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Couple's 3-bedroom home open
to HIV children, others in need By Alberta Lindsey

Baptist Press
1/11/94

RICHMOND, Va. (BP)--Charles and Martha Carter are good at loving children and letting go.

They should be. The Carters have done it more than 280 times.

During the past 28 years, the couple has cared for 286 foster children in their Richmond-area home.

"Our mission is to take a child, get it ready to go on to its 'forever home' and we move on to the next one. But a little piece of your heart goes with every one of them," said Mrs. Carter as she sat beside her husband on the porch of the family's three-bedroom house.

The Carters, who are members of Richmond's Mt. Vernon Baptist Church, share their home with one of their own three children; three foster sons -- ages 16 months, 4 months and 1 month; an 11-year-old granddaughter; and a cat, dog and fish.

In addition, Mrs. Carter looks after three children -- 5 years old, 10 months and 8 months -- while their parents work.

"I would like to have a big house in the country and be able to take all of the children nobody wants. My heart is bigger than my house," she said.

Race is not an issue for the Carters, who are white. They take in children who need a home. Currently they have two black foster children and one who is biracial.

Although the average stay is six months, some children stay longer.

"We like to have the babies placed within six months," Mrs. Carter said.

"It's easier on everybody. They have not grown so attached to us. They bond better when they are younger. When they leave us, they go with a set of grandparents"

The Carters -- he's 58 and she's 53 -- are a special needs foster home for Children's Home Society of Virginia. They take care of children who may be premature, have such problems as Down's syndrome or are HIV positive. They've also taken care of babies born addicted to drugs or alcohol.

Their 4-month-old biracial foster son is small for his age; his mother was a drug addict.

The 16-month-old tested HIV positive at birth. A more recent test was negative. The child's mother has AIDS.

"He has a 1-in-400 chance of developing AIDS," said Mrs. Carter.

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"When we first started, there were not a lot of special needs, but with the drugs, alcohol and AIDS, it's becoming more and more."

Said Carter, "It's sad to say we are one of a few (foster families) who will take HIV positive children. We don't see it as a threat to our family or to us if we take the proper precautions. People are afraid of it because of a lack of knowledge."

While Children's Home Society has several foster families who have been with the agency for years and years, "we rarely encounter someone as committed as the Carters," said Peter Pufki, the agency's director. "We are pleased to have them on our team. They are good folks. We have seen their willingness to meet new challenges."

The Carters share the child-care responsibilities. He is the lead electrician in the engineering department at a local hospital. She is a part-time usher and receptionist at Bliley's Funeral Home.

"When she works on the weekend, I take care of the children," Carter said.

The couple has many stories to tell about their foster children -- some good; a few sad. And they have had to deal with looks and comments when they are out with black children.

Carter recalled a foster son who went through the legal process of emancipation to go out on his own at 16.

"He was searching for something in his life that he couldn't find. ... He was shot and killed on Franklin Street when he was 21. He had been in 20 some foster homes before we got him," Carter said.

On a happier note, Mrs. Carter recalled a foster daughter who joined the family at age 4.

"She was not liked by her father and had been terribly abused. He would hold her head under water. We had her for eight months and she got to be so secure and loving she could swim under water. We went to a picnic one day and met a couple interested in adoption.

"They talked to us and called the agency the next day. Three months later, she was theirs. She's doing fine," Mrs. Carter said.

Twenty years ago when the couple took in their first black baby, "People were nasty," Mrs. Carter said.

"They were very, very hostile and curt to us," her husband added.

"This is a ministry. These are children who need love. Those who know us know the situation. Those who don't know us, I really don't care," Mrs. Carter said.

"These children are part of our family. They go where we go. They go to church with us. They go to restaurants, on vacation."

Some of the children stay in touch with the foster parents.

Carter said every so often he answers the phone and a former foster child says: "Hi, Granddaddy. How are you?"

A young mother whose daughter is a former foster child of the Carters said: "We have kept up with them and do Christmas and birthday presents. This is my child's nanna and granddaddy."

The child, now 7, lived with the Carters from shortly after her birth until she was about a year old because her parents were not financially able to support her.

"They took excellent care of her. They are good, loving people. We were able to visit her there. Sometimes I would watch the children while (Mrs. Carter) went out."

The 7-year-old still occasionally has overnight visits with the Carters.

When grandparents day is held at school, Mrs. Carter sometimes is invited by former foster children. And she goes.

"People say to us: 'You are so wonderful. You are so great.' That's not true. The children are great," she said. "We are just there to meet the needs when its necessary."

SIDEBAR**22,000 babies abandoned,
government study reports**

WASHINGTON (BP)--Thousands of babies have been abandoned in hospitals across the country by parents unwilling or unable to take them home, the Associated Press reported in a recent national article.

"They are the tiniest victims of crack cocaine, poverty, homelessness and AIDS, and one of the reasons the number of children in foster care is inching toward half a million," the AP noted.

Researchers counted 22,000 abandoned infants and "boarder babies" in the nation's hospitals in 1991, according to a draft report from the Department of Health and Human Services.

Boarder babies were defined as those under 12 months of age who remain in a hospital beyond the time when they are medically able to be discharged. Abandoned infants are those under 12 months old who are unlikely to leave the hospital in the custody of their biological parents.

The report is the first national survey on boarder babies, the AP reported, adding "the researchers said their numbers probably underestimate the problem."

Southern Baptist Christian Life Commission spokesman Louis Moore described the report as "one more sad commentary on the devaluation of human life in our culture today.

"In a day of rampant abortion, it is truly a miracle that these 22,000 abandoned children were not killed in the womb," Moore added. "These statistics remind us that in addition to being pro-life, we also must be pro-adoption.

"We must open our hearts and our homes to these children, even when they come from racial groups, economic backgrounds and circumstances different from our own. Jesus loved all the children and we must follow the Savior's example and do likewise," Moore said.

The researchers found hospitalized babies who ranged from basically healthy to medically fragile -- children with heart defects and respiratory disorders, hepatitis and congenital syphilis, Down's syndrome, cleft palates and symptoms of drug withdrawal.

Some were premature, many born weighing less than 5.5 pounds, the AP noted.

The report found 30 percent of the boarder babies nationwide will go home with their biological parents. The rest are placed in alternative homes because their parents are found unfit, unable or unwilling to take their child.

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Art Toalston and Erich Bridges contributed to this story.

**Russian Baptists murdered
in Tajikistan home Dec. 31**

**Baptist Press
1/11/94**

DUSHANBE, Tajikistan (BP)--An ethnic Russian church choir director and his four children were murdered New Year's Eve in their home along with three visitors, according to a report from Russian Baptists.

All the victims except one visitor, a neighbor, reportedly belonged to the Baptist church in Dushanbe, Tajikistan's capital. The other two visitors were ethnic German Baptists -- a mother and daughter. Nothing was reported stolen from the house.

At 3 a.m., while all were asleep, a group of armed men reportedly started beating on the door. The choir director's wife fled her house for help. Neighbors sent for Russian border troops, stationed nearby to quell ethnic and religious violence that has shattered the community. But the troops arrived to find the house afire and its inhabitants dead.

Authorities at first denied the incident, the report said, but acknowledged it and began investigating after the British Broadcasting Corporation aired a report.

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A Russian Orthodox priest in Dushanbe also was reported murdered about the same time.

A report reaching the Baptist World Alliance from Moscow Baptists identified the choir director as "Brother Limar" and said his wife, five children and two relatives were killed. It also identified the attackers as "robbers" and said they had been arrested.

As of Jan. 11, Baptist Press had been unable to reconcile the differences in the two reports.

Tajikistan, a former republic of the Soviet Union bordering Afghanistan, is heavily Muslim. Tension between native Tajiks and ethnic Russians has run high in the wake of Tajikistan's September 1991 declaration of independence.

Across Central Asia, Russians are resented because of their past dominance in ethnic regions -- even before the "Russification" of former republics during the heyday of the Soviet Union. Baptist churches were started mostly by Russians in the regions.

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Burger King vice president
lives marketplace ministry

By Sarah Zimmerman

Baptist Press
1/11/94

MIAMI (BP)--Twenty-four hours after her divorce was final, Rachelle Hood-Phillips moved from Chicago to Miami with two suitcases and a 2-year-old daughter.

Drowning in debt and loneliness, she had a job but remembers all she wanted was peace.

Hood-Phillips grew up in Detroit where she says she had many encounters with God. It wasn't until she reached the end of her rope in Miami, however, that she made a personal commitment to him.

"I pulled over to the side of the road and prayed, 'Jesus, if you're real, you've got to help me out. I can't hold on any longer.'"

Now Hood-Phillips exemplifies the growing number of lay people who consider their jobs their mission fields, says Reid Hardin, Southern Baptist Home Mission Board coordinator of marketplace evangelism.

"I was born again and then I jumped in with both feet," recalls Hood-Phillips, a member of Wayside Baptist Church in Miami. Nearly 10 years later, she adds, "My life is so full of miracles."

One miracle is her marriage. As she began to study the Bible, she became convicted about divorce. "I prayed, 'If it's your will, get us back together.' But I thought, 'There's no way.' Little by little God removed the barriers and we were remarried seven years ago."

Hood-Phillips moved to Miami to work as director of advertising and promotion at Burger King Corporation's world headquarters. She has since been promoted to vice president for human resource development and diversity affairs.

Part of her task is leading management to respond appropriately to more women and non-Anglos entering the work force. In essence, she's paid to be a peacemaker, and she uses the opportunity to share Christ.

"I wanted to leave the work place and go into full-time ministry. Now I realize I can't separate the two," Hood-Phillips says. "It's a lifestyle. If I'm going to be here, I'm going to make a difference."

"I've made a commitment to witness to everyone I work with, but not every one has accepted," she says. She quit counting how many people made professions of faith because God convicted her it was becoming a matter of pride.

The length of her daily quiet time is determined by what Hood-Phillips faces at work that day. She prays over meetings, deals, people and proposals. Major decisions require "mega-praying," she adds.

"I always pray for the executive committee (Burger King's decision makers). I've seen a change in the way we treat people. This is a more compassionate, caring company."

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That was evident in 1992 when 300 Burger King Corporation employees, including Hood-Phillips, lost their homes in Hurricane Andrew. The corporation created a relief fund to help employees get re-established, and Hood-Phillips was named chairman of the committee to distribute the grants.

"Marketplace ministries will express itself in infinite ways -- ethics, compassion, listening," says Hardin of the Home Mission Board. "It is not a program to take home but a concept to interface our faith with our work. It is learning to be God's person in the flow of life, not something extra you do one night a week."

Hardin encourages churches to host marketplace ministry weekends during which people who witness on the job encourage others to do the same. A national marketplace ministries conference is scheduled Nov. 17-20 in Miami.

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EDITORS' NOTE: The following three stories focus on Baptists engaged in bivocational ministry.

Volunteer's 'bus ministry'
blends missions, tourism

By Mark Wingfield

Baptist Press
1/11/94

AUBURN, Maine (BP)--Ever wished you could follow your offerings to the mission field and see what they accomplish?

That's the idea behind a unique ministry developed by volunteer missionary Mary Beth Caffey in cooperation with the Southern Baptist Home Mission Board and the Baptist Convention of New England.

Caffey is a Mission Service Corps tentmaker, which means the Texas native generates her own financial support to serve as church development director for Maine Baptist Association. This year she also serves as president of the BCNE.

To generate financial support, Caffey has developed her own business, VPS Tours. She serves a number of secular clients but concentrates a portion of her business on missions awareness tours.

That's why she calls her bivocational work her "bus ministry." Throughout the year she has opportunities to share her faith with clients who don't know she's a Baptist missionary. And then in the summer and fall she escorts Baptists across New England to highlight the needs of home missions.

"The purpose of the tours is to help folks come to New England to see where their gifts through the Cooperative Program and Annie Armstrong Easter Offering are being invested -- and to see that those gifts truly are making a difference," Caffey explained. "A secondary purpose is to help folks catch the excitement of missions involvement again, to see that it can be fun, challenging and just flat-out exciting."

This year, Caffey plans to conduct 10 missions awareness tours, many of them the first week in October when fall foliage is at its peak. This combination of fall foliage and missions awareness makes the package "two trips for the price of one," she said.

Without exception, past participants in the awareness tours have gained a greater appreciation for missions and returned to be more involved in missions at home, Caffey said. "We have seen every life changed when they leave here. The words I hear over and over again are, 'I had no idea of the needs. My life has been impacted by this.' I've heard that from every group."

Caffey especially likes the story about a Texas woman who returned from the awareness tour to find her church engaged in a debate about whether to help sponsor a new mission. Some in the congregation believed their church was not large enough or strong enough to help start another church.

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"Because she had seen what could happen here, her input led that church to sponsor the new work," Caffey recalled. "So the change that occurs is not just for the benefit of New England."

The standard missions awareness tour is an eight-day package that includes seven nights of lodging, 10 meals, motorcoach transport and sightseeing admissions for \$849 per person. Transportation to and from New England is not included.

Stops on the tour include Boston; Providence, R.I.; York, Maine; Portsmouth, N.H.; Freeport, Maine; Lincoln, N.H.; Stowe, Burlington and Woodstock, Vt.; Hartford, Conn.; and other points along the way.

"We see every area of home missions ministry Southern Baptists support in New England," Caffey said. "We meet both fully appointed missionaries as well as missions volunteer leadership, bivocational pastors and various types of ministries. We also worship in a New England church on Sunday."

While the standard tour is available for any individual or group, Caffey also arranges special tours for churches or groups of churches that bring their own group.

For further information about the missions awareness tours, contact Caffey at (800) 446-4627 or call the HMB's customer service center at (800) 634-2462.

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His ministry dates back to
'John 3 16' license plate

By Ferrell Foster

Baptist Press
1/11/94

CARLINVILLE, Ill. (BP)--Red and white letters on the back of his brother's 1949 Plymouth read "John 3 16." Pete Olroyd thought it was a phone number. It wasn't.

Olroyd noticed the message upon his return to central Illinois in the mid-1950s after a stint in the Navy. It was the first time Olroyd had seen his half-brother, John Hudelson, since going into the service.

At that time, people still called an operator to connect their phone calls, so Olroyd assumed "John 3 16" was John Hudelson's phone number.

When Olroyd commented about the "phone number," Hudelson "kind of laughed." Then "he shared the Lord with me."

"I couldn't believe it was the same man," Olroyd said recently at his home in Carlinville, Ill. "He and I had never gotten along well."

A few days later, at Carlinville's Immanuel Baptist Church, Hudelson led Olroyd to Christ and the pastor's wife led Olroyd's wife, Joyce, to the Lord.

Olroyd is now 59 years old and retired from the U.S. Postal Service. He also resigned last year as pastor of nearby Fayette Baptist Church, where he was named one of Illinois' two bivocational pastors of the year in 1993.

"When we left we all cried," Olroyd said. "It was probably the hardest time in our life. But we felt like the Lord was in it. I just felt like the Lord was through with us over there."

The man who once thought "John 3 16" was a phone number has baptized 191 people during the past 15 years.

When the Olroyds left the church, Sunday school attendance was averaging in the 90s -- a far cry from 15 years ago when Olroyd first preached there.

At the time, Olroyd was a lay preacher, filling pulpits in the area virtually every Sunday. Earlier he had told the Lord he would preach but didn't want to be a pastor.

That first Sunday at Fayette, seven people heard Olroyd's message. But on his way back to Carlinville, Olroyd said he felt God wanted him to be pastor of the church.

Mrs. Olroyd thought he was crazy. That same morning she had taught 17 women in her Sunday school class at their home church, where she also was the pianist.

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Fayette church, on a 7-2 vote (he thinks), asked Olroyd to come as pastor, and he went. Shortly thereafter, on a Wednesday night, Mrs. Olroyd was walking home from a revival service at Immanuel while her husband was at Fayette.

"On my way home ... (God) spoke to my heart," she said. "That's when he called me ... really convicted me that's where he wanted me."

"Phenomenal growth" came quickly. In 1979, the congregation was cited as the fastest growing Sunday school (by percentage) in the Southern Baptist Convention, Olroyd said. Since then growth has been gradual.

"I believe Sunday school is the key to church growth," Olroyd said, noting he came to his belief in Sunday school early in his Christian life.

Two months after accepting Christ, he was asked to teach a Sunday school class. That was probably too quick, Olroyd said, but Sunday school superintendent Tom Barkley "took us under his wing." That meant fishing trips and time "talking about the Lord."

Eventually Olroyd became a deacon, Sunday school director, Brotherhood director and Royal Ambassador leader.

Then a "Witness Involvement Now" school led by Gerald Steffy at Immanuel Baptist "revolutionized my life," Olroyd said.

"Joyce and I really got involved in witnessing and winning people to the Lord," he remembered. He soon made a public commitment to do "whatever" the Lord wanted him to do. And, in 1973, he began "speaking" in churches.

Olroyd, still Sunday school director, would get things going at Immanuel on Sunday morning then head to a neighboring church to speak. Not until a policeman stopped him while driving 87 miles per hour on his way to Litchfield one Sunday did Olroyd give up the Sunday school post.

All that preaching eventually led to Fayette, a country church about 18 miles west of his home. There are eight or 10 houses in the immediate area, he said, but many people call the surrounding area home, including some "moving in and out all the time" as jobs took them elsewhere.

"Our church (at Fayette) was probably known for the fact that they accepted everybody," Olroyd said.

"They accept people whether it is a child that is poorly dressed, smells bad" or whatever, Mrs. Olroyd added.

Olroyd recalled baptizing a whole family of carnival workers who lived in the area for a while. He also remembered the time a cockroach crawled across his arm while he was visiting in a home.

"Not all churches are like Fayette that will take anybody," he added.

"I've never been in a church that has any finer deacons than that church," he continued, citing their soul-winning efforts. During invitations at the end of worship services, "we always had deacons at the front" to lead people to Christ, Olroyd said, noting, "They felt when I knelt with someone to pray it would kill the invitation."

The Fayette church continues doing well, Olroyd said. "And they're going to do great because they're good people."

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He is pastor of 2 churches
-- and was a principal, too

By Bill Webb

Baptist Press
1/11/94

BROUGHTON, Ill. (BP)--Ernest Essary's Sundays are dizzying.

Essary has been pastor of New Prospect Baptist Church in Broughton, Ill., since 1955 and of Ditney Ridge Missionary Baptist Church, 14 miles away near Norris City since 1967.

During an earlier four-year stint at Ditney Ridge, he also was pastor of a third church, Kingdom Baptist near Carmi.

All of that while handling responsibilities as a teacher and coach and later -- until his retirement in 1987 -- as principal of Eldorado Junior High School.

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"On Sunday mornings on the first and third Sundays I am her (at New Prospect) at 9:45 and at Ditney at 11," said Essary, 66, one of two bivocational pastors of the year named by the Illinois Directors of Missions Fellowship in 1993.

"I'm over here at 6 for Bible study (then) I'm back at Ditney for evening services," he continued.

The schedule is reversed on the second and fourth Sundays, except there is no evening service at Ditney.

On Wednesday evenings, Essary leads Bible study at New Prospect at 6:30 and at Ditney Ridge at 7:45. He also has led a women's Bible study every Thursday morning back at New Prospect the past four years.

In addition, Essary periodically takes his turn on Fairfield Baptist Association's Sunday morning "Baptist Hour" slot on McLeansboro radio station WMCL.

Serving as pastor of two congregations requires both clear understandings, flexibility and a high level of cooperation between the two churches, Essary said.

The success of the unique relationship between a bivocational pastor and two churches is dependent upon one of Essary's deepest convictions. "I firmly believe it is the people who make the church, not the pastor," he said.

"My major job is to feed the sheep and their job is to reproduce," he said flatly. "I tell them they don't pay me to visit. That's their job. They call me only when it is necessary. They do it.

"I tell my people there are all kinds of witnesses. You just decide what kind you want to be. Every step you take you are a witness."

The result has been two growing churches.

Each had membership in the 20s when Essary began. Today, Sunday morning attendance ranges from the 50s to the 70s at New Prospect. Sunday school attendance sometimes reaches into the 90s at Ditney Ridge with more in worship.

Each congregation has completed two major building programs under Essary's leadership. The most recent at New Prospect was a two-level classroom and fellowship hall wing two years ago. Ditney Ridge recently moved into its 200-seat worship center.

New Prospect consistently appears among the top 50 churches in the state in Cooperative Program giving, while Ditney Ridge gives about 30 percent of its income to mission causes.

The congregations not only share a pastor, they frequently plan joint events.

"We do lots and lots of things together," Essary said. "A men's breakfast is the third Sunday here and the last Sunday there. The ladies have breakfasts on opposite times."

The congregations team up for a shelter care ministry at Enfield one Sunday afternoon a month, and one adjusts its schedule to participate in the other's revival or homecoming services, he said.

"They almost could be one church if the locale was right," Essary noted. "The relationships are just like one."

Until Ditney Ridge's new worship center was completed a few weeks ago, neither church had a baptistry. "When we had a baptismal service, candidates came from both churches."

Sunday evening youth activities at New Prospect often draw young people from Ditney, Essary added.

Essary encourages both congregations to lend strong support to their young people. As a result, it is not unusual for either to adjust a midweek service to avoid a conflict with an athletic or other school event in the area.

"If we want our young people to be interested in the church, we have to show an interest in what they're doing," he said, noting he and his wife, Nellie, still try to be present whenever daughter LaNelle, now an adult, is singing or playing the piano.

Essary is an outspoken advocate of the bivocational ministry as an effective model.

"Personally, I don't think the bivocational pastor is any different than any other," he said. "I think if pastors would just plain recognize the capabilities (of their people) and let the people work, they would have a lot better ministry.

"If you can't trust your people, you'd better get someplace else," he said.

"I think (bivocational pastors) are A-No. 1," he continued. "You are with people in whatever capacity you are serving as a bivocational. They know you as a person. I really think I've reached more people being involved with kids than I would in any big church around.

"One of the most rewarding things to this day is that people I had back in school will call for counsel or ask me to participate in weddings or, if something goes wrong, they will yell," Essary said. "I can't go anywhere that someone doesn't know me. They not only look upon you as a school person but someone they can rely upon."

During his 36 years as an educator, he said he learned "you can express your faith without dogmatically trying to cram something down someone's throat."

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