



# WESTERN RECORDER

December 7, 1999  
Vol. 173, No. 48**FOR THE RECORD**

**Southern Baptists**  
Leaders decline request to curb Chicago evangelism effort. *Page 2.*

**Prayer**  
Pastors throughout Kentucky are coming together to pray for revival and spiritual awakening. *Page 3.*

**Revival**  
Leaders at Cumberland College are seeking to disciple more than 100 students who made spiritual decisions at the school's recent revival. *Page 3.*

**Editorial**  
Saying goodbye to Real Life magazine. *Page 5.*

**How's your arm?**  
The Salvation Army is looking for a few good bell ringers. *Page 6.*

**Books**  
Reviews include "Tackling Tough Issues" by WMU's New Hope Publishers and a few Christmas gift ideas. *Page 9.*

**World**  
Southern Baptists launch prayer emphasis for Africa. *Page 11.*

## Poll: Americans trying to simplify their holiday

TAKOMA PARK, Md. (RNS)—The vast majority of Americans feel the Christmas holidays have become too commercial and 58 percent say they have tried to simplify their holiday celebrations, according to a new poll.

The survey of 1,015 adults throughout the country was commissioned by the Center for a New American Dream, a non-profit organization based in Takoma Park, Md., that promotes responsible consumption.

It found that 91 percent of those asked said they think the holidays are too commercialized and the idea of "peace on earth" has been forgotten by too many people.

The study indicates people are starting to act on those sentiments, with three out of five surveyed saying they have started to buy fewer gifts or simplify their holiday celebration in other ways.

"People are learning to reconnect with the joyfulness of the holiday," said Betsy Taylor, executive director of the Center for a New American Dream.

"A third of the people we surveyed told us that they were simplifying their holiday to have a celebration that is more in keeping with their family's values," she said. "And almost one in four said that they made changes to reduce stress or have more time with their friends and family."

More than one in four Americans reported feeling pressure to have a more expensive or elaborate holiday than they would like.

If there were no pressures to give presents, 35 percent said they would give gifts as planned and 39 percent said they would either pay off debts or save the money.

## Kentucky natives seek prayer for Burundi

By Mark Kelly  
SBC International Mission Board

BUJUMBURA, Burundi (BP)—A Southern Baptist missionary who is a native of Kentucky has issued an urgent call to prayer for hundreds of thousands of people in Burundi trapped in squalid camps without food, shelter or sanitation.

As many as 800,000 Hutu civilians have been forced into the detention camps outside the capital, Bujumbura. Burundi's Tutsi-dominated government hopes the strategy will stymie attacks by Hutu rebels entrenched around the city.

Southern Baptist missionary David Brandon said many observers consider the settlements to be little more than death camps.

"Starvation is a reality, diseases are

increasing and thousands of people are lying in a fetal position, waiting to die," said Brandon, a native of Greenville. "Humanitarian aid organizations are not doing anything because of the United Nations killings."

Brandon referred to an Oct. 12 attack in which two U.N. aid officials were killed while visiting a detention camp southeast of the capital. While the government blamed the attack on Hutu rebels, others believe it was an assassination coordinated by the Tutsi-dominated military to force aid agencies to leave and put more pressure on the rebels.

The United Nations drastically reduced its staff in Burundi after the attack and aid groups like Doctors Without Borders suspended their operations as well.

Brandon said he found found him-

self frustrated and helpless as multitudes of defenseless people starved to death in camps to which he had no access.

"People have been surviving by selling anything they can to get food money and, more recently, by stealing from local fields or from others in the camps," said Brandon, who was appointed by the International Mission Board as an agricultural evangelist to Burundi in 1990. "Now the rainy season has started, which will drastically increase dysentery and cholera and weaken everyone, as most have no shelter whatsoever."

With \$5,000 from Southern Baptist hunger and relief resources, Brandon aided a few families suffering in the camps before he was forced to leave the country Nov. 12 because of unrelated visa complications. He and his family

See Kentuckians request ..., page 3



**SAVING LIVES** Learning easy and inexpensive ways to plant pumpkin and tree seedlings has improved—and even saved—lives among India's Kui people. The Lottie Moon Christmas Offering for International Missions helps the Asian Rural Life Development Center make a spiritual as well as physical difference in lives in this people group. An average of six new groups of believers have been started every month for the past three years, thanks in part to the work of Southern Baptist missionaries Calvin and Margaret Fox. (BP photo by Don Rutledge)

## Opinions vary on whether to include Pokémon on Christmas list

By Debbie Moore  
Baptist Press

NASHVILLE (BP)—Pokémon—the craze that has captured children's imagination, time and money—has exploded into a multi-million-dollar merchandise and entertainment phenomenon in less than 12 months and generated criticism from some conservative Christian sources.

Reviewers and analysts vary in their views of the fad, ranging from "it's only a game" to accusations that the Pokémon trading cards, currently the most popular item in the merchandise line-up, lead children into the occult.

Pokémon (short for "pocket monsters," fantastical creatures possessing

unique fighting powers) was new to American toy stores this time last year. The first item for sale was the Nintendo video game, a hit with kids in Japan more than two years before it was exported to the United States in late 1998.

Then Nintendo allowed Wizards of the Coast, Inc., the manufacturers of the infamous "Magic: The Gathering" trading card game and "Dungeons and Dragons" roll-playing game, to begin production of the now-ubiquitous Pokémon trading card game.

But while the Pokémon card game has motivated some children to enjoy

reading and working math problems, it also has induced some school principals to ban Pokémon from their campuses and some parents to wonder about Pokémon's value.

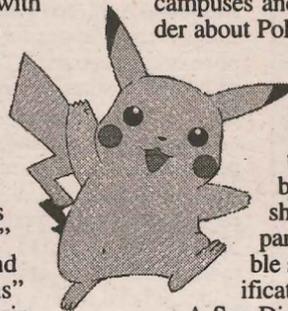
To some parents, concerns about Pokémon values only go as far as trying to keep their kids from making bad card trades with shrewd classmates. Other parents question the possible social and spiritual ramifications.

A San Diego law firm has filed a class-action lawsuit against Nintendo, with plaintiffs, mainly parents, claiming Pokémon promotes an illegal form of gambling. The lawsuit compares an

alleged addiction with the Pokémon trading card game to lottery scratch tickets and slot machines. Pokémon card packs have a few high-value cards, supposedly encouraging children to want to buy more Pokémon cards, like adults buy lottery tickets, in hopes of finding a rare holographic Pickachu. Pickachu is the cute, yellow pig-like Pokémon that also is available as a cuddly stuffed animal.

In recent media analysis, reaction has been mixed.

"Pokémon combines the best elements of other kid fads ... exploit(ing) kids' instinct to collect," as the Pokémon motto is "Gotta catch 'em all," according to writer David Plotz in Slate, an online secular magazine. See Should Pokémon be..., page 7



## SBC leaders reject request to curb Chicago outreach

By Bob Allen  
Associated Baptist Press

**"We are sharing Jesus' message, not a Southern Baptist message. Our message is one of love, not hate."**

*Jim Queen, executive director of the Chicago Metropolitan Baptist Association*

CHICAGO (ABP)—Religious leaders in Chicago have asked Southern Baptists to back off plans to send 100,000 volunteers to evangelize in the city next summer, saying the effort could unintentionally incite religious hatred.

Southern Baptist Convention President Paige Patterson has responded that SBC leaders will move forward with plans for the evangelistic emphasis.

The Council of Religious Leaders of Metropolitan Chicago wrote a letter asking Patterson to reconsider plans to make Chicago the first stop in a highly publicized initiative called Strategic Focus Cities.

The council—a group of 40 top leaders of the area's Roman Catholic, Jewish, Anglican, Orthodox and Protestant communities—warned the effort could disrupt peaceful interfaith relations in the city and unwittingly provoke hate crimes by fomenting religious differences.

The Strategic Focus Cities strategy, coordinated by the SBC North American Mission Board, calls for focusing prayer, evangelism and church-planting efforts in two major metropolitan areas each year, starting with Chicago and Phoenix in 2000. The effort is seeking to enlist 100,000 volunteers to come to

Chicago July 8 to share the gospel with a million people who do not know Christ.

The protest by Chicago's interfaith community follows recent publicity over SBC pamphlets targeting Jews, Hindus and Muslims for conversion. Leaders of those faith groups criticized those efforts, timed to coincide with major religious holidays, as offensive and disrespectful. Southern Baptist leaders defended those initiatives, saying the Bible requires Christians to preach the gospel to everyone.

The letter said Chicago's religious leaders recognize that seeking converts is a tenet of Southern Baptist belief and a constitutional right but that such initiatives should be "sensitive to local realities" and "neither attack nor target specific faiths or religious groups."

A promotional video calling for "an army of believers to converge on Chicago," the council said, "evokes images of a crusade." The leaders said they particularly were concerned about Muslims and Jews, "the two groups who appear to be among your primary targets," in light of religiously motivated hate crimes in the city during the last six months.

In May, vandals hurled stones through plate-glass windows at a suburban mosque. In July, Benjamin Smith shot six Jews as they left Sabbath services.

"While we are confident that your volunteers would come entirely with peaceful intentions, a campaign of the nature and scope you envision could contribute to a climate conducive to hate crimes," the Chicago religious leaders said. "This would assuredly not be your intent, but it could be a disastrous consequence."

The letter suggested Southern Baptist plans might be better received if volunteers were doing service projects such as helping the poor. The council said member congregations would work with Southern Baptists in those kinds of efforts and invited SBC leaders to "enter into discussion with us and reconsider your plans regarding this matter."

In responses to media reports about the letter, Southern Baptist leaders minimized concerns about religiously motivated violence and offered no indication they intend to change their plans.

In a letter copied to several media outlets, Patterson said Southern Baptists are more likely to be targets of hate crimes than to cause them. "You appear to desire religious liberty for Bible-believing evangelicals as long as they agree not to exercise that freedom," Patterson said.

"It is but one small step from alleging that the bearing of witness for Jesus results in 'hate crimes' to the allegation that such a witness is a 'hate crime,'" he said. "When the sad day arrives when

that last small step is introduced, America will have forfeited that sacred conviction of liberty of conscience that motivated the founders of this nation."

Other SBC leaders said some Chicago religious leaders apparently misunderstand the denomination's outreach programs.

"We are sharing Jesus' message, not a Southern Baptist message," Jim Queen, executive director of the Chicago Metropolitan Baptist Association, said in a NAMB press release. "Our message is one of love, not hate."

NAMB President Robert Reccord said despite recent publicity to the contrary, Southern Baptists do not single out particular groups such as Jews or Hindus for evangelism. "Our purpose is life transformation through Jesus Christ, not proselytizing for a denomination," he said.

The NAMB press release noted that Chicago's Southern Baptist churches, which are largely non-Anglo, have invited Southern Baptists from across the country to help them with evangelistic and service projects.

"I'm certain that the local Southern Baptist community seeks converts as an ongoing part of their activities," said Ira Youdovin, executive director of the Chicago Board of Rabbis. "This is absorbed into the regular interplay of religions in the city. But bringing in 100,000 outsiders changes everything."

### BAPTIST BITS

■ **Patterson repeats invitation to Jewish leaders.** Southern Baptist Convention President Paige Patterson has reiterated an earlier proposal that he and seven other Southern Baptists meet with Gedale B. Horowitz, president of the Jewish Community Relations Council, and seven other Jewish leaders in response to a letter sent to Patterson charging the SBC with "deception" in evangelistic outreach to Jews. Patterson's Nov. 22 letter was in response to Horowitz's Nov. 17 counterproposal to Patterson's initial proposal. Horowitz had suggested a private meeting between he and Patterson.

■ **2001 BWA meeting set for Lebanon.** Following meetings with the president and prime minister of Lebanon, Baptist World Alliance General Secretary Denton Lotz announced that Beirut, Lebanon, will be the site of the annual BWA General Council meeting in July 2001. Lotz said Lebanese President Emile Lahoud, in inviting the BWA to Lebanon, emphasized his program of "equality under the law" for all people and reconciliation as a priority in a country that now is rebuilding its damaged infrastructure after years of civil wars.

■ **Seminary Extension offers new diploma.** Seminary Extension, for the first time in 20 years, is increasing the number of diplomas available. The new addition is a diploma in childhood education. This increases the number of diplomas offered to five. Other diplomas are in pastoral ministries, educational ministries, biblical studies and an advanced diploma. The diploma in childhood education features on-the-job training for church members and staff members who work with children. Information is available from the Seminary Extension offices at (615) 242-2453.

■ **California Baptists remain "Southern."** The California Southern Baptist Convention will keep the word "Southern" in its name for at least one more year, after messengers rejected a bid to remove it during the convention's recent annual meeting. Sixty percent of those voting on the proposal to change the convention name favored shortening it to California Baptist Convention. But that fell short of the two-thirds vote needed. Messengers did approve a motion to reconsider the name change next year.

## Judge upholds Southern Seminary's appeal

LOUISVILLE—Affirming First Amendment concerns presented by Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, a Kentucky Court of Appeals judge has stayed the enforcement of a temporary injunction against the seminary.

The injunction was issued Nov. 18 on behalf of Henry Judy, a seminary student who was suspended Oct. 18 after being accused of cheating on a quiz. Following a three-tiered seminary appeals process that upheld his suspension through December 2000, Judy filed suit against the seminary, charging breach of contract and denial of due process.

Seminary officials appealed the injunction which would have allowed Henry to return to classes, take final exams and remain in seminary housing. Citing both procedural and substantive concerns, the seminary's appeal highlighted Southern's right "to determine whether its students meet the spiritual, religious, moral and ethical standards" of the Southern Baptist Convention.

Court of Appeals Judge William Knopf wrote in his decision that he "has serious concerns whether the trial court has subject matter jurisdiction over the claims presented in Judy's complaint."

Citing religious organizations' constitutional right "to establish their own rules and regulations for internal discipline and government," Knopf added that "the Constitution requires that civil courts accept their decisions."

Although "Judy alleges that the suspension and the conversion of his current course grades to failing will irreparably damage his opportunities to complete his degree and to pursue a career in the ministry," the appeals court judge said a judicial review of the disciplinary proceeding "represents a significant intrusion into the internal functioning"

of the seminary.

"Given the significant First Amendment issues presented," Knopf wrote, "this court finds that Southern Seminary will suffer an irreparable injury if enforcement of the temporary injunction is not stayed."

Knopf's ruling will be reviewed by a three-judge appeals court panel. Seminary attorney Stephen Pitt said that review may take place in January.

Until then, Judy's original suit remains pending before Jefferson Circuit Court. It seeks a permanent order reinstating Judy as a student at Southern and "ordering that he not be the subject of any form of retaliation." It also seeks actual damages, punitive damages and "damages for embarrassment and humiliation."

Responding to the Nov. 29 ruling, Judy said, "In terms of the overall case, it really doesn't impact us at all. We're going to go forward with the suit."

According to Pitt, however, "I think Judge Knopf's conclusion will not be lightly set aside by a panel. I think it's significant that he went beyond the procedural defects and signaled what he saw the substantive issues to be. I think it bodes well for Southern Seminary and for all other churches and religious organizations in that it upholds their First Amendment rights."

Seminary president Al Mohler called Knopf's ruling "a very important victory for Baptists and for Christian institutions."

Staying the injunction "affirms the seminary's right and responsibility to judge discipline matters in a way that is in accord with Scripture and the charge we have received from the churches," Mohler said. "This is an issue that should be especially important to Bap-

tists, given our cherished convictions about religious liberty."

In a related development, seminary public relations director James Smith publicly criticized the Western Recorder's initial news coverage of the lawsuit. Two days later Smith affirmed the Recorder's follow-up coverage of Southern's successful appeal.

The bulk of Smith's concerns centered around minor editing errors when the Recorder's article was reprinted by Associated Baptist Press, an independent national news service. In an Oct. 1 Baptist Press article by seminary employee Tim Ellsworth, Smith said the handling of the article was "a grave disservice" to Kentucky Baptists.

According to ABP editor Bob Allen, "I admit a couple of minor errors in editing, which I regret, but they did not affect the substantial accuracy of the story." He described Recorder editor Trennis Henderson's original article about the lawsuit as "newsworthy, balanced and fair."

Henderson said he stands by "the accuracy and news value of the article as published in the Western Recorder."

Following an article by Henderson published in ABP on the outcome of Southern's appeal, the seminary released a second article through BP that cited Henderson's "careful treatment of this very sensitive matter."

"In both instances, the Recorder has sought to be fair and balanced," Henderson responded. "That commitment has not changed and will not change."

Evaluating the initial criticism by Smith, Western Recorder trustees adopted a resolution last week affirming Henderson's "journalistic integrity, competence and desire to tell and print the truth."

## Cumberland leaders praise revival's results

WILLIAMSBURG—Students involved in Christian ministries at Cumberland College are scrambling to catch up with a recent college revival that resulted in 107 students making spiritual decisions, including conversion to Christianity and rededications.

Campus minister Dean Whitaker said the school has experienced "an unreal kind of movement of the Holy Spirit among our students."

The event began recently when Ken Freeman, an evangelist from San Antonio, Texas, visited the school for Cumberland's revival.

Freeman also spoke at Main Street Baptist Church and a meeting of the campus Fellowship of Christian Athletes. Freeman's message and presentation was similar to those of other people who've spoken, but "it seemed to hit home for a lot of folks," Whitaker said.

Among those who have become Christians are some people whom Whitaker and other students had been praying for and witnessing to for some time, he said.

"We've been making a whole lot of efforts to reach out and do what we can do," he said. "It's just like left and right people have been getting saved and people are getting their lives together."

In addition, Freeman spoke at Quest, a promotional event in which church youth groups are invited to campus for worship and to visit the school. This year's event was held in connection with the Celebrate Jesus 2000 youth rallies throughout Kentucky.

During Quest, more than 150 youth from across the state made spiritual decisions, including becoming Christians, rededicating their lives to Jesus and expressing interest in full-time vocational ministry.

Whitaker said several factors have boosted students' spirituality, including having 72 students involved in missions last summer. Recently, students have been participating in prayer retreats and an evangelism training program.

"It's shocking in a good way, but it wasn't surprising when we sat down and thought about it," he said. "God is just sending us the harvest of people being willing to go out and serve Him."

The school's Baptist Student Union and chapter of Fellowship of Christian Athletes are now trying to involve students who made decision in discipleship groups, Whitaker said. "Unfortunately it came at a time just before we (went) into Thanksgiving break."

Whitaker said he hopes more local churches will get active in student missions and involve students in their work. "The potential for students to minister to the church is unlimited."

## Pastors meet to pray for spiritual revival

By David Winfrey  
News Director

ELIZABETHTOWN—Pastors from throughout Kentucky are meeting in Elizabethtown for a monthly prayer meeting for revival and awakening.

The event encompasses on a larger regional scale other area prayer meetings by pastors throughout the commonwealth, according to a Kentucky Baptist Convention official who has studied prayer.

For the past year, about 50 pastors have traveled on the first Thursday of each month to Severns Valley Baptist Church in Elizabethtown, according to host pastor Billy Compton.

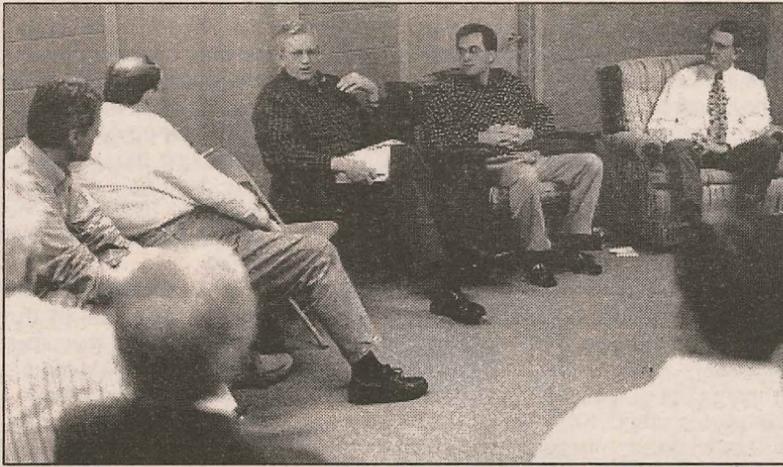
"This is a merging of a couple of different streams," Compton said. Several leaders in his church had been praying for pastors throughout the state at the same time that other pastors report feeling the need to meet regularly for prayer, he said.

Greg Faulls, pastor of Bellevue Baptist Church in Owensboro, traces one starting point for the meeting back to last year's Kentucky Baptist Convention annual meeting in Louisville.

"The thought was to pray for spiritual awakening and God's empowerment," Faulls said. "Whenever we've gathered, the prayer has really been to listen to God, to seek deliverance and freedom in our own lives so that we might see deliverance and freedom in our churches."

Steve Ayers, pastor of Hillview Heights Baptist Church in Bowling Green, said he attends the meeting because it involves "no budgets... no egos."

"The most powerful thing here is there's no agenda but prayer," he said.



**GUIDED PRAYER** David Carter (center) of LifeWay Christian Resources in Nashville leads a prayer session at Severns Valley Baptist Church in Elizabethtown. About 50 pastors have attended the monthly sessions since it started at the first of the year.

Jeff Eaton, pastor of Hope Community Church in Lawrenceburg, agreed. "We're open and honest with each other," he said. "We want to bond as pastors; to be honest with each other and love each other—not be jealous."

Compton called the meeting a "safe environment" for pastors, who often must spend a lot of their energy on others. "This is a restoring time."

Some pastors from other denominations also have been attracted to the event, a trait similar to other regional prayer groups, said Larry Martin, leader of the KBC missions growth team.

"There is a growing movement all over the United States," said Martin, who recently completed a study leave project on prayer. He said he's finding "a movement of prayer that is unprecedented in our lifetime."

Nationwide, there's an e-mail net-

work of pastors praying from Seattle to Miami, Martin said.

"There is a quote that 'God never does anything significant without first setting His people praying.' I think that's what's happening," he said.

Closer to home, Martin said he's heard of pastors meeting for prayer not just in Elizabethtown, but also in Hazard, Litchfield and Paducah. "There are numerous ones that all have emerged at the grassroots level now."

Martin said Art McFee, a Mennonite who has studied previous revivals and spiritual awakenings, found two common traits in such previous events:

■ People pray together across denominational lines for revival.

■ As God begins to move, the news of His work spreads by word of mouth.

"And we're seeing both of those things today," Martin said.

## Kentucky natives seek prayer for Burundi

Continued from page 1

have taken up temporary residence in Nairobi, Kenya.

Working through local Christians, some of whom were themselves detained in the camps, Brandon supplied food and malaria medicine to about 220 families in three weeks before he and his wife, Cathy, a native of Covington, were forced to leave the country.

"We heard several stories about how people were praising God for delivering them from starvation. Some of them hadn't had any food in three days," Brandon said. "It wasn't easy to leave, knowing their situation was not improved, but it made a significant impression on hopeless people and gave newcomers enough food to live on for at least 10 days."

The current atrocity in Burundi recalls the 1994 genocide of 500,000 Tutsis in neighboring Rwanda. Fearing the domination of the minority Tutsi tribe and angered by the assassination of the country's Hutu president, Rwandan Hutus launched a genocidal campaign that ended only after a Tutsi military force drove the Hutu government into exile. Fearing retaliation for the genocide, more than 2 million Rwandan Hutus fled into neighboring countries.

Now the Tutsi-led government and military in Burundi have placed hundreds of thousands of Hutu lives in danger as they try to counter the siege Hutu rebels have set against the capital city.



David & Cathy Brandon

The turmoil in both countries reflects a bitter, centuries-old rivalry between Nilotic tribes of northeastern Africa and Bantu tribes of southeastern Africa, says David Garrison, the International Missions Board's associate vice president for strategy coordination and mobilization. The same tribal rivalries also fuel the regional war boiling in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (formerly Zaire).

More than 200,000 Burundian Hutus, many of them educated leaders, died in massacres in the early 1970s. A second genocide that claimed 150,000 Hutu lives swept the country in 1993 after Tutsi paratroopers assassinated the country's first democratically elected president, a Hutu. The 400,000 Hutus who then fled into Rwanda set the stage for the Rwanda genocide the next year.

"This is an African race war between Bantu and Nilotic races," Garrison said. "The atrocities in the region reveal the depravity that lurks just below the sur-

face of us all."

The fact that Western governments and the mass media largely are ignoring these people's plight means large-scale public pressure won't be brought to bear on the Burundi government—and the people will continue to suffer, Brandon said.

"It's just obvious that the whole situation is too evil for the West to get involved in," he said. "Plus, they have no political or economic reason to get involved. The media look the other way in disgust."

The concerted prayers of God's people may be the only hope for people suffering in the camps, Brandon said.

"Donations are not the solution here," he said. "Even if we were in the country, there is no access to the camps."

Brandon asked for Christians to pray for several items, including:

■ That God will intervene in the political quagmire that is creating the situation.

■ That Christians in the camps would be strong in their faith.

■ For God's peace and security to enter the hearts of true believers who face the enormous pressure of fear.

■ "And pray for the Lord's direction in our future work in Burundi. Our legal ability to return is not guaranteed and work decisions are difficult," Brandon said. "We have been sustained by prayer and we depend on it."

## Real Life magazine ceases publication

LOUISVILLE—Citing a lack of subscribers during the publication's first two years, the Western Recorder's board of directors announced it was halting publication of Real Life, the paper's glossy, color magazine.

Organized around the issues of faith, family, finance and fun, the magazine was designed for use by Kentucky churches as a ministry outreach tool. Cover stories profiled Kentuckians, from a Pulitzer Prize winner to sports stars, whose faith made a difference in their lives.

The decision to cancel all future publications came after "prayerful deliberation and sometimes painful review," said Mark Boes, chairman of the Western Recorder board's finance committee.

Trustees praised the quality of Real Life while noting that the number of subscribers never reached a level sufficient to make the publication financially viable. "This is a door we knocked on, tried to walk through and it didn't work out," Boes said.

Board members also adopted a resolution supporting Recorder Editor Trennis Henderson after recent criticism by a spokesman for Southern Baptist Theological Seminary. The trustees said they affirmed Henderson for his "journalistic integrity, competence and desire to tell and print the truth."

Also during the meeting, board members approved creating a new position for a feature editor/partnerships assistant. The full-time position will expand a currently vacant part-time staff writer position, Henderson said.

## WESTERN RECORDER

P.O. Box 43969  
Louisville, KY 40253  
(ISSN 0043-4132)

TRENNIS HENDERSON  
Editor

DAVID WINFREY  
News Director

MAURI SMITH  
Marketing & Business  
Manager

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

Western Recorder is published weekly by Western Recorder Inc., an agency of the Kentucky Baptist Convention, Box 43969, Louisville, KY 40253, except for one week in July and December. For general information, call (502) 244-6470. Fax: (502) 244-6474. Periodicals postage paid at Louisville, Ky.

**To subscribe:** Send \$10.60 for a one-year, individual subscription. Group subscriptions on the church budget plan are \$8.50 per year. An additional church newsletter service is available for churches of all sizes. All subscriptions are payable in advance, except church accounts, which require a tax exemption number.

**To register change of address:** Send the mailing label from page 1, along with your new address, to the subscription department at the Western Recorder address.

**To give news tips:** Call (502) 244-6471, fax to (502) 244-6474 or write the editor or news director.

**To submit a letter:** Letters on any subject will be considered for publication, provided they do not make a personal attack on anyone. Letters are limited to 300 words and may be edited for length. Submit by mail or fax or by e-mail to: wesrec@ntr.net

**To place an advertisement:** Rates are available upon request by calling (502) 244-6470. Institutional columns on an inside page are paid space. Claims made by advertisers are not necessarily those of the Western Recorder's staff and directors.

**Directors:** Tom Curry, Louisville, chairman; Barry Howard, Corbin, vice chairman; Jim Abernathy, Covington, secretary; Laura Beville, Bowling Green; Mark Boes, Cecilia; Mike Harmon, Princeton; Frank Hatfield, Shepherdsville; Bill Marshall, Louisville; Charles Midkiff, Greenville; June B. Rice, Paintsville; Don Mantoof, Morehead; Kenneth Wells, Somerset.

## Are Americans embarrassed by prayer?

By Dale Hanson Bourke

It is a scene repeated over and over in my memory: Our family is bustling around, hurrying to gather at the dinner table or to grab a slice of pizza. No matter how informal the occasion we would still pause for a moment, bow our heads and pray.

Even in a busy restaurant our family always prayed aloud. My father never cut the blessing short because we were in public. He prayed in a voice loud enough for others to hear and expected a round of "amens" at the end from all of us.

We prayed because we were thankful and because it was a natural part of every meal. We prayed because it seemed like a small way to acknowledge God in our lives.

When I was a child, many people did the same thing. It was not uncommon for families to pray aloud in restaurants or even to settle into their cars and bow their heads. It may still be

common some places, but I rarely see such a gesture anymore.

Perhaps that is part of the reason that initial reaction to a pilot praying in the cockpit of EgyptAir flight 990 was so extreme. Most people couldn't imagine saying a prayer as part of a routine situation. Something bad had to be happening if someone was praying.

### COMMENTARY



Dale Hanson Bourke

For all the tragedy surrounding the crash of the airplane, one of the other tragedies is that Americans have so lost their appreciation of prayer that they find it suspicious.

Some would say they don't pray openly because they don't want to offend others. Yet all major religions include some sort of prayer. And it is typically a personal response to God, not a pronouncement or an indictment of others.

A friend of mine suggested another reason. Remembering how her Catholic family always said a prayer before they started the car or as an air-

plane took off, one day she realized that people were looking at her as she crossed herself. Embarrassed, she stopped praying openly. Now she simply prays silently.

"I'm too embarrassed to let people know I pray," she told me. I think she speaks for many people.

Most of us don't pray openly because we are embarrassed that people will think we are different. We don't thank God in public for fear others will think we are extremists.

If you believe the statistics, America is a religious nation. But we seem to have grown increasingly compartmentalized in our practice of faith, making it something to be done only in private.

Perhaps some of us keep our faith private out of respect for others. But I think most of us are simply embarrassed by prayer and afraid of what others will think of us if they know we pray.

The recent American response to what Egyptians would call a routine prayer may reveal more about us than we realize. Somewhere along the line, Americans became suspicious of prayer.

*Dale Hanson Bourke is publisher of Religion News Service*

My gratitude for Kentucky Baptists and the chance to serve among them is forever in my heart.

*Jim Hawkins*

*Retired Executive Associate  
Kentucky Baptist Convention*

## What are you thinking?

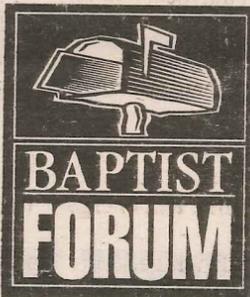
The Western Recorder considers letters on any subject for publication, provided they don't make a personal attack. The maximum length for a letter is 300 words. Baptist Forum is limited to Western Recorder subscribers, unless someone is responding to a story or editorial of which they are the subject. Submit by mail, Box 43969, Louisville, KY 40253; fax, (502) 244-6474; or e-mail, wesrec@ntr.net.

## A bond of ministry

I wish to thank all Kentucky Baptists for the privilege and profound joy of serving alongside them the past 14 years. Their gracious, affirming spirit was so wonderfully expressed in the tribute shared with me during the Kentucky Baptist Convention annual meeting in Covington.

It would be a grand blessing for the work of our Lord among Kentucky Baptists if more laypeople could have the chance to see our folks working together as I have seen it. When people do missions and ministry together, Christ creates a bond that goes

beyond even good friendships and brings to life the real meaning of being brothers and sisters in Christ.



The opportunities to touch and reach our communities and neighbors are the most ripe in all our history. The brokenness, the depravity, the violence and prejudice cry out for release and long for peace of mind and a renewed soul. We can engage these opportunities if we will love those who are different from us

(especially in our churches and associations) and practice the grace and mercy modeled by Jesus Christ.

## PARTNERS IN THE MISSION

### Celebrating the joy of giving

Christmas is such a wonderful time of giving and receiving. As children, we were probably preoccupied with receiving. Hopefully, the older we get the more we enjoy giving.

Jesus said it is more blessed to give than to receive. The Bible records that God loves a "cheerful giver." When we give, we are most like God because He has given so much to us.

Giving also increases our capacity to receive from God. The promise of Malachi 3:10 declares: "Bring ye all the tithes into the storehouse, ... and prove me now herewith, saith the Lord of hosts, if I will not open you the windows of heaven, and pour you out a blessing, that there shall not be room enough to receive it."

This year as I prepare to give to support missions through the Lottie Moon Christmas Offering for International Missions, I think of more than faceless masses and unreached people

groups. I think of the missionaries I have met on partnership mission trips and the sacrifices they have made in order to fulfill the call from God to serve in another culture. Most of them



Bill Mackey

will not be with families this Christmas. Parents and relatives and even children are likely to be in the States. Gifts and celebrations may be limited. However, the significance of mission involvement will be powerful.

This Christmas I also will think of the many Christian leaders I have met in Brazil, Kenya, Romania

and Tanzania. I will remember some of the most committed pastors and evangelists I have ever met. This past summer I met so many serving in Tanzania where Baptist work has become strong despite very limited financial resources. I will especially remember the missions commitment of the late Ken Murphy and his outstanding book, "Russian Harvest."

## FAMILY

### Stewardship and the new millennium

By Doug Strader

We are now less than one month from the year 2000. As we approach this millennial event, we still have a few days to leave our imprint on 1999. One way to impact



the present year is by being faithful stewards of our resources. Take a personal inventory to see what you have accomplished as well as some areas that need to be improved.

Christmas always reminds us that God has given us the greatest gift possible when He gave us Jesus to be our Savior and Lord. Because of His gift, we have the greatest hope of all: When life as we know it is ended, we have an eternal home in heaven. It does not get any better than that!

When we, by faith and trust, become children of God, we then become giving people. There are many ways we can give that bring glory to God. One of the ways we do that is by regularly giving tithes and offerings to God through our church. Because of our faithful giving, our church can then do ministry at home, in our state and around the world through the Cooperative Program. This past budget year, Kentucky Baptist churches gave a record amount through the Cooperative Program. Thank you for your generosity.

Another way to be faithful in our giving is through the Lottie Moon Christmas Offering for International Missions. Why not give your most expensive gift this year to the Lottie Moon Offering? All the money given to the Lottie Moon Offering goes directly to our mission causes around the world.

Another way to be a faithful steward is by helping families who are hurting financially. We can give money to help provide food, lodging, utilities and Christmas gifts for the children. Your church probably has a list of families who need such help.

Try some of these suggestions or others you know about and see if it is not true that "it is more blessed to give than to receive."

None of us knows what will happen as we enter the new millennium, but one thing is certain, if we are faithful stewards of all God has so graciously given to us, whatever happens will be all right because we know the One who holds everything in His hands, including the new millennium.

*Doug Strader is director of the Kentucky Baptist Convention's stewardship department*

## Picking good Christian videos for kids: What are the keys?

**Q: What should I look for in Christian videos for children?**

Despite the quantity of Christian videos available to children, quality and content often are uneven. There are several factors parents should take into consideration when choosing videos for their children:

■ **Be aware of how fact and fantasy are mixed.** Cartoon portrayals of Bible characters can confuse children who are struggling to learn what is real and what is not. Although excellent in production quality and overall content, the popular "VeggieTales" tapes illustrate the problem. As childish understanding gradually gives way to reality, we don't want Bible truth to be dismissed as part of the world of make believe. Parents can help by asking questions like, "What real story does the pretend story remind you of?"

■ **How true are the stories to the Bible?** Make sure the storytellers you put in front of your children stick to the story. Be especially wary of products produced by secular companies, but marketed to Christians.

■ **How age-appropriate are the themes?** Focus on the Family's "Adventure in Odyssey" series tells exciting stories about the kinds of problems and challenges children face every day. Look for videos like this that help children discover and apply biblical principles to situations they can relate to.

■ **Ask for help.** A children's minister, teacher or other parent will be glad to evaluate and recommend videos.

■ **Use video in moderation.** Don't let your children sit in front of the TV all the time, even if they're watching Christian videos. Keep them active!—David Garrard

**Q: I was divorced four years ago and have a daughter from that marriage who is now 11 years old. I am seriously considering getting married again, but I'm concerned about the effect it may have on my daughter. How can I help ease her transition?**

It is wise to consider the effects of this new marriage for your daughter since this decision certainly will affect her life as well as your own.

Remarriage does seem to affect children, although sometimes sons and daughters respond differently to this new family situation. For instance, the remarriage of a mother seems to have a positive affect on sons, maybe due to the entry of an adult male role model into the household.

Many families, however, report an increase in adjustment problems for daughters when the mother remarries. Some experts believe this is because mothers and daughters often gain a special closeness after a divorce and the daughter might view Mom's new husband as a threat to that closeness.

It is important that your daughter's feelings be considered as you make this important decision. This is not to imply that she should have the final say about when and whom you marry, but sometimes it helps for children to know their feelings are taken seriously.

Give your daughter a chance to get used to the idea of your remarriage. Talk to her in appropriate ways about your relationship as it progresses so she isn't forced to adjust quickly to something that may be difficult for her.

Give her some extra attention. Make time to do things with just the two of you. Reassure her through words and actions that she is not being rejected.

She needs to know she is still free to be her father's daughter without hurting you or your new spouse. You can, however, help her see your new husband as someone who cares about her and someone who can have an important place in her life.—Susan Howell

Family Forum writers are David Garrard, minister to children at St. Matthews Baptist Church in Louisville; James Stillwell, minister to singles at Immanuel Baptist Church in Lexington; Susan Howell, assistant professor of psychology at Campbellsville University; Jon Rainbow, a clinical gerontologist and professor at Southern Baptist Theological Seminary; and Wade Rowatt, director of the St. Matthews Pastoral Counseling Center in Louisville. Send questions for Family Forum to Western Recorder, Box 43969, Louisville, KY 40253 or e-mail us at wesrec@ntr.net.



## Saying goodbye to Real Life magazine

It was a valiant effort. Nine issues of Real Life magazine have been produced by the Western Recorder staff during the past two years. Focusing on faith, family, finances and fun, the Christian feature magazine highlighted "practical resources for Kentucky families."

The quarterly full-color publication was designed as a ministry outreach tool to help address the challenges of day-to-day life. Dozens of churches throughout the state ordered and distributed hundreds of copies each quarter.

Unfortunately, circulation has hovered around only 2,000 subscriptions since the magazine was launched. That means quarterly production costs far exceeded subscription income.

The Kentucky Baptist Convention Executive Board graciously provided a one-time grant to help offset production costs. Looking ahead, however, long-term funding was not available to make the effort cost-effective.

As a result, the Western Recorder board of directors made the difficult decision last week to cease publication of Real Life, effective immediately. Kentucky Baptists, especially those who already had come to appreciate Real Life's ministry impact, have lost a valuable resource. On the positive side, the board and staff remain committed to exploring other avenues of providing needed communications resources.

Launching a new ministry is an exciting undertaking. By contrast, deciding when and how to conclude a ministry project often is painful. That is true not only for Real Life, but for ministry efforts in the local church and other settings.

There sometimes is a tendency to prolong established programs even after they have outlived their effectiveness. Even more difficult is the decision to end a worthwhile effort due to lack of funding or response. The key is to carefully evaluate ministry needs, goals and resources to determine the best use of time and energy for the sake of God's kingdom.

The Western Recorder staff and board members have done just that. Despite Real Life's brief history, board members emphasized the venture was not a failure. Nu-

merous reports have been shared about how individual lives have been affected by the words of challenge and encouragement in each issue. Hopefully, the back issues will continue to circulate in doctors' offices, hair salons, laundromats, homes and other settings where church members have used Real Life to help share a positive Christian witness.

For those congregations that never discovered Real Life, a few back issues remain available for future ministry projects. Churches have used copies of the magazine in door-to-door visitation, in Christmas baskets, as a gift to guests or prospects or as a community mail-out. If those or other options can be of help to your church, let us know.

As we bid farewell to Real Life, a few words of appreciation are in order:

■ To former editor Mark Wingfield who had the vision and goal of establishing a family-focused Christian feature magazine.

■ To the Western Recorder staff who contributed hours of time and commitment to make Real Life a reality.

■ To the Recorder board who took the risk of endorsing a new avenue of ministry.

■ To the churches who utilized Real Life as a creative way to impact their communities for Christ.

Real Life's inaugural issue in 1997, which featured a cover story about Kentucky basketball star Cameron Mills, became a sought-after collector's item. Since then, cover stories have ranged from NASCAR driver Darrell Waltrip to Pulitzer Prize-winning journalist Angelo Henderson.

Each issue tackled such timely topics as help for troubled marriages, tips for family finances and making memories with grandchildren. The back cover of each issue was reserved for a gospel presentation, including the latest one which invited readers to discover "the lasting peace and joy that comes through a personal relationship with Jesus Christ."

Obviously, saying goodbye to Real Life is hard. Hopefully, it will serve as a lasting reminder of the importance of pursuing innovative approaches to ministry. If so, Real Life truly was a success.

### STRAIGHT FROM THE EDITOR



Trennis Henderson

## Can anything good come out of Nazareth?

By John Ditty

The next day Jesus decided to leave for Galilee. Finding Philip, He said to him, "Follow me." Philip, like Andrew and Peter, was from the town of Bethsaida. Philip found Nathanael and told him, "We have found the one Moses wrote about in the Law, and about whom the prophets also wrote—Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph." "Nazareth! Can anything good come from there?" Nathanael asked. "Come and see," said Philip. (John 1:43-46)

"You're from where?" When your wife is from Flat Lick, Ky., you hear that question quite a bit. Not much ever happened there. Their claim to fame is a marker that states Daniel Boone's Wilderness Road passed through there.

Though very few folks know where my wife's hometown is, many have been touched by her love for Jesus that she freely shares. This is not so unusual because Charlene is one of a long line of people from obscure places making

a marked difference in God's kingdom. The lineage of folks like her can be traced all the way back to another who came from an out-of-the-way village—One whose worth was questioned because of the place He called home.

Who was this one? He was Jesus of Nazareth. Early in His ministry, as He was gathering around Him those He would call His apostles, one asked an unusual question. His name was Nathanael, the brother of Philip. Philip invited him to meet a man he was sure was the one of whom Moses spoke.

Nathanael responded, "Can anything good come out of Nazareth?" Many have pondered Nathanael's statement. Was his mind racing through Scripture to see what prophecy was being fulfilled through Jesus coming from Nazareth? Was he expounding on the philosophical irony of the Messiah coming from a small town rather than Jerusalem? Or was he just being a little snip? After all who, coming out of that town, ever amounted to anything? Nathanael knew Nazareth was only a tiny, dusty, one-spring town of little significance.

Nathanael may have known Nazareth, but he did not know Jesus. However, over the course of the next three years he would find that something good had come from that insignificant village. Out of that town came One who would heal and teach and challenge all who would listen. But even more than that, out of Nazareth came the One who would take away the sin of the world.

Indeed, Jesus spent 30 years living amid the little happenings of a little town, yet His life, death and resurrection would be the defining point of human history. Through His death on the cross, He would give back to the world life and through the power demonstrated through the empty tomb, He would give back hope.

Can anything good come out of Nazareth? The One who gives us life and power, peace and liberty came out of Nazareth. The One who came out of Nazareth is the same One the prophets wrote about, the angels sang about and the Father promised would come. He is the One whose birth we will soon celebrate. Today you may not know where to find Nazareth on a map, but may you find Jesus in your heart.



John Ditty is pastor of Harlan Baptist Church

## Christian Coalition's financial & leadership problems deepen

WASHINGTON (RNS)—The Christian Coalition's financial and organizational woes appear to have deepened.

The coalition, once the religious right's standard-bearer, has been sued by its direct-mail fund-raiser for nonpayment of bills and has lost its Washington lobbying chief.

A suit filed in Alexandria, Va., by the direct-mail firm, Stephen Winchell & Associates, charged the coalition with nonpayment of about \$400,000—even though the company said it helped the coalition raise \$7 million.

Meanwhile, Randy Tate, the coalition's chief Washington lobbyist and its one-time executive director, has resigned.

Coalition founder Pat Robertson told the Virginian-Pilot newspaper that his organization was "quite a mess." However, coalition spokesman Chris Freund said Dec. 2 that the coalition was not in danger of shutting down.

"Obviously we have some financial and other issues to deal with. But, again, we're quite confident we can. We're looking forward to the new year," Freund said.

With Tate's departure, the Virginian-Pilot quoted unnamed coalition sources as saying, "there is almost no one in a senior position at the national headquarters today who was there a year ago."

Tate, a one-time Washington state congressman, stepped down as the coalition's executive director and shifted to Washington lobbying duties in June as part of a coalition reorganization. That reorganization followed an Internal Revenue Service decision to deny the coalition tax-exempt status.

Freund said the coalition's current debt was about \$2 million, which he called "manageable."

"We have vendors we owe some money to, but we're working out repayment schedules," he said.

## Salvation Army needs a few good bellringers

By Kevin Eckstrom  
Religion News Service

STUART, Fla. (RNS)—They are as much a part of the holiday season as Christmas lights and a shopping mall Santa Claus. When the Salvation Army bellringers arrive with their red collection kettles, you know Christmas can't be far behind.

But this year officials from the nation's top-grossing charity are struggling to find volunteers to staff the kettles in some parts of the country. Without volunteers, the Salvation Army is forced to pay bellringers and more than half of the donated money never gets to the people who need it most.

"I have all my bases covered, but it's not the way I want," said Capt. Robert Reckline, the commanding officer at the St. Lucie County, Fla., corps. "I have to pay everyone."

For years, volunteers stood outside shopping malls and department stores with a gentle smile and a steady ring. But this year Salvation Army officials along Florida's Treasure Coast say those volunteers are nowhere to be found, and nearly half of the \$30,000 to \$50,000 they hope to collect will be spent on paychecks.

The annual bellringing campaign from Thanksgiving to Christmas is lucrative for the Salvation Army, an evangelical Protestant church that is best known for its charity work. Last year Salvation Army bellringers collected about \$79 million in 20,000

kettles around the country.

Of the \$1.2 billion collected last year by the Salvation Army, about 23 percent came through its ubiquitous thrift stores and 28 percent from direct mail solicitations. A full 84 percent of its donations went directly to service programs.

Theresa Whitefield, a spokeswoman for the Alexandria, Va.-based organization, said whether local chapters pay bellringers or recruit volunteers depends on the area. While she doesn't expect the lack of bellringers to be a national problem, she said the appeal is just getting started and it may be too early to tell.

"At this point it doesn't appear to be a problem, but we are very early into the season right now," Whitefield said.

Reckline and his counterpart in neighboring Martin County, Capt. Alan Phillips, are at a loss for why no one is volunteering to man the kettles this year. With Florida's large retirement population, they said volunteers should not be hard to find.

"We need our kettle program to pick up the slack (from slow months) and when you have a bellringer making \$6 an hour, you don't make a profit until they collect a

certain amount of money," Phillips said. "It's basic economics."

What's more, Phillips said holiday donations this year are down \$10,000 from last year. In September and October, the driest months for the Army, Phillips said his office had to turn people away because of lack of funds.

Economics and bottom line aside, both Phillips and Reckline agree the bellringers employed by the Salvation Army need the jobs. The Army fills the jobs with people who come to the agency seeking assistance.

They are people like 19-year-old Erica Cirilo of Jensen Beach, Fla., who spends 12 hours a day, six days a week outside the Jensen Beach Publix with her kettle. This is Cirilo's first year as a bellringer; she said the money helps care for her infant son.

"It's fun," she said recently, despite the monotony of the job and the occasional headache caused by the constant ting-a-ling. "You get to meet a lot of people."

**YOUTH GROUPS NEEDED**  
PRE-PACKAGED MISSION TRIPS  
11 US cities + Toronto  
NAMB endorsed  
800 299-0385 - www.yom.org  
**YOUTH ON MISSION**

## Thanksgiving and hope

By the time you read this you already will have celebrated Thanksgiving Day and made your gift to the Thanksgiving Offering for the ministry of our beloved Kentucky Baptist Homes for Children.

Someone has said, "the world tomorrow will belong to those who give it hope." The Christ-centered mission of Kentucky Baptist Homes for Children is all about giving hope to hurting children and families. I want to be a part of that future of giving hope in the name of Christ, don't you? As you consider God's purposes in your stewardship planning, please include in your consideration this important ministry.

It's the oldest Southern Baptist childcare ministry in the nation and the largest private childcare provider in Kentucky. For 130 years Kentucky Baptist Homes for Children has been extending the hands and feet of Kentucky Baptists and Kentucky Baptist churches to touch in the name of Jesus the lives of young victims of abuse and neglect and of hurting families. Through this ministry, you and I are there to provide God's love, compassion and embrace to those of God's children who are in special need of God's healing hand.

**KENTUCKY BAPTIST FOUNDATION**



Barry Allen

Through the Kentucky Baptist Foundation you have the opportunity to ensure the future of this special and vital ministry. With the establishment of a permanent endowment or trust fund you can provide help until Jesus comes again, and it will be a testimony to your own commitment to Jesus Christ and his ministry to children. Perhaps you

would be interested in establishing such a legacy during your lifetime with a gift of cash, appreciated stock or real estate. If you need to receive income during your life from the asset you give, a charitable gift annuity or charitable remainder trust is worth considering. Perhaps you are more inclined to establish such a fund upon your death. If so, a bequest in your will, a life insurance or a retirement plan beneficiary designation would be worth considering.

Laurie Valentine, our trust attorney, and I would consider it a privilege to assist you in your consideration. Please call toll-free at (888) 254-5701. There is no cost to you.

Barry Allen is president of the Kentucky Baptist Foundation, 10605 Shelbyville Road, Louisville, KY 40223; (888) 254-5701

## Tell Us Where It Hurts

- ◆ Depression
- ◆ Anxiety
- ◆ High Stress
- ◆ Hopelessness
- ◆ Anorexia
- ◆ Bulimia
- ◆ Drug & Alcohol Addictions
- ◆ Thoughts of Suicide

Some problems are too big to handle alone ... problems that leave God's people in pain, feeling helpless and hopeless. It doesn't have to be this way. Rapha's Christ-centered professional counseling can help Christians struggling with emotional and substance-abuse problems turn life's most difficult situations into opportunities for personal growth, restoring God's peace and joy in their lives. Help is a phone call away 24 hours a day.

**1-800-383-HOPE**

CATHOLIC HEALTH INITIATIVES

**CARITAS Peace Center**

**Rapha**

*Where the healing begins*

## Should Pokémon be on your Christmas list?

Continued from page 1  
(www.slate.com).

"All" refers to the 151 Pokémon currently available in the United States. Next year, 100 new Pokémon are set to be released.

Plotz calls the Pokémon trading card game "an intellectually demanding game," acknowledging that it "may resemble Dungeons & Dragons more than any toy fad" as "Pokémon creates an

entire alternate universe, a land with its own cities, ecosystem and rules."

He also recounts "usual fundamentalist protests," such as a Colorado preacher who allegedly made the children in his congregation watch as he burned Pokémon cards and used a sword to chop up a Pokémon toy.

One Christian movie reviewer found "Pokémon: the First Movie" didn't offend his faith as much as it did his sense

of entertainment.

"You'll be hard-pressed to find a positive review of this movie, Christian or otherwise," states John Evans, of Christianity Today Online (www.christianitytoday.com). "Presumably because no one's hiring 6-year-old critics."

Evans acknowledges the concerns some Christian parents have about Pokémon's use of mystical powers. "There is also the concern that the popularity is the first step for some children to occultic games, undesirable beliefs and a mesmerizing fantasy world."

Loren Eaton offers both praise and caution in the Nov. 17 edition of Focus on the Family's "Plugged In" on-line publication (www.family.org).

Eaton navigates through some of the more outrageous claims floating around on the Internet about Pokémon, then concludes by stating Pokémon "encourages reading, critical thinking and social interaction."

But Eaton also cautions that Pokémon contains mild violence, can lead to other disturbing games, is addictive and can easily cause strife between parents and children. "Additionally, the mere presence of ghosts and 'psychic' characters may effectively nix Pokémon for some families. In all cases, caution and moderation are key."

Eaton warns parents who don't mind their kids playing Pokémon to watch for signs of addiction, including "obsessive behavior, a consistent unwillingness to do schoolwork, disobedience when asked to leave the game to come to dinner, etc."

## Coalition sends school leaders pamphlet about homosexuality

WASHINGTON (RNS)—A coalition of medical, educational, mental health and religious organizations plans to send a booklet urging gay tolerance to American public school superintendents.

The Just the Facts Coalition recently announced it would mail the 12-page booklet to the heads of all 14,700 public school districts in the country.

The booklet states there is "no support among health and mental health professional organizations" for the idea that homosexuality is mentally unhealthy or abnormal.

The coalition includes the American Academy of Pediatrics, the National Education Association, the American Psychological Association and the Interfaith Alliance Foundation.

The coalition said the publication "provides information that will help school administrators and educators to create safe and healthy environments in which all students can achieve to the best of their ability."

The booklet, "Just the Facts About Sexual Orientation & Youth," also voices concern about potential harm to gay students posed by "reparative therapy" and other measures that aim to change sexual orientation, The New York Times reported.

Conservative groups criticized the distribution of the booklet. "If they're going to talk about 'the facts,' here's a fact: All the major religions of the world consider homosexuality wrong," said Janet Parshall, chief spokeswoman for the Family Research Council in Washington, D.C.

John Paulk, a homosexuality and gender analyst for religious broadcaster James Dobson's Focus on the Family, said the booklet is based on politics, not science.

"They're saying they want to present factual information on homosexuality, but we believe that they're presenting propaganda," he said.

LifeWay's Exclusive Bus Source

Carpenter Bus Sales, Inc.

328 Southgate Court, Brentwood, TN 37027



Call Today!  
(800) 370-6180

www.carpenterbus.com

- ◆ LifeWay Discount
- ◆ 15-passenger Vans
- ◆ We buy used buses

Available in 20' to 37' models  
(12 to 47 passengers, New & Used)

Since 1953

We specialize in church buses

## Peace, Luke 2:1-7

By Kathy Griffith Fish

Because we know the end of the story and because we have imbued all elements of Jesus' birth with a sort of mythology, we tend to forget that Mary and Joseph must have felt anything but peaceful on that magical night. We know the baby will be born safely and will live to die and rise again for our sins. We know no room in the inn will result in an enchanting birth complete with sheep, cows, shepherds and all the other elements of our favorite nativity scene.

In fact, however, Mary must have been wracked with pain and confusion; Joseph, frantic with worry and frustration. The birth of a baby is an occasion for anxious joy during the best of times, but for the young mother and her carpenter fiancé, this trip to "the ancestral home," as the Living Bible puts it, must have seemed like a time "to go to pieces" rather than feel God's peace.

Although we are not likely to go into labor while riding a donkey or be forced to spend a night in a stable instead of the Holiday Inn, we are likely to feel as much stress as peace during the Christmas season. Seasonal job-related pressures, card addressing, gift buying and more

holiday activities than we can squeeze into a calendar all might make us "go to pieces" rather than feel God's peace.

A "return to (an) ancestral home" might be an additional pressure. For me, a return to my "ancestral home" in the Midwest is always stressful as I find myself in an old but unfamiliar environment dealing with the pressures of being an adult child. By the same token, when my home on Brush Arbor is the holiday destination, I find myself more caught up in cleaning, cooking and planning than in celebrating and worshipping.

Yet I know through faith that God's peace is a gift for me at Christmas or anytime of year. As I ant-

icipate Advent by sharing this devotion with you, I know that whether I will be driving the bleak terrain of Interstate 29 between Kansas City and Omaha or leaning over the oven in my own Kentucky kitchen, God will help me feel more peaceful, just as He helped those young and frightened parents so long ago.

Kathy Griffith Fish is associate professor of English at Cumberland College.

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

CUMBERLAND COLLEGE



## When we understood

Do you remember the exact moment you knew you were without Jesus? Tina does.

This beautiful teenager currently living in one of our residential programs said there was a time when she knew without a shadow of a doubt that she was trying to make it on her own. She said she never had felt so alone, empty and vulnerable. When given the opportunity to really explore what a life in Christ means, she grabbed onto it with both hands. Now she knows she will never be alone again.

Life hasn't been rosy for Tina since she accepted the gift of salvation. She still is struggling mightily against that old familiar instinct to try to take control of her life. She knows her track record isn't so good in this area, but still, she'd rather be in control than trust someone else.

Do you know how she feels? Sometimes it is hard for kids and adults to use our faith to help us through the daily trials of life. The Holy Spirit has so much power to offer, and we know so little about how to appropriate that power. Depending on someone we can't even see to guide us is a radical thing. Can you recall when you

tried to grasp that kind of trust? Maybe you were like Tina, and church, Scripture and prayer were all very new to you. Do you remember what that felt like?

During the Christmas season, our kids are showered with presents and parties. It is such a blessing, and our children need to know they are loved. Even with all these blessings, I need to ask you to pray for more. Pray that our children will come to an understanding of what the love of Christ is all about.

You provide them such insight into sacrificial giving and the lavishing of love for the glory of God. They also need to realize they have a God-sized hole in their hearts that no amount of human love

can fill.

I remember when I understood that. Tina does, too. Pray that all our children will come to that understanding and respond by accepting the perfect, holy gift of Christ.

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

HOMES FOR CHILDREN



Bill Smithwick

## NATIONAL NOTES

■ **Abortion laws temporarily blocked.** Supreme Court Justice John Paul Stevens temporarily barred Illinois and Wisconsin from enforcing laws that ban some late-term abortions. Stevens' order will remain in effect while abortion providers prepare to seek a Supreme Court review of a federal appeals court decision last month upholding both laws, Associated Press reported. Both laws ban a procedure known by opponents as "partial birth abortion." The Wisconsin law, enacted in 1998, provides for life in prison for anyone performing the procedure except to save the life of the mother. The Illinois law, enacted in 1997, makes it a felony to use the procedure.

■ **Guides drafted for stem-cell research.** The National Institutes of Health has issued draft guidelines for the controversial study of stem cells derived from human embryos, which research scientists believe has the potential to advance treatment of numerous diseases. The draft states the early human embryos from which the stem cells are derived must be from frozen embryos that remain as the result of infertility treatment. Ben Mitchell, a Southern Baptist bioethicist, said the guides "represent government-funded, biotech cannibalism." "The decision to kill embryos taints whatever use the cells may have," said Mitchell, a consultant with the Southern Baptist Ethics & Religious Liberty Commission.

■ **School asks "forgiveness" for racism.** The president of Abilene (Texas) Christian University formally asked forgiveness for past admission policies that kept the school off-limits to African-Americans from its inception in 1906 to its integration in the mid-1960s. Royce Money issued the apology Nov. 21 at the 50th celebration of Founder's Day at Southwestern Christian College in Terrell, Texas, a historically black sister institution to Abilene Christian. Both Abilene Christian and Southwestern Christian are affiliated with the 1.8 million-member Churches of Christ.

■ **Ten Commandments plan dropped.** A California school board has overturned its previous decision to display the Ten Commandments in school offices because it feared a costly legal battle with the American Civil Liberties Union. The ACLU sued the board Nov. 16, citing a 1980 Supreme Court decision that declared the posting of the Ten Commandments in schools was unconstitutional. The Val Verde Board of Education in Riverside County voted unanimously Nov. 22 to overturn earlier decisions it made to display the commandments, Associated Press reported.

■ **Group postpones outing churches.** The General Board of the American Baptist Churches USA has voted to postpone the ouster from the denomination of four

California congregations that welcome homosexuals, giving the churches more time to seek membership in regional bodies that will accept them. The decision affects four San Francisco congregations that have been expelled from their regional body. The 5,800 congregations that comprise the 1.5 million-member denomination must be members of a regional group to belong to the national denomination. The board action postpones the termination of denominational status of the four churches until June 30, 2001. If they gain new regional affiliation, they would avoid questions about their status within the denomination.

■ **"Choose Life" license plate on hold.** Florida officials have stopped production of the controversial "Choose Life" license plate until a lawsuit against it is resolved. Supporters say the plate—featuring a crayon drawing of two children—is merely a statement in favor of adoption, but opponents claim it is a political statement against abortion. Former Democratic state Rep. Barry Silver, along with the National Organization for Women, has sought an injunction against the plate in court, Associated Press reported. The tag was approved earlier this year by state legislators, and Gov. Jeb Bush signed off on it on Nov. 23. Money raised through the sales of the plates will support organizations serving

pregnant women who plan to put their babies up for adoption.

■ **Bias alleged in House chaplain choice.** The normally non-controversial post of chaplain to the House of Representatives has become decidedly controversial. Catholics say a priest who appeared the frontrunner for the post did not get the job simply because he is Roman Catholic. A House committee screened almost 50 candidates for the job, which became vacant with the retirement of James Ford, a Lutheran who held the post for 21 years. In secret balloting, the committee named its three top contenders—the first being Timothy O'Brien, a Catholic priest and Marquette University political science professor. But House Republican leaders selected Charles Wright, who was third in the balloting.

■ **Idaho cross sparks debate.** An estimated 10,000 people marched in Boise in opposition to a threat by an atheist organization to file suit in an effort to force the removal of a 60-foot cross that for 43 years has stood on a 1,000-foot bluff overlooking the Idaho city. The Idaho Jaycees constructed the cross on what was then public property in 1956. The Jaycees then purchased the sliver of land on which the cross stands for \$100 in 1972 to thwart a potential suit from the American Civil Liberties Union.

## 'In my rear-view mirror'

It should not come as a surprise to our friends to know that every day at Oneida is not blissful and uneventful. We, like you, face different situations, some pleasant and exciting, others frustrating and discouraging. Though I love Oneida and enjoy my work immensely, at times the responsibilities and demands are staggering.

I presume nearly everyone faces unpleasant challenges each day, but most of us, by nature and God's design, look on the brighter side of things. That does not mean we don't have frustrations. It does mean we choose to overcome those difficulties and dwell on the positive side of life.

A few months ago, I received a rather tart letter from the grandmother of a student we had asked to leave. I have learned over the years that dealing with a parent about problems we are having with a student is one thing. Dealing with grandparents is something else! I am a grandparent too, but I know I will always be understanding if someone should mention that one of my grandchildren misbehaved or did some little mischievous thing. Ha, ha!

Anyhow, this grandparent was not only disturbed that her grandchild had been asked to leave our school, she was also upset with us because since leaving our school he had gotten into further trouble, and that was also our fault. Furthermore, she could not understand why we had failed with her grandson in the first place. Somehow, she had believed we are always successful.

I honestly don't know where she got that idea, and I wish we were always successful, but life is just not that way. I believe my readers over the years have read about some of our failures. Sometimes students, in spite of our best efforts, are

asked to leave because they want to go home or because we feel it is in the best interest of that student or our other students.

I had put that letter out of my mind until last week, when I received a note in the mailbox just outside my office. During the day, various faculty, staff and students drop in requests, complaints or questions. The note had been written by a student we had asked to leave our school. Frankly, he was not asked to leave over some trivial offense.

He had caused a rather serious problem, and we believed it was in his and others' best interest for him to go home. Sending a student home is not a pleasant experience. Often the student is very upset about being expelled. The parents and grandparents are normally not happy about it, and we often lose sleep over having to make such a troubling decision.

The young man who had written me this note first came to Oneida Baptist Institute in the fall of 1996. He had typical needs, including poor grades and living in a single-parent home. He stayed at home at the start of his junior

year, but after one semester returned to Oneida because he did not do very well at home. This was his senior year, and we regretted having to expel him. The note he left in my mailbox said in part, "I would like to take this opportunity to say goodbye. Your school has influenced me so much and I hate to see this school fade in my rear-view mirror. I'm sorry, sir." I wish parents and grandparents were this understanding.

*W.F. Underwood is president of Oneida Baptist Institute, P.O. Box 67, Oneida, KY 40972. www.oneidaschool.org*

### THIS IS ONEIDA



W.F. Underwood

## Thanks for a squeaky leg

The chapel service two days before Thanksgiving included a testimony by Traci Beal of Life Action Ministries.

The team conducted a three-week crusade in Knox County. In this season of giving, Traci reminds us again that it is God's will to give thanks in everything.

After Traci was born two months premature, the doctor told her father, "She would be better off dead."

The umbilical cord was wrapped around her leg and she had a cleft lip. In later years, her leg was amputated and she was fitted with a prosthesis.

"My parents loved me and challenged me to do anything," Traci said. "Other children avoided me or made fun of me."

"I closed up and became angry. In high school I had no close friendships and became reclusive."

"In college, I decided to try to act normal, but I was still angry with God. Relationships failed, and I went through moral compromises, eating disorders and other attempts to be the perfect woman."

"In 1996, God finally got a hold on my heart and I faced the choice—His way or mine. I sur-

rendered to Christ and started Bible study."

Traci completed graduate school as a speech therapist. While working with stroke and accident victims, she realized God could use her life to help others.

"The loss of my leg provided an opening for ministry to my patients. I learned to thank God for the way He made me," Traci said. "We can't understand His ways, but we can obey His word."

As Traci told her story many people would say, "I never realized you had an artificial leg." She indicated this brought less dependence on God. Then one day her leg developed a squeak.

"I couldn't walk without a squeak. I told God if He wanted everyone to know I had an artificial leg that was all right with me. I'll take it and thank You for it."

"The squeak is now gone, and God continues to bless my life. I thank Him for everything."

### CLEAR CREEK CHRONICLE



Bill Whittaker

*Bill Whittaker is president of Clear Creek Baptist Bible College, Pineville, KY 40977*

# BOOKS

**Tackling Tough Issues.** Compiled by Rhonda Reeves. New Hope Publishers, 1999. 134 pages. \$8.99. ♦♦♦♦♦ (out of five)

With topics like violence, conflicts, family problems, spiritual development, etc., a reader might expect this to be a book about issues facing youth. Instead, it is about the issues facing preschoolers.

The days when preschool parents could expect their children to be care-free and untroubled are over, if those days ever existed. Besides being an excellent guide, this book is a wake-up call to preschool parents and teachers about the importance of the early years.

This book draws upon nine contributors to help parents and teachers discover solutions to the tough issues facing preschoolers. The goal is to help young

children cope with the problems of today's world. The book delivers the situation and the solution straightforwardly without wasted words. The approach is like a conversation one would have with a preschool expert at the door while picking up a child from preschool care or Sunday school. The information does not overwhelm, but readers will leave with a greater foundation to deal with the issue. This is not to say the book is not filled with quality information and suggestions, because it is. Rather, one is more likely to remember and use the information presented here because it has the feel of coming from a trusted friend who cuts to the bottom line.

This is a good resource book for churches to make available for preschool families and workers either by putting it in the media library or giving it to each teacher and family as a gift. *Wayne Hager.*



**Love Found a Way: Stories of Christmas.** Ron Mehl. WaterBrook Press, 1999. 146 pages. \$12.95. ♦♦♦♦♦

**Joy to the World! The Stories Behind Your Favorite Christmas Carols.** Kenneth Osbeck. Kregel Publications, 1999. 112 pages. \$8.99. ♦♦♦♦♦

**Christ in the Carols: Thirty-one Devotionals for Christmas and Advent.** Christopher & Melodie Lane. Tyndale House Publishers, 1999. 178 pages. \$12.99. ♦♦♦♦♦

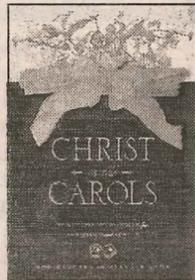
By now you may be looking for a last minute gift for a friend, co-worker or family member. Any one of these three books would be worth considering.

"Love Found a Way" is Ron Mehl's celebration of the love of God, which overcomes great obstacles to transform our lives now and forever. Through a

warm, insightful and occasionally humorous blend of biblical exegesis, devotional commentary and human interest stories, Mehl gets straight to the heart of the meaning of

"God with us." As one who, by his own admission, gets carried away with Christmas, Mehl concludes the book with this observation: "The message of Christmas is this: If by the birth of Jesus the love of God found a way to break into space and time and bring light, life, salvation, hope, joy and help into our lives, then no barrier in your life can frustrate Him."

"Love Found a Way" would be a meaningful gift for a Christian who is struggling with discouragement and doubt, as well as a unique opportunity to witness to an unsaved friend or family member.



"Joy to the World" and "Christ in the Carols" both focus on the music of Christmas, but in different ways. In "Joy to the World," Kenneth Osbeck provides insights into the backgrounds of 25 Christmas carols. Most of the carols are familiar, and some of the stories you have heard before. Yet, Osbeck includes some newer and less familiar carols, as well as some interesting tidbits of information on the most familiar carols. For example, "O Come All Ye Faithful" has a fourth stanza (which is actually the second), and though it is most often identified as an anonymous Latin hymn, it was actually composed by an English layman in 1744. A delightful addition to each chapter is a quote or two that moves the reader beyond merely being informed about the carol to reflecting on its message.

In "Christ in the Carols," Christopher and Melodie Lane encourage the use of Christmas carols to deepen one's walk with Jesus Christ. The book is designed as an Advent and Christmas devo-

tional guide. Each of the chapters begins with a verse or two of a carol, followed by a brief narrative on the carol's message. Following the narrative are two or three verses of scripture related to the message of the carol, with instructions on how to incorporate them into a time of introspection and reflection. Each chapter concludes with a prayer built on some aspect of the carol. One thing I appreciated about this book is its rich blending of familiar and unfamiliar carols.

Though many Baptists are not into celebrating Advent, each of these books, in its own way, reminds us that

the time between Thanksgiving and Christmas can be used for so much more than buying presents and running from one party to another. *Jim Holladay*

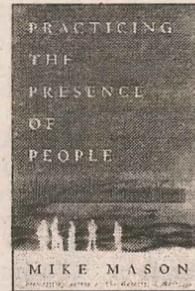
**Practicing the Presence of People: How We Learn to Love.** Mike Mason. WaterBrook Press, 1999. 224 pages. \$11.95. ♦♦♦♦♦

The inspiration for Mason's book is the classic devotional book by Brother Laurence, "The Practice of the Presence of God." Mason encourages readers to apply the same principles of knowing God to knowing the people around us. Mason walks the reader down a path to learn how to intentionally choose and cultivate the depth of love and concern in relationship with others that we desire.

The book is 65 meditations of only a few pages in length. Each meditation explores one way in which a person can begin to give oneself fully to another person in relationship. Mason is convinced we should learn how to enjoy people again and to find connectedness in a world of isolation. In order to do this we need the same intentionality as we have with our relationship with God.

The novelty of Mason's approach is in the idea of approaching people in the same way as we approach God. One result Mason proposes is that we will find ourselves in closer relationship with God. Mason says, "The more I make my peace with people, the deeper grows my peace with God. The more I pay attention to people and connect with them, the richer grows my prayer life."

I commend Mason's book as a source of daily devotions. The result may be a richer and deeper relationship with other people and with God. *Wayne Hager*



## Documentary details controversy of RSV Bible translation

By Adelle Banks  
Religion News Service

WASHINGTON (RNS)—Luther Weigle, the late dean of Yale Divinity School, had dreamed of a symbol of Christian unity—a new Bible that could be embraced by all.

But the Revised Standard Version, whose translation committee he chaired in the 1940s, turned out to be the starting point of a battle that led to division among Christians—and among scriptural translations.

The Bible controversy is the subject of a documentary, "Bible Under Fire: The Story of the RSV Translations," which recently aired on the Odyssey cable television network.

The RSV was the first project of the National Council of Churches, an ecumenical group of Protestant and Orthodox denominations that began 50 years ago. The documentary was produced for the NCC by Odyssey Productions, a division of the network.

The RSV was published in 1952 after 15 years of work by a committee of scholars. It was the first version to gain popularity since the King James Version, which was released in 1611.

Although its creators dubbed it an "accurate, accessible and distinctly American Bible for the 20th century,"

its detractors countered that it was "the most dangerous book of the 20th century."

A single sentence in the book of Isaiah turned out to be the spark of the controversy.

Based on the discovery of the Dead Sea Scrolls in 1947, the translators decided Isaiah 7:14 should no longer say "a virgin shall conceive and bear a son." They determined that "virgin" should be replaced with "young woman."

"The charge was made that these translators were trying to deny either the prophecy in Isaiah as a reference to Jesus or to deny the virginity of Mary and ultimately the deity of Jesus," said David Lull, director of Bible translation and utilization for the NCC, in an interview in the documentary.

One Rocky Mount, N.C., pastor was so outraged that he publicly burned the page of the RSV that included the passage. Another critic delivered the burned ashes of the RSV in a tin can to Weigle's doorstep.

"It was kind of the touchstone, the lightning rod," said John Wackman, the executive in charge of the documentary's production, of the Isaiah passage.

But the publishing of the Bible in the midst of the McCarthy era when fears of communism ran high only made matters worse for the new form of

Scripture.

Critics claimed the RSV was the work of communists, a claim vehemently denied by the translation committee.

"It certainly didn't help that Thomas Nelson published the early editions of the RSV with a very, very red cover," said Walter Harrelson, professor emeritus of Vanderbilt University Divinity School, also interviewed in the special. "That was not their intention, to be sure, to support the communist cause. They were about as conservative as any of the critics of the translators, but they certainly fed fuel to the flame."

In the end, a promotional campaign—featuring public presentations of the RSV to President Harry Truman and baseball celebrity Jackie Robinson—helped advance the RSV's popularity.

Andrew Young, the former U.S. ambassador who was installed as NCC's president Nov. 11, said the new version changed his religious life when he read it as he neared his college graduation.

"It was the first Bible that I ever opened up that I could read and understand," he said in the documentary. "It changed my life in more ways than I can imagine because all of a sudden religion began to make sense."

But critics of the RSV discouraged reading of the new Scripture because

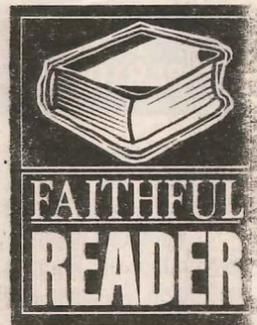
they believed it represented the translators' views, rather than God's inerrant word.

"We had public meetings in churches and halls, telling everybody that the RSV was a mistake and that they should stay by the King James," said Carl McIntire, president and founder of the International Council of Churches, in the documentary.

Although Weigle had hoped the RSV would last for generations, he soon was convinced another translation—the New Revised Standard Version—was necessary. As a committee worked on that translation—which when published in 1989 included more inclusive language than the RSV—evangelicals began working on the now-popular New International Version of the Bible. The NIV, which was published in 1978, returned the word "virgin" to Isaiah 7:14.

The documentary cites other translations flooding the Bible market, giving readers a plethora of choices in scriptural language. Scholars interviewed predict future translations will address the controversial issues of race, class, gender and homosexuality.

"That seems to be just accepted, that the translations will continue," said Wackman, the special's producer. "The controversy will always be a part of translation, as it has been for hundreds of years."



By Wayne Hager, pastor of Calvary Baptist Church in Mt. Airy, N.C. 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@surry.net

**"It certainly didn't help that Thomas Nelson published the early editions of the RSV with a very, very red cover."**

*Walter Harrelson, professor emeritus of Vanderbilt University Divinity School, commenting on critics' claims that the Revised Standard Version of the Bible was the work of communists.*

# PEOPLE

## PRAYER PARTNERS

Please pray for these people and projects, which are part of Kentucky Baptists' partnership with Baptists in Poland, Tanzania and New England:

■ A couple who are considering becoming church planters with Heritage Baptist Church, a new church in Brookline, Mass.

■ Missionary Steven Reece as he begins a Thursday night Bible study in Bytom, Poland.

■ Health and safety for missionaries Doug and Marcy Shaw in Poland. "Winter is upon us. Roads and walkways are icy and snowy," they write.

■ Missionaries to Poland Mark and Tatiana McNeil ask prayer that Asia, a "seeker" who continues to attend church regularly, will become a Christian.

■ Kentuckians to volunteer for 1999 partnership missions projects in Tanzania, Poland and New England.

## Mountains to the Mississippi

Compiled by Shirley Wooton

■ **BOWLING GREEN**—Burton Memorial Church ordained **Howard Spencer** as minister of music. Spencer has served 36 years as music director for churches in Logan, Simpson and Warren counties. The church called **Tom Cummings** as pastor in November. Cummings previously served as pastor of White Plains Church.

■ **CAMPBELLSVILLE**—Campbellsville University promoted **Dwayne Howell** to assistant professor of Christian Studies.

■ **COLUMBUS**—**James Keeling** resigned as pastor of Columbus First Church. Keeling is available for supply, interim or pastor. Call (270) 437-4289.

■ **FAIRDALE**—Keys Ferry Church will host **David Livingston** in concert Dec. 12, 11 a.m. **Harold Temple** is pastor.

■ **LOUISVILLE**—Third Avenue Church called **Jeff King** of Pensacola,

Fla., as pastor.

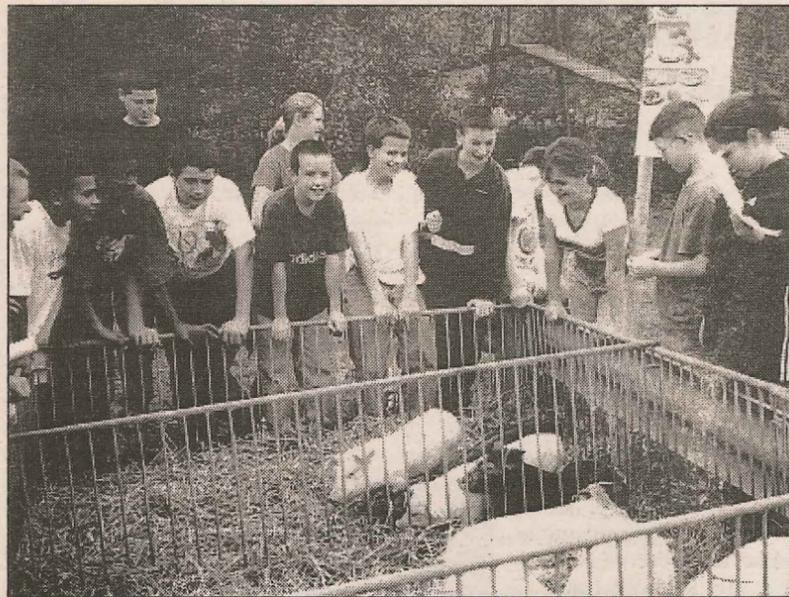
■ **MAYFIELD**—Graves County Association called **Charles Clark** as director of missions. Clark previously served as a pastor in Oak Ridge, Tenn.

■ **MELBER**—Melber Church called **Dale Crane** as minister of music, beginning Dec. 5. Also, the church will start an AWANA ministry Jan. 19. **Jeff Stewart** is pastor.

■ **PADUCAH**—Lone Oak First Church called **Steve Payne** as minister of students. **Willis Henson** is pastor.

■ **SOMERSET**—Beacon Hill Church called **John Mark Tobey** as pastor, beginning Dec. 4. Tobey previously was pastor of Fairdale First Church.

■ **WILLIAMSTOWN**—**James Craigmyle** retired as pastor of Williamstown Church after serving nine years. **Colburn Hooten** was called as interim pastor.



**FIELD DAY** Oneida Baptist Institute recently hosted its annual field day for agriculture and science. Students toured six learning stops, and the Oneida farm pigs were a favorite. The young pigs were divided into three groups and fed different nutrient levels. After three weeks, differences in growth and development were noticeable. (Oneida photo by Denise Spencer)

## CHRISTMAS PROGRAMS

### North Central Region

■ **ERLANGER**—**Erlanger Church**, Living Christmas Tree, Dec. 3 & 10, 7:30 p.m.; Dec. 4, 5, 11 & 12, 5:30 and 7:30 p.m. For tickets, call (606) 727-2588.

■ **FORT THOMAS**—**Highland Hills Church** will present a Christmas musical Dec. 17 & 18, 7 p.m.; Dec. 19, 5:30 and 8 p.m. Admission is canned goods or non-perishable food items.

### West Region

■ **HARDINSBURG**—**New Clover Creek Church**, "A Christmas to Remember" cantata, Dec. 19, 6 p.m.

■ **HENDERSON**—**Zion Church**, "An Evening in December," with pianist Huntley Brown and the church worship choir, Dec. 12, 6:30 p.m.; "Twas the Last Mailing Day Before Christmas" student dinner theater, Dec. 17, 18 & 19, 6:30 p.m. Admission: \$6 and a canned good.

■ **MADISONVILLE**—**First Church** "Return to Bethlehem" walk-through drama, Dec. 11, 13 & 14, 5-8 p.m.; Dec. 12, 2-4 p.m. Groups of 20 or more need reservations. For information, call (270)

821-3611.

■ **MURRAY**—**First Church**, "The Promise, The Murray Christmas Festival-1999" musical, Dec. 4, 7 p.m.; Dec. 5, 4:30 and 7 p.m.

■ **OWENSBORO**—**Seven Hills Church**, Living Christmas Tree, Dec. 9, 10, 11 & 12, 7 p.m.

■ **PADUCAH**—**First Church**, "One Solitary Life" by the adult choir, Dec. 18 & 19, 7 p.m. Call for tickets.

■ **PROVIDENCE**—**First Church**, "For God So Loved" musical Dec. 19, 6 p.m.; Christmas Eve candlelight Communion service, Dec. 24, 10 p.m.

### Central Region

■ **CRESTWOOD**—**Crestwood Church**, Living Christmas Tree, Dec. 10 & 11, 7 p.m.; Dec. 12, 4 and 7 p.m. Call (502) 241-8534 for tickets.

■ **ELIZABETHTOWN**—**Immanuel Church**, "Come Celebrate Christmas!" cantata, Dec. 19, 6 p.m.; Christmas Eve candlelight service at 5:30 p.m.; Watch Night family fellowship, Dec. 31, 9 p.m.

■ **LOUISVILLE**—**Broadway Church**, "The Louisville Orchestra in Christmas Concert," Dec. 9, 8 p.m.

■ **Cloverleaf Church**, "A Christmas to Remember" musical, Dec. 17, 18 & 19, 7 p.m.

■ **Crescent Hill Church**, "Ye Olde Christmas Madrigal Feaste and Ye Olde Christmas Story" youth musical, drama and dinner, Dec. 17 & 18, 7 p.m. For tickets call (502) 896-4425.

■ **West Broadway Church**, "Because of Bethlehem" cantata, Dec. 12, 9:30 and 10:45 a.m.; "The Joy of Christmas Keeps on Shining," Dec. 12, 6 p.m.; "Why Presence Makes the Best Presents," youth Christmas drama Dec. 12, 6 p.m.; candlelight service, Dec. 22, 6:30 p.m.

■ **MT. WASHINGTON**—**Mt. Washington Church**, "Greatest Story" musical, Dec. 11-13, 7 p.m.; "Christmas in Egypt," children's choir, Dec. 15, 6:30 p.m.; "Never Too Old for Christmas," senior adult choir, Dec. 19, 6 p.m.; Christmas Eve service, 6 p.m.

■ **SHEPHERDSVILLE**—**Bullitt Lick Church**, "Because of Bethlehem" musical, Dec. 12, 11 a.m.; candlelight service led by Eugene Sutherland, Dec. 19, 6 p.m.

■ **Little Flock Church**, "A King Is

Born," musical drama, Dec. 16, 17, 18 & 19, 7 p.m.; Dec. 18 also at 3 p.m. Call (502) 955-8760 for free tickets.

■ **VERSAILLES**—**Versailles Church**, "Christmas Celebration '99," featuring choirs, handbells and instrumental ensemble, Dec. 12, 6 p.m.

### South Central Region

■ **AUBURN**—**New Friendship Church**, "His Name Is Jesus" adult and children's cantata, Dec. 19, 11 a.m.

■ **MADISONVILLE**—**First Church**, "Walk Through Bethlehem" walk-through drama, Dec. 11, 13 & 14, 5-8 p.m.; Dec. 12, 2-4 p.m.; adult choir music, Dec. 19, 6 p.m.; Christmas Eve service, 10 p.m.

### Southeastern Region

■ **Belfry**—**First Church**, "A Christmas Apart" musical drama, Dec. 10, 7:30 p.m.; Dec. 12, 6:30 p.m.

■ **CORBIN**—**First Church**, "The Unexpected Guest," youth comedy, Dec. 12, 6 p.m.

■ **WILLIAMSBURG**—**Calvary Missionary Church**, live nativity scene, Dec. 17 & 18, 6:30-8:30 p.m.

## CLASSIFIED ADS

**SEEKING:** Full-time minister to youth and children for growing Baptist church to develop and plan a full-scale ministry to children birth through 5th grade, and to assume a viable, vigorous and dynamic youth program. Person will plan and implement, with the assistance of preschool, children and youth committees, discipleship, Bible, recreation, outreach and fellowship activities for youth, children and their families. Qualifications and skills include: love of God and love of youth and children, organization, teaching, knowledge of child development and willingness to submit to a background check. Relevant education and experience a plus; history of church involvement a must. Send resumé and letter of interest by Jan. 7 to Rosedale Baptist Church, 411 Westover Ave., Richmond, KY 40475, Attn: Dr. Truett Ricks.

**SEEKING:** Full-time dietary assistant. Rare opening in our personal care home. Benefits include two weeks vacation, insurance. Every other weekend off. Must have a good work record. Call Parr's Rest at (502) 451-5440—ask for Ginger Niner. EOE.

**SEEKING:** Part-time youth minister. New Harvest Baptist Church, 815 N Main St., Caneyville, Ky. Please send resumé to PO Box 118, Caneyville, KY 40701, or call (270) 897-4020.

**SEEKING:** Full-time pastor. Please send resumé to: Meta Baptist Church, 8807 Meta Highway, Pikeville, KY 41501, Attn: Pastor Search Committee.

**SEEKING:** Full-time 2nd-shift nursing, CMT. Rare opening in our personal care home. Benefits include two weeks vacation, insurance. Every other weekend off. Must have a good work record. Call Parr's Rest at (502) 451-5440—ask for Bonnie Stephens. EOE.

**SEEKING:** Historic Fee Fee Baptist Church is seeking God's person to serve as minister of education with the additional responsibility of developing ministries to singles in this suburban St. Louis, Mo., community. Prior singles ministry considered a plus. Fee Fee is a strong traditional Southern Baptist church averaging over 500 in Sunday school. Forward resumé or referrals to: Minister of Education and Singles Search Committee, Fee Fee Baptist Church, 11330 St. Charles Rock Road, Bridgeton, MO 63044. Fax: (314) 739-1302.

**SEEKING:** Organist and pianist. Services: Sundays, 8:30 a.m. and 7 p.m.; Wednesdays: 6:45 p.m. Wednesday choir practice (pianist only): 7:30 p.m. Please send resumé to: Personnel Committee, Kings Baptist Church, 989 Kings Church Road, Taylorsville, KY 40071.

**SEEKING:** Full-time pastor for Piney Grove Baptist Church, Corbin, Ky. Contact person: Marlon Sams, PO Box 1563, Corbin, KY 40701.

**SEEKING:** Part-time, bivocational pastor needed for small, rural church near Whitesville, Ky. Three services per week. Call Ed Hemmersbach for details: (270) 264-1478.

**FOR SALE:** Sixteen 11-foot padded church pews, matching pulpit, communion table. Woburn Baptist Church, Greenville, Ill. Ray Stafford, (618) 326-7007 or 326-7042.

**FOR SALE:** Six hardwood pews approximately 17 feet long. Beautiful condition. \$300 for all or \$75 each. Summit Academy, 11508 Main St., Middletown, KY 40243. Call: (502) 244-7090.

**FOR SALE:** Twenty-two 12-foot, three 14-foot and two 4-foot solid oak padded pews with pulpit furniture: \$5,000. Call: (270) 924-5227.

## Site of Jesus' outreach to gentiles readied for tourists

By Elaine Ruth Fletcher  
Religion News Service

TEL HADAR, Israel (RNS)—For hundreds of years, Christian pilgrims have journeyed to the area near Capernaum on the western side of the Sea of Galilee.

There, they celebrate the miraculous feeding of the multitudes where the New Testament says Jesus fed 5,000 Jews with just five loaves of bread and two fishes.

Recently, however, a group of leading regional church figures gathered along with Israeli tourism officials to dedicate a new holy site for the upcoming millennium along the Sea of Galilee's eastern shore.

The site, Tel Hadar, is the place where a noted biblical geographer says a second feeding of the multitudes occurred involving Greek-speaking pagans.

The miracle of the feeding of the 4,000 on the Galilee's eastern shores is recounted in the New Testament books of Matthew and Mark. Unlike Jesus' earlier feat at Capernaum, the people who gathered here were predominantly residents of the towns of the "Decapolis"—the sophisticated Greek-speaking cities of the Golan Heights, the eastern Galilee and parts of what are now Jordan and Lebanon that maintained an informal alliance in the first century period.

The feeding of the multitudes on the Sea of Galilee's eastern shore long has been seen in Christian tradition as a turning point in Jesus' career, when

His ministry to the Jews was expanded to include gentiles as well.

"Two thousand years ago the ethical values of Torah-Israel were infused into the Greco-Roman world. And where was the point of the needle of the infusion? I believe we can say: It happened right here," said Prior Bar-Gil Pixner, a German-born Benedictine monk, speaking at the late October dedication of the Tel Hadar site.

Pixner, a resident of the Capernaum-area monastery of Tabgha, has devoted his life to identifying the sites around the Galilee that are noted in New Testament accounts of Jesus' ministry.

The site of the miracle, according to Pixner, is identified in the New Testament as a hill on the eastern shore of the Galilee, near the first century Greek town of the Decapolis known as Hippos, or Susita. Jesus visited Hippos on his return to the Galilee from a journey through Lebanon, to Tyre and Sidon.

Pixner identified the Tel Hadar site, situated near a popular Israeli beach, as the probable locale of the miracle in 1969. It was the only hilltop on the eastern Galilee that matched the biblical description of the site, Pixner said.

At the time of his 1969 explorations, Pixner marked the Tel Hadar site with a few small stones that were later removed. Only recently, an enormous two-ton rock, decorated with Bible verses and a modern rendition of early Christian inscriptions, was moved to the

hilltop to become the centerpiece of a new park created here for millennial Christian tourists.

In the time of Jesus, Tel Hadar was probably a grassy knoll looking much the way it does today. It was, indeed, a perfect picnic site for the feeding of a great multitude of people, observed Israeli publisher Yadin Roman.

Roman, author of a popular "Pilgrim's Companion" series of tour guide books for Christians, was instrumental in persuading Israel's Ministry of Tourism to designate the park and memorial site.

"If you read the New Testament you find that Jesus did a lot of picnicking. In this particular feast, a lot of gentiles came and they glorified the name of the God of Israel," he said.

According to the New Testament chronology, Jesus apparently entered the area from Hippos, probably en route north to Beit Saida near the Galilee shore, the hometown of five of his disciples. He was followed by Greek-speaking pagans who had heard of his miracles and welcomed Him enthusiastically.

Surrounded by the multitudes, He spent three days healing and preaching—and the crowd "gave glory to the God of Israel," according to the book of Matthew. Then, seeing that the crowd was out of food, Jesus gathered seven loaves of bread and a few fish from among his disciples, and fed the 4,000 who had gathered.

"The birth and expansion of Christianity was a unique historical moment when Jewish thought and beliefs were

injected into the Hellenistic world," said Israeli Tourism Minister Amnon Lipkin Shahak, speaking at the Tel Hadar site.

"Here Jewish villagers and Greek townspeople shared common ground. The parables, the healings and the message of Jesus were understandable to both Jew and Gentile."

The cities of the Decapolis in relatively close proximity to Tel Hadar were some of the most "sophisticated and cultured" cities of the Greek-speaking world, Roman said.

"Their proximity to Jewish areas of the Galilee helps explain why 50 years after the crucifixion, Christianity became the fastest growing movement in the Hellenistic world," he added.

The Tel Hadar park, until recently a neglected hillside bordering a litter-strewn beach-front, is now destined to become part of a Sea of Galilee "Historical Heritage Region"—the first area in Israel to obtain such a designation.

With the designation, preservation of the region's biblical landscape will become an official priority in the heritage area, Israeli authorities said, along with the development of new touring paths and sightseeing programs linking the many Christian heritage sites scattered along the lakeshore.

"The amazing thing Jesus managed to do was to break the barrier between Jews and Greeks and to bring Jewish ideas into the Greek world," said Roman. "Tel Hadar is right on the border, where Judaism gives way to Christianity, and for that reason, it is going to be a very, very important site."

### WORLD VIEW

■ **Representatives from** around the world will gather Dec. 24 on a hill overlooking Bethlehem and Jerusalem for the "One Light, One World" celebration. Hosted by California minister Robert Schuller and broadcast around the world, the Christmas Eve celebration will include the lighting of oil lamps by a 2,000-member choir from around the world. The event will be broadcast in America by Cnn, ABC, NBC and CNBC. More information is available from the project's Web site, [www.onelightoneworld.com](http://www.onelightoneworld.com).

■ **Japan's Aum** Shinrikyo cult has apologized for the deadly 1995 poison gas attack it launched in Tokyo's subway. Tatsuko Muraoka, the group's acting leader, also said Aum Shinrikyo would offer "as much compensation as possible" for the attack.

### Two imprisoned for having copy of 'Jesus' video

BRUSSELS, Belgium (RNS)—Two people in the Comoros Islands, officially an Islamic republic, have been sentenced to prison after being caught watching or possessing the "Jesus" film on video.

The "Jesus" film is a two-hour tape produced by Campus Crusade for Christ as a tool for evangelization. The film is regularly used by evangelical missionaries, including Southern Baptists.

Taki Islam, 22, was sentenced to 10 months in prison and another eight months under court supervision, while Alo Toibibou, reportedly in his late 20s, received an eight-month sentence, half of which was suspended, according to Human Rights Without Borders, an independent organization based in Brussels, Belgium.

At a joint hearing in the Indian Ocean nation, the two men were found guilty of "anti-Islamic activity and disturbing the peace," Human Rights Without Borders reported Nov. 19.

Campus Crusade, an interdenominational evangelical Protestant ministry based in Orlando, Fla., has translated "Jesus" into more than 520 languages.

### Southern Baptist missionaries launch prayer focus for Africa

By Sue Sprenkle  
SBC International Mission Board

JOHANNESBURG, South Africa (BP)—In the face of plague, war, famine and drought, Southern Baptist missionaries are launching an ambitious campaign to bathe Africa's 771 million people in prayer.

A special day of prayer for the entire continent—called 2001 PRAY (Pray 'Round Africa—Yes)—is planned for Aug. 3, 2001. Christians throughout the world are being encouraged to spend time praying for the spread of the gospel across Africa. Volunteers are being recruited to prayer walk in African countries.

Prayer coordinator Anita Hunt said 2001 PRAY is a unique project because it covers an entire continent.

"This prayer emphasis is also unique in that it is not just for Southern Baptists or Americans," Hunt said. "We invite all Great Commission Christians around the world to join us. Prayer will make a difference for Africa."

One of Africa's most serious concerns is AIDS, the leading cause of death on the continent. According to a recent United Nations report, 5,500 Africans die of AIDS every day. By the year 2010, at least 22 million Africans are expected to die of the disease.

The statistics are overwhelming. Every family in eastern and southern Africa has at least one member affect-

ed by the HIV virus, by some estimates. The next 25 years are critical, said Clyde Berkley, associate director of the International Mission Board's work in the region.

"If Africa is not reached with the gospel in the next 25 years, there might not be any Africans left," Berkley said. "We don't really know what is going to happen, but as one pastor put it, 'The only hope is Jesus Christ.'"

Missionaries' goal is to have thousands of Christians praying. An Internet site—[www.2001pray.org](http://www.2001pray.org)—has been established to let people know concerns and specific ways they can help.

The site not only lists prayer concerns but also gives information and stories on the countries and people living in Africa. The prayer list will be updated with new concerns biweekly.

People should begin praying now for Africa, Hunt said. AIDS is not the only concern encompassing the continent. War ravages many African countries, and drought and famine threaten populations in still more areas, she said.

Despite the atrocities and catastrophes, God's kingdom has thrived in Africa. One hundred years ago, Africa had almost no Christians. Now 46 percent of the entire population claims Christianity.

"God commands us to let his way be known and to proclaim his salvation among all the nations," Hunt said. "Now is the time of harvest in Africa. The question is, will you be a part of it?"

### Israeli officials won't enter Holy Sepulchre second door conflict

JERUSALEM (RNS)—Israel, which has been criticized by Holy Land Christian leaders over its handling of a Nazareth mosque dispute, has decided not to intervene in another controversy involving Christian sensitivities—opening a new door to Jerusalem's Church of the Holy Sepulchre.

A second open door at the church, built over the site where tradition holds that Jesus was buried, is needed to accommodate the large numbers of millennial pilgrims.

There is currently just one way to enter and exit the church in Jerusalem's Old City, a situation Israel says is dangerous for the pilgrims should a fire or some other emergency occur.

But the six Christian denominations that lay claim to parts of the church have disagreed over the location of a new door and who should control its key. Recently, a senior Roman Catholic Church official asked the Israeli government to intervene.

No way, according to an unnamed Israeli official. The official told Associated Press that the Israeli government did not want to be accused of fomenting religious animosity.

The Jerusalem government already has been criticized for attempting to settle a dispute in Nazareth between Christians and Muslims fighting over construction of a mosque on land near the Basilica of the Annunciation. The basilica is built over the site where tradition says the Virgin Mary was told by an angel that she would give birth to Jesus.

Wadi Abu Nassar, a Catholic Church spokesman in Israel, agreed with the government's decision not to get involved in the Holy Sepulchre dispute. Involvement would only give the controversy a "political dimension," he said.

Meanwhile, a Catholic Church official, who spoke on condition of anonymity, was reported as saying Christian leaders would not allow a second entrance and exit for the Holy Sepulchre unless Israel prevents Nazareth Muslims from building a mosque on any of the land next to the basilica.

# The ministries of WESTERN RECORDER

## Our best-kept secret

Hawaii Pacific  
 BAPTIST

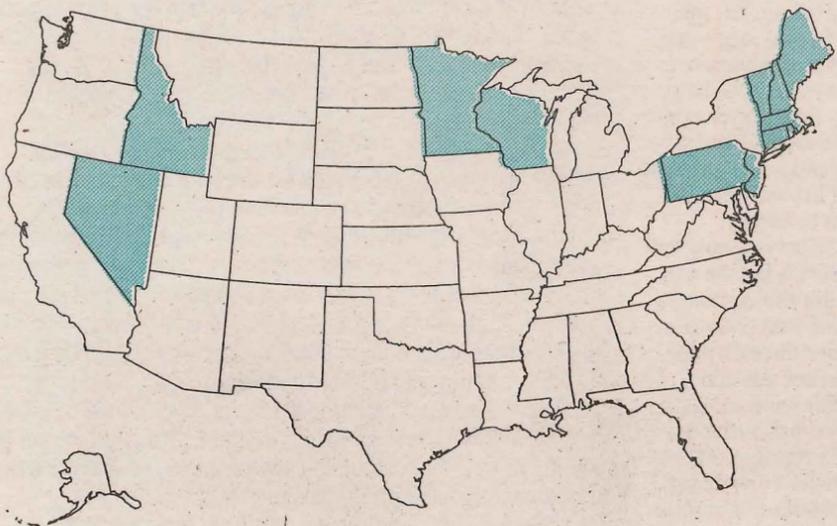
JOURNAL OF THE BAPTIST CONVENTION OF PENNSYLVANIA/SOUTH JERSEY  
PENN JERSEY BAPTIST

THE  
MINNESOTA-WISCONSIN  
BAPTIST



NEW ENGLAND BAPTIST

THE UTAH-IDAHO SOUTHERN  
BAPTIST WITNESS



*The Western Recorder works in cooperation with  
5 Baptist conventions representing 13 states*

A while back at the Western Recorder we got a call asking if we knew another state Baptist newspaper was copying our design format.

It struck us anew that one of the Western Recorder's best kept secrets has been its publishing relationship with newspapers in five state conventions where Southern Baptist work is in its infancy.

For seven years now, the Western Recorder has worked with these conventions to help them publish their monthly newspapers.

In most of these conventions the responsibility for producing the state paper previously fell on the executive director or a staff person whose primary focus was another ministry field. Now, with the help of the Western Recorder, they no longer have to handle the production of their paper.

The process works like this:

Editors or their assistants in the Baptist state conventions of New England, Pennsylvania-South Jersey, Minnesota-Wisconsin, Utah-Idaho and Hawaii Pacific assemble their local news stories, photos, advertisements and editorials and transmit them electronically to our office.

Here, Partnership Editions Editor Joyce Martin edits and prepares layouts, adding national and international news, missions and feature stories from the Western Recorder.

And, yes, she uses the same design format as the Western Recorder.

The result is a win-win situation. Staff in these partnership conventions are freed up to focus on their primary responsibilities and readers get a paper chock full of local, national and international news. And it looks good, too.