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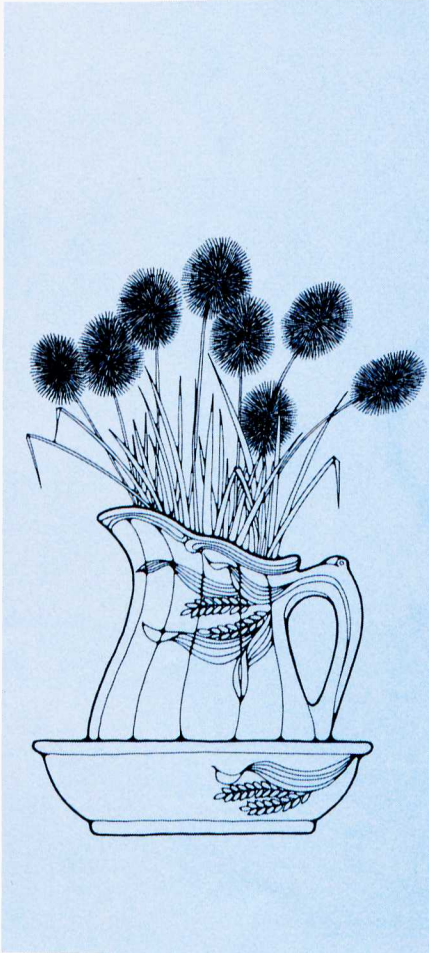


Co-Laborer

October-November-December 1977

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Volume XVII Number 4



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Cleo W. Pursell, Editor

Evelyn Jones, Circulation

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Co-Laborers Write

The Woman's Auxiliary here at Grace Church want to thank you and the staff for the wonderful blessings we have received from the *Co-Laborer* programs.

The *Co-Laborer* programs have been great. When I start reading through the book I usually read it all before I stop. They're such a blessing to me and our auxiliary.

*Joann Lamb
Morristown, Tennessee*

Would you please express my appreciation to our Free Will Baptist women who so graciously stock the provision closet. I just get excited every time I visit. Our ladies have provided many lovely items which we would be unable to have without their generosity.

*Arilla Wode
Ypsilanti, Michigan*

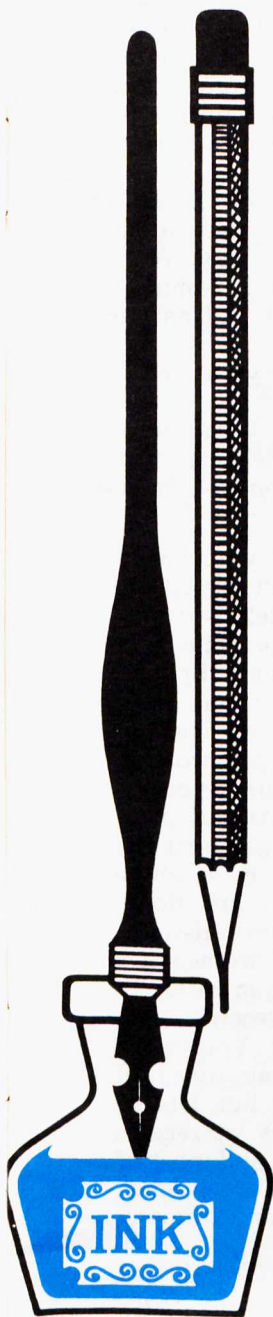
Our auxiliary was organized in November, 1976, by Mrs. Richard Berryhill (our pastor's wife) who is serving as our president.

We started out ordering 10 *Co-Laborers* but we want to add 15 more. The Lord is blessing and we hope to order more soon. We are growing spiritually and in number—Praise the Lord!

*Sandi Hester
Cottondale, Alabama*

We are a new auxiliary . . . Already, we have 18 women on roll. We have been able to help a home missionary, Brother Dale Smith in Rolla, Missouri, and we are continually becoming more aware of the work of the National Auxiliary. Our ladies have always been active in the work of the church, but now it is so much easier with an organized auxiliary where everyone knows what her job is. The ladies enjoy the *Co-Laborer* very much and our program chairman was delighted with the packet she received.

*Glenda K. Jones
Hartville, Missouri*



It was so good to see Mrs. Elsie Staten's picture and write-up in *Co-Laborer*. I hope this feature will continue each quarter. The *Co-Laborer* is such a blessing to our auxiliary. We thank God for those who furnish our good programs each month.

*Mrs. Wayne Smith
Sumter, South Carolina*

Our Woman's Auxiliary here at Limestone Church has been using the *Co-Laborer* for a long time but it seems that the women are more aware of our job to carry the "good news" than ever before. We want to be real missionaries at home as well as help those who go to foreign lands.

Last month an *Actionettes* group was started . . . please pray for these young ladies . . .

*Lois Cutshall
Limestone, Tennessee*

New Zion Church Auxiliary would like to go on record and say how much we enjoy the programs and articles in the *Co-Laborer* magazine. They are real inspiring and our thanks go to all who help to compile them.

*Mrs. Herbert Roney
Headland, Alabama*

We just wanted to let you know how much we enjoy your magazine and program helps. They seem to make our meetings "come alive."

Our auxiliary has had a good time this year. We have come closer to each other as we work together to aid others.

After a bad roof and a hard rain partially destroyed our educational building, we worked

to get things back in order. We chose the library as a special project and painted and carpeted it. We furnished a provision closet (food and clothes) for the church, and helped furnish the kitchen for our school which will open this fall.

This week-end we will attend the Florida state meeting and join the State Auxiliary. We are looking forward to becoming involved in the state and national projects.

Thank you for your help to us.

*Phyllis Bass
Wesconnett Woman's Auxiliary
Jacksonville, Florida*

I guess most of your letters come from women but I felt I must write and tell you how much men appreciate the WNAC. Each time Lynette goes to the provision closet she comes away rejoicing at the generosity of our women. To a man it is hard to get all excited about pots and pans, but I must say I get great joy from your work. Everywhere we go auxiliaries are doing things to support missions. Many times the women are giving sacrificially in order to see missionaries receive items for their ministry. Your work may be valued at times in dollars and cents but let me assure you the joy we receive is of great reward, and most of all the souls that are reached because of your concern. Thanks.

*Clint Morgan
Bound for Africa*

MEMO from CLEO

Cleo Pursell, Executive Secretary



New Materials

Numerous new materials are available from the WNAC office: A new Actionettes yearbook of missions programs and leader's packet entitled *Open Doors to Missions*; an up-dated local Woman's Auxiliary Manual and teacher's guide; numerous new skits and plays; exciting new study course books; a beautiful new local installation service; a delightful WNAC Emphasis Month Program Kit; tracts, and the current program help packet for *Co-Laborer* programs. Check your new WNAC catalog for prices.

Convention Report

News of the Woman's National Auxiliary Convention held in Detroit, Michigan, will appear in the first quarter issue of *Co-Laborer*, 1978. Perhaps some of you are wondering why the information is not in *this* issue. The reason is simple . . . fourth quarter issue of *Co-Laborer* goes to the printer *before* the convention. We are really sorry! However, the next issue of the COMMUNICATOR will be mailed soon after the convention with newsy bits of interest.

Used Christmas Cards

Pastor Dorairaj expresses his appreciation for the pictures from used Christmas cards you have sent. Often a child will attend Sunday school just to get one of the pretty pictures.

To save postage, send only the picture portion. Few people in India can read the Scripture verses printed in English, so the missionary prints verses in Tamil and distributes to the children. Missionaries do not have to pay customs charges on packages which are marked correctly. Wrap securely in heavy paper and tie with cord both ways, but do not seal. Mark plainly on the box—*Printed Matter, Used Christmas Cards*. Send them to: Pastor D. Dorairaj, Emmanuel Free Will Baptist Church, Kotagiri-64327, The Nilgiris, Tamilnad, South India.

Women In Action

WNAC Reaches Out!

New District

The *Idaho District* Auxiliary Convention was organized in April, 1977, with 19 women from four local auxiliaries present. Valerie Stephenson was elected president. The next regular meeting will be October 7-8 in Buhl.

New Locals

Pennsylvania. The Woman's Auxiliary of the Truth Free Will Baptist Church, Oxford, Pennsylvania, was organized October 17, 1976, with 19 members. Mrs. Barbara Riffe is the president.

Kentucky. On April 3, 1977, WNAC field worker, Mary R. Wisheart, and executive secretary, Cleo Pursell, assisted the women of the Trinity Free Will Baptist Church, Bowling Green, in organizing a Woman's Auxiliary. Nine members were present and Kathleen Thomas was elected president.

Alabama. Mrs. Willia Jean Lewis, pastor's wife, reports the organization of a Woman's Auxiliary at Muscle Shoals,

March 29, 1977, with 12 members. The group meets weekly with an exciting program of work.

Hawaii. The Woman's Auxiliary of the Waipahu Church was organized April 29, 1977. Karen Powell was elected president; Clorine Partee, vice president; Peggy Kaleo, secretary-treasurer. Chairmen are Gladys Nitta, Carol Daniels, and Doris Asato.

Idaho. The Calvary Church of Pocatello, organized a Woman's Auxiliary November, 1976, with six members. Although a mission church, this group of women have an active program. Members are, left to right, Sharon Bennett, Ruth Brookbush, Ann Reed, Norma Pasley, Valerie Stephenson, and Carla Raasch.





Mission Action

Members of the Woman's Auxiliary, First Free Will Baptist Church, Newport News, Virginia, made and distributed fruit bowls to the elderly and home-bound in their community. They also filled plastic Easter eggs with candy and scripture verses and gave them to patients in a local nursing home.

Women's Jubilee

Women of the Oak Grove Church, Tusculum, Tennessee, sponsored a 4-day meeting for women, March 24-27, 1977. Speakers included Lissie Turnage and WNAC executive secretary, Cleo Pursell.

Mother-Daughter Banquet

The South Carolina Woman's Auxiliary held its annual Mother-Daughter banquet, May 6, at the Horse Branch Fellowship Hall in Turbeville. Approximately 130 attended the event.

The program consisted of readings, special music and skits presented by various auxiliaries throughout the state. Bud-vase roses were presented to the youngest mother present, Betsy Weaver, and to the eldest, Mable Eaddy. Mrs. Eaddy also was the mother of the most children (14).



A Meeting to be Remembered

Members of the Winnie Vause Circle, Bethany Church, Timmonsville, S. C., share an outstanding program. Members came dressed in costumes from other countries. After the program from *Co-Laborer*, they had a fashion show with each woman telling something about the country she represented and the missionaries who are there. They also enjoyed delicious foods that the women had prepared using recipes from those countries.

Christian Woman's Conference

The First Free Will Baptist Church, Florence, Alabama, sponsored a Christian Woman's Conference, May 12-14, 1977.

Speakers included Barbara Haas, missionary to France; Faith Himes and Grace Rice, MacMullen, Tennessee; and Fran Weber, Alabama. A banquet for teenage girls was held on Friday evening.

State Conventions

California. The California Woman's Auxiliary Convention met April 2, 1977, at Memorial Church, Fresno. President June Rolan presided. Various phases of the theme, "From the Heart of a Woman" (Luke 19:2), were discussed by Joyce Horner, Sandi

Jones, Nora Hampton, Betty Watson, Reba Kirk, Phyllis Shipman, and Gladys Bradshaw. The choral presentation, "Free to Follow Him," was given followed by a luncheon at California Christian College.

New Mexico. The eighth annual session of the New Mexico Auxiliary Convention was held April 15, 1977 at the First Free Will Baptist Church, Albuquerque. President Katie Pinson presided. The theme was "His Name Among All Nations" (Luke 24:47). Gwen Dismuke brought devotions and Missionary Lonnie Palmer, Ivory Coast, Africa, was the keynote speaker.

North Carolina. "Stir Up the Gift that is Within Thee" (2 Timothy 1:6) was the theme of the North Carolina Auxiliary Convention, May 3, 1977. The meeting was in the Fairview Church, Marion, N.C., with a registration of 180. President Joanne King presided.

Home Missionary J. D. Norris brought the morning message and Inez Thompson gave devotions. Cleo Pursell gave a report of WNAC.

The 1977-78 missions project goal is \$3,000 to finish the project for a walk-in freezer for Free Will Baptist Bible College, and furniture for missionaries Clint Morgan and Ron Calloway.

Michigan. The Michigan Auxiliary Convention met May 21, in the Philadelphia Church, Mt. Clemens, with president Nancy

Trimble presiding. Cleo Pursell, WNAC executive secretary, spoke on the convention theme, "Lovest Thou Me?" (Acts 21:17). Registration was 182. The group successfully completed the years' project of raising funds for the convention expense of WNAC. More than \$2,000 was given. A new project was adopted—the Clint Morgan deficit missionary account.

Arizona. A great time of fellowship was had by those who attended the Arizona Auxiliary Convention when held at the First Free Will Baptist Church in Phoenix. Dixie Guild was elected president.

Older Adults Honored

Seven women and five men, all over 70 years of age, were honored by the members of the Mount Olive Church, Plymouth, N.C., with a covered dish luncheon. Woman's Auxiliary colors, lavender and white, were evident in the table arrangements and in the corsages and hand-made lap robes which were presented to the honorees. Left to right, Nannie Ange, Ben Ange, Elwood Wynne, Jennie Ange, and Mrs. Henry Ange.





Teague



Powell

Who's Who in this Issue

Burgess



Shockey



Thomas



Norma June Teague, Henderson, Texas, was first place winner in the WNAC 1976-77 creative writing contest with the October program, "Spiritually Fashioned." June is vice president of the Texas Woman's Auxiliary Convention, and holds offices in her district and local organizations. This busy mother also works as an administrative social worker with emotionally disturbed children.

Wanda Powell has had an exciting life as a missionary with her husband, Larry, in the Virgin Islands and Puerto Rico. They presently are working to establish a church in McAllen, Texas. She wrote the November program, "A Harvest of Friends."

Susan Burgess, Nashville, Tennessee, author of the December program, "Fear Not: For, Behold," is secretary in the Executive Department of the National Association of Free Will Baptists and editorial assistant to *Contact*.

Robert L. Shockey, General Director of the National Home Missions Department, Nashville, Tennessee prepared the Pre-Thanksgiving Season of Prayer Programs, "The Need for Home Missions in America."

Roy L. Thomas, Associate Director of the National Home Missions Department, is the author of the state home missions emphasis, "The Need of State Missions."

October Program
Norma June Teague

Spiritually Fashioned



Song: "Take My Life, and Let It Be"

Scripture: 1 Peter 5:5, 1 Peter 1:13-16

See Program Help Packet

CLOTHING is often a primary concern of women. Christian women, especially, should be concerned with their outward appearances, as this is a testimony to those with whom we come in contact. It is not necessary that our clothing be elaborate or expensive, however, God expects us to present an image befitting His children.

Just as we are concerned about our outward appearances, there also needs to be a concern about those basic qualities that make up the Christian life.

Many women are blessed with a talent to sew clothing for themselves and their families. There are some basic sewing techniques that can be applied to our Christian lives.

Patterns

Before making a garment, a pattern must be chosen. Usually

women can be seen perusing several pattern books before choosing that right pattern for them at that time.

God provides a pattern for the life of a Christian. This pattern is also included in His pattern book, the Bible, and can only be found through the sincere studying of His Word. In 2 Timothy 2:15, Paul admonishes the young Timothy to study in order to understand and correctly apply the precepts to his own life.

While searching a pattern book, there are many patterns, but only one to meet the particular need of the moment. In addition to God's inclusive pattern of holiness and dedication as Christians, we are to search God's pattern book for His choice pattern for our total lives, and also for our lives each day and on each occasion (Romans 12:1, 2). The pattern pictured on the models can easily be misleading, therefore prayerful, careful selection should be made that we may make God's choice for us. Our lives can become confused, as Christians, if we fail to follow His instructions, and listen to the many influences

about us in today's world. (1 Timothy 4:3, 4)

Fabrics

The initial fabric to be considered in our spiritual clothing is wool. Wool is used as the contrast from the sinful life. Isaiah 1:18 reminds us that "though they (our sins) be red like crimson, they shall be as wool." In addition to having sins forgiven, other factors must be included in the choice of our spiritual fabric.

As it would be unwise to choose fabrics that would deteriorate at the first cleaning, or that will ravel or fade, our spiritual fabric must possess strength and durability (Proverbs 10:29; James 1:12). This fabric will most likely need to withstand many trials and circumstances. The final garment may be used in spiritual warfare, as well as in worship. It may be used in service to others, as well as in time of private study and fellowship with the Master. Our lives are our spiritual fabrics. We need stamina and lasting ability to be effective in His service.

Avoid Short Cuts, Follow Directions

One of the first lessons taught in sewing in Home Economics is to trim the excess paper from the pattern and to cut the pattern to the correct form. The unnecessary hindrances must be cut away from our lives, if our spiritual garment is to be serviceable (Hebrews 12:1).

The fabric is carefully laid out

and the pattern is pinned in place. We are encouraged to submit the fabric of our lives to the Lord, in order that He be allowed to place His pattern upon our submitted wills. The Lord will cut the pattern pieces of His *will* and will make no mistakes with the shears, if we are completely yielded to Him (James 4:7, 10).

Sewing darts is often difficult for the inexperienced seamstress. Resisting the fiery darts of Satan is extremely difficult for the unconsecrated, unyielded Christian. The shield of faith is necessary in overcoming this difficulty (Ephesians 6:16).

Basting is a time consuming step that is often felt unnecessary by the more experienced seamstress. What better way to learn patience and the ability to wait on the Lord than to sew a seam twice. We may attempt to get on with the garment and leave off the basting process—just as we may enter a situation when God is giving us a signal to wait for Him to open the way, and make sure that the pieces fit together perfectly and completely, according to His plan (Psalm 37:7, 9).

It is now time for that final seam. The pieces have been placed carefully and skillfully by the hands of God and the machine has been threaded with the tension at just the right number. The seam being sewn will hold together through many difficulties because it was formed properly. It is unlikely that it will break even though we might have to stretch to help someone from the mire of sin. That same seam will hold while we kneel in

prayer and communion with the Lord. It will sustain the sitting and standing activity required for teaching those active beginners in Sunday school. Those seams are strong, because they were fashioned by the Lord.

Finishing Touches

All of the above steps could be taken, but our garment would not be complete without the tedious handwork. Each spiritual garment should be, as the slogan says, "hemmed with prayer." The buttons should be carefully placed or those special additions made with great care or the garment will lose its attractiveness and fit. Often someone is saved and is willing to be used by God. The individual enters into His service, gets really involved in doing a job, but forgets to commune daily with the Master in order to allow Him to smooth those rough edges and complete His work in His time. Care should be taken that our spiritual garment is finished by those great hands of our Saviour who began it.

Purchased Garments

It is virtually impossible to make all the garments needed by an individual, making the purchasing of other necessary garments necessary. There are many facets to our spiritual wardrobe. God may carefully fashion one or more garments directly with the fabrics of our lives. Perhaps He fashions us as Sunday school teachers or simply as Christian

mothers and home makers. This does not relieve us from our responsibilities of having other apparel. Our finances should be used to purchase garments of missionary service, Christian Education and other avenues necessary to get the Good News of Salvation to everyone, everywhere according to the Great Commission. By supporting the entire program of our church, we are not only wearing one spiritual garment, but we are allowing someone else to also utilize our wardrobe.

Accessories

Accessories can be described as those ornaments that embellish our essential clothing to give us that "total" look and make us more attractive. The accessories in the Christian's wardrobe can be found in Galatians 5:22, 23, "But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance: against such there is no law."

Always In Style

If we are clothed in the spiritual garments that God has crafted for us, and we choose matching accessories from His Word, we will have no need to be concerned about the changing styles of our world (1 Corinthians 7:31b). God's style never changes. His Word is unchangeable, His garments infallible, and while wearing them, we can demonstrate His love, which endureth forever.

November Program
Wanda Powell



Song: "Count Your Blessings"

Scripture: Mark 5:19b

See Program Help Packet

PUMPKIN PIES, turkey and dressing with cranberry sauce, Pilgrims and Indians, America, and our freedom of worship are a few of the things we think about during the month of November. Thanksgiving Day originally was designated as a time to show special gratitude to God for a bountiful harvest, for shelter, clothing and the other necessities of life. Though the early settlers had very little when compared to our present standard of living, they were most thankful for the things they did possess.

The Value of a Friend

"Ointment and perfume

rejoice the heart: so doth the sweetness of a man's friend by hearty counsel" (Proverbs 27:9).

What gratitude the Pilgrims must have felt for their new-found Indian friends. When, after many long hard months of work and a treacherous winter, friends of a different color came to show them how to provide food for their families in this their new home.

Have any of you ever moved from your home communities to a new area? Remember all of the doubts, fears and anxieties of finding a new doctor, dentist, school for the children, good grocery, even a hair dresser? Oh, for the advice of someone you can trust! Having lived out of the United States in a new and strange land, I sense how the Pilgrims must have felt in some-ways. I remember the loneliness

those first few months in St. Croix. I even remember praying for a friend. And one evening we heard a knock at the door and there stood a young white couple that had moved there to open a Christian bookstore! They were looking for friends too. What sweet fellowship we enjoyed. Our language was the same and our work was for the same Lord and purpose. I can say as Paul said to his Philippian friends, "I thank my God upon every remembrance of you."

Have you ever realized how much more we enjoy even a cup of coffee when shared with a friend? Even as children we remember how refreshing those popsicles were when shared with a little friend on those hot summer days.

The story is told by Channing Pollock in one of his books of an experience he had on a brutally cold rainy day in Peking. He was riding in a rickshaw—one of those two-wheeled carriages that are pulled by the "rickshaw boys"—when he came alongside a poor little funeral—a cheap wooden box, carried through the street, with a few rags that had belonged to the departed lying on top of it. Even the bearers were wrapped in rubber coats. Behind them, however, one man—one man only—walked in rags even thinner than those on the box. With blue lips and chattering teeth, he trotted along. Mr. Pollock asked the boy if the dead man had nothing besides what he saw on the box and the boy answered, as he pointed to the shivering coolie

who trudged along behind the coffin, "Oh, yes—him got a friend."

Old Friends

There are no friends like old friends,

Where're we dwell or roam,
In lands beyond the ocean,
Or near the bounds of home;
And where they smile to gladden,

Or sometimes frown to guide,
We fondly wish those old friends
Were always by our side.

Author Unknown

Jesus, A Friend of Man

"Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends (John 15:13).

Once in St. Croix our Woman's Auxiliary visited a nursing home and took cookies, punch and a few gifts for a little party for the residents. As we were going from room to room visiting with them, one little old black lady who was completely bedridden exclaimed, "You did all this just for us?" She found it hard to imagine that the group had gone to this trouble and effort on their behalf when they could in no way repay us. I'm sure many of you have experienced similar circumstances. This could well be the testimony of every Christian who comes to a full realization of what Jesus did for us on the cross. What great preparation and sacrifice our redemption cost Him!

As our scripture stated, what

better friend could we have than one who loves us so much He would die in our stead.

This friend is also always near to hear our cries when we have some special need. As mothers and wives, we all can recall asking His help and healing power for one or all of our children or husbands. How many times has He been able to calm our anxious moments and heal our broken hearts.

"What a Friend we have in Jesus

Can we find a friend so faithful
Who will all our sorrows share?
Jesus knows our every weakness,
Take it to the Lord in prayer."

During this Thanksgiving season, the greatest cause for praise should be God's provision for our eternal salvation. As believers we recognize that this is far more important than the temporal blessings He bestows. We too can say with hearts full of amazement and gratitude, "You did all this *just for us!*"

Are you Jesus' Friend?

"Ye are my friends if ye do whatsoever I command you. Henceforth I call you not servants for the servant knoweth not what his lord doeth: but I have called you friends; for all things that I have heard of my Father I have made known unto you. Ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you, and ordained you, that ye should go and bring forth fruit, and that your fruit should remain: that whatsoever ye shall ask of the Father in my name, he may give it you" (John

15:14-16).

While in language school in Puerto Rico, we were taught the difference between the two verbs for "to know" in Spanish. They are: *saber* meaning "to know, to have a knowledge" and *conocer* which means, "to know one personally, to feel, to experience." We could use this distinction in describing our relationship with Jesus. Do we know Him only as a fact, that He did live on earth, or do we know Him *personally* and have had an experience with Him and feel close enough to Him to call Him, *Friend*?

When you have a new friend you are anxious to introduce that friend to your other friends. But why is it that so many times we are so hesitant to introduce our friends and neighbors to our Best Friend? In the passage of scripture we have just read, we see we are to be witnesses. If we are to be Jesus' friends we are to do *whatsoever He hath commanded us*. As witnesses we are to testify by our lives and words that we know Christ personally.

If you are a believer, it is because someone was instrumental in introducing you to the Lord Jesus. The Holy Spirit leads every individual to salvation through the testimony of another, whether by preaching, writing, or personal testimony. It is God's way of propagating the Gospel. It's God's way of reaching souls!

We may use many excuses for not witnessing, but we cannot evade this command of Christ. All Christians are called to witness!

It has been estimated that 95% of all Christians never lead another person to a saving knowledge of Christ. This is a startling fact. Yet, only about 3% of the lost ever attend church. So, personal witnessing is the only sure way of reaching the great masses of humanity. Many church members are missionary minded when an offering is taken, but they fail to help people in their own town who need the Lord Jesus in their lives. Let's ask ourselves a few questions. Why don't we witness? There are several reasons: (1) Lack of love. If we love God, we will love others and want to see them saved. (2) Lack of Learning. Many of us don't know the scriptures well enough to show others the way to be saved. (3) Lack of Living. Some live hypocritical lives and if they should witness, others wouldn't believe.

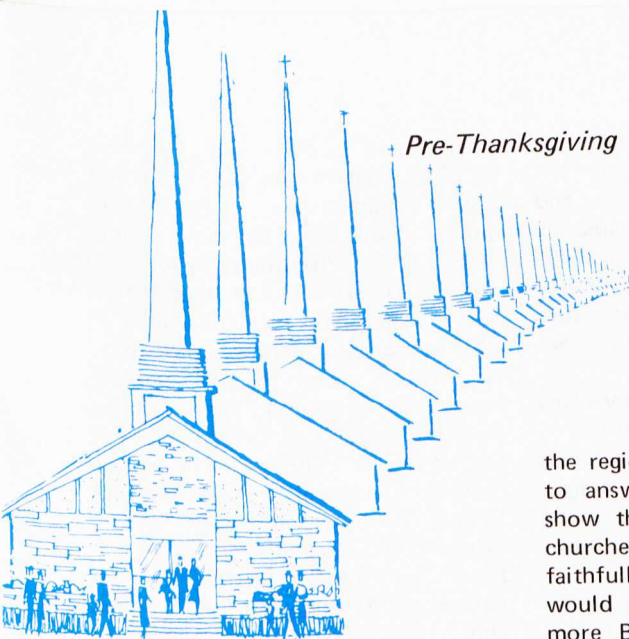
In John 4:39 we read "And many . . . believed on Him (Jesus) for the saying of the woman who testified." One day Jesus met a woman of Samaria at Jacob's well and tactfully led her to a saving knowledge of Himself. Gratefully she told everyone of her new-found faith and friend. The disciples too had gone into the city, but we read nothing of their witness there; yet many believed on Jesus, "for the saying of the woman, who testified." If you want others to know what Christ can do for them, let them see what Christ has done for you. What if no one had cared enough to tell you and share Christ with you?

Many times we tend to *put-off* talking directly with our friends and neighbors about their soul's welfare without realizing the brevity of life. In one of our pastorates, there was a young man with a fine Christian wife and two precious little children. She and the children were very faithful in church attendance and prayed earnestly for the salvation of her husband. He was a hearty, robust, hard-working man who put his job first. She spoke with my husband about talking with him. Larry saw him briefly the following day, but the man was in a hurry to get back to work. Larry decided to wait a few days to go to talk with him when there would be more time to show him the plan of salvation and tell him of their concern for his soul. The next day we were phoned by other members in the church and told that the young man had suffered a massive heartattack and had gone out to meet God. What grief we all suffered for having waited too late. Is there someone on your heart today? Go, tell them before it is too late!

Send Me

Dear Father, to the hopeless ones,
That are in such deep need
And have no one to turn to,
They need one friend to heed.
Oh comfort and uphold them
And draw them close to Thee.
And if there is no one to guide,
Dear Lord, send me, send me.

Rosina Stallman



*Pre-Thanksgiving Season of Prayer Program
November 14-18, 1977*

THE NEED OF HOME MISSIONS IN AMERICA

by Robert Shockey

the regions beyond? It is our purpose to answer these questions and also show that if each of our American churches and professed Christians were faithfully preaching the Gospel, there would still be a need for thousands more Bible-teaching churches in our nation.

Since the effectiveness of the whole program of God on earth is dependent on the effectiveness of the Home church, it would be well to consider the current American scene in this perspective. The evidence presents a challenge for Home Missions and Church Extension which cannot be ignored by those who claim to obey the Word of God.

Social Life

The challenge for Home Missions and Church Extension appears clearly in the area of our social life. The American home is rapidly disintegrating. The divorce rate has increased until in many areas it ends one out of every two marriages. There is a very loose relationship between husbands and wives and their children. The children are not properly disciplined and, worst of all, they do not receive positive, clear guidance for growing up and developing physically and spiritually.

Again, crime is increasing eight times faster than the rate of our population, making America one of

IN MANY Bible preaching churches in America today there is a complacency that nullifies our theology. Nearly 200 million people in America are lost and we spend our time "painting the porch while the house burns." 180 million Americans have no Bible study program. The average evangelical church is 250 in attendance, and the average Free Will Baptist church is 70 in attendance. To reach these 180 million at this ratio we need 770,000 churches *now*. There are 3,100,000 babies born every year. It would take 12,400 new churches *now* to handle these.

The great burden of our heart today lies in the challenge of Home Missions and Church Extension. The question is often asked, "Why do we need more churches in America?" There are already about 300,000 churches and over 125,000,000 church members. Why shouldn't our present church constituency meet the need of both America and the foreign mission field? Further, since the need in foreign countries may seem to be much greater than in our own nation, why not use all mission funds to evangelize

the most crime-ridden nations on earth. Radio, television, and the newstand reflect the moral decline and are generally contributing to increasing the degeneration of our nation. Nude movies are now produced regularly in Hollywood. Pornographic literature and all sorts of obscene films are circulating among our youth.

Narcotics are widely used by teens and pre-teens on a regular basis today. About sixty million Americans habitually use alcoholic beverages. Alcoholism is increasing at an alarming rate as America's greatest drug problem.

In the area of social life we should also list the public school system and its great influence in rearing a nation of pagans. Colleges and universities in America are turning out hundreds of thousands of educated pagans who scoff at the Bible and its revelation.

Religion

The great need for Home Missions and Church Extension in America is also seen in the area of religion. Karl Marx said, "Religion is the opiate of the people." Indeed religion in America today is Satan's tranquilizer to keep people from recognizing their sin and need of Jesus Christ. The word "religion" is applied generally to the system of belief or philosophy in the average American church. On the other hand, the word "Christianity" describes for us what the Bible teaches about sin, salvation, Christ, and eternal life.

According to the American Year-book of Churches, published by the National Council of Churches, there are approximately 125 million church members in America. Generally they break down into figures as follows:

Buddhists, 92,000; Old Catholic, 589,819; Eastern churches, 2,698,663; Jewish congregations in different type groups, 5,367,000; Roman Catholic, 46,864,910; Protestant, about 70 million. Of course, this does not include many false religions such as Christian Science, Jehovah's Witnesses, etc., which make the picture even worse. We know that false religions, including modernism, do not believe in the deity of Christ and have no redeeming message for their people because they have no gospel and no Saviour. At least 80 out of every hundred Protestant churches in our nation no longer preach the gospel. How can people be saved unless they hear the gospel? Even the general picture indicates that relatively few of the millions of church members really know Christ by experience as their Saviour. The church member, moral, baptized, a religionist, is usually one of the most difficult men on earth to win to Christ. There is an urgent need for our church to combat the spiritually deadening influence of religion in our nation by building Bible Preaching, Bible Teaching, and Bible Practicing churches.

Population Growth

The third area of need for Home Missions and Church Extension is found in our rapid population growth. America is literally exploding with new population. Now authorities in our Census Bureau are even thinking in such fantastic terms as a billion people in the United States. Our present population is above the 300 million mark. By 1980 we are to have about 400 million plus people and by the year, 2,000 we will have 800 million people.

From all indications, we are not evangelizing one complete American generation now. (Not all of one American generation are hearing the gospel even once during their life time). What about the additional millions being born annually? Certainly unless we increase our Home Missions and Church Extension, America will simply become a more pagan nation year after year.

To house these additional millions of people many thousands of new homes are being constructed in various sized subdivisions in our larger centers of population. Whole new communities are coming into existence in a matter of months. Each new housing area is actually a new little city and it should have its own evangelical testimony. Absolutely the finest opportunity for Home Missions and Church Extension in American history is found in these new housing areas. Yet there are many of these new subdivisions where there is no church of any kind—Protestant, Roman Catholic, or any type.

Through its home mission organization and local councils in different cities, the National Council of Churches of Christ in the United States of America is gradually controlling more and more of the church extension program in these new areas. Their contacts with the city authorities, subdividers, real estate men, and land owners, and the resultant playing of some sharp politics make it difficult for an evangelical group to enter new subdivisions.

A startling statement by Dr. C. E. Zunkeo of the Church of the Brethren came to our attention recently. He is associated with the National Council of Churches. "I think I am correct in this that in Seattle the comity arrange-

ment has been worked out so carefully and completely that no church could get an allocation of land for building without having a comity allocation by the Seattle Council; neither could any church secure a building permit or buy lumber from a lumber yard for church building purposes without having had a clearance from the Seattle Council of Churches. This made it possible to keep out the groups who tend to ignore matters of comity and are unwilling to try to work cooperatively in church extension. In Denver, as I understand the situation, the executive secretary has now established the reputation of the Council in such a way that realtors will not sell property for church locations without first of all having clearance from the Denver Council of Churches. I am not sure that all realtors cooperate 100% with this, but it is my understanding that in the main the realtors are following this pattern and it is a very fortunate situation. There is no compulsion in it except the good will and the hearty cooperation which the realtors are expressing because of their confidence in the Denver Council."

We should be deeply shaken by the realities of this picture. Unless we fundamental evangelicals do much, much more than we have been doing, the cause for Christ in America could be lost in this decade. If we keep pace with our population growth, we need 1,000 new churches by 1980.

Race Structure

The great need for Home Missions and Church Extension is also emphasized in the area of our national race structure. America has become the melting pot of the nations. Our nation is probably the most cos-

mopolitan nation on earth. There are in America today 6,000,000 Jews, the largest number of Jews in any single nation on earth. There are 26,000,000 black people. More recently 2,000,000 Puerto Ricans have come to our shores. Indians in our nation number approximately 485,000 and at least 7,000,000 Latin Americans live in the Southwestern section of our nation alone. Two million migrants and millions of Orientals are among us. Hawaii, now an American state, has 55% Buddhists in its population. New York City has 56% foreign born or foreign parentage in its population. Cleveland has 45%. Chicago has 45%. Detroit has 40%, etc. The influence of the foreign element in America is growing and the day may come when this could even predominate. We have allowed immigration to the point where it has indeed become dangerous and detrimental to our economy because we do not meet the social and spiritual needs of these people who are not prepared to live as average Americans.

Most of these foreigners have brought their religion with them. For instance, Buddhists and Mohammedans are doing a very special and effective job of evangelizing as they become missionaries to us for their own religions. In turn we have a "foreign mission field" at home. As in normal foreign mission work we need specially qualified missionaries who understand these religions to deal with the foreign peoples here. This is a tremendous home mission challenge. It serves to underline again the need for greater church extension.

The current American scene demonstrates the spiritual need of the churches already in existence, and it shows the need for thousands more evangelical churches in America now.

America's Responsibility

Even in view of all of these facts America still holds the place of centrality in world evangelization. In spite of her degeneration and apostasy, compared with other nations of the earth, America is still the last citadel of Christianity. She is God's last real bastion in this world. America is the spiritual blood and life of the whole world. America has every facility needed to evangelize the world as well as its own citizenry. We have everything we need to do the biggest and best job of evangelization in all the history of man and we have the greatest challenge.

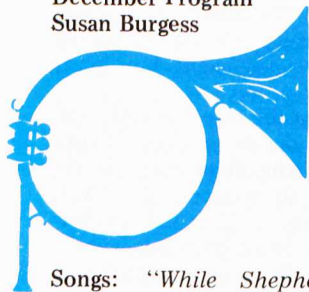
If the world is evangelized in this or the next generation, America must be responsible for it and if it is not evangelized, then I think this responsibility lies at our doorstep and God can justly judge us for this failure. This centrality of America among earth's nations places great spiritual responsibility upon us. Many more churches are needed for this task.

Is it not apparent that the local church occupies the key position in this whole picture? God's work originates, is planned in and proceeds from the local church whether it is for home or foreign missions. Christ certainly made this clear when He chose the local church as His headquarters on earth.

It is obvious that America's greatest need now is more Bible Preaching, Bible Teaching, and Bible Practicing churches. Only in this way can the challenge of our godless nation and the world be met. Our work is cut out for us. It is a divine pattern. Jesus said, "I must preach in other cities also." Let us get busy and do the job!

Offering for National Home Missions

December Program
Susan Burgess



"Fear Not: For. Behold"

Songs: "While Shepherds Watched Their Flocks" and other Christmas carols

Scripture: Luke 1:5-13; 26:32; Matthew 1:18-21; Luke 2:8-14

See Program Help Packet

FEAR is a strangling grip on the throat, a weakness in the knees, a trembling of the hands, a dullness of the brain. Fear stifles and threatens. It can be a demon who is entrenched in the Christian's life, and its exorcism can be as difficult and tedious as removing price tags cemented on unwrapped gifts with cheap glue. That removal practically always results in a scar.

It is strange that this debilitating fear is the dull gray thread woven through the tapestry of the Christmas story. Christmas is a time of hope, rejoicing, love, celebration, generosity and thankfulness. But the events surrounding the first advent of Christmas relate that it was also a time of fear.

God's Promises Hold No Fear (Luke 1:5-13)

The smoke from the burning incense was filling the temple. Some of the aromatic wisps curled between the folds of the heavy curtain and the doorposts and wafted over the bowed heads of the kneeling crowd as they prayed. God was pleased with the dedication and prayers of the believers. Yet within the deep recesses of the Holy Place a priest stood paralyzed with fear and unbelief . . .

An angelic messenger appeared to Zacharias to announce God's promise to this elderly priest. Zacharias and his wife Elizabeth were to have a long-awaited child. His name would be John, and he would prepare the Jewish nation for their Messiah. Surely an angel bearing such good news would be greeted with joy, but the angel's first words to Zacharias had to be "Fear not."

Because of Zacharias' refusal to believe that he could father a child in his old age, he lost his voice for 9 months.

So, too, Christians today miss God's blessings by fearing God's promises. The promise God has left outstanding in this age is the assurance of the second coming of Christ.

Deep in the secret heart of the Christian lurks a fear of that glorious event. Scriptural or not, visions of lightening flashing, winds blowing, trumpets blaring, clouds rolling, mountains shaking, and rocks falling flicker on the viewing screen of the mind. "What if I'm taking a bath? I'd be lifted through the skies unclothed. What if I have unconfessed sin in my life?"

Because a believer can't answer these silly questions posed by fear, a concept begins to develop that nothing about the second coming can be understood; and since scholars are in disagreement about the subject, it could possibly not be true. Perhaps it is all an allegory. Thus the undermining of God's promise by fear results in unbelief.

The Thessalonian Christians were also debating such questions. Paul assuringly wrote, "I would not have you to be ignorant . . . ye, brethren, are not in darkness, that that day should overtake you as a thief. Ye are all the children of light . . . Therefore let us not sleep, as do others; but let us watch and be sober . . . whether we wake or sleep, we should live together with him. Wherefore comfort yourselves together, and edify one an-

other" (1 Thessalonians 4:13; 5:4, 5, 6, 10, 11). In other words, study the subject in the Bible; keep your life in shape; talk it over with other Christians; comfort each other with God's promises.

God's Powers Hold No Fear

(Luke 1:26-32)

Outside the whitewashed brick home on the Nazareth hillside, sparrows chirped and oliveskinned children laughed and sang as they rolled iron hoops down the sunbaked street. Inside the home was spotlessly clean. A chaste Jewish girl with a pleasant smile sat listening to God's message. Yet deep within her chest her heart pounded and her body trembled with fear

Mary shivered from the fear of God's power. One moment she was an innocent young girl occupied with dreams and plans for her coming marriage. The next she was filled with the power of the Holy Spirit and pregnant.

She must have pondered, "What does an angel know about 'Fear not' when he isn't the one who will be ostracized by the community? He won't have to try to find an understanding older woman to explain the process of birth nor have to face the possibility of being alone when it is time for the baby to be born. There will be no hiding the results of submission to God's power in a few months."

Oh yes, Mary had human reasons to fear; but she had spiritual understanding, and instead of terror she learned to rejoice. "My soul doth magnify the Lord" (Luke 1:46).

To the majority of Christians, appropriating the power of God, especially through the Holy Spirit, seems as safe as grabbing the tail of a tornado and hanging on as it sways and dips, raking havoc through farmland and city streets. But God's strength, although exceedingly power-

ful, is never misdirected or oversupplied. When He infuses His power into a Christian's life, the level of filling is always sufficient but never surplus.

Regardless of the fear, the Christian has an inbred desire to utilize God's power. One of the main purposes for this power is to witness. (See Acts 1:8). How sad it is that so few Christians have learned to ask, expect and receive God's power to give them courage to witness.

Before this malignant mass of fears takes over and kills healthy spiritual growth, God's provisions must be applied. Prayer is the first step towards a successful witness. John 15:16 promises, "Whatsoever ye shall ask of the Father in my name, he may give it you." Saturate your witnessing with prayer. The Holy Spirit not only works *for* the Christian but also *with* the sinner, touching and softening the heart.

Secondly, realize that each individual has a different personality. Thus different witnessing techniques, such as door-to-door visitation, telephone calls, tracts, etc., should be used.

Another important aspect to remember is that if the sinner does not make a decision or even show any visible emotion, it is not a sign of failure. God's Word shall not return to Him until it has accomplished what He desires (Isaiah 55:11). Most importantly, remember the words of John 16:33, "... In the world ye shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world." He's bigger than whatever is out there!

God's Plans For Our Lives Hold No Fears

(Matthew 1:18-21)

All was quiet except for the muffled snoring of the healthy young man as he rested after a long day of measuring, sawing and hammering. Sawdust still clung to the soles of his

sandals and would leave tiny clumps of wood shavings on the dirt floor when he dressed at sunrise. His chest rose and fell with his regular breathing. Yet his head was swimming with troubled dreams, and the arms of his mind were trying to fight off the encircling, constricting bands of fear that threatened to squeeze the cherished hopes and plans from his life

Again the angelic messenger's first words were "fear not" as he greeted Joseph, Mary's fiancé, in a dream. Joseph planned to have a family wedding and to live happily ever after, but now apparently Mary had betrayed him. God's plan had interfered with Joseph's life. The angel's bewildering request opposed every rule concerning the sacredness and purity of the marriage relationship Joseph had learned as a conscientious Jewish believer. To shelter an engaged woman pregnant with another's child was anathema. But this unborn child was conceived of the Holy Spirit. Only because Joseph was attuned to God's leading could he willing submit to this change in plans.

Similarly, God often changes the Christian's life plans. God's plan may include a life alone instead of marriage; poverty instead of prosperity; three children instead of two; chronic illness instead of health; obscurity instead of fame; death instead of life. Following the Lord's guidance may mean moving to a different city, state or even continent. It could require the addition of an orphan, neglected child or lonely senior citizen to the family circle.

But human plans for happiness and wealth can lead to heartbreak and sorrow. God's plans always lead to peace and joy. The key to that happiness and contentment is *submission*.

God's Provision Brings Peace

(Luke 2:8-14)

The grass was damp from the early

dew on the Palestine hills. Only the faint bleating of new lambs and the tinkling of the rams' bells broke the stillness of the darkness. The night sky was lit with bright specks of stars, eons away, and covered the hills and valleys with a pavillion of peace and security. Yet when a brilliant light burst on the pastoral scene, rugged shepherds quaked with the fear of the unknown

But the frightening radiance revealed an angel of the Lord, and his message disclosed fantastic news. The promised Savior, whose birth was planned from the creation of the world, had been born early that very morning in Bethlehem. Extraordinarily, God chose the humble shepherds to be the first to hear this marvelous news, and they would be privileged to view the celestial face of the tiny baby. They were to then spread the glad tidings to the entire countryside. How their hearts and mouths were filled with delight and praise to God for the birth of the Christchild.

But the shepherds could not comprehend God's complete plan: that not only the Messiah's birth but also His sacrificial death were ordained from the beginning of time. In no way could God be incomplete. Christ is God's provision for the sin which has plagued the human race since the Garden of Eden. The acceptance of that provision brings eternal life—eternal life for priests and kings as well as shepherds.

In leaving the shepherds the angels pronounced a benediction on all mankind: "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men" (Luke 2:14). The newborn babe was truly the Prince of Peace. His peace He left with the Disciples over 30 years later, and that peace is transmitted to every believer's soul.

It is a peace which penetrates the entire being, soothing and consoling. It can be anyone's who is willing to "Fear not: for, behold" the Prince of Peace.

STATE
MISSIONS
SEASON
OF PRAYER

THE NEED OF STATE MISSIONS

by Roy Thomas

To the Leader: We encourage each state auxiliary executive committee to prepare and distribute program materials emphasizing their respective state mission projects and prayer requests. This program is supplied for benefit of those who do not have their own materials, or who may need supplementary materials.

Acts 9:31 gives a summary of the evangelistic efforts of the early church. It says, "Then had the churches rest throughout all Judea and Galilee, and Samaria, and were edified, and walking in the fear of the Lord and in the comfort of the Holy Ghost, were multiplied." We notice that all three of the sections of Israel had churches. The words "all Judea" indicate that they had filled the cities of their "state" with their churches while the words "Galilee and Samaria" show that they had begun churches in every "state" in their country.

Last year the United States celebrated its bicentennial. This year Free Will Baptists are celebrating because the first Free Will Baptist church was organized 250 years ago. Since there are approximately 2,500 Free will Baptist churches, we have gained ten churches per year for these 250 years.

Judea

In the 50 states which compose our United States, ten have no Free Will Baptist churches at all and twenty have less than eight Free Will Baptist churches. So that leaves twenty states in which our churches are primarily located.

It is to these twenty "stronger" states that this article will give particular attention. These states most nearly correspond to the "Judea" of the New Testament. Jesus said, "Lift up your eyes and look on the field for they are white already unto harvest." (John 4:35) Alabama has dozens of

counties without Free Will Baptist churches. Florida, with its 77 churches, has many large cities without any of our churches. Georgia has 109 counties with no Free Will Baptist churches. Illinois, 5th in population, has only 44 Free Will Baptist churches, while Indiana, its neighbor, has only 25 Free Will Baptist churches. Two thirds of the state of Kentucky has no Free Will Baptist churches. Kansas has thirteen churches in the entire state. Mississippi and Michigan have less than 50 churches each, while Missouri has under ten churches in the northern half of the state. South Carolina has our churches in only 20 of its 46 counties. Tennessee has only five churches in the western part of the state. Texas, 4th in population, has 60 Free Will Baptist churches. Virginia's churches are located in the western part and the tide water area, with no churches between the two. There is not a single state in our country that does not have large cities and whole counties where Free Will Baptists are doing nothing to reach people for Christ. So the need for state missions is apparent.

Most of these twenty states have state mission boards which are laboring to fill in the gaps within their state. Qualified available men who can raise their support are employed to start churches in the needy cities in these states.

Joint Projects

The National Home Missions Board works in a number of these states through the means of the "Joint Project." In the Joint Project, the state and national boards cooperate jointly to establish a new Free Will Baptist

church within a particular state. The missionary is approved by the state board and the General Director of the National Home Missions Board. The money is raised primarily within the state and deposited in an account with the National Home Missions Department. The missionary is paid from that account.

Several district mission boards have joint projects also. Other state and district boards work independently to establish churches within their area.

It is so important that we establish churches throughout these twenty strong states. The support for our entire denominational program comes almost entirely from these states. If we strengthen them with new churches, they will be in a better position to help fill the other thirty states of this great country with Free Will Baptist churches. If our land were filled with our churches, it would broaden our Foreign Missions outreach.

Hearts Joined in Prayer

May we join hearts in prayer for our National and State Home Missions Boards as they pray and plan to start new churches in needy cities. May we pray for our state and district missionaries that they can reach souls and build strong Free Will Baptist churches with a vision to help reach the world for Christ. May we pray the Lord of the harvest that He will send forth laborers to go into the cities and fill our land with Free Will Baptist churches which can win people to Christ and help us with the great task of world missions.

May we join hands in giving so that our missionaries can be free to do this job of reaching our country for Christ!

Prayer Groups

by Pat Thomas

OCTOBER

As we pray for missionaries serving on the Home and Foreign mission fields, we need to also remember those who are now in preparation to enter these fields. There are many steps that have to be taken before a missionary arrives on the field of service, and during these many difficult days these candidates certainly need our prayers.

What are some of the steps of preparation that are taken before a candidate can arrive on the field of service? First, whenever a person is reasonably sure of the call from the Lord, he should contact the Home or Foreign Missions Department for more information. He should let them know of his interest and seek their advice on how to proceed in order to realize the fulfillment of God's plan for his life.

While he is training at Bible college, he should consider the possibility of participating in the summer missionary program of either Department.

For one interested in Foreign Mission service, preliminary application for service should be made to the board as soon as one is certain of God's will. Ideally, this would take place in the third or fourth year of undergraduate training. Then the candidate committee of the Board of Foreign Missions will review the

preliminary application forms, medical examination forms, psychological and reference evaluations which are on hand.

If the candidate committee recommendation is favorable, a personal interview with the entire board will be scheduled. Final action on all applications rests with the board. Most candidates, if approved, will then be required to attend a nine-month session at Missionary Internship in Farmington, Michigan prior to actual appointment. After appointment to a particular field of service, the appointee must then begin itinerate work to raise the needed support. For Foreign Missions candidates the amount needed is approximately \$20,000 cash in his account and from \$1,200 to \$1,500 per month in faith promises. After support is raised, the appointee must then, in most cases, go to a language school to learn the language of the people who live in his particular field of service.

Pray for all missionary candidates as they prepare in Bible College, do itinerate work, serve in missionary internship, and study in language school.

Pray for the Dave Franks, Bobby Pooles and Sam Wilkinsons as they have recently returned to Brazil from the States.

Pray for the Sanford Davis family as they start a new work in Temple, Texas. Also pray for Wallace Hayes and the new work in Lebanon, Tennessee.

Pray for Jerry and Janice Banks and their work in Japan. Continue to pray for Jan's health.

NOVEMBER

The month of November has been, for many years, *Home Missions Month* in the Free Will Baptist denomination. During this month, special emphasis is given to the work of the National Home Missions Department, and a special thrust is made to raise funds to be placed in the *General Fund* of this Department.

In the National Home Missions office in Nashville, Tennessee there are special accounts set up for each missionary. From these accounts are paid the missionaries' salaries, expenses for itinerate travels, insurance benefits, etc. No money is taken from the missionary accounts to operate the office or pay the office staff. Money for these needed expenses must come from the *General Fund*.

Do you know what is paid out of the *General Fund* of the National Home Missions Department?

First, missionaries' salaries whose accounts are in the red receive their monthly checks from the *General Fund*. This way, as long as money can be maintained in the *General Fund*, that missionary is assured of receiving his salary, even though his own personal account may be in the red.

Mailing costs of missionaries' newsletters is paid from the *General Fund*.

Free Will Baptist Hymn Books are given to missionaries to use in their services. These are paid for from the *General Fund*.

Board members expense to meetings to approve new missionaries, adopt policies, and pro-

ject plans for the future are also paid from this fund. Also the travel expenses of Board and Staff members to assist and encourage missionaries are paid from the *General Fund*.

The printing of tracts, follow up lessons, and other materials to be used by missionaries and others to win souls to Christ is paid for from this fund. Also the expense of printing and mailing of *Mission Grams* to keep our people informed about the progress of missionaries is taken from this fund.

Salaries of Staff members who receipt and disburse missionary funds, print newsletters, process faith promise cards, arrange itinerates, and support with prayer and counsel are all paid from the *General Fund*. These and many other items are paid from the *General Fund*. None of these things are paid from money designated for missionary funds. The *General Fund* needs your support so that these many benefits can be provided for the missionaries. Please pray that during this month the money will come in to this fund so that these services can be continued.

Pray for the work in the country of Mexico. Pray for the Jerry Barron family as they labor in Guadalajara, Jalisco, Mexico; for the Jim Williams family as they prepare to open the Institute in Monterrey, Mexico; and for Melvin and Jean Clark as they are in language school in preparation for service in Mexico.

Patsy Vanhook will be returning to the States for furlough in December and needs your

prayers as she makes these preparations.

DECEMBER

For many years in the month of December we have emphasized state missions in Free Will Baptists. There is a definite need for new churches to be started in the United States so these churches in return can help spread the gospel.

In Acts 1:8 Jesus clearly outlined His plan for world evangelization. His disciples are to be witnesses and the Holy Spirit is their power supply. Their witness is to take them into four areas.

Jerusalem—their city: The Great Commission begins in the local church. Acts 5:28 reveals that they filled their city with their doctrine. Where do we need to start churches? Twenty-six of our capital cities have no Free Will Baptist churches. Some of the largest cities in America, such as New York and Los Angeles, have no Free Will Baptist churches. Thousands of other cities, towns, and villages have none of our churches. The Home Missions Department has made a list of 140 cities without Free Will Baptist churches where the need is greatest.

All Judea—their state: Free Will Baptists have churches in 40 states. In 20 of these states we have work of strength. These 20 states compare to "all Judea" in Acts 1:8.

Samaria—30 states: In scripture Samaria represented four areas. (1) There was a city of Samaria. (2) There was a province north of Judea called

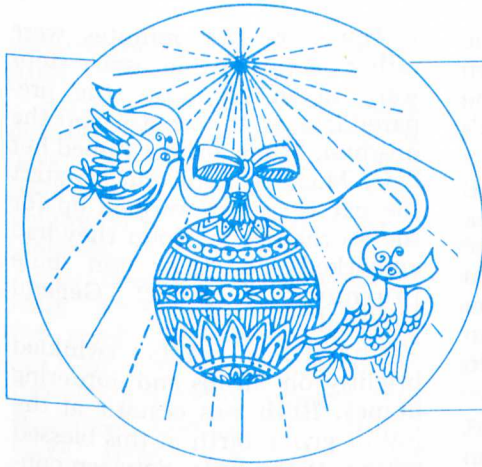
Samaria, which would be comparable to neighboring states that have no Free Will Baptist churches. (3) The people from this area were Jews who had intermarried with Gentiles as a result of the Babylonian and Assyrian captivities. So they could represent minority groups. (4) The northern kingdom was called Samaria, which could represent all of America's unchurched, especially those in isolated and forgotten areas.

Regardless of how one views the field of Samaria, Free Will Baptists are doing very little toward reaching this vast section of Christ's commission. Samaria represents the ten states where Free Will Baptists are not witnessing (Connecticut, Nebraska, Nevada, New York, North Dakota, Rhode Island, South Dakota, Utah, Vermont, and Wisconsin.) the six states with only one Free Will Baptist church, and the fourteen other states with less than eight of our churches.

The uttermost part of the earth: This area includes Canada, Mexico, the islands of the seas, and all other countries of the world.

Pray for Home Missionaries working in isolated areas such as Frank Cousineau, Billings, Montana; Karel Smith, Albuquerque, New Mexico; Harley Bennett, Pocatello, Idaho; Jesse Dunn, Salem, Oregon; and Mark Vandivort in Flagstaff, Arizona.

Pray for Mike and Deleen Cousineau and Dennis and Trena Owen who are in Missionary Internship preparing for missionary service.



A Labor of Love

by Sharon Clifton

RUTH'S eyelids flew open and she proceeded to inspect each corner of the bedroom the best she could, considering the darkness of the winter night. The cold, white moon shining through the window lent some light. The world was muffled in a thick blanket of white, newly-fallen snow. The only thing breaking the silence of the night was Michael's soft rhythmic breathing. Michael was Ruth's husband of three years.

Oh yes, there was one other sound to be heard. There was the persistent tink...tink...tink... of the bathroom faucet. Michael had planned to fix the leak "the very next day" for two-and-a-half weeks now. Ruth didn't mind that it wasn't yet repaired. Who could know better than she that there was an excellent reason for Michael's procrastination? Hadn't he been busy converting her sewing room into a nursery in preparation for the arrival of their first baby?

But what had awakened Ruth from such a sound winter's nap?

Certainly not Michael's gentle snoring. Even when the snoring wasn't so gentle Ruth wouldn't wake up. She was used to him after three years. After all, Ruth loved Michael, Michael loved Ruth, and they both loved the Lord. No, Michael's snoring hadn't awakened her. The dripping faucet had become such an automatic sound of their house that it could hardly have startled Ruth awake. What then?

Suddenly, Ruth was aware of what had aroused her. There it was again!

It started slowly and began building until... "o-o-oh!" Ruth moaning caused Michael to come awake quickly. He sprang out of bed.

"Honey! What is it? What's the matter? Are you okay? Where's the doctor's phone number?"

"Michael, calm down, Darlin! The baby's not due for two weeks yet. I just had another pre-labor contraction. Let's go back to sleep."

Michael wasn't convinced. "But Ruthie, you never groaned before."

"Well, this one was a little harder than the others. You know I've had them since the early stages of pregnancy. It's normal."

Finally, Ruth convinced Michael to lay down and go back to sleep. A few minutes later, she felt her abdomen start to tighten again. And again the contraction built to a climax before the pain ebbed. What was it the man in prenatal class had said?

"When your contractions start out slowly and build gradually in intensity until they reach a peak and then decrease, you will know that you are no longer dealing with the pre-labor contractions that prepare the uterus for childbirth."

Ruth decided that now was definitely the time to begin timing the contractions. As she lay quietly expectant of the next one, she began to think of Christmas. In just a few hours, they would be celebrating the birthday of the Lord. Could it be, she wondered, that her baby would be born on Christmas day? The baby wasn't even due for two weeks, but as another contraction began to build, the inevitable birth in the very near future was obvious to Ruth. She glanced at the luminous dial of the clock, by her bedside. Seven minutes! Was that right? Yes! It had only been seven minutes since the last contraction.

"Michael!" She shook him. "Wake up, Hon!"

"Huh? What is it? The baby, that's it isn't it? That was a real contraction!"

"They're all real enough, Hon, but, yes, I am in labor!"

The next few minutes were rather hectic. The necessary steps were taken to insure the preparedness of the doctor and the hospital. While Ruth combed her hair, Michael went out to start the car to get it warmed up for the mother-to-be. Soon they had embarked on their ten mile journey to Bethel General Hospital.

Christmas lights twinkled brightly on shrubs and bordering homes. Ruth was ecstatic at the joy of giving birth at this blessed season of the year. Between contractions she was able to contemplate upon spiritual things. This baby that was about to be born had been prayed for. Since Ruth had found out she was pregnant, she had considered her pregnancy as a spiritual experience, drawing her and Michael closer to the Savior, closer to the Lord, the Author of all life.

"Who am I," she wondered, "who am I to be going to the place of my baby's birth in a great big fancy 1965 Volkswagon when the mother of my Lord rode to the birthplace of her baby on the back of a lowly donkey? Who am I to be enroute to a meticulously sterile hospital to give birth to our heir when the One who has made me heir to a mansion in Heaven was born in a stable, virtually a cave where animals were kept (Luke 2:6, 7)."

They soon arrived at the hospital despite poor road conditions. The ride was rough, however, and Ruth again thought of Mary. How had she stood the donkey ride, "being great with child," over bumpy, windswept Judean hills? The Lord surely

sustained her as He now sustained Ruth.

Ruth's labor progressed normally. It was reassuring to have Michael with her during labor and the Lord's strengthening presence was with them every moment.

She began to think again of Mary. What had it been like in the stable two thousand years ago? What thoughts had surged through her mind between contractions? Certainly she would have remembered that first visitation from the angel Gabriel (Luke 1:26-38).

Had Mary relished the scent of the sweet, fresh hay that must have permeated the stable? Had she squeezed Joseph's hand as Ruth now squeezed Michael's?

Five hours and twenty minutes after Ruth was admitted, she gave birth to a beautiful, healthy baby boy. The experience of natural childbirth was one that Ruth knew that she would cherish forever. She had felt the very presence of the Lord there in the delivery room. She could imagine Mary's rejoicing at the birth of the Savior of the world.

Michael Andrew was to be the baby's name. It had been chosen after much deliberation. Mary had not been plagued with such trivial problems. First, she had prophesy— "...and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The Mighty God, The Everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace" (Isaiah 9:6b). Then the angel told Joseph— "...Thou shalt call his name Jesus: for he shall save his people from their sins" (Matthew 1:21b).

Before long, Ruth was able to hold her new infant. She looked at him and wondered.

"Dear, precious babe! How very much you are loved!"

It was then that it dawned on her. Her baby had been born on Christmas day. Her heart was singing. Couldn't everyone hear her rejoicing?

She looked down at the sleeping baby. As she did, so many questions flooded her mind.

"My son, what will you be? What will you do with your life?"

Ruth felt the Holy Spirit leading her to pray.

"Dear Heavenly Father, thank you for little Michael Andrew. And, Lord, thank you for giving to us your only Beloved Son, whose birthday we now celebrate. Oh, Lord, our baby has been born to live upon this planet, while your own Son was born to die to save the sinful souls of man. Oh, that our son may grow to serve you... that as Jesus died to save the world, Michael Andrew might live to bring some part of the world to a saving knowledge of Christ our Lord. Help us as parents, help me as a mother, to bring this darling gift of a son up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord. As I have labored to bear my son into this world, so did your Son labor to bear us into your glorious kingdom of Heaven on Calvary."

Tears of joy welled up in Ruth's eyes and in her heart. She said, as Mary had said twenty centuries ago, "My soul doth magnify the Lord, and my spirit hath rejoiced in God, my Saviour!"

EVERYWHERE, everywhere, Christmas tonight! From the snow covered hamlets of West Virginia to the bustling sidewalks of New York City with their loud speakers blaring forth, "Peace on Earth, good will toward men."

Everywhere, everywhere, Christmas tonight! From the isolated farm houses buried deep in the midwest to the desolate regions of the rock bound coast of New England, it is Christmas tonight!

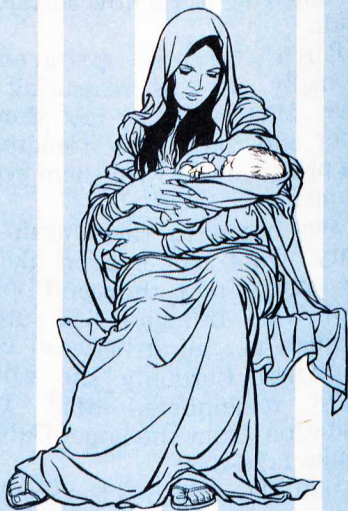
Santa Claus and sleigh bells; parties and presents; tissue wrapped packages and tinsel trees; crowds of shoppers and short tempers blend together in a hubbub of horror that blocks out the real meaning of Christmas.

Christmas is many things to many people, but unless we have a true relationship with Christ and can look backward to a baby cradled in a manger and forward to a Redeemer, alas! we are missing the grandeur and majesty of Christmas.

In the hustle and bustle of the holiday season, we sometimes forget that the world's most precious gift didn't come wrapped in gaily colored tissue paper, but was wrapped in swaddling clothes.

"And she brought forth her firstborn son . . . and laid him in a manger . . . for there was no room for them in the inn . . ." (Luke 2:7).

I sometimes wonder if Mary and Joseph came to Springfield in 1977, would there be room for them? We say there is. We want to believe there is, but even Christians become so wrapped up in the holiday season that we



The Precious Gift

by Dorothy Pressnell

forget life's most important gifts don't come wrapped in gaily colored packages—so maybe we wouldn't have time for a stranger so near Christmas.

When I was a little girl, I found it hard to believe a whole town could be so cruel to a couple of strangers that night so long ago in Bethlehem.

Today, I am not so naive and I can believe there would be no room for Him in Springfield, and it breaks my heart.

Always, I am a little sad at Christmas because the world cannot see the Star of Bethlehem. Even a Christian sometimes finds that the star has gotten a little tarnished during the year, and we try to polish it up and get it out at Christmas time and go back and read again the story.

When I think about Christmas,

my mind lets go a thousand things and yet recalls with perfect clarity the Christmas when I discovered that my parents were not ordinary at all, but very special. Out of the warm fragrance of memory, I look again through the eyes of a twelve year old and I recall the childish anticipation of that Christmas and God's unexpected revelation that I've carried down through the years with me.

It was cold that winter, with the bitter coldness that not only chills you outside but creeps into your veins with the icy stiffness of despair. I remember the half-finished house we lived in, the alien strangeness of a new school, the quiet desolation in my mother's eyes and the knowledge that there would be no presents because there was no money, not even a special dinner for Christmas.

It was the Christmas that I learned that the inner joy one possesses doesn't come from outward circumstances—we had nothing but each other, but I can still hear my dad reading the Christmas Story as we huddled around the heating stove.

The light threw a halo of light around his head and the dismal room stretched out into moonlit fields where wintry skies looked down and I could hear the grand finale of the unfinished symphony of the Old Testament as he read—

"And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God, and saying, glory to God in the highest and on earth peace, good will toward men."

I can still remember the thrill

of that story as I thought of Mary and Joseph and the Baby Jesus there in the stable. I knew that my father had done his very best for us and the appreciation and love I felt for him that night far surpassed any Christmas when I had been given a lot of gifts.

I am glad that I learned early in life that gifts of kindness, compassion, courage and love do not come in brightly colored packages but in the strength of our everyday living. And no matter how great or small the gift, unless it is wrapped in love, it is indeed a worthless gift!

A poignant question that my little boy asked me one night as we were wrapping presents echoes down the corridors of my mind . . . "Mommy, if it's the Lord's birthday, why do we give everybody gifts but Him?"

I tried to explain in terms he would understand that God's gift to us is life; what we do with life is our gift to Him. We don't give it once a year, but every day all year long. As we talked, I realized anew how many times I had failed.

As I look toward this holiday season, I long to be able to see beyond myself, to others; to realize that God's more concerned with my "availability" than with my "ability." I long to make this season a time that shall make Jesus even more real to my small son as he grows up. Lord, give me the shining eyes and glad heart of a little child that sees the Star of Bethlehem. Help me never to lose the joy of Christmas and to realize how richly blessed we are because of Him!



A Woman God Has Used

Surely no Free Will Baptist woman has ever served her Master more faithfully, effectively, or more joyously than Gladys Sloan (Mrs. Hubert B.). As she left this earthly life June 24, 1977, at the Columbia, Tennessee Nursing Facility, she left an indelible mark upon her church and her denomination.

Always active in her local church, Mrs. Sloan taught a Sunday school class, worked with young people, and in the Woman's Auxiliary, at the Loyal Chapel Free Will Baptist Church of Columbia.

The Woman's National Auxiliary Convention felt her strength and encouragement for numerous years. She held the office of president for three years and served as executive secretary for a brief period. Perhaps Mrs. Sloan will be best remembered for her self-sacrificing devotion to the cause that held priority in her life—missions.

Mrs. Sloan was secretary to the Reverend Raymond Riggs when he assumed the responsibility of promotional secretary of the foreign missions department in connection with pastoral duties at Highland Park, Michigan, November, 1950.

When the department was moved to Nashville in August, 1953, to begin full time operation, Mrs. Sloan assumed the job of executive secretary of the WNAC and continued part time service with the foreign missions board. In 1954 she resigned her position with WNAC to give full time to the growing secretarial load of the missions office. She also was charged with the bookkeeping operation.

In 1961 additional secretarial help was employed and Mrs. Sloan took care of the expanding bookkeeping operations, a position she held until her retirement. This faithful servant contributed almost 23 years to the work of the foreign missions department.

The funeral service was held at the Oaks Nichols Funeral Home, Columbia, Tennessee, June 26, 1977. Dr. Charles Thigpen, Rev. Rolla Smith, and Rev. Eugene Waddell officiated.



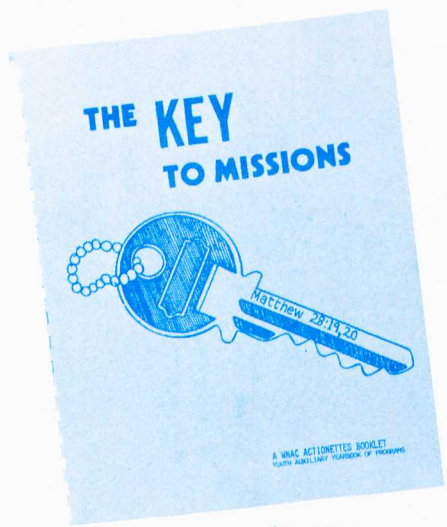
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Elizabeth Cameron
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Velda Tucker
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Betty Reeves
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Mary Ann Owens
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"Realizing God's Will"
Sheila Wilson
Bristol, Virginia

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"Missing or Mission in Action?"
Gayle Hughes
Spartanburg, S. C.

Second Place

"Why Mother Hubbard's
Cupboard is Bare"
Donna M. Little
West Jefferson, Ohio

Third Place

"To Join or Not to Join?"
Sandra Casey
Ozark, Alabama

Honorable Mention

"Is This Consecration?"
Nancy L. Meade
Manassas Park, Virginia