

PRACTICAL RESOURCES FOR CHRISTIAN LIVING

WESTERN RECORDER

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FOR THE RECORD

NOTICE: The Western Recorder will not be published next week in observance of the Christmas holiday.

Baptists

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Dated Material — Deliver by Wednesday, Dec. 22

Need gift ideas? Charities offer goats, rabbits, wells & heifers

By Adelle Banks
Religion News Service

McLEAN, Va. (RNS)—For Linda Hedlund, it seems the perfect Christmas-shopping solution.

She and her family look through the annual "Gifts of Hope" catalog they receive at their Lutheran church in McLean, Va., and they pick gifts they'd like to give to their Sunday school teachers and family members.

This year, her son chose \$15 worth of medicine for a needy family in El Salvador as his teacher's gift. Last year Hedlund, an Arlington, Va.-based physician, gave a \$25 goat, for her step-father, to add to the herds of poor farmers in Namibia.

"I like the fact that there's a wide range of choices, so you can support things that are in the local metropolitan area or internationally," Hedlund said of the program of the Metropolitan Washington, D.C., Synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America. "It's so hard to find gifts that aren't real expensive and yet aren't going to clutter up someone's house or add more clutter to their holidays."

Whether it's buying a goat, a well, or meals to help poor people survive, this particular form of alternative gift-giving is growing in popularity, according to observers in charitable fund-raising. Several religiously-based groups—whose global gift catalogs have been offered for at least

□ See Gift alternatives: ..., page 6

Calendars turn on connections to Christ

By Delia Rios
Religion News Service

WASHINGTON (RNS)—When we start turning the pages of our new calendars next month, few of us will pay much consideration to the tools that help us keep track of years, decades and millennia.

But the human impulse to order time has been evident as long as humans could follow the cycles of the moon and the passage of seasons.

The calendar organizes the business of human lives the world over, so it seems a secular creation. But while the need for regular taxation to support armies and governments has played a

part in the pursuit of a reliable accounting of time, the real force behind most calendars has been religion.

We use the Gregorian calendar, named for Pope Gregory XIII who oversaw its reforms. This calendar's name carries a history with roots in Christian theology, obscuring the fact that it extends back to the Julian calendar devised in 46 B.C. under the rule of Julius Caesar.

However spiritual its origins, the calendar's story is replete with political

whims and crises, bureaucratic delays, religious disputes and even the odd calamity—specifically, the Black Death.

As calendar historian E.G. Richards quotes an anonymous sage, "God made the days and nights, but man made the calendar."

The Gregorian calendar is a relic of an ancient cultural

shift, as one power gave way to another. But even as the Christian church assumed greater authority, it continued to use the Roman Julian calendar until the

□ See Christ's birth ..., page 7



BEANIES FROM HEAVEN Kentucky Baptist Homes for Children has been inundated with Beanie Babies as gifts for the children in the agency's care. Tammy Price (right), executive assistant for KBHC, helps two children pick out a doll to keep. Larry Clardy and his wife, owners of The Doll House Gift Shop in Brandenburg, donated 87 dozen of the prized plush toys. Other Beanie Babies made their way to KBHC through two collectors' clubs on the World Wide Web. "Now that Beanie Babies are being discontinued, we know these donors could have gotten a lot of money for them," Price said. "But they made it clear that they wanted the toys to go to the kids. I think that makes these gifts all the more special." (KBHC photo by Dannah Prather)

Panama Canal transfer creating new ministries for missionaries

By Sue Sprenkle
SBC International Mission Board

PANAMA CITY, Panama (BP)—No electricity, no running water. Definitely a homeowner's nightmare.

But that hasn't stopped many Panamanians from relocating their families to the Panama Canal Zone from Panama City, clearing out patches of jungle and hoping for the chance to improve their lives and own a home.

Small communities known as "barriadas," or suburbs, began developing in the Canal Zone five years after the United States and Panama signed the Torrijos-Carter treaties in 1977. Under the agreements, the United States promised to withdraw its troops and hand over control of the strategic waterway by Dec. 31, 1999.

While the final transition of the canal to Panamanian sovereignty this month is a simple formality between

two governments, the treaty created whole new towns in the reverted area. The 10-mile-wide swath of land on either side of the Panama Canal is home to some of the fastest-developing communities in the country. More than 20 villages, housing a total of 100,000 people, have popped up around Panama City.

Southern Baptist missionary Mark Fuller said the Panama Canal Zone at one time was protected from would-be homesteaders, but in 1982 people started moving onto the land and developing the small communities. Two years ago, the Panama government began selling plots of land in the Canal Zone.

Previously, much of the Southern Baptist work in the area was done by Americans working at the canal. As the barriadas began to develop and the Americans began to leave, missionaries had to make their own preparations for the changeover.

"Some of these changes include going from large churches to small cell groups," Fuller said. "We want to make all of our outreach and church-planting efforts totally reproducible by the people living in the barriadas—and not something the missionaries are doing."

Special teams have been assigned to target the different nationalities living within the barriadas. The teams include missionaries Mark and Mary Fuller and Greg and Cathy Muse. The Muses will target Chinese communities.

Panama strategy leader Wirt Davis anticipates a smooth transition for Southern Baptist missionaries working in Panama.

"We don't expect many changes overall, but we are focusing a team on the barriadas," Davis said. "These people are first-time homeowners, and they are going through a lot of changes in their lives and might be receptive to the

gospel."

Currently, Southern Baptist work is being started in three locations. The canal zone is a tough place to minister, Fuller said. "There is so much spiritual apathy present," he said. "As far as we can tell, there are no other churches in these areas. The people are just not interested."

Despite the apathy, Fuller said he's excited about the possibilities. Once interest is sparked, commitment runs deep and a genuine hunger to learn more about Christ surfaces, he said.

As ministry in the barriadas begins, Davis and Fuller ask fellow Christians to pray for some specific actions:

- For people to understand their need for Christ.
- For training of Panamanians to reach their countrymen.
- For the needs of Panamanians who have lost their jobs because of the U.S. military pullout.

Volunteers share God's love in Timor refugee camps

Christians are sharing their faith with refugees from ethnic people groups that previously had little or no access to the gospel.

By Russell Rankin
SBC International Mission Board

KUPANG, West Timor (BP)—Baptists and other evangelical Christians from Indonesia and elsewhere have intensified efforts to minister to the needs of thousands of East Timorese people at refugee camps at the western end of the Indonesian island.

Despite limited funds and inadequate staff, Christians are sharing their faith with refugees from ethnic people groups that previously had little or no access to the gospel.

An estimated 300,000 people have fled into the Indonesian-held western half of the island of Timor since East Timor voted for independence from Indonesia in August. The vote sparked violent reactions in the already tumultuous region, with hundreds of people in East Timor believed to have been killed by militias loyal to the Indonesian government in Jakarta.

Baptist relief efforts began as members of Kupang Baptist Church in West Timor ministered to 14 Baptist families from Dili, East Timor, who had fled to Kupang. As the refugee numbers increased, a team of 11 young adults from a Baptist student group in Jakarta joined

the church in Kupang to help care for the refugees, who were being housed at the Noelbaki refugee camp.

A Baptist representative involved in the relief efforts said the 105 families the church is now caring for had fled their village near Dili, leaving behind homes, land and most of their belongings.

The representative added that the size of the camps has continued to increase because refugees are not quickly returning to East Timor, mainly due to misinformation and intimidation tactics being used by anti-independence elements in Timor.

"Opportunities for ministry are increasing, and we are moving the ministry into a longer-term project, even though we have neither the funds nor adequate personnel," the representative said. "The project is functioning by faith on gifts from Indonesian Baptist churches, (international) churches in Indonesia, individuals and a church in Australia."

Workers are ministering to the physical, spiritual and social needs of the refugees.

"We have distributed milk and basic food items, clothing and school books and have three nurses and a doctor

working in the camp clinic," he said. "We are holding Bible lessons for the children, which have opened the door for adult Bible studies and personal witnessing."

Working with Campus Crusade for Christ, the "Jesus" film has been shown several times in the camps, he added. However, "we desperately need funds and more people to continue."

Although the majority of East Timor claims to be Catholic and the West Timorese claim to be Protestant, the Timorese are animistic at heart, a Southern Baptist worker said.

"The refugees from East Timor come from 17 people groups that are less than 2 percent evangelical," said the worker, who is not identified for security reasons. "Our goal is to establish a church-planting movement among the refugees who come from these different unreached people groups."

According to reports, the Noelbaki camp—with approximately 13,000 inhabitants—and a second camp nearby, Tuapukan, housing 30,000 refugees—do not meet even the basic needs of the refugees.

The Baptist response teams also have installed a pump on one well at the Tuapukan camp and a water storage

tank. In addition, 15 water purifiers donated from individuals in the United States have been installed in both camps to provide clean drinking water.

"Noelbaki is a series of barracks built with tin roofs, plywood dividers and no floors, stretching several kilometers," the Baptist representative said. "The government-built barracks cannot hold all the refugees, so a thousand refugees have built shelters of palm leaves."

Conditions in the camp are deplorable, relief workers said. Noelbaki camp, located on a seasonal rice field, flooded when the first early rainstorm of the season hit in October, spreading human waste throughout the camp. Because of the condition of the barracks, refugees were forced to sleep in the mud.

"Our doctor and nurses have begun to circulate through the camp doctoring the sick," a Baptist worker said. "Even still, the poor living conditions in the Tuapukan camp are taking the lives of four to 11 children every day."

Contributions for relief efforts in West Timor can be sent to the SBC International Mission Board, Hunger and Relief Fund—Timor Relief, Box 6767, Richmond, VA 23230.

Messianic Jews insist violence won't deter them

WASHINGTON (BP)—Two Messianic Jewish organizations criticized in a letter directed to the Southern Baptist Convention say they will not be pressured by criticism or violence into shunning their Jewish heritage just because they believe Jesus is the Messiah.

In a Dec. 3 letter to SBC President Paige Patterson, Gedale Horowitz, president of the Jewish Community Relations Council, based in New York City, charged that the "SBC's endorsement of the use in Christian worship and conversion of symbols and rituals sacred only to Judaism" by Messianic Jews is offensive to "the entire Jewish community" and should be halted.

The Horowitz letter was written to Patterson the day after seven young men identifying themselves as members of New Jewish Order, a Jewish extremist group, forcibly entered the Paris office of Jews for Jesus, beat a staff member, painted anti-Christian slogans on the walls and trashed the office's equipment.

The Paris incident is the latest of an escalating series of attacks on Messianic organizations and churches around the world by Jewish extremist groups, including the violent disruption of services last September at a Messianic church in New York City. Officiating at that service was the president of Chosen People Ministries—one of the three groups Horowitz complained about in his letter.

"If somehow we don't get together very soon and find common ground, this is going to continue to escalate and someone is going to be badly hurt or killed," said Gus Elowitz, pastor of a Houston Messianic congregation also taken to task by Horowitz in the letter to Patterson.

Elowitz is vice president of the North American Messianic Association within the SBC.

"We must have a break in the hostilities," Elowitz said. "Messianic Jews are getting chopped up by friendly fire from people who should be on our side

on so many issues, but who have a problem with us because being Jews, we refuse to turn our backs on our Jewishness after becoming Christians. We can't do that and we won't do that."

Until and unless Jewish extremists and other organizations teach their members to provide basic human respect for Messianic Jews and respond to them as fellow human beings, there will only be more terror unleashed against Messianic Jews, said Mitch Glaser, president of Chosen People Ministries.

"There is no way that I am going to turn my back on my heritage because my use of the symbols of my heritage offends Horowitz," Glaser said. "We don't stop being Jews when we become Christians."

"We love our fellow Jewish people and there is nothing more we want than to tell them that Jesus is the promised Messiah," Glaser said. "We also want to make the point very clearly that Jewishness and Jesus go hand in hand."

Mohler counters politician's view of prayer guide

LOUISVILLE (BP)—A recent "Dear Colleague" letter from Congressman Jim McDermott to fellow House members should serve as a "wake-up call for evangelical Christians," Southern Baptist Theological Seminary President Al Mohler wrote in the Dec. 18 issue of World magazine.

McDermott, a Washington state Democrat, sent a recent letter to all 434 members of the U.S. House of Representatives, criticizing the recent Southern Baptist International Mission Board's Hindu prayer guide as "an aggressive, intolerant approach" to evangelism.

But rather than Baptist outreach efforts, Mohler wrote, "it is McDermott's letter that should disturb American taxpayers, who should be outraged at the intrusion of governmental officials into the evangelism efforts of American Christians."

"Evangelical Christians now face a critical time of testing. Today it is the Southern Baptists, but the attack is directed to any church or denomination that believes in what the late Francis Schaeffer called 'true truth' and obeys the Great Commission."

"Their greatest fear is that someone, somewhere, for some reason, may be offended by gospel witness," Mohler said of McDermott and other critics. The result of their cowardice and compromise—if followed by others—would be that no one, anywhere, by any means, would be confronted with the authentic gospel."

BAPTIST BITS

Counting down to YouthLink 2000.

Thousands of Southern Baptist youth are only days away from celebrating YouthLink 2000, one of the largest millennium events in the nation. YouthLink 2000, set for Dec. 29-31, will be held simultaneously in Jerusalem and seven American cities. Sponsored by several Southern Baptist agencies, the event will feature several contemporary Christian musicians and youth evangelists. Information is available by calling 1-888-YOUTHCLK.

Seminary professor to run for Congress.

A Southern Baptist seminary professor and former White House staffer during the Bush administration would like to return to Washington—this time as a U.S. Congressman. Dan Heimbach, professor of

Christian ethics at Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary in Wake Forest, N.C., is seeking the Republican nomination in 2000 for North Carolina's 2nd Congressional District. A graduate of the U.S. Naval Academy and Vietnam War veteran, he also served as secretary for the North Carolina Republican Party from 1997 to 1999.

Carson-Newman elects new president.

Samford University Provost James Netherton was unanimously elected as the 21st president of Carson-Newman College in Jefferson City, Tenn. He will succeed Cordell Maddox, who will continue as president until Netherton assumes his new position Feb. 1. Netherton, 52, was vice president and chief operating officer at Baylor University in

Waco, Texas, before becoming provost at Samford in 1996.

Pastor recovers from shooting.

A bivocational pastor/police officer shot three times during a Nov. 26 traffic stop is expected to make a full recovery, according to a spokesman for Jackson-Madison County General Hospital in Jackson, Tenn. Roy Wyatt, pastor of Darden Baptist Church, was listed in fair condition in the hospital's intensive care unit. Wyatt and his partner stopped a car driven by Michael Pearcy who was wanted for questioning by the Tennessee Bureau of Investigation. After Pearcy allegedly fired on Wyatt, the officer's partner returned fire, killing the suspect. Wyatt was shot in the face, chest and leg.

KBC Executive Board highlights prayer, elects new staff

By Trennis Henderson
Editor

MIDDLETOWN—Highlighting a call to prayer throughout last week's Kentucky Baptist Convention Executive Board meeting, the two-day gathering was as much a prayer meeting as a business meeting.

Craig Loscalzo, pastor of Immanuel Baptist Church in Lexington, invited board members to kneel in prayer during the meeting's opening devotional. "It's amazing what God will do when His people lift their voices in prayer," he noted.

KBC Executive Director Bill Mackey urged Kentucky Baptists to "lead in prayer as we make the transition into a new century—praying for God to move mightily among His people."

Among business items, the board's administrative committee announced the election of two new staff members. Board members also approved a site change for next year's KBC annual meeting and approved year-end fund distributions.

The administrative committee elected Alan Witham as a church planter strategist in the extension-ministries department and elected Teresa Parrett as a mountain missions consultant in the state missions department.

Witham, pastor of Hyland Baptist



Witham



Parrett

Church in Henderson, will begin his new position next month. His primary responsibility will be to coordinate new church extension and multihousing ministries throughout the state.

"Alan has had a real sense of God leading him in the area of church planting," said Larry Martin, leader of the KBC's missions growth team. "He is a tremendous strategist with the ability to communicate and share that strategy."

"God has given me a heart for seeing lost people reached," Witham said. "I hope to help build a network of pastors and associational leaders across the state and hope to see an openness to new work throughout the state."

Witham is a graduate of Campbellsville University and Southern Baptist Theological Seminary. He and his wife, Jenny, have two children, Kelsie and Ryan.

Parrett, a member of Pine Hill Missionary Baptist Church in Mt. Vernon,

is an insurance agent in Somerset. In her contract position as a part-time consultant, she will coordinate volunteer work and assist mountain missions director David Aker in ministry research.

"Teresa has a strong sense of call and is very gifted," Martin noted. He said her mountain missions work "will meet a tremendous ministry need we have."

"I definitely feel God is leading me into the area of Christian education," Parrett explained. She said she looks forward to helping meet the ministry needs of small congregations.

Parrett is a graduate of Eastern Kentucky University. She also has attended Southern Seminary.

Board members approved a proposal to move next year's KBC annual meeting to First Baptist Church of Bowling Green. The convention had been scheduled to meet at the Bowling Green/Warren County Convention Center but a scheduling error left the facility unavailable. The annual meeting will be Nov. 14-15, 2000.

With state convention income exceeding budgeted expenses for the third year in a row, board members approved the distribution of more than \$750,000 in 1998-99 year-end receipts. The funds include Cooperative Program challenge gifts totaling \$732,794 and Restricted Kentucky Only excess funds of \$18,029.

The CP challenge fund distribution includes \$258,266 for Southern Baptist Convention causes and \$474,528 for Kentucky Baptist ministries.

In other action, board members authorized the purchase of a lot adjoining the Baptist Student Center at Kentucky State University in Frankfort. The property, priced at \$9,000, will be used for parking and outdoor events.

Members also approved a proposal to establish an annual Christian higher education Sunday beginning in 2001.

Jim Hawkins, retired KBC executive associate, shared an update on efforts to combat expanded gambling proposals in the state. He reported that "casinos are dead for now" because of the volume of letters concerned citizens have sent to Gov. Paul Patton and legislators.

"I'm very proud of our Baptist folks who wrote personal letters," he said. "Our letters actually make a difference when we take seriously our citizenship."

He added, however, that gambling advocates are continuing to push for legislative action to allow slot machines and video lottery terminals in the state.

"We're simply trying to get as many citizens as possible to express their views on this important issue," he said. "We must let all our legislators know that we do not want an expansion of gambling in any form."

BLUEGRASS BURGEO

■ **Carl Kelly** of Bowling Green was elected chairman of the Kentucky Baptist Foundation's board of directors during the group's Dec. 9 meeting. Also elected during the meeting were Vice Chairman Mike Melloan of Owensboro, Secretary Glenn Armstrong of Beaver Dam, Assistant Secretary Laurie Valentine of Louisville and Treasurer Barry Allen of Louisville.

■ **Ken Curry** of Brandenburg was elected president of Kentucky Campers on Mission during the group's recent fall rally. Also elected were Vice President Tom Board of Louisville, Secretary-Treasurer Betty Curry of Brandenburg, chaplain James Workman of Elizabethtown, special ministries coordinator Gil Chard of Lexington and work projects coordinator David Fuqua of Owensboro. Also at the meeting, Kentucky Campers on Mission reported that members had contributed approximately 5,500 hours of work in 1999.

■ **Cumberland College's** Mountain Outreach ministry recently helped more than 330 families with its annual Christmas giveaway. The event offers toys, clothing, shoes and health and beauty items for area residents in need.

KBC evangelism conference to emphasize ways to reach youth

By Brenda Smith
Kentucky Baptist Convention

LOUISVILLE—The year 2000 KBC evangelism conference will be specifically geared toward helping Kentucky Baptist churches reach youth and young adults, according to Dan Garland.

The conference, Feb. 28-29 at Highview Baptist Church in Louisville, will reflect Kentucky Baptists' focus on evangelizing youth and young adults, said Garland, evangelism director for the Kentucky Baptist Convention.

"I want to help cast the vision, to raise the banner," Garland said. "We are at war. Satan has targeted this generation."

Research shows that only 4 percent of the 72 million "bridgers," the term used to refer to those born after 1977, are believers in Christ, the lowest percentage of any generation in American history, Garland said. Since most

make a profession of faith as children or teens, Christians should feel a sense of urgency about reaching this generation, he added.

"If we don't reach people before the age of 25, the chances of reaching them become slimmer and slimmer," Garland said. Unlike their baby boomer parents, most bridgers and busters (people born between 1965 and 1976) did not grow up attending any church and are completely disconnected from the traditions and culture of the church, Garland said. Older generations cannot expect bridgers and busters to understand or accept their values, he added.

Older generations should demand that churches reach youth and young adults, Garland said. "What are you willing to do to reach your grandchildren? Are you willing to lay down a worship style? Are you willing to lay down a comfort?"

Featured speakers for the conference include Ron Hutchcraft, author

of "The Battle for a Generation." Hutchcraft compares preparation for youth and young adult evangelism to preparing missionaries for ministry in Africa. He has said Christians must study and understand the culture of youth and young adults in order to be effective.

Hutchcraft will be the keynote speaker during the Monday evening and Tuesday afternoon session of the conference, and also will lead a resource conference.

Conference participants also will experience a worship service specifically geared toward youth and young adults during the closing session Tuesday evening. Southern Seminary student and Generation X minister Rob Turner will bring the message and the praise band of Hope Community Church in Lawrenceburg will lead the worship.

Other speakers will include:

■ **Kevin Cosby**, pastor of St. Stephen Baptist Church in Louisville.

■ **Cameron Mills**, a former Univer-

sity of Kentucky basketball star and youth evangelist

■ **Brad Johnson**, who soon will leave Living Hope Baptist Church in Bowling Green to become a teaching pastor at Saddleback Church in Lake Forest, Calif.

■ **Herb Reavis**, pastor of North Jacksonville Baptist Church in Jacksonville, Fla.

■ **Evangelist Junior Hill**.

■ **Paul Powell**, chief executive officer of the Robert M. Rogers Foundation.

■ **Toby Frost**, evangelism events manager for the Southern Baptist North American Mission Board.

■ **Bill Fay**, author of "Share Jesus Without Fear."

■ **Robert Pitman**, pastor of Kirbywoods Baptist Church in Memphis, Tenn.

For more information, call the KBC evangelism growth team at (502) 254-4737 or toll-free at (888) 254-5722. Garland also can be reached by e-mail at dan_garland@kybaptist.org.

Shepherding the Shepherd conference to offer ministers a 'pit stop'

LOUISVILLE—Weathering spiritual and social tornadoes can leave pastors and their wives desperately in need of a "pit stop," according to Richard Adams, director of the Kentucky Baptist Convention's leadership development department.

Adams said he hopes the second annual Shepherding the Shepherd conference will provide such a refueling opportunity for couples in ministry. The retreat will be held Jan. 27-29 at the Radisson Plaza Hotel in Lexington.

"Thousands of pastors walk away from their ministry each year," he said, "not because their call to ministry was unclear, but because they

are crushed under the stress."

Surveys have shown 90 percent of pastors feel they were inadequately trained to cope with the constant demands of church leadership, Adams said. Most also report that their self-confidence is lower since entering the ministry and 70 percent of pastors claim to have no close friends.

"Our ministry goals for Shepherding the Shepherd are to relax, romance, renew and refuel," Adams said. "It is a spiritual, emotional, physical and relational pit stop."

Charles Lowery, a nationally-known writer, psychologist and pastor of Hoffmantown Community

Church in North Albuquerque, N.M., will return for the second year to share his observations about ministry and marriage.

Lowery will offer an address titled "Are We Having Fun Yet?: The ABCs of Actually Enjoying the Ministry."

"Pastors love hearing other practitioners of the faith tell how our God is personally and intimately revealing Himself in the heat of the battle," Adams said.

Other speakers will include Archibald Hart, author and professor of psychology at Fuller Theological Seminary in Pasadena, Calif., and his wife, Kathleen, who serves as chaplain to student wives at Fuller; Daniel

Webster, who heads Authentic Leaders, Inc., a ministry that trains and inspires leaders; and Jay Wolf, pastor of First Baptist Church of Montgomery, Ala.

The retreat is underwritten by Baptist Healthcare System and the Kentucky Baptist Convention. Registration costs \$155 per couple. Space is limited, and registrations will be accepted on a first-come, first-served basis.

For more information, call the KBC leadership development department at (502) 254-4734 or toll-free in Kentucky at (888) 254-5706. Adams also can be reached by e-mail at richard_adams@kybaptist.org.

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

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Isaiah's progress: an Advent meditation

By Barry Howard

Some say there was frustration and weariness in Isaiah's eyes.

Uzziah had died. Isaiah was called to the prophetic ministry that same year. Israel was in a state of grief and chaos. It was approximately Y.5K BC.

"Here am I! Send me!" "Here am I. Send me." "Here am I? Send me?"

Those words echoed over and over again in Isaiah's mind. "Why did I say that?" he kept asking himself. "These people don't need a prophet. They need a psychiatrist or a probation officer. They don't need, or at least they don't want, a prophet of God."

Isaiah had witnessed his share of promises and most of them had been broken: "I do, until death do us part." "I swear to tell the truth, the whole truth and nothing but the truth." "If you present the idea, I'll support you 100 percent." "See you Sunday."

There were moments when Isaiah, like the seraph, would like to have taken a live coal from the altar and pressed

it against the lips of the promise breakers, but even he knew his motive was not the priestly purging of guilt and making of atonement, but to teach them a thing or two.

But Isaiah also had to admit the Lord had warned him about the people to whom he was called to prophesy. Isaiah had naively

imagined his ministry would result in mass repentance and national revival. But the Lord had told him at the beginning that these people "hear but do not understand and they see but do not perceive. Their hearts are calloused, their ears are dull, and their eyes and their minds are closed."

"Lord, were you ever right!" Isaiah thought. "But, Lord, what will happen to them?"

The Lord answered, "Many of them will stumble. They will fall and be broken. They will be captured and snared by the forces of this world."

"Lord, is there any hope? Uzziah is dead. Morals have declined. The nation is in chaos."

"Isaiah, be faithful."

COMMENTARY

Spirit of mutual respect needed

From the beginning of human sojourn on earth, "man's inhumanity to man" has been a curse to humankind. In the 20th century, the human mind and spirit have been able to land men on the moon and perform amazing technological feats. Despite such progress, tribal wars, civil wars and world wars don't seem to ever end. Slavery, racism and ethnic cleansing are manifestations of humankind's self-hatred. No wonder innocent children ask, "Why do people treat other human beings so hatefully?"

There are many significant highlights of the 20th century, but for me, the most meaningful in America are: Jackie Robinson's breaking the color barrier in major league baseball in 1947, the 1954 Supreme Court ruling (Brown vs. Board of Education of Topeka) that

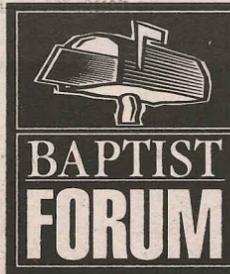
ended segregation in the public schools, the speech of the century ("I have a dream") given in August 1963 by Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., and the U.S. Civil Rights Act of 1964.

Our country, founded on freedom principles, denied that freedom to African-Americans for more than 300 years. The Civil Rights Act of 1964 ordered restaurants, hotels and other businesses that serve the general public to serve all people without regard to race, color, religion or national origin. It also barred discrimination by employers and unions, and established the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission to

enforce fair employment practices. It was a bold, progressive move that serves our country well even though there remains much to be done.

The main challenge of the next century will be to bring a more united America and global community closer together in a spirit of mutual respect and concern. It will involve individuals and nations treating each other humanely. We must work to narrow the gap between rich and poor individuals and nations. We also must use technology and the earth's resources wisely and be good stewards of all that God has entrusted to us.

Paul Whiteley Sr.
Louisville



PARTNERS IN THE MISSION

Celebrate the 'spirit' of Kentucky Baptists

"For you make me glad by your deeds, O Lord; I sing for joy at the works of your hands. How great are your works, O Lord, How profound your thoughts!" (Psalms 92:4-5 NIV)

Following our country's bicentennial celebration in 1976, then Western Recorder Editor C.R. Daley wrote that it was "difficult to describe Kentucky Baptists in these days. It's more of a feeling than anything else. The best that can be said is we have a spirit—a spirit of love, a spirit of unity, a spirit of mutual confidence and trust and a spirit of commitment to God's plan for us."

I experienced that "spirit" as a young pastor in Eastern Kentucky during the 1970s. I'm also experiencing that spirit today as the Holy Spirit fills our hearts and minds with the mission of our Lord.

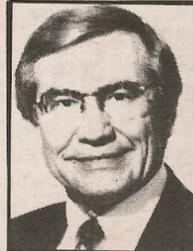
I also believe this spirit is growing among Kentucky Baptists. I shared at the December Kentucky Baptist Con-

vention Executive Board meeting some of the evidence I see of God at work among us:

It is exciting to see churches responding to opportunities to share the gospel with their communities. Many are expressing worship in innovative ways through Christmas musicals and pageants. My wife, Kay, and I experienced this kind of worship at Walnut Street Baptist Church of Louisville's Living Christmas Tree presentation. When I spoke recently at First Baptist Church of Murray, we heard the testimony of that church's wonderful Christmas pageant as well.

God is opening doors to share the gospel with international students. There are about 600 international students at the University of Louisville and 500 at Murray State University alone.

God is bringing churches together to "Celebrate Jesus 2000" through 32 area and associational crusades. Two of



Bill Mackey

these will be major metro crusades.

God is calling people to prayer. It is my desire to see Kentucky Baptists lead the way in organizing church and community prayer gatherings for true revival and to pray for students, teachers, families, leaders and church members.

In 2000-2001, Kentucky Baptists will join other states in celebrating the 75th anniversary of the Cooperative Program. The KBC planning committee has added a memorable ministry event called "Operation Cooperation." It will involve a statewide blood drive that will help us connect with the fact that the Cooperative Program is the lifeblood of missions in Kentucky and beyond.

God is at work in collegiate ministries with standing room only at many BSU worship centers. Major campus revivals have been reported at Campbellsville University and Cumberland College.

God is so good! It's going to be exciting to see what He has in store for Kentucky Baptists in the coming year!

Bill Mackey is executive director of the Kentucky Baptist Convention

GIVING

Why have a will? It's a matter of good stewardship

By Laurie Valentine

Why do you need a will? "You own stuff. ... You will die. ... Someone will get your stuff," explains syndicated financial columnist Jane Bryant Quinn.

By making a last will and testament, you can say who will receive your "stuff" at death and how they will receive it. You also will be practicing good Christian estate stewardship.

If you don't exercise your privilege of making a will, the "will" that the Commonwealth of Kentucky has drawn for you—the Kentucky Intestate Succession Statute—will govern how your probate estate will pass at your death.

Your "probate estate" includes assets titled in your name alone or assets that are payable to your estate or your executor.

Ownership of assets passing under the state's "will" may be shared among several beneficiaries. For example, if a person dies without a last will and testament and is survived by a spouse and some children, ownership of probate assets passes to the surviving spouse and the children together—the surviving spouse will own a one-half interest and the children will own the other half interest.

All distributions under Kentucky's "will" are outright to your heirs under the law. If your children are under age 18, the court will select a guardian to manage their share until they reach 18, at which time they will receive full, outright ownership of their share of your estate.

Likewise, if a share of your estate will pass to an heir who is incapacitated, their share will pass to their guardian or conservator. You will have no say in who manages the shares of these "special needs" beneficiaries.

Using the state's "will" also can add expense and delays in administering your estate.

The court, with input from your heirs, decides who will serve as executor of your estate, which may delay probate if there are disagreements about who should serve.

Probate expenses can be greater because the executor must go to court for authorization to do some things that an executor appointed under a will can be authorized to do under the will.

Determine God's purposes for your possessions and make a plan that will accomplish those purposes.

Laurie Valentine is trust counsel for the Kentucky Baptist Foundation

How can couples overcome or avoid marital burnout?

Q: Is it possible for couples to "burn out" in marriage just as people sometimes "burn out" at work?

Occupational burnout is described as emotional and physical exhaustion in which the individual loses interest in work, no longer finds work rewarding and might even give up by changing jobs or quitting work.

It certainly seems that these same characteristics could apply to married couples. For instance, a couple may find their relationship rewarding, yet lack the motivation or commitment to make it any better. Or a couple might have worked very hard at a difficult relationship, fail to see progress and give up out of emotional exhaustion. Or a couple may lack the commitment to make their marriage better, believing they could be happier with another person.

Just as there are remedies for occupational burnout, there also are steps couples can take to get them through, or even prevent, marital burnout:

- Develop and nurture your spiritual relationship, both individually and as a couple. Your relationship with God can give you the motivation for a healthy marriage and commitment to each other.

- Develop relationships with other couples who have healthy marriages. This is comparable to having a mentor at work who can guide you through occupational burnout.

- Don't assume the grass will be greener with someone else. Giving up on your present marriage, hoping happiness comes easier with someone else, is not the answer.

- Although any good marriage requires work, don't make marriage something you constantly work on. Give yourself permission to take a break. Sometimes couples work so hard on their relationship they fail to see the strengths they possess and forget to enjoy each other along the way. Increasing your enjoyment in being together can go a long way in countering burnout and renewing commitment.—
Susan Howell

Q: My husband retired recently and we had hoped for more time together. However, things are not working out like I thought they would. My husband sits around much of the time and does not communicate with me. The change in him is alarming. How can I help him?

Communication, both verbal and nonverbal, is essential to any continuing relationship. In retirement, some of the most difficult adjustments include the loss of an occupation and the change to being at home with a spouse all day long. Helping him communicate without pushing him will be important.

Here are some suggestions to help his adjustment:

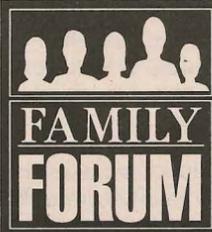
- Esteem support can reduce a person's anxiety about troubling events. If you are attentive, sympathetic and uncritical, it might help him communicate more easily.

- Even if the problem is not easily solved, you can provide motivational support. Encourage him to get involved in activities he always has wanted to do but did not have time for.

- Share informational support by suggesting possible activities, such as hobbies or travel.

Men tend to become withdrawn when concerned about troubling issues. Most men do not communicate well in intimate settings. The way you approach him is very important. Ask gently for information and wait for him to share. Create caring communion and show how much you value him in your life. Be honest and specific. Share your hopes for the future. Be patient. He is going through a difficult adjustment in determining personal worth and establishing a new or revised criteria for productivity in life.—
Jon Rainbow

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.



Christmas: Music, memories and a manger

What is your favorite part of the Christmas season?

Beyond the obvious highlights of celebrating Christ's birth and enjoying family get-togethers, many people are partial to the festive decorations, the holiday parties and scrumptious goodies or the endless gift-giving. Some folks even seem fond of the frenzied, last-minute shopping blitz that draws elbow-to-elbow crowds to every shopping mall and discount store in the country.

As I pause to focus on the rapidly approaching holiday, a few of my perennial Christmas favorites are the music, the memories and the manger.

From "Jingle Bells" to Handel's "Messiah," music is an integral part of the holiday celebration. A rich blend of sacred and secular Christmas tunes can be heard on the radio, in stores, in civic programs and elsewhere. Carolers sharing holiday cheer with shut-ins and nursing home residents and countless choirs presenting the gospel through cantatas and pageants add to the chorus of holiday music.

The hymns and carols being sung this month in churches around the world are vivid testimonies to the arrival of the Christ Child. It would be hard to imagine a traditional Christmas celebration in a Kentucky Baptist congregation without the familiar strains of "Silent Night," "Joy to the World!" and "O Little Town of Bethlehem."

The musical sounds of Christmas, like the enthralling account in Luke 2 of the first Christmas, help set the mood and reaffirm the priorities of what Christmas really is all about. Music also triggers the next entry on my Christmas favorites list—memories.

The joyful lyrics of Christmas carols and hymns can instantaneously transport us back to childhood Christmas scenes or help us more clearly visualize the sights and sounds of that secluded Bethlehem stable.

Christmas memories are significant to me because I associate the Christmas season with the love and security of growing up in a Christian home where Christ

was at the center of our family celebration. Now as a parent with two daughters of my own, my goal is to help make the Christmas season a cherished time for them as well. Beyond presents and parties, I want Emily and Audrey to continually see the Christ of Christmas.

That brings me to the final and most significant Christmas favorite on my list—the manger and all it symbolizes.

One of the first things I think about as I reflect on the manger scene is sacrifice. God sacrificed His Son's presence in heaven, Christ sacrificed the comfort and splendor of that life and they both faced His eventual sacrifice on the cross.

Church members today who whine and complain about the sacrifices of living the Christian life on the eve of the 21st century need only to look to the manger—and the cross—to be reminded of what true sacrifice is in the eyes of God.

The manger also is a testimony to servanthood. As Christ declared in Matthew 20:28,

"The Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve." His earthly life of service, which began in the manger, remains a challenging example to follow today. For those who are tempted to ignore Christ's example and instead pursue power and prestige, Jesus admonished, "Whosoever will be chief among you, let him be your servant" (Matthew 20:27).

Finally, the manger is a reminder of the gift of salvation. "For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son," John 3:16 begins. From that humble entry into the world, the Son of God began His mission to provide salvation to all who would turn from their sin and accept Him as their personal Savior.

As you reflect on your favorite parts of the Christmas season, remember that the music, memories and manger can point you to the sacrifice, servanthood and salvation embodied in Jesus Christ. And as you celebrate, renew your commitment to "tell the good news to everyone."

STRAIGHT FROM THE EDITOR



Trennis Henderson

What shall I cry?

By Tim Mathis

A voice says, "Cry out." and I said, "What shall I cry?" (Isaiah 40:6)

While a college freshman, I was asked to speak to my church on the subject of the spiritual condition of college students. I was petrified! "What would I say?" Fear won out. I declined the invitation to speak. I was off the hook, or so I thought.

Later, when I began sensing God's call to preach, those unresolved fears came roaring back. "Tim, what are you going to say?" I visualized myself as a messenger without a message.

Sometimes silence is golden. Far too often, however, we are silent when we need to be speaking. Let's face it, we all experience those moments when it seems the proverbial "cat's got our tongue."

Isaiah struggled for the appropriate words. His predicament offers words for the wordless.

■ *The messenger:* Before a message can be spoken, there must first be a messenger. Every believer has a message

to proclaim. Verbalizing (or signing) our faith is vital to fulfilling the Great Commission. Around us are people in need of a word from God—and we are the commissioned messengers.

Messengers must be passionate. Anthony Robbins often closes his motivational speeches with these words, "Live with passion!" Passion comes from within. For God's messenger, it's that inner awareness of the spiritual plight of people and the conviction that Christ is his or her only hope.

Passion produces action. Jeremiah experienced "fire in his bones" compelling him to speak. Richard Baxter spoke "as a dying man to dying men." When it comes to passionately sharing Christ, we all need to pray as Leonard Ravenhill, "God, give me unction!" Let's face it, until our souls are stirred we will not speak.

■ *The message:* Passion alone, however, is dangerous. We can be passionate and in error. The content of our message is vital. Our culture needs a clear message of truth.

Like it or not, that message begins with the stark reality of human finitude.

Our "temporariness" is seen on the screen, read in the papers, heard over our radios, captured on our e-mail messages and, finally, experienced personally. Life is short and fragile.

Added to our dying is the chaos of sin. Confusion abounds. We grope for meaning in a host of things. Still the sands of time continue to flow.

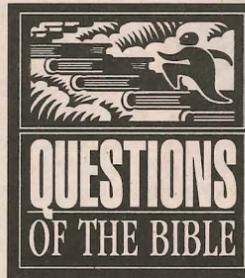
■ *The Messiah:* God has seen our plight and has provided the only solution. Our Lord became a human being. He faced temptation, suffered pain and exercised faith. He was rejected, falsely accused, unjustly tried and condemned. He was brutally crucified and buried in a borrowed tomb. Three days later, He rose from the dead, never to die again. His resurrection forever validated His work, His words and His gift of eternal life.

The record of Christ is found in the Bible—God's Word. The Bible is the only book that is divinely inspired, inerrant and eternal. "The word of the Lord stands forever."

"What shall I cry?" The only message that has the power to change a life—the message of Christ found in God's Word, the Bible.



Tim Mathis is pastor of First Baptist Church of Danville



Studies: Schools' sex education focusing more on abstinence

MENLO PARK, Calif. (RNS)—Abstinence increasingly has become a focus of sex education in the nation's schools, according to two new studies.

More than a third of U.S. school districts teach abstinence alone, the studies found, while a majority urge students to delay intercourse until marriage but to use birth control and practice safe sex if they don't.

"Abstinence, teaching children to wait to have sex, is a core element of most sexuality education programs today," said Tina Hoff of the Kaiser Family Foundation, which conducted the research along with the Guttmacher Institute.

The twin surveys polled secondary school principals and district superintendents.

The findings were welcomed by religious conservatives who have long pushed for abstinence education.

Amy Stephens, a spokeswoman for the National Coalition of Abstinence Education, said: "Ten years ago, abstinence wasn't even considered; it was laughed at. A lot of avenues have opened up for kids to hear this message. That's a good thing."

Meanwhile, another study on teens and sex found that teenagers who take drugs or drink are far more likely to have sex at a younger age with several partners than are teens who abstain from drugs and alcohol.

Teen drinkers who are 14 and younger are twice as likely to have sex than other teens in that age group. The risk of sexual activity is doubled for teens 14 or younger who use drugs, said the report from the Center on Addiction and Substance Abuse at Columbia University.

The study also found that older teens who use drugs are five times as likely to have intercourse than nonusers and three times as likely to have it with four or more partners, Associated Press reported.

Gift alternatives: Donations to charities

Continued from page 1

the last 5 to 10 years—say they have seen an increase in donations in the names of friends and loved ones through these programs in recent years.

Instead of a present in fancy holiday wrapping paper, recipients get a card that often features a small paper insert informing them about the specific donation to a charitable cause that has been given in their name. And the donors can get a tax deduction while helping out the needy citizens of the world.

"People realize that we need to help poor people, they need to reach out to others, it's better to give than receive," said Miyon Kautz, director of development marketing for World Vision. "All of those messages are wrapped up in that."

Last year World Vision, a Christian relief and development organization, raised almost \$315,000 through its alternative gifts program, up from the \$275,000 raised in 1997.

Donations that go a long way for a relatively small cost seem to have the most appeal, Kautz and others said.

Goats—which range in cost from \$25 to \$120 depending on the organization—provide milk for poor families to drink and extra milk that can be used to make and sell dairy products. And, some charities point out, their manure provides great fertilizer.

A \$15 gift of a rabbit through World Concern, a Seattle-based Christian relief and development organization, helps widows who have taken in

orphaned children in Rwanda.

"This type of project enables them to breed rabbits and sell them and have enough to feed their children and even send them to school," said Sondra Perkins, media director of World Concern.

Perkins said her organization saw donations through the "Global Gift Guide" double in a year, from \$93,396 in 1997 to \$118,677 in 1998.

World Relief, a Wheaton, Ill.-based agency that is the relief arm of the National Association of Evangelicals, also has found giving through its "Catalog of Hope" increase dramatically, from \$80,000 in 1997 to \$180,000 last year.

Depending on the organization, donations can be made through toll-free phone numbers, mail-order forms or Web sites. Donors can get a card—with an insert about the specific gift—to give directly to the person in whose honor the gift is give.

Heifer Project International's cat-

alog gives donors the option of buying an entire animal—a \$500 heifer, for instance—or a share of the beast—\$50 for a share of a heifer.

"We send the whole animal—don't worry," joked Anna Bedford, communications director for Heifer Project, a Little Rock, Ark.-based organization that started in 1944 to work against hunger and poverty and is rooted in the peace and justice traditions of the Church of the Brethren.

Such donation-type gifts touch a chord with many Americans' views on Christmas these days.

The Center for a New American Dream released a poll in late November that found 91 percent of American respondents said the holidays are too commercialized and 58 percent have taken steps to simplify the often-hecktic times. When asked if there were no pressure to give gifts, 8 percent of those surveyed said they would donate all or part of the money to charity instead.

Internationally connected

I am thankful I was reared by parents and in a church that took seriously the importance of bequeathing to me a sense of connectivity to the world mission of God and to our missionaries.

Furthermore, I am thankful for my church today for continuing to keep my family and me connected to the mission and the missionaries.

Recently Dr. Mack Shults, a missionary from Brazil, spoke in our morning worship service to begin the Week of Prayer for International Missions. Charles Barnes, past KBC president, led our evening mission study.

I was reminded again how I am connected on a daily basis to Dr. Schults, the other 5,000 missionaries and the mission of the Southern Baptist International Mission Board. Through the miracle of cooperation among the larger family of Southern Baptists, doing together what we cannot do alone, my church and my family are connected.

God has called us to proclaim His name among all peoples of the earth. It is our task, and it is far from finished.

There are 2,161 people groups with 1.7 billion people who live in parts of the world with little or no

access to the gospel of Jesus Christ. We Kentucky Baptists are committed to the Great Commission.

For most of us, these unreached people groups are beyond what we can see or where we can go, but we can demonstrate our love for these lost people by praying for our missionaries and by making a financial contribution through the Lottie Moon Offering.

KENTUCKY BAPTIST FOUNDATION



Barry Allen

In addition, the Lord may be leading you to consider leaving a legacy of your connectivity to the mission and the missionaries. Through your estate plan you could perpetuate your and your family's commitment to reaching the world for Christ.

A simple bequest in your will, a provision in your trust, a beneficiary designation in a life insurance policy or retirement account are some ways you could respond to the leadership of the Lord. Laurie Valentine, our trust counsel, and I are just a toll-free call away to assist you. There is no cost or obligation for this assistance.

Please give us the privilege by calling (888) 254-5701.

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

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ISSUES

Christ's birth & life define how calendars keep count

Continued from page 1
late 16th century.

The Julian calendar had been devised by a Greek astronomer in Egypt named Sosigenes. He "advised Caesar to abandon any pretense to a lunar calendar and to divide the ... year into 12 months, with no attempt to relate them to the moon," Richards wrote in "Mapping Time: The Calendar and Its History."

We still, more or less, count the days of our months as the Romans did and call our months by the same names.

With Gregory XIII's 1582 reforms, the leap year was recalculated and the date of Easter was stabilized in spring, halting a slide that had it occurring later and later in the calendar year.

Global peer pressure ensued as Christian countries began adopting the Gregorian calendar. Christian or not, other countries followed until as late as 1926.

"The failure of some countries to adopt the new calendar sometimes gave them problems," Richards wrote. "In 1908, the Imperial Russian Olympic team arrived in London 12 days too late for the games."

Other calendars survive today, guiding the world's religions and based on different cultural markers. Still, the Gregorian calendar became analogous to a common language.

Adoption of the calendar became a practical matter. Richards argued that it made international trade possible.

"People say time is money," said Robert Grudin, author of "Time and the Art of Living." "But time is much more difficult to figure than money."

By the 11th century, it was common in Western Europe to divide world history by the date of Jesus' birth.

Any given year is designated either A.D. for Anno Domini, "year of the Lord," or B.C. for "before Christ."

Some people use the more religiously neutral and secular "Common Era," C.E., or "Before the Common Era," B.C.E., but the designations refer to the same time line.

"Of course, people have to ask themselves what makes it common," noted James Wiseman, an associate professor of theology at Catholic University in Washington, D.C.

"For a Christian, the coming of Christ is simply the center of history," Wiseman said. "It is why we are called Christians. It is so inescapably basic that it's almost hard to say anything more profound than that."

Under the Romans, Jan. 1 had marked New Year's Day. The early Christians instead set New Year's Day on the dates of various religious festivals. It was the Gregorian calendar that returned New Year's Day to the date we celebrate today.



Dennis' miscount might mean millennium mistake

WASHINGTON (RNS)—How the calendar documents the passing years is a reflection of the belief that Jesus was a historical as well as a religious figure.

By counting forward from the first year of His birth, as calculated by Dennis the Little, a sixth century abbot, we arrive at a new millennium.

It may very well be, however, that Dennis—who was known for his humility—miscounted.

As calendar historian E.G. Richards tells it,

Dennis the Little settled on the date of Jesus' birth after consulting, among other things, the ancient account of Clement of Alexandria. Clement placed Jesus' birth in the 28th year of the reign of the Roman Emperor Augustus.

Dennis mistakenly counted from the date Augustus accepted the title of emperor, rather than his defeat of Antony and Cleopatra at the Battle of Actium.

The Christian era began with A.D. 1. By the abbot's reckoning, we will not enter a new millennium for another 375 days, more or less, at the start of 2001.

Scholars, however, suspect Dennis was off by a few years. They debate by how much. In fact, we might have unceremoniously crossed into the new millennium sometime earlier in this decade.

Dennis the Little came up with the concept of Anno Domini, or "year of the Lord," while grappling with the problem of fixing in time two central tenets of Christian theology: that Jesus

was born and later rose from the dead.

Problems with the calendar persisted into the late 16th century, vexing a succession of popes already distracted by other troubles. There was the Black Death, or plague, in 1347-1348. There were internal problems, finally resolved in 1417, after the church confronted "two popes, then three contenders." Then in the mid-15th century, there was the specter of the Reformation.

Gregory XIII became pope in 1572. He immediately turned his attention to the calendar. The church eventually accepted the proposals of an astronomer and physician named Aluise Baldassar Lilio. A decade after becoming pope, Gregory signed a papal bull on Feb. 24, 1582, establishing the new calendar that would carry his name.

By then, the Christian church was divided in three: Roman Catholic, Protestant and Eastern Orthodox. Protestants were loath to have anything to do with the pope or his calendar.

"The Protestant bishops were not eager to adopt a proposal from the pope, whom they considered to be the Antichrist," Richards wrote. "Accordingly, they replied with delaying tactics. ... They also used other arguments, including the notion that the world was about to end so there was not much point in reforming the calendar."

However, Richards explained, "As the difficulties attendant on having different calendars in the different states of Europe became intolerable, the Protestant countries saw sense and followed, one by one, the Catholics in adopting the new calendar."

Love, John 15:12-17

By Lindsay Vernon

Childhood memories are priceless. Attending the candlelight Christmas Eve services at my grandparents' church are among my most precious memories. As if it were yesterday I remember entering the vestibule, filled with laughter and conversation. My grandfather's strong, gentle hands guided me along, and I was filled with love as he reacquainted me with everyone we encountered.

As the service began we listened while the minister spoke. He read from the Bible important words, but to me, words none the same. And then the music began. As we sang, the room became alive. Old voices, young voices, skilled voices and untrained voices wondrously intertwined together into a beautiful choir singing praises about the birth of the Christ child.

As we took our candles and lit them one by one, the now darkened sanctuary took on a new dimension. It was magnificent and magical with flickering candles and dancing shadows. I sang loudly and proudly. As if with the Magi, I was there following the star to the manger where the baby

Jesus lay.

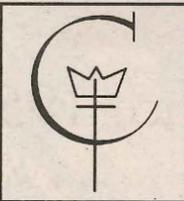
"Silent night, holy night, wondrous star lend thy light. ...

"Christ the Savior is born, Christ the Savior is born."

There was a hush to the room as we left. Couples holding hands, singles in groups, families arm in arm, strangers now become friends.

I had come filled with love of my family, but in the span of an hour I was leaving brimming with the love of mankind in my heart, for together we had shared in the spirit of Christmas, which is the birth of Jesus Christ.

CUMBERLAND COLLEGE



Lindsay Vernon is the secretary for Cumberland College's basketball office. She has worked at Cumberland 12 years and is involved in service on campus and in her church.

We hope you have enjoyed these devotions for the Advent season. Cumberland College students, staff, faculty and administration wish you a blessed Christmas season as we all celebrate the birth of Christ our Savior.—Robert Dunston

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

The ones we missed

We've all heard stories about families that set an extra place at the Thanksgiving or Christmas table for the unseen guest. I've even heard stories of faithful women of God who set that place and the Lord miraculously directed someone in great need to that home on that day to fill that space.

As the days close in before Christmas, I'd like to think I'm prepared at home and that we here at Kentucky Baptist Homes for Children also are ready.

Sure, there are always last-minute glitches, but for the most part, I am confident that my kids at home and those under our care at the agency will have their needs met and many of their wants, too. Imagine the Christmas smiles from our kids whom you sponsored this year!

I'd also like to think that my heart is ready for the unseen guests and that as I enjoy my family and celebrate our Lord's birth, that I remain prayerfully aware of the many others living in darknesses I cannot imagine.

I'm talking about the ones we missed this year. Think about the size of your community, your county. Now imagine more than 27,000 children crowding your town, over-

flowing a football stadium or basketball arena.

That's how many Kentucky children were physically or sexually abused or suffered from neglect in 1996. Those are the most current figures we have from the Child Welfare League of America, and I have to point out that 27,000 is the number of confirmed cases of maltreatment.

It breaks my heart to consider how many children are suffering in silence.

KBHC is a big agency. On the days when I'm traveling from one side of the state to the other, sometimes I think we're too big! But then I think of those numbers—and not just the numbers, but the lives behind those numbers—and I realize we're still not big

enough. We may never be big enough.

As you celebrate Christmas, I ask that you pause and say a special prayer for the ones we missed this year, and pray they'll hold on until next year.

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

■ **Churches block Klan cross in Cincinnati.** Church leaders have booked all the space in Cincinnati's Fountain Square for the holiday season in an effort to keep out a Ku Klux Klan cross that has been displayed there during the holiday season for most of the past decade. "We planned it," Thomas Eisentrout of Immanuel United Methodist Church told Associated Press. "We squeezed the Klan out." When the Klan called Nov. 29 to inquire about getting the display permit, there was no room available, a public works spokesman said.

■ **Exxon Mobil Corp. rescinds domestic-partner policy.** The recently merged Exxon Mobil Corp. has bucked a trend in American business by rolling back benefits for the live-in partners of its employees. The corporation rescinded Mobil's domestic-partner policy, becoming the second major American company to do so, according to a leading homosexual rights organization. It also rejected Mobil's employment policy prohibiting discrimination based on "sexual orientation," according to Associated Press.

■ **Hawaii court ends efforts to legalize gay marriage.** The Hawaii Supreme Court has ended efforts to legalize gay marriage in the state. The court ruled Dec. 9 that the attempts by homosexual couples were rendered moot by a 1998 state constitutional amendment approved overwhelmingly by voters. That amendment gave lawmakers authority to limit state-recognized marriages to opposite-sex couples.

■ **Dark-skinned Jesus wins contest.** A painting of a dark-skinned Jesus has been chosen as the winner of the National Catholic Reporter's contest to update the image of Christ for the year 2000. The magazine calls the winning image a "more gentle Jesus ... modeled on a woman" rather than the muscular male image of the Renaissance. The independent newsweekly launched the competition to counter hype about millennium parties and computer bugs and turn the focus to Jesus, on whose birth the date is based.

Court rejects tuition challenge

WASHINGTON (RNS)—The nation's highest court has again ruled that a state can help pay for students to attend private schools while denying the same aid to those who attend religious schools.

Without comment, the U.S. Supreme Court turned down an appeal Dec. 13 from Vermont in which parents of religious-school students argued that their children's freedom of religion was violated by denying them the same financial aid given to children who attend secular private schools.

The Vermont Supreme Court had ruled that state tuition payments for children attending religious schools would violate the constitutionally required separation of church and state.

Clinton urged to speak out on Sudan war

WASHINGTON (RNS)—About 200 religious leaders, representatives of human rights groups and college campus organizations have issued an open letter to President Clinton asking him to take a stand on the war in Sudan.

"We implore you, in the name of countless lost Sudanese, to raise the profile of Sudan and to add your public voice and leadership to ensuring the success" of peace talks between the government of Sudan and breakaway rebels in the south of the country, the Dec. 9 letter to Clinton states.

According to some estimates, the war between the Islamic government in

In early November, the U.S. Supreme Court rejected a similar appeal from parents of religious-school pupils in Maine.

The nation's highest court has one case dispute on its decision docket that could set precedent in this issue. In a Louisiana case, it is expected to say by summer whether religious schools can receive computers and other instructional materials paid for with taxpayer money under a federally funded program.

Vermont's tuition-reimbursement program, which dates back 130 years, is aimed at high school students whose local school districts do not operate a public high school. State law allows such school districts to pay tuition for students to attend a public or private high school.

Khartoum and the largely Christian and animist rebels in the south has resulted in 2 million deaths.

The letter, whose signers include Richard Land, president of the Southern Baptist Ethics & Religious Liberty Commission, also urged Clinton to meet with Holocaust survivor Elie Wiesel and others familiar with the Sudanese government's policies and practices.

"Either America leads the way toward peace at this crucial historical juncture, or an unspeakable catastrophe evident to all will take its final, dreadful toll in a century already defined too fully by indifference and genocide," the letter states.

Schools opt for precepts over 10 Commandments

SCOTTSBURG, Ind. (RNS)—An Indiana school district has tried to avoid a potential challenge to posting the Ten Commandments by creating 11 "Common Precepts" for moral behavior.

The list begins with "Trust in God" and continues by urging students to respect authority, honor their parents, speak truthfully, abstain from sex until marriage and resolve conflicts without violence.

"We're not trying to teach religion," said Robert Hooker, the school superintendent in Scottsburg, Ind. "With kids killing kids, and so many negative images out there, we're just trying to put forth a positive message."

Hooker told The New York Times that the precept about trusting God is taken from the words on U.S. currency and does not refer to a specific religion.

Although the school board hoped to remove itself from legal entanglements, a lawyer for the American Civil Liberties Union said its hopes may be dashed.

Kenneth Falk said he intends to file suit against the Scott County school district if the precepts are posted. "It suspiciously tracks the Ten Commandments," Falk said. "The edict to trust in God is clearly a religious notion."

Special people, special friends

This is the time of year when many of us will pause long enough to think about the past 12 months.

As quickly as the final seconds of 1999 tick away, the new year will begin. Maybe I am alone with my thoughts, but this always has been a good time to reflect on the many things that have happened during the past 12 months.

The overwhelming reality is that it has been special people, inspired by God, who have made what we do possible. We have been blessed to meet many new friends during the past year. Some of those friends came as visitors to our campus. Others became new friends through their efforts as volunteers.

We have been blessed to have new faculty and staff, many of whom moved many hundreds of miles to be a part of the Oneida ministry. We believe that many of our students have come to appreciate Oneida Baptist Institute because of our efforts to help them.

We have met many new friends as our choir and other groups have traveled across the commonwealth to represent our school in various activities.

As always, we have been blessed to have a host of people who have become special friends and have blessed us financially. Each year about this time I am made aware of a special gift given to us through some unusual circumstance. One year a friend sent us \$20 that had been found on the ground in a parking lot. The note which accompanied the gift stated that the best use of this money would be to invest in Oneida. I would be remiss if I did not mention the two quarters given each Christmas by a special friend apparently living in a nursing home.

This year, another gift from a special friend came in the mail today. I think you will be blessed as I share the letter with you.

"Enclosed is a small check for Oneida Baptist Institute. Also enclosed you will note a \$1 bill. Maybe you wonder why I would enclose a dollar bill.

"Approximately three weeks ago, our pastor Bill Crosby spoke on talents. In each church bulletin was a paper clip with a bill clipped to the bulletin. Some of these bills were \$10, \$5 and \$1. No one was to return the talent to the church, but to use it in another manner such as helping someone else out or doing some good with it. That is why this \$1 bill is enclosed.

"I received one talent, so I am enclosing it so that Oneida Baptist may make it multiply for the Lord's work. I wish I could donate more myself, but I am on a limited income and try to send Oneida a check around this time of year. Hoping and praying for the best of a holiday season for Oneida and all of its workers and children attending school. May God continue to bless you all."

We have all heard the expression, "Pass the buck." This illustration puts a new slant on that phrase. I realize the "buck" has been passed on to me. Now I must make sure it is used as wisely as possible.

One of the greatest challenges any administrator faces is not only to raise funds, but also to use those funds wisely and with great stewardship. So here I am. A talent has been passed on to me. The donor's work is finished, and mine has just begun. I now must make sure this dollar and all of our other resources are put to their greatest use.

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

Computer skills & Bible translation

Shortly after David Musser came to Clear Creek in 1994, he discovered God's call to international missions.

"The call was a good match for my love of cultures, languages and sharing my Christian walk with others," David said. "While seeking God's direction, He put the word 'Wycliffe' in my mind, and kept it there for six weeks.

When I learned about Wycliffe Bible Translators, I found my life's passion. I can't imagine not having God's word in my own language, and yet I discovered that is the reality for over 400 million people."

The steps toward mission service with Wycliffe include 12 weeks of basic linguistic training and intercultural communication classes, eight

weeks of computer orientation, 18 months of French language study in Switzerland, three months of Africa orientation in Cameroon and several months of study in Sangbo, trade language of the Central Africa Republic. All of this hinges on securing adequate financial support.

Since childhood, David has developed computer skills. He served as director of computer services at Clear Creek. As a multi-skilled computer specialist, David will pro-

vide computer support and training of missionaries and nationals involved in eight translation projects in central Africa. Wycliffe collaborates with national Bible translation organizations, and whenever possible nationals are empowered to do the actual translation. Computer technology can encode the 20-30 percent lexical similarity between

languages and produce a rough draft for a new translation project, saving years of work. Wycliffe is the primary developer of linguistic software. Founded in 1942, Wycliffe has nearly 6,000 members. They have completed 400 New Testament translations and have 1,000 projects in process.

"God gave me an ability with computers, and I want Him to use me to keep the translators at work without worrying about the technology. I want to develop relationships with people and relate on a heart level with nationals and thus help people come to the Lord," Musser said. Individuals interested in helping Musser can contact Wycliffe Bible Translators at Box 628200, Orlando, FL 32862-8200.

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

CLEAR CREEK CHRONICLE



Bill Whittaker

BOOKS

Still looking for a Christmas gift?

COLORADO SPRINGS, Colo. (RNS)—Every year at this time, millions of books are given as gifts. During 1999, the publishing industry has been busy producing new volumes for adults and children of faith.

"Billy Graham: God's Ambassador" is a thorough photojournalistic survey of the man who calls himself "an ordinary preacher," but who has probably done more than any other to influence religion in America during the past half century.

Compiled by Russ Busby, a staff photographer for the Billy Graham Evangelistic Association, this collection shows Graham preaching to the masses, praying with presidents, promoting civil rights in America's south and South Africa, and weeping over the plight of the world's poor.

Two new Christmas books can help both children and grown-ups better appreciate the holidays. "A Child's Christmas at St. Nicholas Circle" features an inspirational tale lavishly decorated with nearly 20 paintings by Thomas Kinkadee.

"The Spirit of Christmas: Celebrating a Spirit-Filled Holiday Season" is a compilation of messages from John Hagee, Tommy Barnett, James Robison and other charismat-

ic and Pentecostal leaders.

Two new anthologies provide readers with a wealth of riches. "Spiritual seeking within or without one's religious heritage has become a hallmark of our age," writes Kathleen Norris in her introduction to "The Best Spiritual Writing 1999."

Like last year's inaugural edition, the 1999 compilation features contributions from a diverse list of contributors and periodicals.

Included is a Pico Ayer's piece on travel, Robert Cording's poem-tribute to singer Sam Cook, essays by Kentuckian Wendell Berry, Annie Dillard, Ron Hansen, Mary Gordon, Andres Dubus III and Larry Woiwode and poems by Seamus Heaney and Luci Shaw.

"Memoirs of the Spirit" culls autobiographical gems from the past three centuries of America's religious history. Edwin Gaustad has selected 26 compelling first-person accounts from Protestant, Catholic, Jewish, Native American, Eastern and other traditions. Included are essays by Thomas Merton, Alan Watts, Maya Angelou, Jonathan Edwards, Jimmy Carter, William F. Buckley, Black Elk, Paramahansa Yogananda, Dorothy Day and Billy Graham.

Back Porch Faith: Weekly Meditations. Paul Prather. Andrews McMeel Publishing, 1999. 251 pages. \$16.95. ♦♦♦♦♦ (Out of five)

Kentuckian Paul Prather has penned a jewel of a devotion book. A religion columnist for the Lexington Herald-Leader turned rural pastor, Prather offers 52 weekly meditations intent on helping the reader get to know God on a personal level.

As the son of a pastor who turned rebel and then found his faith again, Prather writes mostly about the simple faith of grace and love. Each of the 52 meditations consists of a perceptive essay about one of Prather's faith experiences or someone he has observed. Prather is a good reporter/storyteller and most of his essays start off with an engaging experience which unfolds into a lesson of faith.

Each essay ends with a meditation more aptly called a prayer. Prather has organized the book to be used once a week, following the biblical mandate of setting aside one day of the week to seek God.

What makes this book appealing, besides the solid theology and splendid writing, is the Kentucky connection. The Kentucky reader will find familiarity at every turn. The essays just feel like home.

If you have not picked your meditation book for next year, include "Back Porch Faith" in your plans. *Wayne Hager*

The Only Necessary Thing: Living a Prayerful Life. Henri J.M. Nouwen. Compiled and edited by Wendy Wilson Greer. Crossroad Publishing Co., 1999. 160 pages. \$18.95. ♦♦♦♦♦

Perhaps best known for his classic work, "The Wounded Healer," Henri Nouwen was a prolific writer in the areas of Christian ministry and spirituality.

"The Only Necessary Thing" is a compilation of Nouwen's words on prayer by Wendy Greer, president of the Henri Nouwen Society. Drawn from his diaries and other devotional writings, the book seeks to share not only Nouwen's insights on prayer, but his life of prayer. Through the collection of topically arranged quotes readers are led gently, but forcefully, to see that prayer is not just a part of our Christian life, it is our life. Nouwen argues that "our desire for God is the desire that should guide all other desires." If that is true, then prayer is the tool that continually stokes that desire.

Like most of Nouwen's books, this one is deceptively simple. With clarity and simplicity, Nouwen draws the reader into the life of prayer. He helps us understand the nature of a prayerful life, as well as how to build our lives around prayer. His love for communion with God shines through. Greer has done a masterful job of pulling from a variety of sources and organizing the material into a form that reads as if it were written specifically for this book. *Jim Holladay*

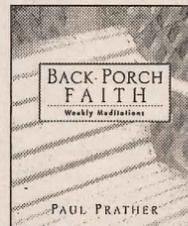
A Passage Through Divorce: An Interactive Journal for Healing. Barbara Baumgardner. Broadman & Holman Publishers, 1999. 165 pages. \$14.99. ♦♦♦♦♦

Barbara Baumgardner was an unwilling party in a divorce. In this book she guides the reader on a journey to healing through releasing the hurt and anger on the written page. Baumgardner discovered the power of journaling while going through her own divorce. She claims writing about the experience of divorce gives a person a renewed sense of control and helps rebuild life.

This task would be in the grasp of only a few people if previous experience with journaling was required. But the novice is not left out because Baumgardner serves as a guide into journaling. Through seven "sessions" she asks questions and leaves space for answers. She includes inspirational thoughts, Scripture and stories to encourage the newly divorced.

Topics include the process of journaling, responding to divorce grief, facing firsts, dealing with the former spouse, speaking creatively, handling holidays and special days, and moving on. While this journaling process is a private exercise, a leader's guide is included if one desires to complement the private journaling through a support group.

Baumgardner's book has an attractive format and would make an ideal gift. *Wayne Hager*



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

The Life of Our Lord. Charles Dickens. Simon & Schuster, 1999. 126 pages. \$14.95. ♦♦♦♦♦

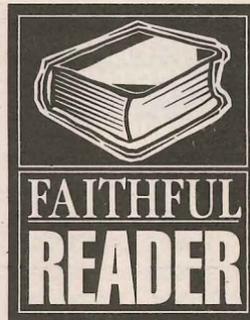
Between 1846 and 1849, Charles Dickens set out to write an account of the life and miracles of Jesus Christ that would engage the imaginations and hearts of his children. He wanted to make sure his children grew up to love and appreciate the Lord Jesus Christ.

When he finished the manuscript, Dickens gave explicit instructions that it was not to be published, because he feared it would lose its character as the attempt of a father to pass along what he knew of Jesus.

In 1933, the last remaining son of Charles Dickens gave permission, in his will, for his children to publish the manuscript and share his father's heart with the world. The first American publication was in 1934.

The book is a fascinating synthesis of the four Gospels, with a sprinkling of literary license. Dickens sometimes alters the time line or the characters just a bit to make the story comprehensible to children. People who want a more straightforward narration of the gospel may find this a bit disconcerting.

He generally skips most of the teaching material of the Gospels, choosing to focus instead on the more active miracle stories. Occasionally he throws in a bit of commentary to make sure his children understand that at the heart of the Christian message is a concern for the poor and the development of a loving heart. As a reader of Charles Dickens, I was amazed that he could use so few words to tell such a profound story. *Jim Holladay*



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

PRAYER PARTNERS

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

■ Missionaries Doug and Karen Lehman and their children, Monica and Melinda, as they leave Louisville for Tanzania this week to serve as career medical missionaries with the Southern Baptist International Mission Board.

■ Seventeen-year-old Laura who recently made a profession of faith in Jesus in Poland.

■ Missionaries Mark and Susie Edworthy of Poland ask for prayer for women who attend a Bible study in Radosc, that they will be "open to God's leadership and be willing to make the step of obedience in baptism."

■ The team of missionaries in Warsaw, Poland, as they develop a strategy for reaching the city of 2 million people with the gospel.

■ Follow up to the recent evangelistic work of Maasai seminary students in the Losimingori, Makuyuni and Minjingu areas of Tanzania. "This area is very open to the gospel, and many people have never heard a clear presentation of the gospel message," said missionary Lisa Moor.

■ Martin Lutero, music pastor at a multiethnic Southern Baptist church in Worcester, Mass. Before immigrating to the United States, Lutero was a top-10 Christian recording vocalist in his native Brazil.

Baking for Lottie turns brother to Jesus

BAT CAVE, N.C. (BP)—Sweet smells of baking cakes and pies greeted David MacEachern as he walked through the door. He followed the aroma to his kitchen to find his wife and his brother.

His brother, Danny, looked up from his perch at the table and smiled. David looked confused. He hadn't expected to see his brother, a tough ex-convict covered in tattoos, making baked goods.

"We're making chocolate pies and cakes for Lottie Moon," Danny explained. "Do you know who she is? She's a missionary who gave up everything to go tell the Chinese about Christ."

David stared at the odd scene for another second and then escaped to the bathroom.

"It was then I knew my brother was for real about this Christianity thing," David recalled. "Here was this big, tough guy baking cakes to raise money for Lottie Moon, and he was really excited about it.

"I knew at that point something was missing in my life," he added.

Danny said that a few months earlier he had attended a church service with a friend and became a Christian. He kept trying to get his brother to attend church. David's wife, Marline, said she prayed he would join his family every Sunday in worship, but it hadn't happened.

Even after the Lottie Moon bake sale, David refused to go to church, but that day had made enough of an impact to keep him thinking about a lady who gave up everything for

Christ and an ex-con whose life had changed dramatically because of Christ.

"I finally went to church for an Easter service and God just got hold of my heart," David recalled. "I repented and got on fire for God."

As David began building his relationship with God, an intense call to preach kept surfacing. Ultimately, he attended seminary and now is pastor of Bat Cave Baptist Church in Bat Cave, N.C.

He said that day of baking for Lottie Moon continues to have an impact on his life. He has been involved in numerous mission volunteer projects in the United States and internationally. He said he wants others—no matter where they live—to hear of the Savior who changed his life.

It's just a normal exploding Christmas pageant

HIXSON, Tenn. (BP)—At first, the annual Christmas production seemed to be a combination of the usual elements—a robed choir, drama and creative movement.

Then the car exploded on stage. For Central Baptist Church in Hixson, Tenn., it was just another routine Christmas production created by music minister Fred Guilbert.

Titled "Under the Influence," the production included a 450-member cast, a \$40,000 budget for professional television filming, pyrotechnics, the exploding car and funeral caskets.

"We wanted to make an impact in people's lives," Guilbert said. "What better time of year to invite someone

to hear the gospel than at Christmas?"

"Under the Influence" tells the story of two teenage boys—one Christian and the other a non-believer. The climactic moment arrives when the boys crash into a utility pole on the way home from a church service. The huge explosion jolted audience members from their pews.

Guilbert, who wrote "Under the Influence," said God gave him the idea for the crash while he was waiting at a stoplight. "I went to our technical guys and told them the idea, and they told me it could be done. We even went out and bought the car for \$300."

The technical crew used a sleight-of-hand trick to pull off Central's first

car crash in a sanctuary. While the audience was watching a video of events leading to the crash on large video screens, the crew rolled out the actual car and utility pole onto the stage. At the moment of impact, the sanctuary filled with smoke, bright lights and pyrotechnics.

But the spiritual impact was even greater, said Ron Phillips, pastor of the 5,000-member church. More than 650 people made professions of faith during the production and more than 100 people rededicated their lives to Christ.

"God is in this thing," Phillips said. "When you really examine it, you'll find a traditional Christmas presentation with a shocking ending."

CLASSIFIED ADS

SEEKING: Youth/music minister. God is on the move at Cloverport Baptist Church. We are about to open a new "Youth for Christ" center. Send resumé to: Gail Hale, 604 Robertson Drive, Cloverport, KY 40111.

SEEKING: Part-time minister of music for a small Baptist church in Payneville, Ky.—needed to assist in leading two weekly services and weekly choir rehearsals. For details, contact Patty Huffman at (502) 499-0136.

SEEKING: Bardstown Junction Baptist Church has ministry opportunity for qualified individuals. We are actively seeking candidates to serve as minister of youth and minister of music. These are salaried, part-time positions. If you have interest in either or both of these areas of service, we will gladly accept your resumé. Please direct all correspondence to: Phyllis Reynolds, c/o Bardstown Junction Baptist Church, 4855 S Preston Highway, Shepherdsville, KY 40165.

SEEKING: New Hope Baptist Church of Versailles, Ky., is looking for a part-time youth minister. Salary is negotiable. Send resumé to: New Hope Baptist Church, PO Box 825, 3825 Tyrone Pike, Versailles, KY 40383. Phone/Fax: (606) 873-1707.

SEEKING: Part-time youth minister and part-time music minister. Please send resumé to: River View Baptist Church, 1850 Louisville Road, Cox's Creek, KY 40013, Attn: Charles Frazier.

SEEKING: Little Flock Christian Academy teacher. Send resumé to: Jeff Rafferty, 5500 N Preston Highway, Shepherdsville, KY 40165, or call (502) 957-7696.

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

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.

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: South Side Baptist Church is seeking a child care director. Applicant must be a Christian, preferably a Baptist with experience as director/assistant director. Mail resumé to: South Side Baptist Church, 1501 Holman, Covington, KY 41011, or fax to (606) 431-1314.

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 for Piney Grove Baptist Church, Corbin, Ky. Contact person: Marlon Sams, PO Box 1563, Corbin, KY 40701.

HELP WANTED: 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.

HELP WANTED: 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.

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.

King & Graham among 'greatest' preachers of the 20th century

JACKSON, Tenn. (RNS)—Billy Graham and Martin Luther King Jr. are among the greatest preachers of the 20th century, according to Preaching, a bi-monthly journal for ministers.

The No. 1 ranking was given to the late James S. Stewart, a Scottish preacher and New Testament professor who served a two-year term in the 1960s as moderator of the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland.

"His books such as 'Heralds of God' ... and 'A Faith to Proclaim' ... have inspired tens of thousands of preachers to strive for greater effectiveness in their proclamation of God's Word," wrote Michael Duduit, the editor of the magazine.

The rest of the top 10 are, in order:

■ Evangelist Billy Graham.

■ The late George Buttrick, an English-born Congregational preacher who served almost 30 years as pastor of Madison Avenue Presbyterian Church in New York.

■ The late civil rights leader Martin Luther King Jr.

■ The late Harry Emerson Fosdick, a pastor of New York's Riverside Church.

■ The late G. Campbell Morgan, an English-born minister who served in the United States and England and influenced evangelical preaching.

■ The late William Edwin Sangster, an evangelical Methodist preacher who had the largest Sunday-evening congregation in London during World War II.

■ John R.W. Stott, a popular evangelical preacher who is rector emeritus of All Souls Church in London and director of the London Institute for Contemporary Christianity.

■ The late D. Martyn Lloyd-Jones, a Welsh preacher who served as pastor of Westminster Chapel in London from 1943 to 1968.

■ The late Clarence Macartney, who served as pastor of First Presbyterian Church of Pittsburgh.

Duduit said the preachers were labeled as "great" based on their influence on church and society and on their fellow preachers.

The "second ten," in order are: Leslie Weatherhead, George W. Truett, R.G. Lee, Norman Vincent Peale, Peter Marshall, E. Stanley Jones, Donald Grey Barnhouse, Ralph Sockman, W.A. Criswell and Gardner C. Taylor.

The list of top preachers was based on rankings by Preaching's board of contributing editors, who reviewed nominations from readers of the magazine.

Macau missionaries value prayer during transfer to China

By Tobin Perry
SBC International Mission Board

MACAU (BP)—Another jewel of the Orient this week became another part of China.

On Dec. 20, 1999, Macau, the first European colony in East Asia, followed Hong Kong in becoming a sovereign territory of the largest nation in the world.

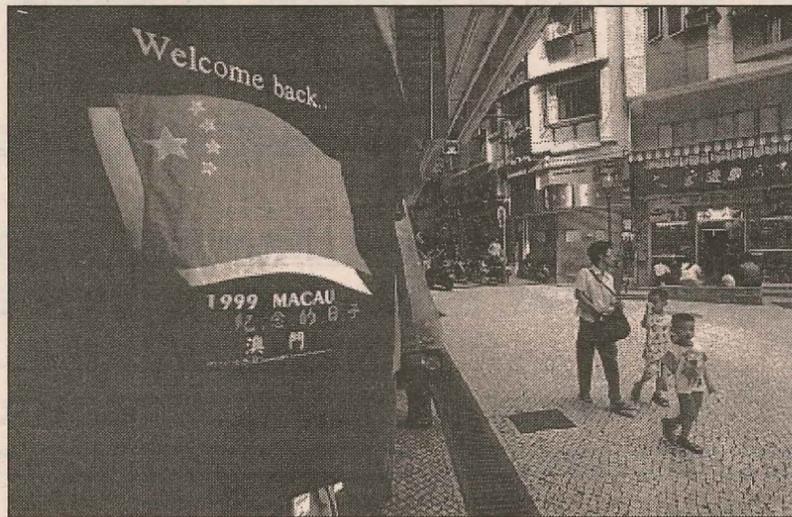
What will the change mean to Christians and Southern Baptist missionaries in Macau? If Hong Kong is any example, not much.

"We've been watching Hong Kong for nearly two years," said missionary Larry Ballew in Macau. He said there have been some changes, but "they've maintained quite a bit of autonomy and freedom. We're not anticipating many changes in our work."

That's good news for Macau. But just two years ago, missionaries in Hong Kong weren't feeling so positive.

As 1997 loomed, it looked as if expansive visions of church-planting movements might be no more than a far-off dream. China's reputation on freedom of religion had preceded it. Many wondered whether China would try the same restrictive policies in Hong Kong that it had in the rest of the country.

But according to Southern Baptists in Hong Kong, most of those fears have gone unrealized. And what would have been the most significant of those changes was made irrelevant by a change in how Southern Baptist missionaries operate in Hong Kong.



CHANGING HANDS The Portuguese colony of Macau became a territory of China on Dec. 20. Christians in Macau wonder how the change will affect them, but they take hope from Hong Kong's experience. Christians there say they've maintained quite a bit of autonomy and freedom since the island reverted to Chinese sovereignty two years ago. (BP photo by Guy Lyons)

Past traditional church starting strategies involved using kindergartens or other public facilities to host a church service on Sundays, said Clay Addison, a missionary in Hong Kong. "What has changed about that is that it is not only the Christian groups but also the Buddhist or other Asian religious groups that get them now."

That hasn't affected Southern Baptist workers more recently as strategies have focused on home-based meetings requiring less overhead, he said.

In the past several years, visas have become more difficult to get, said mis-

sionary Larry Ingram, who has lived in Hong Kong for nearly 30 years. But, he noted, visas became more difficult to get before the changeover, so it is questionable as to whether it was related to the city's political alignment.

Southern Baptist efforts in Hong Kong focus on planting churches among "grass-roots people." These are the lower-class, mostly nonliterate citizens of Hong Kong, who haven't been reached by traditional evangelism methods.

In Macau, Southern Baptist missionaries work in two teams. One plants

churches among the Cantonese-speaking population. The other ministers through medical work at Hope Clinic.

"What we are trying to do in Macau is initiate a church-planting movement that will penetrate all the segments of Cantonese-speaking people," said Ballew, who is the strategy coordinator for church planting in Macau.

Ballew said he doesn't believe the governmental changeover will affect his church-planting work.

Roman Catholic Christianity first came to Macau in the middle of the 16th century when Portugal established the area as a trade colony. But its impact within the city now is minimal. The first Baptist church was established in Macau in 1910, but presently only seven exist among the 424,000 residents of the city.

Most of the people of Macau consider themselves Buddhist, with mothers being the guardians of that tradition in the home. Family pressures force many people to participate in ancestor worship.

Although the people of Macau aren't resistant to the gospel, they aren't clamoring for it either, Ballew said.

"Many see Jesus as a Western God," he said. "They don't understand the concept and truth of there being only one sovereign God."

In the past year as a prelude to Macau being handed over to China, Ballew said he has seen more attention and prayer for the city. Many churches and ministries "here in Macau have attributed a lot of opportunities to the number of people praying for them."

"Many see Jesus as a Western God."

Southern Baptist missionary Larry Ballew in Macau

Israel won't force Church of Holy Sepulcher to install second door

JERUSALEM (RNS)—Israel won't forcibly open an emergency exit in the Church of the Holy Sepulcher, Minister of Tourism Amnon Lipkin Shahak said last week.

Shahak said Israeli police would instead seek to regulate the flow of Christian pilgrims in the structure in order to avoid any fire hazards.

Shahak spoke at the opening of a tourism trade fair in Jerusalem to discuss official preparations for millennial tourism in the city.

The absence of any emergency exit in the sprawling medieval structure has long been a bone of contention between Israeli police and the Greek Orthodox, Latin (Catholic) and Armenian church officials who control the site.

Only about 750,000 pilgrims can safely tour the church in a year, officials have said. At least 2.5 million Christians are expected to visit the church, built over the traditional site of Jesus' crucifixion and burial, during 2000.

Wadi Abu Nassar, a spokesman for the Latin Church, welcomed the government decision, saying the churches would seek to extend the visitation hours at the site in order to ease the pressure from pilgrims.

The Greek, Latin and Armenian churches are exceedingly reluctant to make any changes in the ancient status quo of the site's physical structure, which has been in effect since the Middle Ages.

Evangelical broadcaster jailed in Greece

ATHENS, Greece (RNS)—An evangelical Christian radio station in Athens, Greece, has been closed and a retired pastor who helped run it was jailed overnight, a religious freedom organization has reported.

Human Rights Without Frontiers, based in Brussels, Belgium, stated last week that Channel Station 2000 was raided by police earlier in the month. HRWF also said Lakis Regas, the 73-year-old retired pastor who worked as a technician, was held overnight.

"We have been operating and proclaiming the good news of Christ for 11 years without any problem," station di-

rector Thanos Karbonis was quoted as telling Compass, an evangelical news service. "Channel Station 2000 is very fruitful. It has brought many people to Christ."

HRWF reported that the station has been charged with disturbing the frequencies of nearby naval facilities. A court date was set for Jan. 31.

In 1994, Greece shut down the nation's only evangelical television station. Evangelical sources blame the closures on the politically powerful Greek Orthodox Church.

Greece has about 17,000 Protestants, mainly evangelicals and Pentecostals.

Registration deadline looms for Russian churches

MOSCOW (RNS)—Thousands of religious communities across Russia will be in legal limbo after Dec. 31 with the passing of a deadline for re-registration under a controversial religion law, according to an expert on the law.

"In legal terms, they become no one," said Moscow lawyer Yekaterina Smyslova, adding that she is working with 12 Protestant congregations in Russia on the problem.

The State Duma, or lower house of parliament, had been expected to extend the deadline before closing earlier this month to prepare for elections.

By not extending the deadline, the new law will leave an estimated 14,000 religious communities, most of them Russian Orthodox, on shaky legal ground. What this means in practical terms is unclear and may vary considerably among Russia's 89 regions and from faith to faith.

Religious groups remain unregistered for a variety of reasons, including the inefficient state bureaucracy and groups' refusal to apply.

One Irish Catholic priest with an unregistered parish in Syzran in the Volga region said he was confident the Vatican's "international clout" would offer some protection.

"I'm not too worried," said Philip Andrews. "There could be a lot of headaches for me, but they are not going to confiscate my property."

About 80 percent of Russia's nearly 200 Catholic parishes are re-registered.

By some estimates, about 10,000 parishes of the country's dominant Russian Orthodox Church have not been registered. Because of the Orthodox church's considerable political influence, local bureaucrats are unlikely to use the

opportunity of the passed deadline to go after Orthodox parishes.

At the federal Ministry of Justice in Moscow, the chief of the department for registering religious associations said congregations that do not make the Dec. 31 deadline need not worry.

"We sent out a letter of instruction to all our offices in the regions, telling them there is no need to touch anything, because the new Duma will for sure extend the deadline for another year," said the official, Alexander Kudryavtsev.

He added the Duma simply ran out of time and did not consider legislation extending the deadline for another year. With the Russian Orthodox Church supporting the extension, the new Duma is expected to approve it.

Still, the federal Ministry of Justice's letter, lawyer Smyslova cautioned, does not have the force of law. "Maybe the police won't drive them out. Maybe the Ministry of Justice won't go after them. But, all the same, they won't be able to rent property or invite foreign religious workers."

Smyslova said she is helping Lutheran and evangelical churches scramble to transfer assets to other legal entities before Dec. 31. After that date, she said, assets will be vulnerable to seizure because they will be legally ownerless.

She said a common perception that minority Christian faiths with foreign ties are affluent and alien to Russia may make them especially attractive targets to some provincial officials.

"Sometimes there are millions of dollars in investments in local churches here from abroad," Smyslova said, adding that her clients are "trying to find local people to transfer it to."

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