

# CONTACT

Official Publication of the National Association of Free Will Baptists

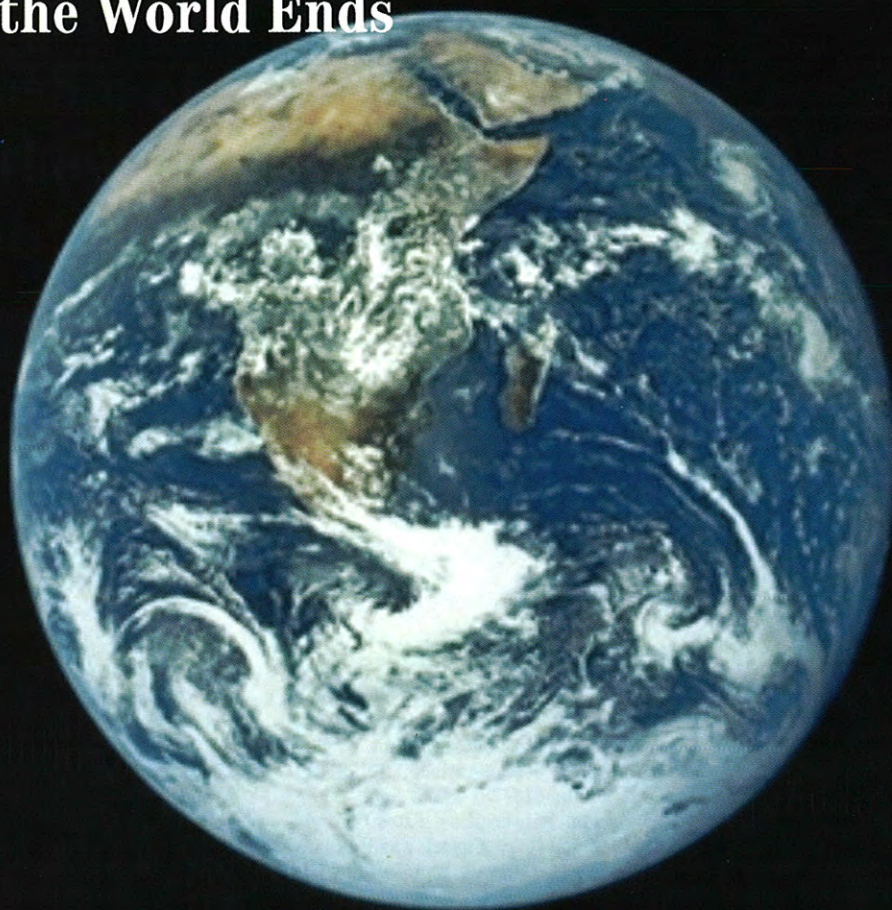
**Nightmare on Okoloosa Street**

**30-Year Man**

**The Sin of Laziness**

**If the World Ends**

**January 2000**





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JANUARY 2000

VOLUME 47, NO. 1

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*Editor:* Jack Williams  
*Editorial Assistant:* Marilyn Pritchard  
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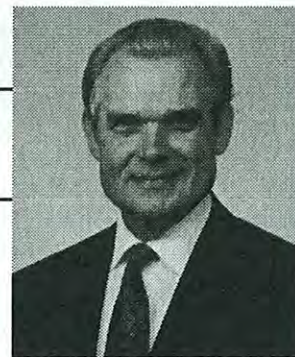
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# THE SECRETARY SPEAKS



Melvin Worthington

## The Free Will Baptist Team

**F**ree Will Baptist leaders met December 6-7 for the annual Leadership Conference. The conference theme was *Working Together*. The emphasis struck a familiar cord for those who understand our history.

The National Association is a team with many members—ambassadors, associations and agencies. All are valuable members of the Free Will Baptist team. Teamwork means that we share the same vision, values and virtues.

The Christian needs the local church, the local church needs the local association, the state association needs the national agencies. By working together and sharing our resources, we can accomplish our denominational goals.

### The Concept

Working together as a team is not a new or novel concept. The *Preamble* in the National Association constitution states, "From long experience we, the members of the Free Will Baptist denomination, being regularly baptized upon a profession of our faith in Jesus Christ, and realizing the necessity of a bond of union and fellowship among us as a Church; and to preserve and maintain correspondence and coordination with us, do therefore ordain this Constitution for our better denominational government" (1935).

The *Purpose* statement conceptualizes this idea, "The object of this organization shall be to unify the work of the various bodies composing this National Association, and to devise and execute measures for the extension of the Kingdom of God . . ." (1935).

The *Preface* of the *Treatise* states, "The Free Will Baptist denomination

is a fellowship of evangelical believers united in extending the witness of Christ and the building of His Church throughout the world" (1969).

### The Challenge

The challenge facing us today is no different than it was in 1935. How can we work together as a team? What does it require from each member individually? What are the advantages?

We can embrace the *Commission That Binds Us Together*. We have united to fulfill as a group the commission that Christ gave the Church. We can do more united than we can separately.

We can exhibit the mind of *Christ Which Builds Us Together*. We are members of one body, each gifted by God for a particular work. Christ is the head of the body, and we must be submissive to His headship. Christ is building His Church, and Free Will Baptists are part of it.

We can extend the *Commitment That Brought Us Together*. Those who organized the National Association in 1935 focused on global outreach. They were committed to the National Association and its purpose. We, too, need to extend this commitment. We are not lone rangers,

each doing our own thing.

We can envision the *Cooperation That Blesses Us Together*. Cooperation brings blessings. When a 1999 tornado devastated Oklahoma City, Free Will Baptists responded and gave \$60,000 to help displaced families.

The 1999 flooding in North Carolina caused extensive devastation to over 100 Free Will Baptist families. Some lost their homes, others their crops and businesses. An appeal was made to the Free Will Baptist team, and there was an overwhelming response.

Over \$300,000 had been given to assist North Carolina Free Will Baptist families by early November. Teamwork works in times of disaster. It also can work when things are going well.

### The Choice

Teamwork does not just happen. Although there are tremendous advantages to working together, this is not something that comes easily. Working together requires that we *have the same vision*—global evangelization.

Working together requires that we *hold the same values*. On the issues that make a difference, Free Will Baptists are together.

Working together requires that we *honor the same ventures*. Every activity of the denomination should be relevant to the purpose of extending Christ's kingdom to the ends of the earth. Everything the denomination does is designed to accomplish this goal.

The choice is ours. Who will be members of the Free Will Baptist team? Who will make that commitment? Join us today! ■

### The Secretary's Schedule

#### January 2000

11-14 Convention Planning Meeting  
Anaheim, CA

15 Louisiana District Association

22-26 First Free Will Baptist Church  
Washington, NC



Stalker terrorizes young wife

# Nightmare on Okoloosa Street

By Danny L. Dwyer



Photo courtesy Camerique

**T**he ringing telephone startled me early that Sunday morning, August 30, 1998. A quick glance at the clock beside the bed told me it was just after 2:00 a.m. I felt a knot in my stomach as I reached to answer the phone and steel myself for what I expected to be bad news.

## The Nightmare Begins

Over the phone came the sobbing, hysterical voice of my youngest daughter, Sara. "Daddy, I woke up and there was a man standing in my bedroom, right next to my bed!"

Sara and Joshua had been married for almost a year. He was in the United States Air Force stationed at Eglin

Air Force Base in Florida. Sara was in training to become a bank teller.

Because of Josh's duty schedule, Sara was home alone every other night during the week. With dead bolt locks and good neighbors, the house seemed secure and Sara should be safe at night . . . or so we thought.

Two weeks earlier, Sara noticed a vehicle following her as she drove home. From inside the house, she watched as the man drove back and forth along the short street looking at her house. She got a general description of the man and his vehicle. The whole incident was unsettling.

Early that Sunday morning when she was home alone, Sara came fully awake. There, in the twilight of her bedroom, stood a man by her bed.

Though there was a loaded gun next to her bed, she did the only thing she could do. She closed her eyes and screamed at the top of her lungs.

When she opened her eyes, the man was gone. He had not attacked her. She frantically dialed 911, called Josh, then me.

"Sara, what's wrong? Are you hurt?" I asked. My wife was suddenly at my side when she heard my question and the cries from our daughter.

"No, he ran away," she sobbed. "Daddy, I'm so scared."

"Try to get hold of yourself, honey. Where are you now?"

"I'm in the bedroom with the door locked," she said.

"Do you have the gun with you?" I asked. "Be very careful with it."



"Yes, I have the gun, but, Daddy, I'm so scared. What am I going to do?" she repeated.

"Are you sure he isn't in the house?" My immediate prayer was, "Please, Lord, give her strength right now."

"I believe he ran away," she stated. "Don't go out of the room. Stay there until the police come." My imagination was getting out of control as I thought of what I might hear over the phone if he came back into the room.

"The police are here now, Daddy. They are at the front door. I'm going to go let them in."

"Are you sure it's them," I asked. "Please make sure it's the police."

"Yes, it's them," she replied.

Sara let the police in the house and I could hear her tell them what had happened.

"Sara, what are the police doing?" I asked.

"They are outside looking around now. Daddy, why did this happen?" she asked.

"I don't know, Sara. The devil wanted to hurt you. But the Lord watched over you and protected you tonight. Even though this is a terrible thing, he didn't hurt you."

We stayed on the phone until Josh got home. Sara was traumatized. After Josh assured us that he did not have to return to duty, we hung up. There would be no sleeping that night.

### What Now?

My wife left the next day to be with our daughter. Fortunately Josh was off duty. But the emotional wounds were deep. Each time Sara went into her bedroom and saw the place where the man had stood, the awful scene flooded her mind.

She could not sleep in the same room where it happened. Later that week, Josh and I secured the house with an alarm system, new dead bolt locks and braces for the doors and windows. It would now take a bulldozer to get in.

But nagging questions remained. Was the intruder still watching, waiting to make another attack? Who would stay with Sara after we returned home? Would the Air Force change Josh's schedule so he could be home at night?

Unfortunately, Josh was unable to get transferred. My wife and I reluctantly returned to our responsibilities. The neighbors promised to keep close watch and even let Sara stay with them for a while. The police committed to patrolling the area each night. This would ease the strain temporarily, but then what?

During those tense days we enlisted the prayer support of everyone we could. We desperately wanted the Lord's guidance in the matter. Our main concern was for Sara, but we wanted the intruder caught.

We constantly called to check on Sara before she went to bed and early in the morning. We went to bed each night wondering if there would be another phone call. Little did we know that the nightmare was only beginning.

## Little did we know that the nightmare was only beginning.

### House of Horrors

Two weeks after the first break in, the phone rang at 10:30 p.m.

"Daddy, someone's trying to get in the back door!" Sara cried.

I could hear the terror in her voice. I felt panic rising in my own mind and the taste of anger in my throat wishing I could be there to take care of this crazed lunatic with my bare hands.

The braces on the doors and windows held firmly. The intruder could not get in. But like a poisoned, jagged arrow, fear found its way into her heart again.

Sara looked out the window and saw a shadowy figure run from the back door into the night. The man's form was vaguely familiar.

Neighbors offered their home for Sara to stay over. Even when she stayed at home, her sleep was fitful, and she dreamed of being attacked. The little duplex that had been freshly painted, carpets cleaned and carefully decorated for a young couple's first home was turning into a house of horrors.

Though we wanted them to find another place to live, to our surprise and to Sara's credit, she told us, "I'm

not going to let this man run me out of my own house. In a way he will win if we move. I want to stay here."

### Good News

In the midst of all this, Sara learned that she was pregnant. In fact, she was expecting at the time of the first break in and did not know it. Could it be that she awakened from deep sleep and had the courage to scream in the face of the intruder because the protecting hand of God was upon her and the new life within her?

It takes little imagination to think what the outcome could have been. "The angel of the Lord encampeth round about them that fear Him, and delivereth them."

But there was still an edge to this good news. The stalker remained at large. We prayed for the Lord to reveal this person. He did, in a most unusual way.

### Answer to Prayer?

Two weeks passed. As Sara left the bank where she worked to go to lunch, there in the parking lot sat the familiar vehicle and the man who had followed her home. With her heart racing, she got into her car and drove out of the parking lot. A quick glance in her mirror revealed that he was following her.

Then she did an incredibly courageous thing. With the man directly behind her, she stopped in the middle of a busy four-lane highway forcing him to go around. Then she began following him getting his license number and the direction he was going.

Sara picked up Josh who was off duty and they both went to see where the man had gone. They found him at a little park close to their house. They went to the police who came and picked him up for questioning. Sara identified him as the man who had followed her home some weeks ago, and she filled out a report.

Since the man had no previous record, he was released. If anything further happened, he would be the first person picked up. Had the Lord answered our prayers and allowed this to



happen to bring him out in the open?

### The Letter

Through police records, I found out who the man was and where he lived. I confess that I wanted to take matters into my own hands. This was my daughter who had been put through this hellish nightmare, and my father's instinct of protection was almost overwhelming.

I wanted to strike back at him. I wanted him to taste the bitter anguish of sleepless nights and uncertain days. I wanted him to know that I knew who he was and where he lived and that the last people he should have to worry about were the police. So in anger I wrote a letter to the man who was now my sworn enemy.

When I finished the letter, I read it to see if it were severe enough. But at that point, something gripped my heart. Was this an act of righteous indignation or an act of the flesh that would displease the Lord? I concluded that it was an act of the flesh. I never mailed the letter.

### Hand of God

The hand of God became evident over the next few days. Our oldest daughter, Wendy, who lives in North Carolina related the matter to her church. One member said she had an attorney friend who lived and worked in the same area where Josh and Sara lived. She called her friend to see if something could be done.

The attorney friend said there seemed to be plenty of evidence to charge the man with stalking and called the district attorney who agreed. The man was picked up within two days and charged. Arraignment and trial dates were set. In a plea bargain, the man's attorney got him off lightly.

This was frustrating. It did not seem that justice had been served. But when it seemed that there would be some closure to the matter, things took a turn for the worse.

### The Seizures

Sara suffered a seizure while driving to work one morning. She had just pulled away from a traffic light when it hit without warning. With Sara slumped

behind the wheel, the car eased off the highway, up a slight embankment and stopped in the grass narrowly missing a group of trees. It seemed to be guided by an unseen hand.

A passerby gave assistance and called 911. Emergency crews could get little response from Sara. She was transported to the emergency room and came to a few hours later with a terrible headache. With this there began a series of seizures occurring without warning.

Doctors at Eglin Air Base ran extensive tests, but nothing was conclusive. We asked the Lord to intervene, not only for Sara's sake but for the new baby's as well. Medically, if Sara were out for as long as 30 minutes, the baby would be affected.

From January to March the spells continued. Because of her health, Sara was unable to work at the bank. At home she went from one seizure to another and became despondent.

Even with Josh's training as an emergency technician, he felt helpless when a seizure occurred. Friends from many places prayed for the Lord to intervene.

While visiting with us in March, Sara announced that she had not had a seizure in two weeks and she believed that the Lord had healed her. That was what we had been praying for.

Could it be that the nightmare was finally over?

### The New Arrival

Josh and Sara moved to another home several miles away. On June 8, 1999, at 2:33 p.m., Jessica was born—healthy and beautiful with a head full of black hair. Mother and father (and grandparents) came through the birth fine.

### Why This Trial?

The nightmare that began on August 30, 1998, now seems like a bad dream. These are the kind of things you read about that happen to other people. We are left with more questions than answers, but there are some clear lessons.

One, even good people go through bad times. We live in a fallen world. There are some sin-sick people out there who are under Satan's control

(Eph. 2:2), and Christians are their favorite targets.

Also, it is clear that the Lord watches over His own when they are attacked. He often protects us when we are not aware of it. We should never presume on His watchcare by being careless and naive, however. We are to trust God and lock our doors.

Further, God moves in response to prayer. In specific ways God heard and answered our prayers. When it seemed that things only got worse, the Lord was at work in His own wonderful ways.

Finally, His blessings are always greater than the hurts. A young couple's faith has been strengthened. A wonderful little baby was born in perfect health. The Lord has been glorified in the way He worked. I would never want anyone else to go through the same experience, but the Lord is there whatever the trial may be. ■

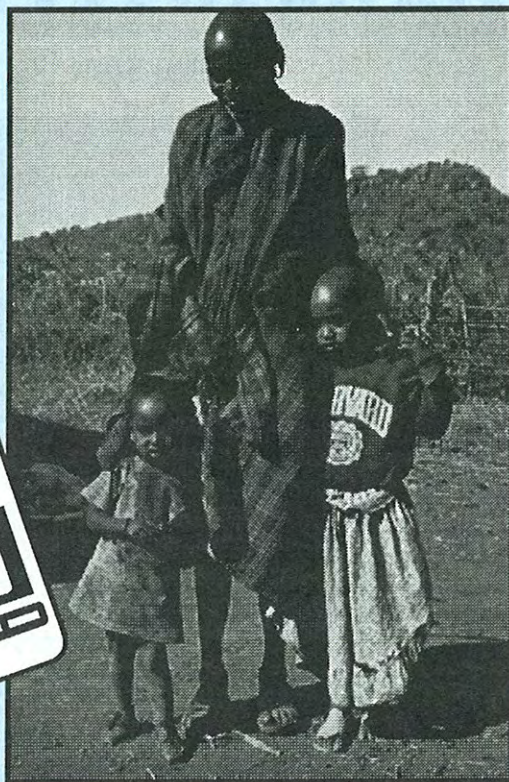


ABOUT THE WRITER: Reverend Danny Dwyer pastors First Free Will Baptist Church in Florence, Alabama.



# The Recorder

By Nathan Weidner



**T**here was a knock at the front door. The missionary arose excitedly and made his way across the kitchen of his tiny cabin to answer it. Through the screen he could see the dark face of his very first house guest. He seemed somewhat nervous, and it occurred to the missionary that this must be the man's first close contact with a Westerner.

He pushed the door open and smiled at the man to help ease his apprehension. Once inside, they sat down in the living room to talk over some cold lemonade. During their conversation, the missionary noticed the man eyeing his surroundings, taking in the sights of all the strange objects that adorned the home.

One item of particular interest was the cassette recorder that sat on the coffee table in front of him. The man's curiosity about the odd-looking black box compelled him to ask the missionary what it was.

"This is a cassette recorder," he informed the man.

"What does it do?" the man asked. "It's really a wonderful machine. You see, I can talk to it, and it remembers what I say. If I say something in the recorder today, I can come back to it tomorrow, and it will repeat exactly what I told it. What's even better, I can say very important things into the recorder, and long after I am dead, what I have said can still be heard by others."

The man did not seem impressed, which confused the missionary somewhat. He thought for sure that such a device would fascinate him and raise more questions.

"Have you ever seen anything quite like this?" he interjected.

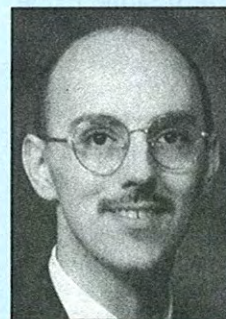
"Yes," the man replied, "we have many of these in our village."

Now he was really puzzled. Certainly this type of technology didn't exist in their culture. What little contact he had made with the people had still made it quite evident that this was far above their capabilities or comprehension.

"What do your people call these machines?" the missionary probed.

The man shook his head. "They're not machines. They're our children. What we say to them remains in their hearts for the rest of their lives. When we die, anyone can look at our children and understand all that we said and did while we were alive."

The missionary nodded and smiled, realizing how true were the words of this simple man. ■



**ABOUT THE WRITER:** Nathan Weidner plans to serve as a Free Will Baptist missionary in France. He is a member of Heritage Temple Free Will Baptist Church in Columbus, Ohio.



Free Will Baptist family named "Farm Family of the Year"

# Modern Farmers . . . Model Family

By Ben Scott

**N**ortheast Arkansas' Randolph County has a lot of farm land and a good number of farmers and farm families. Annually, the Farm Bureau of Arkansas selects and honors the county's outstanding "Farm Family of the Year." Receiving that distinguished award for 1999 is the family of Vic and Rhonda Stone. They are the parents of two sons, Andrew (12) and Sean (8). The *Pocahontas Star Herald* newspaper describes the young family as one that "symbolizes that which is good about rural America."

Rooted in the traditional values of God, country, church and home, Vic is a fifth generation farmer. He and Rhonda became high school sweethearts and were married 16 years ago while Rhonda was a student at Arkansas State University in Jonesboro. After they married, she continued her education and graduated in 1986 with a degree in accounting. As bookkeeper for the family farm, the degree has served her well.

"Behold, a sower went forth to sow . . ." For this "Farm Family of the Year" that means 1,323 acres of soy beans, 630 acres of wheat, 327 acres of rice and 150 acres of corn. With proper cultivation, appropriate fertilization and adequate irrigation, the Stones expect and receive an abundant yield at harvest time.

To assist in the family's farming operation, the Stones employ and secure the services of two full-time farm hands. They have set an appropriately high standard in their employer-employee relationship by providing a retirement plan for their workers.

This "Farm Family of the Year" holds membership in the Sutton Free Will



Vic and Rhonda Stone with sons, Sean (8) and Andrew (12).

Baptist Church which is located four miles west of Pocahontas. Their pastor is Reverend Randy Scott.

In the past Vic has filled the position of Sunday School superintendent. He currently serves in the youth department, teaching the teen boys' class.

Rhonda teaches the teen girls. In addition, she has been the church pianist since 1984. She teams with her mother, Mrs. Cletus Neece, who is the church organist. In the world of business, Rhonda uses her accounting skills as an internal auditor with the Bank of Pocahontas.

Planting seeds of corn in the soil is one thing. Planting seeds of character and Christian conduct in the souls of their sons is high priority for Vic and Rhonda. Watching a crop of rice grow and mature brings its rewards and a sense of satisfaction. Watching their sons develop a proper attitude of respect

and reverence brings greater delight.

Both boys have been saved and baptized and are active in the Sunday School and the youth programs of the church. During a two-year period Andrew achieved perfect attendance in Sunday School. Little League, basketball, football and a few computer games claim much of the boys' attention, along with developing a personal interest in the business of farming.

The fertile land Vic farms not only produces an abundant crop of grain year after year, but each spring the stirred soil turns up some reminders of the past in the form of Indian arrow heads. Over the years the family's collection of excellent arrow heads has grown to one of wonder and enjoyment. It is a reminder that generations have lived before us and have left their mark.

With the Christian principles and quality of life the Stone family so aptly demonstrates, it will not be any surprise that succeeding generations will be the beneficiaries of Randolph County's 1999 "Farm Family of the Year." ■



**ABOUT THE WRITER:** Reverend Ben Scott is a retired Free Will Baptist minister. He is a member of Sutton Free Will Baptist Church in Pocahontas, Arkansas. He does pulpit supply, special services and limited revival work.



# The Sin of Laziness

By Kevin Riggs<sup>1</sup>



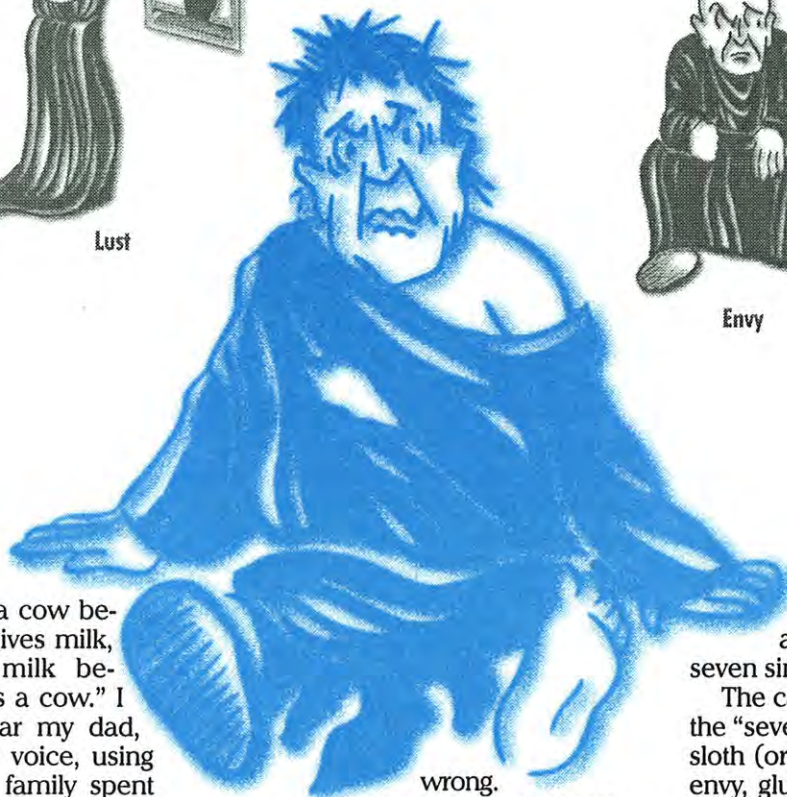
Covetousness



Lust



Gluttony



wrong.

Theologians call this depravity. Parents call it the terrible twos.

## Introduction

Heinous sins bring to mind thoughts of murder, adultery, molestation, rape, stealing, lying and discrimination. Part of me still believes the absolute worst sin is blasphemy against God. The more I think about it, however, the more I realize those things, including blasphemy, are not the worst sins, but characteristics of more deplorable sins.

Near the end of the sixth century (500s A.D.), Pope Gregory the Great, with the help of other church leaders, categorized all sins under seven headings. They referred to these seven headings as the "chief" or "cardi-



Anger



Envy



Pride

nal" sins. They believed and taught that out of these seven sins came all evil in the world.

The categories became known as the "seven deadly sins" and included sloth (or laziness), lust, anger, pride, envy, gluttony and greed. According to church traditions, these seven are the worst sins imaginable, and not one of them would have made my list of heinous sins.

I am now convinced that these attitudes are the root of all sin. Anger is the root of murder. Lust is the root of adultery and immorality. Greed is the root of stealing. Envy is the root of discrimination, and pride is the root of blasphemy.

Furthermore, I believe these seven sins have devastated our society: Laziness has resulted in a society of apathetic and indifferent people. Pornography is the result of lust. The violence in our society grows out of the anger many people feel.

Pride causes groups and races of people to discriminate against others.

"A cow is not a cow because she gives milk, she gives milk because she is a cow." I can still hear my dad, with his loud, baritone voice, using this illustration as our family spent summers traveling from church to church. He would continue, "A frog is not a frog because he jumps, he jumps because he is a frog. A dog is not a dog because she barks, she barks because she is a dog . . ." You get the picture.

His illustration gave me interesting mental pictures, but it was years later before I understood what dad meant. His point was: It is not what you do that determines who you are or what you are, rather, it is what you are that determines what you do.

Dad always ended the illustration by saying, "You and I are not sinners because we sin, we sin because we are sinners." In other words, as human beings it is our very nature to sin. We are born with a natural bent towards



We gossip and slander and sue out of envy. Gluttony runs rampant in our society through substance abuse, as well as obesity. Materialism is nothing more than greed run wild.

While these sins are not collectively mentioned in a single passage in the Bible<sup>2</sup>, they are all condemned separately. Most of the great theologians have agreed with Pope Gregory on the seriousness of these seven, and these sins have been the subject of poems, plays and movies through the centuries.

Over the next several months, I want to take a look at each of these seven deadly sins. This month's sin is laziness.<sup>3</sup>

### The Sin of Laziness

I don't like laziness, and I don't know anyone who does, but I have never considered it a serious sin. Why is laziness considered deadly? Because laziness is the sin of doing nothing. The Bible says, "Therefore to him that knoweth to do good, and doeth it not, to him it is sin" (James 4:17).

If I am not careful, laziness will convince me that what I know is important isn't worth the effort. For example: I know spending time with my wife and kids is important, but there are times when I get home at night I am so tired that it just isn't worth the effort. It is easier to slip into a coma in my recliner than go bike riding with my daughter.

Everyone I meet tells me attending church is important, but after a six-day work week, Sunday is their only day to rest and sleep, going to church just isn't worth the effort. It is easier to relax than worship.

### Prevents Us Being Loving

Furthermore, laziness is a sin because, if I let it, it will rob my life of meaning and purpose. Laziness prevents me from being loving. Time and again the Bible tells me to love my wife, my parents, my children, my neighbors and even my enemies. But to love others the way Jesus loves requires commitment and work.

It's hard to put the other person first. It's hard to love my spouse like I love myself. It's hard to say no to a hurting church member so I can stay

home and spend time with family.

It's hard to discipline my children. It's hard to love my neighbor who plays music too loud and uses my lawn as a U-turn. To be loving is hard. It is easier to be lazy, to look the other way.

The opposite of love is not hatred, but apathy and indifference. Both of which are a result of laziness, and both of which are epidemic in our society. Today, neighbors don't know neighbors, people are afraid to get involved, parents don't love their children and children don't respect their parents. Laziness prevents me and others from being loving, and laziness is slowly killing our society.

### Hinders Following God

The second way laziness robs me of meaning and purpose is by preventing me from following God. I am told that 95% of Americans believe in God,<sup>4</sup> and 90% of Americans claim to pray regularly,<sup>5</sup> but only 49% attend church in any given week.<sup>6</sup>

If this is true, it sounds a lot like the words of Jesus, "These people draweth nigh unto me with their mouth, and honoreth me with their lips; but their heart is far from me" (Matt. 15:8).

Laziness tempts me to desire a "cheap grace"—one keeping me out of hell but not changing my life on earth—instead of a "costly grace"—one changing me from the inside out, making me a new creation.

I want an easy salvation, instead of one calling for commitment. I want easy answers and short sermons. I want an hour-long worship service to get me through a 60-hour work week. But growing in Christ is hard work.<sup>7</sup>

Following God is a commitment that cannot be kept through laziness. Being a disciple requires me to live a life of discipline and self-sacrifice, and laziness hates discipline and self-sacrifice.

### Removes Joy

Laziness also robs me of meaning and purpose because it prevents me from enjoying life. God made the earth for His children to enjoy, and Jesus said following Him would result in abundant life (Jn. 10:10). However, when I give in to laziness, I am like the slug-

gard in Proverbs 26:13, I don't want to do anything so I make up excuses to stay home.

When I give in to laziness, I slide on to the couch of guilt, worthlessness, depression, hopelessness and sadness, all of which prevents me from enjoying life. After pastoring the same church for more than 10 years, I am convinced that few people know what it means to be happy, and fewer know what it means to have joy. Yet the Bible commands, "Rejoice in the Lord always: and again I say, Rejoice" (Phil. 4:4).

### How To Escape Laziness

Laziness is the sin of doing nothing, and it robs meaning and purpose from my life. One way to describe laziness is that yucky feeling which drains me of desire and motivation. Laziness, if I allow it, convinces me that what I know is important isn't worth the effort. If I am to be all God wants me to be, I must escape from the muck and mire of laziness.

### Confess the Sin

One way I have learned to escape is by confessing my sin of laziness to God. Proverbs reads, "The way of the slothful man is as a hedge of thorns: but the way of the righteous is made plain" (Prov. 15:19).

When I confess laziness as a sin, it frees me from despair and gives me liberty to enjoy the life God has given me. The Bible proclaims, "Awake thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall give thee light" (Eph. 5:14).

### Rely on Holy Spirit

Next, I depend on the Holy Spirit's strength instead of my own. When I try to do things on my own, I am easily defeated and tempted to quit. But when I rely on the Holy Spirit's power, there is strength to keep going and hope that I did not have before. Through the Holy Spirit I receive direction, motivation and life.

### No Excuses

Finally, and this is the hardest for me, I do what I know to do, even when I don't feel like doing it.<sup>8</sup> Doing what I know is right when I would rather take



the day off is what it means to follow Christ. This means I love others even though I would rather tell them off. It means I follow God even when I would rather do things my own way. It means I enjoy life even when I would rather complain and gripe.

It is through confessing to God, reliance on the Holy Spirit and diligence to the task at hand that I escape from the muck and mire of laziness. ■



**ABOUT THE WRITER:** Reverend Kevin Riggs pastors Franklin Free Will Baptist Church in Franklin, Tennessee.

#### Endnotes

<sup>1</sup> I would love to hear from you with any comments, questions, or opinions. I can be reached via email at [gkriggs43@aol.com](mailto:gkriggs43@aol.com), or snail mail at 149 Arsenal Dr., Franklin, TN 37064, or by telephone at 615.790.3229.

<sup>2</sup> The closest the Bible comes to mentioning the seven sins in one passage is Proverbs 6:16-19, *These six things doth the LORD hate: yea, seven are an abomination unto him: A proud look, a lying tongue, and hands that shed innocent blood, A heart that deviseth wicked imaginations, feet that be swift in running to mischief, A false witness that speaketh lies, and he that soweth discord among brethren.*

<sup>3</sup> The order that I will deal with the seven sins has not been chosen for any particular reason. The order is neither ascending or descending. In other words, I will deal with laziness first, but that does not mean that laziness is the worst of the seven sins.

<sup>4</sup> According to George Barna, more than 95% of Americans profess they believe in God or a universal force (*Virtual America*, 109).

<sup>5</sup> According to George Barna, nine out of ten Americans say they pray to God on a regular basis (*Absolute Confusion*, 93).

<sup>6</sup> According to George Barna, overall, 49% of American adults are likely to attend a church worship service in any given week.

<sup>7</sup> Salvation is a free gift through the grace of God. There is nothing we can do to earn it or keep it. The Bible clearly teaches justification by faith alone in Christ alone. What I mean by "work" is following the spiritual disciplines—things like a daily quiet time, tithing, fasting, giving to the poor, and such—that help me grow in my faith.

<sup>8</sup> The following Proverbs talk about the importance of being diligent and doing what you know to do even when you do not feel like doing it . . .

- Proverbs 10:4
- Proverbs 12:24
- Proverbs 13:4

# THE TOGETHER WAY

October 1999

Receipts:	Designated	CO-OP	Total	Year To Date Designated	Year To Date CO-OP	Year To Date Total
State						
Alabama	\$ 448.52	\$ .00	\$ 448.52	\$ 5,358.61	\$ .00	\$ 5,358.61
Arizona	.00	.00	.00	3,464.14	214.40	3,678.54
Arkansas	10,425.47	8,772.38	19,197.85	151,645.10	141,708.47	293,353.57
California	.00	1,056.58	1,056.58	.00	11,305.02	11,305.02
Colorado	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00
Delaware	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00
Florida	11.75	.00	11.75	408.08	12,000.00	12,408.08
Georgia	33,118.03	1,948.59	35,066.62	253,902.17	17,894.85	271,797.02
Hawaii	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00
Idaho	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00
Illinois	5,843.50	2,027.37	7,870.87	79,082.37	20,717.46	99,799.83
Indiana	1,036.52	519.52	1,556.04	10,942.80	2,519.28	13,462.08
Iowa	.00	.00	.00	360.00	2,324.65	2,684.65
Kansas	.00	.00	.00	.00	252.92	252.92
Kentucky	1,028.54	507.66	1,536.20	12,777.86	5,495.82	18,273.68
Louisiana	.00	.00	.00	180.00	.00	180.00
Maryland	.00	507.16	507.16	150.00	9,511.14	9,661.14
Michigan	20,325.28	484.53	20,809.81	161,359.22	25,935.77	187,294.99
Mississippi	13,237.56	1,211.91	14,449.47	76,446.87	5,193.23	81,640.10
Missouri	40,004.86	12,000.86	52,005.72	404,770.05	123,450.47	528,220.52
Montana	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00
Nebraska	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00
New Jersey	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00
New Mexico	1,173.25	61.63	1,234.88	6,388.24	379.12	6,767.36
North Carolina	890.06	1,853.95	2,744.01	11,857.87	20,706.61	32,564.48
Ohio	9,041.43	3,469.16	12,510.59	106,058.35	31,384.25	137,442.60
Oklahoma	57,066.65	11,598.12	68,664.77	523,030.00	102,940.95	625,970.95
South Carolina	106,539.13	.00	106,539.13	443,337.54	.00	443,337.54
South Dakota	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00
Tennessee	19,125.58	1,601.42	20,727.00	121,480.45	17,706.89	139,187.34
Texas	8,573.07	272.29	8,845.36	89,934.36	3,034.20	92,968.56
Virginia	912.25	.00	912.25	7,784.13	.00	7,784.13
Virgin Islands	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00
West Virginia	125.00	.00	125.00	21,889.54	887.08	22,776.62
Wisconsin	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00
Canada	224.30	11.48	235.78	2,628.13	120.94	2,749.07
Northwest Assoc.	.00	.00	.00	34.60	.00	34.60
Northeast Assoc.	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00
Other	.00	.02	.02	.00	.34	.34
<b>Totals</b>	<b>\$ 329,150.75</b>	<b>\$ 47,904.63</b>	<b>\$ 377,055.38</b>	<b>\$ 2,495,270.48</b>	<b>\$555,683.86</b>	<b>\$ 3,050,954.34</b>

#### DISBURSEMENTS:

Executive Office	\$ 2,494.70	\$ 21,557.08	\$ 24,051.78	\$ 19,610.94	\$250,057.63	\$ 269,668.57
Foreign Missions	181,882.39	6,059.94	187,942.33	1,480,945.51	70,293.99	1,551,239.50
FWBBC	21,509.92	6,059.94	27,569.86	175,203.63	70,293.99	245,497.62
Home Missions	96,917.65	4,742.56	101,660.21	700,860.73	55,012.73	755,873.46
Retirement & Insurance	641.17	3,688.67	4,329.84	4,337.07	42,787.72	47,124.79
Master's Men	463.44	3,688.67	4,152.11	4,543.49	42,787.72	47,331.21
Comm. for Theo. Integrity	41.21	131.73	172.94	470.69	1,528.13	1,998.82
FWB Foundation	381.23	1,580.85	1,962.08	3,579.03	18,337.56	21,916.59
Historical Commission	22.03	131.73	153.76	242.89	1,528.13	1,771.02
Music Commission	6.54	131.73	138.27	219.79	1,528.13	1,747.92
Media Commission	25.70	131.73	157.43	362.41	1,528.13	1,890.54
Hillsdale FWB College	1,545.95	.00	1,545.95	16,019.12	.00	16,019.12
Other	23,218.82	.00	23,218.82	88,875.18	.00	88,875.18
<b>Totals</b>	<b>\$ 329,150.75</b>	<b>\$ 47,904.63</b>	<b>\$ 377,055.38</b>	<b>\$ 2,495,270.48</b>	<b>\$555,683.86</b>	<b>\$ 3,050,954.34</b>



Three decades as National Association clerk

# The 30-Year Man

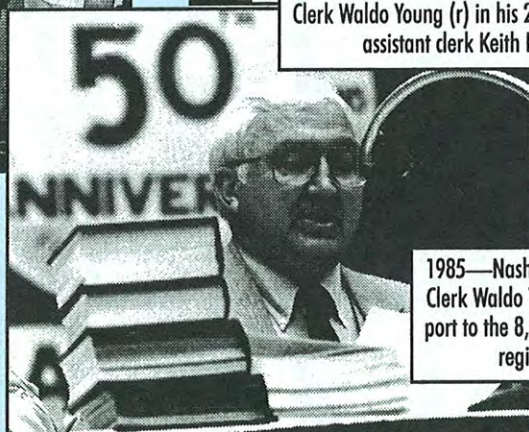
By Waldo Young



1979—Charlotte, North Carolina. In his 10th year, clerk Waldo Young (r) watches as moderator Bobby Jackson welcomes newly-elected executive secretary Melvin Worthington.



1989—Tampa, Florida  
Clerk Waldo Young (r) in his 20th session with assistant clerk Keith Burden.



1985—Nashville, Tennessee  
Clerk Waldo Young reads report to the 8,300 people who registered.



1999—Atlanta, Georgia  
Clerk Waldo Young (l) accepts parting gifts from executive secretary Melvin Worthington.

**T**he date was July 17, 1969, the last day of the national convention in St. Louis, Missouri. I was a 36-year-old, naive, untrained pastor of Spencer Road FWB Church in Oklahoma City. The final item of business was electing officers. With the other names, it read, "Waldo Young nominated for clerk."

I was more surprised than anyone. I had not been contacted. Our three children thought it meant we would be moving to Nashville.

I had been clerk of the Oklahoma State Association for a few years, but was I ready for this plunge? Two committee nominees for officers were not elected; nominees from the floor were elected instead. But I was elected, by acclamation, no less. Another surprise to me and others.

Soon after I returned home from the convention, I received a letter from a departmental director. It said in part, "Congratulations. Your election also places you on the Executive Committee. Please, Brother Young, don't join

the clique that exists in Nashville. When you are in Nashville, call me. I would like to buy you a steak."

How would you read that? I read it, "Don't join their clique, join my clique." But maybe I didn't understand the mind of the writer.

That was 30 years ago. What a ride it has been! Except for my age and the feeling that perhaps I had out-stayed my welcome, I would still be serving. So, here I go with a few 30-year observations.

## Progress

Don't give me the credit; I just took notes. Home Missions reported supporting 30 missionaries on an income of \$160,000 in 1968. Foreign Missions had a force of 73 adult missionaries, four of which were new appointees. Their income was just over a half million dollars, as was that of Free Will Baptist Bible College.

Some of our increased giving has been because of inflation, of course.

But we have made progress in giving in that 30 years. Look at the current year. The combined budgets exceed \$18 million.

The statistical report says we had 177,000 members in 1968, but it includes a footnote on poor reporting. We haven't experienced much progress on reporting our numbers. Reports are still incomplete. However, our reports now say we exceed 200,000 members. But, alas, who knows?

The Superannuation Board was changed to the Board of Retirement in 1969. And it has really come alive in 30 years. The Sunday School Department was just getting revived after an earlier failure, and now it is as good as any denomination needs.

The Laymen's Board had a \$7,300 budget then. Now it has a full-time operation.

In my memory we have had three national office buildings. We experienced success and growth out of each of them. But doesn't the present one make you just a little proud? And it's al-



most debt-free, too.

Now, let me see. Did computers exist 30 years ago?

## Pillars

Paul mentioned two men in Galatians 2:9 who "... seemed to be pillars." Pillars support the edifice. Pillars preserve. Pillars are there doing their jobs. And, as Paul knew some, so do we. Human pillars, that is.

I clerked for five moderators and offer the following observations.

Robert Picirilli was moderator when I was elected and served a few more years. My opinion? He is the most intelligent, efficient person with whom I have worked in that position. He could think on his feet. He knew the rules. He was excellent.

J. D. O'Donnell followed him in 1971. He too was knowledgeable. But when he would try to tell a light or funny story, it would sometimes backfire on him. But what a strong pillar he made in several denominational positions.

Bobby Jackson succeeded O'Donnell in 1977. He was a capable moderator, a fine chairman of the Executive Committee and General Board. He prepared for the position and served well.

My friend Ralph Hampton succeeded Jackson in 1988, and served with dignity and competency for his tenure of service.

And, of course, the story of Carl Cheshier, present moderator, is still to be written. He is doing well. He is a man of leadership and accomplishment.

Only two men served as executive secretary while I was clerk. The first one suffered a breakdown of moral behavior and left office in embarrassment. The Executive Committee heard his prayer of repentance.

The present executive secretary, Melvin Worthington, has the training and capabilities to be CEO of any large company. He is a leader. And in fact, he is a leader in the most important work in all the world. He surrounds himself with capable people and motivates them to be their best. Backed by a tremendous staff, he has led us through 20 years of progress.

The man behind the scenes in the national convention has been Jack Williams. An award-winning conven-

tion coordinator, he has been the hidden force that results in great conventions.

I must mention my assistant clerk for the last 18 years. Elected in 1981, Keith Burden is the most efficient clerk with whom I have worked. One assistant told me after I asked him to take notes while I read some reports, "Brother Young, I don't think I can keep notes."

Keith Burden takes notes well enough so that you can go home and type them as written.

My acquaintance with department directors, board members and committee members has been a blessing. It takes a large number of efficient people doing their jobs to make the work of the Lord go. And many are working for the Lord in the Free Will Baptist denomination.

## Pains

In my ministry I remember two crises of great enough impact and importance that a "Jerusalem Conference" was called. These were meetings to try to settle the issues.

One was on the question of the backslider. I doubt that any minds were changed, but at least the issue was put to rest.

The other was the wine issue. I don't want to open old wounds, but again a meeting was conducted.

Mostly, I found that on some issues we can agree to disagree. There is some room for difference on some issues and still be in the same family. A family faces issues together and settles them.

The selection of National Association speakers does not please everyone, although the Executive Committee gives much prayer and attention to select from every part of the work. Once, after an invitation was extended, it was withdrawn. A telephone conference resulted in withdrawing the invitation. I voted with the minority.

Many letters and calls have been received expressing disappointment with the committee selections at other times. You simply can't please everyone. All of the committee cannot know every speaker. And at times a remark like, "He'll sure do well," is heard, and even the committee is disappointed.

But all in all, the preaching at the convention is really top shelf. In 1989,

I was one of the speakers. One paper stated, "The preaching at the convention was all the way from poor to mediocre."

I said, "I'm just conceited enough to believe my sermon was the mediocre one."

Mostly we find what we look for. And critics find fault. That's what they look for. They have a right to express themselves, but there are times when those rights should not be exercised.

## Prospects

With the excitement of the cross-cultural ministries, the passing of the mantle to the next generation, the increased success of our training institutions, and the doctrine on which the denomination is founded, we have a bright future. We do need an increased number of ministers answering the call to preach, getting the training and doing a great job. How I hope that happens. The future is bright.

There are no greater preachers than those in the Free Will Baptist denomination. Our leaders are capable, called and committed.

I turn 67 the week I am typing this. But I am not through. I see men in their 70s still pastoring, leading and succeeding. I have always said, "Men who get put on the shelf place themselves there."

You haven't told me goodbye yet. Maybe as clerk of the National Association you have, but not in the work of the Lord. May God bring our hopes to reality.

Thanks for 30 years as clerk of the National Association of Free Will Baptists! ■



ABOUT THE WRITER: Reverend Waldo Young pastors View of the Cross Free Will Baptist Church in Prague, Oklahoma.



## Reclaim the liberal arts from secularists

**R**ecently, various people have been pointing out that Western culture is in big trouble. For a long time, our problem was modernism, which totally rejected the Bible as a source of truth; now the problem is postmodernism, which basically rejects the whole idea of the existence of any truth from any source. It is in the midst of this colossal mess that Christian educators in all varieties of schools (public, private, parochial) and all levels of schools (elementary, secondary, collegiate) are called to minister.

One basic thing which all Christian educators can do is to insist on the existence of truth and to insist on the supremacy of divine revelation as a source of truth. One way we can do both of these things is to insist on the old-fashioned Christian liberal arts as the foundation of education.

The term liberal arts is just another term for the various fields of the humanities and sciences: theology, literature, language, music, mathematics, biology, etc. (They are called the "liberal" arts because they are the studies appropriate for liberi or "free men" as opposed to merely manual arts appropriate for slaves.)

Liberal arts education is not the opposite of Christian education, it is Christian education. Liberal arts education is a product of Christian thought.

### Doctrine of Creation

We believe in the liberal arts because we believe in the doctrine of creation. John Henry Newman, in his excellent work, *The Idea of a University*, says, "All branches of knowledge are connected together, because the subject-matter of knowledge is intimately united in itself, as being the acts and the work of the Creator."

If we believe in the doctrine of creation, if we believe that "the earth is the Lord's, and the fullness there-

# Truly Christian Education

By Darrell Holley

of," then every branch of knowledge is His. "This is my Father's world, He shines in all that's fair."

Back in the 500's the theologian Augustine took up this question, asking whether it were right for Christians to involve themselves in non-religious studies. He concluded that "wherever truth may be found, it belongs to [the] Master . . . If [the pagans] have said aught that is true and in harmony with our faith, we are not only not to shrink from it, but to claim it for our own use from those who have unlawful possession of it."

He went on to compare the writings of the pagans to the wealth of the Egyptians taken by the liberated Israelites. While we must absolutely reject all the errors of the heathen, we must not let that keep us from learning from them when we can. Even pagans have some truth.

Augustine encourages his readers to explore "all branches of heathen learning" but to remember that whatever truth they might find there is like silver and gold, "which they did not create themselves, but dug out of the mines of God's providence which are



everywhere scattered abroad."

The Christian, "when he separates himself in spirit from the miserable fellowship of these men, ought to take [this learning] away from them, and to devote [it] to [its] proper use in preaching the gospel." All areas of knowledge in God's world belong to our Father and are ours by right to use to His glory.

### Doctrine of the Incarnation

Second, we believe in the liberal arts because we believe in the doctrine of the Incarnation. The old prayerbook, in speaking of marriage, said that Christ "adorned and beautified" that "holy estate" with "His presence and first miracle" at Cana of Galilee. If that is true of marriage, how much more true is it of all human life and existence, which, having their origin in the creative act of God Himself, have been "adorned and beautified" by the Incarnation of God in the person of our Lord Jesus Christ.

This world can never be the same, for He has entered it, and our lives are now intertwined inextricably with His life. Every part of human activity—from what we presumptuously call the highest to what we foolishly call the lowest—has taken on a hallowed significance, for He has shared our life.

By the Incarnation, Christ has appeared "to put away sin" and to restore us to our rightful place in this world. In his work "On Education," the Puritan writer John Milton declared that "the end then of learning is to repair the ruins of our first parents by regaining to know God aright, and out of that knowledge to love Him, to imitate Him, to be like Him, as we may the nearest by possessing our souls of true virtue, which being united to the heavenly grace of faith makes up the highest perfection."

Milton goes on to show that since we are "in this body" we can build our understanding of this world only on "sensible things." In other words, we are limited by our five senses. We can "arrive . . . clearly to knowledge of God and things invisible, . . . [only] by orderly conning over [in other words, considering] the visible and inferior creature."

We gradually examine the world around us, gradually taking in things visible and physical. Observing them

in light of the teachings of the Christian Gospel, we bring them under the Lordship of Christ. Indeed, Paul instructs us that part of our Christian warfare is "casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ."

"This is my Father's world, The battle is not done, Jesus Who died shall be satisfied, And earth and heaven be one." All areas of human knowledge in this world are either already in a state of Christian cultivation or are to be considered enemy territory which wait for us to conquer them and put them into cultivation to the service of the Lamb.

### Doctrine of Evangelism

Third, we believe in the liberal arts because we believe in teaching the Bible. Paul, meeting with the Ephesian elders, says to them, "I have not shunned to declare unto you all the counsel of God." Every Christian minister worth his salt regularly and systematically delivers to his congregation "all the counsel of God."

Now assuredly this includes the good news of the Christian Gospel: the birth, ministry, death and resurrection of Christ. But also assuredly this includes all that follows logically from that Gospel. Paul did not hesitate to inform his hearers of the full implications of the Christian Gospel for every area of their lives.

Christian faith is not simply an assent to religious truths but a way of life based on those truths. The Christian minister who seeks to give his flock "all the counsel of God" will examine the biblical view of work and money (economics), the biblical view of man (sociology and psychology), the biblical view of health, nutrition, and the human body (physical education), the biblical view of language and literature, the biblical view of music, the biblical view of biology and geology, the biblical view of art, the biblical view of history, etc.

As our culture becomes more and more pagan, the careful Christian pastor must address all these areas.

If we are to give a "Bible-based education," we must start with the Bible. (Let us remind ourselves that theology is "the queen of the sci-

ences.") But then that biblically-informed mind must be turned like a laser onto every area of human thought. And that biblically-informed mind will be able to separate the wheat from the chaff, "prov[ing] all things, hold[ing] fast that which is good." Our students must come to know the Bible, and they must come to apply the message of the Bible to every area of human thought.

By the way, we need not think that this will contribute to some conflict of "piety" versus "academics," "spiritual things" versus "classroom things," church versus classroom, preachers versus professors. Not in truly Christian education. True Christian educators understand that our pastors want nothing better than for us to take the Bible message which they have preached and to apply it to everything.

"Whether ye eat or drink or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God." Likewise our pastors understand that those Christian educators want nothing better than for their students to be truly knowledgeable of the scriptures so that they may know what the basis for Christian thought actually is. The preacher and the professor are not enemies fighting for the minds of students; on the contrary, "we are labourers together with God."

For two millennia now Christian educators have been trying to take the revelation of Jesus Christ found in the Holy Scriptures and apply that truth to all areas of human life and thought. The result is the old-fashioned Christian liberal arts, which have come down to us as our inheritance. They are part of our "goodly heritage" which we ought to preserve. ■



ABOUT THE WRITER: Dr. Darrell Holley chairs the English and Speech Department at Free Will Baptist Bible College. He is a member of the Free Will Baptist Historical Commission.



## The secret behind Greek language no mystery after all

# What Does the Greek Say?

By Robert E. Picirilli

Since I teach New Testament Greek, people often ask me, "What does the Greek say?"

If I'm in a playful mood, and know the person well enough, I sometimes give a smart-alec answer: "It says the same thing the English says."

In fact, that's usually the truth. There's a common misconception, out there, that knowing Greek gives you all the answers. It doesn't.

There are many misconceptions about Greek. Some think Greek is incomprehensible for the average person. The old saying, "It's Greek to me!" gets applied to anything hard. But Greek isn't any more impossible than Latin or German or French. It probably isn't as difficult to master as Chinese.

Some people think New Testament Greek is a *special* language, a language that only the Holy Spirit used. In fact, the Greek of the New Testament is precisely the same language that anyone who grew up speaking Greek in New Testament times used.

Hundreds of things from the first century, written Greek, still exist. Some of them as papyrus fragments found especially in Egypt, for example. Others are scrolls made from animal skins. All of them show us that New Testament Greek was the very language the people of those times spoke, used in the very ways they used it.

I, for one, am glad to know that the Lord chose to speak to the human race in a real language that the human race knows and readily understands. He wants us to hear Him plainly.

### What Greek Isn't

Let's clear up some misconceptions, then.

### Not the Same

The Greek of the New Testament is not entirely the same as the Greek spoken in Greece today. There are many similarities, of course, but in the 2,000 years between then and now the Greek language—like all languages—has changed considerably. Modern Greek is almost as different from New Testament Greek as modern Italian is from ancient Latin. (By the way, the English language is very different, today, from what it was 300 years ago, too. But that's a story for another time!)

### Not Always Clearer

The Greek New Testament is not necessarily any clearer than statements in the English New Testament. Sorry to admit that, but statements in *any* language can sometimes be understood in more than one way.

Sure, there are many times when something ambiguous in the English New Testament can be cleaned up by consulting the original Greek. (*Ambiguous* means capable of being understood in more than one way.)

For example, in Matthew 26:27, when Jesus at the last supper gave "the cup" to his disciples, He said, "Drink ye all of it" (AV). The problem is that "all" could be taken as modifying "of it" or "ye." That's an ambiguity in English that the Greek clears up immediately: "all" modifies "ye."

Jesus did not mean that they should drink up all of the contents of the cup

but that all of them should drink. (This is the reason the New King James, which translates exactly the same Greek text as the original King James, renders, "Drink from it, all of you." Other newer versions do similar things.)

But even though the Greek text often clears up ambiguities in the English text, the Greek text sometimes has ambiguities of its own. And some of them are ambiguities that the English reader wouldn't even know about!

For example, in Ephesians 1:4,5 we read, "... that we should be holy and without blame before him in love; having predestinated us unto the adoption of children . . ." The ambiguity here is whether to connect "in love" with "without blame before him" (as in the King James), or with "having predestinated us" (as in some other versions).

In fact, in the Greek, either is possible. (Remember that the English punctuation marks and verse divisions are not part of the original Greek. All translations, of course, have to make a decision, and in doing so they represent not only the literal translation but their interpretation.)

And sometimes both the English and the Greek are ambiguous. For example, in II Corinthians 5:14 we find the phrase, "the love of Christ." By itself, that phrase can mean—in either language—the love that Christ has (for us) or (our) love for Christ. I think the context makes clear that it means Christ's love for us, here. Even so, it is the *context* (not the language) that settles the issue.



## Not Magic

Greek is *not* magic, then, and does not offer quick and easy solutions to interpretive difficulties. By all means, knowing the Greek is highly helpful, but it isn't a short cut to understanding.

All languages are fraught with the limitations of human expression, and Greek is no exception, even though the New Testament has the enormous advantage of being God-breathed. Even the Greek New Testament, however, requires hard work for full understanding.

## What Greek Does

If knowing Greek doesn't answer every question anyone might have about the New Testament, why study it at all? What good is it?

## Precise Language

The Greek New Testament is the one the Holy Spirit moved the apostles to write. Consequently, if you want to know, as precisely as possible, the exact meaning of a word or sentence, then it is the meaning of the Greek you need to analyze. Remember, if you're looking up a word in an *English* dictionary, you're looking up a word that someone else decided to use to *translate* the original, inspired Greek. You get closer to the meaning of what God breathed into the apostles when you look up the word in a Greek dictionary.

In any language, Greek included, any given word has a range of possible meanings that the scholars call a "semantic range." Take the English word "power," for example. My dictionary mentions a range of meanings that includes *ability, vigor, force, energy, strength, authority*, and even a *nation* (as in, "The U. S. is a great, world power.")

But if you're studying Matthew 28:18, "All *power* is given unto me in heaven and in earth," the English dictionary meanings aren't what you need. It wouldn't be proper to translate "All vigor (or energy) has been given to me" just because "power" can mean that in English. You need to look up the Greek word *exousia* and see what *its* range of meanings includes.

In fact, there is more than one Greek word that is sometimes translated "power" in the New Testament, and *exousia* has more the meaning of

authority than strength or ability. What Matthew 28:18 means is that the Father has given to the Son to exercise all *authority*; Jesus has the *right* of decisive control over things. He can act freely as He chooses, without being subject to some higher authority.

In Romans 1:16, however, "power" is different; there the word is *dunamis*, which means ability; the "gospel" is the good news of God's ability to save. Knowing the Greek is the key to determining this.

I well recall one brother who argued that the word "for" in Acts 2:38 could mean "because of," because, he said, in another place the Bible says that people could not get to Jesus "for" (= because of) the press. But he didn't know that two entirely different Greek words for "for" are used in those two places!

## Preserves New Testament

Someone has to know Greek, even for us to have an English New Testament. Without knowledge of the Greek, the meaning of the New Testament would be lost. Then each of us has to depend on someone else's knowledge of the Greek, or own our own—or both, usually.

There are two sides to this, and both are good. One is that you *can* depend on your English New Testament because there are people who have paid the price required to know Greek well—providing you use a translation made by people who take it seriously as God's Word. (That's the reason I use translations made by Bible-believing groups rather than by cults or liberals or—for that matter—single individuals.)

The other is that you, too, can make use of the Greek, even if you haven't had the opportunity to study it formally. These days, there are many books available that enable you to do this. *Strong's Concordance*, for example, assigns numbers to every Greek vocabulary word, and those numbers allow you to look up words in Greek dictionaries without even knowing the Greek alphabet!

Furthermore, there are self-help books on the market that can help you—given a heavy investment of time and hard work—learn the Greek language. You'll probably need some help, but even that can be arranged.

## Practical Uses

Those who have opportunity for formal study—in Bible college or seminary, for example—can learn Greek well enough to use it fruitfully in many ways. They can translate passages themselves. They can compare different translations in order to evaluate their accuracy and helpfulness. They can understand when the scholarly commentaries make references to the original Greek. As teachers or preachers, they can help others understand the finer details of the scriptures better.

If you know Greek, for example, you are not utterly dependent on some commentary to tell you what a passage means, but you can evaluate the commentary for yourself. Those who write commentaries usually say something like, "This Greek word means . . .," or "This Greek construction means that . . ."

If you don't know any Greek, you have no idea why the writer says this, or whether what he says is the only possibility. If you do know Greek, you can weigh his statement for yourself and make a decision as to whether he's right or wrong—or whether you agree or not.

In summary, knowing Greek is not just helpful, it's indispensable—at least for some. That's one reason, among *many*, that those who are called to the ministry ought to take advantage of every possibility for formal education. That's the reason Free Will Baptist Bible College teaches Greek and requires it of ministerial students whose service to the church will depend on expounding the Bible. The fact that the Bible is, indeed, the very Word of God is what makes it important enough for us to devote time and energy to learning the language He gave it in. ■



ABOUT THE WRITER: Dr. Robert Picirilli served 44 years as teacher, registrar and academic dean at Free Will Baptist Bible College. He now teaches Greek and philosophy as a part-time instructor.



## WNAC Retreat Attracts 134 People

GLORIETA, NM—Christian writer Barbara Tompkins headed WNAC's Third Western Retreat at Glorieta. The September 24-26, 1999, event registered 134 people.

Barbara Tompkins spoke five times on the retreat theme, "Ya Gotta Have Heart." Each session percolated with humor and practical application. She introduced each new topic by reading from a children's book.

During her first two sessions, Tompkins taught on the meaning of true friendship. The mother of three adult children used her third session to address the family. Her final two sessions focused on the disciplined heart.



Keynote speaker Barbara Tompkins.

WNAC president Debe Taylor delivered a message titled "A Heart for Prayer." Attendees then divided into eight groups to pray. Each group prayed for a specific



WNAC President Debe Taylor (r) prepares to speak.

ministry: Foreign Missions, Home Missions, America, WNAC, other agencies, FWB colleges, churches and families.

Missionaries Patsy Vanhook (France), Shirley Combs (Brazil), Lila Nichols (Côte d'Ivoire), Susie Robinson (Flagstaff, AZ), Linda Harvey (Phoenix, AZ) and Brenda Rayburn (Sierra Vista, AZ) attended the retreat. Each missionary gave testimony and led in prayer. Attendees gave an offering of \$1,228 which was divided equally among the six missionaries present.

## Oklahoma Budget Tops \$5 Million

NORMAN, OK—Delegates to Oklahoma's 91st annual state association adopted combined budgets of \$5.2 million, according to Executive Director Ernest Harrison. That includes the operation of Hillsdale FWB College.

The October 11-14, 1999, meeting at First FWB Church in Norman saw Moderator David McDougal elected to his sixth year behind the gavel. Four hundred people registered for the four-day session, including 131 ministers, 42 lay delegates and 19 deacons.

Delegates authorized two constitutional changes, one recommending the state's executive director as Oklahoma's General Board mem-

ber to the National Association. In previous years, the General Board member was someone other than the executive director.

The state association presented four plaques. Three plaques were awarded for gifts to help Oklahoma tornado victims. The plaques were given to Free Will Baptist Bible College, Home Missions Department and Hillsdale FWB College. The fourth plaque went to Waldo Young in appreciation for 30 years as clerk of the National Association.

The association theme, "Finishing Well," was developed by four speakers: Mexico seminary president Dr. Thomas Marberry and Pas-

tors Frank Wiley (Sunny Lane FWB Church, Del City), Waldo Young (View of the Cross FWB Church, Prague) and Clarence Shepherd (Antioch FWB Church, Butler).

Tuesday's Minister's Conference focused on the theme, "Upward, Outward, Onward." Three Oklahoma ministers preached: Francis Berka, Brad Hanna and N. R. Smith.

Tuesday evening featured a free All-Boards Appreciation Bar-B-Q to say thanks to all those who support the various state works.

The 2000 state association will meet October 9-12 at Rejoice FWB Church in Owasso.



## West Virginia Conference Surprises Attendees

RIPLEY, WV—Fifty-four West Virginia ministers, deacons and other men drove to Cedar Lakes Conference Center expecting to hear Oklahoma pastor Connie Cariker speak five times, September 30-October 2. When the men arrived at Ripley in the state's panhandle region, they discovered that circumstances had forced Pastor Cariker to cancel just hours before the conference was scheduled to begin.

Conference coordinators Ivan Asbury (Huntington) and Home Missionary Russell Wright called the men to prayer to decide what to do. After a powerful prayer session, the group selected five men to preach.

Russell Wright said, "Rather than disappointment, God's glory began to fill the gathering through the testimonies and singing and the preaching. When it was over,

we knew that God's hand had been upon the fourth annual West Virginia Men's Conference."

Speakers included: Pastor Carl Cooper (Springdale FWB Church, Hurricane), Promotional Secretary Jim Varney, West Virginia moderator Luther Morgan, General Board member Carl Vallance and Pastor Roy Roach (Louden-

dale FWB Church, Charleston).

The conference theme that emerged was "It Must Be Prayer or Nothing."

The 2000 conference is slated for October 5-7. The speaker will be Dr. Tim York, Kentucky pastor and assistant moderator of the National Association of Free Will Baptists.



West Virginia Men's Conference Attendees.

## Idaho Church On The Move

NAMPA, ID—The congregation at Nampa FWB Church in Nampa, Idaho, outgrew their rented facilities last summer and began building their own place to worship, according to Pastor Delmar Hopkins.

"We should be in our new building sometime in December," Hopkins said. "Since we took the picture, we installed shingles and siding."

By October 10, the congrega-

tion had 73 people in service and had several converts waiting to be baptized.

Pastor Hopkins said, "One lady in her 70s began attending and came to the altar to pray. She wrote me a letter saying, 'I think I got saved when you prayed for me. I want to be baptized.' This is part of what God is doing in Idaho's Treasure Valley."

Assistant pastor John Gibson

heads up the visitation program. Youth minister Ron Briscoe leads the aggressive youth program.

"My vision," Pastor Hopkins said, "is for our church to start churches in nearby Ontario, Meridian and Eagle. When we reach 150 in attendance here, we plan to send a young preacher out with 20 or 30 people to support him."

One of the biggest concerns for Hopkins at the moment is to get himself on a full-time basis with the church. He is part-time now.

Within five years, according to a report from state officials, Nampa will be the largest populated city in Idaho.

Pastor Hopkins said, "I am thankful that I am in the right place at the right time."

He expressed appreciation to the Home Missions Board, Director Trymon Messer and staffer Richard Adams for their encouragement and support.



New building going up in Nampa.



## North Carolina Pastor Killed

WILSON, NC—The Reverend David Ricks, pastor of Grace FWB Church in Rocky Mount, was killed October 22, 1999, when he was hit by a gas truck while working on his hands and knees over a manhole.

The 52-year-old minister was a bivocational pastor employed as a plumber at Braxton Britt Plumbing Service. He was performing plumbing work at a home and was working at the manhole when the accident occurred, according to a story filed by *Daily Times* staff writer Connie Rhem.

Wilson Police Sergeant Robert Barnes said that the driver of the gas truck "didn't see Ricks leaning over the manhole" and that "there was nothing in the road to indicate Ricks was there working."

Reverend Ricks was a member of North Carolina's Palmer Association at the time of his death.

## Mike Jones Accepts South Carolina Post

FLORENCE, SC—Pastor Mircheal (Mike) Jones has been named promotional director for the South Carolina State Association of Free Will Baptists. Reverend Jones (52), pastor of Grace FWB Church in Lake City, will begin his new duties January 1. He succeeds Ron Moore in the position.



Brother Jones has been preaching 38 years. He preached his first sermon at age 14 in a tobacco storage building. The first two converts were his parents.

He has pastored 30 years in three states—Florida, South Carolina and Mississippi. Twenty-five of those years, he invested in three South Carolina churches. For the past 15 years, he has pastored Grace FWB Church—his third time at the church.

Prior to that he pastored Shiloh FWB Church in Bratt, FL (1981-85), Jefferson Road FWB Church in Sumter (1980-81), Grace FWB Church (1973-77, 1978-80), Beech Springs FWB Church in Saltillo, MS (1977-78), and Poplar Hill FWB Church Hemingway (1969-73).

After he was ordained to preach in 1964, Jones served a four-year hitch in the United States Navy as an electronics technician

aboard the destroyer, the USS Carpenter. He also served two terms of duty in Vietnam and helped on four of the Apollo flights, including the first landing on the moon.

In addition to his pastoral duties, Rev. Jones has conducted daily or weekly radio programs since 1973. He writes

devotional articles for five weekly newspapers. He has published 12 books on Bible study, doctrine and devotional messages.

He publishes a monthly newsletter of sermon outlines and information for more than 1,000 subscribers. He also maintains two web sites that provide Bible study materials, sermons and other information.

Brother Jones has taught Bible courses at the Mississippi Bible Institute, Bethel Bible Institute (Florence) and Bethel Bible Institute (Darlington). He organized and taught in Grace Bible Institute in Lake City.

He is a member of the Media Commission of the National Association of Free Will Baptists.

Mike married Paula Evans on February 6, 1970. They have no children.

## Revival Brings Veteran Ministers Together

INWOOD, WV—One hundred years of preaching came to a revival meeting at Heritage FWB Church in Inwood last fall. Pastor Tom Blake and the congregation invited Huntington minister Carl Vallance to conduct the revival meeting.

Reverend Vallance has been preaching 61 years. Virginia minister Lester Horton attended the services; he has been preaching 44 years. Founding pastor Russell



Lester Horton (L), Russell Wright, Carl Vallance.

Wright also attended services; he has preached 25 years.

Reverend Vallance is pastor emeritus at Central FWB Church in Huntington. Reverend Horton just retired as pastor at Fairwood FWB Church in Fairfax Station, VA. Reverend Wright is a home missionary who is beginning a new work, the Victory FWB Church, in the eastern pan-

handle of West Virginia.



# currently

**First FWB Church in Salinas, CA**, celebrated 50 years of service, according to Pastor, **Patrick Palomo**. The church began 1949 when three families rented a building on Roosevelt Street for \$47. Deacon **Charles Van Horn** purchased benches from Fort Ord for one dollar each. They called **William Johnson** as their first pastor. The nearest Free Will Baptist church was a distant 100 miles away in the San Joaquin Valley.

**Bethel FWB Church** near **Ashland City, TN**, baptized 26 converts in six weeks, according to Deacon **Jerry Milom**. At press time, the congregation was seeking a pastor.

Evangelist **Bob L. Thomas** reports 16 conversions, four rededications and one young man who answered the call to preach during a revival at **First FWB Church in McAlester, OK**, where **Scott Real** pastors. Thomas re-entered full-time evangelism in 1999 after pastoring several years in Oklahoma. He publishes the monthly *Bob Thomas Ministries Newsletter*.

Pastor **Jimmy Shields** reports four conversions and seven new members at **New Pleasant Grove FWB Church in Savannah, TN**. The church completed a fellowship hall last August.

Sixteen teens committed their lives to Christ at **Bethel FWB Church in South Roxana, IL**. **Bill Crank** pastors.

There's a new 14-foot sign standing at **Crossroads FWB Church in Effingham, IL**, according to Pastor **John Hollis**. The church purchased a 15-passenger, 1995 Ford Maxi Van to use in outreach activities.

Some 250 **Missouri** women gathered on August 20 for the state's **WAC Retreat** which met at Stonecroft Conference Center in Branson, according to President **Shirley Jackson**. Featured speaker was **Joan Wallace**, noted author and encourager. The conference theme was "Becoming an Image Bearer for Christ."

The hammering finally stopped at

**Cavanaugh FWB Church in Fort Smith, AR**. Pastor **Will Harmon** said the new education and administration building was completed in November. The facility adds eight Sunday School classrooms, five offices, a conference room and several work rooms.

One month into the academic year at **Free Will Baptist Bible College in Nashville, TN**, the Christian Service Department reported that students had already led 26 people to Christ, witnessed 47 other decisions, preached 117 sermons, taught 179 classes, distributed 392 gospel tracts and performed 655 musical numbers. **John Murray** heads up the busy department. The college students also raised more than \$1,750 to assist **North Carolina** flood relief efforts.

Pastor **Johnny Jones** can go home at last. Members of **New Life FWB Church in Pontotoc, MS**, provided a new parsonage for the minister and his wife.

**Gulf Coast FWB Church in Gulfport, MS**, turned 18 years old in August. The church organized on August 31, 1981, with 41 people. They purchased a four-acre site on which to build and completed their sanctuary in 1983. **Johnny James** pastors.

**Missouri's Southeast District Association** celebrated their centennial in October, according to Moderator **Raymond Mitchell**. Pastor **Lloyd Durbin** (Mine La Motte FWB Church in Fredericktown) prepared a historical resume for delegates on Saturday morning. To everyone's surprise, the Centennial came six years too late. Durbin's research showed that the association was in reality 106 years old. *Contact* editor **Jack Williams** spoke twice on Free Will Baptist history.

While **South Carolina** voters were preparing for a referendum on video gambling in November, vandals damaged the sign at **Fellowship FWB Church in Manning, SC**. Pastor **I. Benlie Turner** said that local police as well as the newspaper editor took an interest in the sign vandalism. Turner

was invited to write a guest editorial about the video gambling issue. The church sign had urged voters to reject video gambling.

Somebody loves Pastor **George Johnson**. Members of **North Warren FWB Church in Warren, MI**, celebrated Johnson's 29 years as their pastor with a special offering to send him to Spain (round trip). They also gave him an ice-cream maker . . . which means that they plan for him to entertain hungry members on hot summer days. Sorry, George.

*Contact* welcomes *The Beacon*, official publication of the **West Fork District Association in Texas**. The four-page review includes church news, association activities and a mission statement.

Pastor **Edward Ruble** set fire to the mortgage at **North Five FWB Church in Lebanon, MO**. The congregation borrowed money to construct a new sanctuary, and then retired the indebtedness within 18 months. Missouri executive secretary **Nathan Ruble** preached during the mortgage-burning celebration.

**Lowery FWB Church in Twin Oaks, OK**, reports that attendance tripled in three years and now overflows the sanctuary. The church added an 8:30 a.m. service Sunday morning. The regular Sunday service averages 225, while another 75 come for early services. **Doug Carey** pastors.

*Contact* welcomes *The Bethany Beacon*, publication of **Bethany FWB Church in Timmonsville, SC**. **Galen Dunbar** pastors. The church observed its 181st anniversary in October. It began in 1818 when it was known as the Pine Log Church. Sunday School averages 133, with 143 in worship services.

Twelve people from **Missouri's Indian Creek Association** spent a week with Home Missionary **David Carlson** in **Paducah, KY**. They installed a new kitchen, carpet for classrooms and did landscaping. ■



- *I played in the dirty street with naked children who know they will probably not live past the age of 35. I never knew I was so blessed and fortunate.*
- *We were downtown at an inner-city fair. I sat on the shoulders of the missionary I was with, looking over the throng of 400,000-plus people. He asked me if I thought their numbers would be any smaller after the rapture. Without giving me a chance to respond, he answered his own question, 'According to statistics there will be no appreciable difference in the size of this crowd after the Christians are extracted.'*
- *Our assignment was to count the tombstones in the cemetery. The missionary instructed us, 'Multiply by three or four (the number of people buried under each tombstone), then multiply again by one-half of one percent (the percentage of evangelicals in the country).' Tears came to my eyes as the figures revealed that, most likely, only 60 of those 12,000 dead people were in heaven.*
- *It was the best and worst time of my life. When my cultural props were kicked out from under me, I found I could no longer hide behind routine and the familiar. It was as if God held up a mirror to my character and I didn't like what I saw. Yet, by His grace and with the help of some caring teammates, I learned to walk with the Lord and allow Him to transform my attitude and character.*

**W**hat kind of classroom can give students this kind of perspective on ministry and life? The best one I know of is the classroom of experience. Even though I spend significant time communicating information in a lecture hall, I realize that real teaching is more than just adding to my students' head knowledge. My academic dean consistently reminds me that all of us (you and me included) learn best when truth is communicated through all three dimensions of our personality: the cognitive, affective, and psycho-motor. He tends to talk in 'education-ese,' so let me translate for you. You and I haven't learned something in the fullest sense unless it passes through our intellect, our emotions, and our will. We have to understand it, feel strongly about it and experience some kind of hands-on activity to reinforce it.

In my case, I was willing to give mental assent to



**Jeremy Riggs, Franz (a French national), Shane Davison and Matthew McAfee enjoy a break at the new St. Nazaire youth center.**

## "I Could Not Hide Any Longer!"

By Tom McCullough

received from short-term student missionaries who 'winged' or drove their way to eight different locations this past summer: France, China, Mexico, Panama, Taiwan, Central Asia and inner-city Chicago.

In the past four years over 100 students have benefited from this richly rewarding educational and life-changing experience in over 13 countries and two North American urban centers. Not all of them plan to be cross-cultural workers, but all of them returned changed individuals, prepared to assume their rightful place in Christ's Church as mobilizers, intercessors, givers, and goers. In addition to learning much about missions, all of them learned a great deal about themselves, God, and His purpose for their life. Isn't this the objective of Bible-based education? I think so. I hope you do too. ■



Tom McCullough is a native of Michigan and a veteran missionary.

He came to Free Will Baptist Bible College as a student in 1971 and graduated in 1974. In 1980, he and his wife, Patty, went to France as missionaries and served there for 15 years. After a year as associate pastor of Central Free Will Baptist Church, Royal Oak, Michigan, Mr. McCullough returned to FWBBC as Missions Professor.

In addition to a B.A. earned at the Bible College, he holds a master's in Missions from Columbia International University. He also studied at the Université De Haute Bretagne, 1981-82.

He has been an effective teacher and motivator, challenging many students to consider whether God's call to them might be for service on a foreign field.

# Free Will Baptist Bible College



## Those Wonderful Revocable Trusts

By David L. Brown

You could be hit with penalties and loss of interest for early withdrawal.

**M**any individuals and organizations have a difficult time managing their surplus funds. It is not uncommon for thousands of dollars to remain in checking accounts earning little or no interest due to lack of management.

**T**he story of the talents in Matthew 25 reminds us we are to be good stewards of that which God has placed in our hands. It is inappropriate to invest short- and medium-term funds in high-risk investments. However, it is also wrong to allow funds to earn less than the inflation rate. Inflation has been averaging around 3.1% over the last decade. Funds earning less than this are actually losing money.

**T**he Free Will Baptist Foundation has sought to solve this dilemma by offering Revocable Trusts to both individuals and organizations at competitive money market rates. The Foundation paid 5.5% on Revocable Trusts for the period that ended June 30, 1999.

Over the past several years, we have compared favorably with money market accounts. We believe it will be possible for Foundation Revocable Trusts to consistently beat inflation by 2-3%.

**A**t the same time we offer safety, in that all Revocable Trust funds are invested in either government backed or government insured investments. This gives you peace of mind knowing that your funds are protected. When managing short- to medium-term funds we must minimize or, if possible, eliminate risk.

Some have tried to get a better return by locking up funds for long periods of time using bank (CDs) certificates of deposit. However this method could backfire if the funds are needed before the CD matures.

**A**nother problem with using a CD is that it does not allow you to make additions to the funds. When you purchase a CD, you deposit a set amount and you can not make additional deposits.

Revocable Trusts through the Foundation do not require you to lock up your funds for any specified period of time. Revocable Trusts can be set up for as little as \$1,000. Additional contributions of any amount may be made at any time. You also have access to all or a portion of the trust funds without penalties. We request that you give at least seven days notice when you need your funds, since we strive to be fully invested all the time.

**R**evocable Trusts can be set up for individuals, churches or organizations. The Foundation only handles trusts that directly or indirectly benefit a Free Will Baptist ministry. Therefore, individuals must designate a Free Will Baptist ministry as a 20% beneficiary of the trust assets upon the death of the grantor(s) if the funds are not withdrawn earlier.

**F**ree Will Baptist Foundation Revocable Trusts can be adapted to meet any financial need. We can design a trust for those who have large lump sums and desire interest only. Churches may use these trusts to accumulate funds for a building project. State or district associations may need to save for a special project. Individuals may use a trust to gather college funds for children, to save for a large item purchase or a reserve for emergencies.

Examine your management of surplus funds and consider a Revocable Trust. Please contact the Free Will Baptist Foundation for more information. ■

Free Will Baptist  Foundation



**M**ost Pastors will agree that one of the major problems within the established church is persistency. Having spent many years in the business world, particularly in sales management, one of my major concerns has always been persistency. Persistency is the ratio of business that remains on the books in relationship to what is sold.

This is not only a problem in the sales world where continuing business is necessary, it is also a problem in the church. It is not just those who come for the first time, but growth is measured by those who come and stay. That is our goal.

**W**e sometimes wonder what happens to all those who come through the church doors. Where and why did they go? I do not have all the answers, but in our home mission work in Portland, Oregon, we have been doing some things that help with persistency.

As every pastor knows, it is very important that everyone who enters the church house be made to feel welcome, and information must be received from them such as name, address, phone number, etc.

**O**ne thing we have done successfully is introduce new people to our Discipleship Training Program. Most have no idea what a "Free Will Baptist" is in this portion of the country where we are sparsely represented. Rather than try to explain everything in one session, we suggest that they enroll in our *discipleship program* and learn what we believe. Not all agree to do that, but many will.

I have had discipleship training with both the saved and the lost. Many of the lost did not know that they were lost until we completed the first lesson. Many have given their heart to the Lord during that first lesson which is "*Salvation and Assurance*." What a great thrill it is to hear an individual who had been religious but without Christ proclaim his need for salvation and then follow through by confessing Christ as Savior!

**O**ur plan is simple. We begin with the understanding that the training will be conducted at a certain time each week, and every following week at the same time for 15 weeks. The lessons are conducted on an individual or couple basis, if married, and are held either in their homes or in one of our church classrooms.

## Discipleship . . . A Great Need for the 21st Century!

By Darrell Smith  
Home Missionary to Portland, Oregon

Yes, it is time consuming, but for me it has been the best time spent. I have not had a dropout among those taking the courses and 99 percent have finished.

**T**he lesson plan begins with the basics: *Salvation and Assurance* addresses the questions, "Why do you need a Savior?", "How can you receive the Savior," and "How can you know you have the Savior?" The second lesson addresses the importance of the *Church and its Ordinances*. The third

lesson teaches the importance of *Growing in Christ*. The fourth lesson spotlights *Separation to the Gospel and Separation from the World*. The fifth lesson shows the importance of *Obedying God and Loving God*.

**T**he sixth lesson teaches the importance of the *Great Commission* and winning others to Christ. The seventh lesson addresses *Forgiveness*, accepting God's forgiveness and that of others, and forgiving others. The eighth, ninth and 10th lessons deal with *The Spirit-Led Life*. Lessons 11 and 12 deal with *Living the Abundant Life*. The 13th lesson deals with *Stewardship*. The 14th and 15th lessons deal with *The Christian Home*.

**F**or those desiring to continue, I have developed lessons for Discipleship II and III. This has been out of necessity, as most of those who complete the basic program have become hungry for more spiritual food.

It is not just the course that increases persistency and makes disciples of those involved in the study, it is the time spent with their pastor and the freedom to ask questions and discuss issues. After 15 consecutive weeks with a family in their home, from one hour to 90 minutes in private discussion, something has happened. That non-committed individual has now begun to think like a faithful servant of God, and in most cases, they will want to see that others have the opportunity to grow and learn.

**M**ost of our graduates have been successful in getting others to begin church attendance. They also urge them to get involved in discipleship training. This has and continues to be an effective tool for winning the lost as well as instilling discipline within them and educating them to the Free Will Baptist way. ■

Home



Missions



**T**he danger of opposition is less dangerous than the danger of indifference. That is precisely what happens to an individual, church or denomination that lacks a vision for the future. I asked myself the question, "How can I convey through Randall House the vision I have to our denomination?"

We go into nearly 300,000 minds each week with our printed curriculum. In this sense we are the largest educational institution in the denomination just as Sunday School is for the nation.

Our visions right now may look vague because, we see only what is now. But we must dream a dream with a common mission and a *vision for the future*.

#### Inward Look: What Did We Look Like Inside?

**A**s we move into the 21st century, we should take note of the following: "The future belongs to those who see possibilities before they become obvious."

It does not take long to see that Sunday Schools and churches are hurting in America. Research shows that in 1991, only 24% of Americans attended Sunday School. Attendance fell to 17% by 1996. This same percentage was true of small groups studies in homes or businesses. In fact, 78% of all growth has been transfer growth coming from mainline denominations to smaller evangelical denominations.

#### Outward Look: What Do We See Out There?

**A**s we perceive the future, we have to understand that *the future isn't what it used to be*. We must take a look at what is happening all around us and the changes which are happening that will affect the church and our outreach plans.

The cities of America are the mountain peaks of society. Everything runs downhill from the cities; therefore, if we are to reach the nation for Christ, we must develop a plan for the cities.

1. Our churches and denomination as a whole will have to accept change which is unavoidable. Change has come, and unless we take a real look at ourselves, we will die.
2. Our denomination will move, as society has, from the rural to town and city churches.
3. Our people are moving at the rate of one out of five yearly into cities removed from their birth area. They have moved into cities where the masses are and where the gospel is needed.

## Vision of Victory for the 21st Century

By Alton Loveless

**U**pward Look: Where Are We Going? "The future is an opportunity yet unmet, a path yet untraveled, a life yet unlived. But how the future will be lived, what opportunities will be met, what paths traveled, depends on the priorities and purposes of life today." (C. Neil Strait)

Since 1985 our report forms have provided a record of our churches to check whether they be city or rural. The current

report showed we had 1,112 in the city and 1,342 in the rural areas of our country.

Today 45.4% (1,112) of our churches are in towns. From this figure, 367 are in cities with a population of 50,000 or above. This represents only 14% of our entire denomination. This means that 86% of our churches are either rural or from towns with a population less than 50,000.

**T**he annual Roll Call Sunday is a representation of only one Sunday a year. Still, it is about the only instrument we have to determine actual attendance. The data below is gleaned from 12 years of Roll Call totals.

The lowest attendance on Roll Call Sunday was 211,283 from 2,525 reporting churches in 1996. The highest was 271,457 from 2,552 reporting churches in 1997.

Our demographics are interesting. Thirteen percent (about 335 churches) average less than 24 people. Our largest body of churches ranging from 25-49 represent 26.5% or about 725 churches. Our second largest group (50-74 people) have more than 500 churches or 20.6% of our total churches. The 75-99 and 100-149 represent 13.2% and 13.1% respective.

**C**hurches whose attendance is between 150-199, represent about 134 congregations, and make up about 5.9% of our 2,600 churches.

We had 191 churches with more than 200 people on Roll Call Sunday, about 7.68% of our churches. They produced 64,948 of our attendance. This means 191 of our churches were responsible for 27.7% of our denominations attendance. In other words, just over 7% of our churches bring in over one fourth of our people.

Our average attendance was 90.2 over the 12-year span. Free Will Baptists continue to have a strong evangelistic ministry of soul winning and church planting at home and abroad. However, we have failed to see our responsibility to the changing communities and neighborhoods who may have a form of religion, but are without our Lord. ■

Randall



House





Garnett Reid

## Sing A New Song!

**A**s we mark the new millennium, let's take one final look at something "new" in the Bible. Revelation 5:9 notes that the redeemed myriads around the Lamb "sang a new song." Although I make no pretense of being a singer, I do love songs. From the tone songs of Schubert and Schumann, to George Gershwin, to the late Shari Lewis and her puppet tunes (Lamb Chop was my favorite), a good song can be one of God's gracious gifts.

Songs of faith hold a special place of blessing for God's people. Whether it's Isaac Watts, Charles Wesley, Michael Card or Vernon Whaley, I try to both listen and sing enthusiastically. You see, their songs give musical expression to my own story; what they write I think and feel in my walk with the Lord. I depend upon their skills in composition, however, since evidently I was absent the day those gifts were distributed!

Songs must be a delight to God as well, since He included so many in the Bible. Here's just a sampling:

- ♪ the songs of Moses in Exodus 15 and Deuteronomy 32
- ♪ the "songs" in the Psalms (some 30 are called "songs" in their titles)
- ♪ Deborah's victory song in Judges 5
- ♪ the worship songs in II Chronicles 29
- ♪ the vineyard song in Isaiah 5
- ♪ The "Song of Songs" (also called The Song of Solomon)
- ♪ Paul and Silas' prison praise songs in Acts 16
- ♪ spiritual songs in Ephesians 5 and Colossians 3

Nine passages in scripture mention a "new song": Psalm 33:3, 40:3, 96:1, 98:1, 144:9, 149:1, Isaiah 42:10, Revelation 5:9 and 14:3. The Revelation passages present the great climax of this theme, envisioning Heaven's great

celebration of redemption (note the emphasis on the "redeemed" in 5:9 and 14:3) through Christ.

To understand better this "new song," a brief survey of the Old Testament passages where the phrase occurs is helpful. Some of these references extol God's *work of creation*. Psalm 33, for example, calls for a new song acknowledging His creative word (vv. 6-9). In fact, creation joins the song in 96:11-12 and 98:7-9.

Isaiah's call to "sing a new song" occurs in the context of identifying the Lord as "he that created the heavens . . . he that spread forth the earth" (Isa. 42:5, 10). No wonder, then, that the new song in Revelation attributes worthiness to the Lord, "for thou hast created all things, and for thy pleasure they are and were created."

A second theme calling for a new song is God's *work of deliverance or salvation*. David testifies that the Lord heard his cry, brought him out of the pit, set his feet on a rock and put a new song in his mouth (Ps. 40:1-3).

"Shew forth his salvation from day to day," exhorts the psalmist in 96:2 (see a similar testimony in 98:1-3). Psalm 144 is a prayer for deliverance; when victory comes, David promises, "I will sing a new song unto thee, O God" (v. 9).

In connection with this salvation theme, we must further note that the scope of deliverance extends to all nations. The new song in Psalm 96 declares "his glory among the heathen, his wonders among all people."

"All the ends of the earth have seen the salvation of our God," announces the writer of the Psalm 98 new song (v. 3). Likewise the new song of praise for salvation in Isaiah 42 includes the "islands" and the "coastlands," expressions denoting Mediterranean areas outside Israel.

How fitting that Revelation 5:9 iden-

tifies the singers of the new song as those redeemed—delivered—by God "out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation."

This new song ultimately celebrates *the righteous reign of Christ*. In the Servant Song of Isaiah 42, God decrees that His Servant, Christ, will bring righteousness to the nations and "establish justice in the earth" (vv. 1, 4). Jesus' triumphant reign is likewise the focus of the new song in Revelation 5, as the Lamb receives the seven-fold kingdom tribute of power, riches, wisdom, strength, honor, glory and blessing (v. 12).

The new song, therefore, comes from a fresh reminder of God's great work in our lives, from "a new impulse of gratitude in our hearts" (Delitzsch).

Spurgeon exhorts, "Let us not present worn-out praise, but put life, and soul, and heart into every song since we have new mercies every day, and see new beauties in the work and word of our Lord." ■



# ESPECIALLY FOR YOUNG PREACHERS



Dennis Wiggs

## How to Treat the Guest Preacher

**M**any churches still sponsor Bible conferences, revival meetings, missionary conferences and special days. Sometimes the invited speaker is left to fend for himself. Consider these suggestions on how to treat the guest speaker.

### *Promote*

Requesting a preacher or missionary to visit your church demands his or her time, efforts, preparation and prayer. The very least the young preacher can do is advertise the special meeting. Most newspapers will accept news articles. Some will print a picture of the guest speaker. Radio and television stations will provide spot promotions at times.

A letter or card to local pastors announcing the meeting could be beneficial. Neatly printed brochures or handbills could be used. In other words, promote the meeting with effective advertising.

### *Prepare the Congregation*

Weeks in advance, announce the upcoming services in the bulletin. Provide interesting information about the speaker. Show church members a recent picture. Be enthusiastic about the speaker's abilities and gifts, but don't exaggerate. Over-promoting the speaker can dampen the spirits of the congregation.

### *Pray Fervently*

The young preacher should set aside specific times to personally pray for the speaker and the services. Then, call the church to prayer. Remind the congregation of the meeting during the mid-week services.

Call on church leaders to pray audibly for the speaker. Maybe cottage prayer meetings, all-night prayer ses-

sions, extended mid-week prayer meetings, personal fasting and praying times, and even a week of prayer would greatly benefit the meeting.

And, young preacher, be sure to pray with the guest speaker. Anoint the speaker in prayer before and after the services. A group of men praying with the speaker just before the services would be most encouraging.

### *Plan Adequately*

If the visiting speaker stays in a motel, arrange to have a fruit, cracker and soft drink basket placed in the room before he arrives. If the guest is diabetic, make the beverages diet and the crackers sugar free.

Arrange to feed the special speaker only two large meals a day. Maybe a late breakfast and an early evening meal would be adequate. If the guest is staying in a home, alert the family about an eating schedule.

### *Pay the Speaker Well*

Full-time evangelists surely need more than a pastor who is drawing a salary from a church. A good guideline for speakers would be \$100 per service plus mileage (whatever the federal allowance is) either from the church budget or love offerings.

For the evangelist, maybe the last night a special love offering could be received. Give your congregation the opportunity to practice Galatians 6:6 ("Let him that is taught in the word communicate (share of finances) unto him that teacheth in all good things.")

Also, missionaries should receive generous love offerings plus pledges of monthly support. The pastor is probably the leader in these matters, encouraging and challenging the congregation. If the young preacher takes care of other men of God, then the Lord will provide for his needs.

Whatever is received in the offerings each night or the special offering should go to the guest speaker. It would be dishonest to announce that the offering goes to the speaker and then the church pocket some for the general fund.

### *Preserve the Decisions*

It is usually the young preacher's responsibility to train counselors when decisions are made at the altar. Church members should be available to meet with those who make decisions. Proper follow-up literature, decision cards and pens, and a box of tissues should be near the pulpit.

Those who make decisions for Christ would benefit from a pastoral visit immediately. A discipleship class should be established, taught by the pastor or a trained associate. Church members could be assigned to visit the new converts.

### *Ponder the Fruit*

Immediately after the special services, write the guest speaker a note of appreciation, present an optimistic report in the bulletin, report the results to denominational newspapers, schedule a baptismal service, write a letter of challenge to those who made decisions, and begin to plan for the next meeting.

Good meetings don't always produce large crowds. One decision for Christ, one young person who yields to enroll in a Christian college, one backslider who confesses, one church member who begins to tithe—these, plus many more decisions, prove that conducting a special meeting was worth all of the effort. ■

You may reach Dennis Wiggs at [denniswiggs@always-online.com](mailto:denniswiggs@always-online.com) or visit his church website at [www.ruthschapel.com](http://www.ruthschapel.com)



# YOUTH UPDATE

## 2000

### THE YEAR IN PREVIEW

\* February 2 - FREE WILL BAPTIST YOUTH DAY **YOUTH DAY 2000**

\* February 11-13 - NATIONAL YOUTH WORKERS RETREAT  
Branson, Missouri

❖ February 18-20 - NATIONAL YOUTH WORKERS RETREAT  
Prestonsburg, Kentucky

\* March 9-12 - T&P2 JUNIOR HIGH STUDENT LEADERSHIP CONFERENCE  
Camp Hope, Illinois

\* March 16-19 - T&P2 JUNIOR HIGH STUDENT LEADERSHIP CONFERENCE  
The Oaks, Tennessee

★ March 30-April 2 - T&P2 JUNIOR HIGH STUDENT LEADERSHIP CONFERENCE  
Camp Beaverfork, Arkansas

\* June 16-25 - NATIONAL YOUTH EVANGELISTIC TEAM TOUR  
Mississippi, Arkansas, Louisiana, Texas, Oklahoma, and Tennessee

\* July 3-20 - TRUTH & PEACE STUDENT LEADERSHIP CONFERENCE, Nashville, Tennessee & Anaheim, California

☆ July 16-20 - NATIONAL YOUTH CONFERENCE, Anaheim, California

☆ September 20 - SEE YOU AT THE POLE, Your School's Flagpole

For More Information About These Events, Please call 1-800-877-7030, write to the Youth Ministries Division at P.O. Box 17306, Nashville, Tennessee 37217 or email us at [youth@randallhouse.com](mailto:youth@randallhouse.com).



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Thomas Marberry

## *Abiding in the Son: A Study of the Believer's Security in Christ*

By David L. McGowan

(Pontiac, Michigan: Fellowship Publishing, 134 pp., paperback, \$5.95).

**R**everend David McGowan pastors FWB Church in Pontiac, Michigan. He is a long-time pastor and student of the Bible. He has a B. A. degree in Bible and is pursuing the M.R.E. degree. He is the author of several books, articles and other publications.

This book examines an important doctrinal issue for Free Will Baptists. Most Baptists in the United States are Calvinists in the sense that they accept some form of eternal security. Free Will Baptists are the largest group of Arminian Baptists in the United States. We're called Arminians because we follow the teachings of Dutch theologian James Arminius who rejected several of John Calvin's teachings, including his view on eternal security.

In chapter one McGowan traces the eternal security doctrine back to the teachings of Augustine, Bishop of Hippo in the late fourth and early fifth centuries. This teaching was later defined and codified by John Calvin, the greatest theologian of the Reformation era.

The author then discusses the reaction of James Arminius and his followers. He correctly notes that Arminius believed that "election was conditional and not unconditional."

In the final part of the chapter the author outlines how both Arminianism and Calvinism came to the New World. He notes that while modern-day Calvinists have abandoned many of Calvin's teachings, they still cling to the eternal security doctrine.

Chapter two addresses "The Condition of Salvation." McGowan argues that salvation is based on faith, not on human works. He writes, "Our standing with God is not based upon our good deeds but rather solely upon the shed blood of Jesus Christ."

He notes that saving faith involves more than intellectual assent to a

body of truths. "It is clear from the teaching of the Word of God that the mind, heart, and the will are all involved in saving faith."

Genuine faith also involves repentance. As the author writes, "When a man turns to Christ with his mind, heart and will, he will also turn from his sins."

Chapter three addresses "Continuance in the Faith." The author argues strongly and persuasively that both the Old Testament and the New Testament teach that the believer must continue in the faith. He cites key passages in Exodus, I Samuel, Psalms, Ezekiel, Matthew, Luke, Colossians, I Thessalonians and elsewhere.

Chapter four focuses on "Failure to Continue in the Faith." The author carefully outlines the problem of apostasy. He demonstrates that the Bible both in Hebrews and in several other books warns believers of the danger of apostasy.

Chapter five asks, "What About the Backslider?" McGowan points out that not all who profess to be Christians are true believers, and that some genuine believers do fall back into sin. He writes, "While we should never excuse sin, we must realize that Christians do fail and sin."

He notes that Christians can be influenced by false teachers and false religions. The author states, "While salvation is based upon faith and continuance based on faith, playing with sin always causes havoc and heartache in the life of the believer."

The last chapter is titled, "Our Abiding Security in Christ." It emphasizes that God provides many resources to enable the believer to stay in the right path. He writes, "Security for the believer does not reside in a church, a doctrine, a man, or a form of theology. Our security must rest first, last, solely, and eternally upon

Christ and His work." We have forgiveness when we sin, and we have much help when we stumble.

In many respects, this is a fine book. The author has done our denomination a service. Not many books discuss this issue in such clear and understandable terms. The focus of the book is where it ought to be, on the teachings of scripture. His analysis of key biblical terms and concepts is excellent.

I do have, however, two reservations. The arguments of Augustine, Calvin and Arminius play an important role in this work. The book should quote directly from the writings of these men, and it does not. In several places the author mentions something he has read, but he doesn't identify the book either by author or title.

While it contains much correct and valuable information, chapter five needs further thought and reflection. It is incomplete. The author recognizes that Christians must continue in the faith. He also recognizes that Christians can, because of sin, fail to continue in the faith without necessarily committing apostasy. Yet, the chapter does not seriously examine the consequences of sin in the life of a believer. Failing to continue in the faith produces consequences, and these consequences need to be discussed in the book.

In spite of these reservations, this is a good book. Buy it. Read it, and see if you agree with my analysis. ■

The book may be purchased from Randall Bookstore (Nashville, Tennessee), at Ambassador Bookstore (Columbus, Ohio), and at the Bible Book Store (Durham, North Carolina).



# OUR READERS COMMENT

## Put It in a Book

"Especially For Young Preachers" by Dennis Wiggs needs to be published in book form. The recommendations are wonderful.

Anita Messer  
Elizabethton, Tennessee

## Go, "Men!"

The October 1999 Briefcase, "The Secret World of Men," has credibility, comedy and great truth.

Today's world, including the feminist movement, has taken such a toll on men that they are generally afraid to hold a door open for a lady . . . afraid they will be reprimanded or slapped.

Over the years, my husband and I have attended countless activities in support of our children and found only a handful of men present. The bulk of the tasks involved had to be handled by women who came alone. Certainly, the men were sometimes working, but more times than not, they simply showed no interest in what their children were doing.

I agree with your words in the section titled "The accountability." We really need men in every home, every pulpit, every political office and especially in the life of every child. Role models for children come at a premium. In too many cases, wives have to be strong because the husbands will not try.

Sadly, another area that suffers greatly is the church where there are either no men or only a few whose lives have been touched by the hand of God. No one can effectively accomplish anything for God without God's help and direction. (And, you know what "they" say about men not wanting to ask for directions.)

Ida Lewis, Editor  
AIM  
Home Missions Department

## Commends 'Perfect Missionary'

I read the article about a "Perfect Home Missionary" in the November 1999 issue. I commend you on the article. I appreciate the good work.

Trymon Messer  
General Director  
Home Missions Department

## Replace the Myths

The Eddy Hall/Gary Morsch article, "The Lay Ministry Revolution," in the October issue was excellent.

We need to replace the myths they cited with the truths they pointed out. Thanks for sharing this piece with your readers.

Larry Hampton  
Adult Curriculum Editor  
Randall House Publications

## Magazine Informative

Thanks for the publication. It is very informative about our Free Will Baptist denomination! I'm grateful for the work that goes into it.

Pastor Carl Miller  
Dailyville Free Will Baptist Church  
Waverly, Ohio

## Directory Update

### MISSISSIPPI

Jimmy Daniels to Harmony Church, Eupora  
Jay Clifton to First Church, Richton

### OHIO

Tim Stout to Canaan Land Church, Grove City  
from White Oak Hill Church, Bailey, NC

### OKLAHOMA

Toby Youngblood to Spencer Road Church,  
Spencer from Hillsdale FWB College as vice-president of student services

Ward Fellabaum to Tamaha Church, Stigler  
Luther Brown to First Quinton Church, Stigler  
from Tamaha Church, Stigler

Glenn Bratton to Cass Church, Stigler  
Jimmy Howell to Hugo Mission, Hugo (We  
mistakenly put Boswell in September.)

### SOUTH CAROLINA

Carroll Bazen to Grace Church, Lake City

### TEXAS

Bill Jones to Eastside Church, Houston from  
Oklahoma State Missions as director

### VIRGINIA

Shawn Williams to Fairwood Church, Fairfax  
Station from Stage Road Church, Willow Springs,  
NC

### OTHER PERSONNEL

Dick Terry to Oak Park Church, Pine Bluff, AR,  
as minister of music and youth from Spencer Road  
Church, Spencer, OK ■





Jack Williams

## If the World Ends . . .

**If** the world ends at midnight when the calendar flips to January 1, 2000, just ignore the rest of this editorial and continue your flight upward . . . or whichever direction you're headed.

However, if the world does not end and New Year's Day finds you bogged down on the 50-yard line in need of a wake-up call at halftime of the Rose Bowl game, I have the perfect solution: Read the rest of this editorial. Guaranteed to get you pumped in time for the Orange Bowl.

**The question before us**, since it appears the world did not end before dawn, is how to face the new millennium. Forget the self-help experts because nobody alive today has ever done this before. While that observation may not cut into the sales of the latest know-it-all best seller, it might cause you to raise an eyebrow before dropping \$27.95 for the hardback edition.

Everybody's a rookie in the 21st century. No trails are marked. The rivers are all uncrossed, the mountains unclimbed, the best-sellers unwritten, the sermons unpreached, the songs unsung, the riddles unsolved, the mistakes unmade.

Step right up and invent that gadget everybody wants, win the heart of Miss Wonderful, finish that college degree or break that world record.

**The first rule** for the 21st century is easy—Keep it simple. Get this one right and the rest will fall into place.

The really important stuff in life can be explained in one or two syllable words. Eat right. Go to church. Read your Bible. Love your wife. Pay your debts. Get a job. Stand up straight. Move to the front. Tithe. Pray. See what I mean?

Accept no substitutes here. Don't get snookered by flashy, multi-syllable solutions to one-horse problems. God did not require Adam to graduate from

Harvard before He handed him the keys to the Garden of Eden. And you don't need some fuzzy-talking bozo to muck up the nice, clean 21st century. It's yours. Here are the keys and the tank's full. Just get in and drive off.

**The second rule** for the 21st century paints the road signs for you—Set some priorities. Remember, you only need priorities in three areas: God, family and others. Compared to these, nothing else matters.

The "God priorities" mark the rest of life. Life gets crowded and busy early in the day. That's why it's important to stay on speaking terms with the Almighty and in agreement with His basic philosophy—love God and love your neighbor.

The amazing part is that when we get the "God priorities" set, it uncomplicates the rest of life. Family values, good citizens and sound economic decisions flow from the fact that the divine markers are in place.

Those who love God first and pattern their lives after Jesus Christ make great neighbors, honest businessmen, faithful spouses and reliable mechanics. If your neighbor is a Christian, you can leave the door unlocked and the keys in the car.

**The third rule** for the 21st century sounds like a negative, but it's really a positive—Know when to say no.

You can't do everything that others want you to do. Sometimes, you can't do everything *you* want to do or need to do. Don't worry; we're all in this boat with you. But some are better than others at knowing when to stop and get off.

There are a few basic ideas that work for everybody. For instance, if you're asked to do financially what jeopardizes your ability to pay the mortgage or tithe, say no. If the new project demands so much time that your children think you live somewhere else, say no.

Those who juggle the most projects don't win a gold star. They usually get another project to juggle. A lot of people coast through life on the efforts of others. One of the best ways to say no when someone suggests a project is to put the fellow who brought up the idea in charge of it.

**Rule four** is my favorite—Stay positive. A few months ago, North Carolina pastor Dann Patrick wrote an article titled "Keeping Positive in a Negative World." He lists 10 practical ways to remain positive. Here are numbers one, eight and nine.

"If I can, I avoid negative people," writes the good reverend. He lists that first because he knows if you give negative folks half a chance they'll poison the water hole with woe, gloom and doom.

Number nine reminds us to "have several good friends who are positive people . . . and call them." We all like to be around people who can laugh on Mondays and see the rainbow behind the cloud.

Pastor Dann's number eight suggestion rings my bell, "I try not to take myself too seriously." That may be the best advice you get all year. Learn to laugh at yourself. It's the only tranquilizer you'll ever take that has no side effects.

Nothing defuses anger and relaxes people quicker than a spontaneous, from-the-toes laugh. Solomon warned that three bad things will happen if we lose our sense of humor: a broken spirit, a lack of inner healing and dried-up bones (Prov. 15:13,15; 17:22).

If you need more than four rules for the new millennium, then write them yourself. Oh, if the world did end yesterday and you're still reading this editorial, you might want to check your eschatology. ■



CONTACT

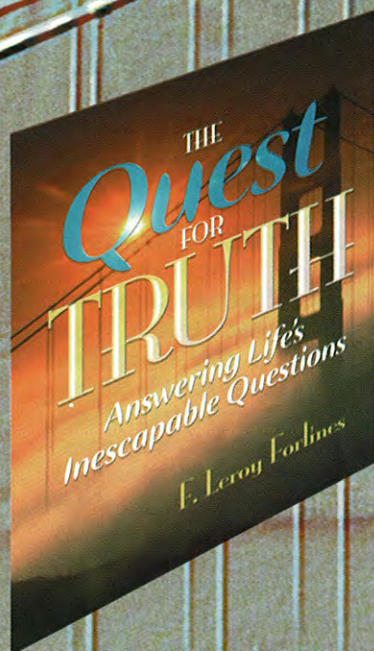
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