

DECEMBER 1994

# BAPTIST HERALD

The

Gift



THAT MADE A

DIFFERENCE



## Americans' religious beliefs reflect ignorance of basic Bible teachings

A new study on religious beliefs shows increasing evidence that millions of Americans—even many who might be classified as born again Christians—do not reflect beliefs that are consistent with the teachings of the Bible.

A nation-wide survey by the Barna Research Group among 1,015 randomly selected adults indicates that although most people own a Bible, relatively few have consistently accurate understanding of the content of the Bible.

"There is virtual total ignorance of the history of the Bible," says George Barna. "The content of the Old Testament is a mystery to most adults. The continuity between the Old and New Testaments would surprise most Americans. About the only elements to biblical teaching that people seem to retain are the cultural truisms that get repeated during major holidays, such as Christmas and Easter. People generally believe in the existence of Christ, the virgin birth, Jesus' death and resurrection, and the occurrence of the miracles outlined in the Bible. But most adults certainly have little understanding of how these matters fit together, or any sense of the implications of biblical principles for people at the close of the 20th century." Barna's research also shows that millions of people own Bible versions which contain language which is simply too difficult for them to read and comprehend, due to functional illiteracy.

Barna feels some reasons for the high levels of Scriptural misunderstanding and Bible ignorance are that less than half of the adults surveyed had read the Bible in the past week. Also, much of the Bible reading that takes place is a quick reading of a few verses, hardly enough

to enable a person to grasp the key themes and messages of the Bible.

Only about one-quarter of those surveyed were currently studying the Bible or Christian teachings as part of their current focus.

## African Baptists help Rwandese refugees

While Baptists around the world have responded generously to the need of Rwandese refugees, Baptists in Zaire, Kenya, and Burundi are doing just as much to help, and perhaps, at a greater cost.

"Baptist churches in Zaire have not had services for sometime because they are full of Rwandese refugees they are serving," says Paul Montacute, director of Baptist World Aid.

For example, Baptist churches in Goma, Zaire, are much poorer because of these sacrifices, Montacute said.

"We have given up our churches and schools," said Mauke Mathe. "We have given medicines. No radio or television mentioned this. All the pictures showed what the Westerners are doing. Zairians were even shelled, and some died from cholera."

Mathe is the legal representative of the Baptist Community of Kivu, Zaire, and one of the several Baptist leaders from Zaire, Rwanda, Burundi, and Kenya with whom Montacute met.

"Churches and homes were flung open to take in refugees as Christian families took up to 20 people per family," said Lyn Lusi, a Zairian school teacher. "Food and water were shared, and rich Zairians cut down their fruit and floral trees for the refugees to use as firewood," said her husband Joe Lusi, a Zairian doctor.

"Before the international help arrived, it was the churches who

did most of the work in Goma and Bukavu," said Joe Lusi.

The Kivu Baptists gave more than \$15,000 to transport refugees, changed their guest house to an orphanage, and during a program for children, called "Operation Moses," Hutu women carried Tutsi babies out of Rwanda to save them from being slaughtered.

"I told them church is more than singing and clapping for a few hours on Sunday; it is about serving in His name," said Joe Lusi.

The Lusis, themselves, members of Nairobi Baptist Church, have been helping in Goma, Zaire, and in Rwanda. In fact, Joe gained a spot of publicity as the doctor to whom American singer Harry Belafonte sang when Belafonte visited Rwandese refugees in Goma on behalf of the United Nations.

Lusi saw firsthand in Rwanda the horror of the war. He operated for five hours in the Kigali Hospital on a Tutsi who had been macheted across the forehead. Later, when he asked the nurses how the man was doing, he discovered that other nurses had pulled out his tubes and allowed him to die because he was a Hutu.

Many Baptists suffered because they put their faith above their tribe. One Tutsi Baptist pastor in Rwanda was killed because he took in a Hutu pastor.

All of the Baptist pastors Montacute met had lost relatives in the war and in the camps. The Baptist Union of Rwanda President lost his son to cholera in the Goma camp.

But while they are suffering, Baptist pastors are ministering in the camps. There are 29 Baptist pastors in the camp at Bukavu and the BWA regional secretary, Zihemambere, who says there are 20,000 of the 40,000 Rwandese Baptists in Bukavu.

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## BAPTIST HERALD

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# The Right Gift

by Lewis J. Petrie

**I**t is amazing how well we respond to the surprise gift! During the Christmas season, we anticipate receiving gifts from family and friends. We may even have some idea of what we are going to receive as a gift! But there is no thrill quite like receiving a surprise gift . . . one that we did not expect to receive . . . the right gift that truly surprises us.

As a small boy, I received a train set from my father as a Christmas gift. I had no idea I was going to receive such an extravagant gift. It was an expensive miniature rail set. The locomotive smoked just like the real thing. It had a large wooden box so that all of the pieces could be carefully packed away. Even as an adult, I still remember the gift of the train set with great fondness. This emotion I felt was generated by a gift that came as a complete surprise! The gift I received made a great difference in my young life.

During this Christmas season, many children and adults will receive gifts. Both the giver and the receiver of wonderful gifts will experience surprise and joy.

As Christians, we will want to remember the one gift that made a difference for the whole world. It was an incredible gift! It was the right gift, at just the right time, with the right thought, and it set the right tradition.



*"But when the time had fully come, God sent his Son, born of a woman, born under law, to redeem those under law, that we might receive the full rights of sons," (Galatians 4:4-5).*

**The Right Time**  
". . . but when the time had fully come . . ."

When we receive a gift, it does make a difference that it comes at the right time. God's Word states that God's gift came exactly at the right time. Not too soon, not too late, but at the expedient moment.

While a student at seminary, I remember going to my mailbox at school and receiving a surprise gift of money. We were struggling financially that first year to make ends meet. The gift came just at the

right time. Some thoughtful, generous person shared what they had with us. The right gift at the right time! The Apostle Paul expresses this sentiment in a different way in *Romans 5:8: But God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us.*

We did not have to get ready in order to receive this gift. Paul says we were sinners when God decided to provide the gift. We did not have to clean up, or change, or become better. In the moment we needed

God's gift the most, He sent His Son to live, die, and rise again for us. It was the right time. Christmas is the right time to rediscover the truth concerning the significance of God's gift to mankind.

How many people this Christmas will receive gifts that will be unwanted, unused, or unappreciated? Gifts given which do not meet the deep needs of people, or help get them through another day, or encourage them to face uncertainty in their lives.

No matter the situation or circumstance in people's lives, the Gift that makes a difference in people's lives came at the right time. This may be the right time for you to share the gift of God's Son to

someone who needs to hear.

## The Right Tradition

*" . . . God sent his Son, born of a woman, born under law . . . "*

For countless generations, the Christian community has celebrated the birth of Jesus Christ as the ultimate gift of God to a lost and dying world. This celebration is a tradition we need to continue.

In the community, where I served as pastor of a small Baptist church, there was the tradition of giving the pastor and his family a financial gift at the Sunday school program each year. It was a fine tradition, which expressed love and concern for the pastor and family. It was a tradition which filled the holidays with new meaning. I always looked forward to this tradition not because of the gift of money (though it was appreciated), but because for me, it was a fine example of the spirit of the Christmas season.

The secular world is trying to rid the holidays of any religious significance or meaning. Good Friday/Easter has been replaced with the Easter bunny. In many circles, Santa Claus has replaced the nativity scene as the dominant image of Christmas.

To take Christ out of Christmas is to take the joy and hope out of the greatest gift ever received by mankind. Christmas is more than just a formal, empty tradition. It is the focusing on the Son of God coming to this earth and identifying Himself completely with our sinful condition in order that we might be brought to God.

Can there be any greater good news than to hear that God personally cared enough for His children . . . that He was willing to bear the injustice of becoming sin on our behalf in order that we might be made right with God?

*"God made him who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God," (2*



*Corinthians 5:21).*

At this Christmas season, men, women, and children need to hear that. There is no greater gift that we can give to anyone than this gift which will make all the difference in the world!

## The Right Thought

*" . . . to redeem those under law, that we might receive the full rights of sons."*

There are times when family and friends come to visit for the sole reason to see what they are going to

**The majority of us are so prosperous that we give gifts to family and friends which carry very little meaning. We are expected to buy and give at Christmas, so we fulfill our empty obligations. We go through the motions.**

receive. Jesus in Acts 20:35 is quoted as stating, *"It is more blessed to give than to receive."*

It is imperative that we give with the right thought or motive in mind. We have not only received the gift of God's Son so that we might be redeemed, but also so that we might become the family of God. Jesus also said, *"For even the Son of Man did not come to be served,*

*but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many," (Mark 10:45).*

What a thought! What a sentiment! He gave the precious gift of Himself not to benefit Himself but in order to benefit and bless us! What a revolutionary thought, that we should be willing to give not in order to get in return but so that others may benefit.

I will always remember with fondness the Salvation Army . . . the group with the single word for a motto: "Others."

As a small boy living in poor conditions, I vividly recall a knock at the door near Christmas. We were facing the prospect of little food and no toys; yet there they were . . . standing with armfuls of food and toys for the children. The Salvation Army. They came in the Name of Jesus Christ to minister to those who had little. I remember their gift to me and my family, and I am thankful!

The majority of us are so prosperous that we give gifts to family and friends which carry very little meaning. We are expected to buy and give at Christmas, so we fulfill our empty obligations. We go through the motions. **BUT PLEASE WAIT. . . !**

There was a precious, surprise gift which came at Christmas a long time ago . . . the right gift . . . at the right time . . . with the right thought . . . establishing a right tradition.

This year give that gift . . . God's gift of good news to someone who is waiting for that perfect gift. The gift of God's Son, Jesus Christ. Surprise someone today by sharing the gift which can make all the difference in that person's life! □

*Dr. Lewis J. Petrie served as Development Director from 1989 through December 1994, and as Associate Development Director from 1988 to 1989. He becomes senior pastor of First Baptist Church, Minot, ND, in January 1995.*



# God at Work in Bulgaria

by Harry Haas



Pastor Igoff of First Baptist Church in Varna (l.) and leaders from the Second Baptist Church in Varna

The reason for the rapid growth in the Bulgarian evangelical churches, I believe, is two-fold: First, it is the result of the extreme persecution which they have endured, and second, under communism, they experienced great emptiness.

If any persecution has ever been counter-productive, then it has been in Bulgaria. On our visit, we saw such a hunger and desire for spiritual food that it made us feel guilty for our laxness as Americans.

## Believers persecuted for 50 years

Stories abound of the many pastors who were imprisoned for periods of six to seventeen years in Bulgaria during the years of Communist control. They were tortured and abused daily for months as their oppressors tried to get them to admit that they were spies for America. But the pastors did not break.

After years of suffering by the prisoners and persecution of their families at home, the pastors were allowed to return home where they immediately resumed their preaching. Some preached another 30 years.

When the pastors were in prison, their families could not get employment at government jobs, so they had to find odd jobs

that paid very little. Many stories were told to us of how the families often exhausted all food supplies only to have them miraculously replenished the next day.

Many risked imprisonment as they smuggled in Bibles, often moving them from vehicle to vehicle far out in the country. The secret police would appear at their doors at 3 a.m. demanding to search their homes for Christian materials. Much was confiscated, but much was hidden or could not be seen even though very visible.

Persecution, however, did not come to a close in 1989 when the government of the Soviet Union collapsed. There is much harassment today from government officials and the Bulgarian Orthodox Church, which in many cases is one and the same.

A local paper ran an article denouncing Baptists, Methodists, and Pentecostals as a danger to Bulgaria. Believers told us that

some grocers refused to sell them food. Children are threatened by their schoolteachers that if they continue to go to the Baptist church they can no longer attend school. People lose their employment if employers learn they are attending a Baptist church.

Even as we entered a church, we were told that a man standing across the street was watching all who entered. The people fear that if communism returns, they will lose their jobs. Even though we thought their fears were unfounded, they have a continuous fear.

The purpose of our trip was to observe the spiritual and physical condition of the churches to see how we might help. We preached in about 25 different churches and preaching points. Attendance at the various services ranged from 20 to 250.

We found that few of the groups had adequate meeting places. The meeting places were swept clean, but in many places, the paint was chipped or worn to the bare wood. These buildings had received little maintenance since 1994.

Most of the church groups cannot afford to put up a building or to buy one, if allowed. Many churches or preaching points rent small rooms that are part of community playhouses. Whenever government officials find that Baptists worship in public buildings, they do everything possible to harass or keep the Baptists from renting the facilities.

Others will not sell land to evangelical church groups in order to keep them from constructing church buildings. This has led some groups to purchase houses to renovate to use for church meetings.

We learned that membership in the Union of Baptist Churches in Bulgaria has tripled from 1989 to 1994. In some churches, it is five times greater. There are 37 organized churches and 60 preaching points in this Union. One church alone has started 26 preaching points. One pastor told us that he preaches up to ten times a week.

As two or three evangelical Christians are found in a village or city, a preaching point is established, and the group soon grows. Pastors can do little outreach, but the people bring their friends. This is one of the reasons for the rapid growth.

One finds a great hunger among all people, including former Communists, for something that has meaning. Many in the congregations sat on the edge of their chairs, as we preached, and someone interpreted the message.

In Varna, one half of the 400 members of the Baptist church are former Communists. Among them is a former captain in the Bulgarian secret police. He is now a dedicated believer who serves as treasurer of the church.

A young lady who was the secretary of the Communist youth of Varna now serves as the church secretary. She lives on a salary of



The Baptist church in Varna with 400 members was dedicated in 1992.



Don Richter (left) visits with an interpreter and a new Christian.



\$25 per month. But her happiness as a Christian is evident. When asked why she and her attorney sister started attending church, their answer was "emptiness." Their praying at the prayer meetings is very intense. They pour out their hearts, and others in the congregation weep with them.

A person's average monthly income is about \$50, but the price of what people buy is near to the cost of the same items in America. Even out of the church's meager funds, they help those in need.

The churches discovered some elderly living in cold apartments, without heat, to save money to buy medicine. Of the \$20 a month pension an elderly person receives, \$10 per month goes to rent their apartments. The rest of the income must cover food, heat, and medicine.

As we visited churches and preaching points, we found the evangelical Christians' enthusiasm and desire for Christian fellowship most heart-warming.

Opportunities for helping these Christians should not be passed by. The greatest need in the work is for trained leaders. Most churches are served by self-trained, dedicated laymen. To my knowledge, there is only one pastor who has been trained in a Baptist seminary. A Bible school in Sofia is doing its best to meet this need, but progress is slow.

Pray for more pastors and leaders. Pray that the congregations will not be driven from their meeting places by the government. Pray for the young Christians that they will not get weary. □

*The Rev. Ralph Cooke of Rapid City, SD, Dr. Don Richter of Portland, OR, and the Rev. Harry Haas, associate area minister for South Dakota, of Venturia, ND, spent two weeks visiting and ministering in Bulgaria, September 27 through October 11.*

## Ten Benefits of Tithing

by G. Roger Schoenhals  
Part IV

**T**he ten benefits of tithing are not new, but taken together they may be valuable as you sort out this issue for yourself. We discussed benefit one in the April issue, benefit two and three in the May issue, and benefits four and five: Tithing Demonstrates Faith and Tithing Recognizes Rightful Ownership in the September issue. Benefits six and seven are listed below.

### 6) Tithing Protects Worthy Priorities

Jesus said, "Where your treasure is, there will your heart be also" (Luke 12:34). If you regularly invest in a program, an institution, or a material possession, you will find yourself gaining interest and commitment in that direction.

For example, if you purchase a motor home or a boat, you will begin to schedule your time to use that possession. You will find ways to justify your investment.

The same is true of our investment in God's work. Our interest and commitment follows our pocketbook. The person who gives regularly to the church will tend to be more involved in the various ministries of that church than the sideler who only tosses in loose change now and then.

Faithful tithing is an insurance policy that helps protect our involvement in things that are truly important. Cheerful tithing helps keep us close to God.

Actually, the Lord is able to get along quite well without our tithes. He could easily place money in the

coffers each month. But that's not His plan. He wants to involve us in His work. And, our wise heavenly Father knows that giving is good for us.

The New Testament contains stern warnings about the cancerous effects of riches (Mark 4:19; 10:23-25; 1 Timothy 6:9-10, 17-19). We can easily be caught up in the pursuit of possessions and lose grip on the less tangible, more important things of life. The regular practice of tithing helps us keep perspective, helps us renew our trust in God. In giving to God's work, we declare our independence from the materialism around us.

### 7) Tithing Provides Needed Support

Gracious giving underwrites the ongoing work of God's Kingdom. It was so in Old and New Testament times, and it continues to be God's way of financing His work today.

"Bring the whole tithe into the storehouse," thunders the Old Testament prophet Malachi (3:10). No such exhortation is needed when the Holy Spirit gets hold of our wallets. Consider the spontaneity and generosity of the early church when the converts sold land and houses to have more money to give (Acts 4:32-35).

The Bible tells us to support those who serve among us as ministers of the Word (1 Corinthians 9:14; 1 Timothy 5:18).

What a shame that so many Christian workers have to exist at the poverty line because the non-tithing people of God insist on pampering themselves and building their own earthly kingdoms. □

*G. Roger Schoenhals is a freelance writer from Seattle, WA.*

# Is There a Difference Between Right & Wrong?

By Matt Newby

**A**bsolutely, and in more ways than one! The difference I am referring to is the difference that is actually "between" right and wrong.

As human beings, we have a tendency to view life in terms of black and white, right and wrong. Things either fall on one side or the other. But do all things naturally fit into right or wrong? Is there another category? The answer is yes and that category is "difference." Not all things in life have a moral value attached to them. They are amoral, being neither moral or immoral. The problem comes when we begin to attach a moral value to something that is in reality amoral.

Let me give an example. A newlywed couple on their honeymoon had their first breakfast together. The new bride was happy to fix her

husband eggs for breakfast. Upon placing the eggs on the table in front of him, he looked at the eggs and remarked, "What immoral thing did you do to these eggs?" Of course, the new bride was heartbroken and retreated in tears.

Question: Is there a right or wrong way to cook eggs? Is one way moral and another immoral? Of course not! This man was merely used to having his eggs cooked a "different" way. His mistake was placing a moral value judgment on something that falls into the category of "different."

These kinds of misunderstandings occur in families, at work places, and in the church. We often fail to recognize that everything does not fit neatly into right or wrong, moral or immoral categories. There is a whole category involving

differences. It is at this level that we must exercise patience, acceptance, and understanding. What one person likes, another person may dislike, but these preferences do not invalidate the preference of the other. One may like to sing hymns in church while another may prefer choruses. One is not right and the other wrong. They are "differences" that we must learn to appreciate in one another.

When we encounter conflict, we must stop and ask ourselves, "Is there clearly a right and wrong in this situation, or is this merely a difference I must learn to appreciate?" □

*Reprinted from "Temple Witness," a newsletter, Temple Baptist Church, Lodi, CA. Matt Newby is Minister of Christian Education.*



Youth  
Consider...

# the Role of the Church

by Eric Mangek Ngum



Campers take a break from a very heavy schedule.

**"Lord, heal our disintegrating home.  
Lord, rescue our disintegrating church.  
Lord, heal our disintegrating society.  
And by your grace, make us agents  
of integration in our homes, churches,  
and society. Amen."**

**T**he role of the church in a disintegrating society captured the interest of the Cameroon Baptist Convention youth as they dedicated their lives to Christ, discussed practical ways to integrate their Christian witness into society, and debated a controversial issue.

The youth met for their annual national camp at Joseph Merrick Baptist College, Ndu, in August.

The 637 youth came with lots of hopes to be satisfied. These hopes ranged from the desire of meeting old friends to making new ones. But even with this, the youth seemed more prepared to be taught what role to play to integrate the disintegrating society of Cameroon. Added to these were two youth from Malabo—Equatorial Guinea and one youth from Nigeria.

As the speakers, Rev. Paul Maffin, Pastor Joeys Itue, Brother Samuel Chia, and Pastor Isaac Mbeng, took the podium, they told youth to ensure integration of first the home, then the church, and then society.

In strong terms, the speakers called on the youth to trust the Lord, read His Word, and be realistic in their Christian living. They called on the youth to spend their time and energy wisely in serving God rather than becoming involved in gossiping, arguing over trivial things, or in sexual immorality.

The CBC general secretary, the Rev. Peter Nyumnloh, reminded the youth of their three-fold responsibilities: To let their light radiate to all the corners where there is darkness; to heal the disintegrating society through prayer and reaching the lost for Christ; and to speak out against demonic activities in high places.

More than 80 youth accepted Christ for the first time following a message, "The Unsafe Christian," by the Rev. Paul Maffin. By the end of camp, 113 youth met Christ for the first time. This became reality, thanks to the unrelentless efforts of the counselors led by Pastor Isaac Mbeng. One hundred seventeen others rededicated their lives to Christ. The youth camp ended with 320 youth having made a new commitment or renewing their covenant with Christ.

**D**uring the camp, the campers were involved in one point of controversy on prayer. How should we pray? This question remained unanswered to many campers. When we pray should we sigh, shout, murmur, and say "amen" at every point of the prayer, or should we follow our prayer to the end before we say amen?

Each camper seemed to have gone home with his

own idea. It is, therefore, sad to note, that even within the camp officials, there was open disagreement. It seemed like "liberals" and "conservatives" were pointing fingers at each other. It grew from murmuring to an open air affair when the secretary general of the youth department cried aloud to the CBC general secretary that youth in some churches of the CBC are being persecuted. The "liberals," so they are called, say the Baptist Church in Cameroon should open up for changes. While the "hardliners" want the old practices to be maintained. A generation gap was noticed.

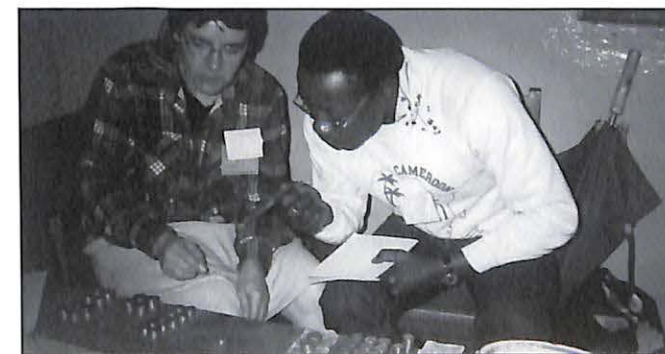
The general opinion concerning this year's camp was that of satisfaction. Those who met Christ for their first time or rededicated their lives to Him left Ndu with beaming smiles, smiles of people whose burdens have been taken care of.

Matured youth confessed the youth camp added a new touch to their spiritual lives. The overriding gain from the 1994 youth camp is the awareness of the part a Christian youth has to play in integrating the disintegrating society. ☐

*Eric Mangek Ngum is a staff member for the Baptist Communication Ministry, Cameroon Baptist Convention in Bamenda. He has served in the BCM since he graduated from the University of Yaounde in 1992.*



Campers discuss how to integrate as Christians into a disintegrating society to make a difference.



Missionary Patricia Lenz and Pastor Emmanuel Nsah count the registration receipts at the National Youth Camp in Cameroon.

## Checklist for Year-End Giving

The following is a checklist for you to use in planning your year-end giving.

- Do you need additional tax deductions this year? ☐ Yes ☐ No
- Will your income taxes be higher this year than next? ☐ Yes ☐ No
- Do you wish to dispose of highly appreciated property? ☐ Yes ☐ No
- Do you need increased income from low or non-income producing property? ☐ Yes ☐ No
- Do you have existing life insurance policies which are no longer needed? ☐ Yes ☐ No
- Have you made charitable commitments which have not been completed? ☐ Yes ☐ No

If your answer to any of these questions is "yes," we would like to assist you in meeting your needs as well as providing for the programs of the North American Baptist Conference.

*We have prepared a special planning report, "How to Maximize Your Year-End Giving." Please complete the coupon below to receive your free copy, or to let us know how we can help you with your year-end gift planning.*

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# Ministry to the Family of a Handicapped Child

by Phil Zylla

**C**hurch families can have a vital role in the support and encouragement of families who are confronted with the challenge of raising a special needs child. Often we find ourselves incapacitated by lack of knowledge. The imperative that we have embraced as a Conference this year, "Commanded to Care," ought to translate into specific compassionate action to those families within our local churches who are contending with the demands of a handicapped child.

Here are some practical ways that pastors and churches can respond to the needs of families with these special demands.

## **Learn about the special problem that the child has**

It doesn't take much effort to consult a dictionary or a medical reference book to gain a simple understanding of the special condition that the disabled child in your congregation has, but it makes the world of difference to speak to the parents from an informed voice. If the parents feel that you understand the nature of the problem that they must contend with, you have already been very helpful to them.



## **Resist citing "victory stories"**

Failure to distinguish between types of handicapping conditions can lead to a common mistake and that is to cite other cases which have little or no resemblance to the situation that the family in your church is going through. We have not found it helpful for people to tell us about "a boy in Nebraska who was in a wheelchair and is now captain of the basketball team at his high school." If anything, we find these stories discouraging because they reinforce the severity of our daughter's condition and increase our feeling of isolation. Every special needs child is unique, and their condition is unique. Comparisons rarely turn out to be equivalent and are not very helpful to the family who has to bear the weight of life with a special needs child. Be sensitive when sharing "victory stories."

## **Be specific in offers of help**

When a person offers a general word of willingness to help, there are no identifiable parameters to guide the parents of the special needs family in accepting the offer. For example, statements like, "If there's ever anything that I can do, just call." (A very

common offer.) So if we need \$5,000 to renovate our home for our child are we to call this person and say, "You said if there's ever anything I can do . . . well, we need \$5,000"?

It is more helpful to offer specific help with definite parameters of the ways in which you are prepared to assist the family. Here are some offers that we have found helpful:

"When you have to go to the hospital and you need someone to watch Amanda (our six-year-old) just call, any time of the day or night."

"Would you appreciate it if I made you some sandwiches to take with you to the hospital so that you don't have to spend so much on cafeteria food"?

"When you encounter a financial burden with regard to Chelsey's special needs, would you tell us so that we could have the privilege of

assisting you with that need"?

"I know that you are very busy going back and forth to the hospital. I have next Saturday free, and I would love to come to your house and clean it for you, if that would be a help to you."

"Would it be a help if we brought a meal over for you on Wednesday"?

## **Be ready to listen if needed**

One of the things that parents of handicapped children need most is someone safe to whom they can talk. By safe, I mean that they are sure that they will be accepted even if they express negative feelings or emotions. Offer to be a listening ear and when the opportunity comes—listen. The parents may be reluctant to share their true feelings with you at first. Much trust is needed to bring out the honest questions about the peculiar kind of suffering that comes when your child is permanently disabled. Offer warm words of encouragement, but concentrate on listening and understanding.

## **Make provision for the special needs child in your church program**

Again this will involve a clear understanding of the special needs of handicapped children in your church. Talk to the parents and find out what they feel their child needs from the church. It may be wheelchair accessibility. It may be a teaching aid to assist with learning disabilities, or it may be that the leaders working with the children fail to include them in the activities based on some false assumptions. Educate your leaders to be sensitive to the special needs child and their family, e.g. Do you have a part in the Christmas drama for the disabled child?

## **Develop a long-term care plan**

Most families who have a child with special needs are responding

on two levels to their family situation. On the one hand, they are responding to the immediate challenges of hospitalizations, doctor visits, and child care. These daily practical needs demand much time and effort.

However, the family is also looking at the future, which can be very daunting. Perhaps your church can assist with the long-term care needs of this family. Need ideas?

- **Schedule a work day** to help renovate a home to make it wheel-



chair accessible. Use your engineers to design it, your carpenters and laborers to build it, and your church benevolent fund to finance it.

- **Set up a trust fund** to help with long-term financial needs.

- **Organize volunteers to assist** with routine tasks: once a month the church provides free babysitting so that the parents can get some much needed rest (make sure to provide responsible, knowledgeable adults . . . special needs chil-

dren often need specialized or at least very responsible care if the parents are going to feel secure).

- **Mobilize special talents** to respond to special needs. Maybe someone in your church has learned to sign and is willing to translate the morning sermon. Once you know the special needs you may be able to identify special resources that you can provide free of charge that the parents would have to pay for elsewhere.

## **Don't neglect the able child(ren)**

There is the temptation to give attention to the special needs of a disabled child and, by virtue of focusing on that child, neglect the children in the same home who are not disabled. Simple attempts to include all the children in caring acts will strengthen the family as a unit and will be constructive.

## **Every family with a special needs child requires special care by their congregation. There are no exceptions.**

If you have families in your church who have a child with Cerebral Palsy or Spina Bifida or Down's Syndrome or some other handicapping condition, it is important that you embrace this child as part of your community. It is part of learning to be a compassionate people that we sensitize ourselves to the difficult challenges of families who have special needs children.

That caring response will be different in every church family. What is important is that we become aware that there are indeed special needs that require some response by our congregation. In doing this, we reap the benefit of growth in our discipleship as followers of Christ who Himself commanded us to care. □

*The Rev. Phil Zylla is pastor of Greenfield Baptist Church, Edmonton, AB.*



# Caring with a Needle and Thread

by Ardath Effa



**E**ven in remote areas like Allat in Cameroon, White Cross is used a lot. We don't know what we would do without White Cross. There is hardly any cloth available in this area so these items are very useful. People come from miles around to our health centers because they know they will receive a lovely layette for their new baby. Then, when they experience the love and quality of treatment here, they come back! What an opportunity to witness"! reports Missionary Scott Clark. Scott, his wife, Ruthie, and his family are working among the unreached Fulbe people in a remote area of Cameroon. This is only one of many areas in Cameroon as well as Nigeria that are touched by the faithful ministry of North American Baptist Conference women in our churches.

White Cross began as early as 1922 but really took hold since 1946. It grew out of the Red Cross work being done everywhere during World War I. In 1919, American Baptist women inaugurated the White Cross program. Three years later, North American Baptist women joined this effort.

The hospitals and health centres of the Cameroon Baptist Convention and the health centres of the Mambilla Baptist Convention in Nigeria could not function without White Cross. Through the faithful ministry of our women's groups throughout the years, we are able to furnish these hospitals and health

centres with the lovely home-made items such as baby jackets, baby blankets, hospital gowns and pajamas, draw sheets, cotton squares, and rolled bandages, as well as bedding and towels for the guest houses.

Those who prefer not to do the sewing donate money to purchase material, which is sent to the field for the women to sew. Through this, the Cameroonian women receive a small income as a result.

Our well-equipped and supplied hospitals are an inducement for nationals to come to the hospitals for care. Not only are they taught good health care as a result, but also the many people who come are exposed to the Gospel as chaplains, Gospel teams, and missionaries share their faith.

Women are not the only ones who get involved in White Cross. It is exciting to discover that men are often busy rolling bandages and cutting squares, too.

One of our N.A.B. churches hosts an Elder Fellowship every month made up of seniors from various other churches and denominations. After enjoying good food, they all work on White Cross.

Mr. Bankui John Kimbinin who manages the Cameroon Baptist Convention's White Cross Store, writes:

"On behalf of the Cameroon Baptist Convention Hospitals and Health Centres, we humbly thank you fellow sisters in Christ for the White Cross aid to the CBC Health Board. We received the latest shipments in good condition. We thank the Lord for giving success in all of our efforts to help the needy ones. We also give thanks to Rev. Fred Folkerts, associate director of missions, for his great work. We pray that God should give him more time to serve His people. All of what you send is useful to our patients, and we make sure we send (White Cross materials) to all hospitals and health centres. May the Lord bless as you are all working for Him."

We recently closed another White Cross year at the N.A.B. Conference Office. A shipment is on its way to Nigeria and another to Cameroon.

The new medical center that is being built in Gembu, Mambilla Plateau, Nigeria, will need lots of help from us for it to become functional. Thank you for your part in this vital ministry. □

*Ardath Effa serves as White Cross secretary at the N.A.B. Office.*

**A video depicting the White Cross ministry at home and overseas is available from the Conference Development Department. Call (708) 495-2000 to reserve the video.**

# From "Slave" to "Slav"

by Perry Kallis



The student body became like family to us, and we grew to love and appreciate them so much that the language barrier was almost a non-factor in our relationship.

**M**y mind raced with both anticipation and reluctance as I walked down the cold, stone stairway to the room in the church basement that would be my classroom for the next two weeks. Questions filled my mind:

"Would the students respond to my teaching style? Would they understand some of the difficult course material? Will the interpreters be able to accurately reflect the importance of what I am teaching?"

I looked forward to this experi-

ence for almost a year. I felt blessed that God was giving me this opportunity to be one of the first "professors" to assist in the training of ministers and missionaries in our new mission field of Russia.

The Church that I serve as pastor,





Perry Kallis teaches through a translator at the new Bible School in Samara, Russia.

Salt Creek Baptist Church in Dallas, Oregon, gave me full-hearted support for this ministry. In addition to our Church, many friends, family, and other churches heard of our trip and covered us in prayer as well.

Dr. Harold Dressler and his wife, Ruth, encouraged us. With these foundations of support and a clear sense of God's call, Linda, my wife, and I prepared to go to Russia in October.

We arrived in Moscow on October 12 and spent two days seeing the sights. It was fascinating to observe the city that played such an important role in world situations for hundreds of years.

From Moscow, we flew to Samara, the sixth largest city in Russia. This city of more than two million people is not well-known because until 1991 it was a "closed city" to all foreigners. It was the center of the Russian manufacture of missiles and other military hardware and also the main point of construction for the Soviet aerospace department.

The city is bustling with people. The streets are filled with small Russian-made cars and old trucks, and pedestrians seem to be ignored. Pedestrians are never given the right of way, and those not walking quickly enough will be honked at or narrowly missed by the quick-moving traffic.

**T**he Christians in the Russian Baptist churches are loving, friendly people who have a keen concern about the truth of God's Word. Their singing touched our hearts. Through interpreters we learned to know the themes of what they sang. As we later learned what some of these people had been through for their faith, the distinctive minor keys in the melodies brought tears to our eyes. They love their songs of faith and sing all verses of their songs with great intensity and praise. They care about their faith and love for God in a way that those of us who have not been tempered by persecution cannot quite fathom.

After a busy Sunday in a crowded church, we began the teaching aspect of our mission to Russia. The church in which the Bible School is being conducted is going through a building program to expand its facilities. Most of the work is being done by the local church people, so the construction is slow and tedious, especially with the coming of winter. Classrooms for the Bible School are part of the plan, but they are not yet finished. As a result, we taught in a basement room without heat.

The 21 students are men who range in age from 19-49. Some are single; others are married with as many as six children. Most of the men are relatively new Christians

(less than three years) and of various backgrounds. Some are carpenters; most had served in the Russian army at some point. The students came with a variety of educational backgrounds. One of the men was a lawyer who wanted to become a minister. During the teaching week, the men lived in the church basement in a humble dorm room on the other side of our classroom.

Teaching through interpreters, I found it fairly easy to become accustomed to the style of "speak - wait - speak." The obvious disadvantage of speaking through interpreters is the tendency to forget the original direction of the thought if a long point was being expressed. But the advantage was the luxury of having time to construct clear, concise sentences.

The teaching day included a half hour chapel time each morning before the class lectures. During these chapels, the men sang with great joy and sincerity. I was struck by their desire to pray. We closed each chapel time by asking for several to feel free to pray. There was never a pause between prayers as they eagerly enjoyed the privilege of communication with their Savior. The teaching day consisted of four hours of lecture before lunch, and then two hours after lunch. They were extremely polite and attentive and looked forward to opportuni-

ties for questions and answers.

In addition to teaching each day, we preached at various "stations" throughout the area where churches were being started. Each Sunday afternoon, we taught a class of deaf people who wanted to learn from God's Word. The translation went from English to Russian to sign language, making for a long pause. But these hearing impaired people were eager and appreciative.

We ate our meals with the students in the church kitchen and enjoyed the very real "taste" of Russia. Perhaps the best way to describe the food is to say that it is simple, tasty, and generous. Many things about our food reminded me of my own Russian-German heritage and memories of eating at Grandma's house in the rural midwest.

Linda and I stayed in a small apartment about 15 minutes drive from the church. It was modest by western standards, but very comfortable and adequate by Russian standards. God blessed us with good health and safety; although we will never forget the daily rides and the traffic-pedestrian situation in Samara.

We experienced some of the daily life in Russia as we rode on the local "tram" (an ancient trolley car system for mass transit in the city) and city bus service. We took some time to shop in the local markets and grew to appreciate the ease and convenience of shopping here in the West.

**I**n our anticipation of this mission event, the one thing we had not expected was the close attachment we felt for these students by the end of our two weeks. The student body became like family to us, and we grew to love and

appreciate them so much that the language barrier was almost a non-factor in our relationship with them.

Our hearts ached with the pain of good-bye on the last day. The students held a short farewell where they sang to us, offered gifts, and



Preaching through a translator (left) during a worship service.

becoming a Christian, he was involved in the use and sale of alcohol, which is one of the devastating social problems in Russia.

But Vjacheslav has been "made new" through the power of Jesus Christ and is now fast becoming a leader among the students and his home church. I will never forget his sincere words agreeing with the prayers of fellow students. He stood in front of me. I heard him say "slav" during the prayer time. When I asked the interpreter, he said the word "slav" means "praise be to God" or "glory to God!"

I am grateful to be part of God's kingdom. I am humbled to know brothers and sisters in Russia who have gone from being a "slave to sin" . . . to "slav!" or Praise to God!

This ministry to Russia is a key example of the mandate to be "disciples who train others to be disciple-makers." These Russian men are being trained to become disciple-makers. It is thrilling to think that this ministry could make a difference for the kingdom of God for many generations to come.

We say thanks to the many people throughout our

Conference who gave toward the special offering for the Russian ministry. Your gifts have made it possible for these men to prepare themselves for leadership in the kingdom of God. It is our prayer that our combined efforts will bring results in this mission field for many years. Pray for all the volunteer "professors" who will touch the lives of these students over the next six months. □

*The Rev. Perry Kallis is senior pastor of Salt Creek Baptist Church, Dallas, OR, and was the first volunteer professor to start this new Bible school.*



# Is Your Church Senior-Sensitive?

by Win Arn and Charles Arn

**M**ost churches in America are following a course which will miss one of the greatest social changes—and greatest opportunities—in American history: the coming age wave. Like beach residents unaware of the approaching tsunami, most congregations still seem to assume that “the future of the church is its youth.” Today, tomorrow, and well into the 21st century, the more accurate description is “the future belongs to the old.”

Of course, most churches have a token senior adult class, perhaps a monthly potluck or field trip for

their older adults. But such approaches are woefully inadequate, if not entirely irrelevant, to the task of reaching and ministering to the rapidly growing community of persons over 50.

Why are most churches so “senior insensitive?” It is generally one or more of the following reasons:

1) *Ageism*. This disease discriminates against, diminishes, and demeans age. Unfortunately, it is alive and well, not only in our society, but also in our churches.

2) *Ignorance*. A minuscule number of today’s church leaders have

been trained in the unique needs, opportunities, and outreach strategies required for persons over age 50.

3) *Irrelevance*. Most existing “senior adult” church groups are operating on assumptions about senior adults that grew out of a different time and place. Today’s senior adults are far different from their parents or grandparents.

Isn’t it ironic that in the midst of decreasing resources, most churches don’t realize the “hidden treasure” inherent in the senior adults of the church?

For example . . .

## Common Church Problems

1) A survey we recently conducted among pastors indicated that their most common frustration is a lack of dedicated lay people to do the work of the church.

2) Financial short falls are the most common reason for not adding building, programs, and/or staff.

3) Members transferring jobs and/or moving to another community account for three to five percent membership loss in a congregation each year.

4) Low institutional loyalty is a common characteristic of baby boomers. Most churches find it difficult to solicit membership or even long-term commitment from this age group.

5) Biblical “illiteracy” is common among laity in many churches. As a result, pastoral teaching often remains at the “elementary” level.

## The “Hidden Treasure”

1) A separate study found that senior adults average two to three times as many available hours for church related activities as any other age group.

2) In a given year, one senior adult church member will give seven times the amount of money that a “baby boomer” member will give in the same church.

3) Senior adults change address an average of once every 12 years, compared to the national average of once every seven years.

4) High institutional loyalty is a common characteristic of senior adults. When they join, they stay, and they are committed.

5) Most senior adult members have been Christians for years. Having experienced life’s mountains, as well as its valleys, they have a wealth of maturity and wisdom they can share with others.

**The “age wave” is rapidly approaching! Those churches that are not prepared will be swamped by the sheer numbers, diversity, and impact of these older adults. Or, if they are prepared, they will get out their surfboards and catch the ride of a lifetime!**

There indeed are effective ways for churches to respond to the challenge of an aging population. The graying of America provides an enormous opportunity for the church; perhaps unique in this century. But without a major re-tooling of strategy and tactics, the church will be left behind. To restate: the approach most churches presently have for ministry to the aging adult population is woefully inadequate, if not entirely irrelevant.

## So, what can be done?

1. Realize that all seniors aren’t seniors. A new generational group-

ing has emerged in our society during the past generation. Their members are called “middle adults” and include those people between 50 - 70 years of age. They are, as *U.S. News & World Report* says, “a new generation, different not only in size, but also in vitality and outlook.” Older adults are living healthier, more active, productive, longer lives. In reality, a person of 50 or 60 can expect to live 15, 20, 30 more years. It is, indeed, their middle years. They are not, certainly in their own minds, “senior adults.”

### MATURE ADULTS

- Declining influence by peers
- Declining materialistic values
- More subjective
- More introspective
- High sensitivity to context
- Perceptions in shades of gray
- More flexible
- More individualistic
- More discretionary behavior
- Less price sensitive
- Complex ways of determining values

### YOUNG ADULTS

- Heavily influenced by peers
- Highly materialistic values
- More objective
- More extrospective
- Low sensitivity to context
- Perceptions in black/white
- More rigid
- More subordinated to others
- More predictable behavior
- More price sensitive
- Simple ways of values determining values
- Detail oriented

2. Realize that age does make a difference. People 30 years old are different than people 60 years old; not only in the hair on their head, but also the mind inside. Older adults think differently than younger adults. David Wolfe, a knowledgeable researcher and marketer, draws some fascinating contrasts:<sup>1</sup> (See chart at left below.)

## Christian Implications

What does this changing demographic landscape mean for the church?

Most importantly, it means that the old ways of doing senior adult ministry must be re-evaluated. It is my belief that even the term “senior adult” will become politically *incorrect*. As more and more baby boomers inch toward that age category (the first boomers will turn 50 next year), the stigma attached to the word “senior” will make it a liability to effective ministry.

Even now we are finding that when churches offer a “senior adult” program, at most only 15 percent of the church members who qualify to be there, actually are. As we have researched this phenomenon, we have found that most do not want to be lumped into the category of senior citizen, either in the minds of others, or their own.

The new and still emerging strategies that will be necessary for effective ministry to “middle adults” have many implications for programming, evangelism, and scheduling of church activities. The church that is “age sensitive” will be providing a *variety* of groups to appeal to the diversity of interests, needs, and activities for each age group.

## Getting Started Right

We are often asked the question, “If you were to develop an age-sen-

<sup>1</sup>David Wolfe, “Targeting the Mature Mind,” *American Demographics*, March 1994, pp. 32-36.



sitive adult ministry, how would you begin?" Here are five components:

● **Find, select, train leaders.** The success of your adult ministry will be directly related to the quality of your leaders. Someone(s) needs to own the goal of ministry/outreach to young, middle, and senior adults. The leaders who will be most successful in each group have a genuine love for people in that group. It's not a job; it's a ministry.

In research we conducted with 500 churches that had a full or part-time senior adult staff member, we found that the leaders who had received specific training in this area were far more effective—and their adult ministries were more likely to be growing—than were leaders who had received no training. (80 percent of all older adult staff members had received *no training* whatsoever in their field.) We also found that retired pastors are generally ineffective as middle and senior adult leaders unless they have been re-trained in the unique issues and challenges of senior adult ministry in the 1990s.

● **Get the facts.** Here is a proven principle: "Abundant, accurate information, properly interpreted and applied, enables churches to be good stewards of the grace of God and effective communicators of the Gospel of Christ."

What are the actual statistics in your church? How many members are over age 50? 55? 60? 65? What are the age groupings in your community? How many are homebound? What percentage are males, females? What are the various needs and interests represented in your prospective constituency? Effective programs and activities will be based on the findings of your research.

● **Begin with an adult ministry, not a senior adult group.** This dis-

inction is important. If you have a "senior adult group," you limit the potential involvement to those individuals who see themselves as "senior adults." Many other senior adults in your congregation and in your community will not identify with "those old people." In contrast, if your paradigm is an adult ministry, all kinds of groups can develop, many of which would not even be identified as "senior adult." A church of 300 members could have ten to fifteen various adult groups responding to the variety of needs, and touching the lives of many more people.

#### ● **Develop a Purpose Statement.**

A clearly written purpose statement will be the guiding light for a successful older adult ministry. This purpose statement should be "owned" by the members and be a yardstick to regularly measure progress. If a clear purpose statement is not established and used early in the ministry, the activities will become increasingly self-serving and self-centered.

Here is one purpose statement developed by an age-sensitive adult ministry. Use or adapt it if it describes the purpose you desire for your adult ministry. If not, create your own.

*The adult ministry of \_\_\_\_\_ Church has as its purpose to communicate and share God's love to those in the church family, and to those outside the church. The assumption behind the adult ministry, the groups, and activities sponsored by this ministry is that they exist for the purpose of serving, not being served; of giving, not receiving.*

#### ● **Build your adult ministry on adult motivators.**

Marketing researchers have spent considerable time and money seeking to identify the reasons today's older adults buy or don't buy certain products. Their discoveries are of value to church leaders seeking to reach this

same generation, and encourage them to "buy" a new lifestyle in the Christian faith and community. According to these studies, older adults are motivated by one of five values which form the foundation of most of their meaningful activity.<sup>2</sup> Those values are

- **Autonomy**—They desire to be or remain self-sufficient.

- **Social and spiritual connectedness**—They respond to people more than programs.

- **Altruism**—They desire to give something back to the world.

- **Personal growth**—They desire to continue developing as human beings.

- **Revitalization**—They respond to activities that bring fresh and new experiences.

Effective older adult ministries of the 1990s and 21st century will be those which integrate these values and motivators into a creative variety of activities and experiences.

The "age wave" is swelling! The 60+ -year-old age group is growing three times more rapidly than the population at large; and for the first time in American history there are now more citizens over age 65 than under age 18.

The "age wave" is rapidly approaching! Those churches that are not prepared will be swamped by the sheer numbers, diversity, and impact of these older adults. Or, if they are prepared, they will get out their surfboards and catch the ride of a lifetime! □

<sup>2</sup>For a more comprehensive discussion of these values, see the above mentioned article by David Wolfe in *American Demographics*.

*Win Arn is honorary chair of the North American Congress on the Church and the Age Wave . . . May 1 - 5, 1995. He is founder and president of L.I.F.E. Int'l, (1857 Highland Oaks Dr., Arcadia, CA 91006). Dr. Charles Arn is editor of the LIFELINE, a newsletter for leaders of older adult ministries.*

"Many have known the Rev. Charles Littman as area minister, pastor, mentor, and friend," said Dusty Lewandowski as she presided over an afternoon of celebration of Littman's ministry. The service, attended by close to 400 people, was held at West Meadows Baptist Church in Edmonton, AB, September 18. "For me, he has been an example of a lifetime of Christian service. We are here to say thank you to God and to him for being an example."

"Charles Littman is a most faithful and loyal servant of God," said Dr. John Binder, representing the N.A.B. Conference. "This is evidenced during his 37 years of service as a pastor for 23 years and as an area minister for 14 years. Littman has served as area minister of the North Central Area and the Alberta Area, the largest association of our Conference."

Binder said Littman viewed the N.A.B. Conference as one unified family and promoted the total cooperative ministries of the Conference. "The legal border between Canada and the U.S.A. never became a dividing issue with him." Binder noted that with Littman there was always a sense of mutual understanding and teamwork—a working together in harmony. "You always found Charles enthusiastic about his ministry. In every report I received, there was always an enthusiasm for the ministry, the Lord's work."

"I also saw Charles as a mediator in internal conflicts in churches. He was effective and blessed of God in this role."

"Through the tragic loss of their son and the recent illness of Charles, Audrey and Charles, in a positive and helpful way, have counselled others. They shared their pilgrimage with the Lord and how the grace of God upheld them. This has been a tremendous encour-

# Albertans recognize Littman's ministry



agement to many."

On behalf of the N.A.B. Conference, Binder presented Littman with a plaque and a gift.

"Everyone needs a shepherd," said the Rev. Ken MacDonald, pastor of West Meadows Baptist Church, as he expressed appreciation on behalf of the pastors to the Littmans.

MacDonald drew a mental picture of Charles and Audrey, as a husband-wife team standing on both sides of a ski lift as each chair was being loaded with pastors and people. "You saw to it that we got on the chairs properly with all our poles and skis. If we got tangled up, you stopped the lift and picked us up. When you were sure we were seated correctly, you sent us up the

hill. You cheered us on—encouraged us. Thank you for believing in us and our churches. Thanks for listening." MacDonald also thanked them for modelling team ministry. "It has touched literally thousands of people over the years."

Carol Potratz of Edmonton described Charles and Audrey Littman as love. "Your love of God, of each other as a married couple, and for the people you have shepherded over the years has been a tremendous example to me. Young people have noticed you because of your love for each other as a couple."

Potratz noted that the Littmans are faithful prayer warriors. "When they promise to pray for you, they keep the promise."

"Through your faithfulness to God, to each other, and to your word, you have been a great example. You have been God's touch on our lives."

"You knew God's faithfulness in tragic times. You did not allow yourselves to be imprisoned by bitterness and hate. You've witnessed to God's amazing grace as you spoke about your grief to people who were hurting or grieving. You truly are servants of God." □

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# The Presence . . .

**F**or the Weber family, Christmas has been unanimously chosen as our most favorite holiday. Each year after the Thanksgiving turkey is devoured, we anxiously search for the boxes containing our Christmas decor—a tree for the living room, a tree for the family room, and miscellaneous boxes of decorations, Christmas books, and other treasures. (There have been years the tree was up *before* Thanksgiving!)

Each year I ponder the same question: "What is the best 'present' for each family member?" Each of us desires to acknowledge the true meaning of Christmas, but how? Over the past years, we have tried to focus on Christmas in three ways.

## Realize the Presence of Christ

The hectic holiday season demands deliberate action to prevent the frazzled, weary feelings of too much of a good thing. I have found the most important time during the holidays is when I'm communicating and *listening* to my Heavenly Father. I'm weak and worthless when I act in my own strength. Many times I've shared that my "quiet time" gives me a charge to which the first cup of coffee could never compare. I receive direction from the Holy Spirit that is impossible to imitate on my own. For several years, I have been journalizing my concerns and praises—



by Annie Weber

*as I continue to realize the presence of God. God makes a difference in my day and in my life!*

Christmas is a great time to read about the birth of Christ as a family, and to spend time talking about the **sights, sounds, and smells** that were experienced in the manger that first starlit night. Every home should have a non-breakable nativity scene with movable pieces for children to play with. The child can imagine what it was like to be the Christ-child in a manger surrounded by animals. Cast your family in their favorite parts and act out the Christmas story. Learn a song that can be hummed or whistled

throughout the day to remind you of the presence of Christ.

## Realize the value of family traditions

Being a thousand miles from home for ten years forced us to develop our own traditions for each holiday. At this point, our daughters won't let us forget any of the family traditions that will be life-long memories for them. Traditions and memories are created using a variety of **sights, sounds, and smells**.

Baking cookies always sensitizes the sense of **smell**. One familiar smell welcomed at our home during the holidays is the smell of train smoke from our old Lionel train as it blew its whistle while circling the tree.

Playing over and over again certain music albums etches the music in our memories forever through their **sounds**. We love to sing familiar carols. What a fun time to bundle up and go to your neighbor's homes to bring them the joy of Christmas through carols (even if they're not in perfect tune).

Many **sights** are experienced as we view all the Christmas lights in our neighborhood. Each year, we look forward to our "Winter Picnic." On a dark, mid-December evening (hopefully with a light snowfall), we pack a basket with sandwiches and goodies. The girls put on their pajamas, and we sing Christmas Carols in the car as we



tour the town looking at the display of lights. The years we lived in Cleveland, OH, we annually toured the downtown square and watched the toddler's eyes open in awe at the sights. At home we like to lie on the floor with all the lights off and, at the count of three, turn on the Christmas tree lights for the first time, as we watch the darkness turn into a dazzle of light. What fun to reminisce about each treasured tree ornament from past years.

## Realize the importance of giving

It's sad that we don't stretch the giving spirit over the entire year. Many times the simplest gift becomes the most treasured. If miles separate you from loved ones, the **sight** of a Christmas letter/ photo is a treat. I have a special basket that waits for cards and letters each Christmas.

The **sound** of laughter and visiting—time spent with loved ones is a precious gift. I often play a game

while standing in long checkout lines. I see how many long-faced, frustrated people I can smile at. It's amazing how the atmosphere changes if even one person is smiling. You can easily give the gift of a smile this season.

The most important way we realize the presence of Christmas is when we take time to evaluate and renew our relationship to God. The **presence of Christmas** is the gift of God to each of us in His Son.

During these hectic holidays, take time to use the presents that God has already given—the **sights, smells, and sounds** to make this year a memorable experience for all and lead us to the real **presence** of Christmas! □

*Annie and her husband Rick serve at Oak Hills Baptist Church in Sioux Falls, SD. The Webers have two daughters, Megan and Malarie.*

## TOOLS FOR MINISTRY

**Prepare Ye for a New Advent of God's Love in Our World** by John and Adrienne Carr. Published by Upper Room Books, it consists of a leader's guide and participant's workshop.

This powerful group process is designed to help us examine and evaluate the way we prepare for, experience, and celebrate the miracle of Advent. The course of the study provides participants many experiences.

- Get in touch with both the longings and regrets that Christmas evokes.
- Focus on the difficulties of receiving the gift of Christmas.
- Examine ways our celebrations reveal our captivity to culture.
- Make plans to revolutionize the way we celebrate the season as individuals, families, and as congregations.

Designed for small groups, the process uses group interaction, personal reflection, and partnership sharing to help participants contemplate the true meaning of Advent, confront the barriers in their lives that hold that meaning at arm's length, and consider the ways they can go about changing their holiday celebrations so the wonder of Advent can become a reality in their lives.

# . . . of Christmas



WITNESS

**Praise God for people receiving Christ as Savior and for His growing Church**

■ MARION, KS. The Rev. Don Mashburn baptized a youth at the Marion Reservoir and welcomed her into the fellowship of Strassburg Baptist Church. —*LaNorma Kreutziger*

■ RAYMORE, SK. The Rev. Graham Kern baptized four youth at Raymore Baptist Church. —*Irma Brightman*

■ PORTLAND, OR. Chaplain Fred David (VAMC) reports, "The Lord blessed my ministry with the opportunity to lead a retired college professor to the Lord. This is a man who claimed he had no soul. He has now, praise God!"

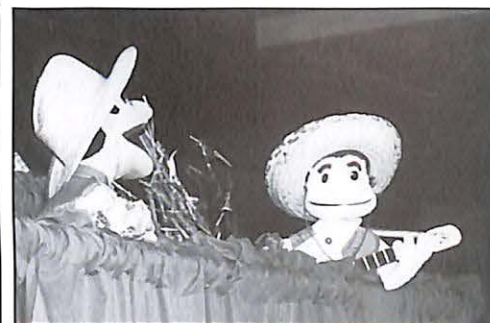
■ GLADWIN, MI. The Rev. Robert Brown baptized eight people at Round Lake Baptist Church. Youth Pastor Dave Winters baptized his

wife of five months. Also, seven people were accepted into the fellowship of the Church. —*Jean Jurgensen*

**CrossTimbers puppet team captures top awards**

■ FLOWER MOUND, TX. The CrossTimbers Baptist Church puppet team, Ambassadors At Arms (AAA), captured the top award in every category except one at the Seventh Annual One Way Street 1994 Regional Puppetry Festival in Irving, TX, October 21-22.

More than 600 people were in attendance at Calvary Temple to watch AAA compete in final competition with 16 other puppet teams from several states. Besides the professional panel of judges awarding them the "Gold Medal" in overall competition, the Ambassadors received first place in each of the following categories: "Outstanding Originality," "Exceptional Use of



Props and Scenery," and the "People's Choice Award." AAA is directed by Morrie and Lien Fenslason. Assistant Directors are Rick and Kelly Flanagan, scenery design, and Gabe Smith, creation.

"We are pleased with our team's development and growth. They are a real testimony of the power of God to minister through people who are willing to yield their lives in His service," says Pastor Presley.

The puppet team performed several times during the Triennial Conference (pictured.)

CARE

**Pacific Northwest Association holds annual meeting**

■ SULTAN, WA. The annual meeting of the Pacific Northwest Association's 16 churches was hosted by Pastor Bill Neuman and the members of Hillcrest Baptist Church in their new facilities.

The Rev. Phil Yntema, executive director, was the featured speaker. Among the other speakers were Melissa Krispense, CEIF; Dr. Rod and Mrs. April Zimmerman and Dr. Helen Marie Schmidt, missionaries to Cameroon; Dr. Ronn Read, Olympic View Baptist Church, Tacoma, WA; Darrell Schuh, First

Baptist Church, Elk Grove, CA; and former pastor, Ken Gould, and his wife Ingrid.

Seventy-five youth, under the leadership of youth directors John Gonnerman, Calvary Baptist, and Dan Santos, Olympic View, held a "Bible Bowl," a question and answer quiz based on I John.

The Rev. LeRoy Schauer is Pacific Northwest Area Minister, and the Rev. Larry Neufeld is the Association moderator for 1995. —*Earl Shadle*

**Hillcrest church offers Tender Loving Care Groups**

■ SIOUX FALLS, SD. One of the exciting ministry opportunities of Hillcrest Baptist Church is the Tender

Loving Care Groups (TLCG) that meet three Sunday evenings a month. It is a time focused on sharing, caring, prayer, and Bible study. The studies are electives; some groups study a book of the Bible, others study topics such as parenting, marriage, prayer, or discipleship.

A meal is prepared, for a small charge, by one of the men who sees this as his ministry. Because there are activities for infants through high school, these Sunday nights give the Church an opportunity to minister to the whole family.

**Temple church honors Kujat**

■ MEDICINE HAT, AB. Temple Baptist Church honored Pastor

Irwin and Louise Kujat at the Annual Fall Fellowship Banquet. A framed plate of Medicine Hat's historic Railway Station was presented to Kujats as their seven years of ministry at Temple was compared to a

railway stopover with more challenges ahead as Kujat becomes area minister of British Columbia.

The Rev. Robert Hoffman is interim pastor with Larry Dye, asso-

ciate pastor and Calvin Tomm, minister of music and worship.

—*Madeline Kern*

SERVE

**Chaplain Bollinger serves with "Operation Provide Promise"**

■ PUYALLUP, WA. AFR Capt. Craig Bollinger spent February through June 1994 involved in "Operation Provide Promise" in Sarajevo, Bosnia, Herzegovina, Croatia, Macedonia. He flew with air crews of C-130s and C-141s and provided ministry to Air Force, Army, and Marine Corp troops. They also brought humanitarian aid to people of Bosnia, Herzegovina, and Sarajevo.

"Many decisions were made for Christ," Bollinger reports.

**Caleb's Companions helps seniors fulfill God's purposes**

■ YORKTON, SK. Caleb's Companions is a ministry that targets those who are 60 years and older with opportunities for evangelism, discipleship, and service. When Caleb's Companions first began in 1991, the seniors met once-a-week for Bible study, prayer, and fellowship. CALEB is an acronym for companionship, active loving (or service), learning (or discipleship), evangelism, and blessed worship.

"Each of these aspects of ministry is used to let the seniors of the

Church know that just because they have aged doesn't mean they are useless or in the way," says Robert Sandford, senior pastor. "They are reminded that they can and should be active in God's work."

But the ministry as envisioned was intended to be more far-reaching. By mid-1994, the seniors caught a fuller sense of vision and elected a leadership team to give Caleb's Companions ministry more direction and attention. With that leadership, the ministry is growing in numbers from within the Church and from the community. Caleb's Companions seek to fulfill God's purpose in the lives of many seniors living in Yorkton.

**Church plant moves into larger facilities**

■ OTTAWA, ON. Harvest Baptist Church, which began in January 1992, in a trailer next to a real estate office, moved into a Viceroy cottage, renovated into a "Chapel," at the same location. The Church is continuing to reach out to the families and individuals in the developments around them.

"We are excited as we see God save and sanctify, forming our

motto, 'Foundations for Family and Friendships,'" says church planter Frank Hildebrandt.

The core membership group has grown to 28, and worship attendance has reached the 50s so the Church is using the trailer again for Junior Church. The Church offers several weekly cell groups: family cells, a prayer cell, a share (discipleship) cell, and a Real Life cell for young adults.

**Raymore church celebrates Harvest and Mission Day**

■ RAYMORE, SK. Raymore Baptist Church celebrated Harvest and Mission Day with guest speaker, the Rev. Leland Bertsch, missionary to the Philippines. Bertsch spoke at the morning worship service and presented a video on the work in the Philippines at the afternoon service.

A banner with the imperative, "Commanded to Care," decorated with produce and grain draped the front of the Church.

The Rev. Graham Kern led the communion service. Both morning and afternoon offerings were given to missions. The Rev. Graham Kern is the pastor —*Irma Brightman*

WORSHIP

**Folsom Church observes 60 hours of prayer**

■ FOLSOM, CA. Oak Hills Baptist Church began 1994 with a Sunday attendance of 225. On Sept. 11, 808 people were in the Church . . . an

increase of 260 percent.

"Our job is merely to lead these people into a relationship with Jesus Christ, integrate them into the community of believers, and develop them into His fully devoted follow-

ers," says Kent Carlson, pastor.

The Church is looking for another associate pastor to serve as one of the main teachers at Oak Hills as well as to lead in the area of small groups and discipleship. In addition



to this, the Church has the need to finance the ongoing needs of the Church, to build its next buildings, to care for the hurting people God is bringing to the Church, and to meet organizational and administrative demands of a church this size.

"It seems overwhelming," says Carlson. "God's Word reminds us that unless God is involved and doing the eternal work throughout the various ministries, we're wasting our time."

So, as a Church family, we dedicated 60 straight hours from 7 p.m. Thursday, October 6, to 7 a.m. Sunday, October 9, exclusively to prayer. We called it "Sixty Hours of Prayer." The kickoff for this time began October 6 when the entire New Community that night was dedicated to worship and prayer. People were encouraged to sign up, individually, as a couple, as friends, or as a small group, to come to the Church at least once to pray for an hour in a specially designated prayer room. Prayer helps were available to make this an even more effective and meaningful time.

"Nothing is more important than our commitment to be a people of prayer," says Carlson. "Placing our confidence not in our own strength, but in God's."

## GIVE

### Schauer speaks at Goodrich church

■ GOODRICH, ND. Area Minister Rev. Herb Schauer spoke at First Baptist Church's Harvest Mission service. "Former members were invited, and the service was well attended," reports Norma Felchle. The Rev. Kenneth Wutzke is the pastor.

## YOUTH NEWS

### Morris church youth participate in many ministries

■ MORRIS, MB. The junior and senior high youth groups at Emmanuel Baptist Church participated in many ministries during the summer.

Eighteen youth travelled to Denton, TX, to attend the Triennial Youth Conference. Several youth worked at Lake Nutimik Baptist Camp in Manitoba. Two youth served as summer missionaries in Europe, one in France and one in Germany.

The junior high youth sponsored a comprehensive book on drug safety which they distributed to all local businesses, health, and learning facilities. During "White Ribbons against Pornography" week, the youth handed out ribbons and information sheets to those attending the Church.

This fall, the youth observed their annual Rally at the Flag Pole at school where they were joined by youth from other local churches.

The youth also visited Union Gospel Mission in Winnipeg, where they helped serve a meal and cleaned up afterwards. The Rev. Dave Kirsch is the youth pastor.

## ANNIVERSARIES

### Valley City church celebrates 100th anniversary

■ VALLEY CITY, ND. First Baptist Church observed its centennial September 30 to October 2, 1994. The theme for the celebration was "Founded in Faith, Forward in Faithfulness."

The special events began on Friday evening with Music Night. Local talent and visitors brought musical selections. At a Saturday morning brunch, the women watched a program, "Fashions by the Spirit," presented by ten women modeling aprons depicting the Fruit of the Spirit. The men attended their brunch.

Saturday afternoon was spent at the Church visiting and looking at memorabilia and pictures. That evening a banquet was held at the University Student Center with the Rev. Richard Lute of Nebraska, as guest speaker.

The Rev. Bill Van Gerpen of Tyndale, SD, spoke at the Sunday morning worship service, and the Rev. Curtis Haas of Missouri at the

closing service Sunday afternoon. The Rev. Herb Schauer, area minister, also participated in the celebration. The Rev. Allan Gerber is the pastor.—Eileen Harris

### Gladwin church celebrates 90th anniversary

■ GLADWIN, MI. Round Lake Baptist Church celebrated its 90th anniversary on Sept. 18, 1994, with the theme, "Great Is Thy Faithfulness."

Dr. Constantino Salios, associate director of estate planning, spoke for both services. The Rev. Pat Clarey, former youth pastor, taught the adult Sunday school class.

Former members and friends were invited to join in the celebration and dinner. The Rev. Robert Brown is the pastor. —Jean Jurgensen

### Wedding Anniversary

■ Congratulations to Mr. and Mrs. Robert Eichler, Prince George, VA, on the celebration of their 61st wedding anniversary October 6.

## IN MEMORIAM

■ POTRATZ, ORVAL A., (64) Sumner, IA; born Dec. 24, 1929, to Albert and Josephine (Fossen) Potratz near Sumner; died Oct. 22, 1994; married Variena Schulte, Dec. 5, 1951; charter member, First Baptist Church, Sumner, IA; survived by his wife, Variena; daughter, Linda (Roger) Hagedorn; three sons: James (Lynda); Michael (Karin); Jeffrey (Cris); nine grandchildren; brother, Dr. Willis Potratz; two sisters: Burnita (Milton) Menke; Marva (John) Lalk; Pastor Douglas Sathren, funeral service.

■ REMPLE, CORNELIUS, (82), Calgary, AB, born Nov. 3, 1911, in Russia; died Sept. 22, 1994; immigrated to Canada in 1930; attended Bible schools in Winnipeg and the N.A.B. Seminary in Rochester, NY; ordained Nov. 3, 1940; married Gert-rude Hoffman, Nov. 25, 1940; together they served N.A.B. churches in White-mouth (MB) Baptist; Trochu (AB) Baptist; Venturia (ND) Baptist; First Baptist, Hebron, ND; Bethel Baptist, Missoula, MT; Portland Ave. Baptist, Tacoma, WA; Temple Baptist, Calgary, AB; Grace Baptist, Medicine Hat, AB; and as associate pastor, Thornhill Baptist, Calgary, AB; retired after 45 years of faithful service to the Lord; survived by his wife, Gertrude; one daughter, Sharon (Willi) Shultz; one grandson, Matthew; one granddaughter, Sara (Mark) Stewart; and one great-grandson, William Stewart; Dr. Walter Kerber, pastor, funeral service.

■ SCHRENK, CHRISTINA (99), Aberdeen, SD; born June 11, 1894, to Martin and Christina (Knoll) Bender in Venturia, ND; died May 7, 1994; married Jacob P. Schrenk, Dec. 13, 1913; mem-

ber, Venturia Baptist Church, Venturia, ND; active member, Sunday school teacher, worked with children/youth singing groups, Women's Mission Society, First Baptist, Aberdeen, SD; participant in local radio ministry; survived by two sons: Ephraim J., Dallas, OR, and Milton, Aberdeen, SD; one daughter, V. Frieda Kusler, Aberdeen, SD; six grandchildren; 14 great-grandchildren; four great, great-grandchildren; the Reverends Herold E. Salem and Oliver Bender, officiating, funeral service.

■ TESSMANN, APOLONIA (100), Bismarck, ND; born May 18, 1894, in Wolynien, Russia, to Leopold and Maria Adam; died Sept. 19, 1994; married Paul Tessmann, Dec. 28, 1912, in Wolynien; immigrated to the USA in 1914; member, Goodrich (ND) Baptist Church; moved to Harvey, ND, 1954; predeceased by her husband in 1957; survived by two sons: Dave (Frieda) and Clarence (Alma) of Goodrich; seven grandchildren; and 13 great-grandchildren; the Rev. Clyde Leimberer, officiating, funeral service.

■ WILLMANN, GON-HARD (61), Prince George, BC; born Jan. 2, 1933, in Frauenburg, Lithuania; died July 3, 1994, in Prince George, BC; member, Bad Oeynhausien, Germany; immigrated to Canada, where he joined Bethel Baptist Church, Prince George, BC; the Rev. Eduard Nerling, officiating, funeral service.

■ ZIEMER, MYRON D. (82), Hutchinson, MN; born May 9, 1912, to William and Martha (Hildebrandt) Ziemer; died Oct. 11, 1994; married Viola Jensen, Aug.

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25, 1942; active member, deacon, Sunday school teacher, choir member 50 years, Bethany Baptist, Hutchinson, MN; predeceased by his parents, two brothers, and grandson, Ted, in 1992; survived by his wife, Vi; one son, Don (Immie)

Ziemer, Waxhaw, NC; one daughter, Marthann (Paul) Olson, Orono, MN; four grandchildren; one brother, Melvin (Celia) Ziemer; the Reverends Bert Itterman and Chuck Carlson, officiating, funeral service.



## Baptist and Orthodox Meet

■ **ISTANBUL, TURKEY (BWA)**—In an attempt to seek greater understanding to help Baptists and the Orthodox peacefully coexist in Eastern Europe, Baptist and Orthodox leaders met October 22-24 at Istanbul (Constantinople) and began "initial exploratory discussions" with the hope that future conversations will occur.

The thirteen-man Baptist World Alliance delegation from England, Germany, Bulgaria, the former Soviet Union, and the United States was led by BWA President Knud Wumpelmann and General Secretary Denton Lotz.

The Orthodox team was led by His Eminence Metropolitan Professor Dr. Chrysostomos of the Senior See of Ephesus, head of the Orthodox Synodical Committee of Inter-Christian Affairs of the Ecumenical Patriarchate.

Both sides agree there was an excellent spirit at the meeting, and the Orthodox leaders promised to convey this to their 15 self-governing churches whose approval is needed for the talks to continue.

The meeting could be described as "one small step" towards religious understanding, since it is uncertain if the talks will continue, and "one giant step" because it is the first in the 400-year history of Baptists.

These talks could not have come

at a better time since Baptist leaders in Eastern Europe, especially in Bulgaria, are being described by local Orthodox leaders as "an heretical sect" and charged with such bizarre acts as killing babies.

BWA President Wumpelmann appealed to Chrysostomos to do whatever can be done to ease the situation of Baptists in Bulgaria.

In the theological discussions that followed, Baptist leaders learned much about the Orthodox faith with its emphasis on mysticism, prayer, and an unswerving commitment to the orthodoxy or right beliefs of the Christian faith.

Lotz said Baptists and the Orthodox agree on great theological issues like the Trinity, the Person of Christ, the Holy Spirit, the sacred Scriptures, and have shared a common suffering under Communism.

Chief among the issues that divide and need to be discussed is the Baptist commitment to evangelism which the Orthodox describe as "proselytism" or "sheep-stealing" in areas they consider their national territory, or their religious soil.

But in the good spirit of this first meeting, Baptist and Orthodox leaders tried to understand each other and lay the groundwork for possible future meetings.

Among those present was Gerald Borchert, professor of New Testament at Southern Seminary, who gave an outline of previous conversations involving Baptists. □

## African Baptists . . .

(continued from page 2)

Baptist pastors and people long for reconciliation. "The problem needs prayer," says Joe Lusi.

"The church must keep preaching reconciliation," says Mathe. "The chaplains in the camp have an important role to play."

While in Kenya, Montacute and Ziherambere spoke at an All Africa Baptist Youth meeting. When Ziherambere finished, Evelyn Zimulinda, the secretary of the Baptist Women's Union of Africa, spoke.

"While I am seen as a Tanzanian living in Nairobi, I am, in fact, a Rwandese Tutsi," she said. She fled Rwanda with her family in 1959.

Quoting from the Bible, Esther 4:14, Zimulinda told Ziherambere he was their leader "for a time as this."

Montacute says, "Standing with her arm around Ziherambere, she asked if anyone present could tell they were from different tribes. She declared they were brother and sister . . . a son and daughter of Rwanda, and they now needed to work together to defeat the work of the devil in Rwanda."

Zimulinda said it was up to Tutsi and Hutu Christians to work together, and quoted Psalm 108:13, "With God, we shall gain the victory, and He will trample down our enemies."

"As she asked someone to pray for them both," Montacute said, "she turned with tears in her eyes to Ziherambere and asked, 'Eleazar, do you love me?'"

"I do love you, my sister," Ziherambere replied. "I love you, my brother," said Zimulinda.

"There was audible sobbing around the room," said Montacute as someone prayed for them. "There was not a dry eye, including mine." (BWA) □

## Ministerial Changes

■ **The Rev. Paul Baumbach** from pastor, Temple Baptist Church, Jansen, SK, effective December 1.

■ **The Rev. Kenneth Wutzke** from pastor, First Baptist Church, Goodrich, ND, effective March 1995.

■ **The Rev. Scott Shaum** to associate pastor, Grace Community Church, Detroit, MI.

■ **The Rev. Rinn Tamm** to associate pastor, Cambodian Ministry, Stockton, CA. This church ministry meets in Quail Lakes Baptist Church.

■ **The Rev. Scott Weisser** from pastor, Immanuel Baptist Church, Brookfield, WI, to an ABC USA church in Michigan.

■ **Mr. Harold Huber** from pastor of youth ministries, Steele Heights Baptist Church, Edmonton, AB, to pastor a Free Church in Irma, AB.

■ **Mr. Tim Dekker** from pastor First Baptist Church, Warburg, AB, to pastor, First Baptist Church, Smoky Lake, AB.

■ **The Rev. Don Snell** to interim pastor, First Baptist Church, Warburg, AB.

■ **Mr. Doug McRae** to pastor, Brooks Baptist Church, Brooks, AB.

■ **Rev. Richard Dodson** to assistant pastor, Calvary Baptist Church, Bethlehem, PA, effective December 1994.

## Retirement

■ **The Rev. Loren Weber** retired from the pastorate of Brooks Baptist Church, Brooks, AB, in May. He was ordained by First Baptist Church, Buffalo Center, IA, August 4, 1958. He served the following: Iowa Rural Bible Crusade, 1953-55; pastor, South Canyon Baptist Church, Rapid City, SD, 1958-62; Isabel Baptist Church, SD, 1962-65; First Baptist Church, Arnprior, ON, 1966-72; Nepean Baptist Church, Ottawa, ON, 1972-75; First Baptist Church, Bellwood,

IL, 1975-81; Temple Baptist Church, Medicine Hat, AB, 1982-87; and Brooks Baptist Church, Brooks, AB, 1988-94.

## Ordination

■ **Silverwood Baptist Church**, Saskatoon, SK, ordained its pastor, **Michael Goethe**, at a service held on Oct. 30, 1994. The ordination message was delivered by Dr. Ralph Powell, Distinguished Professor of Theology Emeritus, North American Baptist Seminary. Dr. Powell stressed that we need to have more strong men of God like Daniel. Daniel took action for God because he was a man of character who could not be compromised; this was because Daniel's heart was close to God's heart.

## Church name change

■ **Eastside Baptist Church**, a church planting project in Galt, CA, has changed its name to Horizon Baptist Church. Steve Lemke serves as church planter there.

## New area ministers appointed

■ The Executive Committee of the N.A.B. Conference appointed part-time Associate Area Ministers for three Associations at its November specially called meeting. The appointments were made on recommendation of the Executive Committees of the Associations involved. Those appointed are the Rev. Herb Schauer of Hebron, ND, for the Northern Dakota Association and the Central Dakota/Montana Association; Dr. Sam Berg of Nepean, ON, for the Eastern Association, effective Nov. 1, 1994, to Sept. 30, 1995; and the Rev. Chester Strobel of Hope, KS, for the Southwestern Association, effective Jan. 1, 1995, to June 30, 1995. Strobel continues as pastor of First Baptist Church of Dickinson County.

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## On Discipling

I read with great interest a recent issue of "N.A.B. News" (No. 4, 1994). What caught . . . (and) held my attention were the words of the nominee for executive director, Rev. Philip Yntema . . . (and) the proposed revised purpose statement for the N.A.B. Conference: "To glorify God by making disciples at home and abroad." I had to applaud the statement and Yntema's comments.

I was encouraged to see the Conference and the executive director nominee speaking in terms that so fully matches what our and a sister church have been attempting for some years. First, Whyte Ridge Baptist and then Rowandale Baptist (both in Winnipeg, MB) launched a Growing by Discipling ministry developed and assisted by Churches Alive. The

purpose statement and Yntema's remarks affirmed our efforts.

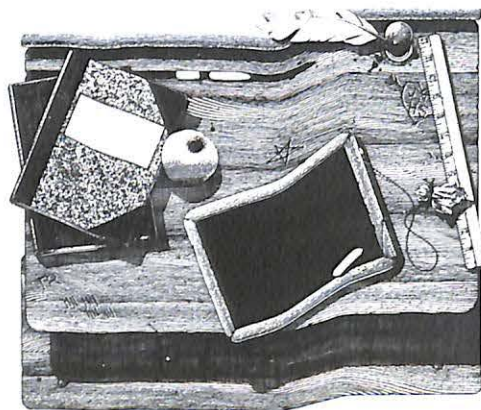
The purpose of our discipleship ministries is "to glorify God"; our goal is "to make disciples who reproduce" (or as Yntema put it, "making disciplers"); and our plan is "to equip people for the work of ministry." At the core of our ministry is short and long-term discipling small groups called Discovery and Growth Groups respectively. Discovery groups are six to twelve weeks in length and introduce people to the basics of discipleship, viz., Jesus, salvation, Christian living, and the church. Growth Groups are 18-24 month accountability groups focusing on Bible discussion, sharing, outreach training, and prayer.

We believe that part of our mandate as disciple-making churches is to help other churches, and individ-

uals within these churches, become more effective disciplers. In May, our two churches hosted the second annual Growing by Discipling Institute—a one-day seminar where people can learn more about the ministry, interact with other disciplers, and gain practical discipling skills. At this year's GBDI, we had 16 elective sessions led by 10 different individuals including six lay ministers. The Institute was attended by 64 people from 12 churches (half of which were Conference churches).

For more information on our discipleship ministry, contact either me at Rowandale Baptist or Pastor Dave Henkelman at Whyte Ridge Baptist—Ken Dueck, associate pastor of discipling and adult education, Rowandale Baptist Church, Winnipeg, MB.

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**JESUS Film Evangelism** - Participate in the CBC Crusade Ministry using the JESUS film

**TEACH '95** - Join a Cameroonian leadership team conducting teaching seminars for Cameroon Baptist Convention pastors and deacons.

If the Lord is leading you to volunteer for one of these ministries, call or write the Rev. Fred Folkerts, International Missions Department, N.A.B. Conference, 1 So. 210 Summit Ave., Oakbrook Terrace, IL 60181 or Fax: (708) 495-3301; call: (708) 495-2000.

## BUILDING CHURCHES INTO THE 21ST CENTURY

## Reaching the City for the Savior by Melissa Krispense

"In 1988 International City Community Church was sanctioned by our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ, through the service of His humble servant, Pastor William T. Grier, Jr." So begins the historical account of the International City Community Church in Philadelphia, PA.

In 1988 God gave Bill Grier, a pastor in Coatesville, PA, the heart to develop a ministry in the southwest area of Philadelphia that extended beyond traditional concepts. The focus was evangelism by establishing strong leadership, developing committed preachers, and uniting diverse groups. Grier began several Bible studies in the target area from which a core group developed, and in October 1989, resigned his Coatesville pastorate to devote himself to the new ministry.

About a year later, God brought Grier's group and the N.A.B. Conference together through the Center for Urban Theological Studies. The Conference desired to plant churches in the Philadelphia area, and Grier felt led to affiliate this planting effort with the Conference.

The Church, meeting in a Presbyterian church building at the time, prayed for permanent facilities to support its expanding ministry. God provided a facility which served

until August 1990. The group then moved to an industrial area previously off limits to any religious groups.

Grier continued to stress evangelism through developing a core group of people and training ministers in the "how to and don't do" of the church. International City began offering counseling services and again grew to need a new facility.

In 1993, after various attempts to obtain facilities, the Church was led to a building in Philadelphia's southwest area where both they and the surrounding community strongly desired a church. The building had been occupied by a Lutheran congregation until a year prior.

In early 1994, God directed International City to Church Extension Investors Fund for loan assistance to purchase the building. Purchase negotiations were finalized in September, and a special dedication and service of praise held October 31. At the service, the Church presented CEIF Director Bob Mayforth with a check to pay off one of its CEIF loans.

International City has teamed with other ministries to provide food, clothing, and furniture aid to the community, and plans to establish a Christian rehabilitation program.

The core group of 35 is "welded together by the Holy Spirit," says Grier. Several ministers discipled by Grier plan to enter full-time ministry; 10 people are preparing for baptism, and others are responding to the Church's witness.

"Our emphasis is evangelism," Grier says. "We don't have programs. We reach people for Christ, and as they come, they bring needs. We let people tell us what they need, and those needs dictate our ministry. We demonstrate Christ as an all-sufficient Savior." □

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