

# Religion

## Earth Temple provides social services on ecumenical basis

By R.C. BOURNEA  
Call and Post Staff Writer

Earth Temple, a non-profit, religious-oriented organization, will be implementing its third annual Toys for Christmas Kids program. On Christmas Eve, Saturday, Dec. 24, noon-2 p.m., Earth Temple volunteers will distribute toys to needy children at the Eldon W. Ward Branch, 130 W. Woodland Ave. Any family with a current Aid to Dependent Children ID card is eligible to receive free toys.

1994 marks the first year Earth Temple is registered with the Ohio Attorney General's Office Charitable Organization's registry and the Columbus City Council Clerk's registry of church and non-profit social service organization.

Anthony Hodge, founder and director of Earth Temple, started the Toys for Christmas Kids program because "I don't have any children so I felt compelled and motivated to do something for other kids."

Toys for Christmas Kids is one of three programs Earth Temple administers.

The others are G.O.D. (Get Off Drugs), a drug rehabilitation program, and Unfaithful Crusade, an effort to instill religious values in youth.

Earth Temple, pastored by the Rev. Jerome Dillard, offers spiritual classes by appointment and holds various seminars. "We're located out of a small residential structure on a couple of acres of land in the Berwick area. In exchange for donations we offer spiritual education and guidance away from drugs, violence and poverty."

The church combines several different religious philosophies. The principles of Christianity, Hebrew, Buddhism and Islam are taught, with the ecumenical term Jahillah used for God. A pyramid-shaped learning tree is the basis for instruction in Earth Temple's classes. The organization has goals of building a pyramid-shaped facility in Columbus as it expands over the next several years.

The drug rehabilitation program has been very successful, Hodge said. "We've gotten dozens of people off of hard drugs, mainly crack cocaine. Most

of these people have tried everything else and been through several treatment centers and after coming through the educational programs and learning steps that we prescribe they are able to rebuild their lives.

Earth Temple offers addicts alternatives to drugs such as skiing, scuba diving, even gourmet food, anything to provide extreme stimulation to the brain since addiction is so extreme, Hodge said.

"We suggest whatever a person is doing to support the drug habit (except drug or other crime-related activity) to keep doing it with a clean mind," Hodge added. "(The addicts) are saving their lives. It has to be taken back, sometimes with force against former associates who don't want to see you get straight."

Changing the addict's mentality is the first step to recovery, said Hodge. "We have a great idea that has proven itself. We've showed many people that a change was possible. Until one believes



ANTHONY HODGE, founder and director of Earth Temple, will be passing out toys to needy children on Christmas Eve.

that change is possible, recovery cannot begin," said Hodge.

The organization is in need of volunteers and donations. To get involved with Earth Temple, call 231-5595 or write P.O. Box 272100, Columbus, Ohio 43227-272100.