

# CONTACT

Official Publication of the National Association of Free Will Baptists

February 2000

**People of the Book**  
**Can't We Just Get Along?**  
**The Faulty Logic of Abortion**  
**The Kindness of Strangers**  
**What a Century!**

# inside

FEBRUARY 2000

VOLUME 47, NO. 2

## ARTICLES .....

### 4 People of the Book

Why the Bible stands at the center of American culture.

### 6 Sunday School Days

If it were Sunday, he came on time, Bible in hand, offering in pocket, lesson ready.

### 8 Can't We Just Get Along?

We cannot bow before God while stomping on the rights and feelings of others.

### 10 The Faulty Logic of Abortion

Have Americans killed 30 million innocents?

### 12 The Kindness of Strangers

The North Dakota winter pushed her inside a stranger's vehicle.

### 13 Question . . . or Answer?

An eye-opening explanation on the doctrine of sanctification.

### 14 The Sin of Lust

Part two of a seven-part series on the Seven Deadly Sins.

## COLUMNS .....

### 3 The Secretary Speaks

The Christian's Conversation

### 23 The Department Pages

### 27 Green Tree Bible Study

My Personal Savior

### 28 Especially for Young Preachers

Should a Preacher Have a Will?

### 29 Youth Update

### 30 Top Shelf

### 31 Briefcase

What a Century!

## NEWS .....

### 16 Free Will Baptist Newsfront

Leadership Conference

Four Ministers Honored

Theology Symposium

Oris Doggett Dies

Mississippi State Association

FWBBC Welcome Days

Church Gets Road Paved

2000 State Association Meetings

### 22 Currently

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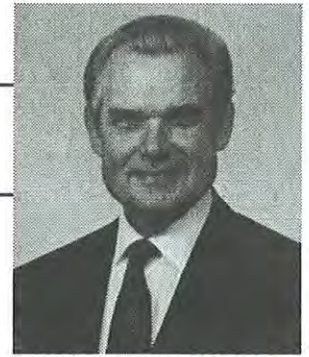
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# THE SECRETARY SPEAKS



Melvin Worthington

## The Christian's Conversation

**T**he Bible characterizes the conversion experience as a transformation. Paul declares, "Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold all things are become new," (II Cor. 5:17).

The conversion experience is a transforming experience. This truth is affirmed by the use of the word *conversation* and describes those who are right with God. Consider the following areas.

### The Meaning

In Psalm 37:14 and Psalm 50:23, David uses the word *conversation* when referring to the life-style or course of life of the righteous. Paul uses the word in II Corinthians 1:12 to describe how he lived. In Ephesians 2:3 Paul uses the word to characterize the way people live before conversion.

*Conversation* in these verses simply means the way one lives, the course of one's life or manner of living. Rather than referring to speech, which is the way we often use the term *conversation*, Paul uses the term to depict the manner in which people live.

### The Mandate

Is the way a Christian lives important? Is God interested in the Christian's behavior? The Bible makes it clear that the Christian's conversation is very important. The conversation of Christians should be *honorable*.

Paul admonishes the Philippian to, "Only let your conversation be as it becometh the gospel of Christ . . ." (Philip. 1:27).

The conversation of the Christian should be *happy*. Hebrews asserts,

"Let your conversation be without covetousness; and be content with such things as ye have," (Heb. 13:5).

The conversation of the Christian should be *holy*. Peter says, "Seeing then that all these things shall be dissolved, what manner of persons ought ye to be in all holy conversation and godliness," (II Pet. 3:11).

The conversation of the Christian should be *honest*. Peter admonishes, "Having your conversation honest among the Gentiles: that, whereas they speak against you as evildoers, they may by your good works, which they shall behold, glorify God in the day of visitation," (I Pet. 2:12).

The conversation of the Christian should be *humble*. James argues, "Who is a wise man and endued with knowledge among you? Let him show out of a good conversation his works with meekness of wisdom," (Jas. 3:13).

The conversation of the Christian should be *habitual*. Paul instructs Timothy to, "Let no man despise thy youth: but be thou an example of the believers, in word, in conversation, in charity, in spirit, in faith, in purity," (I Tim. 4:12).

### The Manifestation

God's precepts, presence and pow-

er are manifested through the conversation of saints.

The *power* of our conversation. Peter says, "But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts: and be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you, with meekness and fear: Having a good conscience; that, whereas they speak evil of you, as of evildoers, they may be ashamed that falsely accuse your good conversation in Christ," (I Pet. 3:15-16).

The *pattern* for our conversation. Christ is the pattern we should emulate. Peter declares, "For what glory is it, if, when ye be buffeted for your faults, ye shall take it patiently? but if, when ye do well, and suffer for it, ye take it patiently, this is acceptable with God. For even hereunto were ye called: because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that ye should follow in his steps," (I Pet. 2:20-21).

The *perseverance* in our conversation. In spite of their circumstances, Christians live according to the precepts of scripture. Paul says, "For our conversation is in heaven; from whence also we look for the Saviour the Lord Jesus Christ: Who shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body, according to the working whereby he is able even to subdue all things unto himself," (Philip. 3:20).

The conversation of sinners indicates that they do not know the living God in a redemptive relationship. The conversation of saints indicates that they do know the living God. The transformed life evidences itself in the behavior of the Christian. It is time for Christians to take a reality check in light of the scripture. ■

### The Secretary's Schedule

#### February 2000

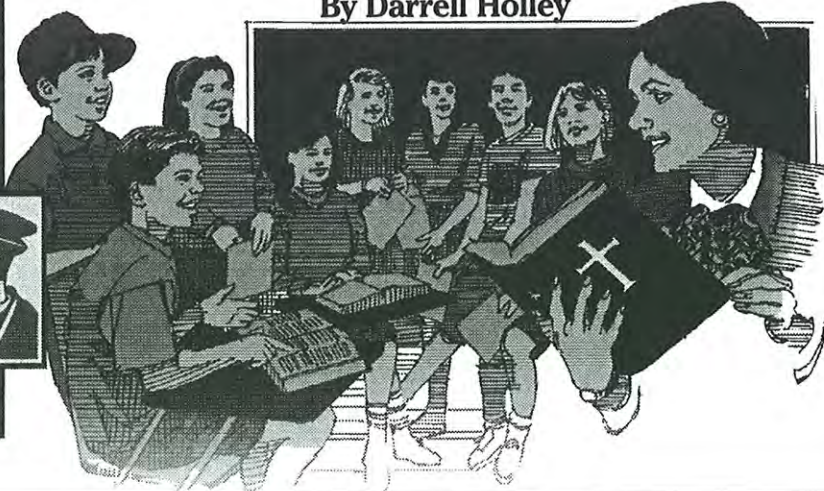
- 1-4 Religious Conf. Mgt. Association
- 18-19 CMP Board Meeting
- 24-25 South Carolina State Association
- 27 Central FWB Church  
Royal Oak, Michigan

## Why the Bible stands at the center of American culture



# People of the Book

By Darrell Holley



### A Book from Heaven

In the fourth chapter of the book of Nisa in the Koran, the author—whoever he was—three times describes Jews and Christians as “the People of the Book.” Now, he doesn’t say this as a compliment. For him, coming to God by means of a book is preposterous; he says, “The People of the Book demand that [God] cause a Book to descend on them from heaven.”

Though he reproves us for it, he is quite right: we do view this Book as a book from Heaven. We are absolutely devoted to the belief that this Book is inspired by God. Indeed, we Free Will Baptists have stated our belief in what we call the “plenary verbal” inspiration of the Bible, our belief that it is absolutely inerrant and true in everything that it states.

No, the Muslim writer doesn’t understand all that. But I am intrigued by his description of us as “the People of the Book,” because he has stumbled upon an amazing fact. Christians, because of our devotion to the Word of God, have become “people of the Book” and, as a result, we have also become “the people of books.”

Because we value the scriptures so highly, considering every word, every jot and tittle as inerrant and inspired, we spend vast amounts of time studying everything about the scripture: its history and geography, the grammar

and vocabulary of its original languages, and the interrelationships between the various writings and authors. We practice—at great expense of time and energy—what is called the *historico-grammatico* literary method.

### People of Books

In other words, we are interested in both the historical background and setting of the text (*historico*) as well as in the vocabulary and grammar of the text itself (*grammatico*).

If you practice this kind of scholarship seriously, you’ll start developing quite a library: Hebrew and Greek grammars and concordances, geographies of ancient Palestine, studies of the horticulture of olives and the raising of sheep, studies of architecture in the first century A.D., and of epic poetry in the 20th century B.C. In short, if you take the scriptures seriously, it will be difficult to keep from becoming a scholar.

Which is not to say that some people don’t succeed in resisting this impulse toward scholarship. Some certainly do—but such laziness requires great effort. Everything in Christian worship and culture pushes us toward literary scholarship. (Just think how many times in one short church service we open books and read texts from the scripture or sing texts from the hymnal.)

Any people who live in this kind of biblical literary culture eventually become people not just of “the Book” but of books generally. It is not merely a happenstance that what we call the Western liberal arts have accompanied biblical Christianity; they are outgrowths of it.

Now this *historico-grammatico* method of examining the Bible has become the method that we use for examining all other serious books as well, whether religious or non-religious. We take the methods we have learned for study of the infallible Word of God and apply those same methods when studying the fallible words of men.

The literary method we use when approaching the scripture and the literary method we use when approaching Shakespeare or the U.S. Constitution or the *Iliad* is inevitably the very same—with the exception, of course, that we recognize the scriptures as inerrant and authoritative and as the lens through which we view the other books—not vice versa.

Our approach to the Bible and our approaches to other works are absolutely connected; one inevitably leads to the other. How you approach the Bible affects how you approach other books. And how you approach other books affects how you approach the Bible.

## Danger of Not Reading

We need to be readers. Obviously, if you cannot read (or read well), you can't read the Bible or any other books. So connected are Christian orthodoxy and reading that when one declines so does the other.

It is not surprising that, as Roman Catholic theology and worship in the Dark Ages grew further and further removed from the scriptures, illiteracy increased as well. And, of course, it is also true that the more their illiteracy increased, the more erroneous their religion became.

It is equally not surprising that the Reformation and the printing press became inextricably connected. John Foxe, in his *Book of Martyrs*, says that "as printing of books ministered matter of reading, so reading brought learning, learning showed light, by the brightness whereof blind ignorance was suppressed, error detected, and finally, God's glory, with truth of his word, advanced."

People began to carry Bibles with them to church; they began to think of the service as centered around the reading of a biblical text and a sermon explicating and explaining that text.

Reading is necessary for Christian living. Phonics is practically a means of grace. It is not merely a coincidence that the publication of the Bible in English in the 16th century was accompanied by the rise of the teaching of English reading and writing. When our ancestors landed in this nation, one of the first things they did was to establish schools.

As early as 1646 Massachusetts Bay Colony established elementary schools, giving as their primary reason: "It being one chief project of that old deluder, Satan, to keep men from the knowledge of the Scriptures, as in former times . . ."

The study of English reading and writing actually began in the literary culture produced by the English Bible in the 1500-1600's. The first English dictionary, the first children's readers, the first little first-grade reading group—all these things were direct products of the renewed interest in reading the Bible in our own language. Reading is absolutely essential if we are to understand and communicate the Word of God aright.

## How to Read a Book

We also must continue to use the old-fashioned historico-grammatico literary method. I'm sure all of us have found ourselves in a Sunday School class or Bible study group where people, rather than discussing what the biblical text actually means, spent most of their time discussing what it meant "to them."

Likewise there are plenty of university English departments where they spend their time not trying to find out what Shakespeare actually said and what those words actually mean in their original context but exploring what Hamlet means "to them." There are all sorts of bizarre ideological approaches to literary study; Marxists, feminists and homosexuals are constantly re-interpreting texts to mean what they want them to mean.

Others say that the meaning of a text lies not in the proper understanding of the historical and grammatical meaning but totally in the reader's response to it.

If we begin to accept these methods of literary study, we cannot remain a constitutional republic very long: the Constitution comes to mean whatever the courts feel that it means "to them." Likewise, if we accept these irrational views, we cannot remain orthodox Christians very long either. Inevitably, these literary methods will lead us away from the plain meaning of the scriptures, not toward it.

If King Josiah had used these methods, he would not have rent his clothes upon first hearing the Book of the Law; he would simply have re-interpreted it in light of the prevailing culture of sixth-century B.C. Judah. If the Bereans had used these methods they wouldn't have "searched the scriptures daily" to see if what Paul preached were so; rather, they would have accepted or rejected it on the basis of their own personal and emotional responses.

## A Goodly Heritage

Think of all the examples from our heritage that would encourage us in this area: Ezra the scribe standing upon "a pulpit of wood" and "read[ing] in the book [of] the law of God distinctly, and [giving] the sense, and caus[ing] the people [to] understand the reading."

Paul, in a Roman dungeon, urging Timothy to bring him not only his cloak but also "the books, [and] especially the parchments."

Augustine, hearing a voice saying, "Take up and read" and his obeying that voice and reading the Epistle to the Romans. Medieval English followers of John Wycliffe hiding little primers under their bedstraw. William Tyndale, while languishing in a Flemish jail, asking for his Hebrew dictionary.

John Bunyan, describing "a man . . . with a book in his hand, and a great burden upon his back." William Carey, learning Sanskrit while cobbling shoes in his shop in Northampton. Thomas Grantham, early English Free Will Baptist, teaching himself Hebrew by candlelight after a day spent plowing.

Benjamin Laker, Free Will Baptist father-in-law of Paul Palmer, bequeathing his books individually by name and leaving his precious copy of Thomas Grantham's *Christianismus Primitivus* to his beloved daughter Sarah.

The London Free Will Baptists in 1702 collecting "ye Sum of Seven pounds twelve Shillings" to buy books for their Free Will Baptist brethren in the Carolinas. My own grandparents sitting around the hearth at night, taking turns reading to each other by firelight. We have a goodly heritage.

We must be people of the Book, and we must be people of books. Personally and culturally we're doomed if we don't remain a book-reading and book-studying people. Personally and culturally we're doomed if we don't remain a Bible-reading and Bible-studying people. The two are absolutely and inextricably connected. ■



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.

He was the poster child for the Six Point Record System

# Sunday School Days

By Larry Hampton



**A**s the title of a well-known book from the '40s put it, Papa was a preacher. I was born in a hospital in Shawnee, Oklahoma. I was born again in a Free Will Baptist church in Modesto, California.

I grew up in the church. Sometimes it seemed like I practically lived there. I have fond memories of Free Will Baptist League (newcomers and the young are familiar with its successor—CTS), Vacation Bible School and church services. Lots of church services—Sunday morning, Sunday evening, prayer meeting, revival services at our church and other nearby Free Will Baptist churches. Summers also included a week at youth camp.

But nothing had a more profound influence on me than Sunday School. Every Sunday morning at 9:45, I joined with the youth of a Free Will Baptist church in California or Oklahoma to study God's Word.

It was in Sunday School that I learned all I really needed to know—"Jesus loves me, this I know, for the Bible tells me so," and "The B-I-B-L-E, yes, that's the Book for me. I'll stand alone on the Word of God. The B-I-B-L-E."

I was the poster child for the Six Point Record System. If it was Sunday,

I would be there, on time, Bible in hand, offering in my pocket (put there by my mother), with the lesson in my head. You could even count on me to know the day's memory verse. And, of course, I would be staying for church.

Somewhere there are several years' worth of attendance pens I earned during that time years ago and miles away.

Lucille Hampton, Johnnie Jenkins, Ruth Jones, Lavada Ellison and Edith Shehi. My Sunday School teachers had three things in common. They loved God, the Bible and me.

And in the case of Mrs. Shehi, she loved Skiatook, Oklahoma—her hometown. (I always thought she should have been named Mrs. Shelo because she was so short and her husband should have been Mr. Hehi because he was so tall.)

As a young teen I was asked to teach the Adult Sunday School Class on a Youth Sunday. I was hooked. A lifelong love for teaching the Word of God began that morning.

As a child, teenager and young man, I attended Sunday School. And now as a not so young man, I can still be found in Sunday School each Lord's Day.

I've heard it said that Sunday School is the only school a person never grad-

uates from. That's okay with me. The way I see it, no one should become a member of the "Sunday School Alumni Association" until he goes home to be with the Lord.

No matter how old or how young you are, there's always a place for you in the Sunday School.

"We want you to come to our Sunday School  
Where we'll teach you to live by God's Holy Rule.

Bring your grandma and your grandpa  
Bring your mother and dad.

Bring your sister and your brother  
And make the dear Savior glad." ■



**ABOUT THE WRITER:** Larry D. Hampton serves as adult curriculum editor at Randall House Publications. He attends Sunday School at Woodbine Free Will Baptist Church in Nashville, Tennessee.

# THE TOGETHER WAY

November 1999

## Receipts:

State	Designated	CO-OP	Total	Year To Date Designated	Year To Date CO-OP	Year To Date Total
Alabama	\$ 238.34	\$ .00	\$ 238.34	\$ 5,596.95	\$ .00	\$ 5,596.95
Arizona	.00	.00	.00	3,464.14	214.40	3,678.54
Arkansas	21,217.10	25,159.56	46,376.66	172,862.20	166,868.03	339,730.23
California	.00	782.73	782.73	.00	12,087.75	12,087.75
Colorado	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00
Delaware	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00
Florida	125.56	.00	125.56	533.64	12,000.00	12,533.64
Georgia	28,656.57	1,819.26	30,475.83	282,558.74	19,714.11	302,272.85
Hawaii	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00
Idaho	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00
Illinois	5,602.26	1,889.61	7,491.87	84,684.63	22,607.07	107,291.70
Indiana	1,729.35	136.89	1,866.24	12,672.15	2,656.17	15,328.32
Iowa	.00	.00	.00	360.00	2,324.65	2,684.65
Kansas	.00	.00	.00	.00	252.92	252.92
Kentucky	1,867.00	350.41	2,217.41	14,644.86	5,846.23	20,491.09
Louisiana	.00	.00	.00	180.00	.00	180.00
Maryland	.00	.00	.00	150.00	9,511.14	9,661.14
Michigan	42,277.60	6,853.01	49,130.61	203,636.82	32,788.78	236,425.60
Mississippi	7,844.28	993.28	8,837.56	84,291.15	6,186.51	90,477.66
Missouri	58,712.46	15,095.69	73,808.15	463,482.51	138,546.16	602,028.67
Montana	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00
Nebraska	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00
New Jersey	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00
New Mexico	567.84	28.92	596.76	6,956.08	408.04	7,364.12
North Carolina	2,419.02	1,394.48	3,813.50	14,276.89	22,101.09	36,377.98
Ohio	16,884.11	3,635.07	20,519.18	122,942.46	35,019.32	157,961.78
Oklahoma	40,610.19	10,464.35	51,074.54	563,640.19	113,405.30	677,045.49
South Carolina	.00	.00	.00	443,337.54	.00	443,337.54
South Dakota	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00
Tennessee	16,209.78	1,057.35	17,267.13	137,690.23	18,764.24	156,454.47
Texas	25.00	.00	25.00	89,959.36	3,034.20	92,993.56
Virginia	918.08	60.00	978.08	8,702.21	60.00	8,762.21
Virgin Islands	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00
West Virginia	4,007.69	157.67	4,165.36	25,897.23	1,044.75	26,941.98
Wisconsin	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00
Canada	533.20	25.20	558.40	3,161.33	146.14	3,307.47
Northwest Association	.00	.00	.00	34.60	.00	34.60
Northeast Association	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00
Other	.00	.03	.03	.00	.37	.37
<b>Totals</b>	<b>\$ 250,445.43</b>	<b>\$ 69,903.51</b>	<b>\$ 320,348.94</b>	<b>\$ 2,745,715.91</b>	<b>\$ 625,587.37</b>	<b>\$ 3,371,303.28</b>

## Disbursements:

Executive Office	\$ 1,385.26	\$ 31,456.56	\$ 32,841.82	\$ 20,996.20	\$ 281,514.19	\$ 302,510.39
Foreign Missions	132,358.75	8,842.81	141,201.56	1,613,304.26	79,136.80	1,692,441.06
FWBBC	15,951.78	8,842.81	24,794.59	191,155.41	79,136.80	270,292.21
Home Missions	76,042.97	6,920.43	82,963.40	776,903.70	61,933.16	838,836.86
Retirement & Insurance	302.54	5,382.56	5,685.10	4,639.61	48,170.28	52,809.89
Master's Men	297.13	5,382.56	5,679.69	4,840.62	48,170.28	53,010.90
Commission for Theo. Integrity	70.71	192.24	262.95	541.40	1,720.37	2,264.77
FWB Foundation	299.16	2,306.82	2,605.98	3,878.19	20,644.38	24,522.57
Historical Commission	23.03	192.24	215.27	265.92	1,720.37	1,986.29
Music Commission	33.96	192.24	226.20	253.75	1,720.37	1,974.12
Media Commission	46.35	192.24	238.59	408.76	1,720.37	2,129.13
Hillsdale FWB College	1,981.74	.00	1,981.74	18,000.86	.00	18,000.86
Other	21,652.05	.00	21,652.05	110,527.23	.00	110,527.23
<b>Totals</b>	<b>\$ 250,445.43</b>	<b>\$ 69,903.51</b>	<b>\$ 320,348.94</b>	<b>\$ 2,745,715.91</b>	<b>\$ 625,587.37</b>	<b>\$ 3,371,303.28</b>

## Directory Update

### ARKANSAS

Tim Landers to Allen Chapel Church, Batesville from First Church, Fort Gibson, OK

### CALIFORNIA

Paul Webb to Antioch Church, Antioch

### KANSAS

Mark Braisher to Southern Hills Church, Overland Park from Rejoice Church, Owasso, OK, as minister of church growth

### TEXAS

Tim Smith to United Church, Bryan from Shady Grove Church, Phil Campbell, AL ■

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# Can't We Just Get Along?

By LeRoy Lawson

**E**ver notice how quickly a heated argument veers off course? What starts as a question over who left the front door unlocked last night ends up with her sobbing that he doesn't love her anymore while he storms out the door muttering something about why he ever got married in the first place.

Ever notice what happens when a church splits? You thought the disagreement was over whether or when to build the new building, but before long, charges fly about the preacher's liberalism and the moral degeneracy of certain board members and what we need around here is tighter discipline in the youth group. Then the disgruntled groups take off to start a real church and the new building is the last thing the remaining members need.

Even Christian movements that begin as efforts to unite all God's people in the essentials (while tolerating differences of opinion in nonessentials and promising to love one another no matter what) disintegrate into several factions, each promoting itself as the defender of the true faith.

For that matter, have you ever noticed how many passages in the New Testament beg Christians to get along with one another? When talking about restoring New Testament Christianity, is it really the early Christians' crankiness we want to imitate?

At home, at church, at work, wherever human beings congregate, bad temper blows the peace. You have only to scan today's crowded court dockets or watch television's popular shout shows for proof that hostility is in the saddle and rides mankind.

## Why can't we just get along?

We can, of course. Just let *them* satisfy us and peace will reign. There would be no problem if—and here you can pick your words—they would only (agree with us, yield to us, stop fighting us, love us, come to our interpretation of this or that scripture, see things our way, let us have control).

James is of a different opinion.

What causes fights and quarrels among you? Don't they come from your desires that battle within you? You want something but don't get it. You kill and covet, but you cannot have what you want. You quarrel and fight. You do not



have, because you do not ask God. When you ask, you do not receive because you ask with wrong motives, that you may spend what you get on your pleasures, (James 4:1-3).

How long would a fallout last, do you suppose, if one of the disputants would confess, "I know I'm the problem! It's my moodiness (or my selfishness, or my bullheadedness, or my pride, or my need to control)."

I've seldom heard such an admission—and have been pretty slow to utter one. So the fight goes on. James is pretty forthright. We don't get along, he writes, because we don't want to. Preserving the relationship is not the goal; proving ourselves right is. Or getting our way.

James blames our secret, unspoken and perhaps subconscious desires. We are prompt to accuse someone of harboring hidden agendas; we may not be aware of our own.

As far as this passage is concerned, the problem isn't with *them*. It's with *us*. We're the *you* he's talking to.

## Have you located the blame in the right place?

*What causes fights and quarrels among you? Don't they come from your desires that battle within you?*

You may have seen the cartoon a friend sent me. The church sign, so big it dwarfs the little church behind it, trumpets: ONE CHURCH of the CLEAR-EYED PREVIOUSLY MISINFORMED BUT WE'VE GOT IT ALL STRAIGHT NOW RIGHT PEOPLE WHO YOU'D LIKE IF YOU GOT TO KNOW US. In the caption, a member explains to an onlooker, "Every time the congregation splits we need a bigger sign and a smaller building."

His church has mastered the art of self-deception: "... but we've got it all straight now. ..." Blame-throwers are notoriously lacking in spiritual insight. They can't see their own sin, but their 20/20 vision spots their opponents every flaw.

Certain of their superiority, proponents are loath to admit the mistaken or misdirected to their ranks on any terms but complete surrender. Expect no compromise from the "right people."

Perfect persons can't abide imperfection in others, like spouses, for example. How can ONE WHO'S GOT IT ALL STRAIGHT NOW be expected to bear with a sinful partner?

James offers no comfort for such paragons. He forces



them (us) to examine the “desires” that “battle within.” Such desires are legion: ambitions, obsessions, cravings for control, talking of the Spirit but feeding the flesh. Because these are inner conflicts, they are hidden from ourselves. As popular psychologists would say, we are “in denial.”

### Are you being honest about what you really want?

*You want something but don't get it. You kill and covet, but you cannot have what you want.*

Is unity in the church a genuine value—or just something we talk about because scripture expects us to? Is harmony at home important enough to pay love's price for it? As far as James is concerned, there are some things you can't get, no matter how passionately you want them.

Maybe they aren't achievable. Covetousness is never satisfied. And forced conformity is beyond your arranging. For instance, if you want everybody else to agree with you, or to behave the way you think they should, or to agree with you on all points of doctrine, forget it. Even the killing of heretics has never made true believers of them! And speaking of heresy, what should be done about yours?

I made the mistake of rereading some of my old sermons. “How could I have said that?” I asked. “What in the world was I talking about? Did I really believe it?” I wonder what I'll think of last week's sermon when I reread it 10 years from now. My point? I can't even be consistent with myself. What right do I have, then to demand your complete agreement with me? Which me?

Many a quarrel would die in a hurry if the parties could only see and hear accurately. Perceptions are difficult things to keep in focus. What a difference is made when your primary question switches from “How does this affect me?” to “What effect does this have on you?” If I unselfishly want what's best for you, we can pretty quickly come to terms.

I'll have difficulty yielding, though; among other things, I want you to admire my firmness of conviction (even though you may erroneously think it is just bullheadedness). A political philosopher once observed that in politics, it's not enough just to be right. “You also have to be reasonable.” But reasonableness is pretty scarce in the heat of verbal battle, especially among bulls.

A reasonable, honest person can say,

- You have a point there.
- I may have been mistaken.
- I admit I don't have all the answers.
- Let me make certain I understand you.
- Even if we can't agree, I still want to be your friend.

### Are you asking the right person?

*“... you do not ask God.”*

Sometimes we don't ask God because we don't want to hear His answer. We prefer His silence to His censure.

Do we shun God's counsel out of arrogance or merely self-confidence? Or because we don't trust Him? Or because we have to be in control, even if that means ignoring God?

James' reference to God raises the issue of worship. God cherishes our praise and listens for our prayers. Thus the scriptures. Yet nothing is tearing at the unity of the church more viciously than the clashes over contemporary worship styles.

British minister Leslie Weatherhead was of the opinion that “the kingdom of music is all embracing. It knows nothing of the barriers that separate men.” He wrote these words in the midst of World War II. Maybe with the bombs dropping and the armies wasting each other a difference of musical tastes seemed a trifle. But in the relatively peaceful 1990s, the cacophonous clashes over music in church board meetings are anything but worshipful. You don't hear them asking God.

Weatherhead, insightful man that he was, called this one wrong. In today's church, music is polarizing congregations. And peace will not return until they ask God.

### How gracious are you, anyway?

But He gives us more grace. That is why scripture says: “‘God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble.’ Submit yourselves, then to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you,” (James 4:6-7).

Because of space limitations, I have skipped a couple of verses in order to get to the core of James' instruction.

What is missing in most church quarrels and domestic squabbles is the quality we thank for our salvation (“we are saved by grace”) but tend to dismiss in our interpersonal relationships. James captures the essence of the gospel here. Because Jesus *humbled himself* (see Philippians 2), God's grace became available to us. Grace always operates through *somebody's* humility

- The proud won't receive God's grace (so God “gives grace to the humble”).
- The proud won't submit to God (so “God opposes” them).

James presents a telling contrast, doesn't he? Submit yourself to God—and the devil will leave you alone. Act with humility—and God's grace will be yours. Be proud—and the devil's “gotcha.”

This teaching is easily grasped but applied with difficulty. Here's the rub: submission to God means humility before people. As Jesus insisted that the commandments can't be reduced to just one (“You shall love the Lord your God”) but to two (“You shall love your neighbor as yourself”), so we cannot bow before God while stomping on the rights and feelings of others.

It appears that humility is the quarrel's solution, the key to peace at home and harmony at church, the one essential without which we cannot get along. Blessed are the humble, for they:

- Listen to what's actually being said.
  - Give the benefit of the doubt.
  - Do not assign or impugn motives.
  - Work hard to learn and understand the other's point of view.
  - Realize that most of the time we will act from mixed motives, so they don't demand a purity in others that's absent in themselves.
  - Are quick to admit their own faults, slow to judge another's.
  - Seek first of all to please God and know that nothing does so like loving one's neighbor—even one's disagreeable neighbor.
- Yes, the humble *can* “just get along.” ■

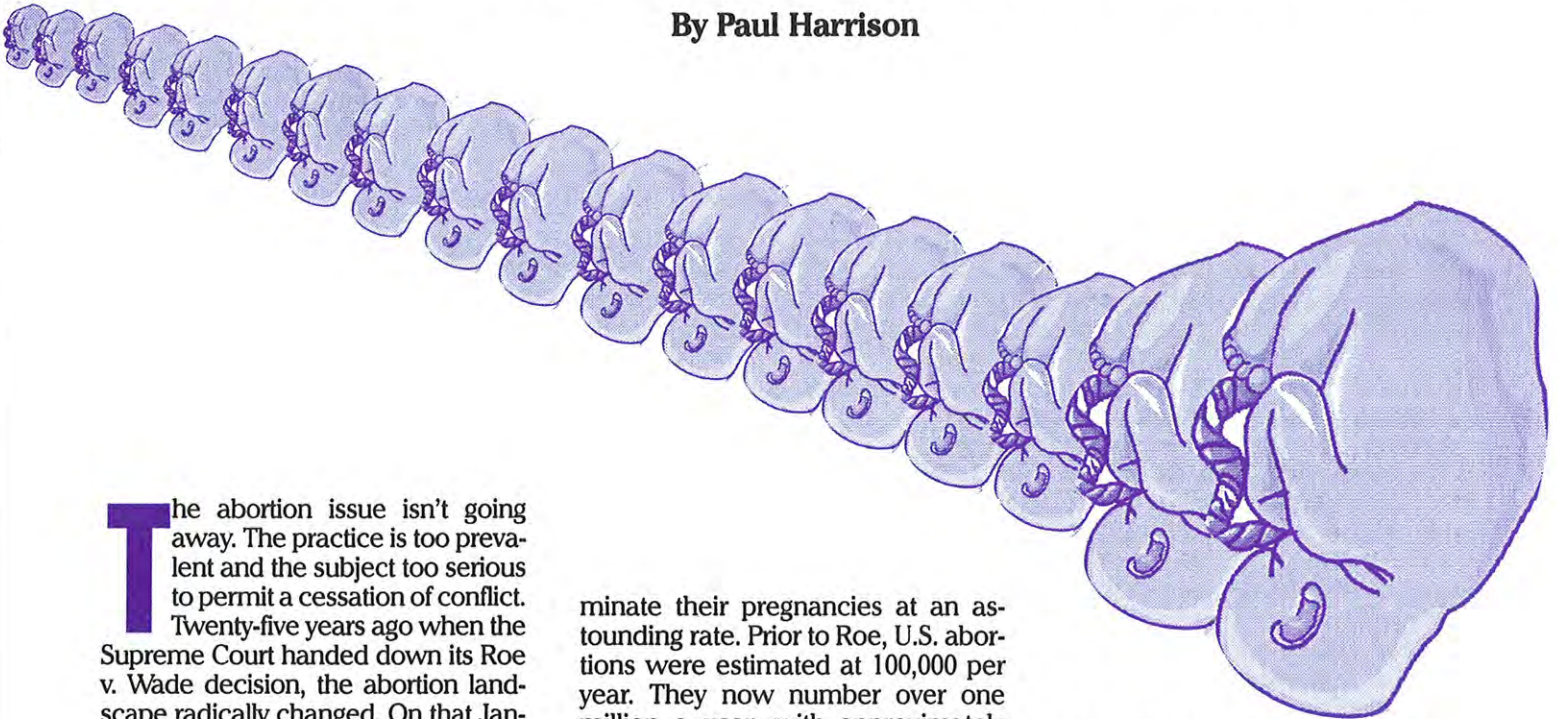
ABOUT THE WRITER: Dr. LeRoy Lawson is president of Hope International University, Fullerton, California.

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Have Americans killed 30 million innocents?

# The Faulty Logic of Abortion

By Paul Harrison



**T**he abortion issue isn't going away. The practice is too prevalent and the subject too serious to permit a cessation of conflict. Twenty-five years ago when the Supreme Court handed down its *Roe v. Wade* decision, the abortion landscape radically changed. On that January 23, U.S. law shifted from banning practically all such procedures to permitting them.

## Present Abortion Law

In *Roe* the Court broadly ruled "that a state has no right to restrict abortion in the first six months of pregnancy." During these months, the state cannot interfere with a woman's desire for an abortion, regardless of what her motives for ending the pregnancy might be.

*Roe* further instructed that in the final trimester states could prohibit abortion, if they so chose, as long as the pregnancy did not jeopardize the woman's "health."

*Roe's* companion case, *Doe v. Bolton*, defined these health exceptions, declaring that health must be taken in its broadest possible medical context. Decisions regarding such third trimester abortions must be made "in light of all factors—physical, emotional, psychological, familial, and the woman's age."

With such freedoms in hand, American women proceeded to ter-

minate their pregnancies at an astounding rate. Prior to *Roe*, U.S. abortions were estimated at 100,000 per year. They now number over one million a year, with approximately one in every three pregnancies in America ending in abortion.

## The Illogic of Abortion

Though abortion statistics have swollen, it has become increasingly difficult to defend the morality of this practice. The logic of abortion is breaking down just as slavery's logic did in the last century.

## The Back-Alley Argument

For example, it has been argued that if abortion were not legal, then back alley butchers would perform the operations and many women would be hurt or killed. But this argument will only hold up if we assume that the unborn is not a full person, which is the point in question.

As philosopher Francis Beckwith has noted, if the fetus is fully human, this argument is tantamount to saying that "because people die or are harmed while killing other people (i.e., unborn people), the state should make it safe for them to do so."

## The "When Is It Life?" Argument

In response to such reasoning, abortion proponents have taken the necessary next step and dehumanized the unborn. "We do not know when life begins," they say, "so we should protect the woman's right to choose." Again, however, such thinking crumbles before close examination.

It is a biological fact that life begins at the moment of conception. No one debates this point. The question is what *kind* of life are we talking about. The life, however, is clearly human. Any scientist will classify the species of a woman's unborn fetus as *Homo sapiens*, that is, human. No one can reasonably doubt that the unborn, at any stage in pregnancy, is a living human.

Dr. Matthews-Roth of Harvard Medical School states: "... it is scientifically correct to say that an individual human life begins at conception, when egg and sperm join to form the zygote, and this developing human always is a member of our species in all stages of its life."

## Continuity Of Life

Another problem with the "we don't know when life begins" argument is the continuity of life from conception to death. In earlier years, many thought that there occurred during gestation a crucial turning point when personhood miraculously happened. Some saw "quickenings," the first felt movement of the fetus, as that point.

Scientific advances have made it harder to believe in such a crucial turning point. We know that at conception all 46 chromosomes are in place, that at 2.5 weeks the fetus has blood cells and a heart. One week later, often the time a woman discovers she is expecting, that heart begins to beat.

At six weeks, brain waves can be detected. In the first trimester, somewhere between the eighth and thirteenth week, the fetus can feel pain. The evidence of fetal pain is what first caused Judge Robert Bork to question his earlier pro-choice position.

Instead of a special turning point in pregnancy, there stands an unbroken continuity. The changes during gestation are not transitions from some nebulous pre-human form to a human one but advances from immaturity to maturity. This continuity allows me to speak sensibly of when *I* was conceived.

Efforts to exclude personhood from the unborn have sometimes led to all sorts of nonsensical talk such as that by Suzanne T. Popperma in her 1996 book, *Why I Am an Abortion Doctor*.

The doctor-author recalled her own abortion some years ago: "Since my fetus was at twenty weeks, I could actually feel the fetus convulsions not long after I was given the saline injection . . . I remember having a special kind of conversation with the embryo at the time. 'I'm very sorry that this is happening to you, but there's just no way that you can come into existence right now.'"

If this statement about not coming into existence had any meaning, there would have been no "you" to address the conversation to.

## Better Safe Than Sorry

If, however, we were to grant the assumption that we don't know when life begins, the argument for abortion still falls. In such a case, since we would not know whether the unborn we are aborting is a person or not, we would be embracing the possibility of killing an innocent person.

We might not be killing a person, or, then again, we might be. One can't be for sure. In other words, we might have killed over 30 million innocent people over the past 25 years or we might not have. If my preferred, convenient behavior might kill someone, I must choose other alternatives. Is that not what we tell drunk drivers?

## Christian Responsibility

As a society we must surely address the complex root causes that

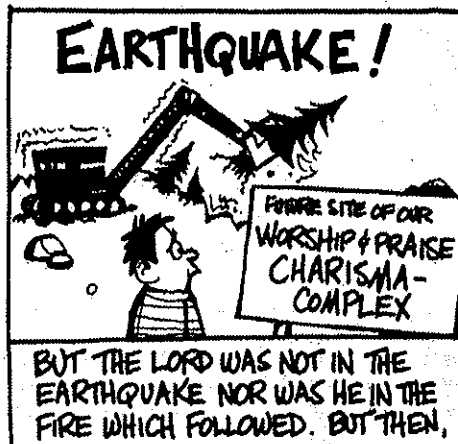
have led to abortion on demand. Such work is essential, and Christians need to be in the thick of it. But we are most foolish if we think we can improve society while condoning behavior that is clearly subhuman. Perhaps ignorance of the facts once explained our behavior, but that cloak has been taken from us.

Now, more than ever, we Christians must shoulder the responsibility of exposing the fallacious thinking of abortion proponents. Our pluralistic society is set up so that Bible verses will not in and of themselves win the day. But our God-given arguments, enlightened by scripture though not dressed in that garb will ring true and bring conviction. So with the truth in hand and heart, let us take captive every fallacious thought and so exalt God and His righteousness. ■



ABOUT THE WRITER: Dr. Paul Harrison pastors Cross Timbers Free Will Baptist Church in Nashville, Tennessee. He is a member of the Commission for Theological Integrity.

## BEYOND BELIEF



The North Dakota winter pushed her inside a car with strangers

# The Kindness of Strangers

By Joanne Less

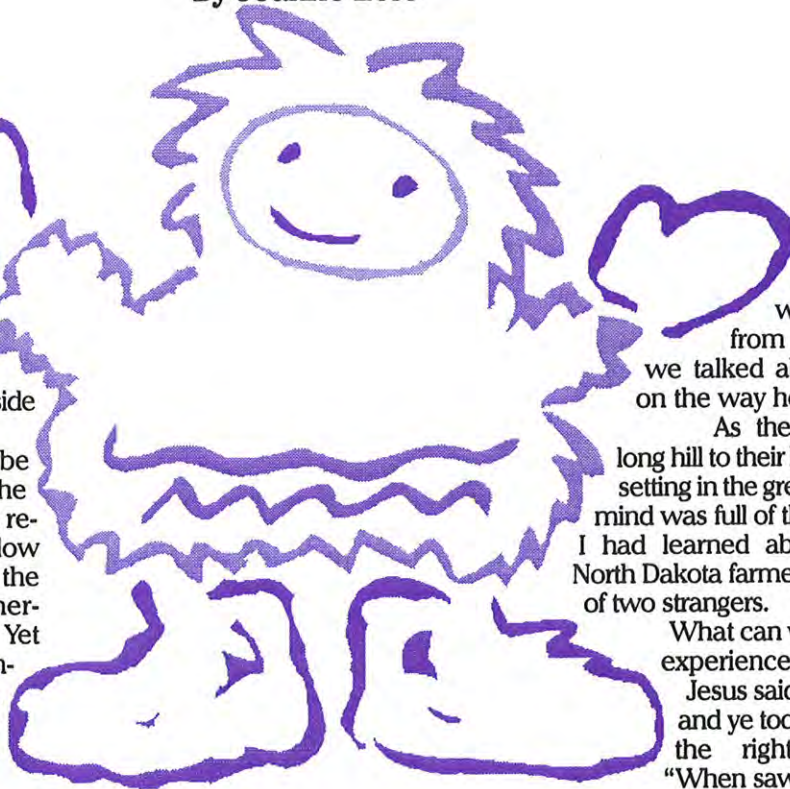
**C**hristmas 1963. I was invited by my friends, the Homers, to spend the holidays with them in their new home which stood upon a knoll above the prairie vastness outside Mandan, North Dakota.

Winter in North Dakota can be unforgiving in its cold. During the week I spent there, temperatures remained in the 10-15 degree below zero range. On the warmest day the temperature in the outside thermometer registered 10 below! Yet each day there was bright sunshine and brilliant blue skies. Deep snow which had already fallen remained frozen and dazzling in its whiteness.

One day my friends drove me to downtown Bismarck located across the bridge from Mandan. The bridge spanning the Bismarck River links the two cities. Intrigued by the shops, I wanted to browse and investigate those which featured Western wear.

At my request, my friends dropped me off at a designated stop and agreed to pick me up outside this store in a half-hour. Most of my browsing turned out to be window shopping, since the stores were closing at 5:30 or 6:00. I wore warm winter clothing, leather snow boots, but I was becoming aware of the cold biting my toes as well as my fingers inside my usually warm gloves.

Too soon I found myself standing outside the store where my friends agreed to meet me. Cold. Never before had I experienced such penetrating cold. While I was stamping my feet to keep the blood circulating to my toes, a car slowed and then stopped a few feet from me.



The passenger side door opened, and a voice called out, "Would you like to sit in the car and warm up?"

I saw an older couple, perhaps in their late 50s, natives of the area. While the invitation was tempting, I made no overt response except to answer, "My friends will be coming for me in minutes now."

The invitation was extended again, simple and kind. This time I accepted, glad to enter the warmth of the strangers' car. Thus we sat and began to talk.

"We own a spread west of Mandan."

"I am visiting friends who live in the big house on top of the hill overlooking Mandan."

Upon closer view of this man and woman, I saw the ruddy countenance of Westerners, North Dakota farmers, who had to know I was a stranger to this climate. Momentarily, my friends came, pulling up behind

the car from which I was emerging. There was no surprise from my friends while we talked about this incident on the way home.

As the car climbed the long hill to their home, the sun was setting in the great Western sky. My mind was full of thought about what I had learned about the enduring North Dakota farmer and the kindness of two strangers.

What can we glean from this experience?

Jesus said, "I was a stranger, and ye took me in," to which the righteous answered, "When saw we thee a stranger, and took thee in?" (Matt. 25:35, 38).

"Verily I say unto you," Jesus answered, "inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren ye have done it unto me" (Matt. 25:40).

Like that pebble thrown into the water, creating ever widening circles far beyond our sight, so a word softly spoken can lift the human heart . . . ■



ABOUT THE WRITER: Joanne Less is a member of Central Free Will Baptist Church in Royal Oak, Michigan.

# Question . . . or Answer?

By Malcolm Fry



**T**o be or not to be—that is the question. The Bard of Avon, William Shakespeare (1564-1616), has been credited with that provocative and/or prophetic bit of English prose. Ironically, the words “to be” occur three times in the first seven verses of Romans, chapter one: “to be” an apostle (v. 1), “to be” the Son of God (v. 4) and “to be” saints (v. 7).

In each case, the words “to be” are italicized. According to Professor F. Leroy Forlines, “In the translation of the King James, the translators chose to use italics to show when there were no Greek words from which the words are translated in an attempt to make the meaning clear.” (*Romans, The Randall House Bible Commentary*, p. 10).

For our purpose, it is the third incident that piques my interest. Are Christians called “to be” saints or would the verse be clearer and more accurate theologically by omitting the italicized words? Is not the primary thrust of holiness dedication to God (not “to be” saints; they already *were* saints!)?

They are “called as saints,” or “saints by calling,” which does not at all mean that they were invited to *become* saints. They *were* saints by divine sovereign calling. All believers *are* saints positionally and ultimately experientially. We *are* God’s holy ones. Believers are holy already by virtue of their faith in Christ.

The verb “to be” is not present in the Greek; this implies that a Christian is, in fact, already a saint or a holy person.

Mark Twain wrote about a slave who lived in Missouri on a narrow neck of land that jutted out into the Mississippi River. The current ran very swiftly at that point and gradually cut through the neck of the land. One night, the current completely severed it from the mainland. According to the law, when the land was cut free from Missouri, it became part of Illinois. The man who had gone to bed in Missouri awakened in Illinois. Best of all, he went to bed a slave and awakened a free man, for Illinois was a free state.

This is what God does for us in Christ. We come to Him defiled and unclean but, when we claim His salvation, we are “made the righteousness of God in Him, (II Cor. 5:21).

God’s will for the believer, then, is not so much that he be sanctified as that he live out the sanctification he

already has as a result of salvation. As a musician must express the music within him and an author express his thoughts in writing, so the Christian must express his salvation in life. This is what sanctification is all about.

We grow into the likeness of Christ. We progress *in* sanctification, not *toward* it. Holiness of life is not ascetic withdrawal from reality. It is practical goodness. The holiness God wills for us is principle put into action, faith at work, and love of Christ expressed in daily conduct.

“To be or not to be” is not so much the question as it is *the answer!* The world does not take notice of buildings and budgets, plans and programs, but it will be challenged by Christlike lives. ■

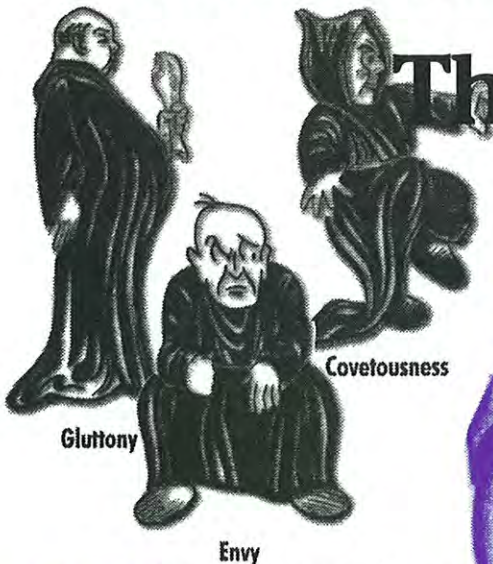


ABOUT THE WRITER: Dr. Malcolm C. Fry is a retired Free Will Baptist minister who resides in Desloge, Missouri. He maintains an active preaching and teaching role.

## Part two of a seven-part series on the Seven Deadly Sins

# The Sin of Lust

By Kevin Riggs<sup>1</sup>



**W**hen I was about 10 years old, I was walking alone on the railroad tracks near my home one hot summer day, heading toward the SDI Market (Super Drive In) to get an Icee. Halfway to the store, on a section of track surrounded by fields on both sides, I noticed a magazine lying on the tracks, flapping in the wind. I picked it up and looked at the pictures. It was a pornographic magazine, and those images have been ingrained forever in my mind. That is the power of lust!

Fifteen hundred years ago, Pope Gregory and other church fathers, categorized all sins under seven "cardinal" sins.<sup>2</sup> They believed, and I concur, all evil in the world can be categorized under these seven deadly sins. All seven are dangerous, but lust is one of hell's keenest weapons for the destruction of families, societies and souls.

### Sin of Lust

The basic meaning behind lust is a strong desire of any kind, but over time, lust came to mean the perversion of what is good. Today, lust is primarily associated with strong desires concerning our sexuality. Thus, lust could best be defined as "the unrestrained and unethical expression of the sexual impulse."<sup>3</sup>

It is this type of lust that has given birth to a pornography industry grossing nearly \$8 billion per year.<sup>4</sup> In America, adult bookstores outnumber McDonald's



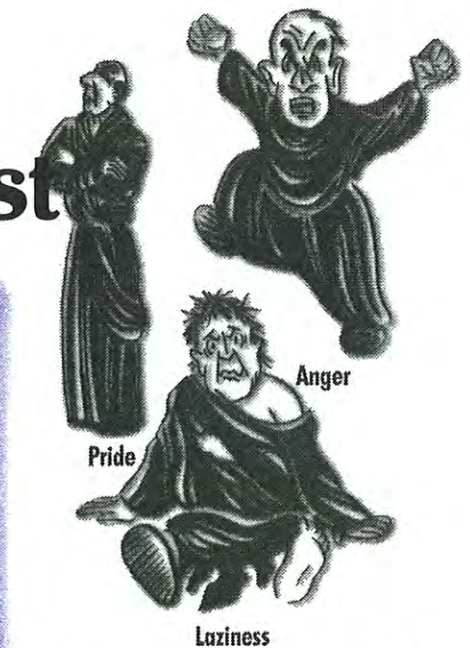
restaurants three to one,<sup>5</sup> and "adult only" theaters report over \$50 million in annual box office receipts.<sup>6</sup> Alarmingly, at least 70% of pornography ends up in the hands of kids, even those children who are protected from it.<sup>7</sup>

Today, through the internet, a person can view whatever he chooses in the privacy of his home. Without a doubt lust is a most deadly sin.

### Problem with Lust

As I reflect on my own struggles and talk with others about theirs, three problems surface. First, lust is never satisfied. Lust never knows when to say, "Enough is enough." Lust wants more and more until it destroys the person.

The Bible says, "Let no man say when he is tempted, I am tempted of God: for God cannot be tempted with evil, neither tempteth he any man: But every man is tempted, when he is drawn away of his own lust, and enticed. Then when lust



hath conceived, it bringeth forth sin: and sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death," (Jas. 1:13-15).

Second, lust never delivers what it promises. Lust promises love, acceptance and fulfillment, but it only delivers emptiness, guilt and loneliness.

Again, the Bible says, "Flee fornication. Every sin that a man doeth is without the body; but he that committeth fornication sinneth against his own body . . . For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's," (I Cor. 6:18, 20).

Third, lust is a sign of immaturity. When my kids ask for something, they want it right then. My job is to teach them to be patient, but then, at times when I want something, I want it right then as well. Wanting everything now and being impatient means we all still need to grow up.

Likewise, giving into lust is a sign of immaturity. It is saying, "I want everything, and I want it now!" I have to constantly remind myself that God has a better plan for my life than I do. He knows what is best, and He knows how to best meet my needs.

### Consequences of Lust

Lust dresses itself up and makes itself appealing to my senses. In the middle of temptation it is hard to think of consequences. But lust, like all sins, carries deep consequences.

First, lust perverts love.

Jesus said, "Whoever looketh on a woman to lust after her hath committed adultery with her already in his heart," (Matt. 5:28). Immorality is as much an attitude of the heart as it is an action of the body, and lust and immorality always pervert true love.

What is true love? "Charity [or *love*]<sup>8</sup> suffereth long; and is kind; *love* envieth not; *love* vaunteth not itself, is not puffed up, Doth not behave itself unseemly, seeketh not her own, is not easily provoked, thinketh no evil; Rejoiceth not in iniquity, but rejoiceth in the truth; Beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things. *Love* never faileth," (I Cor. 13:4-8a). Lust perverts every aspect of love described by the Apostle Paul.

Lust also ruins homes. The lust for money and things separates spouses. Through adultery, immorality and pornography, married couples grow apart, are no longer attracted to one another and are no longer able to get along. The results are broken homes, single parents and "latch-key" kids, just to name a few.

A third consequence is lust destroys a person's health. The results of a life lived by the philosophy, "If it feels good, do it," are broken hearts, abortions, sexually transmitted diseases, bad memories, lost relationships, guilty consciences, low self-esteem and feelings of abandonment by God. Lust destroys a person's physical, emotional and spiritual health.

### Conquering Lust

God has promised, "There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man: but God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it," (I Cor. 10:13). What a wonderful promise! I can conquer lust. I don't have to live a defeated life. How can I conquer lust?

First, I must recognize that lust will be a life-long battle. Although that sounds like bad news, it is meant to be a warning. I must never think that I have arrived; I can never afford to let my guard down. I need to constantly remind myself, "Except for the grace of God, there go I."

This gives me reasons to rejoice. I

can rejoice because while on earth I can overcome the power of sin, but in eternity I will overcome the very presence of sin.

A second thing I can do to overcome lust is determine to be freed from its grip. Romans 6:18 reads, "Being then made free from sin, ye became the servants of righteousness."

Christ has set me free from sin, but too many times, my prayer is like St. Augustine's, "O Lord, deliver me from lust—but not yet." Through Christ I have been set free and do not have to live in sin any longer. Every day I need to remind myself of that truth.

Third, I need to fill my mind with pure things. Philippians 4:8 says, "Whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things." The Psalmist—before the invention of televisions, movies, and VCRs—wrote, "I will set no wicked thing before mine eyes," (Psa. 101:3).

It is impossible to please God if I am constantly feeding the lust of the flesh. With so many temptations and such easy access to wrong, I must make a commitment to think pure thoughts, read moral books, listen to good music, watch wholesome shows and guard what I allow to enter my computer through the internet.

Several years ago, newspapers carried a story about an elderly lady who lived in the Big Cypress Swamp in South Florida. Her home was an old shack located by a small pond. Every day the lady went out to the pond to draw water. In the pond lived an alligator. Despite the danger, the lady allowed this alligator to live in the pond for years. It seemed tame. She didn't bother the gator and the gator didn't bother her.

However, one day while she was drawing water from the pond, the gator swam under the water and grabbed the old woman's hand with his mighty jaws. She tried pulling her hand out of his mouth, but the gator ripped it off. Bleeding profusely, the terrified and stunned old woman crawled back to her shack and called for help. Paramedics finally arrived and she received medical attention.

The next day, the park ranger found the alligator in the pond and killed it. When they cut the alligator open, they found the old woman's hand.

The park ranger told reporters, "Alligators are most dangerous when they lose their fear of humans. By allowing an alligator to remain in your pond, you unknowingly give it the courage to attack." The lady still lives in the swamp. But there are no longer any alligators in her pond.<sup>9</sup>

Lust, like that alligator, will eventually bite the hand that feeds it. Paul warned Timothy, "Flee also youthful lusts," (II Tim. 2:22). "For the wages of sin is death," (Rom. 6:23). Lust is a most deadly sin, and one of hell's keenest weapons for the destruction of the soul. ■

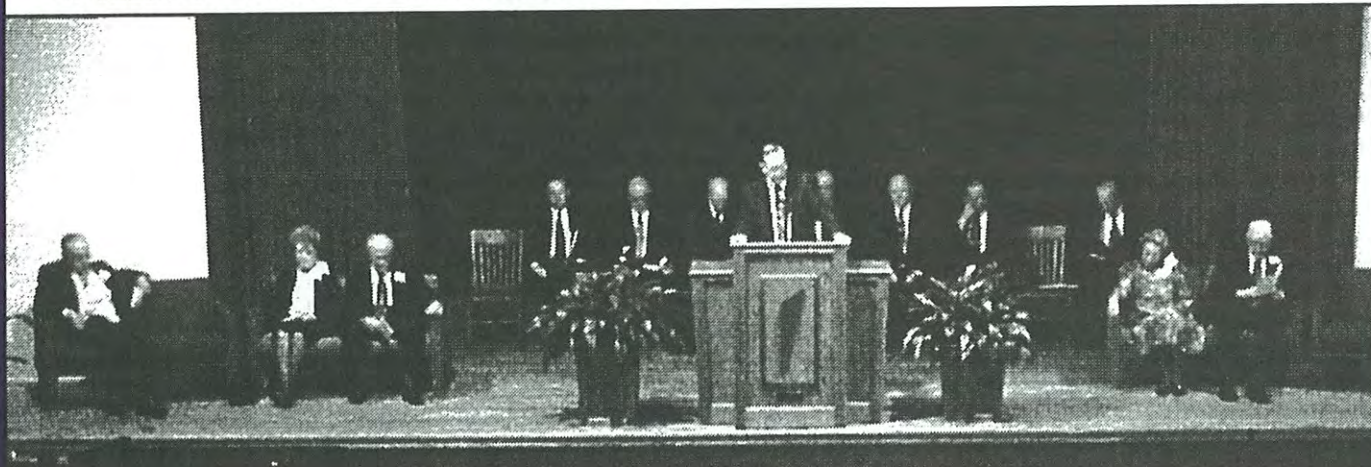


ABOUT THE WRITER: Reverend Kevin Riggs pastors Franklin Free Will Baptist Church in Franklin, Tennessee.

### Endnotes

1. I would love to hear from you with any comments, questions, or opinions. I can be reached via email at gkrigs43@aol.com, or snail mail at 149 Arsenal Dr., Franklin, TN 37064, or by telephone at 615.790.3229.
2. The seven cardinal (or deadly) sins are laziness, lust, anger, pride, envy, gluttony and greed.
3. Solomon Schimmel, *The Seven Deadly Sins*, p. 111.
4. "Report of the Attorney General's Task Force on Family Violence," U.S. Department of Justice, Washington, D.C., p. 112.
5. U.S. Senate Judiciary Committee, "Effects of Pornography on Women and Children," Subcommittee on Juvenile Justice, 98th Congress, 2nd Session, 1984, p. 227.
6. Liegh Ann Metzger, "Understanding the Problem of Pornography," (Pornography Committee Report Project, p. 6).
7. *Focus on the Family Citizen*, Aug. 1, 1989, p. 10.
8. The word translated *charity* in the King James Version is the Greek word *agape* which is the highest form of love. In quoting 1 Corinthians 13:4-8a, I have taken the liberty to insert the word *love* for the word *charity*, and indicated I was doing so by placing *love* in italics.
9. Wayne Rice, *Hot Illustrations for Youth Talks*, pp. 31-32.

## Cumberland Association Honors Four Ministers



Smyrna (TN) pastor Billy Walker leads opening prayer. Honorees Dr. Homer Willis (l), Reverend and Mrs. Raymond Riggs, Dr. and Mrs. L. C. Johnson await the time of celebration.

NASHVILLE, TN—Tennessee's Cumberland Association Presbytery honored four Free Will Baptist ministers who have served 60 or more years in the ministry. The "Four Men of God" celebration recognized the contributions of Reverends Robert Crawford, L. C. Johnson, Raymond Riggs and Homer Willis.

Meeting on the campus of Free Will Baptist Bible College November 13, 1999, the two-hour gathering brought more than 200 people for a time of singing and recognition.

The four ministers' lives have been intricately associated with

national and state ministries. They have preached a combined total of 254 years—Crawford (66 years), Johnson (66 years), Riggs (62 years) and Willis (60 years).

Robert Crawford (86) was the first full-time executive secretary for the National Association of Free Will Baptists (1943-48). Due to ill health, he was unable to attend.

Dr. L. C. Johnson served as president of Free Will Baptist Bible College for almost 40 years (1943-1978). He was also moderator of the National Association.

Raymond Riggs' (84) ministry includes pastoring, evangelism and promotional work. However,

he is best known as a champion for foreign missions, serving as director of the Foreign Missions Department and as a board member.

Homer Willis served 17 years as general director of the Home Missions Department (1956-73), and has been a full-time evangelist for 26 years.

The four ministers were lionized by presenters Ralph Hampton, Charles Thigpen, Rolla Smith and Harrold Harrison.

After the service, the honorees and guests fellowshiped at a reception on campus.



## Arkansas Minister, Oris Doggett, Dies

WARREN, AR—The Reverend Oris Doggett died November 7, 1999, three weeks before his 81st birthday. During his 45-year ministry, he pastored eight Free Will Baptist churches in Arkansas and one in Louisiana.

A native of Bradley County, Arkansas, Brother Doggett also sang for many years in the Doggett Quartet. The quartet conducted a regular radio program and sang in numerous revivals and association meetings.

He attended Free Will Baptist Bible College in the mid-1950s, then returned to Arkansas where he served on the state Executive Board as well as boards in the Saline Association and others.

During World War II Doggett was awarded the Bronze Star, the Purple Heart and other medals for



his service in the Pacific Theatre. He was wounded in battle during the conflict in the Philippines while serving in the U.S. Army.

He was a quiet man and gentle in dealing with the Lord's people. He maintained calmness and dignity as he worked in local associations on boards and committees. He demonstrated resolve and love in matters of business.

Reverend Doggett is survived by his wife of 54 years, Ollie Sweeney Doggett; one son, Rev. Larry Doggett; one daughter, Phyllis Williams, and one sister, all of Arkansas.

Funeral services were conducted November 9 at Brother Doggett's home church near Warren, Pleasant Valley FWB Church. Reverends Bill Wyatt, Anthony Williams and Roy Williams (son-in-law) officiated.

## Theology Symposium Meets in Oklahoma

MOORE, OK—The fourth annual Free Will Baptist Theology Symposium met November 4-5, 1999, at Hillsdale Free Will Baptist College. Thirty-eight people attended the two-day event to hear nine papers presented on a wide variety of subjects. The presenters included six pastors and three college professors. The new sched-

ule of Thursday night through Friday night was endorsed by the registrants, according to symposium spokesman Daryl Ellis.

The Theology Symposium is sponsored by the Commission for Theological Integrity. The 2000 symposium will meet November 2-3 on the campus of Free Will Baptist Bible College.

Papers from the 1999 symposium have been bound into one volume. Only 10 copies remain and they will be sold on a first-come, first-served basis. Please send \$15 to the Commission for Theological Integrity at 1405 Butterfield Road, Aurora, IL 60504. Contact Daryl Ellis at 630/851-4211.

## Florida Church Paves Road



A two-lane paved road replaces the dirt road leading to Pleasant Hill FWB Church in Bonifay, Florida. Pastor Danny Conn said that members prayed for two years that they could get the road paved. "The church now has a solid testimony of God's ability to answer prayer."

## FWBBC Welcome Days Enrolls 261

NASHVILLE, TN—Free Will Baptist Bible College's fall Welcome Days on November 11-13, 1999, attracted 261 visitors from 82 churches in 18 states, according to Stewart-Allen Clark, assistant director of enrollment management. This includes 196 prospective students and 65 sponsors.

Mr. Clark considers the fall Welcome Days a success. He says, "Compared to last fall, more churches than ever were represented. A special thanks goes to all sponsors who sacrificed their time and efforts to expose their young people to FWBBC."

States represented by the most visitors were Illinois (26), Tennessee (23) and North Carolina (22). There was a tie for the largest church group between Peace FWB Church (Granite City, IL), and Maple Lane FWB Church (St. Mary's, WV) with eight from each.

Bible College alumnus Brian Tippett, youth pastor at Peace FWB Church in Wilson, NC, spoke in chapel. Visitors also got a preview of the proposed new campus to be completed by fall 2002.

Visitors watched the Flames basketball team score an impressive 85-82 victory over Oakwood College (AL) in front of a standing-room-only Welcome Days crowd. Student Body president Darin Miles' 3-pointer with 2.6 seconds left in overtime was the margin of victory. Miles led FWBBC in scoring with 30 points.

A Hawaiian-style luau on Friday night wrapped up an action-packed weekend. Several visiting seniors turned in applications for admission before leaving campus Saturday morning.

Spring Welcome Days at FWBBC is scheduled for March 23-25. For information, call 1-800/76-FWBBC.



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## Messer Keynotes Mississippi State

WAYNESBORO, MS—The 34th annual session of the Mississippi State Association kicked off at Corinth FWB Church in Waynesboro with a challenge from Home Missions general director Trymon Messer to make a difference. Messer's "The Church That Makes a Difference" sermon opened the November 5-6 meeting.

Two Mississippi men also

preached to delegates: Pastor Rickey Willis (Smith Chapel FWB Church in Booneville) and Evangelist Van Dale Hudson.

Clerk Benny McKinney said that 66 people registered for the event, including 31 ministers and 23 lay delegates. Moderator Charles Walden was re-elected.

Two plaques were awarded during the session—one to Petal

FWB Church for contributions to home missions, and the other to Lanarse Stricklen for ministerial duties at Harvest FWB Mission Church.

Master's Men sponsored a breakfast and Women Active for Christ sponsored a banquet.

The 2000 state association will meet November 3-4 at Burgess Creek FWB Church in Tishomingo.

## 2000 State Association Meetings

State	Date & Time	Place & Address	State	Date & Time	Place & Address
Alabama	Starts: November 9, 9:00 am Closes: November 10, 7:00 pm	First FWB Church 2701 Florence Boulevard Florence, AL 36116	Mid-Atlantic District	Starts: October 28, 9:30 am Closes: October 28, 4:00 pm	Welcome Home FWB Church 1303 Prospect Mill Road Belair, MD 21014
Arizona District	Starts: March 11, 10:00 am Closes: March 11, 3:00 pm	First FWB Church Pinnacle Point Road Phoenix, AZ 85022	Mississippi	Starts: November 3, 9:00 am Closes: November 4, Noon	Burgess Creek FWB Church 63 County Road 126 Tishomingo, MS 38873
Arkansas	Starts: August 8, 7:30 pm Closes: August 9, 9:00 pm	Nettleton School Performing Arts Cntr. Jonesboro, AR	Missouri	Starts: June 5, 7:30 pm Closes: June 7, Evening	<i>Evening</i> - Fort Zumwalt High School O'Fallon, MO <i>Day</i> - First FWB Church 716 Sandy Lane O'Fallon, MO 63366
Atlantic Canada District	Starts: June 29, 7:30 pm Closes: July 2, 7:00 pm	St. John Valley Bible Camp Route 5, Harland New Brunswick, Canada	New Jersey District	Starts: March 17, 7:00 pm Closes: March 18, Noon	Thompson Memorial FWB Church 1520 South Orchard Vineland, NJ 08360
California	Starts: May 18, 7:30 pm Closes: May 20, Noon	California Christian College 4881 East University Ave. Fresno, CA 93703	New Mexico District	Starts: April 6, 1:30 pm Closes: April 8, 4:00 pm	Carlsbad FWB Church 403 North 8th Street Carlsbad, NM 88220
Colorado District	Starts: May 20, 9:30 am Closes: May 20, Noon	First FWB Church 4140 Oasis Street Cheyenne, WY 82009	North Carolina	Starts: June 5, 10:00 am Closes: June 6, Noon	Victory FWB Church 1806 Wayne Memorial Drive Goldsboro, NC 27534
Florida	Starts: May 10, 7:00 pm Closes: May 13, Noon	Holiday Inn Convention Center 350 International Speedway Blvd. Deland, FL 32724 / 904/738-5200	Northeast District	Starts: June 23, 4:00 pm Closes: June 24, Noon	First FWB Church P. O. Box 164 New Durham, NH 03855
Georgia	Starts: March 17, 10:00 am Closes: March 18, Noon	First FWB Church 420 North Westover Blvd. Albany, GA 31707	Northwest District	Starts: May 19, 7:30 pm Closes: May 20, Noon	Tri-Cities FWB Church 1149 North Edison Kennewick, WA 99336
Idaho	Starts: May 19, 7:00 pm Closes: May 20, Noon	Rupert FWB Church 206 East 6th Street Rupert, ID 83350-0277	Ohio	Starts: June 23, 9:30 am Closes: June 24, Noon	Heritage Temple FWB Church 2295 South High Street Columbus, OH 43207
Illinois	Starts: March 17, 9:00 am Closes: March 18, 3:00 pm	Peace FWB Church 3725 Horse Shoe Lake Road Granite City, IL 62040	Oklahoma	Starts: October 9, 7:00 pm Closes: October 12, Noon	Rejoice FWB Church 13413 E. 106th Street North Owasso, OK 74055
Indiana	Starts: June 16, 7:00 pm Closes: June 17, 3:00 pm	Harvest FWB Church 6710 Bittersweet Drive Fort Wayne, IN 46825	South Carolina	Starts: February 24, 9:30 am Closes: February 25, 3:00 pm	White Savannah FWB Church 4010 Highway 65 Conway, SC 29506
Kansas	Starts: June 8, 7:30 pm Closes: June 10, Noon	First FWB Church 600 North Glenn Ulysses, KS 67880	Tennessee	Starts: November 13, 7:30 pm Closes: November 15, Noon	Donelson FWB Church 3210 McGavock Pike Nashville, TN 37214
Kentucky	Starts: June 16, 7:30 pm Closes: June 17, Noon	First FWB Church 656 Pritchardsville Road Glasgow, KY 42141	Texas	Starts: June 7, 7:00 pm Closes: June 9, Noon	First FWB Church 913 Richardson Henderson, TX 75654
Louisiana District	Starts: January 15, 10:00 am Closes: January 15	Heritage FWB Mission 2665 Williamson Way Shreveport, LA 71118	Virginia	Starts: June 15, 7:00 pm Closes: June 16, 9:30 pm	Great Bridge FWB Church 700 Mt. Pleasant Road Chesapeake, VA 23322-3416
Mexico	Starts: July 28 Closes: July 30	Altamira, Tamaulipas Mexico	West Virginia	Starts: June 9, 9:30 am Closes: June 10, 3:00 pm	Cornerstone FWB Church P. O. Box 1185 Crab Orchard, WV 25827
Michigan	Starts: May 19, 7:00 pm Closes: May 20, 4:00 pm	Quality Inn 3750 Washtenaw Avenue Ann Arbor, MI 48104-5253			

## Leadership Conference Meets in Nashville

NASHVILLE, TN—Some 135 Free Will Baptist state and national leaders met at the Regal Maxwell House December 6-7 using as a theme, "Working Together." Nine speakers developed the wide-ranging Leadership Conference theme that included addresses by five pastors, three state promotional officers and one national director.

One of the conference highlights was North Carolina promotional director Jim Marcum's Tuesday morning session in which he updated the state's flood relief efforts and thanked the Free Will Baptist people for their generosity. He reported that more than \$375,000 had been given to assist local churches and families.

Executive Secretary Melvin Worthington said, "The conference was a powerful statement by our leaders that what we have accomplished is the result of everybody pulling together toward a common goal. The future has no limits if we join hands in winning the lost, building churches, training workers and carrying the gospel to the world."

The conference was a reality check for attendees who heard the five pastors who spoke (Rick Ketchum, Ronnie Adkins, Roger Childers, Matt Pinson, Gary Fry) sound the same note that cooperation begins with the local church, extends to the quarterly meetings and sets the course for state and national outreach.

State promotional leaders Jim Marcum, Nathan Ruble and Ernest Harrison, Jr., picked up the same theme and told why the working together concept builds strong local churches, district and state associations.

Master's Men director Tom Dooley called on national agen-

cies to mirror the efforts of churches and state associations, and set an example on the national level.

In addition to the conference agenda, the National Association's Nominating Committee met twice to consider nominees for board and commission vacancies during the 2000 national convention. Nathan Ruble chairs the committee.

Moderator Carl Cheshier chaired a Monday afternoon meeting with the chairmen of all national boards.

The 2000 Leadership Conference is scheduled December 4-5 at the Regal Maxwell House in Nashville.



Ohio moderator Robert Prichard (L) and speaker Roger Childers



North Carolina promotional secretary Jim Marcum



WNAC executive secretary Marjorie Workman (L), Diana Bryant (FL), Dawn Sweeney (OH)



Leadership Conference general session

Home Missions director  
Tymon Messer (L) greets  
speaker Rick Ketchum (AR).



Speaker  
Matt Pinson (GA)



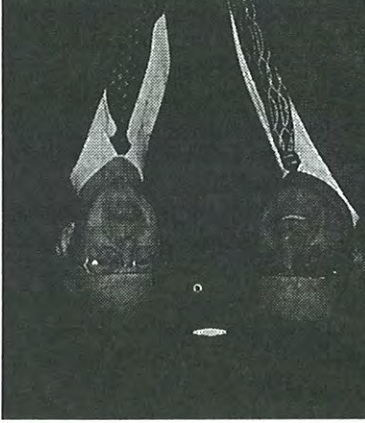
NYC director Dean Jones



Speaker Ernest Harrison, Jr. (OK)



Lloyd Locklear (MI) and Tennessee  
promotional director Charles Thigpen (R)



Tom Dooley  
Master's Men  
Director



Joanne King  
(NC)



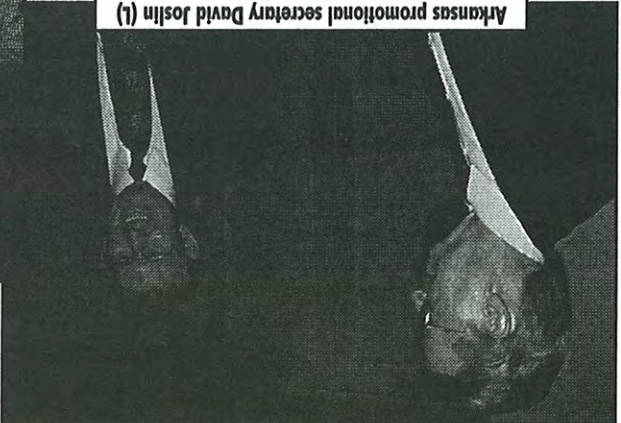
California  
director of  
ministries  
Nuel Brown



Alabama pastor  
Richard Hendrix



Arkansas promotional secretary David Joslin (L)  
and speaker Nathan Ruble (MO)



# currently

**Willow Springs FWB Church** in **Mountain Grove, MO**, marked 75 years of service, burned their mortgage and threw an appreciation celebration for Pastor **Howard Anderson**. The church began with a bang in 1924 after 60 people were converted in a three-week revival. The congregation sponsored building programs in the 1930s, 1951 and 1988. Nineteen pastors have led the group.

They were without a pastor when they celebrated 50 years at **Exeter FWB Church** in **Exeter, CA**. The church began with 11 members in 1949. Former pastor **Jay Wilson** preached the golden anniversary sermon. California executive director **Nuel Brown** presented a plaque from the state office.

The **California Women Active for Christ** published their first newsletter, *Women with One Voice*, during the fall retreat.

Pastor **Robert Hardgrove** baptized 18 converts at **Lighthouse FWB Church** in **Haskell, OK**. Seventy-two people attended the service which met at the home of **Delbert Webbs**.

**New Hope FWB Church** in **Indiana, OK**, reports 19 conversions, seven baptisms and 12 new members. **Odes Farles** pastors.

After pastoring the past 23 years in **Oklahoma**, **Jim Puckett** accepted a new role. He is now director of the state Missions Board. Puckett succeeds **Bill Jones** who was called to a pastorate in Texas.

Pastor **L. S. Anthony** celebrated 34 years at **Wilson Chapel FWB Church** in **Thomaston, GA**. The 81-year-old minister has led the congregation since 1966.

Fourteen baptisms and 13 conversions at **Fairview FWB Church** in **Mount Vernon, OH**, keep Pastor **Crete Sparks** wet and busy.

Pastor **Timothy Hamblen** reports eight baptisms, four new members and two conversions at **Rock of Ages FWB Church** in **Cleveland, OH**.

Members of **Hillview FWB Church** in **Columbus, OH**, began construction on a 6,000-square-foot family life cen-

ter, according to Pastor **Bill Hayes**. The church reports four conversions, five new members and three baptisms.

Pastor **James McComes** reports 21 new members and nine baptisms at **Canaan FWB Church** in **Creston, OH**. The church gave the pastor a "This is Your Life" celebration.

**Liberty FWB Church** in **Norton, OH**, witnessed four conversions and three rededications, as well as welcomed six new members. Pastor **Cecil Farmer** baptized four converts.

Pastor **Robert Bryant** reports eight conversions, four baptisms and five new members at **Newark FWB Church** in **Newark, OH**.

When Pastor **Roger Tillis** burned the mortgage at **Cornerstone FWB Church** in **Asheville, OH**, the congregation celebrated paying off the 15-year-loan in just eight years. The mortgage burning coincided with homecoming activities.

The newly-remodeled sanctuary at **First FWB Church** in **Austintown, OH**, seats 202. That's good news for Pastor **Bruce Beal** since he witnessed 20 conversions, baptized 15 and received 19 new members.

Ohio evangelist **Calvin Ray Evans** reports 27 conversions and 100 rededications during Camp Meeting.

There's a new sign up at **Beulah FWB Church** in **Pensacola, FL**. Pastor **David Baker** says the next project is raising funds for a new church van.

Pastor **Cecil Parrish** presented a plaque to the only living charter member at **Waltonville FWB Church** in **Waltonville, IL**. The plaque went to **Marie Hall**. Pastor Parrish read the church history, and after lunch at the homecoming celebration, **Tim Pierce** was ordained as a deacon.

**Blue Point FWB Church** in **Cisne, IL**, celebrated 102 years of service, according to Pastor **Ernie Lewis**.

Pastor **Larry Cook** reports five baptisms at **Bear Point FWB Church** in **Sesser, IL**.

Pastor **Billy Gene Outland** reports

eight conversions and eight baptisms at **Hazel Dell FWB Church** in **Sesser, IL**.

**Bethel FWB Church** in **Kansas City, KS**, reports six new members. A special Tuesday and Wednesday youth program attracts 20 attendees. **Clifford Ball** pastors.

The vote was unanimous, according to Pastor **Bill Van Winkle**. Members at **Fulton FWB Church** in **Fulton, MS**, approved construction of a 12,500-square-foot family life center at a cost of \$335,000. Construction was scheduled to begin in January and be completed within 90 days.

Thirty-eight couples at **Rejoice FWB Church** in **Owasso, OK**, renewed their wedding vows in a special ceremony, according to Pastor **Leonard Pirtle**. One couple, **Rev. and Mrs. W. T. Roberts**, celebrated their 70th wedding anniversary. Brother Roberts has pastored seven churches in Oklahoma, Kansas and California.

When Pastor **Buddy Henry** is not preaching at **Taylor's Seminary FWB Church** in **Cookeville, TN**, he places framed prints of the Ten Commandments in homes, schools, businesses and churches. More than 165 prints had been placed by late October 1999.

**Victory FWB Church** in **Jackson, TN**, celebrated Founder's Day last October 10 with day-long events that included the presentation of the church's history written by **Vernie Hersey**. Founding pastor **Norlin Jones** attended the activities. The church began with 13 people in 1966, organized in 1967 and moved into their new building in 1971. Pastor **Terry Booker** has led the congregation since 1990.

Pastor **Dennis Kizzire** reports four converts at **Smithville FWB Church** in **Smithville, MS**. Members also installed new carpet.

Pastor **Bill Phillips** reports 10 baptisms at **Valley FWB Mission** in **West Jordan, UT**. The daycare enrolled 16 children with the capability of enrolling 45. ■

Here are five of the most frequently asked questions to our staff. Contact us for more information on these or other questions.

## Frequently Asked Questions

By D. Ray Lewis

### 1. What happens to my money when my spouse and I die?

The answer depends on the following:

- If both die during the accumulation years before taking a settlement, the funds become part of the estate and are disbursed to a named beneficiary or as part of the probatable assets.

- If settlement has been made, we fulfill the specific directives of that agreement. Settlement agreements are legal contracts directing the frequency, amount and duration of payments.

A participant's funds *can never* become property of the Board of Retirement and Insurance.

For self-directed settlements with a set number of payments or payments of a specific amount to exhaust the account, we complete the agreed-to payments to the beneficiary or estate as directed by the participant.

For annuity settlements, the type annuity determines what happens. For single life annuities, all payments cease at the death of the participant. For Single Life with 10 or 15 year guaranty (assures a minimum of 120 or 180 payments), the participant is guaranteed payments as long as he lives. If death occurs before the guaranteed number of payments have been made, payments will continue until the guaranteed number have been made.

For simple joint life annuities, payments cease at the death of the survivor of the two annuitants.

For joint life agreements with the 10 or 15 year guaranty, payments will continue until a total of 120 or 180 payments have been made or both annuitants die, whichever is later.

The problem seems to be with the single and joint life annuities which have no guaranteed number of payments. People want to know "What if we both die before we've used up all of our money?"

Some will outlive their funds. But with an annuity, payments will continue as long as they live. Some will die before their funds are exhausted. In this case, once the contract is fulfilled, any remaining funds stay in the annuity pool to provide income for those who outlive their funds.

### 2. Can I borrow against my account?

Yes. Once in the plan for three years, up to the lesser of (a) \$50,000 or (b) one-half of the cumulative Salary Reduction and Employee Funds may be borrowed. Employer funds cannot be borrowed against.

The interest rate is 3% with pay-back not to exceed

60 months. The loan amount is deducted from the participant's retirement account. No earnings will be accumulated in his account on the outstanding loan principal. The principal

portion of each payment will be deducted from the loan balance and returned immediately to the participant's account. Once back in the retirement account, repaid principal will again experience the full results of the retirement pool of investments either positive or negative.

### 3. When can I get my money?

All funds are available at retirement (age 62), disability or death. Upon either of these, all settlement options are available to a participant, with no penalty by our department or IRS.

Employee funds can be withdrawn after five years in the plan with no penalty for early withdrawal. Salary reduction funds can be withdrawn early, but we must withhold 20% of the withdrawn funds for taxes. IRS may levy a 10% excise tax on early withdrawals unless it is a *hardship withdrawal* (see Plan Document for details).

As a rule employer funds are held for retirement, disability or death. However, if a person ceases employment with Free Will Baptists, these funds may be available for a direct rollover.

### 4. What types of contributions can I make to my account?

There are three types of contributions:

- *Employee* – Funds that come directly to us by personal check or money order from a participant. They are not tax-deferred.

- *Salary Reduction* – These tax-deferred, non-budgeted contributions give the option to lower taxable income now. A Salary Reduction Agreement is made between participant and employer (a copy must be provided to our office) to reduce his/her salary by a stated amount. The employer must send these funds on an employer check.

- *Employer* – Tax-deferred contributions designated in the employer's budget, above the employee's taxable income, for the pension account of a specific employee.

### 5. Is there a limit on what I can deposit per year?

Yes and no. Tax-deferred contributions (Employer and SRA) are limited to 25% of base salary, not to exceed \$10,000 per year. There is no limit on Employee contributions. ■

**O**ne size fits all!" That's what the sign said in a dress shop window. It was advertising the "Muu-Muu" which resembled a tent with neck and arm holes. It may have had its practical side, but most people want something made "just for them."

After consulting with experts and conducting surveys to evaluate our status and effectiveness as a mission, we determined we were taking too much of a shotgun approach to reach people. One broad stroke does not "fit all" nor "hit all." In other words, what appeals to men does not necessarily appeal to women or youth. And what pastors look for does not always attract laymen or women.

**I**n light of this, we decided to make some bold moves. We redesigned HEARTBEAT and reduced the number of pages. Then we proceeded to launch four new full-color "Beats" (publications) following HEARTBEAT's basic format: PASTORS'BEAT, MEN'SBEAT, WOMEN'SBEAT and YOUTHBEAT.

In the PASTORS'BEAT we seek to provide pastors "inside scoops" on the policies and progress of their denominational missions program. For example, the projected outreach into some new areas of East Asia was first reported through PASTORS'BEAT. We seek to help pastors move their churches from a position of mild or moderate belief in missions to that of vibrant, active participants in the Great Commission following the Acts 1:8 pattern. We want to challenge our leaders by demonstrating the wonderful works of God around the globe.

**W**OMEN'SBEAT attempts to help women develop a prayer focus, become personally involved with missionaries (especially the women), and sense the fulfillment of Christ's last command. Stories from God's working in the lives of national Christians connect people to missions fruitfulness. In August of 1999 we shared the history-making graduation from Bible college of Francoise, an Ivorian pastor's wife. What a heart-warming story!

Men are responsible to be God's leaders of the family. In MEN'SBEAT they are confronted with the



*These new publications are available on request.*

## "Beat"ing the Odds

By Don Robirds

God to "make disciples of all nations." Through YOUTHBEAT Free Will Baptist young people are offered avenues of adventure and service for the King. They are given concrete examples of God using young people in His great service. And they are asked to answer the question, "What role am I to play in God's great plan for this world?"

The response has been greater than we anticipated. People are signing up to receive the free publications which are published three times a year. And they are responding to God's challenges.

But what about you, *Contact* reader? Have you signed up yet? You can by writing to Foreign Missions, P.O. Box 5002, Antioch, TN 37011-5002, emailing [deborah@nafwb.org](mailto:deborah@nafwb.org) or by calling 615-731-6812. Just request the publication(s) you want to receive.

challenge to submit their personal gifts and resources to God and receive the Lord's bountiful blessings. Laymen are featured doing special service for God in various parts of the world. Men are provided opportunities to use their talents and gifts to fulfill the Lord's mandate to get the gospel to every creature.

**I**f Free Will Baptist witness is to advance in the twenty-first century as we feel God desires, we must have those who will respond to the awesome call of

### April is Foreign Missions Month

Plan your special program now.

#### REMEMBER:

God's Primary Objective = People to  
Worship Him

God's Primary Method = Acts 1:8

God's Primary Instrument = Local Church

Write for materials and information:

**Foreign Missions**

P.O. Box 5002

Antioch, TN 37011-5002



Men from five states rallied on October 9, 1999, to assist Rev. Tom Jones, home missionary and pastor of Three Rivers FWB Church in Pittsburgh, PA. The day was rainy, but the Lord provided a two-hour window of dry weather in which approximately 2,500 homes were contacted.

Brother Tom Jones reported that "Operation Saturation" contributed greatly to their church. Attendance increased, souls were saved, and the young congregation was blessed by their Free Will Baptist brothers who cared enough to assist them in sharing the gospel.

The following letter expresses the impact "Operation Saturation" had on a participating church.

*I wanted to thank Master's Men for having the vision to launch Operation Saturation. Eleven of our men went to Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, to be part of a great day of outreach and be an encouragement to Brother Tommy Jones and his family. However, when the day was over, we found that we were the ones who had been blessed!*

*I can't tell you how excited our men were when we emptied out of our van and into the neighborhoods where we went door to door. It was like an army united with one purpose in our hearts and minds. Many of the men we brought had never knocked on a door before and were nervous. But our men were fired up when they got back at the end of the day.*

*One story especially touched me. John is a young man in our church who attended Operation Saturation. Not one for public speaking, he requested to go with someone else as we went door to door. After going with one of our deacons and listening to him share with folks, he decided to talk to someone. The next door they came to, John started to speak, and the lady shut the door in his face! But John was now determined to conquer his fears and invite someone to Three Rivers FWB Church. The next time the van stopped and we headed out door to door, I watched as John took the literature and went by himself knocking on doors.*

*This story does not end there. John has a brother*

## "Operation Saturation" Report

By Tom Dooley, General Director of Master's Men

*that he and his family have been praying for to come to church and be saved. He had never attended after scores of requests. The day after Operation Saturation, John's brother showed up for service. The Lord seemed to speak to me that because of John's faithfulness in sharing the gospel to folks in Pittsburgh, he honored his efforts and drew his brother to our church the next day. My point is, God's Word will not return void, and we are just excited about what God is going to do because of Operation Saturation, not just in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, but also back here in Creston, Ohio.*

*By the way, our men now are eager to do something like this here in our community. In the weeks before Roll Call Sunday, we are going to have our own Operation Saturation, and reach every home in our area with the gospel.*

*Thank you for this wonderful opportunity. We received far more out of it than we put into it. My advice to all pastors is to bring your men to an Operation Saturation event in your area, and your men and your church will never be the same.*

*Pastor Jim McComas  
Canaan FWB Church, Creston, Ohio*

Operation Saturation was a success in every way. We mobilized men to become involved in missions. We showed them from the scriptures that they need to be men the Lord can use. We challenged them to take the event back to their local church. We encouraged them to be faithful witnesses and begin specifically praying for unsaved men that they know with the determination to personally speak to them about Christ.

The potential of Operation Saturation is tremendous. We praise the Lord for what has been accomplished and for what He will do in the future. ■

### Upcoming Master's Men Events:

Deep South Golf Tournament, Dothan, Alabama	February 17-19
National Master's Men Retreat (all men are invited)	April 27-29

Master's Men



It has happened. The year 2000 has arrived. Whatever Y2K experience you did or did not encounter, I hope you have a greater desire to make a global impact for Christ this year. WNAC's theme for 2000 is *Opportunities: a Door Ajar*.

Scripture verse is Revelation 3:8, "I know thy works: behold, I have set before thee an open door, and no man can shut it: . . ."

Look for open doors to share Christ with hurting, hopeless, dying people. The WNAC Calendar offers a variety of opportunities for women in the church as they fulfill the Great Commission in the home, church, community and around the world.

### *January: Enlistment.*

This is the time to go after the new and uninvolved women in the church and encourage them to be participants rather than observers.

### *February: Cleo Pursell Foreign Student Scholarship.*

This year WNAC voted to give scholarships to two seminary students in Côte d'Ivoire, Africa. They are Robert Houessou and Paul Amiezi.

### *March: Writing.*

Test your writing creativity and artistic ability by entering the Creative Arts Contest. Your ideas could minister to others. Categories are: art, feature articles, plays, poetry and programs.

### *April: Praying and Giving.*

Traditionally WNAC women observe a full week prior to Easter praying specifically for foreign missionaries and staff. During this time they are also collecting an offering for the Laura Belle Barnard World Missions Offering. This is an opportune time to get acquainted with the missionaries by name.

### *July: WNAC National Convention in Anaheim, California.*

Women meeting women! Worshiping, singing, praying, eating and fellowshiping together – that's a Convention.

### *August: Emphasis Month.*

You have the opportunity to accept financial responsi-

## *Opportunities Through WNAC in 2000*

By Marjorie Workman

bility for operating a National Office. Together you can support the operation of the WNAC National Office which has four full-time employees. The office provides literature and information, publishes a national magazine for FWB

women, maintains a missionary provision closet and provides programs for retreats and conventions.

### *September: National Retreat at Ridgecrest, N.C., the Dr. Mary Ruth Wisheart Loan Fund and the Rest of the Family Offering.*

The Dr. Mary Ruth Wisheart Loan Fund is a low-interest loan for students in their second year or more at Free Will Baptist Bible College in Nashville, Tennessee. The Rest of the Family Offering is for WNAC, Master's Men, Executive Office, Retirement and Insurance, National Youth Conference, FWB Foundation and the Commissions (Music, Media, Historical, Theological Integrity).

### *November: A Door Ajar for Home Missions.*

Traditionally women observe a week of prayer prior to Thanksgiving for home missionaries and staff. The Lizzie McAdams Offering is received and becomes part of the Benjamin Randall Offering for Home Missions. In praying for missions, women are also praying for opportunities to personally witness to others.

### *December: Educational Opportunity.*

Women support the Paul Kettelman Memorial Offering for Free Will Baptist Bible College.

### *Other Doors Ajar.*

**Organ Fund:** WNAC women are working together to help purchase a pipe organ for Free Will Baptist Bible College. We are one-third of the way toward the projected goal of \$32,000. Take the opportunity to be a part of this musical challenge.

**Missionary Provision Closet:** The provision closet offers you an opportunity to have fun and help save our home and foreign missionaries thousands of dollars at the same time. The provision closet consists of household items such as small appliances, linens, dishes and cookware for the missionaries. You may send actual items, gift certificates or money.

Look for the door ajar. Minister through the opportunities available with WNAC. Write to WNAC at P. O. Box 5002, Antioch, TN 37011-5002 for more information on any of these opportunities. ■

Women Nationally



Active for Christ



Garnett Reid

## My Personal Savior

**A** wise preacher once told me that the real subject of every sermon, whether explicit or implied, is Jesus Christ. He is the ultimate issue of life; everything we are, everything we think or do finds its significance as it relates to Him. The preacher was right on target with what the Bible says (see, for example, Eph. 1:7-12; Col. 1:14-20; and 3:1-11), for Christ is the very heart of the gospel we believe.

I must confess, however, that as one who has preached, taught and written about Jesus for all of my adult life, I face a dilemma. On the one hand, I gladly acknowledge that my entire life and ministry are, in the final analysis, about Him and for Him. The greatest compliment I can imagine someone ever paying me would be to say, "You have made too much of Jesus."

Yet on the other hand, I admit a great sense of inadequacy regarding what I say and write about Him. No matter how hard one tries, human efforts seem so lame and pitiful when it comes to glorifying the One whose perfections are limitless.

I feel like a second grader trying to describe a Beethoven symphony. What comforts me, though, is the knowledge that God is pleased with

our feeble though sincere attempts to make much of His Son. Grace makes up the difference.

Much religious literature over the past 20 years has focused on who Jesus is and why He came. Some works have dealt fairly with the evidence, others have not. For example, since 1985 a group of 74 critical "scholars" have met twice a year to offer their opinion on how much of the Gospel record about Jesus is historical. Though their decisions often change from one meeting to the next, this "Jesus Seminar" consistently rejects some 80% of what the four evangelists report Jesus said.

Putting aside these and similar ravings, my concern is that in all of the deliberations about evidences and history *we stand in danger of failing to see Jesus as a real person*. Mind you, I'm not discounting the value of apologetics and the defense of the gospels as trustworthy. Instead, I simply want to present another side—one sorely needed, it seems to me—of any discussion about the Lord. My focus is more pastoral than polemical.

In this series of Bible studies, we will explore the lives Jesus personally impacted during His earthly ministry. My friend and teacher Ralph Hampton says that Jesus' life always intersected

other lives at the point of human need.

During the next few months we will travel to these particular places where the Good Shepherd tends His sheep. We will sit along the dusty roads of Palestine and listen to His words; we'll watch over the shoulders of Jesus' close friends as He repairs broken bodies and heals wounded hearts. Our goal is to see the Savior as He makes the difference, person-to-person, in the lives of those He met.

Several years ago the German critic Rudolph Bultmann claimed that the gospel of John was of no importance in presenting the personality of Jesus. C. S. Lewis' reply is a classic:

So there is no personality of our Lord presented in the New Testament. Through what strange process has this learned German gone in order to make himself blind to what all men except him see? What evidence have we that he would recognize a personality if it were there? If anything whatever is common to all believers, and even to many unbelievers, it is the sense that in the Gospels they have met a personality.

That person is Jesus the Messiah. Next month we begin with the fascinating relationship between Jesus and John the Baptist. ■



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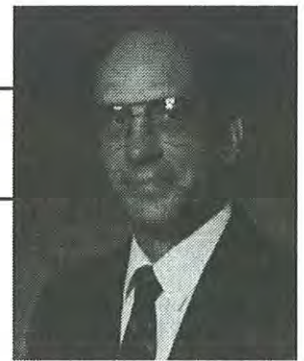
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# ESPECIALLY FOR YOUNG PREACHERS



Dennis Wiggs

## "Should a Young Preacher Have a Will?"

**A** will is a legal document. The written record expresses a person's personal desires and plans for earthly possessions. The average young preacher declares, "I don't have enough to get a will!" Or, he states, "I'm afraid to get a will. I may die the next day."

That was my opinion until my brother-in-law, John S. Craft, died at age 39 in a single-vehicle accident. As soon as my wife and I got back home, we immediately began to prepare our financial affairs in case of our deaths. One of those things that I had put off was drawing up a will, which we did soon in an attorney's office.

Death did not claim us the day after we signed the papers, but my wife and I did have a greater peace of mind. Especially did we feel better about our five children's living conditions if both of us died at the same time.

### *Necessity of a Will*

Young preacher, you may possess more than you realize. Maybe two vehicles, a home, a life insurance policy or two, an inheritance, furniture, savings, investments—it adds up. A will declares that the living spouse will receive all the possessions of the deceased spouse without any legal difficulties. Surely the young preacher wants to be assured of this guarantee.

### *Wisdom of a Will*

Every young couple with young children should have a will to provide for the care of the children in the event both of them die at the same time. Or, if one parent dies in an accident and the other is in a coma in the hospital. A properly written will guarantees placement of the children where the couple wants them to go.

In our first will, my wife and I stated that we wanted all five of our chil-

dren to be placed in the same children's home so that they would not be separated. Thankfully, that never became necessary.

### *Executor of the Will*

In the event of the death of both parents simultaneously, it is wise to declare an executor in the will. The executor will be responsible to file all necessary forms, pay all expenses and make proper distributions. A bank officer, a trusted friend, or a child could serve in this capacity.

The young preacher may think he is going to live almost to 100 but he may not. It is better to plan as if an executor will be needed.

### *Provisions in a Will*

If the young preacher wants to leave 10% to his church after his estate is settled, the will would be an ideal document to assure this plan. If personal possessions with sentimental value need to be passed on to certain children, the will could accomplish this. Certain statements could be made. For example, I understand that Patrick Henry declared the testimony of his conversion in his will.

### *Legality of a Will*

Should a computer program be purchased? Can one write his own will? It is possible to draft a will without an attorney, but there is a tremendous risk in doing so. I recommend spending a few dollars for peace of mind.

Also, if a move to another state becomes necessary, it may be wise to determine if it is required by law to update the will. Considering the importance of this document, it is most important that every aspect of the will be completely legal and executable.

### *Greatest Problem*

Procrastination. Very few people die while sitting in an attorney's office signing a will. The young preacher needs to deal with this fear. Make an appointment today with the legal advisor. When an estate is in order, an emotional load disappears. Besides, a family may be saved from later regret and hardship. ■

E-mail: [denniswiggs@always-online.com](mailto:denniswiggs@always-online.com)

**COMING  
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▶ **THE ONE-EYED  
GENERAL**

▶ **WEAPONS OF  
LEARNING**

▶ **TEACH OLD  
CHURCH BUILD-  
INGS NEW TRICKS**

▶ **10 WAYS TO IN-  
PROVE YOUR  
WRITING**

▶ **SIN OF ANGER**

# YOUTH UPDATE

T&P2



Perhaps you've heard of Truth & Peace or even the National Youth Conference, but what about T&P2?

T&P2 is a junior-high student leadership conference, designed just for 6th, 7th, 8th and 9th grade Free Will Baptist students. The extended weekend program will challenge students to press toward the goals that Christ has for them.

First they'll be equipped with the proper running gear (Bible study, prayer, devotions, quiet time, etc.). The next step is identifying the obstacles along the running path, and finally to set out on the marathon of life.

Spread throughout the conference will be numerous opportunities to create new friendships, mold teams into fine-tuned machines, and laugh a lot.

Using powerful, intense speakers and challenging activities, we'll help your junior-higher to see that they can accomplish their goals and Christ's too!

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March 9-12  
Camp Hope  
Ewing, Ill.

March 16-19  
The Oaks  
Greeneville, Tenn.

March 30-April 2  
Camp Beaverfork  
Conway, Ark.

**Conference Registration is only \$79. Call 1-800-877-7030 for a brochure.**

Conducted by the Youth Ministries Division.



Thomas Marberry

## “Ezekiel” in *The NIV Application Commentary*

By Iain M. Duguid

(Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1999, hardback, 568 pp., \$24.99).

**D**r. Duguid holds a Ph.D. from Cambridge University. He serves as associate professor of Old Testament at Westminster Theological Seminary in California. He has devoted a considerable portion of his academic career to the study of Ezekiel.

Ezekiel is one of the least understood, most often misunderstood, and generally overlooked books in the Bible. Most modern Christians have little acquaintance with the book and little understanding of its message for them. This author offers a distinctly Christian interpretation of this difficult book. One of his major goals is to make the book more understandable and relevant to modern Christians.

Few major commentaries on Ezekiel have been written in recent years, and this commentary is unique in several ways. First, it is unique in its historical interest. The author notes that “The Book of Ezekiel was written for a particular moment in time.” Unlike some other prophetic writings, Ezekiel gives us precise dates that enable us to place the book in its specific historical context. It was written to a group of Jewish exiles living near the Kebar River in Babylonia.

As the author interprets the various sections in the book of Ezekiel, he always places the section in its historical context. He asks how these Jewish exiles would have understood and used each section. As Duguid argues, “When the text is allowed to speak for itself, it conveys a coherent and consistent worldview that addresses the situation of those exiled from Judah in the sixth century B.C.”

The author defends a quite traditional view of the date and authorship of Ezekiel. He recognizes that some limited editorial activity may have taken place after the time of Ezekiel, but he considers the book to be the work

of Ezekiel himself. It is not a collection of different prophetic writings from different time periods as many critical scholars have argued.

This commentary is also unique in its practical emphasis. For Duguid, the book is not just a collection of predictions about the future. It contains much practical instruction that the church today needs to hear and heed. The author’s treatment of chapters 38 and 39 illustrates this emphasis.

Most commentators see chapters 38 and 39 as a detailed prediction of future events. Much attention is devoted to identifying Gog, Magog and other symbols that occur in these chapters. This commentary makes no attempt to identify Gog with any historical figure. Gog is “a fear-inducing creature of cosmic proportions.”

The primary purpose of the passage is not to give a detailed prediction of the end times. This passage is “a word of encouragement to all the saints of all times that no matter what the forces of evil may do, God’s purpose and victory stand secure.” This author consistently emphasizes how the church today can put the lessons of the Book of Ezekiel to practice in its everyday life.

This commentary is also unique in its Christocentric approach to Old Testament prophecy. The entire book of Ezekiel points forward to Jesus Christ and His ministry in many different ways. The author’s treatment of chapters 40-48 illustrates this Christian emphasis. Many interpreters see these chapters as a rather detailed description of the future millennial temple in Jerusalem.

Duguid rejects this type of interpretation. He writes, “Christ is the fulfillment of Ezekiel’s temple for Christ himself is the new temple. He is the dwelling of God among humankind, the glory of God made manifest . . . .”

The author of this commentary sees Jesus Christ as the fulfillment of the promises made to the children of Israel in the Book of Ezekiel.

In some respects this is a quite traditional commentary. The author defends a high view of the inspiration and authority of the Bible. He defends a grammatical and historical interpretation of the meaning of the text.

In other respects, however, it is quite non-traditional. The author approaches the study of the text from two perspectives. He examines the book in order to determine what it meant to those Jewish exiles that first received it. He also examines the book from a distinctively Christian perspective. It interprets the message of Ezekiel in light of the life, death, burial and resurrection of Jesus Christ.

This commentary is a refreshing piece of scholarship written by a knowledgeable writer in the Reformed tradition. It deserves a place on your bookshelf. ■



Jack Williams

## What A Century!

**W**hen the 19th century ended, northern Free Will Baptists rushed to dismantle their organization that had flourished since 1780, to depart from their uniqueness as a movement and merge with other Baptists. It was a confusing, often frustrating time in our history that's still a puzzle with missing pieces.

Now, 100 years later, we're back taking care of business . . . planting churches, printing literature, training Christian workers, winning the lost.

**What a century!** On October 5, 1911, the Randall movement's 21-member Conference Board signed documents transferring to the Northern Baptist Convention all invested funds and accumulated property that Benjamin Randall's followers had spent 130 years gathering.

That day we lost (gave away) 60,000 members, 600 churches, six colleges and everything on all mission fields. What a disaster.

But 24 years and one month later on November 5, 1935, at Cofer's Chapel FWB Church in Nashville, Tennessee, the Southern and Western Free Wills and the remnants of the Northern Free Wills met to organize the National Association. What a renaissance.

Some 80,000-members strong, the 1,100 churches of the new National Association were scattered from North Carolina to Texas, from Alabama to Nebraska with no mission program, no training institutions, no literature program and a nation-wide depression. Within six years, the fledgling denomination would send her sons to the far-flung battlefields of World War II while their fathers built churches at home.

The denomination caught the technology wave and rode it to the 21st century. Today, we stand on the cusp of our finest hour.

**What a century!** The first decade of the 20th century we tried to com-

mit denominational suicide under the guise of fulfilling Jesus' prayer in John 17, "that they may all be one." The second decade we almost succeeded when the Randall movement disappeared in merger mania.

But the third and fourth decades we started the long haul back from the brink of extinction with a fire in the bellies of the founding fathers and a dream that we could do more together.

During the fifth and sixth decades, we built 1,000 new churches and added 100,000 converts. We came back from the war and went back to school. We began printing literature and shipping it by the carloads. We caught ships and planes to Africa, to Japan, to India, to South America . . . this time carrying the gospel.

**What a century!** Then came the 30-Year-War when brother went to theological and cultural war with brother. During the seventh, eighth and ninth decades, we turned inward and fought each other as we had fought the forces of darkness. We forgot who was the enemy and turned our considerable energies against each other. We ignored the brotherly covenant that bound us together.

We ripped ourselves apart at state and national meetings with harsh words, hot editorials and bitter resolutions. We pointed fingers at liberals nobody could find. We measured long hair on the brothers and short skirts on the sisters. We drew lines in the sand warning about the evils of cooperative evangelism...and then became so suspicious of each other that the work in many areas fractured, because we no longer trusted each other.

Stirred by outsiders, we debated second-degree separation. We nearly came to blows over grape juice, bus evangelism, the backslider, Bible versions and the B-1 Bomber. We were not nice to each other.

**What a century!** But in the 10th decade we began to dream again, to build again, to change again. A new generation declared an armistice in the 30-Year-War and beat their swords into plowshares.

The 21st century holds the brightest promise for Free Will Baptists since the days of Paul Palmer and Benjamin Randall. A new college campus will soon rise off I-24 just a few miles down the road. New mission fields are opening in Korea, China, Russia and all over Asia. Doors closed to the gospel during the 20th century are swinging open.

New leadership is taking hold at local, state and national levels. They were not casualties of the 30-Year-War. They see the sunrise, not suspicion and pessimism. Who are these new leaders? God bless them—they're our own children!

They sat in our Sunday Schools, watched us conduct the Lord's business in our meetings and graduated from our colleges. They set their sails by the sure compass of the Almighty.

Look around. They're everywhere. They're in their 20s and 30s, some in their 40s and 50s. They're ready to take the reins of responsibility. They believe they can pay the bills and build a better future. Their motive is holy, their faith strong, their vision contagious.

**What a century!** It began in the dying years, muscled to the growing and building years, crystalized in the fighting years and culminated in the dreaming years.

I read about the dying decade in old books. I talked to those sun-crowned heroes who powered the building and growing decades. Like many of you, I survived the fighting decades with a few scars of my own. I can hardly wait to see what God does through Free Will Baptists as new hands touch the helm in the 21st century.

What a century! ■

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