

# Baptist and Reflector

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NEWSJOURNAL OF THE TENNESSEE BAPTIST CONVENTION

## FMB votes Eastern Europe aid; 24 new missionaries appointed

By Robert O'Brien

RICHMOND (BP) — Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board trustees voted \$1 million for evangelism in Eastern Europe, appointed 24 new missionaries and heard reports of strategies aimed at spreading the Gospel in unevangelized areas of the world during their December meeting.

News of the first net loss in the foreign missionary force since 1972 added a sobering note, but hope was voiced for an upturn in 1990.

Harlan Spurgeon, board vice president for mission personnel, confirmed a problem about which he warned trustees in an earlier meeting. The appointment of 306 new foreign missionaries in 1989, down from 358 the previous year, will bring the total overseas mission force to about 3786, pending final tabulation at the end of 1989.

Southern Baptists ended 1988 with 3867 missionaries. But retirements, resignations, deaths and the normal service completions surpassed appointments this year.

Spurgeon, who challenged trustees to help reverse the downward trend, indicated some encouraging prospects exist for more appointments in 1990.

Noting the changes in Eastern Europe and that Spurgeon's challenge had moved him "philosophically and

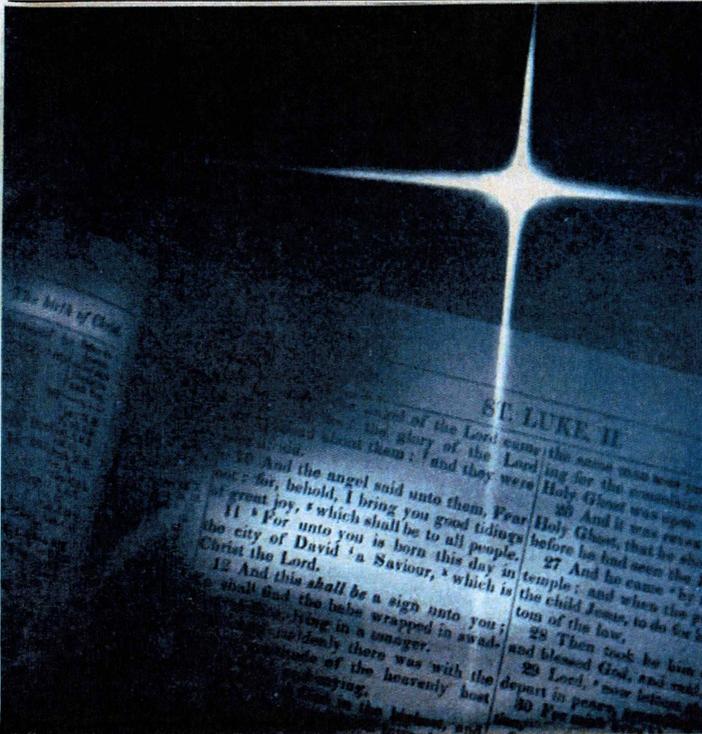
spiritually," trustee Chairman Mark Corts asked three trustees, headed by John Jackson of Anaheim, Calif., to convene a "solemn assembly" for a half-day at the trustees' February meeting. The solemn assembly was used in Old Testament times to call people to repentance, prayer, and fasting, said Corts, a pastor from Winston-Salem, N.C.

"It's an appropriate time for us as a board to call our own solemn assembly" as trustees confront the needs of the world, additional missionary recruitment and the wisdom to respond to the "extraordinary changes in Eastern Europe," Corts said. "It's an appropriate time for us to pray for the Lord of the harvest to send laborers into the harvest. It's a specific command of our Lord."

The \$1 million appropriation for assistance in Eastern Europe, which is undergoing sweeping political change, will draw from unused funds set aside for missionary cost-of-living supplements, said Carl Johnson, vice president for finance. The strength of the U.S. dollar overseas resulted in a surplus in the missionary account, he explained.

The board's Global Strategy Group has assigned a task force to study needs targeted by Eastern Europeans. A trustee subcommittee also will prepare an overview of the history of Southern Baptist strategy in Europe. Trustees opted for the overview study rather than following up on a proposal that they specifically consider purchasing an evangelical school in Belgium.

The 24 new missionaries include  
(See page 5)



**CHRISTMAS JOY** — The staff of the Baptist and Reflector, its board of directors, and the Executive Board share Christmas joy with all Tennessee Baptists. May God's blessings, Christ's love, and the evidences of His work in the world, bind us together as one. May the New Year usher in salvation for millions of lost people, in His Name.

### The other family

## 'We saw the angels, heard them sing!'

The hour grew late as weary travelers stumbled along the dusty road toward the little town. Twilight faded into night. On they pressed.

It was a worried family that finally came to the doorway of the inn. The father knew the town was bustling with visitors, including hundreds who had come to register in a special census. Many families were staying in with relatives, or with hospitable townfolk.

"You are fortunate, good traveler," said the smooth-voiced innkeeper.

"With such a large family, you are fortunate. There is room left for just one family. It is not fancy, but you are welcome ... but there is the matter of the cost. Since you are large in number, more than the ordinary price for lodging will be necessary."

The father argued, and his wife harangued the innkeeper from her place in the street. In the darkness, the father tried to give the innkeeper one coin too few, but to no avail. In the heated exchange, neither thanked the other.

"There is no food left for anyone," growled the innkeeper, half-glad that he didn't have to give any to such a

miser.

He turned back to his business, thinking aloud, "Surely this is the last group to seek lodging for the night. It is not safe to be about so late."

The family went to their quarters, already crowded with other guests. The father grumbled that it was good that they could leave the next day.

"We are so near the sheep-pen and the stench is almost unbearable. And nothing to eat — and the place is crowded!"

Yet other travelers were on the road to Bethlehem. A man striding along, leading a donkey bearing a young woman of gentle look and stately bearing. She seemed to slump from exhaustion. They too were tired, and they were looking for room at the inn. They were met by the innkeeper, who began to lecture them for traveling so late. He pondered some method of squeezing them into the room and charging them for ordinary space. But there was something about this pair ...

"Many thanks, sir, and blessings on you for your advice," said the man. "We do not blame you for not having room for us. We would be most

grateful if you would allow us to rest tonight with your animals. We are tired — and this could be the night for our baby to be born."

Troubled by conscience and a nagging thought that something was amiss, the innkeeper nodded hurriedly, showed them to a stall, and gave them some clean straw. He thought of a price for the straw. "If you had only come earlier," he said, "there was this other family, most ungrateful bunch they were."

During the night, the man and woman who had taken the last space thought they heard the cries of a babe out in the darkness. And once they imagined they saw a strange light in the sky. Only sheep bleating, thought the man, what a nightmare.

Came morning and they registered for the census after spending an hour or so gossiping with some friends. Then they took the road out of Bethlehem, heading north. They stopped for a few minutes outside the village, pausing to talk with a group of shepherds as they munched on fruit and bread.

The shepherds were shouting and waving their arms excitedly. The travelers were curious. A crowd gathered.

It was a wild array of shepherds. Disreputable! Their eyes were blazing and they had glowing faces. "Oh

(See page 5)

## Focusing on Christmas; next paper Jan. 3

The next issue of the Baptist and Reflector won't be published until next year — Jan. 3, 1990, to be precise.

The Tennessee newsjournal is published 51 weeks each year, and this is the last issue for 1989.

Tennessee Baptists will note that Christmas is the focus for this Dec. 20 issue. Editorials, regular columns, and special stories emphasize the celebration season honoring the birth of Christ.

Regular Sunday School lessons are included, with condensed lessons for Dec. 31 — by Mattie Mullins, Charles Gibson, and Deryl Watson, who have written for the Oct.-Dec. quarter.

New writers will begin the Jan.-March quarter in the Jan. 3 issue: Paul Moody, Erin Church, Erin; Roger Oldham, First Church, Martin; and Larry Fields, Central Church Bearden, Knoxville.

Look for issue No. 1, Volume 156, next year!

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**Editorials**

**The real Christmas Shepherd — secure foundation**

Look down and see the world rejoicing!  
Would that this could be the joyful exclamation of the angel hosts at each Christmas tide.

Surely this was their chorus as Jesus the Christ was born to an ordinary woman, with an anxious husband at her side. They witnessed the fruition of God's holy and ageless plan as the world was presented a Savior, Messiah.

"So all the generations from Abraham to David were fourteen generations, and from David to the deportation to Babylon fourteen generations, and from the deportation to the Christ fourteen generations."

The Christ — wonderfully and extraordinarily fitted into God's plan of salvation for mankind!

"Now the birth of Jesus Christ took place in this way. When His mother Mary had been betrothed to Joseph, before they came together she was found to be with child of the Holy Spirit.

"And her husband Joseph, being a just man and unwilling to put her to shame, resolved to divorce her quietly. But as he considered this, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream saying,

"Joseph, son of David, do not fear to take Mary your wife, for that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Spirit; she will bear a son, and you shall call His name Jesus, for He will save His people from their sins."

These verses are from Matthew's first chapter, telling an old, old story of Jesus and why He came. It was for His people.

Luke's narration is so familiar to us, the sweet story of the shepherds and their sheep, the angel chorus, the baby born in a manger — the baby who would be the Shepherd for mankind.

The Shepherd of souls came to bestow on us the joy of a world reborn, of mankind won back to newness of life born out of death. Only he who is willing to lose his life for Christ's

sake and the Gospel's can come into possession of the life which Christ gives. It is self-denial and faith.

Christ, the personal Savior, offers us personal salvation. The offer still stands. Christianity was brought into the world to get under our skin. Until it does, it misses the mark. It is as personal and true — yes, more so, than love or patriotism — or anything else.

Each of us, as a young person trembling on the back pew, as an innocent child, or an adult who knows the ways of the world — each of us may want to flee from questions aroused in the soul by the Savior.

Persons, however, cannot find peace, or a secure foundation for their lives, until we have a personal meeting with Christ.

And that is what Christmas means. Christ, whose advent we have come to call Christmas, came to shepherd us home.

"You are all sons of God, through faith, in Christ Jesus." — Galatians 3:26 — WFA

**Properly named love — the idea of Christmas**

The idea of Christmas may be as old, as eternal as God Himself. It may be simplistic theology to think such a thought, but it strikes us as being possible.

And when God first thought of Christmas, it was not gaudy and selfish. That blessed occasion was entirely different, except for the glad expectancy of children. It was spangled with stars — His stars. It was glorious to behold — His glory. It was immense, surpassing the very boundaries of all the universe. But most of all, Christmas was love.

Somehow man has dragged out all sorts of fanciful ideas and made them part of Christmas. It almost is as if we strive to confuse the purpose of the celebration. Casting about for something that feeds other than our souls, we add those things we "love." In so do-

ing, we pull Christmas down to our level.

The things we do with Christmas have supplanted almost the day itself.

There probably was no snow in Bethlehem at Christ's birth.

There were no presents.

No sugar plum fairies, no elves danced that night. There was no Santa Claus.

And when is Christmas? Some say we have missed even the year of Christ's coming. No one knows the exact date. What month, who kept a diary? More than likely, Mary and Joseph marked down the date. For us, it is difficult to believe that a person so important, so royal, could not know His own birthday.

Christmas comes at any time, not just on a certain date for calendar purposes — but when it is least expected, and when it is needed. It is

in our lives without being set apart. It is a constant presence, always being celebrated.

Perhaps it is difficult to grasp the infinity of Christmas because we forget it is also a gift, freely given out of God's awesome love. It may be beyond our reasoning to see ourselves encompassed and saturated by such goodness.

It is not enough to say "Merry Christmas" and ponder sweetness and light, though these too are good. Most of what we do at Christmas is for self, and not for Him.

It is not enough to lay claim to all the blessings and ignore the Blesser — or render Him half-praises, afterthoughts. Cutting through all the muddled, misplaced ideas passed on from generations, we see the Christ. At the center of Christmas, He is there, and He is love. — WFA

**Guest editorial**

**Good news of our faith — sent to serve**

By Hal C. Wingo

"Sent ... to serve." What a comfort it is to know that the good news of our faith is continually shared around the world.

"Sent ... to serve." What a relief it is to know that there are those among us who have felt the call and responded with dedication of life in such service.

"Sent ... to serve." What a dangerous, half-baked idea it is if any of the rest of us feel the slightest sense of release from personal obligation.

No one is sent without a sender. There is no service to be offered if there is no sustaining support which makes it possible for others to go.

Surely the flip side of being sent to serve is a realization equally as urgent: staying behind ... to support. These are really two parts of one whole, and the whole includes everyone who professes to care that the world should come to understand the true nature of God's love. And that true nature is that God will love the world whether we do anything about it or not.

God will love dying children in lands torn by civil war whether we tell them that or not.

God will love the families slowly starving in a world where surplus food is stored until it rots, whether we tell them that or not.

God will love the people oppressed by

rulers who forbid them to think and act for themselves, whether we tell them that or not.

The sadness, and the shame, is that much of the world may not know of that love without our participation, either in service of life or in support of that service.

And how do we participate? How much do we do in order that this unimaginable love be presented and explained and celebrated? One thing Southern Baptists love is numbers (it is true, isn't it?), especially when the numbers are impressive. Consider these numbers:

- Southern Baptists support the largest foreign mission enterprise in the world today: 3797 dedicated, called, and obedient people.

- There are 14,727,770 Southern Baptists, which means that it takes 3878 of us to keep one foreign missionary clothed, fed, and on the job.

- The cost of mission support for those foreign missionaries is \$104,706,000 a year, or a little more than \$7 a head for every Southern Baptist.

Talk about the miracle of the loaves and fishes! Whoever heard of such a bargain? Whoever got a bigger return? And whoever felt we shouldn't be able to do much better than that?

"Sent ... to serve." Thank God for all who go, and thank God for all who care enough to send them in His name.

Tennessee's Lottie Moon Foreign Mission Offering goal is \$6 million.

— Hal C. Wingo is assistant managing editor for People Weekly, and the brother of FMB missionary Nancy Wingo.

**Baptist and Reflector**

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# Christmas '89

*Around the world*

## 'It came upon the midnight clear'

Hymns stressing the social message of Christmas — "peace on earth, good will toward men" — are distinctly American. Carols from England and Europe do not reflect this concern.

Edmund H. Sears, a minister living in Wayland, Mass., wrote "It Came Upon the Midnight Clear" in 1849. The storm clouds of strife were gathering and would erupt a dozen years later and embroil the nation in Civil War.

The first stanza of Sears's hymn speaks of the appearance of the heavenly host and the song they sang.

Stanza two suggests that the message of peace comes again and again at Christmastime. Here is the

assurance that though this seems to be a "weary world" with its "sad and lowly plains" and "Babel sounds," yet the angels sang "with peaceful wings unfurled."

Other lines speak plainly of man's inhumanity to his fellow man, and the phrase "two thousands years of wrong" refers to the practice of slavery.

It is strange that this well-known Christmas carol contains no mention of Christ, the newborn King, or any other elements of the Scriptural account of Christ's birth from Matthew and Luke, except the song of the heavenly host, "Peace on earth, good will to men."

## 'O come, all ye faithful'

The words of "O Come, All Ye Faithful" were first written in Latin, about 1743, by an Englishman who lived in Douay, France. John Francis Wade, a musician and skilled calligrapher, made his living copying and selling music to the chapels and families of his community.

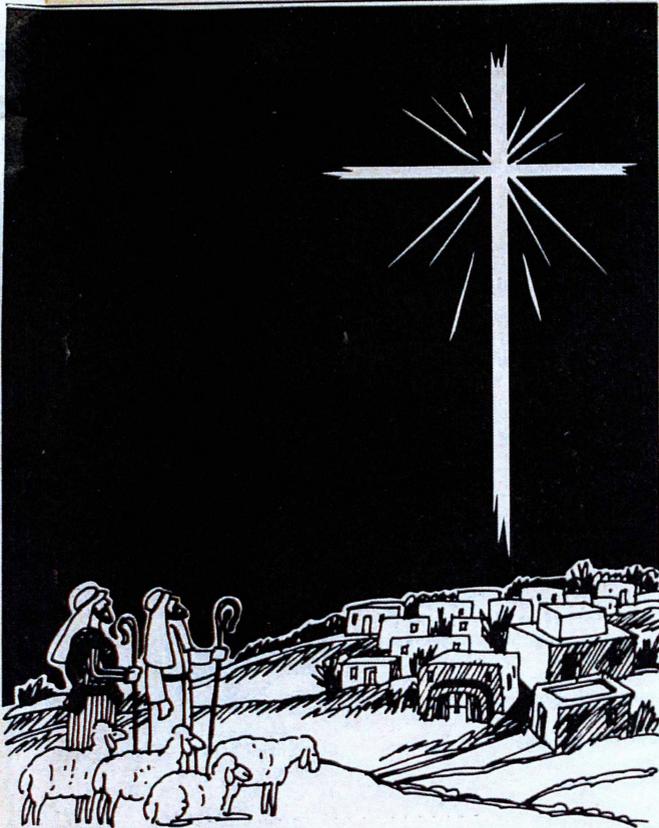
His beautiful manuscript books were the finest examples of his artistic craft and were cherished by those who possessed them.

The origins of words and music have long been shrouded in mystery. Only in recent decades has John Francis

Wade's authorship of both been firmly established.

What a joyful song this is, that sings of the adoration of Bethlehem's Babe.

The music is simple, unsophisticated, and sings easily. For more than 200 years — in Latin, English, and in many other languages — the words and music written by a transplanted Englishman have become our most frequently sung song of the Christmas season. — *William J. Reynolds, professor of church music, Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary.*



**AMAZING LIGHT** — The story of Christmas is ageless, matchless, pure joy, and light for all mankind. It is truth, beauty, salvation. The awesome wonder seen first by shepherds in the light of Bethlehem's star, and translated into Christ's birth, death, resurrection — is God's perfect plan for redemption.

## Born this day, a Savior, who is Christ the Lord

Luke 2:1-40  
By Clifton J. Allen

The late Dr. Allen, longtime editorial secretary for the Sunday School Board, wrote this Christmas message for the Dec. 25, 1966, Convention Uniform Lesson.

Monday is Christmas. We celebrate the birth of Jesus Christ. It should be a holy season. Have we cheapened it by too much commerce or desecrated it by selfishness? What will we gain from it? What will we give to it that the coming of Christ may be known everywhere?

### Jesus' birth

Luke locates the exact time of Jesus' birth. He records historical details to emphasize the facts related to this timeless event. These facts in secular history have been confirmed by competent research.

Putting these facts and many others — in various passages — together, we learn that Jesus' birth occurred about 5 or 6 B. C. In keeping with the custom of the Jews, everyone went to the city of his family or tribe to be enrolled in the census. Joseph and Mary thus went to Bethlehem.

Doubtless they felt high satisfaction that circumstances were taking them to Bethlehem, that there her Son miraculously conceived might be born. All these circumstances were the ordering of God. He had chosen the time, the virgin to become the mother, Joseph to be the foster father, and Bethlehem to be the place. And He had chosen the ruler of an empire and a civil decree to be the instrument of His will.

### Good news

The good news of Jesus' birth never grows old for those who are spiritually sensitive to the sublime grandeur of God's wondrous ways and works. An angel of the Lord, in a blaze of the glory of the Lord, appeared to the shepherds. No wonder they became frightened.

But the angel calmed their fears and announced "good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people." The good news was the fact that a Savior had come, "which is Christ the Lord." The word

"Savior" emphasized Jesus' saving mission.

The sure confirmation of the angel's announcement would be the finding of the babe wrapped in swaddling clothes and lying in a manger in Bethlehem. And suddenly a heavenly host joined the angel on the Judean hillside in an anthem of praise, ascribing glory to God and declaring God's purpose and promise of peace on the earth.

### Wondrous beauty

With the recession of the angels into heaven, the shepherds resolved to go immediately to Bethlehem and to see the marvelous thing which the Lord had made known to them. They found Mary and Joseph, and they found "the babe lying in a manger."

The sight confirmed the angel's message. Then in joy they began to make known the word which had been spoken to them about Jesus. Their wonderful story occasioned wonder on the part of those who heard it. Mary pondered the meaning of the things they said and treasured these meanings in her heart.

There was, indeed, reality in the birth of Jesus. Something happened! Something happened of so great significance that there was announcement by a messenger sent from heaven, a miraculous manifestation of light to attest it, and an anthem by a heavenly choir to interpret it.

Something happened that marked a point in history and affected the destiny of mankind. Something happened that was God's breaking forth into the actual life stream of humanity in order to save men from their sins.

Something happened which declared that God in Christ is with us, reconciling the world unto Himself. The world has never been the same since that wondrous event in Bethlehem on that holy night when Christ the Savior was born.

### Jesus Christ is the world's Savior

There is the greatest danger that this sublime truth will become too familiar to us. We will take it for granted. It will seem commonplace. We may become so preoccupied with personal concerns — even intoxicated by the love of pleasure — that we become dull of hearing the good news.

We need a new awareness and a fresh conviction

about Christ as the world's Savior. There is no other Savior, no other way of eternal salvation. But through Christ, those who have sunk deepest into the mire of sin may be lifted up and made new persons by God's grace.

Persons who have lived in the tormenting fear of superstition and in the moral impotence and corruption of idolatry can find in Christ deliverance from fear and guilt, the key to the meaning of life in the world, strength for moral achievement, and the sure way of acceptance by the true God.

All persons who yearn for a world of righteousness and peace and for assurance of life after death and fulfillment in eternity will find in Christ the all-sufficient Savior.

### The birth of Jesus, God is with us

His birth brought God down to man's level, that man might see God as a living person, as perfect love and righteousness, as faithful friend.

It meant that God's love reaches to the point of willingness to be involved in the sins and sorrows and conflicts and sufferings of humanity. It meant that God poured the energies of His eternal righteousness and truth and love and sovereignty into the redemption of the human race.

Therefore, let us become aware of God as revealed in Jesus Christ, respond to Him with faith and love, see ourselves in the light of His gracious purpose for us, strive to live in unbroken fellowship with Him through the Spirit, and give our utmost to make known His salvation to all the peoples of the earth.

God in Christ is with us through His eternal Spirit to redeem and save us, to enable us to resist evil and overcome difficulty, to provide grace for affliction and whatever life holds, and to empower us and guide us in the Christian mission. God is with us, and He rightly deserves our adoration and our devotion; and He wants supremely our love and our trust.

*Unto you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, which is Christ the Lord.* — Luke 2:11

Christ was born: the incarnation is fact. Christ is living now: the resurrection is fact. He is the Lord and Savior — our hope forever!

# Christmas '89

## In Tennessee

### God's gift

Christmas is ... God's gift to mankind, His Son, Mary's baby child. What would we do without His love? Of all the gifts we can get, Jesus is the best. With His love in our heart, we don't just celebrate once a year — He is there always. Truly He brought joy to the world.

Nonnie Tramel  
Rt. 1  
Dowelltown 37059

### Christ's birthday

Christmas, above all else, is Christ's birthday. There must be children to make Christmas special — without them, Christmas is not so exciting as we grow older. Buying gifts for others is a pleasure. Helping with parties for children is a joy. Telling the Christmas story brings happiness to young and old. Every family should celebrate with a birthday cake for Jesus.

Wileva Mullins  
Camden

### Love of Christ

Jacob DeShazer was interned by the Japanese for some 40 months during WWII. Cruelly treated, an intense hatred for the Japanese grew in his heart. One Japanese soldier, in an act of kindness gave him a Bible. Through the study of it, DeShazer came to know Christ, and

hatred became love.

When the war was over, DeShazer returned to Japan and gave out copies of his testimony printed in Japanese. One of those who took and read his testimony was Mitsuo Fuchida, the Japanese pilot who had led the attack on Pearl Harbor. Fuchida gave his life to Christ and became a Baptist evangelist, known as Japan's most outstanding evangelist.

Each of these men had given testimony that it was Christ who had given new life and had changed hatred to love. Giving generously to the Lottie Moon Christmas Offering will make it possible for the love of Christ to penetrate other lost lives and vengeful hearts.

Carl B. Camp  
752 Northaven Dr.  
Memphis 38127

### Love's door

Christmas is ... opening love's door so all may see God's greatest gift and hear the greatest story ever told. Remembering angel choirs, excited shepherd, and wise men's treasures for the Christ Child ... Giving Him loving hearts, joyful praise, and willing service ... Sharing our faith in every season, exalting Jesus every day, anticipating His return, and Christmas unending!

Hazel Yoakum  
Route 1  
Speedwell 37870

### A child's gift

Christmas is ... a child handing a small gift to Mom. The gift is wrapped in wrinkled tissue paper, tied with bits of leftover ribbons. His face is angelic. "For such is the Kingdom of God," said Jesus. "I made it myself," the child says proudly. That statement removes all imperfections.

Thelma Sudberry  
900 Belmont Ave.  
Shelbyville 37160

### Special time

Christmas is ... a very special time for a Christian. We have a wonderful opportunity during this holiday season, to share a gift with all the world that doesn't cost anything to give. When exchanging presents, why not include Jesus! Reach the lost, let the people see God's love through you!

Teresa Malone  
Watertown 37184

### Immortality, mortality

Christmas is more remarkable than Easter; the incarnation is more surprising than the resurrection. That Jesus the Son of God could raise Himself from the dead is merely a supernatural act of a supernatural being.

That Infinity would put on the finite, that Immortality would enter into mortality, that Eternal Peace would live among human conflicts — that is wondrous.

Craig M. Williams  
Rt. 1, Box 33  
Crossville 38555

### No smoking — Lottie benefits

Charles Edwards, deacon at First Church, Sharon, believes in the old adage of getting two birds with one stone.

He wanted to make a special contribution to the Lottie Moon Christmas Offering for Foreign Missions at his church. And, he wanted to stop smoking cigarettes.

On Jan. 1 of this year — he discovered how he could accomplish both. He decided to save his cigarette money — and give it to the Lottie Moon Offering. He started on Jan. 1.

Each day, Charles Edwards put into an ice cream bucket (he likes ice cream) the amount of money he would have spent for the smoking habit that day.

The money piled up. Edwards felt more confident each day. He was going to whip that habit and give something special to Foreign Missions.

One night last week as the WMU had its program of emphasis on Foreign Missions, Edwards contributed the contents of his ice cream bucket — \$456.25. He had kicked the habit.

Edwards says he didn't accomplish his two-fold goal alone. "There were some prayers for me," he said. And, Aileen Edwards, his wife, had two reasons to celebrate. She is president of the Sharon WMU.

Wendell Smith, Sharon pastor, thinks Edwards may have started something good. "Just think what could be contributed if more of us gave this way," he said. — Wm. Fletcher Allen

## WMU launches two periodicals

BIRMINGHAM, Ala. — Southern Baptist Woman's Missionary Union began two new publications in October — Our Missions World in the Korean language and Magazine.

Magazine is a quarterly, eight-page minimagazine for Southern Baptist ministers' wives.

Our Missions World in the Korean language is a new publication. Yarbrough said, but the English version of the magazine has been around for some time.

The Christmas anthem bore the everlasting message of "peace on earth, good will toward men." It seemed that there could still be beauty and peace and love — no matter how much hatred, violence, and death surrounded them.

As he finished singing, Henri Regnault noticed a lull had come over the battle lines. There was a hush in the air, gentle silence.

And across the Seine came another young voice as a German soldier sang. "Silent night, holy night, all is calm, all is bright, 'round yon virgin, mother and child!"

The French listened in reverence as the Germans had listened to them. A solemn stillness rested over both sides for a long while before the rattle of weaponry was heard again. The Christmas music had reminded enemies that they had a friend in Jesus Christ — on a snowy Christmas.

## One Woman's View

By June McEwen

How do you decorate your family Christmas tree? Is this part of the Christmas season a traditional time of family fun and togetherness? Or is it only part of decorating the home that is done when you get to it? Do you have fun getting the tree ready or is it an occasion for bickering and disagreement?

Some families have assigned roles for the various stages of making the tree the centerpiece of the Christmas celebration. Often the father and the children find the tree in the woods or in a Christmas tree lot. The family may have discussed whether to have a cedar or a spruce, and the tree's size.

Who strings the lights? Does this person have sole choice or must the family agree when the stringing and arranging is acceptable? Do you have ropes of tinsel and icicles? Are the tinsel icicles tossed with abandon or must each strand be carefully placed? Do you agree? And what about old and new ornaments, some bought, some handmade?

Who tops the tree with angel or star? Do you use strings of popcorn and paper chains? Is there a nativity set placed beneath the tree. Is Santa allowed or must all pieces reflect the Bible story?

Why a tree at Christmas anyway? Tradition has it that Martin Luther, the great reformer, instituted the tree with lighted candles as part of the observance of Advent. The wonder and beauty of an evergreen decorated with points of candlelight adds beauty to the celebration whoever the originator. But the idea of a tree helps believers recall the tree that is central to all history: the tree on Calvary where Jesus was crucified.

Even as carols celebrate the coming of the Christ child, we are brought back to the realization of the sacrifice of the God-Man on a cross, a tree, many centuries ago.

As Peter preached in Caesarea, "You know about Jesus of Nazareth and how God poured out on Him the Holy Spirit and power. He went everywhere doing good and healing all who were under the power of the devil, for God was with Him. We



McEWEN

## 'It's midnight — that means it's Christmas'

Christmas sometimes brings out the best in people — even soldiers in opposing armies.

It happened many years ago, in 1870, as Prussian soldiers were camped on the gates of Paris. France was in turmoil.

The French army was just across the Seine River from the Germans who were bent on capturing Paris, the City of Light.

From time to time there was firing from both sides of the river — when a soldier was careless, or when one was nervous. In a French outpost near the river, Henri Regnault was stationed. He was young and brilliant, an artist who had given up his work temporarily to help defend his country.

It was Christmas Eve, and Regnault's platoon had never seen weather more dreary, dismal, or cold. A wet snow was falling. Only the sound of occasional gunfire shattered the stillness.

are witnesses of everything that He did in the land of Israel and in Jerusalem. Then they put Him to death by nailing Him to a cross," (TEV Acts 10:38-39).

It is no wonder that one of the all-time favorite hymns is "The Old Rugged Cross." People in the pew love this song even though it is sometimes the despair of the professional musicians. The vision of Christ hanging on the tree, high against the horizon between heaven and earth, as a result of His love for the ordinary sinner, moves us deeply.

There are many questions about the tree used to decorate our homes at Christmas, but there is no question about the importance and centrality of Golgotha's tree in our Christian faith. That tree made Christmas possible and filled it with meaning of the most ultimate kind.

Suddenly the men heard a church bell tolling the hour in a nearby village — and a soldier spoke in a gloomy voice, "It's midnight, and that means it is Christmas. What a Christmas!"

The young artist-turned-soldier said nothing, but his thoughts stirred within him. He began to reflect on how much Christmas really means to mankind. Before he could be stopped, he jumped to the top of the barricade around them. German bullets whined, but he was not afraid. He began to sing.

Regnault's voice rose above the noise of the bullets, clear, distinct: "O holy night, the stars are brightly shining; it is the night of the dear Savior's birth ..."

Out into the darkness his voice carried, across the Seine, over to the German trenches and the miserable men who wanted to be home, just as the French did. His song carried a message of peace, and a different kind of challenge to the enemy.

# FMB votes Eastern Europe aid; 24 new missionaries . . .

(Continued from page 1)

Patricia Chiu Lee and her husband David, both Chinese born in Taiwan. Mrs. Lee, minister of education of a Chinese congregation in Dayton, Ohio, since 1982, became the first ordained woman appointed since a trustee subcommittee vote last June raised speculation among some people that the board no longer would appoint ordained women.

Mrs. Lee's appointment, Cortis said, proves trustees "honestly practice board policy that ordination neither qualifies nor disqualifies a missionary candidate and that ordination is a local-church matter. Board policy is not in bondage to a theological position or to this board of trustees."

In June, the subcommittee rejected the application of Greg and Katrina Pennington of Ardmore, Okla. She had been ordained at the request of her church to serve as a staff member over the objections of the local Enon Baptist Association.

Trustees said in earlier news reports that the Penningtons were not rejected

because she was ordained but because the subcommittee felt the couple had not handled her ordination redemptively, resulting in disruption of fellowship among area churches. The association dismissed the church from its membership.

Trustees said the Penningtons' actions created concern the couple might fail to cooperate with overseas Christians in delicate situations on the mission field. The subcommittee has agreed to reconsider the Penningtons' application.

The Lees will go to Japan, where he will develop churches and she will serve in a church and home role and work with women and children. She was ordained in 1982 at the request of Culbertson Avenue Church, New Albany, Ind., where she and her husband served during seminary study. She said she accepted the ordination as an affirmation by her church but does not feel it is necessary for her ministry.

In other action, trustees received two recommendations they will consider at

their February meeting — a nominee for regional vice president for the Americas and a recommendation on the board's divorce policy.

Board President R. Keith Parks nominated Betty F. Law to be regional vice president for the Americas, succeeding Don Kammerdiener, who will become executive vice president Jan. 1. The trustees' Americas committee approved the nomination.

Law, a former missionary and current associate area director for Spanish South America, is a veteran of more than 33 years of mission service. That includes eight years in the 1950s as a missionary to Cuba under the Southern Baptist Home Mission Board, more than 17 years as a missionary to Spain and eight years on the Foreign Mission Board's Richmond, Va., office staff.

Trustees also received a unanimous recommendation from their mission personnel committee that the board retain its long-established policy of not appointing divorced people.

The recommendation grew out of a year-long study of the issue in response to a motion at the 1988 Southern Baptist Convention annual meeting calling for an evaluation of the board's current policy. The study, one of the most comprehensive ever on the FMB's

divorce policy, leaders said, reviewed Scripture and surveyed other Southern Baptist agencies, other missionary-sending agencies and predominant attitudes in countries where Southern Baptist missionaries work.

William R. O'Brien and Lewis Myers of the board staff outlined approaches the board is making to reach millions of unevangelized people in the world.

Southern Baptists are working to help evangelize 21 major people groups in restricted parts of the world, said Myers, the board's vice president for Cooperative Services International. CSI relates to regions where missionaries do not or cannot live — both by sending skilled professionals and by using the non-residential approach. Non-residential missionaries help coordinate evangelization of people groups in highly restricted areas from bases outside the areas.

"We currently have 15 non-residential personnel under assignment to 120 million of the least-evangelized people in the world," Myers said.

"Twenty-four other population segments have been targeted, and personnel are being enlisted. When all these units are in place, non-residential personnel will be focusing on nearly 240 million of the least-evangelized people."

## Love defines Christmas season: Leavell

NEW ORLEANS (BP) — Christmas means love, liberality and liberation. Landrum P. Leavell II told students and faculty at New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary during a chapel service.

"In an incomparable manifestation of love defying human understanding, God laid Emmanuel on the world's heart in the form of a baby," the seminary's president said. "Love is a manger, for Jesus was not cradled in some regal palace but in a feed trough."

"His love is also a miracle. A child was born to a woman who had no husband and who had never known a man sexually. This basic truth is not to be ignored with some false modesty or explained away through scientific reasoning. . . . It was a miracle.

"This mystery can deepen our faith, and it can add to the meaning of Christmas when we stand in childlike wonder and awe at what God has done in Jesus."

Second, Christmas means liberality, he noted. Many people like to dream about how liberally they would give if they were in a better financial position, he said, adding: "If you don't tithe on \$10 a week, you wouldn't tithe on a million a week. It's all in the heart of the giver. If you haven't the heart for it when you're impoverished, or when you're living on social security, or when you're on starvation wages, or when you're not faithful to God then and liberal in your giving then, then you wouldn't be if you were the richest man on earth."

Third, Christmas means liberation, he said: "There are multiplied millions more people unsaved today than there were ten years ago. Christmas ought to be a time when these things begin to come into sharper focus.

"Because of Christ we can begin to love other people in spite of their sins. It ought to be a time of improved human relations, when we're liberated from jealousy and hatred and animosity and hostility and all of those other things that distort our lives and mar the image of Jesus Christ in us."

## The other family . . .

(Continued from page 1)  
strangers," they shouted, "listen to us. The promised Messiah is come! Last night in a little stable behind the inn — here in Bethlehem, Christ the Lord was born — the one we have waited for.

"We saw the angels, heard them sing, and one told us where to find Him! It is true."

A small boy added, "And He is still there in the stable — yet He is here with us. I cannot explain it, but . . . but . . . come, let me take you to the place before we go to tell our friends!"

"Yes, it is true — just as my beard is blue," said the leader of the travelers. "It is true that you are mad men. It was probably you who kept me awake last night, yowling and carrying on. Savior indeed!"

He spat on the ground, wheeled toward the road in a huff, and led the group away from Bethlehem. "Why — there was no room for a Savior in Bethlehem!" — *Wm. Fletcher Allen*

## Search committee requests resumes

A new Division Directors Search subcommittee of the executive committee, met for the first time Dec. 15 at the Baptist Center, Brentwood.

The subcommittee is beginning anew the search for a TBC Convention Ministries Division director.

Subcommittee chairman Mrs. Bobby Turner asks that resumes be received in the office of D. L. Lowrie, TBC executive director/treasurer by deadline date of Feb. 1. The address: P. O. Box 728, Brentwood 37024.

The next meeting of the subcommittee is scheduled for Feb. 8, when resumes will be considered.

Other search committee members are Don Givens, vice chairman; Raymond Boston, Paul Durham, Larry Gilmore, Irvin Hays, Emerson Wiles Jr., and Ray Fowler, chairman of the executive committee of the Executive Board, ex-officio.

## One Word More By Wm. Fletcher Allen, editor

Much of what we do for Christmas is not about Christmas at all — only what we want it to be. But Christmas certainly should include children.

Christmas evokes memories. By Christmas we gauge important events that are part of us. We are likely to recall a particular joy, or a sadness, when it's Christmas time.

I recall the pure wonder of boyhood Christmases. From year to year, gifts were scarce. To be sure, there was always one thing, one special present, for each child, there beneath the fresh-cut tree.

By present standards, the gifts were mere trinkets, and often they were necessities. There was a spirit of joy.

Christmas thirty years ago captures for me this real spirit of the Lord's birth.

loaded the treasures into jeeps and trekked out to the children's home. We rode beneath a dark blue canopy of crisp winter's night, spangled with bright silver stars. The white moon shone like midday sun on the giant fir trees.

The cobblestone roadway led us to the long driveway up to the old mansion. With the squeal of the jeeps'

brakes, the children came rushing down the long stone steps and surrounded us. We gave them our precious cargo.

This was not a group without gratitude. They ushered us inside the main building,

endlessly chattering, and performed for us in royal fashion. Urchins were turned into angels, grimy hands had been scrubbed, and we saw a Christmas "drama" that none of us will ever forget. Replete with shepherds, heavenly choir, Joseph, Mary, and the Christ-child.

There had already been tears in our eyes when the littlest angel blew bubbles with her bubblegum. And when Joseph bounced his new rubber ball a few times hastily, and as Mary hugged her first baby doll, we didn't know whether to laugh or cry.

When those little displaced orphans sang German Christmas carols for us and shared their meager food, our vision blurred just a little bit more. That Christmas I always recall with a lump in my throat.

But Christmas, too, is always the present, the day that is here. With Christ in our hearts, later memories of the very day are likely to be worthy of retrospect.



ALLEN

# Festival of Lights brings world missions home

By Terri Lackey

NASHVILLE (BP) — Santa Claus was waving to small children at one end of the mall. And waving at the other end were more than 100 flags representing nations where Southern Baptists perform mission work.

The contrast of Christian and secular Christmas was evident Saturday, Dec. 2, when the Nashville Baptist Association Woman's Missionary Union brought 37 countries to one of the city's oldest malls.

About 40 of the 141 churches and missions in Nashville Association participated in the missions fair, dressing in their assigned country's traditional garb, and serving indigenous foods. Several churches participated by providing choral and instrumental music.

The countries represented included the familiar — Canada, Mexico, Brazil, Argentina — the not so familiar — Burkina Faso, Sierra Leone, Namibia, Senegal.

## Christmas '89

In Tennessee

"We want the general public to be aware of what Southern Baptists are doing around the world and where they are doing it," said Diane Stewart, Nashville Baptist Association WMU director in charge of the missions fair at 100 Oaks Mall.

Stewart said she and eight others on the associational WMU council began in June planning for their first Festival of Light missions fair.

"Traditionally, during the Christmas season we hold a Baptist Woman's Day of Prayer, where we pray for foreign missionaries and the Lottie Moon Christmas Offering for (foreign) missions," Stewart said.

This year, the WMU wanted to do more to heighten missions awareness — not only among the unchurched public, but among Southern Baptists as well, Stewart said: "Really, our purpose for a missions fair was two-fold. We are educating our own people about the countries Southern Baptists serve, and we are sharing Jesus Christ with those who just come to browse our mission booths."

"We just arbitrarily assigned countries to churches who wanted to participate," Stewart said. "Those churches were then encouraged to tell their people about the missions fair and to educate them about the purpose of the Lottie Moon Christmas Offering.

"As churches prepared for their booths, they went through a learning process of that particular country, and their awareness of Southern Baptist mission work and the Lottie Moon offering was strengthened."

Kathleen Gilbert, a member of Inglewood Church which represented Thailand, said as a fair participant she "learned an awful lot about what Southern Baptists are doing in foreign missions."

"By learning about a specific country, a lot of our church members were more motivated into giving to foreign missions," said Gilbert.

Judging by the first-year success of the WMU missions fair, Stewart said she hopes to hold another next year, perhaps building it into an annual event.



MISSIONS FAIR — Kathleen Gilbert, left, and her daughter, Kathryn, learn about missions work in Argentina at one of 40 booths displayed during the WMU Festival of Light missions fair held Dec. 2 at 100 Oaks Mall in Nashville. They are members of Inglewood Church, Nashville.

## Cumberland choir shares 'Love in any language'

By Connie Umstead, news assistant  
CROSSVILLE — The Cumberland Baptist Choir traveled to Vienna, Austria, Nov. 15-20 on a missions trip to perform at Advent Sing, a program sponsored by the city of Vienna.

The choir, composed of 24 people from eight Cumberland Plateau Association churches, performed at the United Nations Building, City Hall, a Lutheran Church, and on the pedestrian mall. They sang a mixture of Christmas, contemporary Christian, and country gospel music and closed each concert with the theme song, "Love in Any Language."

Tom Jacobs, founder and organizer of the group and minister of music at Homestead Church, Crossville, sang a portion of the theme song in German. "You could see in people's faces that the message of what we were singing was really hitting home," said Jacobs. " 'Love in Any Language' moved everyone who heard it, especially considering the ongoing events occurring in Berlin and other eastern bloc countries."

"What touched me the most is the love we shared and were able to give to the people of Vienna. Individual personalities were put aside," said Gypsy Cook, choir member and choir director at Oak Hill Church, Crossville. "We reached out and touched them and became one with the people."

Jacobs, the son of missionaries, said this is the first year American choirs

were invited to participate in Advent Sing. Until now, it was limited to European choirs.

During the concert at City Hall, the choir was recognized by an Advent concert series official who said they were the first choir to draw a crowd into the building from outside where loudspeakers broadcasted the program. The official added that he believed the Cumberland Choir was the best group he had ever heard at the festival and presented the group with a pictorial history book of Vienna, only one of which is given each year.

While in Vienna, the choir performed at three revival services at Vienna Church, where Southern Baptist missionary David Borgan leads the congregation.

There are ten Southern Baptist churches in Austria with a total of 750 members. The population of Austria is 2.6 million, and about 94 percent are Roman Catholic.

Mike Graham, choir member from Homestead Church, said, "In Tennessee, a lot of people go to church. You don't think about people never having heard of Jesus. It will humble you. There's so much work to be done."

"When you can sing about Jesus in a language people don't understand and they have tears in their eyes, the Holy Spirit is at work dealing with them. We knew we weren't over there by ourselves," Graham added.



CHOIR VISITS AUSTRIA — The Cumberland Baptist Choir from Cumberland Plateau Association performed Christian music on the pedestrian mall in Vienna, Austria.

## TeamTalk

By D. L. Lowrie

One of the major hotels in Nashville has a special Christmas program called "Country Christmas." I have not seen their program, but I suspect that the only thing "country" about it is the music and it is probably written and sung by folks who live in the city.

Since about half of my 54 Christmases have been observed in the country, I ought to be something of an authority on this subject.

The country Christmas I remember was not so commercialized. While gifts were exchanged, there weren't many and they didn't cost much. I get the feeling that the business world feels that the Son of God was born so they could have a great holiday sale.

The country Christmas I remember was unapologetically Christ-centered. No one felt that they must apologize for mentioning the name of Jesus, singing a carol, or praying a prayer. If the worldly crowd doesn't want to acknowledge that Christmas is a celebration of the birth of our Savior, why don't they figure out something to celebrate, and leave our celebration alone.

The country Christmas I remember was church-centered. The pastor could expect a full house to hear his Christmas sermon. The people wanted to be

reminded that "unto you a Savior is born." The city crowd will come to the pageant two weeks before Christmas, but the pastor will deliver the announcement to a meager crowd on the Sunday closest to Christmas.

The country Christmas I remember had time for family. The family enjoyed each other. They celebrated joyfully this blessed gift that the Savior makes possible.

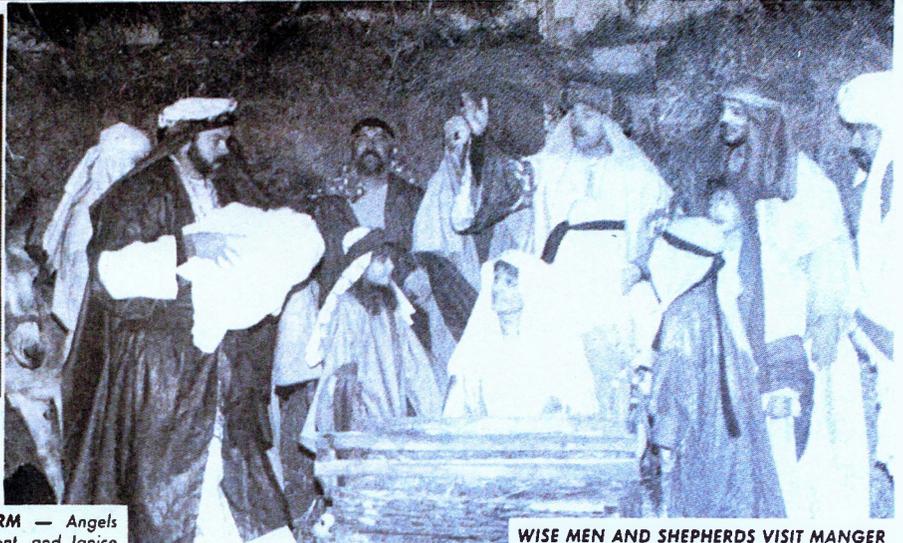


LOWRIE

But really all of this had nothing to do with the country. You don't have to live on a dirt road, draw water out of a cistern, heat the house with a pot-bellied stove, and be five miles from town to have this kind of Christmas. You can live in the city and enjoy the realities of Christmas. But you will have to resist the spirit of the age. You will have to say "no" to the world, and "yes" to Jesus Christ. I am in favor of all Tennessee Baptists celebrating what God has done in Christ. Let's do it! Let's fill every church with grateful worshipers this Lord's Day.



**A WISE MAN** — Tracy Pope portrays one of the wise men coming to visit the Messiah.



**WISE MEN AND SHEPHERDS VISIT MANGER**

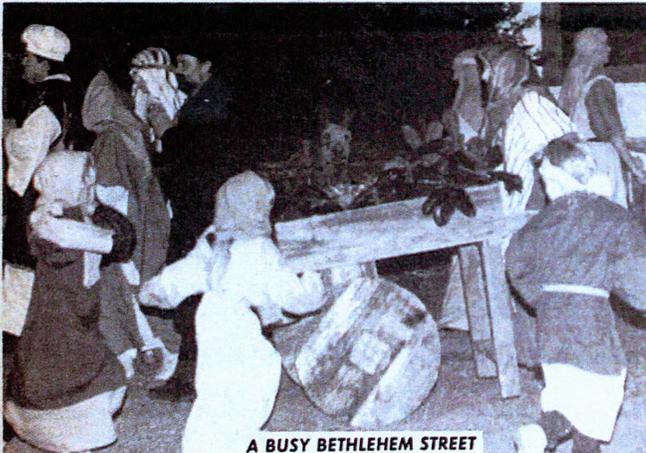


**◀STAYING WARM** — Angels Lauren Walke, front, and Janice Gibson wait in church for their cue.

**PAGEANT IN PULASKI** — Despite frigid temperatures Dec. 16, Pulaski's Highland Church premiered "The Living Nativity Pageant," which will be held each evening hourly 6-9 p.m. through Christmas Eve. Beginning with a crucifixion scene on a 35 ft. Golgotha, the production involved about 70 percent of the church's active membership including 80 actors. Construction and planning took four months and 40 animals participated, including a dove trained to fly into the manger scene and an ox. Director is Nell Franks and the pastor is Dwight Mercer.



**ARRIVAL IN BETHLEHEM** — Mary, Cindy Landham, and Joseph, Bob Landham, the church's minister of education and youth, stop for a drink.



**A BUSY BETHLEHEM STREET**

Photos by Connie Davis



**ANGELS APPEAR TO SHEPHERDS**

# Christmas '89

In Tennessee



**SPECIAL TEA IN TWO WAYS** — Japanese tea served at the International Friends group of Nashville was held on Dec. 7, Pearl Harbor Day, and Japan is the featured country of the Southern Baptist Christmas foreign missions emphasis. The stylized ceremony, served by Mihoko Suzuki, right in photo to left, lasts from two to three hours and allows guests to meditate. Tea guests, from left in photo to left, were Noriko Yoshioka, guest of honor, Kuniko Nishibi, Noriko Shibata, Sachiko Oida, all from Japan, and Marlene Fleming from Colombia. The group, which represents 13 area churches, has 107 members from 21 countries and meets weekly at Woodmont Church, Nashville.

— Photos by Connie Davis





Dr. Gerald L. Stow  
Executive Director/Treasurer  
Tennessee Baptist Children's Homes

## Trees, a Reminder of Christ's Love

It was always a cedar tree at our home in West Tennessee that added to the sights and smells of Christmas. It was a joy to go into the fields to search for just the right tree.

Later in life we would experience that same joy as we took our three children to the farm and looked for the special tree.

The tree became the central focus in our home at Christmas time. It was a joy to trim it with silvery icicles, red roping, and a few ornaments. Occasionally, we strung popcorn and hawthorn berries for an added touch.

Now we decorate with beautiful lights and colorful ornaments. On Christmas Day we gather

around the tree to open gifts. What joy and excitement fills the room!

Trees at Christmas should remind us of a special tree in another time. That tree was used for a shameful purpose for it was selected from someone's forest to be made into a cross.

Tradition says it was a dogwood tree, and that it once grew tall and straight. After its shameful use as the cross on which Jesus died, it became crooked and twisted so it could never be used that way again.

As you gather your family around the tree in your home this Christmas, remember that special tree. That tree upon which our blessed Savior

gave His wonderful love for us. Remember the great gift He purchased for us by His death — our eternal salvation. Remember the grace gifts He gives daily that include such blessings as love, joy, and peace.

The staff and children from our homes join me in expressing thanks for the warm expressions of love shown by the people of our churches. Your love is a continuation of His love from the tree.

*Gerald L. Stow*

## Children on TBCH Campuses Learn Giving is Greatest Gift

For most people, December is a month of cheer and rejoicing with loved ones. But for those separated from their families, the holiday season can be a challenge.

"December is probably the hardest month for these kids," says Susan Hardison, a houseparent on the Franklin campus of the Tennessee Baptist Children's Homes. "No matter how wonderful we try to make it, we're not home."

Many of the children living in TBCH group homes have been removed from their parents' care by the Department of Human Services because of abuse or neglect. It's understandably easy for the children to become depressed during Christmas, particularly if their parents fail to follow through on promises to visit.

"The disappointments are a constant pain for the kids," says Susan. "They get their hopes up, and then when a visit falls through, they become sad and sometimes bitter."

So to help the children focus beyond their own problems, the cottages on each TBCH campus are participating in a number of service projects during December.

In Memphis, all of the children baked cookies, and then went Christmas caroling to deliver the baked goods to elderly shut-ins. In other special projects, the children cleaned houses for senior citizens, raked leaves and painted.

"We cut firewood for an older man who lived in a really run-down house," recalls Mark Vigus, activities director of the Memphis TBCH campus. "The boys could see that the wood they cut would provide the only heat in this man's home. So they stacked as much as they could, and

even carried wood inside the house so he wouldn't have to walk so far. It meant a lot to them that they were needed by someone."

In Franklin, children from one cottage went Christmas caroling to raise money for the Fannie Battle Home, a day care center for senior citizens.

"A group of ladies at Woodmont Baptist Church in Nashville has done so much for us," explains Susan. "So this year, we were given the opportunity to help their group in a charity project."

"The children loved it. Besides feeling good about doing something for someone else, it was the very first time caroling for two of our children."

Children in the Franklin campus are also gathering small toys to fill shoeboxes to send to children in Mexico, and are collecting canned goods to help homeless families.

In Chattanooga, projects include raking leaves and other tasks to help the elderly. Boys and girls on all the campuses are participating in church mission projects, such as running church post offices to raise money for the Lottie Moon Offering for Foreign Missions.

"All of these projects do so much to help the self-esteem of these kids," says Mark. "Churches have been so good to the Children's Homes, and this is a way the kids can give something back."

Since no money is included in the TBCH budget for Christmas, all the gifts and parties on the campuses are made possible through donations.

"We started on November 1 with a negative balance in our Christmas fund," says Jerry Blasingame, regional director of the Franklin TBCH campus. "We plan parties and presents for the children on faith that



Children on TBCH campuses participate in a variety of giving programs during the Christmas season, including donating money to the Lottie Moon Offering for Foreign Missions. (TBCH photo by Jim Whitmer)

the money will come in."

Thus far, Tennessee Baptists and other friends of the children have responded wonderfully to meet their needs. Churches and local businesses have planned special parties for each cottage on all the campuses, and every child will have presents to open. Families have also responded to the need for visiting families, so hopefully each child will have a place to go during the Christmas break.

"I'm so thankful for the dedication of the groups who help us," says Susan, who along with her husband, David, cares for seven children in her cottage, in addition to her own two children. "These kids are learning about love and giving in a very special way — by feeling it first-hand."

Tennessee Baptist Children's Homes is a ministry of the Tennessee Baptist Convention for abused, neglected and abandoned children.

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# TenneScene

... Dukedom, Beersheba Springs, and Byber ... all pleasant places along the Tennessee trail ...

A group of youth from Holston Association recently attended the Lay Youth Leaders Seminar in Gatlinburg. They were trained in developing a budget and a yearly youth calendar, youth evangelism, youth discipleship training, building a youth Sunday School, and personal spiritual development.

## Churches ...

Members of Jolley Springs Church, Gleason, recently retired the debt on their new building by burning the note exactly four years after holding their first services there.

The congregation of Pleasant Grove Church, Greenfield, retired the debt on their new fellowship hall in November.

Members of Sanford Church, Riceville, dedicated their new building in October.

First Church, Martin, exceeded their Hallelujah goal of 800 in Sunday School Dec. 3 with 814 in attendance. This is the highest Sunday School attendance in the history of the church. Bill Manning, Tennessee Department of Veterans Affairs commissioner, spoke to the youth division during Sunday School, and Gerald Stow, Tennessee Baptist Children's Homes executive-director, spoke during the morning worship services.

The congregation of Calvary Church,



**OFFICERS CHOSEN** — The Middle Tennessee Baptist Ministers' Conference recently elected officers for the upcoming year. Jim Growden, right, pastor of Edgemont Church, Shelbyville, was elected president. Gary Shockley, left, pastor of Cumberland Drive Church, Clarksville, was elected secretary-treasurer. Randy Sledge, pastor of Riverdale Chapel, Murfreesboro, was elected vice president. The organization's next meeting will be Jan. 4 at 11:30 a.m. at Belmont Heights Church, Nashville. Paul Hall of the TBC's Missions Department will be guest speaker.

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Parsons, celebrated the church's 34th anniversary Nov. 5.

## Leadership ...

First Church, Hixson, called Jimmy Arms as staff evangelist.

The congregation of Mercer Church, Mercer, honored Pastor Jerry Drye with a celebration Nov. 26 marking his 30th birthday and 10th anniversary as an ordained minister. Drye was presented with a money tree.

Paul Clark Jr. has been called as minister of music to First Church, Jackson. He was formerly assistant pastor, music, at Metropolitan Church, Wichita, Kan.

James E. Humphreys Jr. and his wife will be honored Dec. 31 upon his retirement as Carroll-Benton Association director of missions. The program will be at 6 p.m. at First Church, Camden.

First Church, Parsons, called Matt Plunk as assistant pastor in charge of music and youth. He is a graduate of Union University, Jackson.

Jay T. White has been called to Philadelphia Church, Waynesboro, as associate pastor.

Shelby Association reports several new staff members at Memphis churches. Churches and staff names and positions follow: Ardmore Terrace Church, Roy Campbell, associate pastor; Labelle Haven Church, Coleman Pratt, associate pastor, education and youth; Georgian Hills Church, Mark Coleman director of ministry to singles; Agape Church, Charles Richie, minister of youth and music; and Poplar Avenue Church, Scott

## Pomona calls Dyer

Pomona Church, Crossville, recently called Ron Dyer to his first pastorate. The Cookeville native was ordained this year by Wilhite Church, Cookeville. He and his wife, Cindy, have four daughters.

## Maryville church calls Johnson as pastor

Immanuel Church, Maryville, recently called Barry Johnson as full-time pastor. Johnson formerly served as pastor of Fellowship Church, Fairburn, Ga. He was pastor of Alluvial City Church, Shell Beach, La., while he was attending New Orleans (La.) Baptist Theological Seminary. Johnson and his wife, Linda, have two children.

Lemasters, minister of youth and music.

Troy Cody has retired from Unity Church, Maryville, after serving as a pastor for 45 years in Tennessee and Kentucky. He is currently living in Seymour and serving as a supply preacher and revival speaker. Cody was pastor of Jersey Street Church, Piney Grove Church, West Lonsdale Church, and Galilee Church, all in Knoxville; Providence Church and DuPont Church, both in Seymour; French Broad Church, Kodak; Providence Church, Sevierville; East Maryville Church, Maryville; Calvary Church, Oak Ridge; and New Providence Church, Loudon. He has spoken in 15 states.

Bill Buchanan resigned as pastor of Big Springs Church, Elizabethton, to accept the pastorate of Woodlawn Church, Woodlawn, Texas.

D. L. Hammer has been called as interim pastor to Gallaher Memorial Church, Knoxville.

Black Oak Heights Church, Knoxville, called George Williams as interim pastor.

Zion Church, Waynesboro, called Larry Wilcoxson as interim pastor.

## Ordinations ...

Richard L. Bonds, minister of music at Broadway Church, Maryville, was ordained to the ministry Dec. 3.

Mt. View Church, Antioch, ordained Bart King and Parker Holder as deacons Dec. 3.

## Revivals ...

West Shiloh Church, Shiloh, held revival Nov. 29-Dec. 3. Johnny Parrack was evangelist.

First Church, Loretto, held a one-day revival Dec. 10 with evangelist Paul Jackson, Little Rock, Ark.

Grainger Association reports revivals held recently at member churches. Churches and leaders follow: Oak Grove Church, Washburn, Jimmy Poore; Buffalo Church, Rutledge, Lewis Thomas; Red House Church, Blaine, Herman Lakin; Washburn Church, Washburn, Billy Carroll; and Helton Springs Church, Rutledge, Gary Satterfield.

## First Church, Rogersville, plans centennial

First Church, Rogersville, will begin a year-long celebration of its 100th year on Jan. 7, 1990.

Opening ceremonies will include recognition from the Tennessee Baptist Convention, the Southern Baptist Historical Society, and the state of Tennessee.

Congressman James Quillen will be the special guest.

During the service the centennial flag will be presented as will the centennial hymn and three commissioned anthems. Pastor Ronell Owensby will deliver the message.

## CLASSIFIED

WANTED: Part-time music director to coordinate all music activities. Send resume to: Grassy Valley Baptist Church, 10637 Kingston Pike, Knoxville, Tenn. 37922.



**100 YEARS PLUS** — Nettie Tennessee Childress recently celebrated her 102nd birthday in the morning worship service at Second Church, Millington, where she is an active member. With her are son, Kenneth Childress, left, and pastor Scott Walker.

## War Creek Church calls Dick Pettiecord

War Creek Church, Sneedville, called Dick Pettiecord as pastor.

Pettiecord was most recently interim pastor at Elmira Church, Elmira, Mo. That church ordained him in 1985.

The Lawson, Mo., native plans to graduate from Clear Creek Baptist Bible College, Pineville, Ky., in May, 1990, with a bachelor of ministry degree.

He and his wife, Linda, have two children.

## Reeves tapped for Tech post

Larry Reeves has been elected director of Baptist student ministries at Tennessee Technical University in Cookeville, effective Jan. 1.

Reeves comes to the post from First Church, Jacksboro, where he had served as pastor since 1981.

Reeves also has been pastor of churches in Corryton and Cottontown, Ky. He was campus minister/associate BSU director at University of Tennessee, Knoxville, from 1979-81.

He is a member of the Tennessee Baptist Convention's Executive Board. Reeves also has held various positions in Campbell County Association. He holds degrees from Berea (Ky.) College and Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, Louisville, Ky.

Reeves and his wife, Shirley, have two children.



REEVES

# The birth of the Savior

By Deryl G. Watson, director of missions; Hardeman County Association

In 1972, I stood in Bethlehem in the church of the nativity. According to tradition, the stable where Jesus was born was located in a cave now beneath this church. The original church on the site was built by the Roman Emperor Constantine in 325 A.D. In order to get to this site one walks through a narrow door which is so low that you stoop to get through.



WATSON

As I stood and gazed at this spot I thought about the contrast between when Jesus was born and the gaudy display located there now. I also thought how appropriate one had to stoop to gain entrance to Jesus' traditional birth place. The gaudiness that surrounds the birthday of the Savior today eclipses the heart of the Christmas message.

At the time of Luke's writing, the Christian movement was becoming primarily Gentile. A real question arose about whether the Christian religion was genuine. Had the Christian movement really sprang from the Old Testament, was it truly from the heart of God? Luke answered these questions in the affirmative. He began with the birth of Jesus.

A census decreed (2:1-3)  
The date of Jesus' birth is not important. The fact of the birthday is all important. God timed the coming of Jesus perfectly. Scholars look back in history and list five key factors in God's timing: (1) The dispersion of the Jews; (2) a common Greek language; (3) an era of peace; (4) good roads for the spread of the Gospel; (5) Roman law protection of citizens.

Jews were required to register in their hometown, usually where they owned property. The word taxed should really be enrolled, much like a census. As descendants of David, Joseph and Mary registered in Bethlehem (1 Samuel 17:12); the couple made their home in Nazareth.

The birth of Jesus (2:6-7)  
Mary must have told about Jesus' birth looking back at the experience. She would have remembered the hurt of those who slandered, and the place, time, and situation of the event.

The large room where people slept was full and they were probably obliged to go to the open court where the animals were. Some say this was a cave, some a small stable. In any event, it was a place which depicts the humility of Jesus.

A chaplain told of a riot at a penitentiary in which a priest was taken captive. One of the most violent rioters asked the priest, "Do you know why Jesus was born of a virgin," and had

God for His Father? The priest turned to give a theological explanation, but was interrupted by the words, "I'll tell you why, so He and God could be the Father of us all and all people!"

So it is. He is the Savior of us all, born of a virgin, born in a definite place, at a definite time, for a definite purpose. He was wrapped in strips of cloth, swaddling clothes, and placed in the manger.

Announcement to the shepherds (2:8-14)

Since these shepherds kept their flocks in this area from March until November, it is doubtful that Jesus was born in December. According to the Mishna, flocks from this area usually ended up as temple sacrifices. If this is so, it is fitting symbolism, for the Lamb of God was sacrificed for the sins of mankind. The occupation of the shepherd was a humble one. The shepherds confirmed what they witnessed, not from a theological point of view, but from a standpoint of awe and humility.

## BIBLE BOOK SERIES

December 24 Lesson

Basic Passage: Luke 2:1-20

Focal Passages: Luke 2:1, 3-17

The angel came upon them. The glory of the Lord was probably indicated by a bright light or lighted cloud-like area. This sort of manifestation was unknown to the shepherds. They were very afraid and awe struck. They were told not to be afraid.

The sign of verse 12 is a strange one, but one they did not question. Would the learned theologians have accepted

this as a sign? No doubt many children were born that night in this city, but one was in a manger wrapped in strips of clothes. Suddenly multitudes of angels praised God together for the redemptive work of Jesus (Revelations 5:11-14). Recent discoveries of parallels in the Dead Sea Scrolls indicate that the term good will towards men means the peace of right relations to God through the forgiveness of sins.

The shepherds' response (2:15-17)

The New Testament language at this point indicates the angels left rapidly and the shepherds repeatedly spoke to one another urging each other to go to the city of Bethlehem. They found what the Lord, which here is the translation Yahweh, revealed to them. This baby truly is the Savior, the Messiah, the Lord. Many questions go unanswered here. How did they know exactly where to go to find Jesus? Who all did they tell? What happened to them afterward in Biblical history?

Summation

Mary and Joseph would never be the same. The shepherds would never be the same. God had come to earth as a baby. None of us can ever be the same after we have met Jesus, no matter what we do in life or where we find ourselves. A 52-year-old angel adorns our home each Christmas. It was purchased when I was born. The wings are frayed, the halo bent, but each time I see it I am reminded of the eternal angels of Christmas, their message always the same, always fresh, always meaningful. Jesus is Savior. Jesus is the Messiah. Jesus is Lord!

# The Word among us

By Charles E. Gibbs Jr., pastor; Trace Creek Church, New Johnsonville

It is a wonderful thing that the first announcement of God came to the shepherds, the simple men of the fields. The shepherds who looked after the temple lambs were the first to see the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world.

The birth of Jesus Christ, the son of God, was the biggest thing that had ever happened. The angels said, "Here are the good glad tidings we bring to you: Christ has come!" That is the good glad news of Christmas! And even today, 2000 years later, we still sing about it. The air is filled with music. Store windows are filled with Christmas displays.



GIBBS

The message on every heart is, it is Christmas — a time of joy — a time of singing — a time of rejoicing — a time of giving — and a time of loving.

J. Vernon McGee gave this illustration of the Lord being our Savior. Three men made a lonely trip to the moon. They had an engine in their module that was their only hope of returning to the earth. If it did not fire, they would be in orbit from then on. That engine was their only savior.

Right now the world is in orbit of sin, and the only thing that can pull us out of that orbit of sin and draw us to God and to heaven is the Lord Jesus Christ. That is the reason the angel's tidings were of great joy — born in Bethlehem was that Savior, man's only Savior.

The theme of John's Gospel is the Deity of the Savior. John gives us seven proofs of His Deity. "I am the bread of life," (6:35). "I am the light of the world," (8:12). "I am the resurrection, and the life," (11:25). "I am the way, the truth, and the life," (14:6), and "I am the true vine," (15:1).

"In the beginning" means the Lord Jesus had no beginning. He was before all things. He is eternal. What does "word" mean? A "word" is a medium of manifestation, a means of communication, and a method of revelation. Christ "the Word" came to make known the invisible God. Christ has fully revealed God by displaying His

## UNIFORM LESSON SERIES

December 24 Lesson

Basic Passage: Luke 2:8-12; John 1:1-5, 9-18

Focal Passage: Luke 2:8-12; John 1:1-5, 9-18

power, wisdom, His holiness, and His marvelous grace. In Christ, and nowhere else is God fully made known to man.

John told us that the "Word" — Jesus, was God. People ask who made the universe and everything in it. John made it very clear. Jesus made it all. The universe did not just happen. In verse three, "All things were made by Him; and without Him was not anything made that was made." Everything in this world was created by Jesus.

Jesus was before all things, and therefore, eternal; so was He the originator of all things, and therefore

omnipotent. Christ became what He was not previously — a man. But Christ did not cease to be God. He was God-Man. He lived in a tabernacle of flesh here in this world for 33 years.

"In Him was life; and the life was the light of men." If Christ created all things, He must be the foundation of life. He is the lifegiver. The word "life" here is one of the divine titles of the Lord Jesus.

"That was the true light, which lighteth every man that cometh into the world." This means that men are accountable creatures. Every man is morally enlightened.

In verse 5, "And the light shineth in darkness; and the darkness comprehended it not." Every man that comes into this world is lightened by his Creator, but the natural man disregards this light and he is plunged into darkness. Instead of the natural man living up to the light he has (which none ever did), he loves darkness rather than the light. John 3:19 says the unregenerate man is like one that is blind — he is in the dark. When the light in darkness appears, he cannot see it. Nothing short of a miracle of saving grace can ever bring one out of darkness into God's marvelous light.

"That was the true light." Christ is the "true light" as the undecieving

light. Satan is transformed into an angel of light, but he appears as such only to deceive. (2 Corinthians 11:14).

"He came unto His own, and His own received Him not." Israel was not ignorant. They refused to believe. They drove Him from their door, and even banished Him from the earth. If the world knew Him not and Israel received Him not, was the purpose of God defeated? No. "But as many as received Him, to them gave He power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on His name." Salvation comes to the sinner through receiving Christ and believing on His name.

How simple is salvation? What must one do to be saved? One must believe and receive the Lord Jesus Christ. Do this and you will become a child of God. Neither blood heredity, culture, education, nor prestige will bring salvation, only the power of the Holy Spirit.



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# Telling the Good News

By Mattie Carroll Mullins, layperson; Gray Church, Gray

Approximately forty days prior to the text of this lesson, Jesus was born. God sent His Son in human flesh. He was born into the earthly home of Mary and Joseph, but He was given to the world. Mary and Joseph were careful to obey all the Jewish traditions and requirements concerning a male newborn.

Remember what happened immediately after the birth of this baby Jesus? The shepherds left the stable to spread the word abroad of what they had seen and heard (Luke 2:17). The wise men left their gifts and went back to their own country to tell the Good News (Matthew 2:12).

Luke 2:22 tells us that the prescribed time had passed and Mary was ritually clean. Mary and Joseph took Jesus to the temple for the first time, and dedicated Jesus to the Lord. In addition to this dedication, an offering of purification was made for Mary.

In Luke 2:25-38, we see two who were divinely chosen to have the op-

portunity to see Jesus, then give thanks in prayer and praise for this One whom they knew to be the Savior of the world. Simeon and Anna saw the baby Jesus and in faith recognized Him as the Savior. They immediately responded in the same manner as the shepherds and the wisemen. They not only thanked God for the gift of His Son, but they were compelled to share the good news to all. They witnessed without ceasing to all who would hear about the child, Jesus. We are challenged by this lesson to tell the good news in the same way.

This study concludes thirteen weeks of emphasis on "God's Plan - Our Mission Task," in which we have focused on the need for Christians to witness and minister in Christ's name to a lost world. Surely, as we read from the Old and New Testaments, we deepened our commitment to and involvement in the worldwide missions effort of Southern Baptists. We have over and over confirmed our belief in Bold Mission Thrust. As we explore the Biblical foundation for missions, we discover ways to become more involved in the work of God's kingdom as He seeks to bring all people to Himself.



MULLINS

## Sunday School lesson outlines — December 31

There will not be an issue of the Baptist and Reflector next week. The Sunday School lessons for Dec. 31 are condensed on this page. New lesson writers will begin writing for the Jan.-March quarter in the Jan. 3 issue.

### BIBLE BOOK SERIES

Right attitudes in action

Focal passages: Galatians 6:1-17

This last chapter of Galatians speaks to practical matters concerning church life.

Paul tells the Galatians to act with concern toward others, and to be considerate with people in the church.

The Galatians had doctrinal and fellowship problems. Paul says that church people who are spiritual must help those who are overcome by sin to realize the need for being "set right." It must be done in meekness. The wrongdoer must be set right because flagrant sin in the life of the church cannot be ignored.

Those doing the correcting must remember their own "feet of clay." They must be willing to bear another's burden, placing the wrongdoer's spiritual welfare in high priority. This is the law of Jesus, not an option.

Paul also says we must be accountable for our own actions. Persons with "holier than thou" attitudes roar like spiritual lions, but are really like "kitty cats." Paul says to put yourself to the test; prove, not by comparing with others, but what needs to be improved in the personal life.

Verse 6 tells us we should support spiritual leaders. Ministry includes sharing the Word, in whatever form. Paul clearly teaches support for those in ministry, 1 Corinthians 9:11, 1 Timothy 5:17-18. Those who minister should never be allowed to feel that they are alone in ministry.

In verses seven and eight, Paul contrasts works of the flesh and fruits of

the spirit. A person reaps what he sows. He also says we must be careful how we treat God. Paul wants the Galatians to know that he is writing his concluding remarks (11-17) with his own hand. He warns them not to be fooled by Judaizers, who really just want to seem like good orthodox Jews.

Often a church measures success by budget and additions, verse 13. But Paul glories in the cross, verse 14. Verse 17 indicates that Paul knew he was branded for eternity by Jesus. Through beatings, stoning, and other dangers and distress, he was branded. Paul bore pain for Jesus. And, he says, this pain will keep you from wanting to turn to anything else but Jesus.

Praise God for the brand of Jesus in our hearts. — Deryl Watson

### CONVENTION UNIFORM LESSON

Jesus reveals Himself through healing  
Basic passage: John 4:46 to 5:18; focal passage: John 5:1-15

John called Christ's miracles "signs" and he recorded seven of them in John 2-12. These signs pointed to Christ's true identity as the Son of God. The signs discussed by John are: turning water into wine (2:1-11); healing a nobleman's son (4:46-54); lame man at Bethesda (5:1-47); feeding of 5000 (6:1-14); Jesus walks on the sea (6:15-21); healing of man born blind (9:1-41); and, raising of Lazarus (11:1-46).

One of the simplest Bible stories tells of the nobleman whose son was sick at Capernaum. The man was a royal officer, and he believed Jesus could heal his son. He did heal him.

If Christ could heal this dying boy who was at least ten miles away, simply by speaking, He can give eternal life today by His Word even though He is in heaven.

It is fitting at Christmastime to study about sharing the Gospel of Jesus Christ with those who are lost.

For several weeks now, we have all been involved in decorating our homes, offices, and churches with lights and beautiful decorations for the festive holiday. We have practiced countless hours on musicals and drama presentations telling the story of Christ's birth. We have prepared and eaten delicious foods which are special for this time of year. We have crowded our schedules on the calendar with the endless round of holiday parties, and moved through the busy days of shopping, gift wrapping, and exchanging of presents.

### LIFE AND WORK LESSON SERIES

December 24 Lesson

Basic Passage: Luke 2:1-38

Focal Passages: Luke 2:22, 25-32, 36-38

Truly, gift giving is a wholesome part of Christmas when it is motivated by love.

God's gifts to us are not limited to Christmas, but are available to us every day of the year. We know God gave us joy (Luke 2:10), peace, goodwill (Luke 2:14), and the greatest gift of all, His only Son and the promise of life everlasting (John 3:16). This lesson asks us if we are willing to share these gifts with the world by tell-

ing the good news of salvation.

Several years ago my husband and I traveled to Germany for a two week visit with family who were on military assignment. One of the most memorable activities was an all day visit to a large Christmas factory.

Every room we went in was filled with breath-taking creations. We spent a great deal of time just watching the skilled workmen making their wares. We selected beautiful nutcracker dolls, gorgeous wooden tree ornaments, and lovely hummel figurines. My purchases were motivated by the fact I had never before been in a place with so many choices, reasonable prices, and the novelty of buying them in Germany.

We approached the check out counter to pay, only to hear the cashier say to us, in German, "Tell others you see about our shop and also tell them the good news that Jesus Christ was born on Christmas day."

Astonished we gathered our bundles in our arms and started to leave. As we started out the door we realized the pathway outside led us through an enormous nativity scene. Moved by this sight we stopped to listen to a recording of a choir singing, "Go, tell it on the mountain, over the hills and everywhere; go, tell it on the mountain, that Jesus Christ is born!"

How important it becomes for you and me to share the good news!

This is a simple explanation of what it means to come to Christ, and get what we need.

In Jerusalem, Christ finds another man who needed His help. Near the Bethesda porches, He could see many impotent, sick, maimed, crippled people in need of healing and deliverance.

The man with infirmity had been aching for healing for 38 years. Jesus asked what He asks us today: "Would you be made whole?" Jesus told him to get up and walk, and that he would be whole.

As in our spiritual lives, the man admitted that he wanted to be made whole, complete. We must ask for that and seek it. Christ brought the man face to face with the one thing he could not do. Jesus healed him, gave him power, and told him to sin no more. The man confessed to the Jews that Christ had made him whole.

Jesus proves in these miracles that He is God in the flesh. If Jesus made man from dust of the ground, He would not have a problem in restoring the man's health. If Jesus had not been able to heal the infirm man, could we believe He was God? — Charles Gibbs

### LIFE AND WORK LESSON SERIES

The foundation for service

Basic passage: Mark 1:1-15; focal passages: Mark 1:1-5, 7-11, 14-15

Mark points out to us that the beginning of the Gospel was centered in Jesus Christ. He refers to the good news recorded in the Old Testament. The promised messenger, John the Baptist, prepared the way for Jesus Christ by calling persons to repent, confess their sins, and be baptized. The same message is ours to continue to tell.

God calls us to salvation and to service. The foundation for our service is a personal relationship with God

through His Son.

As John the Baptist always pointed to Jesus, so we are expected to point people to Jesus by our lives and our verbal witness. John the Baptist was prepared for a specific time and purpose.

He was a true prophet. He preached because he had been sent from God.

The Scriptures tell us Jesus was baptized by John as an example for us. The Holy Spirit descended on Jesus. A voice from heaven sounded, "Thou art My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased." In God's confirmation of Jesus' ministry we find relevance for our own call to service. We must have the proper foundation for service before we can be the most effective servant for the Lord.

Although John the Baptist felt he was unworthy of even untying the Master's sandals he found his place of faithful service to Christ. Think of the privilege and responsibility of pointing others to the Savior. John the Baptist only baptized with water, which was an outward sign of death and burial of the old life; Jesus baptized with the Holy Spirit which is an inward experience, John explained.

A few years ago I was teaching third grade in an elementary school.

One morning a student rushed into the room yelling at the top of his lungs, "Oh, Mrs. Mullins, you should ought have been in the projects last night."

He said, "These two men got in a fight. They wuz yelling and cutting up on one another with knives. One man was 'bout dead." I said, "Oh, I'm sorry." He quickly interrupted me as he said, "Oh, it's alright now. The police come and the rescue squad mens come and they give the man 'mouth to mouth' consideration."

Every Christian has a responsibility to proclaim the Gospel.

— Mattie Mullins

'Modern-day Lottie Moon'

# Clara Brincefield blazes new trails in Chile

By Art Toalston

TEMUCO, Chile — Flintstones, One-A-Day, and vitamin C don't have anything on Clara Brincefield.

She is a walking "vitamin injection" for the people she works with in Temuco, Chile. At least that's how they describe her.

Others have described her as a



**A LIVELY PRESENCE** — A sense of humor accompanies Clara Brincefield wherever she travels in southern Chile to strengthen Baptist churches through Christian education. Her laugh, a familiar one to Baptist co-workers, is a quick crescendo of short, joyous bursts. Here, she enjoys a light moment with Flavio Gonzalez, pastor of a congregation in Temuco.

modern-day Lottie Moon. She is single and blazing new trails in missions as was Lottie Moon in China during the late 1800s.

But Brincefield isn't blazing new trails just for the sake of blazing new trails. She has important things on her mind.

"The doors are open in Chile," she said. "We have complete freedom. We can preach on every street corner, and people would listen. There's no limit to the properties we can buy for church sites. If the doors are open, let's go through them."

With such an openness to the Gospel, Brincefield is burdened that more people haven't stepped forward to do something. "We need more missionaries to take advantage of all the opportunities here in Chile," she said.

And until more missionaries join Brincefield in responding to the opportunities, her philosophy is, "If I've got the strength and the health to do it, let's do it. Why say no?"

Brincefield is demanding, "but not in a negative way," said Eduardo Rios, longtime pastor of First Church, Temuco. You're mistaken, he said, if you think Brincefield is pushy or too aggressive. Rather, "She has zeal for the Lord and His purposes," he said.

Temuco, a city of more than 200,000 people, lacks the sort of climate entic-

ing to most North Carolinians like Brincefield. It's as far south of the equator as Washington, D.C., is north of it — and considerably colder. A heavy coat, sweater, and warm boots are necessary seven or eight months out of the year. And Brincefield keeps her coat on in many of the minimally heated churches and homes she visits.

The climate, however, never chilled this single missionary's fervor. Rios remembers Brincefield when she came to Chile 25 years ago for "her vitality, her cheerfulness and her willingness to help. She hasn't changed. She still has this youthful spirit."

Her personal calendar is filled with reminders of meetings, workshops, and appointments. Some involve the women's and youth organizations, the association's stewardship and Christian education committees or her MasterLife discipleship group. Some commitments will involve helping Sunday School teachers use the latest Spanish-language church materials. Other time slots are set aside for friends and acquaintances wanting her counsel.

"She's always ready to help," said Alejandro Valdivia, president of the Young People's Association. "She wants every minute to count for the Lord."

Missionary colleagues and Chilean

Baptist friends often say that Brincefield "can't say no." But, "We've never heard her say no unless her calendar is full," said Teresa de Herrera, president of the association's Woman's Missionary Union.

"I don't ever do busywork," Brincefield maintains. "I'm not busy all the time in the derogatory sense of 'busy.'" She asserts that everything she does has a purpose linked to her conviction that training leaders and teachers is necessary "to strengthen the church so we can accomplish the task of evangelism — the task that we've been called to do."

"When people ask me to come to their churches and teach or lead something, I count it a privilege," Brincefield said. "If I'm possibly able to do it, I do it."

"I do have time for myself," she adds with a laugh. Sometimes there are spare moments during the day; more often, "after ten o'clock at night." Sometimes, after late-night sessions, "I sleep late." And she makes use of her vacation days.

"I think burnout comes when you're not happy in what you're doing," Brincefield said, "or when you don't know what you want to do, or when your job is so demanding that it just keeps you busy all the time."

"But I demand of myself," she said.

# Missionaries in Nepal redefine meaning of 'sacrifice'

By Marty Croll

TANSEN, Nepal — Boiling milk for ten minutes before her family can drink it. Washing clothes by hand. Cooking every dish from scratch. These tasks are merely inconveniences to Southern Baptist missionary Pat Thorpe in the nation of Nepal, nestled between India and China.

Pat and her physician husband, Wayne, who met while working with refugees in Thailand seven years ago, refuse to own a car in the Nepalese city of Tansen where they live. A show of such wealth, they say, would come between them and Nepalese friends.

Wayne travels anywhere from two hours to three days on a motorcycle and by foot to reach health outposts where he teaches.

A "holiday" in the capital city of Katmandu requires a daylong ride on a bus packed with people and all kinds of living and non-living freight — nearly an impossibility with their two-year-old son, John. Or they can take a less-crowded, all-night ride winding high above deep gorges in the black Nepalese night.

Pat has kept John inside to shield him from rampant viruses and has, at times, felt isolated and confined. Sometimes it would be nice to have a car, she admits. And what a pleasant break it would be to eat fast food or ice cream and not have to cook from scratch.

But suffering? Sacrifice? Hardly, the Thorpes say. Sure, they are giving up some of what they had. But it wasn't valuable in the Lord's sight in the first place, they stress. "Rewarding" is the word they use more often to describe their work.

"Wayne never thinks he's sacrificing," Pat says. "He's just that way." The Thorpes reserve the words

"sacrifice" and "suffering" for the Nepalese Christians they know. Only .1 percent of the country's population of 18.7 million people profess to be Christians. The king and queen of Nepal draw their ruling authority from Hinduism, and overt Christian witness is illegal. Nepalese authorities are jailing increasing numbers of Christian leaders.

Wayne tells of a housewife and two farmers who were candidates for baptism in the mid-1970s. They were all told they might go to jail for a year. The farmers were told they might lose their land. The housewife was told that her children might abandon her. Each proceeded to be baptized anyway. Before long, one farmer had been jailed, the other had lost his land and the woman had lost her family. "These people indeed counted all as loss to know their Master," Wayne says.

Still, as the body of Christ is being scattered, it is being multiplied.

The Thorpes came to Tansen, a city of 15,000, in 1984. They spent most of their energy at first learning the language and culture.

As Southern Baptist missionaries, the Thorpes work through the United Mission to Nepal. The united mission is an independent organization recognized by the Nepalese government as part of its development plan.

The Thorpes and other UMN missionaries participate in Bible studies in their homes and in the homes of Nepalese who attend the two churches in Tansen. "We try to resist leading," Wayne says. But, "the missionaries are able to read, when sometimes many Nepalese don't. Also, the missionaries are seen as more spiritually attuned because we have left our homes and come to Nepal to help them."

Wayne spends about one full day every week in the UMN hospital as one

of ten doctors. He uses four working days a week offering his expertise to ten public health clinics scattered throughout the surrounding Palpa District — or traveling between them. At the clinics he teaches medicine to government workers and serves as a consultant on specific problems and projects.

During their first term, Pat worked more often outside the home than she has recently, assisting in community health and nutrition.

Recently she has sensed the need of Nepalese women to produce more income. Woman after woman has knocked on her door asking for work and telling sad stories. Husbands who left them, husbands unemployed or irresponsible, or even struck by disease or crippled — each situation debilitating to an already tenuous financial existence. Modernization in Tansen has taken its toll, too, leaving less room for the small business that once drove the city's economy.

Pat now is working with many of these women, sewing handicrafts that can be sold to foreigners from Katmandu. Through the small cottage industry she has developed, women have sold neckties and change purses. Women she works with show a strong spirit to survive. "We're always looking for ideas of things they can make," Pat said.

In their efforts to meet the needs of the Nepalese people, the Thorpes have found that what they might have thought was sacrificing isn't necessarily so.

"In terms of the Lord, what is a sacrifice is very different from what is a sacrifice in the cultural mind of most U.S. people," Wayne says. "I'm having to redefine in my own mind what I do think is a sacrifice."



**NEPAL MISSIONARIES** — Missionary physician Wayne Thorpe, top left, works in the Nepal Hospital in Tansen. When he is not in the hospital he works in surrounding communities advising workers in ten public health clinics throughout the area while his wife, Pat, top right, takes arm measurements of children in the Rupsy Village area of Tansen. Pat has a background in social work and nutrition and has taught the natives about nutrition.