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# T E N N E S S E E ' S B A P T I S T & REFLECTOR

Volume 166/ Number 49

Statewide Edition

December 20, 2000

Christmas and throughout year

## Knoxville ministry takes hope to Appalachia

Lonnie Wilkey  
and Reflector

KNOXVILLE — What began as the effort of one Knoxville Baptist woman to help needy residents of Appalachia at Christmas has developed into a year-round ministry.

Mission of Hope based here started about five years ago. Julie Holland, a member of Central Baptist Church,

and was responding to a series of reports entitled "Mission of Hope" which was on Channel 10 news and on Williams, a member of First Baptist Church, Fountain City (see story on page 7).

and collected clothing and toys at Christmas and other members of her church to provide gifts and help for three schools in Appalachia, according to Mark Moreland, minister with young adults and missions at Central Baptist Church.

Next year Central Baptist Church will be behind the effort completely and was joined by members of Central Baptist Church and First Baptist Church,



**MARK MORELAND**, minister with young adults and missions at Central Baptist Church, Bearden, Knoxville, loads a box with the help of Julie Rumph, a college student at Central. They recently delivered 300 toys to Breathitt County, Ky.



**VOLUNTEERS**, from left, Sharon Stomer, Central Baptist Church, Fountain City, and Lisa DeVault and Kim Mierzejewski of First Baptist Church, Concord, Knoxville, sort clothes for Mission of Hope, a Knoxville-based ministry.

Concord, along with other individuals, Moreland recalled.

Since then several other churches and numerous individuals have joined the ministry effort. It evolved into "Mission of Hope," a non-profit organization.

The mission statement for Mission of Hope is "to provide Christian ministries during appropriate seasons of the year including Christmas and Easter through a system of deliver-

ing clothes, food, toys, and school supplies to impoverished families; to assist in repair of existing homes or relocating to other homes when appropriate"; and more, according to Emmette Thompson, executive director of Mission of Hope and member of First Church, Concord.

The response of East Tennesseans has been tremendous, according to Thompson

and others associated with the ministry.

They attribute it to learning of the vast needs of Appalachia through news reports done by Williams each year on Channel 10 in Knoxville.

The segments show real life examples of children and families who suffer from physical hunger in the mountains, hills, and hollows of southeastern Kentucky and several counties

in Tennessee. Most of those residents live in areas where coal mining was the big industry at one time and now about 80 percent of those people no longer have jobs as the coal mining industry pulled out or reduced operations.

Williams described the area like that of a "Third World country, not 50 miles from where we sit."

— See Knoxville, page 8

Next issue will be Jan. 10

## Have a safe, happy holiday

and Reflector

SPRINGWOOD — The staff of Baptist and Reflector — Blasingame, Connie Davis, Edwards, Mary Nimmo, Lonnie Wilkey and Betty Williams — is thankful for the privilege of communicating the needs of Tennessee Baptists to our readers during the year.

We are proud to be part of Tennessee's only Baptist journal which reaches into more than 53,000 homes each year. We value the support and encouragement shown to us the past year.

We are also proud to have been able to report the many accomplishments of Tennessee Baptists and our churches during the past year. Countless

numbers of lives were affected for the good as Tennessee Baptists ministered in the name of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ.

As a reminder of our production schedule this will be the last issue of 2000. This issue has the regular Sunday School lessons for Dec. 24 and condensed versions of the Dec. 31 lessons.

Our next issue will be dated Jan. 10, 2001.

Our goal in 2001 will be the same as in years past — to tell the story of Tennessee Baptists. We pledge to continue to produce the highest quality, God-honoring publication possible.

The staff of the Baptist and Reflector wishes each of you a blessed Christmas and a joyous new year. ■ — Lonnie Wilkey, editor



### Preparing for Christmas in Springfield

Members of South Main Baptist Mission, Springfield, pack food boxes and sort toys for Christmas gifts. From left are Nell Rawls; Marilyn Poteete; Lorene Dean; Mike Mayo, pastor; and German Poteete Jr. The small congregation coordinates and distributes toys and clothes to about 80 individuals and food boxes to about 50 families in the area. See story on page 9.



## about your newsjournal

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## First time for Alexandria congregation

# Upper Helton sponsors marketplace

By Lonnie Wilkey  
*Baptist and Reflector*

ALEXANDRIA — Members of Upper Helton Baptist Church, a rural congregation in Salem Baptist Association which runs about 200 in worship and has an average Sunday School attendance of 110, took on a large-size task this Christmas season.

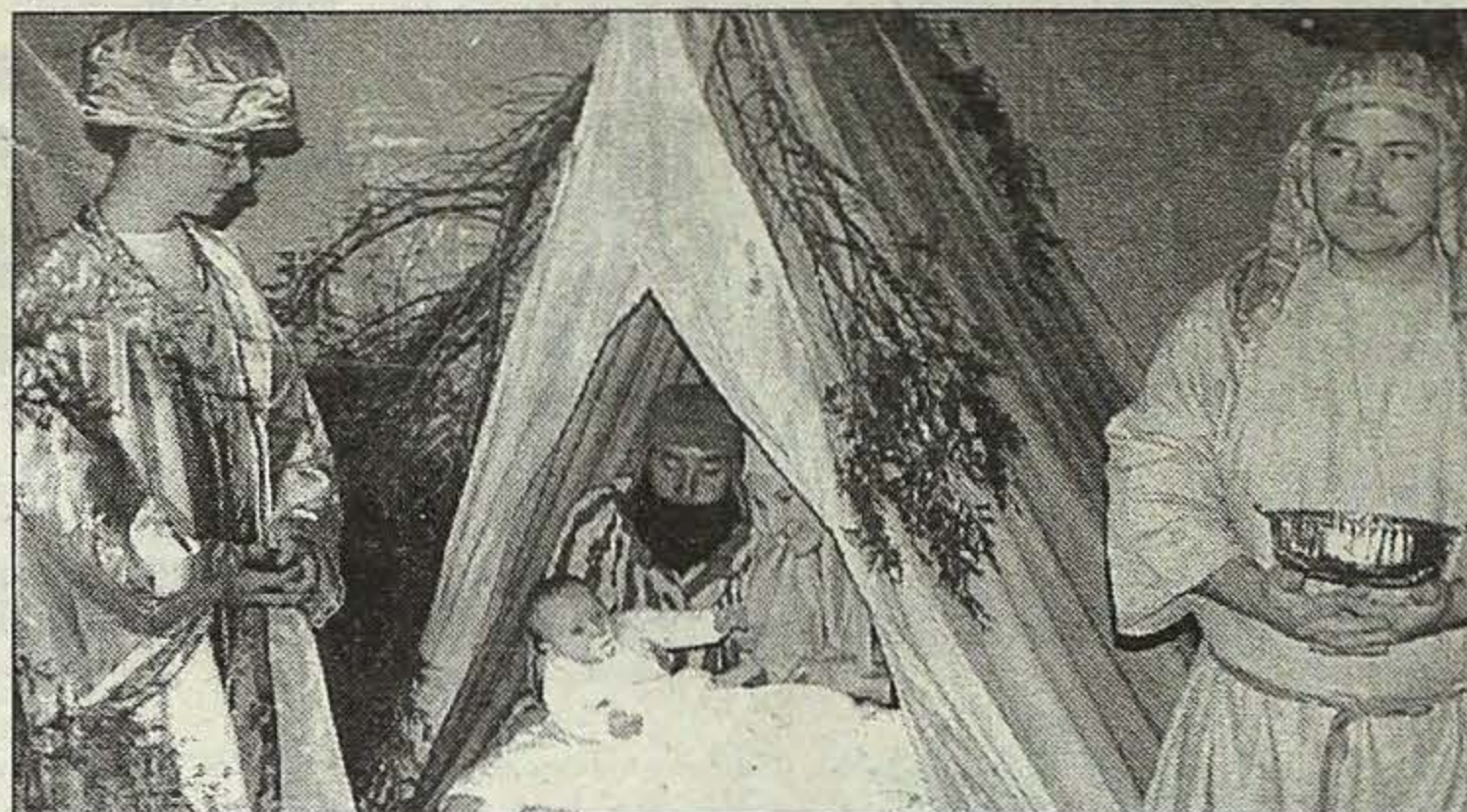
And they accomplished it with great success.

The church sponsored its first-ever Bethlehem Marketplace, which took those who attended back in time to what Bethlehem may have been like when Jesus was born. Nearly 340 people attended Dec. 15-16 despite bad weather.

The event was patterned after a similar effort that has been conducted by Southeast Baptist Church in Murfreesboro for about 18 years, according to Upper Helton pastor Thurman Seber.

Seber noted that the idea for Upper Helton holding a similar event came from many of the church's young adults, led by Kathy Slager.

Slager later served on the church's Christmas Committee which coordinated the Bethle-



**SEATED INSIDE** the manger at Bethlehem are Mary and Joseph and baby Jesus, portrayed by Glenda, Kerry, and Lance Davis (the baby).

hem Marketplace. Other committee members included Seber's wife, Laura, and Charlotte Webster, Tina Paschall, and Vivian Campbell, Seber noted, adding that those ladies husbands could be considered "ex officio" members because they too spent a lot of time and effort on the project.

Seber admitted he was skeptical at first if the congregation could pull it off because "I knew it would be a great big job."

But the young adults got it on their hearts, took it to the

church, and received approval, Seber said.

The pastor said the church knew it could be a great outreach tool that would bring in visitors, some who might see the church for the first time.

Seber said the church also knew the production would tell an important story — the birth of Jesus Christ.

"There are a lot of folks who don't know what Christmas is all about — even some church folks," Seber observed. ■



**OMRIE ALLEN** describes what the shepherds in the field witnessed on the night of Jesus' birth in Bethlehem.



**SHEPHERD "BOYS"** Jessica Paschal and Tera Beth Campbell show off their lambs.



**UPPER HELTON** Pastor Thurman Seber "preaches" in the synagogue in Bethlehem.



**ANGEL** Lindsay Turner points visitors to the Bethlehem Marketplace at Upper Helton Baptist Church to the manger where Jesus was born.



**TURNING THE** potter's wheel in the Bethlehem Marketplace is Laura Seber, wife of Upper Helton's pastor, Thurman Seber.



## Churches join B&R family of subscribers

*Baptist and Reflector*  
Brentwood — new churches have joined the *Baptist and Reflector* family of subscribers in past few months.

Seven of the churches are East Commerce, Lewisville, Smoky View, Maryville; Intentional, Memphis; Knoxville; North Murfreesboro; and Chokee, Memphis — signed families under the Church Leadership Plan which not require a minimum number of subscribers.

Three churches — Lenoir, Beech Grove; Stanton, and Barren Springs — have added members under the Church Budget Plan in which they send the percentage to 50 percent or more of their members.

"We are excited this year churches joined our family of subscribers as 2000 came to an end," said Editor Lonnie Wilkey. "We are committed to telling the story of Tennessee Baptists and we want as many people as possible to know the things Tennessee Baptists are accomplishing as they spread the good news of Jesus Christ across the state and around the world."

In addition to the pages above, the Church Page also is available which enables churches to publish their newsletters in the *Baptist and Reflector*, either weekly, monthly, or quarterly. Combining church newsletter with B&R in many cases saves churches money. It also saves valuable staff time to tend to other matters within the church office.

"We are here to assist churches in any way possible," Wilkey said. "With postage rates increasing across the board in January this may be a good time for churches to seriously consider using the B&R for newsletter."

For more information on any of the subscription plans, contact Susie Edwards at (615) 371-2003.



# Tennessee women conduct Christmas ministry



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Carrol Kelly, executive di-  
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According to Becky Sum-  
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**TENNESSEE WMU** Executive Director Carrol Kelly, center, packs food along with volunteers Ashley McCollough, left, of Memphis and Frances Johnson of Lenoir City.

Tennessee Baptist women took gifts to hospitals, a nursing home, a prison, cancer wards, and the Second Harvest Food Bank. At each location they found persons eager to receive.

"These women took extra time out of their busy lives to bring the spirit of the Christ Child to people in difficult situations," Sumrall said.

"Our desire was to give women an opportunity to gift persons with ministries that would meet their physical, emotional, and spiritual needs," she added.

Gifts provided by the Baptist women, Sumrall said, included:

- singing and story sharing with senior adults in nursing homes.
- handmade dolls for cancer patients.
- a listening ear and reading of a book to those without family.

➤ food sorted and boxed for the needy.

➤ prayers for the sick.

➤ Christmas cards for prisoners to send to families and friends.

➤ visits and conversation with individuals with no families.

➤ hugs and comfort for the lonely and isolated.

Following the ministry event, the Tennessee women gathered at Judson Baptist Church for dinner, a musical program presented by music evangelist Carolyn Reed, and a time of sharing before heading off to the Moore seminar.

The opportunity for ministry had an impact on the women present.

"I can do this back home. There are people there with no family that need what these women needed today," said Julie Fine of Bayside Baptist Church, Chattanooga.

Sharon Lunsford of Bellevue Baptist Church, Nashville, observed, "I didn't even know this (the food bank) was in our town. My church could come back and help another time."

Vickie Puckett of Snow Hill Baptist Church, Dowelltown, noted her husband works in a prison, "but I have never visited one before today."

"I didn't realize there was a

need for me to visit and invest some time in the lives living there," she said. ■ — Becky Sumrall and Lonnie Wilkey



**HOLDING HANDMADE** dolls given to cancer patients are members of First Baptist Church, Tullahoma, from left, Cindi LeMay, Jeanett Roy, Fran Johnson, and Bonnie Philpott.



**VISITING** patients in a Nashville area nursing home are two members of First Baptist Church, St. Bethlehem, Clarksville, Anissa Coleman, center, and Becky Grier, right.

## Gifts given to Jesus symbolized his acceptance as a king, scholar says

anessa Willis  
ssociated Baptist Press

INSTON-SALEM, N.C. — Gifts the Bible says the Wise Men brought to the baby Jesus were fit for a king, says a professor at Wake Forest University.

Gold, frankincense, and myrrh are traditional gifts given in antiquity to royalty in the Middle East, Fred Horton, a Bible professor at Wake Forest University, said. "The first Palestinian Jews of the first century would have been unable to understand such gifts," Horton said.

Their mention in the story of Jesus' birth in Matthew indicates that Christ was to be revered as a king not only by Jews but by Gentiles as well, he said.

Gold is frequently mentioned as a gift for kings in the Old Testament. The less valued today, frankincense and myrrh, fragrant gum resins extracted from trees in south Arabia and Somalia, were during Jesus' time used

to make fine perfumes and anointing oils.

"Oils were used extensively in the Middle East to restore moisture after bathing and to protect skin from the dangerous rays of the Middle Eastern sun," Horton said.

Frankincense was a valued commodity long before Jesus' era. Ancient Egyptians used hundreds of pounds of it per funeral. When scientists opened King Tutankhamen's tomb 3,000 years after his death, the smell of frankincense filled the air.

Greeks used the resin to honor heroes. The Romans gave it to soldiers to treat skin infections and bruises. The Chinese sent precious porcelain by boat to Africa to trade for frankincense, which they used to improve respiratory health.

Sweet-smelling frankincense also

had religious importance. It was one ingredient in incense that was burned in the Jewish Temple and other holy sites. Some religions today still believe the smoke from incense carries prayers to God.

Myrrh was more rare in the ancient world but valued for perceived curative powers. Arab men drank it as a cure for baldness. In India, it was used to fight obesity and to prolong life. The Chinese mixed it with breast milk to cure diaper rash.

Because frankincense and myrrh were used by so many ancient cultures, scholars speculate they may have been at the height of their value during Jesus' time. In estimates using today's dollars, frankincense would have cost about \$500 a pound and myrrh as much as \$4,000.

More is known about the gifts than their mysterious bearers described as

the Wise Men or Magi.

"The Gospel of Matthew, which is the only biblical document that tells us about the Magi, does not mention how many there were, nor how they got from place to place," Horton said. "We do know something about Magi in the ancient world, however. Often the word 'Magi' refers to wandering Mithraic priests."

Archeological excavations at Caesarea, a coastal city in Israel, have uncovered clues about the possible identification of the biblical Magi. A group digging there in 1973 found a "mithraeum," or place for worshipping the God Mithras, said Horton, who has led several digs in Caesarea during the past 25 years.

Horton said Matthew's mention of the ancient religious group is no accident.

"The author makes it clear that the birth of Jesus was an event not just for the Jews but for the whole world," he said. ■







letters/opinion

## about letters

The editor is not bound to print all letters that are submitted for publication. No letters will be published that contain known factual errors. It is the responsibility of the individual submitting the letter to meet guidelines. Notification of the failure to meet guidelines is not the responsibility of the *Baptist and Reflector*. Letters:

- Should deal with issues relevant to Tennessee Baptists and should not deal with personalities or attack people.

- Must not be libelous or potentially libelous.

- Should be 300 words or less

- Must not be "form" or open letters.

- Will be accepted from writers once in a three-months period.

- Should be clearly marked they are intended for publication.

- Be signed and include address and phone number. Faxed letters are accepted, but must be signed. Letters that are e-mailed should be followed with a signed, mailed, or faxed copy.

## Apology offered

A few days prior to the convention a letter was sent to pastors from Concerned Tennessee Baptists that contained a factual error. Through an oversight we stated, "The Constitution and Bylaws Committee drafted the Protocol." We, of course, knew that the Education Committee drafted the Protocol.

This oversight was discovered within an hour after the letters were mailed. We offered an apology and an explanation to the Constitution and Bylaws Committee which they graciously accepted.

Since the Protocol was not an issue at this convention but merely used to make a point we are confident that our mistake had no effect on any vote and for that we are thankful.

I have suspected for years that I am not perfect and unfortunately this incident has confirmed my suspicions.

Charles D. Bailey  
Louisville 37777

# B&R readers share memories of Christmas

## Christmas recitations

In the early 1920s our church gave each child a recitation to be memorized by Dec. 25.

The letters of CHRISTMAS were given to us with four line verses beginning with each letter. We sang "Away in a Manger" and "Happy Birthday" to Jesus so loud that he surely heard.

We had no rehearsals (roads too bad), no microphones (strong voices), and no fancy trimming (only strung popcorn). A treat was given to everyone in a brown paper poke (sack) containing one orange, apple, raisins on stems, and one stick of peppermint candy. I believe our Savior approved our sincere efforts.

Ruth Turner  
Rogersville 37857

## Awaiting child

Years ago while attending our church's Christmas cantata, under the direction of Peggy Palmiter, I had the joy of being six months with child. The choir sang beautifully. It seemed as though angels had come and I was there on the night Christ was born.

During the musical, the babe I carried

lept in my womb. I suddenly felt akin to Elisabeth, mother of John the Baptist, who also knew the joy of a baby leaping in her womb for the joy of the Lord. The babe I carried is now a college vocal major, singing praises to her Lord.

Mary Beth Duke  
Smithville 37166

## Generosity to LMCO

One of the fondest memories I have is when we totaled the Lottie Moon Christmas Offering in 1999 and found we had collected \$6,000 for Bethlehem Baptist Church in Indian Creek Baptist Association.

Bethlehem in Waynesboro is a rural church with average morning attendance of about 50 and total weekly offerings of about \$600. I was their pastor and am now retired.

Norman O. Baker  
Antioch 37103

## Church came to us

We moved to Tennessee after 35 years in Indiana, joining Baileytown First Baptist in 1990. In July of 1991, our new church family harvested and preserved

our garden vegetables when Doyle emergency surgery while vacationing in Indiana.

In October we went to Denver, CO after extensive tests revealed infected abdominal grafts and required surgery he might not survive. After two months in the hospital, complications requiring four surgeries, he was discharged Christmas Eve.

We received a wooden replica of church saying: "Since you can't be us at church, we're sending church you." The prayers, phone calls, care and love brought a blessed Christmas us in spite of being away from home three months.

Sara and Doyle Johnson  
Afton 3

## First Christmas as a Christian

December 25, 1977 was my Christmas in the "trinity" spirit of God. I was so happy with myself and my walk with the Holy Spirit, Jesus Christ and God the Father. Especially after following my Lord in believer's baptism did receive more blessings.

Susan  
Nashville 3

# Baby Jesus 'finds way back to manger' after absence

## a Christmas story

by Leonard Markham  
pastor, Bluegrass Baptist Church, Hendersonville

I recently heard the story of a young woman who as a child had severe physical problems. When she was four years old, her parents took her to the Mayo Clinic for treatment. The doctor asked her what she wanted to do when she grew up. Without hesitation, she said, "I want to be a doctor."

During those early years of examinations, surgeries, and therapy, her mother purchased a beautiful nativity set for the family. It wasn't long until the Christmas figurines became very special to the little girl.

The baby Jesus became her very own possession. She would take him out of the manger scene and carry him around with her. She watched over him and protected him, cradling him in her hands as gently as the Mother of Jesus had cared for him on that first Christmas.

As the young child grew into adolescence and became a young woman, she always looked forward to Christmas and setting up the nativity scene. When her mother realized how much the statuettes meant to her daughter, she gave them to her. The young

woman kept the manger scene through college and medical school. She was fulfilling her dream to be a doctor and every Christmas there was the nativity scene and the baby Jesus safe in the manger. The baby Jesus became to her a sign of the presence of the incarnate Christ. Just as he had been with her during the doctor's visits and surgeries through her teenage years and as a young adult, he was with her during the stress and strain of college and medical school. She was accepted to do her residency in pediatrics, and the vocational dream was becoming a reality. She loved children and they loved her.

Even so, during her first year of residency, the workload was demanding and the hours spent at the hospital with children seemed endless. The life of a physician in residency is an emotional roller coaster. A child is critically sick, he gets well, and goes home. Another child is critically sick, but gets worse and dies. The strain of caring for and seeing children get well or die took its toll on the young doctor.

Soon it was Christmas time and she was busy attending to others. Still she stayed in touch with her traditions. She got her old and worn nativity scene and put each piece in place. Every piece was present except one. She was missing baby Jesus. The manger was

empty. She searched in the box but she couldn't find him anywhere. "Maybe I put him somewhere else. Maybe I left him at Mom and Dad's. Where could he be?" she asked herself and those who might know. Finally, she gave up her search and concluded that it was the way it should be, because it represented what she felt had happened in her own life: for the first time,



MARKHAM

as she faced the demands of residency, she felt abandoned by God. Friends and family purchased little figures of baby Jesus to go in the manger but none of them ever fit or matched with her set. For three years the manger in her nativity set was empty.

Then she began preparing for the most important day of her life. She was to be married in December, and during this time she was either at the hospital taking care of children or working on the first house she would share with her husband. She and her mother and fiancé worked for months painting the house, refinishing the floors, completely remodeling the kitchen and the bathroom, and finally moving her furniture into the house. She felt pressured to get the house fixed up before the wedding.

Finally, it was less than two

days away. She was physically exhausted but the workhouse was finished. It was after midnight and she gave her attention to decorating Christmas. She carefully placed the Christmas candles, wreaths, and they looked beautiful along with the first Christmas tree. It was late and she started putting up the nativity scene.

She had done this many years she could do it with her eyes closed. She carefully picked each piece, wrapped the protective and arranged her set. She almost completed her set when again she thought missing baby Jesus.

She reached down to the bottom of the box, amidst papers, to find another piece. Her hand touched a figurine that wasn't wrapped in paper. She lifted her hand out, and to her amazement was missing baby Jesus. She picked him up, held him securely, said a prayer of thanksgiving, then placed him gently in the manger where he belonged. Then he was always present and, all, he would be there most cherished event of her life: her marriage to Larry. ■ — Editor's note: Larry and Mindy Markham were married on December 15, 1998, in Little Rock, Arkansas. Bradford Markham was born March 14, 2000, at UAMS Hospital in Little Rock, Arkansas.



# Christmas reminds us of hope God provides

Donnie Wilkey, editor

As time last year Tennessee Baptists along with the rest of the world, caught up in Y2K. As we prepared for Christmas, those doubts and expectations of what would happen when the year would roll over into the year 2000 on our minds (even though most of this year would like to deny it).

People across the nation bought Christmas gifts they also stocked up on necessities such as food, water, etc., and the worse case scenarios of Y2K. The year 2000 came without even a flicker in the electricity of most homes. And we lose sight of the hope we find in God?

As this year ends, our nation has been in turmoil, awaiting the final outcome of the presidential race.

While there have been presidential

elections even closer than the one this year, it is safe to say none received the media attention that this election has.

People have been watching countless hours of election coverage since Nov. 7. Depending on the candidate of choice emotions have swung back and forth like a pendulum. Whenever it seemed one candidate would be announced the winner, a court would decide in favor of the other.

Gov. Bush of Texas has been declared the winner. We need to pray for him and the new administration. They will not have an easy task because our nation is so divided.

Let us not forget the hope we find in God.

A press release came across my desk last week from the American Family Association about a new program on the cable channel Showtime called "Queer as Folk," a new series about

sex-obsessed homosexual men. What's worse, according to the release, is the show has been applauded by national publications such as *Time* magazine, the *Wall Street Journal* and others. Just when you think television has hit "rock bottom" someone drills the hole a little bit deeper.

What ever happened to Barney Fife and Gomer Pyle? Where are John Wayne, Roy Rogers, and Gene Autry when we need them?

Is there any hope for this world in which many people refuse to even acknowledge God?

Despite all the turmoil and confusion about who will lead our country, and all the filth that we are subjected to these days, God is still in control.

The celebration of Christmas, the birth of our Savior, Jesus Christ, provides an opportunity for us to recall that approximately 2,000 years ago,

God already knew what our nation would be like today.

That's why God sent his only Son to be born into a world that would eventually nail him to a cross.

The hope we have today, despite all the chaos around us, is the hope that sprang forth that Easter Sunday when Jesus came out of that tomb.

Our hope for the year 2001 is the same hope we had this year and all the years preceding — Jesus Christ.

On Christmas Day, say a special thank you to God for sending his Son. If he had not, we indeed would be living in a world without hope. **B&R**



## Don't forget — your Christmas 'stuff' is part of your life

Part  
k

James Porch,  
executive  
director



Early one December, during pastoral years (pre 1993), I was a church member and welcomed into a very cluttered house. Somewhat embarrassed, the mother and wife explained, "we're unpacking Christmas!"

Gifts and pieces of Christmas stuff and any beauty and joy the season seemed lost in the tone in her voice advertising the distinct dimension of Christmas.

As Christmas, my daughter

and I set aside most of a Saturday afternoon to unpack our Christmas stuff. Early into the process, I surrendered to the rising feeling that this ritual merited leisure and reflection and should not be rushed.

The assortment of ornaments, ribbons, wreaths, garlands, and manger scenes recorded our family's Yuletide collection of over 35 years of memories. Piece after piece prompted rehearsals of our family's story including fun scenes, and yet challenging even painful days, all part of our home pilgrimage.

Now, the mass and magnitude of the items exceed and extend beyond space for display in the house. And, that's OK. Some of this family's treasury of heritage just needs to

be seen again, washed with a few tears, and bathed even in the breath of laughter. After all, the safe keeping of the stuff answers a more worthy need than merely being seen. Here lies a mixture of items and colors, a private chronicle of a family's celebration. The chance to see or hold an article in hand seems to refresh precious moments of Christmas times in the distance of yesterday.

Occasionally, in the unpacking, this labor of love produced mesmerized moments of wonder as questions overtook us. "What is this?" "Why did we keep this?" And answers ranging from pure speculation to "Oh, I remember" and onto "Who would know?"

And, once again as often

this past year amid laughter and tears, we echoed an answer "Momma would know!"

And in those moments, daughter and dad would join with a vast audience of the *Baptist & Reflector* who include people unpacking Christmas and feeling the absence of a main player of their family drama.

While we will continue to miss the one or the many, the unpacked stuff can make cameo moments when our God-given gift of remembering offers again a familiar face or a joy time and even more you remember that in Christ we're still together.

While we unpacked, a witness, a baby with big and bright eyes watched, wiggled, and cooed nearby. There will

be new stuff this year. New stuff for a new baby, a grand baby. He has come to help fill our lives at the time of a loss. He is our new happy life chapter. We must have new stuff to celebrate his arrival.

Even the missing grandmother would expect us to unpack new stuff for her. How scriptural. Once upon a time, there was gold, frankincense, myrrh, swaddling clothes, hay and who knows what else. Just maybe also a long time ago, that special couple, Mary and Joseph, carefully unpacked their Christmas stuff on a regular basis to rehearse the story in the eyes and ears of the born Saviour.

This Christmas don't be too tough on your stuff. After all, it's part of your life's story. ■

## Counselor offers suggestions for 'beating the holiday blues'

Families  
matter

Paul Barkley



At this time of year is a combination and contradiction to people. While for many, it is a time of celebration, fun and fellowship with family and friends, for some it is a time of loneliness, despair, and frustration. All sounds, smells, and scurry indicates that people are having fun, but you are caught in the middle of this excitement and still feel empty and you begin to believe that your damaged goods and cannot measure up. I would like to address some of the causes and some of the cures for this melancholy malady.

Bad memories of past holiday seasons where tragedy or mistreatment has occurred helps many to set themselves up at this joyous time of the year. The sights, sounds, and smells that bring joy to most bring only haunting memories of past abuse, abandonment, and adultery. The very sensations that should be bringing joy and happiness elicit sadness and depression.

Believe it or not, it is sometimes good memories that bring about sadness at this time of year. We set ourselves up again when we remember the past in such embellished ways that we make it virtually impossible to recapture the moment. When we remember experiences that we enjoyed, we sometimes tend to enhance the good by forgetting the bad. In the present, any bad part of the experience convinces us that the present cannot possibly

live up to the memory of the past.

To a great extent what we choose to focus on in the past controls our perception of the present or future. When we ruminate on the past misery, we cloud our view of the present and shape our expectation of the future.

We also set ourselves up when we allow ourselves to get too lonely, too hungry, too busy, and too tired in this happy and hectic time of the year. I would like to invite you to consider four things that can be done to help avoid the blues caused by these memories.

One of the principle signs of depression is loneliness. In order to protect ourselves from the pain that this can bring, especially at this time of year, we tend to withdraw from the parties and people who are having a good time. The problem with this tactic is that the

loneliness produces withdrawal that exacerbates the depression. We must guard against this loneliness by making sure that we stay involved with other people, even when it means that we push ourselves beyond our comfort zones. All of us dread going to a party, yet came back admitting that we had fun.

During this festive season it is even more important that we concentrate on getting the proper food. All of America is on a diet of some kind. At this time of year we are faced with tempting treats that threaten our weight. One defense is not to eat. The body must have a balanced diet to function properly. We do not have to eat some of all of the party tray, but we must eat a balanced diet.

Every social calendar gets overloaded at this time of year. Sometimes in an effort to fend off the loneliness people will

allow themselves to be stretched too far and feel defeated because they have allowed themselves to get in that position. We must guard our time and guarantee a place for quiet and emotional regrouping.

In all the hustle and bustle of this season one can easily get overextended physically to the point of exhaustion. There must be appropriate rest. There is just so much energy in the old battery and it must be recharged when it runs down. Don't allow yourself to miss a good night's sleep or possibly an afternoon nap.

These suggestions are not meant to be all encompassing but rather to address the main issues that I see involving the holiday blues. ■ — Barkley is professor, Baptist Memorial College of Health Sciences, Memphis, and a family therapist in private practice.



## leaders

■ **Larry Simmons**, associate pastor and business administrator, First Baptist Church, Kingston, has been called as associate pastor and business administrator, First Baptist Church, Paris.

■ **Coleman Nichols**, youth minister of a church in Hattiesburg, Miss., has been called as minister of youth and activities, First Baptist Church, Paris. Nichols also was an exercise specialist for a Hattiesburg hospital.

■ **Billy Hammonds**, pastor, First Baptist Church, Trenton, will be honored at the church Dec. 31 from 2-4 p.m. on his retirement.

■ **Brogan Avenue Baptist Church**, Fayetteville, has called **Thurman Young** as pastor.

■ **Wilhite Baptist Church**, Cookeville, has called **Tim Adams**, pastor, Rayon City Baptist Church, Old Hickory, as pastor, effective in January. He served the Old Hickory church for five years. **Harold Smith**, retired director of missions, New Duck River Baptist Association, served as interim pastor of Wilhite church.

■ **Bob Bowman**, church administrator, Calvary Baptist Church, Knoxville, recently observed his 15th anniversary of service there.

■ **Blythe Avenue Baptist Church**, Cleveland, has called **Jake Carroll** of Morris Hill Baptist Church, Chattanooga, as pastor, effective Nov. 19.

■ **Norman Reece** was called as pastor, First Baptist Church, Mountain City, effective Nov. 19. Formerly he was interim pastor.

■ **Billy Holly** has resigned as music director effective Nov. 8 and **Bob Wilson** has resigned as youth minister effective Oct. 31 from Siam Baptist Church, Elizabethton.

■ **Fifth Avenue Baptist Church**, Knoxville, installed **John R. Silver** as pastor Dec. 3. Silver formerly was a missionary in Paraguay, South America, for 13 years. Paul Brewer was interim pastor.

■ **Daniel Williams** was called as pastor, Calvary Baptist Church, Lebanon, effective Nov. 5.

## deaths

■ **Mildred Joy Dawson Cagle**, 78, missionary emerita, International Mission Board, died Dec. 10. She served in East Africa and Kenya, Africa, from 1974-88. She is survived by two sons including Gordon Cagle Jr., of Clinton and six grandchildren.

## associations

■ At the recent 172nd annual meeting of **Big Hatchie Baptist Association**, based in Covington, messengers elected the following officers: Paul Olson, First Baptist Church, Covington, treasurer; Frances Slover, Pleasant Grove Baptist Church, Covington, clerk; Roy Harkness Sr., pastor, Eastland Baptist Church, Ripley, vice moderator; and Rodney Hardin, pastor, Ashport Baptist Church, Ripley, moderator.

## churches

■ **Brush Creek Baptist Church**, Brush Creek, will build a two-story addition to its facility which will include a fellowship hall, kitchen, and classrooms.

■ **Higher Ground Baptist Church**, Kingsport, held a missions market offering used items which were donated. The church raised \$2,000 for missions as a result.



**HONORED** by Big Hatchie Baptist Association during its annual meeting was **Connie Hall** on her retirement as association secretary after 20 years. She stands in front of Oak Grove Baptist Church, Covington, with her husband, **Kenneth**, left, and **Ray Jones**, director of missions, holding a painting of her family's former house and herself as a child.

■ **Williams Chapel Baptist Church**, Halls, will demolish its fellowship hall and build a new one.

■ **First Baptist Church**, White Bluff, held revival Nov. 19-22. **Harold Hunter**, evangelist of Nashville, spoke. As a result, 12 people made professions of faith and many others made other spiritual decisions. Since then, the church has baptized three people, seen five join the church, and seven make professions of faith as a result of visitation.

■ **Alpha Baptist Church**, Morristown, continues to host an extension center of the James P. Boyce College of the Bible of Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, Louisville, Ky. The college offers a full-accredited 129-hour bachelor's of science in biblical studies with a missions, evangelism, and church growth emphasis. The next semester begins Jan. 29

and offers Preaching I, Hermeneutics, New Testament Survey II, English Composition II. For more information, call the church at (423) 581-3237.

■ **First Baptist Church**, Clinton, burned a note Nov. 12 representing the debt-free status of land bought two years ago worth \$170,000.

■ **Lancaster Baptist Church**, Lancaster, dedicated its new facility Dec. 3.

## missionaries

■ A Christian bilingual school in Tegucigalpa, Honduras, is in need of **two English-speaking principals** for an elementary school and high school, reported **Tina Torbert**, missionary and a former member of Judson Baptist Church,

## Tennessee

Nashville. The workers serve from January to May or June. Airfare as housing, insurance, monthly stipend would be provided depending on experience. For more information, contact **Torbert**, who is the daughter of **Johnnie Hall**, retired from Tennessee Baptist Convention at torbert@david.intertb.org (504) 232-7070.

## hospitals

■ **Baptist Hospital East Tennessee** has named one of the nation's Top Hospitals for the consecutive year by the 100 Top Hospitals, marks for Success conferred by the HCIA-Sachs Institute. The study considered excellence in quality of care, efficiency of operation, sustainability of overall performance. The study was an objective, quantitative performance data which assisted and completed United States hospitals are analyzed in groups on size and teaching. Other Tennessee hospitals named were Vanderbilt University Hospital, Nashville; Hendersonville Medical Center, Hendersonville; and DeKalb Hospital, Smithville.

## Campers on Mission meet at boys ranch

By Jean Bearden  
For Baptist and Reflector

**MILLINGTON** — A recent rally and ministry project of Tennessee Campers on Mission drew 40 participants to the Boys Ranch here of Tennessee Baptist Children's Homes for a week of work and fellowship.

Members did construction, maintenance, sewing, and prayerwalking. They gave the ranch bath towels and kitchen linens, and gave the residents gifts prepared by the

Woman's Missionary Union of Hermitage Baptist Church, Nashville.

Participants heard **Phil Wade**, minister, Second Baptist Church, Millington, and **Ann German**, a member of the group, Winchester, who spoke on "Share Your Faith Without Fear." Also WMU members of Sway Baptist Church, Memphis, hosted a meal for the group and ranch residents.

The spring 2001 rally will be held at Chattanooga Campus. ■



**PARTICIPATING** are, from left, **Ken and Jean Ritenour**, Cleveland; **Joe and Charlene Carter**, Mt. Juliet; and **Phyllis and Bob Ingram**, Cleveland.



**AL BERTRAM** of Cleveland installs a light fixture at the boys ranch.



**MEMBERS** of Chapman Grove Baptist Church, Kingston, pray during the dedication of its new Family Life Center Nov. 12. **David Acres**, director of missions, Big Emory Baptist Association, helped lead the program along with members **Leslie Borum**, **Roscoe Gamble**, and **Adrian Jones**, pastor. The church will use the building for fellowship, Sunday School, children's church, youth activities, Awana, karate, and a library.



# Actions speak louder than words for news anchor



Donnie Wilkey  
St and Reflector

NOXVILLE — Arguably Williams may be the most recognized voice and face in Tennessee.

For 23 years he anchored news for WBIR, Channel 10 in Knoxville.

When he did his last newscast on Dec. 1, the station honored him with an hour-long special highlighting his career in broadcast journalism.

That many people in East Tennessee never heard, at least on the news set, was Williams' commitment to the faith and ministry.

Many do not realize that the Chattanooga native grew up with a desire to be a preacher in the Christian Church and even went to college and seminary for those intentions.

When he finally decided God did not intend for him to preach, Williams turned to broadcasting, a career that eventually allowed him to combine his desire to minister to others with his profession.

Williams moved to Knoxville in 1977 to anchor the 11 p.m. newscast for Channel 10. A year later he moved to the 6 p.m. newscast and did both until 1997 when he dropped the 11 p.m. newscast as he moved toward retirement.

After moving to Knoxville Williams related he was "fortunate to marry an East Tennessee Southern Baptist."

Williams later became a Southern Baptist and joined his wife Wanda's church, Central Baptist in Fountain City. They have two children, both of whom accepted Christ and



**BILL WILLIAMS**, right, news anchor at Channel 10 in Knoxville, broadcast his last program before retirement on Dec. 1. He is joined by co-anchor Robin Wilhoit, center, and meteorologist Todd Howell. Both Williams and Wilhoit are members of Central Baptist Church, Fountain City. — Photo courtesy of Michael Patrick of the Knoxville News-Sentinel

were baptised at Central.

He maintains membership at Central and attends as he can. He also attends an interdenominational church in Loudon, where he resides.

Williams observed that he never "made a big deal" on the air that he was a Christian or Southern Baptist. "I don't think you have to," he said.

Rather, he let his life mirror his Christianity. Williams noted people have always come up to him and said, "I can tell you are a Christian."

"That's a high compliment," he said.

The veteran broadcast journalist said he learned early that on TV, and in particularly

in the East Tennessee market, that "you could make a difference in people's lives by presenting problems and showing how those problems could be solved."

Two news segments that have become synonymous with Williams' name are "Mission of Hope" (see page 1) and "Monday's Child."

Monday's Child is a 20-year-old feature of Channel 10. Every Monday, Williams highlights a special needs, adoptable child or sibling group. The segment is shown in its entirety on all three news broadcasts (noon, 6 p.m. and 11 p.m.).

Over the lifetime of the feature (which Williams will con-

tinue to do in retirement) about 1,000 kids were presented. Of those, 630 were adopted, Williams said.

He noted the idea was presented to him by a woman who had seen it somewhere else. "It clicked with me," Williams said. "Here was a way to make a difference in lives. And what a powerful and wonderful difference it has made."

He observed that the success of Monday's Child is a tribute to the people of East Tennessee.

"The gratifying part of my career and ministry here in the East Tennessee market is the way people have responded."

"The response of people here to the needs we presented far exceeded any expectations I may have had."

Williams is convinced God led him into broadcasting in order to broaden his ministry.

"I was led by God to do what I did and am continuing to do."

Williams has given of himself to the denomination by providing the narration for the Tennessee Baptist Convention's new video on Appalachian Outreach Ministry, "Ministry in the Mountains." He also has spoken at events in Knox County Baptist Association and in numerous churches. Last year Williams was presented an honorary doctorate from Carson-Newman College, Jefferson City, in recognition of his contributions.

"You don't have to listen to someone long to get a sense of who they are," said Walter Taylor, director of missions for

Knox County Baptists.

"Bill has always presented a positive image of himself and the station," Taylor observed.

Williams' pastor, Marvin Cameron, agreed.

"Bill takes seriously Jesus' call to care for the 'least of his brethren' in a multitude of ways. His Christianity is heartfelt and ministry-centered. The people of East Tennessee have

not only heard the news reported accurately by Bill, they have been inspired by him to produce good news in the lives of the less fortunate people of our area."

Cameron also noted that Williams is a "Christian with a song in his heart."

"The song reverberates throughout our part of the world in the homes of children who have been adopted through Bill's work, and in the homes of some of the poorest people who have clothes to wear because of Bill's work on their behalf."

Though retired, Williams will continue to do special assignments such as Monday's Child and Mission of Hope, as well as other assignments.

He also hopes to get back to his love of music and find time to sing in the church choir.

As he looked back on his career Williams noted he has been blessed in so many ways to "find the acceptance accorded here." ■



## State convention to offer three evangelism conferences in January

Baptist and Reflector

RENTWOOD — The Tennessee Baptist Convention will offer three evangelism conferences next month.

The 2001 State Evangelism Conference will be held Jan. 15-16 at Judson Baptist Church, Nashville.

The theme for the conference is "The Great Commission — Our Mandate to Multiply."

The meeting begins on Jan. 15 at 7 p.m. The evening session begins at 7 p.m.

On Tuesday, sessions begin at 9:15 a.m., 2 p.m., and 6:15 p.m.

Program personnel include John Brough, vice president of evangelism, North American Mission Board; Larry Linginfelter, president of the Tennessee Vocational Evangelists Fellowship, Alcoa; Randy Isbell, pastor, Jewell Baptist Church, Savannah; Junior Hill, evangelist, Hartselle; and Robert Smith Jr., associate profes-



GLATT



HILL



ISELL



PORCH



REIGHARD



ROBERTSON

sor of divinity, Beeson Divinity School, Samford University, Birmingham, Ala.; Wade Akins, evangelism director of Eastern South America for the International Mission Board;

Ike Reighard, pastor, NorthStar Baptist Church, Atlanta, Ga.; David Thompson, church planter/pastor of The Church at Madison Creek, Nashville; Scott Dawson, evangelist, Birmingham, Ala.; and James Porch, TBC executive director/treasurer.

Special music will be provided by The Stone Brothers, Carolyn Reed, The Howards, and the Tennessee

Baptist Chorale.

For more information, contact Larry Robertson at 1-800-558-2090, ext. 2059.

The first annual **Hispanic Evangelism Conference** will be held Jan. 12-13 at Judson.

The conference will begin on Friday evening with a rally at 6 p.m. On Saturday morning, breakout conferences will be held from 10-11:30 a.m. A rally will follow from 11:30-1 p.m. A complimentary lunch will be served from 1-2 p.m.

For more information about the Hispanic conference, contact Chuy Avila at

1-800-558-2090, ext. 7913.

The annual **Bivocational Evangelism Conference** for bivocational pastors and staff will be held Jan. 12-13 at Village Baptist Church, located at 201 Belinda Parkway in Mt.

Juliet. The conference begins at 1 p.m. on Friday and concludes at noon on Saturday.

Guest speakers for the conference include Rod Glatt, black church extension specialist, Tennessee Baptist Convention; Larry Robertson, evangelism specialist, Tennessee Baptist Convention; and Skip Youngcourt, bivocational evangelist, New Johnsonville. Leanne Barker, bivocational music evangelist from Johnson City, will provide special music.

For more information, contact the TBC Church Staff Leadership Group at 1-800-558-2090, ext. 2018. ■



# Knoxville ministry takes hope to ...

— Continued from page 1

He noted that there are still homes in that area with no inside bathrooms or plumbing. Some homes depend on water from nearby springs.

The poverty goes in a cycle. Everyone in the family has lived there on a plot of land they own. Most of the residents there are afraid to move, Williams observed.

## Just taters

In a segment aired by Channel 10 last year promoting Mission of Hope's fourth annual mission drive, Williams talked with Billy, a young boy "who lives poverty day by day with his sister and grandfather."

When asked what he would be having for supper, Billy replied, "beans." When questioned about what he had the night before, the boy replied, "taters."

"Anything else?" Williams asked. "That's all," the boy replied as the camera showed a close-up of a face without emotion, without hope.

That is what is happening in Appalachia, Williams noted. "Six-year-old Billys having taters one night, beans the next, and that's it."

Faces such as Billy's are what inspires volunteers to give freely of their time and resources.

One person who did leave the cycle of poverty in the mountains of Kentucky is Jim Montgomery, a member of First Church, Concord, who now coordinates volunteers for Mission of Hope.

"If you live there there is a tendency not to see the problems," Montgomery shared. "You are too close to it."

"But when you leave and come back, you see how the rest of the world has passed them by."



**KNOX COUNTY BAPTIST ASSOCIATION** Director of Missions Walter Taylor, right, visits with Mission of Hope volunteer Larry Triplett of First Baptist Church, Concord, in Knoxville. Taylor promotes Mission of Hope with churches in Knox County.

Montgomery noted that when volunteers hear and see the needs of the people in Appalachia they are driven to work so hard. "When you see the real faces of Appalachia, that's the motivating force."

## How it works

Mission of Hope does not just go into the communities of Appalachia and leave gifts and food. They work through primarily the local elementary schools and established mission points.

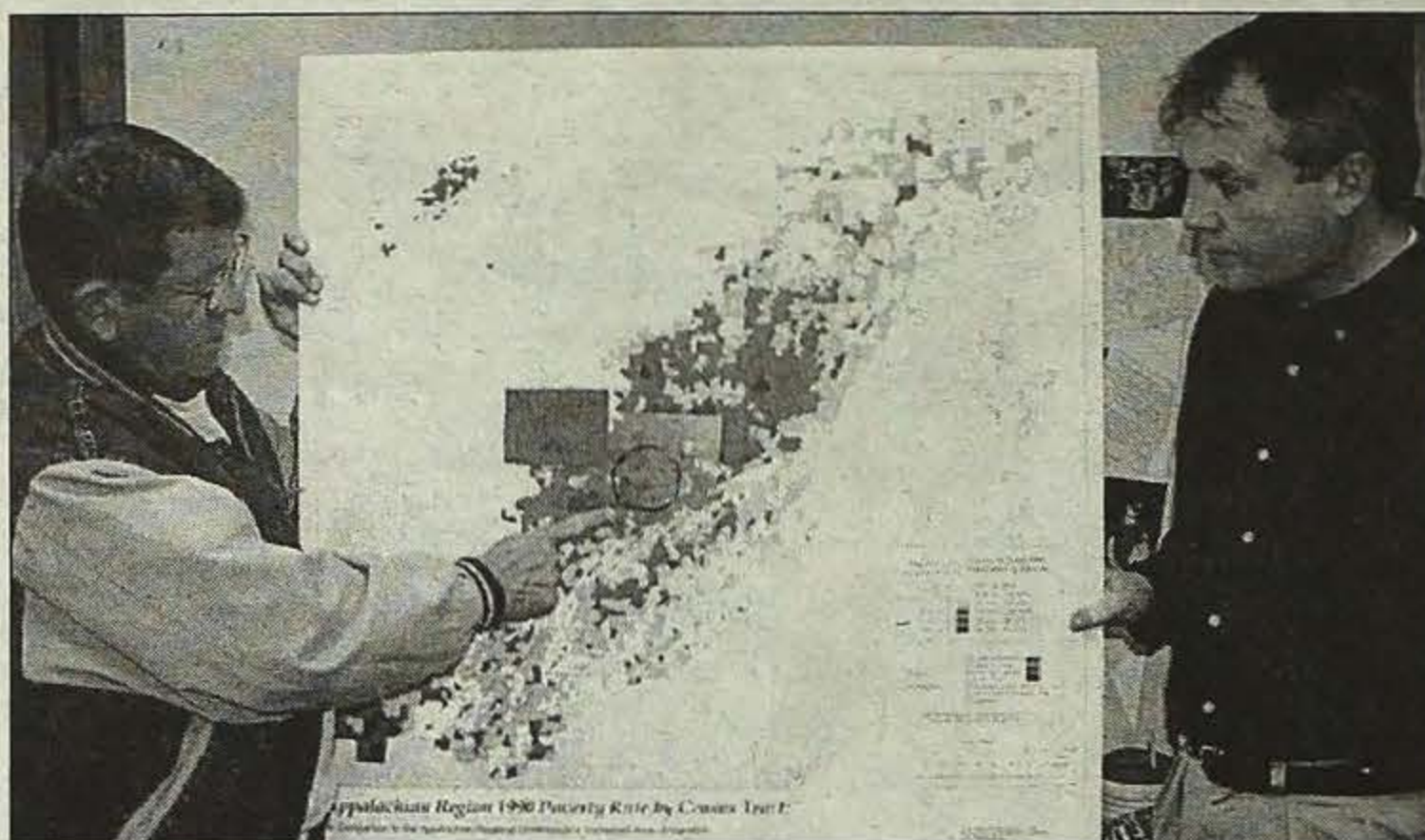
Thompson noted the schools are in very depressed areas and that many of the kids are on federally-funded lunch programs. In one school, 90 percent of the kids are on that program, he noted.

Many of the children are in need of shoes, coats, and other clothing. These are handled on an as needed basis, Thompson said.

Mission of Hope provides toys for every kid in a particular school so that no one is singled out, Thompson said.

Last year Mission of Hope provided assistance to 7,000 kids in approximately 13-15 schools, Thompson said.

This year they will make 30 deliveries to 19 schools and 11 different mission efforts with a



**POINTING OUT** the coverage area for the Knoxville-based Mission of Hope is Jim Montgomery, coordinator of volunteers, and Emmette Thompson, executive director. The map shows the percentage of people in poverty in the Appalachian area.

goal of reaching 10,000 children.

Among those efforts are ministries that already have been established in the region.

One such ministry, according to Moreland of Central Bearden, is Interfaith of Breathitt County, Ky., an organization that has had a ministry in the area for years but did not have enough toys to meet all the needs.

"We try to connect with people who live there so you can have a witness for Christ that is ongoing," Moreland said.

Volunteer Larry Triplett of First Church, Concord, agreed.

"There are men and women already ministering there on a shoestring," he observed.

"We can't be there 24 hours a day, seven days a week. They can and we can assist," Triplett added.

## The bottom line

Mission of Hope does more than meet physical needs in poverty-stricken Appalachia.

"We were born out of an evangelistic core," Thompson stressed.

"We don't go in to cram the Gospel down their throats, but we do share the Gospel when we can," Thompson said, noting that they make New Testaments

available to the children in the schools. Most take them, he acknowledged.

Thompson also noted the ministry tries to pair youth and adult mission teams with churches and missions organizations in the area. These teams go in and help repair and renovate homes in the summer, Thompson said.

"We do whatever we can to share the Gospel."

## Other results

In addition to helping meet needs in Appalachia, Mission of Hope has helped unite churches beyond denominational and theological lines.

Approximately 10 churches are involved in a concerted way in Mission of Hope,

Thompson said. Other churches, including many in County Baptist Association, also pitch in with contributions and volunteers and County Director of Mission Walter Taylor said he "our people to get involved."

The organization currently has donated office space, local warehouse and has use of the warehouse to store items during their annual Christmas drives.

Moreland noted that Mission of Hope began as "the witness of different churches working and serving together as one."

"My passion is to make the churches work alongside each other to help people. Moreland, former chairman of the board of directors for Mission of Hope.

"No one church can do Mission of Hope does. We to work together," he stressed.

Anyone who would like more information about Mission of Hope may call to 1-877-627-1909, or (865) 5727 or write Mission of Hope, P.O. Box 22312, Knoxville, TN 37933. ■



**BOB AND NANCY COPELAND** drove to Knoxville from Harrogate, Tenn., to pack and sort toys in the warehouse used by Mission of Hope.



**EMMETTE THOMPSON**, left, executive director of Mission of Hope, discusses the organization and its ministries with two strong supporters, Walter Taylor, center, director of missions for Knox County Baptist Association, and Bill Williams, who recently retired as news anchor of Channel 10 in Knoxville. Williams' reports on poverty in Appalachia sparked the idea for Mission of Hope five years ago.



**VOLUNTEERS** at Mission of Hope sort and fill food boxes to be shipped to needy families in the Appalachian regions of Kentucky and Tennessee. Local businesses and media outlets in Knoxville help promote the annual Christmas drive each year to provide food, toys, and other items.





h help from sponsoring church

## Congregation gives gifts despite small size

Donnie Davis  
Baptist and Reflector

SPRINGFIELD — Christmas is a busy time and it is especially so for South Main Mission here. The community is somewhat small — about 13,000 people — located in the hills north of Nashville. It still has a poor section, where South Main Mission of Springfield Baptist Church is located.

Members are glad it's most live in the area despite the crime, drug transactions, despair of poverty, and people from different ethnic groups.

What goes on here in a one-tan metal building is a giving, explained Mike Mayo, pastor, which is what Christian faith is all about, he said.

**Meeting needs**  
Around Christmas several a week people come to mission building who have needs, explained Nell Rawls, church member. Rawls helps if she's at the building, she often is in her job as a custodian. She also works time as custodian of Springfield Church. But South

Main Mission is her second home, says her brother.

Rawls also accepts and re-



MAYO

sponds to calls at home by people the church has helped in the past and by church members who know her involvement in the ministry. Rawls also washes clothes donated to the ministry. She said she enjoys "doing it. I really do."

At Christmas last year South Main Mission coordinated and distributed Christmas gifts to 46 children and 31 adults and gave food boxes to 53 families, reported Marilyn Poteete, church member. They will probably distribute and coordinate about the same this year, she added.

Amazingly, the congrega-

tion only has about 70 people each Sunday for worship.

### With lots of help

Of course, the congregation has lots of help with its ministries, reported Lorene Dean, a member of Springfield Church who was asked to serve cookies at the congregation in 1980 and never left, she described.

Many Sunday School classes of Springfield Church agree to help families at Christmas, explained Dean, who organizes the gift-giving ministry, and Poteete. The two women coordinate information about families, buy gifts, and help distribute them.

Poteete, who runs a plumbing service with her husband and has been a member of the church for 21 years, said the congregation meets a need because, unlike other area ministries, it gives clothes in addition to toys.

Poteete said she can attest to the fact that many of the children wouldn't get any gifts if not for the Christmas ministry of South Main Mission. The congregation helps people attending first and then as many others as they can.

This year one boy who requested toys asked for baseball

cards, a football, and a portable CD player, said Poteete, which isn't a big list compared to most children, she added. The class at Springfield Church which adopted him also bought him and his three siblings bicycles.

She praised the Springfield members for their generosity, noting many of the classes want to remain anonymous, which reveals they are giving without desire for any credit, added Poteete.

Other help comes from churches of Robertson County Baptist Association, especially Woman's Missionary Union groups; a few churches in other denominations; community groups; and local residents.

Food and money for food is also given to the congregation to share. Members make up food baskets and distribute them to needy families.

### An unselfish congregation

Recently Mayo watched as members, most of whom have a very limited income, brought cans of food and toys for the Christmas ministry during a Hanging of the Green service.

The congregation also has met its \$350 goal for the Lottie Moon Christmas Offering for International Missions. And



although Springfield Church provides half of the congregation's budget, the mission raised \$51,000 of it last year.

Some of the members "may feel cheated on everything else" in their lives, said Mayo, but he is glad to see they aren't cheated of the joy God gives to people who help others.

Mayo is also proud of the other work of South Main Mission. The congregation with help from the association has an after-school children's activity each Tuesday and Thursday. A weekly sewing group of ladies meets.

A Hispanic congregation meets in the mission's facility two nights a week. On another night about 50 students, mostly Hispanics, gather for English as a Second Language classes provided by the association. And on the first Monday of each month members, including long-time worker Nadine Goosetree of Springfield Church, open the clothing closet.

"We're doing a lot of good things for a lot of good people," said Mayo. **B&R**

## Memphis church gives \$80,000 hay barn to TBCH boys ranch

Don Burke  
Baptist and Reflector

MILLINGTON — "Away in a Manger" has been a favorite Christmas hymn of children for generations. It tells of the scene in the stable on the first Christmas night.

Christmas is celebrated every year, a large donation from the Colonial Baptist Church in Memphis has funded the construction of an unusual gift to the Tennessee Baptist Children's Homes' Double B Boys Ranch — a hay barn.

"We had money left in our church building fund that we weren't going to use," said Jack May, pastor of the church. "The TBCH volunteer board wanted to see who we might give the funds to."

Jack Land of Collierville led the committee. Land, a former pastor of education, had led the church as business manager and also was a for-trustee of TBCH.

One of the first places we visited was the Boys Ranch," Land recalls.

They also considered the Southern Baptist North American Mission Board and the International Mission Board, but the committee felt

led to the boys ranch.

The Double B Boys Ranch, a ministry provided by Tennessee Baptist Convention churches, began helping youth from troubled family backgrounds in 1988. The program provides residential care for up to 27 youth.

The boys come from varied backgrounds. Some are inner-city youth from Memphis while others are from rural areas of Tennessee. Each receives spiritual direction from their houseparents and the local churches they attend. The boys attend area public schools and help out with ranch chores.

According to Bert Sutton, boys ranch vice president, the boys feed, care for, and show animals from the herd of 80 brood cows and heifers.

Over the years, the program has worked to convert the herd to registered polled herefords and has received several awards including the 2000 Tennessee Junior Livestock Exposition grand champion for polled herefords.

Feeding the cattle takes a lot of hay. "We typically use about 700 round bales of hay each season," said David Marlin, ranch manager.

They didn't have space to store the hay so a neighbor,

Bub Cole, donated space for the hay in his barn until he decided to sell it earlier this year.

When the ranch staff learned of the pending sale, they investigated constructing a barn for the storage. They found it would cost about \$45,000.

Shortly after obtaining bids for the barn, the committee from Colonial Baptist called Sutton to ask about needs of the ranch.

"I gave them a list of projects and told them about our need for a hay barn," Sutton recalls. "Of course, there were some smaller projects on our list too. I told them that the barn would be costly and we certainly understood if the cost was more than the committee could do."

"But the committee's instructions were for us to build the kind of barn we wanted and needed and they would cover the expense — even if the cost was higher!"

The generosity of the congregation allowed the ranch to increase the size of the barn to include some show stalls for top animals and a restroom.



BERT SUTTON, left, of TBCH boys ranch in Millington, shows Jack May, pastor, and Jack Land of Colonial Heights Baptist Church, Memphis, the barn they used to store hay when the church was considering giving the ranch a gift.

Colonial Baptist paid for the entire \$80,000 cost.

"Over the years, Colonial Baptist Church and their great pastor, Dr. Jack May, have been marvelous supporters of the Children's Homes' ministry in general and our Boys Ranch in Millington especially," said Bryant Millsaps, TBCH president/treasurer. "Without their help and the help of other churches, it would be very difficult for us to meet the many needs of the young people in our care."

The hay barn was to have been completed in June.

However, compliance with building codes and delays caused construction to be delayed until late November. The barn is now scheduled to be finished a few days before Christmas.

May reported he and Sutton recently visited the new barn where "hay is currently kept," said May. "Seeing that barn floor piled with hay reminded me again of God's love revealed in the gift of Jesus. When our church sings 'Away in a Manger' this Christmas, it will certainly have an additional meaning." ■



# Directive raises questions for Christian groups

By Todd Starnes  
For Baptist Press

FRANKLIN — A directive by a Nashville-area school board that forbids Christian groups from "officially" meeting during school hours or having faculty sponsors is illegal, according to a spokesman for the national office of the Fellowship of Christian Athletes.

The directive was most recently enforced at Page High School here, where club sponsors of Christian organizations, including the president of the school's FCA chapter, were given a memorandum that outlined the Williamson County School Board's policy toward religious groups.

The FCA was meeting along with other extracurricular clubs during the school day but was ordered to stop when the school board informed high school principal Joe Yeager that it was against school policy.

As per board policy, students wishing to participate in a Christian or any other religious organization may do so during the school day, but may not have scheduled meetings or a school/teacher sponsor," wrote Aimee Wyatt, Page High

School's activities sponsor. "We understand this to mean that any student-led group may meet as they wish, but it cannot be sanctioned by the school nor can a teacher or any religious official from outside the school sponsor the meeting."

Wyatt told Baptist Press the memorandum was distributed after the school officials were alerted that a Christian group was violating the directive.

David Smale, director of communication for the FCA, called the Williamson County directive illegal.

"It happens all the time," Smale said. "What they have done is totally against the law."

Smale said the Williamson County School Board seems to have a double standard in place. "As long as other clubs are meeting, they cannot turn away a faith-based organization,"

Smale said.

But the Williamson County policy has a Catch-22 in its directive. The policy states that Christian groups are not allowed to have teacher sponsors. However, if a club doesn't have a sponsor then it can't meet at the school, according to Justin Cook, the high school's FCA president.

"Obviously, the school board is trying to stop us from meeting, but they're doing it in a way that is deceiving," Cook said.

"Our sponsor hasn't come to any of our meetings [since the Nov. 2 directive] and he hasn't been involved."

Steve Carr, senior pastor of Grassland Baptist Church in another part of the county, expressed dismay at the FCA problem.

"I think that it is unfortunate and an unfair way to treat an organization that stands for good and stands for a means to

encourage youth as a positive influence," Carr said.

At the same time, Carr offered advice for Christian teenagers in Williamson County who are upset with the policy.

"Christian teenagers should be careful they don't come across as going against the rules," he said.

"They should feel comfortable conveying their feelings of being treated unfairly. I would suggest that they don't back away from taking a stand. Still, they should respond in keeping with the example of Christ."

The school board is researching and preparing a new policy to be adopted regarding student-led and school-sponsored groups, according to communication director Carol Birdsong. She said there was no definite timetable on when the policy might be completed. ■



## CLASSIFIED

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### MINISTRIES — MUSIC

Church prayerfully seeking time or part-time minister of music/youth. Please send resume to New Life Baptist Church, Shackelford Rd., Florissant 63031. Attn. Pastor Tim McPherson. Phone: (314) 837-0626.

New Salem Baptist Church, Clinton, Tenn., is seeking a leader. Send resume to Broyles, 302 Woodland Hill, Clinton, TN 37716 or e-mail broyles@icx.net or Paul V. Pfaff at discover.earthlink.net.

### MINISTRIES — OTHER

The Loudon County Baptist Association is now accepting resumes for a director of missions. E-mail to Search Committee, Loudon County Baptist Association, 814 Webb Circle, Loudon, TN 37771.

Walker Memorial Baptist Church, Franklin, is seeking a director of music. Please submit resume for this part-time (28 hours per week) position to Walker Memorial Baptist Church, 1350 West Main St., Franklin, TN 37064, Attn. Personnel Committee.

First Baptist Church of Chattanooga, Tenn., is receiving resumes for minister to families and children. This position is a full-time, preferably seminary-trained, to minister to preschoolers and children, parents and leaders. Include theology and creative in ministry. FBC is supportive of both Baptist and CBF. Resumes should be mailed to Search Committee, Baptist Church, 401 Georgia Ave., Chattanooga, TN 37402.

Seeking experienced, enthusiastic, spirit-filled worship leader for blended services (325 average attendance). Seminary preferred. Send resume and video to Baptist Church, 105 N. Main St., Piedmont, AL 36272.

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## CLASSIFIED

### MINISTRIES — PASTOR

Walker Memorial Baptist Church, Franklin, Tenn., is seeking a full-time associate pastor. Please submit resume for this position to Walker Memorial Baptist Church, 1350 West Main St., Franklin, TN 37064, Attn. Personnel Committee.

Northside Baptist Church in Mechanicsville, Vir., is seeking a senior pastor, who is committed to Bible teaching and preaching. This Godly man should possess a love for senior adults, youth, and children. Home visits, reaching out to the community as well as helping to develop our spiritual gifts and seeking God's will is our prayer. Please send all resumes to Pastor Search Committee, 12087 Hanover Courthouse Rd., Hanover, VA 23069.

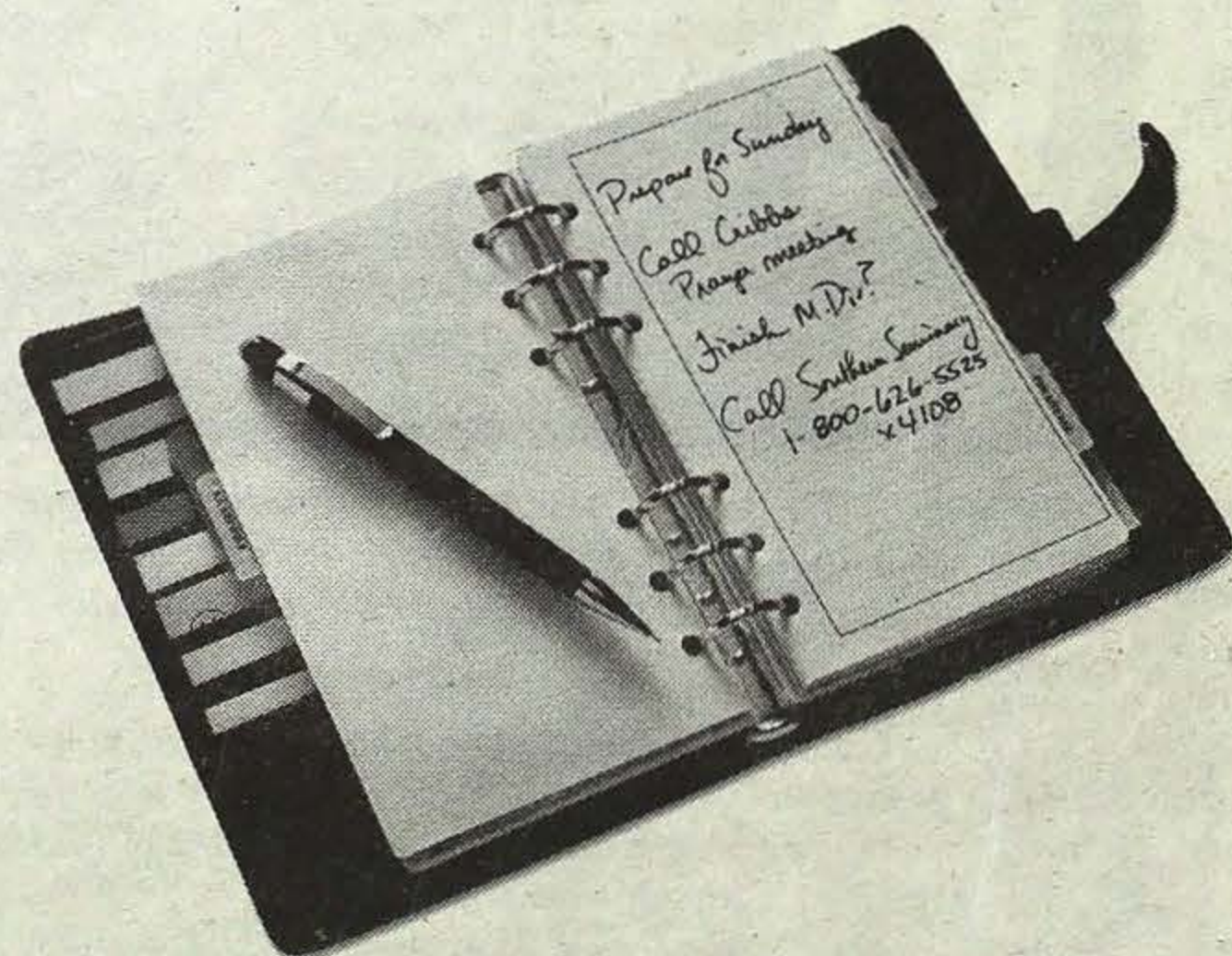
Mossy Grove Baptist Church in rural Morgan County, Tennessee, is seeking a full-time pastor. MGBCC supports the CP and SBC. Seminary degree preferred. Submit resume to Jack Davis, Chairman, Search Committee, Mossy Grove Baptist Church, 347 Mossy Grove Rd., Harriman, TN 37748, (423) 346-3229.

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The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary



# Oklahoma Baptist school honors TBC's Raley

al to Baptist and Reflector

LAWNEE, Okla. — Making her life count to benefit the elderly and children is one of the goals in a three-part pursuit statement around which Raley has modeled her life. And those people she has helped, young and old, are still enjoying the blessings of having her around who has dedicated her

life to training others.

Raley was recognized as a Profile in Excellence Award recipient during Oklahoma Baptist University's recent Homecoming festivities.

Raley, a 1963 OBU graduate, is the preschool ministry specialist for the Tennessee Baptist Convention who took on a beyond retirement career.

Raley worked at LifeWay

Christian Resources (then the Baptist Sunday School Board) for nearly 20 years. She worked in varied aspects of design and editing of preschool curriculum, creating and supervising preschool materials used nationwide and internationally for Vacation Bible School and Backyard Bible Club programs.

When she was eligible to re-

tire from LifeWay, a position opened up at the TBC. So, the same day she officially retired, she began as the preschool ministry specialist in a new arena.

At the TBC, Raley provides materials and leadership training for preschool leaders across the state. In three weeks this summer she drove more than 3,000 miles to lead training seminars at churches.

No matter the distance, Raley sees the benefits of training for all churches.

"It helps them have enthusiasm as well as teaching skills," she said. "We discuss how to improve their teaching ministries."

She has traveled many more miles for leadership training with the TBC. She has served with other adults in Portland, Maine; Lisbon, Portugal; and Las Vegas, Nev. She also has done VBS training for Canada.

"My job definitely goes beyond Tennessee."

And her involvement with children and adults certainly stretches beyond just a career.

Raley has served as president of the Nashville Area Association on Young Children and as a Stephen Minister and Stephen Ministry Trainer at her home church, Brentwood Baptist, Brentwood.

The Stephen Ministry program trains church members to offer encouragement, suggestions, care, and support to someone who is going through a crisis.

"I have a purpose statement that I have tried to live toward," Raley said. "Follow God's will, honor my family, and make my life count to benefit people and children." ■



RALEY



## Historic building burns, owned by FBC, Nashville

For Baptist and Reflector

NASHVILLE — A vacant downtown building here which once housed the Nashville Union Rescue Mission was destroyed by fire Dec. 13. No one was injured in the fire.

The facility was purchased by First Baptist Church, Nashville, in a cluster of buildings last year.

The burned building was constructed in 1914 to house the Centennial Club, a women's activist group, according to an article in *The Tennessean* on Dec. 14.

The building was on Historic Nashville's endangered list, according to the article.

As of late last week officials were still investigating the cause of the fire. Arson had not been ruled out.

Pastor Frank Lewis noted the Spanish-mission architectural design was the only one of its kind in the downtown Nashville community.

"Historic groups would see this as a tragic loss for the community," Lewis said.

"While we were not completely certain about the future use of the property, First Baptist purchased the site for future growth.

"In order to sustain growth, we must provide adequate parking for worshippers. When the opportunity came for FBC to buy this land, we felt that it was a step of faith for our congregation's future." ■



## ClearView choir sings in gift to Nashville community

Matthew Yessick (at the mike) son of LifeWay employee Tommy Yessick, and the children's choir at ClearView Baptist Church, Franklin, take part in *The Music of Christmas* held at the Ryman Auditorium, downtown Nashville. The program was LifeWays' gift to the downtown business community. — Photo by Morris Abernathy



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## Blankets for Christmas

As a Christmas project, Royal Ambassadors from Salem Baptist Church, Trenton, collected 24 blankets for the Mississippi River Ministry. Making the presentation to MRM staff members Randy Pool and Leslie Allen are second graders John Warmath, left, and John Hoppers, along with their leader Robbie Rodgers.



# Missionaries recount efforts to multiply outreach

By Linda Lawson  
For Baptist Press

NASHVILLE — In addition to working with Southern Baptist missionaries and introducing LifeWay resources to Baptists and other evangelicals in their regions of the world, LifeWay Christian Resources' four missionaries spent much of their second year multiplying themselves by training others.

The four, along with their families, serve in a LifeWay partnership with the International Mission Board. They are: Steve Cretin, Southeast Asia/Oceania, based in Singapore; Neal Cordle, Central and Eastern Europe, based in Prague, Czech Republic; Michael Woolridge, Eastern Africa, based in Nairobi, Kenya; and Ernie McAninch, western South America, based in Quito, Ecuador. Prior to moving to their respective mission field, the Cordles and McAninches were members of Tulip Grove Baptist Church, Old Hickory; the Woolridges at Miracle Baptist Church, LaVergne; and the Cretins at First Baptist Church, Franklin.

They returned to Nashville in early December and, on Dec. 7, presented formal reports on their year of service.

McAninch, who used 41 persons trained by him or LifeWay, said, "Our goal is to multiply ourselves, to multiply LifeWay." His plans for 2001 include several LifeWay conferences conducted totally by others.

"It's intentional serendipity by which we plan," said McAninch, who focused his efforts in Chile, Peru, and Ecuador. "We put ourselves in places where God can open up relationships. We've had nothing but open doors."

He cited the need for Christian resources and other helps for families.

"That's the number one need for western South America and, I dare say, for all of Latin America," McAninch said.

Cordle, who moved during



**IN ADDITION** to working with Southern Baptist missionaries and introducing LifeWay resources to Baptists and other evangelicals in their regions of the world, LifeWay Christian Resources' four missionaries spent much of their second year multiplying themselves by training others. They are, from left, Ernie McAninch, Western South America; Michael Woolridge, Eastern Africa; Steve Cretin, Southeast Asia; and Neal Cordle, Central and Eastern Europe. — Photo Morris Abernathy

the year from Frankfurt, Germany, to Prague, said much of his work was accomplished through partnerships.

For example, an all-age Bible study was launched in Belarus through a partnership involving Belarussian Baptists, LifeWay, IMB, International Teaching Ministries (translated LifeWay curriculum), and the Missouri Baptist Convention (partnership with Belarus).

"Because God brought us together, we are accomplishing things none of us could have done alone," Cordle said.

He cited language as his biggest challenge.

"Every country [in the region]

has a different language. We're very dependent on people who will help us logistically. We have worked through IMB folks in deliberate and intentional

ways," Cordle said.

Woolridge said training pastors was a primary focus of his work this year. In addition, he attended numerous annual meetings of Baptist groups, staffed exhibits and led conferences at booksellers and publishers meetings, and made contacts with numerous Christian bookstores.

Walking each day in his Nairobi neighborhood where most homes are surrounded by fences and have guards posted, Woolridge said he met many of the men who serve as guards. He now leads a Bible study for about 20 of them.

"Even with all the danger, people want to know about God," Woolridge said.

Cretin conducted the first official FAITH Sunday School

evangelism clinic in Singapore, hosted a Beth Moore women's conference, hosted Vacation Bible School and Sunday School conferences, and taught in several seminaries.

"Our relationship [with IMB missionaries] over the past two years has grown into a working partnership of mutual respect and support," Cretin said.

He plans to expand services throughout his region in 2001. "The longer we are on the field, the more convinced we become that the best solution to our expansion of LifeWay missionaries is to train national trainers to take our place," Cretin said. ■



## CLASSIFIED

### MINISTRIES — EDUCATION

Central Baptist Church, Corbin, Ky., is seeking a full-time minister of education. Candidates are expected to have an undergraduate or seminary degree in religious education or related field. Prior experience is required, full-time or part-time experience is acceptable. Compensation package includes full benefits. Please send resumes to Personnel Committee, Central Baptist Church, 201 W. 4th St., Corbin, KY 40701.



Union Baptist Church, Knoxville, Tenn., seeks full-time minister of youth and education. Responsible for planning, conducting, and evaluating program of Christian education and youth ministry. Requirements: bachelors degree (masters preferred), favorable driving record, teaching aptitude, and ability to interact with congregation. Competitive salary and benefits package. Forward resume to Union Baptist Church, 6701 Washington Pk., Knoxville, TN 37918.

### MINISTRIES — YOUTH

If you love Jesus, have a heart for youth and are God-called to youth ministry, we are looking for you. This is a full-time position as youth/education minister at Miracle Baptist in Laverne, Tenn. Must have training in the field and three or more years experience. Contact Bob Adkins at bobmel@dellnet.com.

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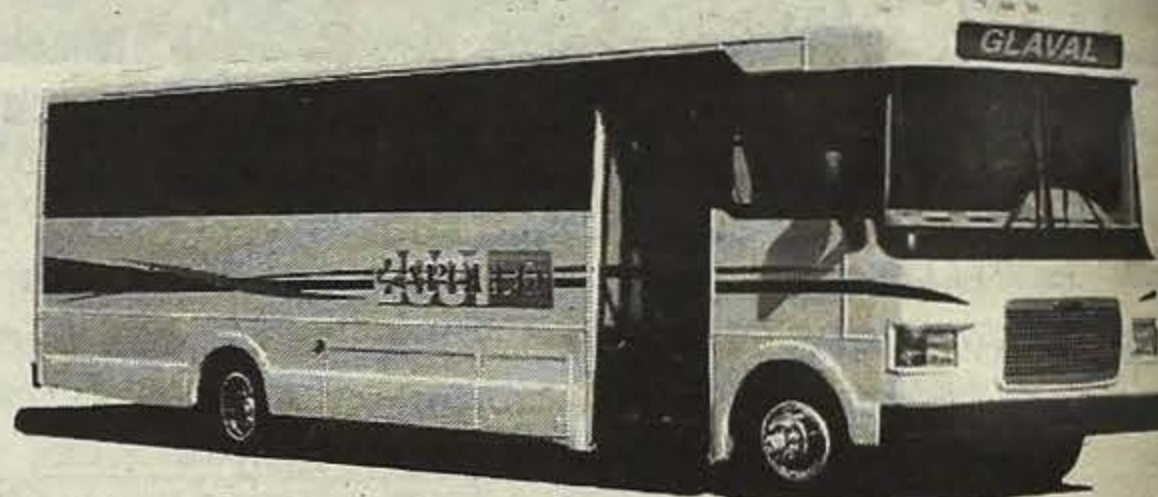
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# Modern day shepherds no longer visit the manger

Robin Perry  
Tribune Press

BETHLEHEM, Israel — Hussein Abed leans against a wall on the side of a narrow road. The sun is just beginning to set. He waits.

Unlike Christians around the world, this 54-year-old Palestinian shepherd in Bethlehem isn't waiting for Christmas Eve to begin. When the sun sets, Hussein and more than 1.2 billion fellow Muslims worldwide will sit down for a meal that breaks their sun-to-sunset Ramadan fast.

As evening approaches, not a single star will be visible in the cloudy sky, certainly not the one that guided the shepherds 2,000 years ago. But the wise men can follow a

modern-day light source — car lights — to Manger Square, the traditional site for Jesus' birth.

Each year, nearly 15,000 tourists — equal to almost a third of Bethlehem's population — flood the small, not-as-sleepy-as-one-might-expect West Bank town to celebrate Christmas.

But most of the Christians making their way to Manger Square will be coming from somewhere besides Bethlehem. In recent years, Muslims have become the majority in this small town known worldwide as the birthplace of Christianity.

Southern Baptist representatives throughout the Middle East are earnestly trying to reach Palestinians like Hussein.

"It's a God-sized task," said a Southern Baptist representative

working with Palestinians in a country near Israel. "We have no idea how he will choose to work."

One hopeful sign rests in the legendary hospitality of Palestinians.

"The hospitality has always given me hope," said another Southern Baptist worker "because if they invite me into their homes, they might invite Christ into their hearts."

Before recent Israeli-Palestinian conflicts escalated tensions, Christians and Muslims peacefully coexisted in the area for centuries.

"We've lived together as neighbors for generations," says Achmud Hammeeda, a shepherd who lives in an area called Beth Tamaar, just nine miles from Bethlehem. "We've lived together very peacefully."

But for Hussein the more important image of peace this Christmas Eve is between him and his sheep. Hussein puts his fingers to his lips and makes a high-pitched sound. Like a heavenly Christmas choir, his sheep bleat a collective "baaaah."

"See, I told you the sheep know my voice," Hussein said with a laugh.

Unlike Christmas cards showing shepherds in fields, letting their sheep graze on rich, green pastures, Bethlehem's lack of water in recent times has reduced the landscape to rocks and dirt.

Sometime around March, as

grass starts reappearing, sheep (and all of the goats mysteriously left out of traditional nativity set) will reappear on the countryside. But until then, many of the sheep will have to be content with a diet of barley feed in their pens.

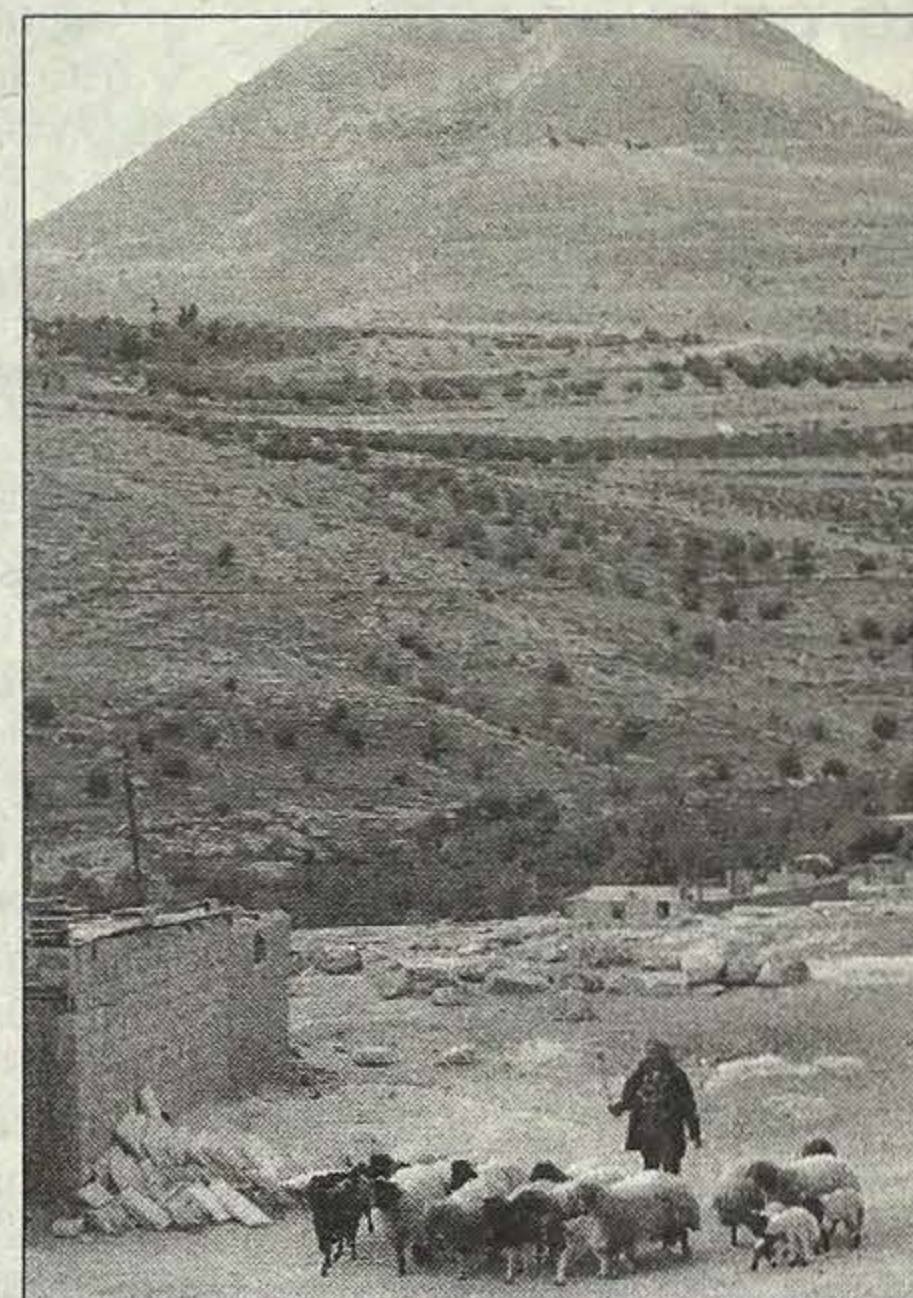
Today, few shepherds in the Middle East actually make their living exclusively from shepherding. Achmud Hammeeda feeds his 13 children by building bricks for the construction trade.

His family, originally Bedouins, has raised sheep for generations. His father and several brothers all live within close proximity.

For many Muslims, it's a time to get together with relatives and catch up on the year's activities. Spiritually, it's a time for prayer, reflection and generosity, according to Muslim tradition.

The month is concluded with an evening called the Night of Power, when Muslims believe they have direct access to God as "the heavens open wide."

Southern Baptists see the time as a crucial one to pray for Muslims and have for several years promoted 30 days of



**SHEPHERDS LIKE** Achmud Hammeeda are less common today than they were at the time of Jesus' birth. Like most shepherds in Bethlehem, Hammeeda keeps his flock as a part-time job. — Photo by Grace Robinette

prayer for Muslims during Ramadan.

"Most people say they are closer to God during this time," Achmud says. "But I am not sure." ■

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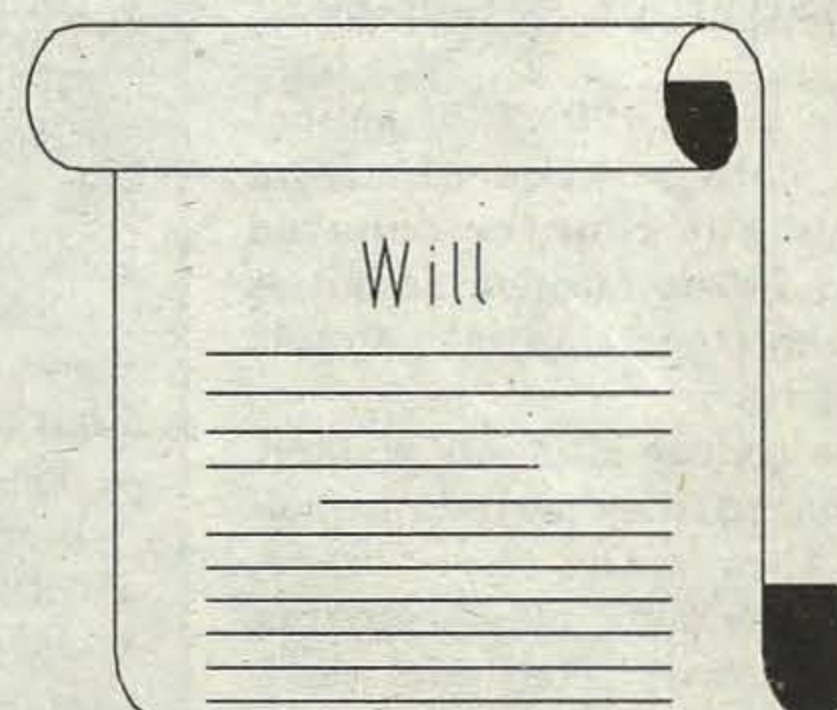
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## Korea outreach records 2,754 decisions for Christ

Baptist Press

RICHMOND — A total of 2,754 new believers has been added to the kingdom of God through a partnership evangelism project involving Baptists from the United States and South Korea.

W.H. "Dub" Jackson, who helps organize partnership evangelism projects for the International Mission Board, led a team of 121 Southern Baptists from the United States to South Korea. There, the volunteers paired with Korean believers to host 37 evangelistic campaigns in local churches.

"We heard many wonderful testimonies of how God had worked during the crusades," said Dennis Brotherton, an International Mission Board missionary in Korea. "We give God the glory for all that he did during these wonderful meetings." ■

## College students raise \$3.5 million for missions

Baptist Press

NASHVILLE — Collegians give!

For the 1999-2000 school year, college students from around the country donated \$3,417,705 to mission activities through their Baptist campus ministries.

The college students walked; they baked; they played racquetball; they made snow cones, along with many other activities to raise money. They gave sacrificially and they had fun.

Bill Henry, director of LifeWay Christian Resources' National Collegiate Ministry department, said, "These college students work hard and make personal sacrifices to raise that kind of money. They are to be commended for that."

The state convention and local campus leadership is what gives the students the drive to raise money for missions, Henry said, noting that without the dedication of campus ministers, it would never all happen.

The money students raise is sent to their state convention collegiate ministries offices and used to fund mission programs in their states, the nation, and the world.

At Middle Tennessee State

University in Murfreesboro, BSU director Charles Nored said food is a big fund-raiser. "Churches from the area bring in home-cooked meals to the BSU each Wednesday for lunch. The students pay \$3 and all the money goes to summer missions."

Besides raising money, the lunch serves as an outreach tool, giving the BSU students an easy way to invite friends to go to the BSU with them. ■

## Presidential race over; Baptists seek prayer for both men

Baptist Press

NASHVILLE — On his first morning as president-elect, George W. Bush went to his church for a prayer service, an action praised by James Merritt, president of the Southern Baptist Convention. Well-wishers cheered and applauded as the next president and future first lady Laura Bush made their way into Tarrytown United Methodist Church in Austin, Texas, for the service, where they sat on a front pew.

"I am grateful that President-elect Bush is beginning his first day as the acknowledged president-elect in church worshiping

God and asking for his guidance," Merritt said. "Perhaps as much as any new president in our nation's history, the president-elect needs and deserves our prayers and total unqualified support."

"He wants to start this on a message of prayer and healing," a Bush aide told CNN following five weeks of post-election strife that ended with a concession speech Dec. 13 by Democrat Al Gore. Gore and Bush addressed the nation Wednesday night — the Democratic nominee disappointed but not bitter, and the Republican winner promising to earn the respect of all Americans, "whether you voted for me or not."

Merritt, pastor of the Atlanta-area First Baptist Church, Snellville, urged all Southern Baptists to pray for Bush and Gore.

"Our Southern Baptist family needs desperately, at this time, to pray for both President-elect George W. Bush and Vice President Al Gore," Merritt said. "I call all Southern Baptists to take time this Sunday in their services to pray particularly for the new president-elect and our nation that we would see a spiritual renewal sweep across this nation from the White House to the schoolhouse, to the courthouse, to the church house, and to our house," Merritt said.

Richard Land, president of

the SBC's Ethics & Religious Liberty Commission, said Bush and Gore handled themselves appropriately during their Dec. 13 addresses. "I thought they both struck an appropriate tone and provided a finality to the result that only they could bring," Land said.

Evangelist Billy Graham, currently undergoing medical treatment, issued a statement the night of Dec. 13 urging Americans to repent and pray. "This division of the spirit of our nation can only be healed by prayer and repentance toward God, followed by reconciliation with those of differing perspectives — extending the love that only [God] can give," Graham said.

"I am encouraged that democracy has prevailed as our nation has negotiated a difficult impasse," Graham added. "The time has come to put aside the strong rhetoric that can only divide us and unite for the greater good as 'one nation under God.' He alone can bring us together. I urge all Americans to pray for and support President-elect Bush and to follow the gracious example of reconciliation he and Vice President Gore modeled in their speeches tonight."

Bush and Gore were to have met Dec. 19 in Washington. The president-elect also has been invited to a meeting with Clinton. ■

## Weathersby chose for NAMB position

Baptist Press

ALPHARETTA, Ga. — K Weathersby, former evangelist specialist for the Tennessee Baptist Convention, has been named national African American specialist for the North American Mission Board.

Since 1998 Weathersby has been a NAMB missionary, serving as Nehemiah Project director and church planting professor at New Orleans (La.) Baptist Theological Seminary.

Weathersby's position has been expanded to include working with recent immigrants, representing 48 people groups of African descent now living in the United States.

NAMB also called former Memphis pastor Chris McNairy as a national mission leader for multi-housing. Until recently he served as African American missions leader for the Baptist State Convention of Michigan.

McNairy served as pastor of West Haven Baptist Church before going to Michigan. ■



WEATHERSBY

## Automatic deductions for church offerings gain ground

By Ken Walker  
For Baptist Press

MOUNT WASHINGTON, Ky. — When his mother checked into a nursing home, Travis Collins was pleased the short-term rehabilitation didn't interrupt her giving to First Baptist Church of Mount Washington, Ky.

The 81-year-old member is one of nearly 20 people or families who have signed up this year for automatic checkbook deductions to contribute to the budget.

"That's one less thing she has to worry about," said Collins, pastor of the central Kentucky congregation. "What we're trying to do is facilitate the giving of offerings."

First Baptist has joined a trend toward electronic tithing. While the numbers aren't clear, a suburban Minneapolis firm that processes such payments for 3,200 churches sees a growing interest in the practice.

"The momentum is clearly there," said Len Thiede, senior account manager for Vanco Services. "We're getting contracts every day. We're seeing a huge influx right now, with 2001 stewardship campaigns going on."

It isn't clear how many are involved. An article last year in *Leadership Journal* estimated 5 percent of all U.S. churches use electronic transfers.

But since then, one automated giving plan among Lutheran churches has seen a 517 percent increase in participation, with about 3,100 currently enrolled. Because so many churches go through their banks, accurate estimates of overall numbers are tough to determine, Thiede said.

However, he said so many pay utilities, insurance, and other bills by computerized transfers that using it for tithes and offer-

ings is second nature.

While Lutherans and Catholics are Vanco's leading customers, about 90 have a Baptist affiliation, ranking the group third.

"A lot of churches are signing up because their people are asking for it," he said. "Word gets around that it does work and more people are satisfied that it does."

Several Southern Baptist churches that have implemented automated giving report that their members have been slow to embrace the new method.

Only approximately 20 families — of an average Sunday attendance of 800 — have signed up at Lakeside Baptist Church in Granbury, Texas, since the fall of 1998.

Minister of education and administration Brian Hill said the option began as an experiment that has worked out very well. He estimates that 90 percent of the participants are senior citizens. They like its convenience and the feature of continuous giving while they're traveling, he said.

"Those who are using it wouldn't have it any other way," said Hill, who plans to publicize the program more actively next year. "What it could change is the work at the church [office]. There's a lot less to deal with. You don't have to deal with an envelope and we get a report once a month, which is a lot cleaner."

Highland Baptist Church in Louisville, Ky., had eight families choose an automated giving option after it was launched. But since then, financial secretary Betsy Neill said, no one else has expressed interest.

"The people who are using it like it," she said. "A few others said they thought about it, but never got around to it. I would recommend it because it's not that much more bookkeeping. And if people don't want to write a check, it's a good thing."

Although First Baptist of Mount Washington recently ran a second article in its church newsletter about the program, more using automated transfers signed up last summer.

Financial secretary Pat Bowen said many people are waiting to see how it works before making a commitment. Others are reluctant to give up their offering envelopes, she said.

"It would save me a lot of time if the whole church would do it," she said. "Bookkeeping-wise and getting deposits, it's much easier on the bank and us."

One consideration that could influence acceptance is potential savings. Bowen said the topic of envelopes came up at recent budget meetings, with some committee members surprised that First Baptist spends more than \$2,000 a year to print them.

Added to that is postage, plus the cost of paying for returns when people move but fail to leave a forwarding address, she said.

Another is increased giving. According to a recent report in *The New York Times*, one church in New Jersey discovered that giving electronically donated an average of \$277 a month. That compared to \$111 for those using traditional methods.

The pastor of First Baptist of Mount Washington believes resistance to automated donations will relax over time.

Collins compares the cautious attitude to the introduction of the envelope system a few decades ago: "Whenever Baptists first placed their money in an envelope, there was suspicion that people thought it was too mechanical."

He sees another benefit — giving members a chance to commit to continual giving, even if they're on vacation, sick, or kept home by bad weather. ■



## Worthy to be worshiped

**Focal Passage: Matthew 2:1-23**

Sometime after Jesus' birth in Bethlehem, wise men from the east searched until they found him. When they found him they paid homage and presented gifts. The central truth of today's lesson is Jesus is worthy of worship. This worship involves giving him the best we have. If we did not experience the emptiness and frustration that often comes with serving him. Confusion in our lives and in the church body often surfaces when we are less than our best.

The key Bible verse is v. 11. The life impact of the lesson help you worship Jesus by offering him your best.

After we celebrate the birth of Jesus, we go through the arduous task of taking down and storing the decorations for the season. Christmas is over. A new year is before us. What about Jesus? Will we pack him away until next year? The events in today's Bible lesson took place at the birth of Jesus, yet the people involved were intent on worshipping Jesus. They did not allow distance, hardness, or government red tape to interfere with their desire to pay homage to Jesus.

What do we allow to interfere with our worship of Jesus? We often offer as excuses our busy schedules or personal concerns. We are ultimately responsible solely for the success of our worship experiences.

There are four sub-topics in today's lesson: The wise men's search, Herod's deception, the wise men's worship, and God's protection. This progression really speaks to the question of how we come to know Jesus personally. We have searched for him. The Devil always tries to deceive us. We need to invite him into our lives before we can worship him. When we have done this, we can be assured of God's unending protection.

God works through people like us to accomplish his purpose. Are you willing to make sacrifices to worship Christ? Jesus is worthy of worship! — Jerry King

Explore the Bible  
SS Lesson — Dec.31

## Making a difference

**Focal Passage: Acts 19:11-17, 23-27**

In today's uncertain and ever changing world, there are a multitude of folks that feel they have nothing to offer. They have a very pessimistic view of themselves and the world in which they live. They recognize things that need to be changed but conclude that they are only one voice, so they try. Today's church suffers as a result of such thinking. I am thankful that the Apostle Paul and his fellow preachers did not follow this line of reasoning. Paul concluded that a Christian has no choice but to stand if he/she wants to please the Heavenly Father. In today's lesson we find examples of just that, people standing and making a difference in the lives of others.

In Acts 19:1-10 we find the apostle making a difference in the lives of those that were religious. While in Ephesus the apostle came upon certain disciples that were still adhering to the teaching of John's baptism. They were good people, religious people, but they were religiously wrong. Paul took the time to share the truth, and they readily accepted it and were baptized in the name of Jesus (v. 5). After this we are told that Paul laid hands on these converts and they began to speak in tongues and prophesied. It was not uncommon for the Spirit of God to manifest himself in the lives of those that have been converted. Verse eight tells us that Paul continued his teaching and preaching in the synagogue for three months. As time passed opposition grew, so Paul moved his ministry to the "school of Tyrannus" (v. 9).

Beware! Any time great things are happening for God, Satan is not far behind. He will seek to destroy or interfere with the presentation of the good news of Jesus Christ.

Verses 11-12, 13-17, and 23-27 deals with how God used Paul to present the Gospel in a wide variety of places. Each of these verses offers new challenges concerning the presentation of the Gospel. Whether it is the "vagabond Jews" (v. 10) or "Demetrius, the silversmith" (v. 24), people will at times feel misused or feel threatened by the Gospel. This in itself should stop us from doing what is necessary. In closing I offer these questions: Are you doing what is necessary? Are you making a difference for Jesus today? — Terry Bradshaw

## Responses to Jesus

By Jerry C. King

**Focal Passage: Luke 2:22-33, 36-38**

Many people know who Jesus is. They know where he lived and how he died. They may even know the story of his wondrous resurrection. However, they really don't know who he is. It seems to be so difficult for them to understand the awesome truth behind the events about which they know so little. So many in our nation seem to struggle with the Christian certainty that Jesus is God's only way for salvation from sin.

Some people only think of Jesus as a great teacher or a miracle worker. Some think of him only as an insurance policy to keep from an eternal hell. Do you as a Christian believe that it is your responsibility to witness to non-Christians or do you view it as an option? A personal relationship with the Babe of Bethlehem also includes understanding his Lordship in our lives. It seems certain that some who were around Jesus at the time of his birth clearly understood that Jesus entered human history to suffer and die to atone for sin. This lesson is designed to help us living today to also appreciate this truth.



KING

**Obedience to God's law (vv. 22-24).** We think Jesus was named and circumcised on the eighth day of his young life. Mary and Joseph clearly understood the importance of obeying the laws of God. These two events show his unity with God's covenant people as one born under the law. The family went to Jerusalem following the completion of the time of their purification according to the Law of Moses. This law was re-

quired of every mother 40 days after giving birth to a son. The couple then took Jesus to consecrate him to the Lord. From the very beginning until the end of his life on earth, Jesus served God perfectly and glorified him.

**Recognition of God's salvation (vv. 25-33).** After describing Mary's and Joseph's faithfulness in obeying the law, Luke recorded their encounter with a man in Jerusalem called Simeon. Very little is known about Simeon. Luke said he was righteous and devout. The Holy Spirit was upon Simeon and had assured that he would not die before he had seen the Lord Christ. The Lord Christ refers to the Messiah. The Lord kept his promise to Simeon. That's the way God is, isn't it? Why, when they had already had so many unique experiences, did Joseph and Mary marvel at Simeon's revelation regarding Jesus? From Simeon they learned that the child's influence would reach far beyond the borders of Israel to the Gentiles (v. 32). What is the greatest longing and

central focus of your life?

**Gratitude for God's redemptive law (vv. 36-38).** Simeon had more startling truth for the parents of Jesus. Simeon told Mary that the child was "destined" to cause the falling and rising of many in Israel. He further revealed that the life and ministry would either provoke hostility or loyalty. No neutrality about him would be possible. Simeon also revealed that a sword would pierce Mary's heart. This was prophetic that Mary might be confused by Jesus' message and mission. Then Anna, a prophetess whose name means "grace" came along. To Mary and Joseph, Anna gave thanks to God and spoke about the child to all who were looking forward to the redemption of Jerusalem. This referred to the deliverance the Messiah was to accomplish.

How are we to respond to God's gift of salvation in Jesus? Obey God's law. Recognize God's salvation and be grateful for God's redemption. Oh, what a gift! — King is a former TBC evangelism ministry specialist.



Family Bible  
SS Lesson — Dec. 24

## Celebrating Jesus' birth

By Terry Bradshaw

**Focal Passage: Matthew 2:1-12**

Christmas, what does it mean to you? It seems to me as the years pass we hear more about the gadgets and less about the real meaning of Christmas. It has increasingly become more of a secular holiday than a religious one. Today's lesson reminds us of what Christmas is all about, the birth of our Savior.

**Background.** Matthew 1:18-25 records for us several events that took place leading up to the birth of Christ. In verse 18 we are introduced to a young couple that was soon to become earthly parents of the Son of God. It is said that Mary and Joseph were "espoused" (KJV) or "betrothed" (NAS) to one another. Betrothal was a binding legal arrangement that usually lasted for a year. The couple then would unite in marriage.

There were only two ways to get out of the legal agreement, death or divorce. In essence you were legally married but lived apart from one another. There was to be no physical consummation of the relationship during the betrothal period. So, to be found with child would have been an upsetting proposition for anyone.

The remaining part of the chapter, verses 19-25, reveals to us how God dealt with Joseph and Joseph dealt with Mary. First, there was an angelic visitation that laid out God's plan concerning Mary and Joseph's relationship. The phrase in verse 20, "Fear not to take unto thee Mary

thy wife" summarizes what the Lord initially wanted Joseph to understand — don't be scared to take Mary as your wife.

Second, they had been chosen by God to participate in one of the greatest events in history, the birth of the Savior.

The angelic visitor tells Joseph that baby shall come into the world and, "shall save his people from their sins" (v. 21). We all know how Joseph responded to the angelic announcement, with obedience.

**Purposeful worship (vv. 1-2).** We now take a leap forward in the life of Joseph and Mary to the time of Jesus' birth. Bethlehem was a small village of about 300 people, located about 5 miles south of Jerusalem. King Herod was ruler of this region at the time of Jesus' birth. Furthermore, we are told that "wise men" came in search of the "king of the Jews."

These Magi were probably from either Persia, Babylon, or Arabia. Some suggest that they were Zoroastrians from Persia. No matter where they come from, notice what they came to do — worship the newborn King. We are not told if these Magi fully understood everything, but we do know that they under-

stood enough to realize that this child was royalty. We too need to recognize that Christmas is about more than gifts. It is about the worship and celebration of God's only begotten son, Jesus.

**Hypocritical worship (vv. 3-8).** Don't think for a moment that

Herod wanted to truly worship the baby Jesus. We are told in verses 12-13 that the Lord knew the intent of Herod. The real reason was that Herod saw a threat to his throne. Any man that would put to death his wife and children over family rivalries and jealousies is cold hearted.

Herod wanted Jesus to meet the same fate as others who threatened his power and authority. It was Herod's desire to eliminate the competition no matter who that might be. We are told that God thwarted the plans of Herod by giving the wise men notification of his cruel intent (v. 12).

**Joyful worship (vv. 9-12).** In spite of all the activity surrounding the birth of Jesus, the Magi (wise men) maintained their focus. Their intentions from the beginning were to worship and offer gifts to the King of the Jews. That is exactly what we find them doing as we close this lesson. What about you? Will you take time this Christmas season to worship and celebrate the real reason for Christmas, Jesus Christ? — Bradshaw is pastor, FBC, Bruceton.



BRADSHAW



# Christian-themed toys gain in popularity

By Sue Ann Miller  
For Associated Baptist Press

BIRMINGHAM, Ala. — Hey parents, looking for some last-minute Christmas gift ideas for your kids? You may not have to look any further than your neighborhood Christian bookstore.

Christian-oriented toys are a new market niche in toyland that's catching on like wildfire — much to the delight of parents and grandparents in search of Christmas toy items.

Until recently Christian-oriented children's toys have played a minor role in the billion-dollar toy industry. That is until the introduction and phenomenal reception a few years ago of Veggie Tales — a video series featuring adorable, animated, vegetable-like characters that promote Christian beliefs through biblically oriented stories and songs.

Mark Miller, owner of the Carpenter Shop Christian Bookstore in Birmingham, Ala., says he has seen an increase in the number of Christian toys, games, and videos throughout the past 18 years he has been in business.

"Fifteen years ago you didn't see the type of toys with a Chris-

tian theme or message like you have available today. Back then — at best — we could offer puzzles and books."

Today the rise in popularity and availability of toys with a Christian emphasis has resulted in Miller offering an entire section in his store dedicated to children's toys. On his store shelves are toys and games geared to boys as well as girls.

Perched in a decorative box is a dark haired, Barbie-doll size figure that represents Ruth, Esther, and Mary in the "Women of the Bible" series. The one figure comes with mix-and-match outfits that are interchangeable, and according to the doll's instructions, "girls can pretend the doll is any one of these courageous and faithful women of God."

For girls with an artistic flair there are Bible craft kits that feature tapestry, sand, and bead art.

A myriad of toy choices is available for boys ranging in age from young toddlers to preteens.

A recent newcomer on the market is the "full armor of God play set." The seven-piece set includes a breastplate, helmet, shield, belt, sword, and shin guards and is made of play-safe

plastic. The set is promoted as being a "great teaching tool for kids about spiritual warfare" and is based on a Scripture passage located in Ephesians 6.

Other toys for boys include David and Goliath action figures that can complement a regiment of soldiers, horses, and chariots — to a Noah and the ark playset for younger children. The playset, which helps kids learn the story of Noah's faith and obedience through play, is featured as a biblically correct, 81-piece set suitable for ages 4-10. The set comes with a parent's guide that recommends activities that promote Bible learning and Christian values.

Young tikes and toddlers are not overlooked in this expanding market. A series of toys known as the "Baby Bible" collection features such items as Baby Bible pals, which are plush stuffed characters depicting biblical personalities and animals such as Mary and a donkey, Daniel and a lion, and Jonah and a big fish. These items are also available in squeakable versions, as well.

Another line in this series is the Baby Bible video TV that includes two interchangeable video cartridges that play to the tune of the children's Sunday

School song, "Jesus Loves Me." And when it comes to card and board games for kids the options would rival any selection found in secular stores.

For instance, there is Bible bingo and Bible dominoes. There's also Bible Categories — a Christian version of Scategories that can be played with the entire family.

The Bible Challenge board game is a compilation of 2,100 Bible-trivia questions that focus on the life of Christ, people, places and Old and New Testament quotations.

And for families that enjoy animated fun — there's a Bible Charades game.

The abundance of children's books, videos, and tapes is impressive in its own right with one Christian children's catalog featuring more than 150 authors targeting infants to teens.

For older children there is the popular "dangerous devotions series" by Jackie Perseghetti. It is hyped as a "study guide of the New Testament with a hiker theme and a unique approach." There is also the book, *Devotions from the World of Sports*, by John and Kathy Hilman that takes a devotional approach of sports heroes from the past and



state/national

## Partnership Prayer Requests

December

- 24 — Pray for the Muslim community in Canada. A God to bless the missionaries to the Muslims and their families.
- 25 — Pray for Konny and Dorothy Jane Wiggins, IMB master missionaries in Brazil, who are working in Rio de Janeiro.
- 26 — Pray for Art and Dot Dennis, IMB ISC Nicaragua Disaster Relief Response volunteer coordinators, they work with volunteer teams to help victims of Hurricane Mitch.
- 27 — Pray for Jim Daniels Baptist student minister at Sheridan College in Oakville, Ontario, Canada, and his family. The Daniels are in a new community and are building relationships.
- 28 — Pray for Ray and Sharon Fairchild, IMB missionaries to Brazil. Mr. Fairchild is serving as Carioca Convention/Tennessee Partnership volunteer coordinator in Rio de Janeiro. The Fairchilds are currently on stateside assignment in Houston.
- 29 — Pray for Rich Cuthers, Baptist student minister at Simon Fraser University in Burnaby, British Columbia, Canada.
- 30 — Pray for Brazilians in Portugal who are tending the Portuguese worship services at the International Church in Algarve.
- 31 — Pray for Tennessee volunteers who will work in Las Vegas, Nev. Ask God to call out volunteers during the coming year.

# Billy Graham schedules 2001 crusade in Louisville

Baptist Press

LOUISVILLE, Ky. — The last time Billy Graham held a major crusade in Louisville, Ky., he was a young 37-year-old evangelist with a simple message — Jesus saves.

Nearly four decades later, his message of salvation through Christ hasn't changed.

The 82-year-old Graham has accepted an invitation to hold a crusade in Louisville June 21-24, 2001, in Papa John's Cardinal Stadium — 45

years after he last held a major crusade in the city. Graham's last full-scale crusade in Louisville, held in 1956, lasted four weeks. He also had a one-day crusade in 1964.

R. Albert Mohler Jr., president of Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, will serve as chairman of the Louisville crusade's executive committee.

"It is an enormous honor for the city of Louisville and for this entire area for Dr. Graham to come here," Mohler said. "Dr. Graham said he is

coming to Louisville because the Lord has laid this city on his heart. We are very glad of that."

Graham's visit to Louisville is special for Southern Baptist Seminary, because it has a school and professorship named for the evangelist.

The Billy Graham School of Missions, Evangelism, and Church Growth prepares ministers for evangelism and missions work. One of the school's professors, Timothy Beougher, is the Billy Graham Professor of Evangelism



GRAHAM

and Church Growth.

A formal announcement of the Louisville crusade will take place Jan. 16, when area pastors will come together to begin planning for the four-day crusade. The Billy Graham Evangelistic Association will announce in the ensuing weeks and months the speakers and recording artists who will participate in the crusade.

Graham held crusades in two cities this year — Nashville and Jacksonville, Fla. Each crusade drew more than 200,000 people. Graham has been preaching for more than 60 years. He was ordained in 1939 and founded the Billy Graham Evangelistic Association in 1950. ■



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See addresses on page 2.

## Church of the Covered Dish

By Thom Tapp, pastor, Oral Baptist Church, Lenoir

