAS

Not-so-little town of Bethlehem a major tourism site

What tourists see today at the Church of the Nativity bears little resemblance to what Mary and Joseph saw on that night long ago.

Continued from page 1

Drinkard, professor of Old Testament interpretation at Southern Seminary, concurs with Ward's assessment of the Bethlehem inn as one of the most reliable markings of a site related to Jesus' life and ministry.

Nevertheless, Drinkard points out, Helena marked the site 300 years after the birth of Christ. "The gap from the birth in 5 or 6 B.C. down to 300 A.D. is an awfully long gap. We have an awfully hard time proving this is actually the site. Likewise we have a hard time proving it is not."

That gap isn't as huge as it appears, though, Ward explained, because of other signs of earlier veneration of the site as a place of Christian worship that predate Helena's visit. Also, a village the size of Bethlehem would have had only one inn, and everybody would have known where it was, he said. And unlike nearby Jerusalem, Bethlehem never has been destroyed by war.

"I don't think there's any doubt about that location," Ward said.

Whether the little silver stars embedded in marble in the grotto beneath the Church of the Nativity mark the exact spot of Jesus' birth and of the manger where he lay really isn't the point, added Rusty Cherry, vice president of Dehoney Travel, one of the nation's largest organizers of Holy Land tours for American Protestants.

"What we want people to come

away from this site with is that this is an event that occurred," said Cherry, a Southern Seminary graduate. "It occurred somewhere near here. This is kind of representative for us as we think through the story. This can be our visualization of the space."

Of course, what tourists see today at the Church of the Nativity bears little resemblance to what Mary and Joseph saw on that night long ago.

Cherry describes the modern scene this way: "When you get to Bethlehem, the Church of the Nativity sits off a square. When you get to the church, you enter through a doorway which has been blocked off, so it's extremely low. You have to go in so you're almost doubled over."

This four-and-a-half-foot high entrance, called the "gate of humility," actually is the result of precautions taken centuries ago. According to information provided by the Israeli Ministry of Tourism, the church's wooden door was built 1272 by the Armenian King Hetron to protect the site from Muslim invaders.

During a previous Turkish invasion of Bethlehem, horses had been stabled inside the church.

Cherry continues his description of the tour: "When you get inside, it's really a Greek Orthodox church. In the front part you've got some areas of the floor that are opened up so you can see down to lower levels, where the church has been built up over the years. You can see some mosaic tiles that are significantly older than the rest."

Those tiles date to the fourth century church built on this site by Helena. One mosaic features the Greek word for "fish," an acronym built off the first letters of the Greek phrase



BETHELEHEM STAR A Christian pilgrim kisses the 14-point silver star inlaid in a marble floor marking the traditional birthplace of Jesus in the grotto of the Church of the Nativity. Today the site is covered by a Greek Orthodox church. Visitors must descend a set of stairs behind the church's altar to enter the grotto, one of several caves believed to have been part of the inn at Bethlehem. (Reuters photo)

"Jesus Christ, God's Son and Savior." The fish symbol was a secret code for Christians during the time of Roman persecution.

The current church building actually sits above the spot where the inn of Bethlehem's stables are believed to have been. Cherry explained that visitors must go down a narrow stairway to the grotto where one small area is marked off with a silver star embedded in marble to mark the spot where Jesus is believed to have been born.

American Protestants may find the appearance of the site disconcerting at first, noted Drinkard. "To us, there's nothing very worshipful about the idea of the marble, the hanging lights, the silver of the star encrusting the location. That doesn't speak to most of our Baptist feelings of worship. Nonetheless, those are the most ancient indications we have of veneration of this site as a place of worship."

And ultimately, the most important

aspect of a visit to the Holy Land is to increase the Christian pilgrim's sense of worship, Drinkard added. "That's what these churches and the traditions tied to these churches do. They help make it concrete."

He compared a visit to the sacred sites of Israel to searching for family genealogies and finding some of the cemeteries where previous generations were buried.

"It's the same way with the connections with our family of faith," Drinkard said. "Granted, you are not always really walking where Jesus walked, because you've got 10 feet, or in some places 25 feet, of debris underfoot. But in some places you are seeing and touching remains that were present during the time of Christ or the Old Testament prophets. That helps concretize and make much more real these biblical narratives to us. ... Every time I've been I've been very much moved."



Church of Nativity site history

■ In the second century A.D., Christian apologist Justin Martyr makes a reference to Joseph having taken quarters in a cave near Bethlehem when Jesus was born.

■ Writing in the fourth century A.D., Jerome notes that even before the time of the Emperor Hadrian (117-145 A.D.), the cave now identified as the birthplace of Jesus was revered by Christians as the authentic site. Jerome reports that Hadrian, in an effort to stamp out Christian worship on the site, ordered a pagan shrine to Adonis, the god of fertility, erected there.

■ About 325 A.D., after Constantine's conversion to Christianity, his mother, Helena, traveled across Palestine seeking to mark the sacred sites of the faith. She built a church on the current site of the Church of the Nativity.

■ In 530 A.D., a larger church is erected on the site by Justinian. That building is largely still intact today, and is what visitors to Bethlehem see.

■ At the time of the Persian invasion in 614 A.D., other buildings in the area were destroyed. However, when the soldiers saw mosaics on the outside of the church with the Wise Men dressed in what appeared to be Persian attire, they spared the church.

■ During the Turkish invasion, horses were stabled in the church.

■ The "gate of humility," the current wooden door to the church, with a low opening of only four-and-one-half feet, was built in 1272 A.D. by the Armenian King Hetron.

■ Today, Bethlehem is controlled by Palestinians. However, Holy Land pilgrims regularly pass the checkpoint between Israeli-controlled Jerusalem and Bethlehem, with only occasional disruptions.



CHURCH OF THE NATIVITY The traditional site of Jesus' birth in Bethlehem has been covered by a church building since the early part of the fourth century. The current building, called the Church of the Nativity, is a Greek Orthodox Church erected in 530 A.D. Visitors must pass through a four-and-a-half-foot-high door called the "gate of humility" to enter the church. (Photo by Wayne Dehoney/Dehoney Travel)

CHRISTMAS

Other sites also connected to Christ's birth

NAZARETH—Bethlehem isn't the only holy site associated with the birth of Christ.

Though Jesus was born in Bethlehem, Mary and Joseph lived in the village of Nazareth both before Jesus' birth and after they returned from hiding from Herod in Egypt.

The most strongly supported historical site in Nazareth, according to Baptist scholars, is Mary's well. Today a Greek Orthodox church stands on this site, marking the place some believe the angel Gabriel announced to Mary her impending pregnancy.

The Roman Catholic Church maintains another site in Nazareth said to possibly be Mary's home, another potential location for Gabriel's announcement of good news, often called the annunciation.

Whether Gabriel appeared to Mary at either of these locations is impossible to know, said William Tolar, distinguished professor of biblical backgrounds at Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary in Fort Worth, Texas.

"There is an early Catholic tradition that Mary would have been at home when Gabriel came to her," he said. "And the Greek Orthodox have a strong early tradition that she was drawing water at the spring."

But both views are merely traditions, he said. "Scripture does not say where Mary was."

The one thing that's certain is that Mary would have drawn water from the well today called Mary's well, according to Tolar and Wayne Ward, senior research professor of Christian theology at Southern Baptist Theological Seminary.

"What you have in Nazareth is the certain site of Mary's well," Ward said. "We can't claim that's where the angel appeared to Mary, because the Bible doesn't say. But what you can say is that young girls like Mary went to get water at this well."

One reason that is certain is because this well was the only source of water in Nazareth for centuries.



MARY'S WELL This church in Nazareth is built over the site of what for centuries was the village's only source of water (Photo by Wayne Dehoney/Dehoney Travel)



Historical sites of the nativity

Journey to Bethlehem was difficult

By Mark Wingfield
Editor

BETHLEHEM—Today, a journey from Nazareth to Bethlehem takes two or three hours by car. But 2,000 years ago, when Mary and Joseph traveled to participate in the census of Caesar Augustus, the trip could have taken eight to 10 days.

"Back in the times when they would have been doing it by camel or donkey or horseback, it would have been a significant journey," explained Rusty Cherry, vice president of Dehoney Travel, one of the largest organizers of Holy Land tours for American Protestant groups.

Exactly how Mary and Joseph traveled to Bethlehem is not known; the Bible does not say. However, the most likely route, according to Wayne Ward, senior research professor of Christian theology at Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, would have been straight through the Jordan Valley.

That route, though passing through the despised region of Samaria, would have had less ups and downs and a straighter path.

Nazareth lies about 1,200 feet above sea level. A traveler leaving Nazareth descends to about 700 feet below sea level in a short amount of time, Ward noted.

Passing over Mount Tabor, Mary and Joseph would have headed then for Bet Shean, an ancient city that today has the accumulated debris of 28 civilizations layered on top of each other. This is the place where the Philistines hung on the city wall the bodies of King Saul and his three sons after their defeat at Mount Gilboa.

From there, Mary and Joseph would have traveled down the Jordan River Valley to a crossing known as the Adam Bridge. Here they would have connected with the Pilgrim Road running along the east side of the Jor-

dan and then crossed the Jordan again at Allenby Bridge.

From Jericho, Ward said, Mary and Joseph would have followed the Roman road running along the Waddy Kelt. This is the area where King David tended his father's sheep as a child, and the site of deep canyons believed to be the inspiration for David's writing in Psalm 23 about the "valley of the shadow of death."

From the floor of the Jordan River Valley near Jericho, about 1,300 feet below sea level, the couple would have traversed Mount Olivet, 2,800 feet above sea level.

"When you walk it, you wonder what kind of physical condition those people had to be in," Ward explained.

It is not likely Mary and Joseph would have passed through Jerusalem to get to Bethlehem, Ward said, because of the threat Herod posed. "People going to Bethlehem would not have gone through Jerusalem, except maybe into the temple area."

Instead, they would have taken a cut-off just outside Jerusalem that led to Bethlehem.

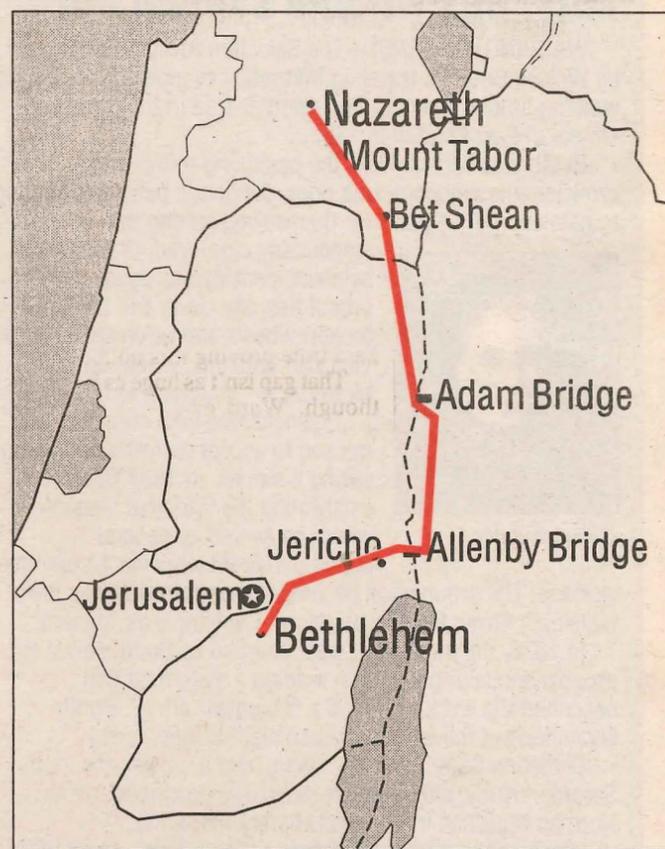
Along this road, archaeologists recently discovered the remains of a fifth century church building, believed to have marked the location of a rock where Mary may have rested on the journey.

While finding the site interesting, Baptist scholars are not ready to proclaim it a holy site equal to the traditional birthplace of Christ.

This is what scholars call a "traditional" site rather than a historical site. Cherry explained that the Holy Land is full of traditional sites venerated by one group or another, all with varying degrees of reliability.

The site of Mary's resting place is impossible to determine, said Joel Drinkard, biblical archaeologist at Southern Seminary. "How would anyone know where Mary stopped and rested? That one doesn't even have a biblical basis for it."

Overall, the journey would have been close to 100 miles, Ward said. Jesus and his disciples later would



make the same journey many times in three days, he said. "But someone like Mary, in her condition, they'd want at least seven or eight days, at least a week or more."

Ward and his wife, Mary Ann, have lived in Israel three times and visited dozens of other times. "We've walked many times on the old Roman road the family would have used" from Jericho to Bethlehem, Ward said. And they have heard the clipety-clop of donkeys along that road, carrying pregnant women, he added.

"We have seen women, sometimes riding a donkey, that you would think were heading for the maternity ward," he said. "It's amazing; they go right on."

Based on what he's seen, he knows the journey to Bethlehem would have been difficult, but possible.

POSSIBLE PATH This map of Israel shows the likely route Mary and Joseph would have traveled from Nazareth to Bethlehem, according to biblical scholar Wayne Ward. The dotted line in the middle of the map represents the Jordan River flowing into the Dead Sea.

Infancy Gospel offers 'different, detailed' account of Jesus' birth

LOS ANGELES (RNS)—It's the Christmas story you probably haven't heard before.

The characters are much the same: There's Joseph, Mary, the Magi and, of course, the newborn Jesus. There's also a donkey, a trip to Bethlehem and a star in the east.

But that's about where the similarities end between the familiar accounts of Jesus' birth and the one told in the Infancy Gospel of James, a non-canonical book about Mary and the birth of Jesus purportedly written by Jesus' half brother.

The ancient Infancy Gospel includes these fascinating "details" about the Nativity:

- Two of Joseph's sons accompanied their father and Mary as they traveled from Nazareth to Bethlehem for the census.

- Halfway through the trip—before reaching Bethlehem—Mary delivered Jesus in a cave by the roadside.

- While Mary was in labor, Joseph ran

off to find a midwife.

- As Mary gave birth, Joseph experienced a sort of time warp in which all activity around him appeared momentarily suspended.

- Eventually, two midwives arrived at the cave. The second midwife, named Salome, performed a physical examination of Mary to assuage her doubts that a virgin had given birth.

Although some material does overlap the gospel accounts of Jesus' birth as told in Matthew and Luke, the Infancy Gospel "tells a very different and much more detailed story," writes Ronald Hock in the newly published "The Life of Mary and the Birth of Jesus."

The Infancy Gospel of James is a protevangelium, or pre-gospel, because it begins well before the life of Jesus; it is part of the Apocrypha, a variety of early Christian writings that did not make it into the New

Testament. The uncomplicated story, which focuses on the life of Mary and stresses her piety and purity, ends with the birth of Jesus.

"It's kind of fluff," said Hock, a religion professor at the University of Southern California in Los Angeles.

"It's a simple story and more sentimental than profound. It doesn't meet the requirements of what theologians would like in a document," he said when asked why the Infancy Gospel is not part of the Bible.

"But," he added, "there's nothing heretical about it."

So then, how trustworthy an account of the life of Mary and the birth of Jesus is the Infancy Gospel of James?

"When writers in the ancient world wrote narratives, one of the criteria they had to meet was plausibility rather than accuracy," Hock said. "So there wasn't an expectation that this happened but rather that it could have happened and that was good enough."

MISSIONS

Salvation Army began because churches wouldn't reach out

WASHINGTON (RNS)—The Salvation Army was founded by William Booth, a traveling Methodist evangelist who began working among the poor and marginalized in the mean streets of East London in 1865.

Booth was "drawn from the beginning to the urban crowds—the working-class poor, desperate people struggling to gain and hold a place for themselves among the



Catherine Booth

respectably employed, orphans, the helpless, pensionless aged, prostitutes, the clods and castoffs, broken-wheels and ne'er-do-wells of Victorian England," wrote Edward McKinley in "Marching to Glory."

Disenchanted with churches that refused to accept converts with such sordid histories, in 1867 Booth established the Christian Mission, where he served as general superintendent alongside 10 full-time

workers. The group soon became known informally as the Hallelujah Army; Booth was referred to simply as "general."

In 1878, the movement was renamed as Booth edited the group's annual report. Upon reading a statement that described the work as that of a "volunteer army," Booth scratched out the words and penned "salvation army."

Catherine Booth, William's wife, held a crucial role in the Salvation Army, although one not easily described, wrote Norman Murdoch in Christian History magazine.

"Besides the nurturing of their eight children, seven of whom became Army leaders, Catherine's unique contribution to the Salvation Army was her recruitment of a much larger group of women from the working classes," Murdoch wrote.

In addition to her role in advocating women's ministry, Catherine was the group's theologian, and she established the Army's position on the sacraments.

"After 1883, Salvationists no longer practiced baptism and communion in their halls. Some have held the prohibition was to protect converted alcoholics from the taste of juice," wrote Murdoch. "It is more likely that it had to do with female ministry—the unwillingness of worshippers to accept the sacrament from women."

In 1879, the Salvation Army unofficially began work in the United States, when a Salvationist silk worker, Amos Shirley, along with his wife and 17-year-old daughter, began holding evangelistic meetings on street corners in the slums of Philadelphia. Shirley soon moved the meetings indoors to a converted furniture factory, paying the rent from his personal wages.

In 1880, after Shirley had sent press clippings about the new mission to Booth, the Salvation Army sent its first "official" missionary to the United States, George Scott Railton, who held the Army's first official meetings in New York City.

Ten years later, the Salvation Army was operating evangelistic crusades—and the beginnings of social welfare programs—in 43 states.



JOB TRAINING Men down on their luck learned job skills and raised funds by collecting and recycling garbage for the Salvation Army in New York during the 1920s. (RNS photo)

Army more than just kettles, soup kitchens

By Michael Paquette
Religion News Service

ALEXANDRIA, Va. (RNS)—Despite being named "America's favorite charity" last year by the Chronicle of Philanthropy, officials at the Salvation Army admit most Americans haven't a clue about the breadth of their social work programs.

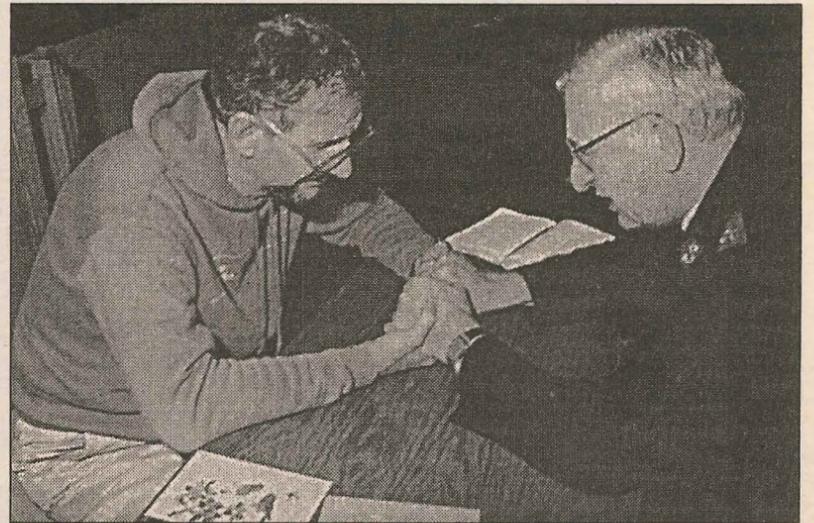
"Most people have a good feeling about us ... they like us, they trust us," said Commissioner Robert Watson, national commander of the Salvation Army's U.S. operations. "But when asked why, they can't give specifics."

The Salvation Army today has expanded its role in easing the burdens of the less fortunate. And as calls for devolution of big government ring from the halls of Congress and the White House, in many states the Salvation Army has been there to pick up the slack.

In Michigan, for example, the Salvation Army either runs or oversees every homeless shelter in the state since the government there stopped providing those services, said Major Tom Jones, national community relations and development secretary.

Jones added that the Army is "in favor of devolution and handling these problems on the local level."

In Florida, many county governments have hired the Salvation Army to handle the paroles of convicted felons. Last year, about 50,000 ex-convicts checked in with Salvation Army workers. In the Tampa Bay region alone, the Army has 100 full-time employees working only on proba-



PRAYER TIME A Salvation Army officer prays with a man in need. Most people recognize America's top charity for its ministries, but officials admit not everyone realizes its evangelical mission. (RNS photo)

tions, Jones said. The program is financed through a \$30 monthly service fee paid by each parolee.

"And it doesn't cost the county anything," said Jones. "It doesn't cost the taxpayer anything."

Around the nation, the Salvation Army runs about 40 half-

way houses where model inmates serve out the last three to six months of their sentences. The Army is responsible for finding ex-offenders jobs and a place to stay after they have served their time. Big names entrusted to the care of Salvation

Army half-way houses include former TV evangelist Jim Bakker in North Carolina, former Congressman Dan Rostenkowski in Chicago and a member of the famed Gucci family in West

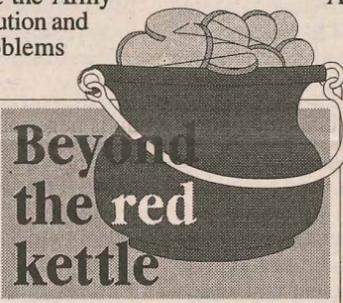
Palm Beach, Fla., Jones said.

But like many other charities and religious groups, cutbacks in federal and state programs have forced the Army to provide even more services. Army case loads, Jones said, have increased 10 percent to 30 percent during the past few years.

"We think it's going to get worse, and we don't have the money," he said. "Our resources are already stretched to the limit."

Still, those resources are vast. According to its 1995 annual report, the Salvation Army brought in more than \$1.4 billion from a variety of sources, including private contributions, government funding and program service fees. More than 85 percent of that was used on programs meeting human needs.

Said Commissioner Watson: "If we're doing this right, you won't be able to see where the line is drawn between social work and religion."



Agency seeks to link missions & evangelism

Continued from page 1
decisive, courageous, aggressive effort."

Also enlisted for the battle are more than 1.5 million volunteers in the United States, "good people who care about the community and other people" but are not otherwise affiliated with the Salvation Army, said Watson.

After more than 100 years, the Salvation Army's central mission remains unchanged: It uses social welfare programs to improve the lot of the downtrodden so they are more receptive to the gospel message.

"It just doesn't make good sense to talk to a man who is hungry about religion. He's focused on his hunger pains," said Watson. "Meeting needs is a bridge to evangelism."

Building bridges has become the Salvation Army's forte.

According to its latest national annual report, in 1995 the Salvation Army served nearly 7 million holiday meals, visited more than 5.5 million people in nursing homes, hospitals and prisons, helped more than 2.5 mil-

lion Americans affected by natural disasters and opened 11 million cases on people needing ongoing assistance—anything from temporary housing to job training.

"The court of last resort in most towns is the Salvation Army," said Major Tom Jones, national community relations and development secretary. "We are the safety net most people talk about."

Serving others—"regardless of race, creed, religion or no religion"—is required duty for all Army soldiers, said Commander Watson.

"To inculcate that sort of spiritual value in people," he said, potential soldiers complete a 12-lesson course of study on the Army's history and theology before they are ready for "active engagement."

Since its founding, women have maintained a high profile in the Army. "William Booth once said, 'Some of my best men are women,'" Winston noted.

Indeed, the Army was one of the earliest Protestant groups to give

women full equality in ministry with men.

"Booth believed there was nothing a man could do that a woman couldn't do," said Winston, noting women often opened Salvation Army missions and preached on the street alone. "The Army was attractive to women who wanted independence in a religious vocation."

An officer's wife is commissioned at the same rank as her husband and the couple are required to serve in the Army together. However, Winston noted, since the couple always takes the husband's rank, "women with less-talented husbands are often held back" from reaching their full potential as ministers.

Officers may serve in one of the Army's nearly 1,300 community centers—or churches—where, among other things, regular Sunday worship services are held.

Salvationists ascribe to an 11-point doctrine of theology reflecting orthodox Christian beliefs, including a high esteem for the Bible as the word of God and that "repentance toward God, faith in ... Jesus Christ, and regeneration by the Holy Spirit, are necessary to salvation."

Party might defund foes of 'partial-birth' abortion ban

PALM SPRINGS, Calif. (RNS)—Anti-abortion activists want the Republican National Committee to end its funding of all GOP candidates who do not support a ban on a controversial late-term abortion procedure.

The proposal will be considered by a resolutions committee, which will decide whether it should be voted on by the 165-member RNC during its Jan. 15-17 meeting.

If the resolution is passed, it would prevent the RNC and affiliated groups from supporting candidates such as New York Mayor Rudolph Giuliani, New Jersey Gov. Christine Todd Whitman and Maine Sens. Susan Collins and Olympia Snowe.

The proposed resolution is one of six that have been presented to the party. Three of the six relate to abortion. One restates the party's position against abortion in general and late-term abortions specifically. Another would declare January "anti-abortion month."

New Jersey gives adoption rights to gays

NEWARK, N.J. (RNS)—New Jersey will allow homosexual couples to jointly adopt children in the same way married couples can, following settlement of a lawsuit Dec. 17.

Supporters hailed the decision as an important step for gay rights while critics worried about its effect on the notion of traditional family.

The agreement stemmed from a case involving Michael Galluccio, 35, and Jon Holden, 34, who live together in Maywood, N.J. The men have cared for a 2-year-old foster child named Adam since he was 3 months old, the Washington Post reported.

When the men tried to jointly adopt him, they were told that Galluccio would have to go through the adoption process and then Holden would have to repeat those steps. The men sued, saying New Jersey officials were violating their rights to equal protection under federal and state law.

"We are on equal footing now, with all couples, straight and gay," Galluccio said after the settlement was reached. "There are a lot of people who want to become families. This makes one more piece of it easier. It's also important for the kids out there to be able to have all the rights and protection that any family can have."

The Family Research Council, a conservative Christian group based in Washington, called the agreement a "sad decision for children," said spokeswoman Kristin Hansen.

"Children have a right to both a mother and a father and without both a male and female role model, they're starting out disadvantaged," she said.

"There's no doubt that a lot of the homosexuals who want to adopt children have good intentions. However, the child is still going to be deprived of never being able to say 'Mommy' or never being able to say 'Daddy' and the state in this decision is saying that's OK."

"Children have a right to both a mother and a father, and without both a male and female role model they're starting out disadvantaged."

Kristin Hansen, spokeswoman for the Family Research Council

Promise Keepers lock dates for stadium events

DENVER (RNS)—Promise Keepers has no firm dates at stadiums throughout the country for its events aimed at lay Christian men because the realignment of Major League Baseball has delayed completion of team schedules.

The evangelical Christian men's movement usually has more than 20 "stadium events" each year, running from the spring through the fall. But most of those events are held in stadiums used for baseball and football, or both sports, said Steve Ruppe, public affairs director for Promise Keepers.

Promise Keepers officials thought

they could determine their sites by November, "but we have no commitments so far," Ruppe said Nov. 28.

The group, founded by former University of Colorado football coach Bill McCartney, already has determined the dates and cities for nine pastors conferences that will be held from January through March 1998. The organization had its first pastors' conference in 1996, a three-day event in Atlanta, but the ones planned for 1998 will last one day each.

Several weeks ago, Promise Keepers spokesman Steve Chavis said the group is negotiating for about 20 sta-

dium locations for 1998, but called those discussions "very close to the chest." Some of the events will be "arena events," in basketball and hockey arenas, and some will be in smaller cities than those where the group previously has held stadium events.

A recent news release from the organization cited plans for 46 conferences in 1998, including the pastors' conferences.

Men attending the stadium events have usually paid \$60. But this summer organization officials decided to make all of the events in 1998 free.

Pastors' conferences

Although 1998 Promise Keepers events for laymen have not been announced, the following sites are scheduled for pastors' conferences:

- Jan. 15 Philadelphia
- Jan. 22 Denver
- Jan. 29 San Diego
- Feb. 5 Nashville
- Feb. 10 Charlotte, N.C.
- Feb. 12 Dallas
- Feb. 19 St. Petersburg, Fla.
- March 10 Portland, Ore.
- March 12 Indianapolis

For more information, call Promise Keepers at (800) 888-7595; Spanish (800) 203-1564; deaf modem (800) 679-6855; or visit their website www.promisekeepers.org.

CLASSIFIED ADS

SEEKING: Campbellsville Baptist Church is now accepting resumes for a full-time minister of students. Seminary degree preferred. Send resume to: Search Committee, Campbellsville Baptist Church, P.O. Box 530, Campbellsville, KY 42719-0530. Resumes will be accepted through Jan. 21, 1998.

SEEKING: Part-time minister of music for a healthy, growing church—two morning services. Send resume to: P.O. Box 197, Rineyville, KY 40162.

FREE: Telephone system for church use. A Louisville Christian businessman is offering a free AT&T telephone system to a church which can use it. The system includes six lines and 12 phones. Church must arrange for installation—donor will provide free advice on installation. Interested church should contact Ed Mahanes, Compatible Communications, Louisville, (502) 897-5323. Note: Mr. Mahanes has helped several churches with these donations. Jim Hawkins, KBC.

SEEKING: Full-time minister of youth and recreation. Experience and seminary needed. Send resume to: Second Baptist Church, 308 S. Russell St., Marion, IL 62959.

SEEKING: Associate pastor of music/youth for a Southern Baptist church located in Frederick, Md. Responsibilities include coordinating the music ministry; directing the choirs and congregational music; coordinating the youth program; working with adult youth leaders; and assisting the senior pastor with pastoral duties. Send resume to: South End Baptist Church, 506 Carrollton Drive, Frederick, MD 21701.

SEEKING: Peninsula Baptist Association of Virginia is seeking to fill two staff positions. A minister of mission development and planning is needed to assist association churches in developing and implementing plans for missions ministry, evangelism, church starting and growth. An associate minister of urban centers and services is needed to give leadership to the association's center ministries. These ministries are an avenue of service and compassion of the association's churches for the sharing of the gospel with people of the urban core of the cities. Please send resume to: Peninsula Baptist Association Search Group, 863 Cloverleaf Lane, Newport News, VA 23601.

SEEKING: Enterprising person to foster spiritual formation of youth and college students for our moderate-oriented Baptist church. We are looking for creative and dynamic ways to attract youth and their families for integration into the church. This Christian person should have high energy, good communication skills and an engaging personality. A graduate or seminary degree with emphasis in youth and students is preferred. Having recently celebrated our 50th anniversary, our 1,300-plus-member church has dynamic vision plans in place. Please send resume to: Dr. Ken Meyers, Hendricks Avenue Baptist Church, 4001 Hendricks Ave., Jacksonville, FL 32207. Email: ken_meyers.parti@ecunet.org. Phone: (904) 396-7745 ext. 302. Fax: (904) 396-2473.

SEEKING: Individuals with good school/community contacts to place and supervise an exchange student for \$825. (800) 964-4678.

SEEKING: Minister of music/associate pastor. Baptist church in central Maryland has immediate opening for individual with calling to full time ministry. Responsibilities include development of comprehensive music program and promotion of full life and work of the church. Mail or fax resume: Westminster Baptist Church, 354 Crest Lane, Westminster, MD 21157. Fax: (410) 848-6460.

SEEKING: Part-time financial secretary. Experience required. Hours and salary negotiable. Submit resume to: Administrative secretary, Lyndon Baptist Church, 8025 New LaGrange Road, Louisville, KY 40222.

FOR SALE: Allen MDS-45 organ. Two 61-note manuals and 32-note pedalboard. Tone card reader, total MIDI, MDS orchestral percussion sounds, console controller, digital reverberation, speakers and cables. Beautiful oak finish console, original documentation. Purchase price was \$42,000; asking \$25,000 (negotiable). For more information, contact Craig Sundheimer, First Baptist Church, 511 W. Arrington, Farmington, NM 87401; phone: (505) 325-4528; fax: (505) 325-4529; e-mail: FirstFarmington@CompuServe.com or Sundheimer@Juno.com.

SEEKING: Resumes are being accepted by Green Valley Baptist Church of Henderson, Nevada, for a senior pastor and a minister of music by Jan. 15, 1998. Send resume to Mike Parnham, chairman of senior pastor search committee, or Larry Reynolds, chairman of music pastor search committee, 270 N. Valle Verde Drive, Henderson, NV 89014.

SEEKING: Cactus Shadows Baptist Church in Cave Creek, Ariz., is now accepting resumes for full-time pastor. Send to: Cactus Shadows Baptist Church, P.O. Box 504, Cave Creek, AZ 85331, Attn: Search Committee (Confidential). Phone: (602) 488-1975.

SEEKING: CBF church accepting resumes for full-time pastor with a vision for a growing area of Louisville. Send resume to: Hillview Baptist Church, 5319 Dixie Highway, Louisville, KY 40216, Attn: Pastor Search Committee.

SEEKING: Accepting resumes for the following positions: full-time minister of youth and children, part-time director of music. Mail resume to: Pleasant Grove Baptist Church, 5664 Highway 56, Owensboro, KY 42301, Attn: Kenny Davis. Phone: (502) 771-4150; fax: (502) 688-0354.

SEEKING: Part-time music director. Send resume to: Nortonville Baptist Church, Box 1119, Nortonville, KY 42442.

SEEKING: Baptist church in Bowling Green looking for a part-time minister of youth to minister to approximately 40 enrolled youth. Send inquiry or resume to: Greenwood Baptist Church, 5165 Scottsville Road, Bowling Green, KY 42104. Telephone: (502) 781-2378.

SEEKING: Growing church seeks full-time music worship leader. Forest Park Baptist Church, Bowling Green, KY 42101. (502) 843-3419; fax: (502) 843-3434.

TOUR: 10 days, best of Israel and full-day London tour, \$1,799. Personally escorted by experienced staff. Call for dates and details: (800) 853-5337. Group rates available.

NATIONAL NOTES

■ **State's abortion ban held up.** A day after the New Jersey Senate outlawed a controversial late-term abortion procedure, a federal judge issued a restraining order that temporarily prevents the ban from being enacted. New Jersey is the 17th state to ban "partial-birth" abortions. Legislators overrode Gov. Christie Todd Whitman's veto of her ban. The legislation outlaws the procedure except when a woman's life is at stake.

■ **Suicide rates higher in gambling cities.** Three cities with legalized gambling—Las Vegas, Reno, Nev.; and Atlantic City, N.J.—have higher suicide rates than other U.S. cities of comparable size, according to a new study. David Phillips, a sociology professor at the University of California at San Diego, found that rates of suicide were as much as four times higher than in cities of comparable size where gambling is illegal. Las Vegas has the highest suicide rate in the country, he said. Suicide patterns would indicate that a city the size of Las Vegas would have had 310 suicides in 1990. But Phillips said the actual number in that city was 497.

■ **Baptist ministry hosts U.N. delegates.** About 160 United Nations ambassadors and other officials attended a luncheon this month sponsored by Christian Ministries to the United Nation Community, according to missionary Jewell Habermehl, a Kentucky native. The ministry, sponsored by the Southern Baptist North American Mission

Board, is entering its 25th year of service to the United Nations. Arkansas Gov. Mike Huckabee and NAMB President Bob Reccord addressed the group.

■ **Opposing groups publish their sides.** Groups representing opposing sides in the debate about gender-inclusive translations of the Bible have published their stands. The Council for Biblical Manhood and Womanhood has issued a 31-page booklet, "What's Wrong with Gender-Neutral Bible Translations." It is available by phoning (800) 872-6898. Meanwhile, Christians for Equality will devote the next issue of its quarterly journal, the Priscilla Papers, to the matter. It can be ordered by calling (612) 872-6898.

■ **Churches offered free web sites.** The American Bible Society has pledged \$5 million to link every church in North America to the World Wide Web. The Houses of Worship project has a goal of networking an estimated 300,000 churches in the United States and Canada through the Internet. Churches signing up will receive free pages on the HOW web site. Officials said the Internet can help churches connect with their members, with each other and with the communities they serve. The society hopes to benefit by closer contact with churches using its products. Information is available at www.housesofworship.net.

■ **Schuller had mild heart attack.** Robert Schuller, 71, whose Crystal Cathedral

services are broadcast worldwide, is recovering from a mild heart attack. His doctor said Schuller did not have serious heart damage.

■ **Court rules on divorce & religion.** The Massachusetts Supreme Judicial Court has ruled divorced parents of different faiths can be prevented from teaching their religious beliefs to their children if it causes harm. In a 6-0 decision handed down Dec. 9, the state's top court barred a father from taking his children to church services or enrolling them in Sunday school.

■ **Charges recommended in death.** Police have recommended criminal charges in the case of a Scientologist who died after spending 17 days at a Florida church retreat in 1995. Last February, Lisa McPherson's family filed a wrongful-death lawsuit against the Church of Scientology, claiming she was held against her will in isolation because she did not want to stay in the church.

■ **Lyons: Convention can't meet mortgage.** Henry Lyons, embattled president of the National Baptist Convention USA, said the nation's largest black Baptist denomination needs to raise \$1 million to pay outstanding bills, including the mortgage on its Nashville headquarters and the college that trains many of its pastors. Lyons' comments in Nashville were his first public appearance in that city since allegations of his misuse of church funds.

School sued over Bible history course

FORT MEYERS, Fla. (RNS)—Parents in Florida's Lee County, backed by People for the American Way and the American Civil Liberties Union of Florida, have filed suit seeking to stop the county from teaching a controversial course that uses the Bible as a history textbook.

"Public school officials are not allowed to use public school classrooms to promote religion and teach religious lessons," said Carole Shields, president of People for the American Way. "This class would be perfectly appropriate for Sunday school, but not for public school."

The American Center for Law and Justice, however, said the Bible curriculum adopted by the school board is constitutional.

"The Bible curriculum in Fort Myers is absolutely constitutional," said Jay Sekulow, chief counsel of the Virginia Beach, Va.-based ACLJ. He offered the ACLJ's resources to help defend the school board.

"The lawsuit is premature. The Supreme Court has repeatedly stated that the Bible can be used in classrooms as long as the focus is educational. This curriculum is about Bible history, not proselytizing. It poses no constitutional crisis," he said.

The Florida school board voted in 1996 to start a two-semester Bible history course.

Love

By Robert Dunston

Our Advent meditation this week is on love. Robert Browning, pastor of First Baptist Church in Somerset, is the author. Browning has taught church administration at Cumberland College and currently serves on our Board of Trustees. He served a term as president of the Kentucky Baptist Convention and has been active in Baptist life in Kentucky and beyond. A gifted writer, he has written for the Somerset Commonwealth Journal and the Western Recorder. Let his words help you reflect on John 13:34-35.

Let me share a story that occurred 10 years ago when my son, Josh, was in the second grade. It is one of my favorite Christmas memories. Josh went to Santa's workshop at his school. This was the place students could buy trash, trinkets and a few treasures. Each child was encouraged to buy gifts for family members and friends. Josh did.

I would imagine most children carefully wrapped their gifts, placed them under the tree and waited until the appointed time on Christmas morning to distribute them to family members. This was not Josh's style or method, though. The instant a family member en-

tered the house the day of the shopping spree, Josh handed their gift to them. It was accompanied by a broad smile and an eager question, "Do you like it?"

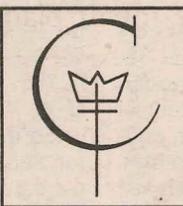
Actually, I did not even have to wait until I got inside the house to receive my gift. I was met on the street (not the driveway, the street) by a child waving a crumpled sack.

"I've been to Santa's workshop and have everyone a gift, including myself," Josh shouted. "Would you like to see yours?" I put the car in park and turned off the engine. This was worth a citation or even a ticket. I am not sure I had seen this kind of enthusiasm even on Christmas morning.

Josh taught me a lesson that day I hope I never forget. Love delights in surprising people with acts of generosity and deeds of kindness. Genuine love cannot be concealed or at times even controlled. What could you do to surprise someone you love this year at Christmas? Go ahead. Get excited and do it. Be unpredictable. I guarantee you the person you surprise will still be talking about it 10 years from now.

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

CUMBERLAND COLLEGE



Seize these days

Christmas, the Advent season, is upon us.

Advent is a reminder that every day we can embrace the gospel. It also reminds us to seize every opportunity of life we can, to live the "abundant life" of which Jesus spoke.

I have enjoyed so many opportunities during the past eight months as the new president of Kentucky Baptist Homes for Children.

I have enjoyed getting to know our dedicated staff. We have some wonderful people doing a great job for thousands of children and families all across Kentucky. I hope you will take the opportunity to meet those near you.

Interacting with our children helps keep me focused on why we exist

as an agency. To get to know our kids, learn their stories and see their growth is motivational for me. I hope you will take advantage of the opportunity to meet some of them, too.

If I have not yet had the chance to visit your church, I hope it won't be long until I do.

I have attended Baptist churches all my life and have served as pastor and staff in several. I am at home with Baptist worship, prayer

meetings, pot luck suppers, dinners on the grounds, baptisms, Lord's Suppers, Sunday school, old hymns, new choruses, etc.

To visit with people who support our ministry is always a treat for me. People who give are always a pleasure to be around. I believe it is true that we are most like God when we give.

If you are taking advantage of the opportunity to support our ministry, we thank you and I hope to meet with you someday if I haven't already.

Christmas is about incarnation. God became one of us, lived among us, died and arose from the dead for us. God made the opportunity to get involved with us and took full advantage of it.

At Kentucky Baptist Homes for Children, we are striving to incarnate the love and grace of God in the midst of broken families, children in pain and young people with little hope. I am so glad to be a part of such a mission as ours. I hope you are too.

Bill Smithwick president of Kentucky Baptist Homes for Children, 10801 Shelbyville Rd., Middletown, Ky. 40243. Call (800) 456-1386. KBHC's Internet address is: <http://www.iglou.com/kbhc/>

HOMES FOR CHILDREN



Bill Smithwick

BOOKS

ANNUITY

Is international investing for you?

By Don Spencer

People naturally tend to follow current winners and avoid current losers. This year, international investments have generally not performed well compared to U.S. stocks. Thus, many have questioned the wisdom of being in international stocks. Some participants in retirement plans have changed their investment choices as a reaction to this year's experience. Was this wise?

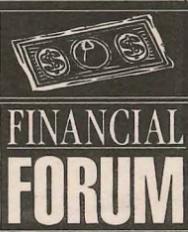
Every day, your life is affected by products made overseas. Think of how many products you have purchased recently that were made in a foreign country. Many companies you know as American actually have an international source. For example, one major restaurant chain is owned by a company based in the United Kingdom and a major record company is run by a Dutch firm.

If a portion of your portfolio is not invested in foreign stocks, you may ultimately be missing out on many promising investment opportunities from around the world. Foreign economies follow different cycles than the U.S. economy and have different risks related to currency, economic and political factors. This adds more diversification to your investments. Many experts would suggest that some degree of investment in overseas corporations actually may increase returns and reduce total volatility over the long term.

The key phrase is "long term." Whenever one is invested in stocks, they must see the long term perspective. The short term view sees that 1997 ended with less than 5 percent return in international stocks and nearly 30 percent return in U.S. stocks. Few people benefit substantially from this short term view because their changes are after the fact.

No one knows for certain where the best returns will be next year, and this year's experience guarantees nothing about next year. That's why it is important to have a well diversified (or blended) portfolio of investments in your retirement plan and in other investments. It is a proven fact that most people do best with an appropriate portfolio (diversified blend of investments) rather than with trying to "time the market." In today's world, that balanced portfolio probably should include some international investments.

Don Spencer is a certified financial planner and directs the Kentucky Baptist Convention's annuity department.



Character is the Issue: How People with Integrity Can Revolutionize America. Mike Huckabee. Broadman & Holman Publishers, 1997. 191 pages. ♦♦♦ (out of five)

Mike Huckabee became governor of Arkansas in July 1996, following the conviction of then Gov. Jim Guy Tucker on federal fraud and conspiracy charges. A former Baptist pastor, Huckabee was elected lieutenant governor in 1994, following an unsuccessful U.S. Senate bid in 1992. When he stepped into the governor's office, he became only the third Republican governor in Arkansas since the Reconstruction era.

In writing this book, Huckabee hopes to do two things. First he wants to make the case that character is not incidental to the process of governing, the character of a politician does matter. Second, he hopes to challenge Christians to become involved in the political process in order "to shape the culture and laws by using a world view we believe has value."

Though written in the flowing and engaging style of a memoir, Huckabee's book raises a number of significant and complex issues. Often this is done less by what is stated than by what is implied or left unsaid. I found that, in arguing his case, he presents the reader with some inherent contradictions that go unreconciled.

Huckabee's decision to enter the realm of politics grew, in large part, out of a growing restlessness and frustration with ministry. What pastor, at one time or another, cannot identify with Huckabee's statement, "In my early years ... I was quite idealistic ... thinking most people ... expected me to [lead] God's troops into battle to

change the world. As the years passed, I became increasingly convinced that most people wanted me to captain the Love Boat, making sure everyone was having a good time." He wanted his "life to count for something more than as an ordained cruise director." His solution to the dilemma was to leave the pastorate to enter politics, where "a person could make a significant contribution in deciding issues that affect the entire world."

Without disparaging the role of Christians in politics, Huckabee's struggle raised for me the question of how God chooses to pursue his redemptive ministry. Huckabee almost seems to argue that the political arena, not the church, is more significant than the church in extending God's kingdom.

His discussion of the character issue, while in places insightful, is all too brief. Often it degenerates into a primer on practical tips for the day-to-day operation of a governor's office. I found his discussion of legalism vs. liberalism fascinating and wished he had spent more time developing his thoughts. And yet, it is at this point I encountered one of his inherent contradictions.

At one point Huckabee writes: "Today, grace affects everything I think and do. In every decision I make ... it has an impact on me." However, toward the end of the book, when he is issuing his challenge for Christians to be involved in the political process, he lapses into a harshly dualistic view of society and the political process. His proposed solution to social issues, like teen pregnancy and drug addiction, is to renounce any solution that smacks of a man-is-basically-good philosophy—education, treatment,

etc. In its place he proposes solutions based on a man-is-basically-bad philosophy—create negative, punitive consequences for drug addiction or teen pregnancy.

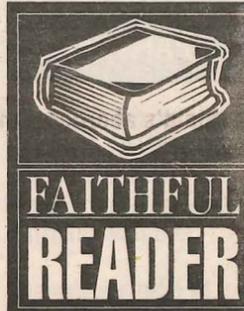
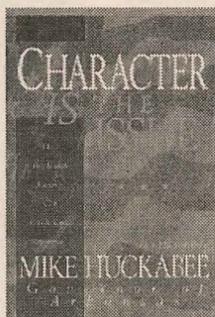
Space does not permit further exploration of the issues Huckabee raises. "Character is the Issue" is many things at once: an apology for leaving the pastorate to pursue a political career, an argument for the primacy of character in our civic discussions, a primer on how to run a political office and perhaps a little bit of self-promotion for a man with larger aspirations. If you read the book, do so with discrimination. Let it be a platform to struggle with the issues Huckabee raises and hints at. *Jim Holladay*

A Cry of Absence: Reflections for the Winter of the Heart. Martin E. Marty. Eerdmans, 1997. 185 pages. \$12. ♦♦♦♦♦

First published 14 years ago, Marty's book is well on its way to being designated a spiritual classic. Written out of his reflections on the Psalms after his wife's death, Marty addresses "winter" times in our life of faith. Loss is the occasion for the winter times Marty addresses.

Marty turns to the Psalms to offer hope in these winter times. He does this because many of the Psalms speak to the remoteness of God. The surprise is that in the midst of the winter the Psalmists, and Marty, declare that a person can come to a renewed experience with God.

Marty's book is not meant to be a quick, feel-good book to get someone out of the doldrums. The meditations take time and effort at reflection. Like in the experience of absence, hope is not found on each page. Hope comes in the book, as in life, as one honestly wrestles with the winter of the heart and the God who leads the way into the season of hope. *Wayne Hager*



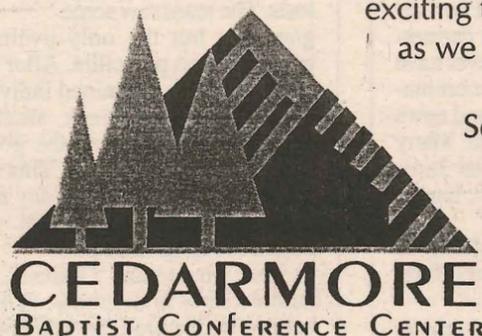
By Wayne Hager, pastor of Midlane Park Baptist Church in Louisville, and Jim Holladay, pastor of Clifton Baptist Church in Louisville. Holladay and Hager welcome feedback or suggestions for book reviews. Contact them via e-mail at: docholladay@juno.com or jwhager@juno.com

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Cedarmore Baptist Conference Center
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PRAYER PARTNERS

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

■ Brad and Jeanine Horne, in language school in Moscow, ask for "an increased understanding of the Russian language, an increase in our ability to retain what we learn and an increase in fluency when using what we know."

■ That Dick and Marilyn Beaudoin in Moscow will have opportunities to share their faith with their neighbors.

■ Follow-up efforts on ideas generated in the October Kentucky Baptist Convention/Baptist Convention of New England planning meeting.

Mountains to the Mississippi

Compiled by Ann Tatum

■ **ALBANY**—First Church called **Lance Metcalf** as pastor. **Ron Jones** has been serving as interim pastor.

■ **NOB LICK**—**John Batcher** resigned as pastor of Antioch Church, effective Jan. 4. He will be available for supply ministry, interim pastorate and revivals. Contact him at (502) 465-3462 or 4936 Hodgenville Rd., Campbellsville, Ky. 42718-9571.

■ **LOUISVILLE**—**Steve Branch** resigned as minister to students at Walnut Street Church, effective Dec. 21.

■ **Cliff Cribb** resigned as minister to youth at Deer Park Church, effective Dec. 31.

■ **MAYFIELD**—New Hope Church called **Charles Buntin** as pastor. He recently was ordained to the gospel ministry at Trace Creek Church.

■ **MIDDLESBORO**—First Church ordained associate minister **Jack McClelland** to the gospel ministry Nov. 9.

■ **SOMERSET**—Beacon Hill Church called **John Akers** as minister to students. He previously was minister of youth at Rineyville Church. He began his new ministry Nov. 23.

■ **SUMMERSVILLE**—**Kevin Byrd** resigned as pastor of Summersville Church to become pastor at First Church at Hartsville, Tenn. He began his new ministry Nov. 1.

CORRECTION

■ **ASHLAND**—Rose Hill Church dedicated its \$1.5 million facility Nov. 16. The building includes a 1,200-seat gym, office suites and classrooms. The facility will be used by the church and Rose Hill Christian School.



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Couples with Kentucky ties appointed as missionaries

RICHMOND, Va.—Four couples with connections to Kentucky recently were appointed to be missionaries by the Southern Baptist International Mission Board.

■ **James and Dianne Teafatiller** will work in Tanzania.

Teafatiller is a former minister of youth and children at Sligo Baptist Church in Pendleton, and a former minister of education and singles at Victory Memorial Baptist Church in Louisville. He will promote children's ministries, and Mrs. Teafatiller will be involved in a variety of outreach ministries.



Teafatillers

■ **Lee and Beth Collins** will work in Croatia. Collins will work as business manager for the South Europe Mission, and Mrs. Collins she will be involved in a variety of outreach ministries.

■ **Mark and Linda Creech** will work in north Brazil. Creech, a native of Cumberland, will work with students.



Creechs

1989 he has been minister of youth at First Baptist Church in Fort Meade, Fla.

Mrs. Creech will be involved in a variety of outreach ministries.

■ **Marc and Annie Byrd** will work in Poland.

Mrs. Byrd, the daughter of Jerry and Eleanor Domek of Louisville, will be involved in a variety of outreach ministries. Her husband will start and develop churches.



Byrds

■ **Lee and Beth Collins** will work in Croatia.

Collins will work as business manager for the South Europe Mission, and Mrs. Collins she will be involved in a variety of outreach ministries.

■ **Mark and Linda Creech** will work in north Brazil.

Creech, a native of Cumberland, will work with students.

■ **Lee and Beth Collins** will work in Croatia.

Collins will work as business manager for the South Europe Mission, and Mrs. Collins she will be involved in a variety of outreach ministries.

Since 1993, Collins has worked on the campus of Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in Louisville.



Collinses

We have been blessed in 1997

While most children will count their blessings by the number of presents under the Christmas tree, those of us who are older will count our blessings differently. Certainly we who are privileged to serve in this ministry have much to be grateful for as 1997 comes to an end.

Time and time again we have been blessed this year. Our greatest blessing has come from the young people we have been privileged to serve. Each gives different opportunities of ministry. Many come with serious academic needs. Years of falling behind in school have made learning a drudgery. Others come with a multitude of social needs. Family conflict, lack of respect for authority, running with unfavorable peers and little or no parental supervision have created a nightmare.

It is easy to get discouraged at times. We are eager to see improvements overnight. We know they can make better grades, but it takes a lot more effort than most students have been accustomed to. Kind words of instruction or correction often are met with anger and frustration. We must be firm but not overbearing. We have to be loving and kind, but not gullible. We are always challenged to find a way to replace hostility and distrust with compromise and understanding.

Another blessing this year was an overwhelming number of volunteers. We have been blessed to see this program grow from less than 100 volunteers about 10 years ago to nearly 700 this year. They help us with new projects, assist with routine maintenance and offer suggestions and advice for other projects. The agriculture program has benefited from volunteers with farming backgrounds. Many ladies have assisted in the craft

shop or have helped paint, sew, clean and do clerical work. The ministry these dedicated friends provide is a source of tremendous blessings.

Other friends have blessed us this year with donated items, including a mini-bus, vans, cars, trucks, a tractor, farm equipment and tons of other useful items. It is always exciting to see how God provides so many of these items in answer to prayer or even gives them before we know we have a need.

All these blessings would be of little value if we did not have dedicated faculty and staff to carry on the daily ministry of this school. Most of our friends know that our faculty and staff serve for a fraction of the incomes they could earn in secular jobs or other ministries. One area of our greatest stewardship is reflected in the willingness of our people to make substantial financial sacrifices to be a part of this ministry.

Finally, we have been blessed with a host of new friends who have heard about Oneida. We have received many kind letters and generous donations.

The letters of encouragement are reminders that others share in all we do. A partnership is formed among friends who may never have met, brought about by one common denominator: Jesus Christ. We unite to share the good news with young people from around the world. Many students have heard for the first time that Jesus loves them and is the source of strength, happiness, peace and love.

Each year, dozens of our young people invite Jesus into their lives. Your investment, our efforts and God's desire come full circle.

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

THIS IS ONEIDA



W.F. Underwood

Testimonies from Russia partnership team

Include in your Christmas celebration a gift for international missions. The Southern Baptist Convention goal for the Lottie Moon offering is \$100 million. Our campus family received missions motivation from chapel testimonies by our summer mission team that worked in the maximum security prison in Voronezh, Russia.

John Jones and John Little worked in the prison clinic. Jones has a medical technology degree. "They called us Johnson and Johnson," he said. "The prison physician examined the patient and made a diagnosis; I dispensed the medicine. They began to introduce me as the pharmacist."

Common ailments were ulcers and tuberculosis. The team saw some gangrene but the only available treatment was penicillin. After four prisoners were examined individually, the Clear Creek students shared testimonies and the gospel with the four as a group. This routine went throughout the day from 8 a.m. sometimes to 10 p.m. with only a break for meals.

The physician, Granadi, remarked early in the week, "I don't believe in this God, but we'll work with you. We appreciate the medi-

cine." Before the team left Granadi said, "Now I know there is a God. I had heard about this Jesus person; you have shown him to me by your work to help heal people and telling them about Christ."

James Castlen, team leader and professor, especially enjoyed the opportunity to work again in an overseas mission setting. Prior to coming to Clear Creek he and his family completed 18 years as SBC missionaries in the Philippines and Australia. Castlen recalls a scene that vividly typifies the world mission need.

"We had an early meeting with the administrative leadership of the prison. We felt very much on display as we sat in front of seven stony-faced men. Each of the team told about themselves. I concluded with the reason we came and invited them to take a Bible and New Testament which we placed on the table between us. At the conclusion of the meeting they rushed to the table and pushed and shoved to get a Bible. As we drove through Moscow to catch our plane, I again saw those hands reaching for the word."

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

CLEAR CREEK CHRONICLE



Bill Whittaker

Gospel, not genealogy, defines Billy Graham's daughter

By Adelle Banks
Religion News Service

WASHINGTON (RNS)—Anne Graham Lotz doesn't want to be known as Billy Graham's daughter. Though she is proud of her family heritage, she'd rather be known, she said, as a messenger from God.

"I've had people express disappointment after I've spoken because I haven't told family stories ... so sometimes that's hard," she said in a recent interview. "Because I think, you know, I'm here giving a message from my heavenly father and you want to know sort of curiosity things about my earthly father."

But those who have heard Lotz say she holds her own as a preacher.

"Maybe the initial opening of the door is because of her father, but once she's in, it's all Anne," said Melanie Beroth, spokeswoman for Focus on the Family, which chose Lotz as the closing speaker of an event that drew 19,000 women to a Nashville arena in September.

At 49, Lotz travels the country and the world expounding on the Bible, but makes it home each Sunday to attend her Southern Baptist church with husband Danny.

The self-described "Bible expositor" urges Christians to have a "fresh vision" of Jesus and preaches Bible basics to non-Christians. When she invites people to become Christians after her sermon, hundreds have responded at sites ranging from Nashville to India.

Lotz said she doesn't want people to pay attention to her, but rather to God.

"I don't want to be known for who I am," she said. "When I speak, I want people to hear God speaking to them through the message, through his word."

"Listen to me!" Lotz urged in her

50-minute sermon to delegates to the District of Columbia Baptist Convention, often pointing her hands in the air. "Do you understand that the basic, bottom-line, primary problem is just sin? ... If the basic problem is sin, then the basic solution is a Savior."

A rustle of "amens" arose from the crowd of more than 200 men and women in the sanctuary of the First Baptist Church of the City of Washington.

Lotz's focus on the fundamentals of her faith also permeates her new book. After Lotz spoke recently at the District of Columbia Baptist Convention, she autographed copies of "The Glorious Dawn of God's Story: Finding Meaning for Your Life in Genesis."

She believes that if the principles in the first book of the Bible were followed by everyone—"I'm not talking about Christians now. I'm talking about everybody"—the world would be better off.

"Everything that's happening, all the breakdown in the home and relationships and right on through, you can trace it to the fact they're not following God's principles laid down in the first 11 chapters," she said in the interview.

Lotz began her ministry in 1976 by affiliating with Bible Study Fellowship, an international organization that offers Bible classes around the globe.

In 1988, she felt called to start her own ministry, which she calls AnGeL Ministries, using the initials of her name. She's the sole speaker for the Raleigh, N.C.-based organization, which also offers tapes and devotional study books.

"There are no other angels," she said with deadpan humor. "One day I'd like to have a host of 'em."

But the name of the ministry is intentional. "Angels in Scripture were messengers of God," she said. "I go

wherever he sends me."

Not everyone is enthusiastic about Lotz's appearances in pulpits, particularly before mixed audiences of men and women.

Tim Bayly, executive director of the Council on Biblical Manhood and Womanhood, believes the "biblical norm" is that only men have the authority to preach to mixed groups of men and women. Women may only preach to women, he said.

"If our position on women in authority in the church is scriptural, it applies equally, regardless of who the person is, and that because she is Billy Graham's daughter doesn't remove her from the strictures of Scripture," Bayly said from his office in Libertyville, Ill.

Lotz said she realizes everyone doesn't agree with her preaching role—one church where she held a Bible class for 500 women asked her to leave—but she says she only goes where she is invited.

When she spoke at a statewide interdenominational meeting of ministers in the early years of her independent ministry, Lotz found herself facing the backs of some clergy who turned their chairs around when she was speaking.

"That's when I began to really pray and ask the Lord to settle it in my heart," she said. "He just took me to the Scriptures and showed me so that in my heart I'm at peace and I can stand in the pulpit very confidently."

She refers to the Gospels of Matthew and John as examples of her scriptural counsel. In those accounts, the resurrected Jesus tells Mary Magdalene to give a message to his disciples.

"She was a woman and he was sending her to tell all these men her personal testimony, the risen Christ," Lotz said.

Lotz said she hopes for mutual re-

spect from those who disagree with her decision to preach.

"I respect people's opinions, especially from somebody like (Bayly) who I'm sure has researched it, looked carefully into God's word and come up with his own conclusions," she said. "But I also want to be respected for the fact that I have thought about it carefully, prayed it through, feel like from Scripture God has shown me something different and I just agree to disagree with them."

Lotz said her parents also are on her side.

Billy Graham has introduced his daughter—one of five children—as the "best preacher in the family" at two international evangelism events.

When he introduced her in the mid-1990s at the Billy Graham Training Center at The Cove in North Carolina, he said, "Well, I brought my big Bible with me tonight, because when I go to hear Anne I have to have an extra big Bible because God has taught her the Scriptures and God has given her a gift of teaching and preaching and evangelism as well as Bible teaching that's very rare."

Lotz, a self-described private person uncomfortable in the celebrity spotlight, said she has personally chosen not to be ordained.

While the Southern Baptist Convention is on record opposing the ordination of women, some individual Southern Baptist churches, which are autonomous, have chosen to ordain women.

Although Lotz feels other women may be called in that manner, she said, "I feel like the Lord would not have me do that."

Yet, she doesn't mind that she may be a role model for others. "My message is not to put women in the pulpit, but if that happens and through that somebody else can serve God in the way God called her, then I'd be glad."



Billy Graham calls his daughter Anne the "the best preacher in the family," but some still oppose her presence in the pulpit.

Christmas is different for seminarian working with homeless

By Russell Moore
Southern Seminary

LOUISVILLE (BP)—As department stores beckon shoppers to come see their "merry side," don't expect John Matala to celebrate this Christmas basking in the light of the local mall's electronic reindeer display.

Instead, the student at Southern Baptist Theological Seminary probably will be found somewhere on the streets of Louisville, with the abused, the homeless and the desperately lonely.

"I expect to be out on the streets for the rest of my life," he says.

A successful Chicago-area advertising and communications executive, Matala grappled with the claims of the gospel and came to faith in Christ at age 30.

Three and a half years ago, after struggling for 15 years with a deepening call to pastoral ministry, Matala arrived at Southern's Billy Graham School of Missions, Evangelism and Church Growth.

After sending resumes to 50 local churches, Matala found only one response: Louisville's Wayside Chris-

tian Mission, an evangelical interdenominational rescue center for the city's urban homeless, addicted and poverty-stricken populations.

"So believing in the providence of God, that's where I went and that's where I am," he recalls.

Matala serves as volunteer coordinator for Wayside, Louisville's oldest rescue mission. Founded in 1957 with 12 beds, the mission now provides emergency shelters, crisis child care, job training, counseling, chapel services, a thrift store and a feeding center which serves up to 1,000 meals per day.

The mission ministers to an average of 300 people every night.

Matala winces when fellow seminarians refer to his work as "social ministry."

"I see my ministry as a pastoral ministry. I see it as Jesus-centered ministry," he counters.

With an overarching priority on evangelism, last year the mission chapel baptized 59 converts. "That is better than 65 percent of the Southern Baptist churches in Kentucky," Matala says. "And we're not a church. We're a chapel."

Homeless converts are referred to local evangelical churches which often learn that a new believer still living on the streets faces a unique hurdle of challenges in his or her sanctification as a Christian.

"Sometimes their mouth is not going to be what we want to hear," Matala explains. "That's where the teaching and the discipleship and the grace needs to come in from God's people."

At Christmas, believers should be particularly sensitive to their responsibility to the poor, Matala reminds.

"The incarnation was the most expensive gift ever given," he asserts. "God didn't have to send his Son. He chose to give out of his own love. We must give, not just to give, but to give with the right motivation."

When confronted with the seeming hopelessness of the urban wanderer convulsing under the tyranny of alcoholism, drug addiction or other moral minefields, Matala seeks answers in biblical counseling.

"I prefer to work through the Scriptures specifically and purposefully because that's what has changed my life," he says.

"I'm convinced that the Scriptures

are the only way to go in counseling" such situations, he continues. The mission offers both traditional therapeutic alcoholism counseling as well as "Alcoholics for Christ," an explicitly evangelical, Scripture-based program. "We have had 20 conversions in that program, none in the other," he says.

"Until the heart is changed, converted by the message of the gospel of the love of God, that individual is going to continue in different paths of trying to seek fulfillment."

Matala finds widespread ignorance among middle-class Americans regarding the precarious nature of their own prosperity.

"Most people are two paychecks away from being as homeless as these people are," he states. "Over 10 percent of the people in homeless shelters have four-year degrees."

The problems he combats on the streets of Louisville, he says, stem from the sinfulness of the human heart. "We tend to focus on it there," he asserts. "We don't realize the same things that happen to the people in the shelter happen on Wall Street or in corporate America. They just make more money."

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