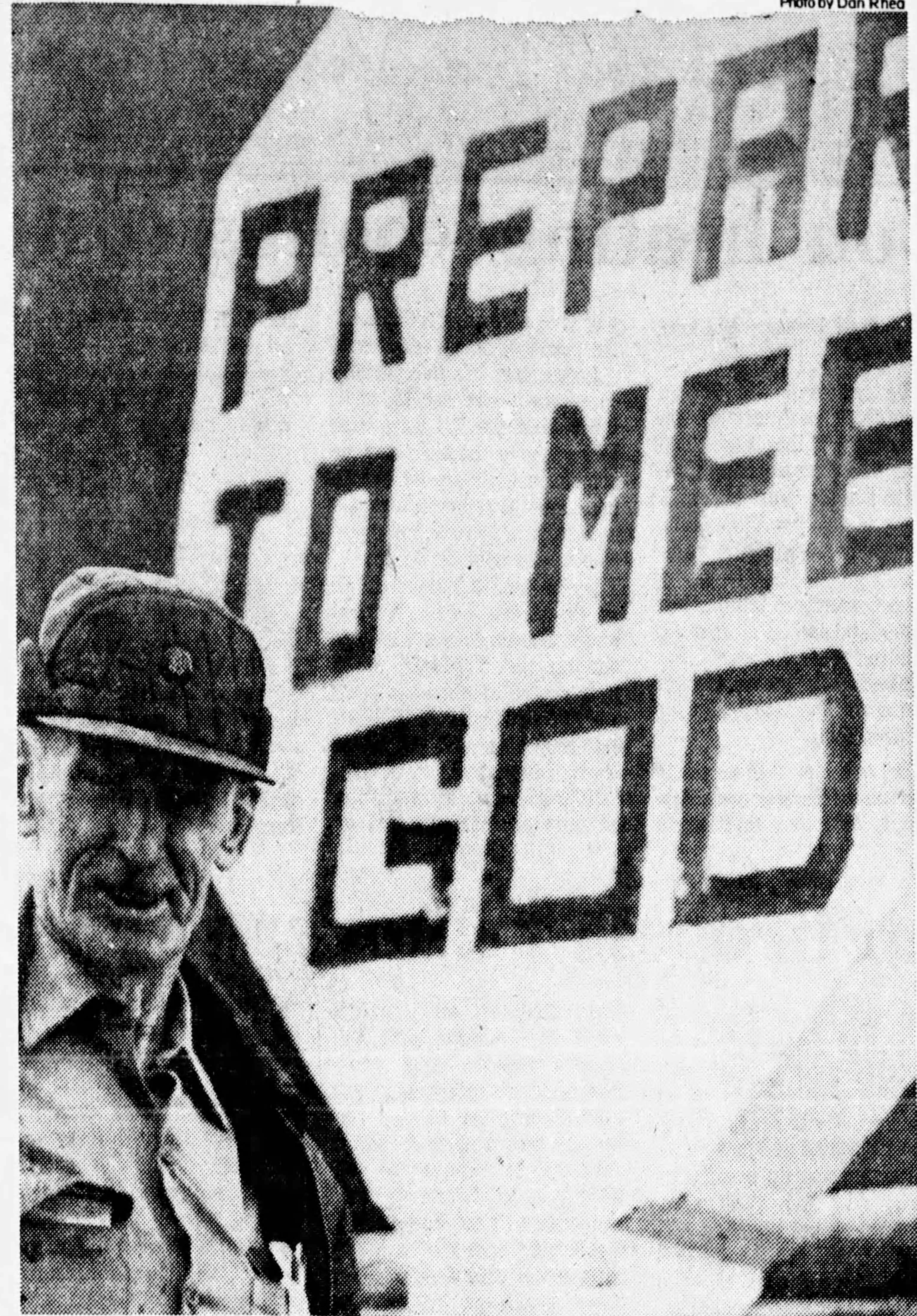


Photo by Dan Rhea



Henry Harrison Mayes of Middlesboro, Ky., paints and plants roadside advertisements for Jesus Christ.

Sign painter is 'awakin' people up'

By Tom Tiede
 Newspaper Enterprise Association
 MIDDLESBORO, Ky. — In 76 years Henry Harrison Mayes has been witness to five wars, one Great Depression and several sexual revolutions.

But he's never seen anything to equal the nation's current state of affairs.

"The only thing that's gonna put things right again," he says, "is for ever'body to right here and now get to know the Lord."

Mayes plans to help the familiarizing process as much as he can. For 56 years Mayes single-handedly has been painting and planting many of America's roadside advertisements for Jesus Christ.

The signs stand outside Middlesboro and nearly every other community in the country. They are usually sizable things, fashioned out of corrugated iron or recycled Coca Cola sheet metal. "Get Right With God," they read, or "Prepare to Meet God."

Nobody, not even Mayes, knows how many of the religious billboards have been distributed, but their familiarity attests to their numbers. Mayes, a retired coal miner, says the posters stand in "at least 50 states and 82 foreign lands." And even though there's no total count, Mayes has computed the energy and money expended: 60 per cent of his time and \$75,000 "at a minimum."

Don't ask why. Mayes says that should be readily appar-

ent. "I've got this cabinet in my workshop what's filled with all the nudity and pornography ever printed." Well, that alone is reason for Mayes' passion for propagandizing God. And when today's other troubles are added to the equation, "things like the Book of Revelations predicted a long time ago." Mayes feels he is more dedicated than peculiar. "Somebody's got to be a wakin' the people up."

There is of course some wonder whether the people appreciate being wakened in the Mayes manner. Hunters shoot the Mayes signs full of double-ought shot, kids at graduation disfigure them with class numerals, and farmers often seem less than pleased when a Get Right With God poster appears in the tractor path. On this latter point, Mayes admits, "I'm the most wanted man in America. . . . The last time I heard from New York they wanted \$43 for the cost of removing two signs. I suppose I could go to jail for a million years."

Besides the usual sign distribution, Mayes will continue the erection of 200 concrete crosses, each weighing 1,400 pounds. "I've got 85 distributed already. I plan to have four of them outside each capital by 19 and 90, if there is a 19 and 90."

Indeed, if there is a 1990 Mayes may be even more prolific and wandering than now. Not content with plugging God in Tulsa, not satisfied with the erection of "36 of the signs on

the Black Sea where Russia can get a whiff," Mayes has greater expectations.

"Well, there are nine plan-

ets," he explains, leafing through an old Life magazine layout of the heavens.

Silly? No way. As Mayes sees

it, "Everybody in the universe is under God, and maybe the people on Mars need a little religious proddin, too."

Whatever the path you tread, let that path lead to God

<p>Agoga Tabernacle.</p> <p>"Start The New Year Right" "Attend The Church of Your Choice" If you are unable to attend Church any where we welcome you to our Radio Broadcast every Sun. 10:06-10:30. WGBF Radio Dial.</p> <p>THE AGOGA BIBLE CLASS 311 Chestnut St. 9:30-10:30 Non-denominational—Jack Miller (Teacher)</p>	<p>Christian (Disciples of Christ)</p> <p>BETHANY CHRISTIAN CHURCH 533 West Columbia Street Church School Classes 9:30 a.m. Worship Service 10:30 a.m.</p> <p>EAST SIDE CHRISTIAN CHURCH Weinbach of Bayard Park Drive Worship 8:15 a.m. & 10:45 a.m. Sunday School 9:15 a.m. 476-3091</p> <p>WEST SIDE CHRISTIAN CHURCH 1200 N. RED BANK RD. S.S. 9:30 a.m. Worship 10:30 a.m.</p>	<p>Nazarene</p> <p>NORTHSIDE CHURCH Second and Meyer Aves. 424-6153 S.S. 9:30; Worship 10:30, 7:00 Martin Mayer, Pastor "Let Us Go Unto the House of the Lord"</p> <p>FIRST CHURCH of the NAZARENE 800 E. Blackford S.S. 9:30 Worship 10:30 a.m. Sun. nite 6 p.m., Wed. 7 p.m. "The Friendly Church That Cares" Rev. B. W. Downing</p>
<p>American Lutheran</p> <p>SHEPHERD OF HILLS LUTHERAN 3600 OAK HILL ROAD Worship 9:00 a.m., Sunday School 10:15 a.m. Reuben Evenson, Pastor 476-2349</p> <p>PEACE LUTHERAN CHURCH 200 S. BOEKE 476-8201 John Pankuk, Pastor Sunday School 8:45, Worship 10:00</p>	<p>Christian Science</p> <p>FIRST CHURCH OF CHRIST SCIENTIST 212 Mulberry St. S.S. Church 10:45 a.m. Wed. 8 p.m. Reading Room—Ross Center</p>	<p>Presbyterian</p> <p>OLIVET PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH 5600 Oak Hill Road Sunday School 9:15 a.m.; Worship 10:30 a.m. Evening Gospel Service 7:00 p.m. Hour of Power — Wed. 7:15 p.m. Onesimus J. Rundus, Pastor.</p>
<p>Baptist American</p>	<p>Church of God Anderson, Ind.</p>	<p>Pentecostal</p>