Official Publication of the National Association of Free Will Baptists

April 2000

Better Public Relations
"Do You Remember Me?"
Teen Suicide
Sin of Pride
Five Things I Gave Up

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APRIL 2000

VOLUME 47, NO. 4

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THE SECRETARY SPEAKS



Melvin Worthington

We Are Witnesses

ne of the most important days celebrated by Christians is Easter. Each year multitudes attend church who do not attend at any other time. Many businesses close in observance of this celebration. The resurrection of Jesus Christ is the central truth of Christianity. It is the theme of the preaching in the New Testament. Christians worship on Sunday—the first day of the week—to acknowledge and affirm the resurrection of Jesus.

Christians are Christ's witnesses in this world.

The Term

The term means to be a witness, to bear witness, to testify, give testimony, a martyr or witness. Literally, it refers to one who remembers, one who has information or knowledge of anything, and hence, one who can give information, bring to light or confirm anything.

Christians have the responsibility of being something and doing something. Paul declared, "Having therefore obtained help of God, I continue unto this day, witnessing both to small and great, saying none other things than those which the prophets and Moses did say should come" (Acts 26:22).

Acts declares, "But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth" (Acts 1:8).

The Task

As Christ's witnesses we have the

responsibility of demonstrating and declaring the *regenerating power of God.* Our conversion experience transformed our lives. We became new creatures in Christ. Our lives will evidence the transforming power of the Christ. We also have a responsibility to declare to others how God's regenerating power can change their lives.

As Christ's witnesses, we have the responsibility of demonstrating and declaring the *redemptive power of God*. Christ's death, burial and resurrection provides redemption for all. All humans have sinned and come short of the glory of God. The wages of sin is death—eternal separation from God. God's provision for redemption is Christ's work on the cross.

As Christ's witnesses, we have the responsibility of demonstrating and declaring the *reconciling power of God.* Following the fall of man in Genesis 3, man and God have been separated. All of Adam's descendants have been born with a depraved nature. Through the work of Christ on the cross, provision was made for man and God to be reconciled. As His witnesses, we demonstrate and declare this truth.

The Secretary's Schedule April 2000

- 3-6 IFOFWBC Executive Committee Antioch, TN
- 6-8 New Mexico District Association
- 10-11 Convention Site Inspection Memphis, TN

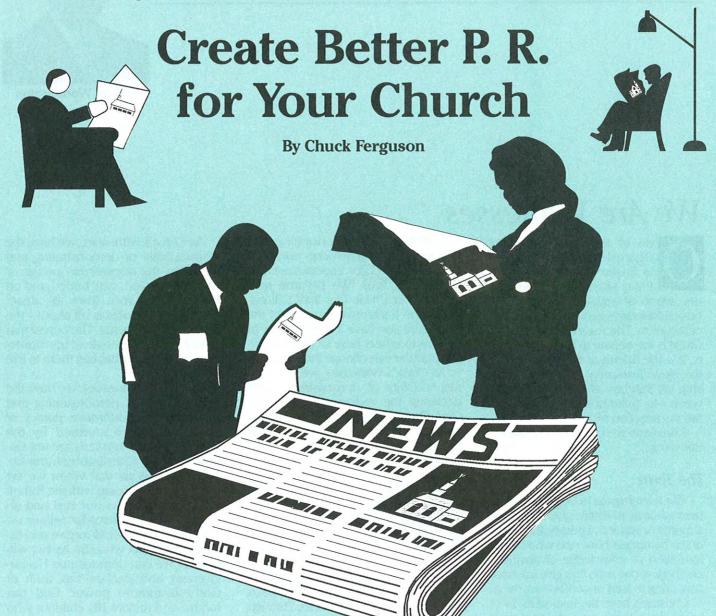
As Christ's witnesses, we have the responsibility of demonstrating and declaring the *resurrection power of God.* Christ died, was buried and on the third day rose from the dead. That is what Easter is all about—the resurrection of Jesus. The power that raised Him from the dead transforms all who believe, enabling them to live for the Lord.

As Christ's witnesses, we have the responsibility of demonstrating and declaring the *restorative power of God*. Though transformed by the power of God, Christians are not sinless. At times, Christians commit sin. John reminds us that when we sin we have an advocate with the Father.

We can confess our sins and allow the blood of Jesus to cleanse us. God has the power to forgive and restore Christians who sin. As His witnesses, we can demonstrate His forgiveness and declare this truth of God's restorative power. God can forgive and restore His children who repent of their sin and seek forgiveness and restoration.

The Territory

God places His witnesses in Jerusalem, Judea, Samaria and the uttermost part of the earth. We are to be witnesses where God places us. As His witnesses, we must be a witness by our deportment, our changed, consecrated and clean lives. We must also declare the regenerating, redemptive, reconciling, resurrecting and restorative power of the living God. That is what Easter is all about. We are His witnesses.



any churches rarely have their name or congregational functions published in local newspapers although the desire for publicity might be present. But some seem to have endless access to media coverage and might appear to either own a part of the newspaper or have a massive advertising budget.

However, neither budget or ownership is the key to free publicity.

The key is to develop a method of providing newsworthy material that not only meets the church's need for publicity but also fulfills the media's criteria for use of information.

In short, the best way to get an article printed is to give it to the editor in usable form and meet some basic journalistic standards.

Be Concise

Editors love "briefs" which can be dropped into a blank space on a page during composition. It means they don't have to search for something and, more importantly, do not have to do the work at deadline time. The same is true for broadcast journalists with one major exception—the material needs to be even more to the point because broadcasters

use shorter amounts of information than print reporters.

Broadcasters like briefs to use as public service announcements. Such activity looks good on a radio station's application for license renewal but, to be used, these items should follow accepted format.

So what is journalistically acceptable? And how do most of our pastors and church people who are not professional writers deal with the need?

Be Precise

News items are of no use to the public unless they present informa-

tion that somebody wants or needs. In a nutshell, every news article must answer the following questions, commonly called the five Ws of journalism, if it has any chance of being a communication piece:

* Who is sponsoring an event or who did something worthy of others

reading about it?

* What is the event or reason for offering information to the public?

* When will the event be held or when was it accomplished?

* Where will the meeting or program occur?

* Why is it important enough to

mention to the public?

All of those ingredients need not be mentioned in the first sentence or paragraph of a proposed news piece, but there is another key that figures into the lock on a reader's mind: how should the article be worded in order to get someone to read more than just the first several words?

Be Practical

Most church members are not news reporters and the editor of the local newspaper might not be a member of the congregation. But every church has someone who can put together the basic format and satisfy both the need for publicity and the requirement for presentable easy-to-use items.

First, that person should cultivate a relationship with someone on the newspaper staff or at the local radio or television station. It would also be a good idea to invite the media representative to church to hear the gospel. Reporters and editors need salvation, too!

Second, learn what deadlines are. News items are not just dropped off and used. Deadlines are rules. Without deadlines, nothing gets printed.

Planning is the plan.

Your church knows about the revival, for example, long before fliers are printed and visitation teams hit the streets. When the revival (or any other event) is set, that's the time for publicity planning to begin. A visit to the news media with a prepared "news release" is in order—written in concise language. A well-placed word of appreciation for use of the item is also a good idea. A phone number which the reporter/editor can call for additional information or clarification is a must.

Be Creative

Aside from providing editors with a ready supply of news briefs, how do some churches maintain a constant presence in the news media without paying for very expensive advertising? In largely populated areas, it is more difficult to get news briefs published because of competition for such space. But your church, large or small, can successfully compete.

Church groups do something almost every week that could—if thought about a little—be made into a news item and also serve as a ministry extension of the church.

For example, the ladies auxiliary meets on the first Tuesday night of each month. But the community doesn't know or perhaps even care what happens in the meeting. Someone might care a great deal, though, about the mission work if it was explained how a missionary couple prepares for the field . . . how they live in societies with different languages and customs. ... what they did to prepare for such an outreach . . . even why they are at the local church (back to the gospel message again). How about offering an interview with the missionary on his/her next leave?

The community might also want to read about the foreign-land family that had a special need met by a missionary—especially if that missionary is speaking Friday night at your church. The intent is to take the usual and customary, add a little different twist, blend a grabber to snag the media's interest, and present the gospel at the same time.

One of the growing events at some larger churches on Wednesday nights is to have a "time of fellowship" where groups meet in different sections of the church facilities—a fellowship supper for one group... a special speaker for the youth... an informative presentation about an upcoming community event for interested adults. Certainly, we must be careful to always use God's Word, have a time of prayer and most definitely invite people to Christ, but an occasional special situation might be added with great interest.

And the news media might even want to attend.

The key to getting the article published is to answer those five Ws—

Who, What, When, Where, Why.

Even the gospel fits into them: Jesus; the Savior; 2,000 years ago died for all our sins; on Calvary; because He is not willing that any should perish!

Take those five Ws, write your news article, give it to the news media, mix it with proper prayer, sow the Word along the way, and you'll see the information often published and the gospel furthered in yet another way.



Reverend Charles (Chuck) Ferguson of Pikeville, Kentucky, pastors Tom's Creek Free Will Baptist Church at Ivel. The West Virginia native has a journalism degree from Marshall University, worked for several years as a newspaper reporter and editor in West Virginia and Florida, and is corporate communications specialist for American Electric Power.



A prisoner comes to chapel

"Remember Me?"

By Doug Lance



very once in a while, God gives us a glimpse of what Heaven will be like and the joy we will experience in eternity. That happened to me recently.

As a volunteer assistant to the chaplain at the state prison in Dallas, North Carolina, I go every third Sunday morning and preach the message to inmates at the facility. It was there amid the fences and razor wire in the little chapel building that God chose to demonstrate to everyone present one of the greatest joys we will share in Heaven.

That cold, clear, January morning found me at the side door of the prison chapel, greeting inmates as they came from the dormitories. For five years it has been my custom to greet each man with a handshake, a smile and a "God bless you." I have grown to know many of these men and their families.

Christians tend to stick together and form an extended family within the

confines of the fences. They may come from different backgrounds; they may have been convicted of different crimes, (everything from murder to shoplifting); but Jesus binds them all together into a brotherhood of love to worship and praise in the little chapel.

On this particular Sunday, I recognized everyone who came in except for one young man. From the moment he stepped into the chapel, he began staring at me. We began the service with prayer and the song leader led us in some hymns. All during the music, this young man continued to stare at me.

I was concerned because I work in the state court system, and sometimes, men are placed in prison as a consequence of my actions. I wondered if this was one of those men, placed here as a direct result of my work. Other men in similar situations had confronted me in the past at the prison. God had always worked it out for good. I began to pray that God

would do the same this time.

After the music, we have a time of testimony and praise. I told the men, "If you want to brag on Jesus, now is the time. We don't want to give the devil any credit, but if the Lord has blessed you and you want to testify, then stand up now."

Immediately, the young man who had been staring at me stood up. He looked at me as I stood in the pulpit and asked, "Don't you work at the courthouse?"

"Yes," I replied, a little shaken by the question.

"Do you remember me?" he asked. There was no anger in his voice but a sort of nervousness.

"I'm sorry, but no I don't," I replied. He looked around the room at the other men who now focused eyes and ears on him. After a few moments, he began to speak to them as a group.

"Last year I was in court and was sentenced to prison. Deputies put me in handcuffs and leg shackles and led me to the elevator. I was upset and crying. I thought my whole world had come to an end. When the elevator doors opened, a man was standing inside.

"My head hung down and tears were rolling, when I heard him ask me what was wrong. I told him what had happened and he told me that it wasn't the end of the world. He said, 'There's always hope in Jesus Christ. If you seek Him, He will find you and everything will be okay."

A loud, "amen," echoed back and forth across the aisle from row to row

as the men agreed.

The young man now looked straight ahead and began talking directly to me. "It was you in the elevator. When I left the elevator, what you had said to me was in my head. They took me to prison for processing. When I got there I was placed in isolation for 15 days. I couldn't get what you said out of my mind."

Tears now flowed down his cheeks and down mine. He continued speaking in a quivering yet strong voice, "The only thing I could have while I was in isolation was a Bible. I began to read that Bible as soon as I got it. Not long after I began reading, I prayed and asked Jesus Christ to forgive me and to be my Savior.

"I didn't know your name, but I

knew I would never forget you. And now God has brought me here so that I could have an opportunity to thank you."

The young man stepped into the aisle and ran up to the pulpit. He grabbed me and hugged me as hard as he could. I felt joy in my heart like I had just been blessed in a thousand ways. Applause broke out in the chapel. The men all stood up. They clapped their hands and praised God. There were shouts of joy and praise. There were no dry eyes in that little chapel.

When everyone was seated again, I wiped the tears from my eyes and looked at the men seated before me. "This is something like what we will experience in Heaven. We will be walking along enjoying what God has prepared for us, when a stranger will come up to us and ask if we remember him. There will be people from other countries and lands that will know us because we gave money to missionaries who led them to Christ.

"There will be people we quoted scripture to who seemed hard or unconcerned, but later the Holy Spirit dealt with their hearts and they remembered the scripture and accepted Christ. And, yes, there will be those we comforted and simply spoke to in the name of Jesus, those who after hearing His name found hope, searched for

Him and were saved. We will never know how many people we have affected until we reach the other side. Then we will praise God and shout, just like we have today. We will give all the glory and honor to Jesus, just like we did today. All this will happen over there, but today, I believe God let us share in His joy a little early."

After the service, the young man came up to me at the door and hugged me again. "You probably saved my life." he said.

I grinned and said, "I still don't remember that day. I speak to so many people in those situations . . . "

He interrupted me, "It doesn't matter if you remember me or not. I praise God for you and I will never forget you."

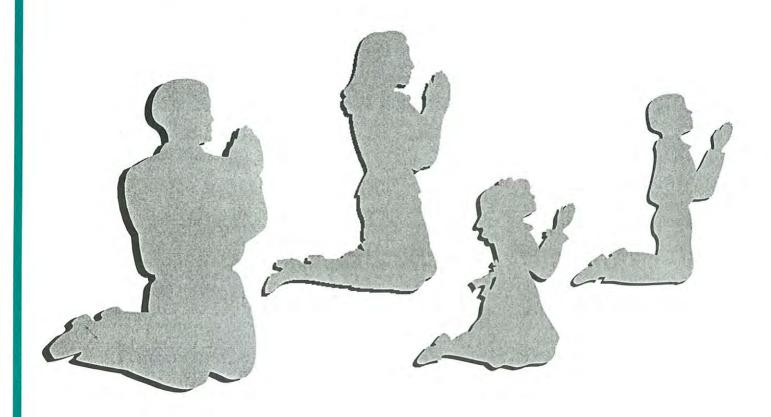


ABOUT THE WRITER: Doug Lance is a member of Goshen Free Will Baptist Church in Mount Holly, North Carolina.

| LOCAL CHURCH DELEGATE CARD —2000— | | | | | |
|---|--|--|--|--|--|
| THIS CERTIFIES THAT | | | | | |
| is a duly authorized delegate to the National Association of Free Will Baptists | | | | | |
| fromFWB Church, | | | | | |
| | | | | | |
| Signed (City) (State) (District Association) | | | | | |
| (Pastor) (Church Clerk) | | | | | |
| IMPORTANT: This card properly signed and accompanied by a \$50 registration fee entitles a local church delegate to register for voting privileges. Only one delegate allowed per church. | | | | | |

Five Elements of Prayer

By Darrell Holley



uring my first year of teaching I discovered a little book by C. S. Lewis titled Letters to Malcolm: Chiefly on Prayer. My thoughts had been on prayer—you ought to think about prayer in your first year of teaching—and I found the book helpful. Now there are some things in that book that I don't agree with—as there are in nearly all merely human works.

C. S. Lewis was an Anglican, an Episcopalian, and sometimes dangerously close to Romanist attitudes on prayer—at least much too close for my Free Will Baptist tastes. But I did discover an idea in Lewis' wise little book that helped me tremendously.

When we read the Lord's Prayer, we immediately recognize that it falls into several groups of petitions. The Roman and Lutheran churches say there are seven petitions. The Greek and Reformed churches say there are six. I'm a rebellious Baptist, and I

say there are five.

I would put them into these five groups: (1) "Our Father, which art in heaven, hallowed be thy name." (2) "Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven." (3) Give us this day our daily bread." (4) And forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us." (5) And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil."

Getting Started

The idea that I got from Lewis was to use these groupings as the basis of my prayers. He uses the idea of what he calls "festoons" or "garlands." Just as you may hang up a garland of holly and ivy over the mantle at Christmastime, just so we can hang our own personal petitions onto these five general petitions.

I suggest a method much like this: kneeling for prayer (I'll say more about this posture in a minute), first pray the entire Lord's Prayer—which version you use is really not that relevant. Free Will Baptists, at least as far back as I can tell, have usually used the version with the word *trespasses*, but if you prefer *sins* or *debts*, use those versions.

Then go back and pray the different petitions individually, hanging your own garland of prayer onto the petition. For example, you might pray, "Our Father, which art in heaven, hallowed be thy name." Then you might spend time reverencing, hallowing the Lord's name, giving Him your praise for His character and works.

Getting Real

Then you pray, "Give us this day our daily bread." This is encouraging, for God recognizes that all our needs are not sweet, mystical, spiritual needs. We also need food and shelter, money for tuition, clothes for the ba-

by, a new water heater, or a good used car. Express yourself. The Lord wants you to want Him to help you.

Then, "And forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us." At this point we have to face hard realities. Unfortunately, not one of us—if we are honest—can go to our beds at night with a clear conscience. We offend "in thought, word, and deed" every day. We need forgiveness. And we also need to forgive others.

Confess to the Lord your anger and disappointment at the actions of others. If you group it with your pleas for forgiveness, you may find yourself more sinning than sinned against, to turn around King Lear's words.

Finally, "And lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil." We pray not just to avoid temptations to sin, though we should pray for that kind of grace. But also for deliverance from trials and all dangers. It's proper to pray for protection of your family and your property, for deliverance of your kin and friends and even your enemies.

However, with this prayer, as with the earlier request for "our daily bread," we must always remember to pray—as our Lord Himself did—"if it be thy will." We need to pray, not just to inform God—the Almighty knows our needs before we ask—but we pray to put ourselves, by our own free will, into submission to the will of God.

The Lord has promised to answer our prayers. But we have to remember, consciously to remember that "No" is just as much an answer as "Yes." Tennyson wrote, "Our wills are ours, we know not how; our wills are ours, to make them thine."

After completing the five petitions, you can repeat the Lord's Prayer again, slowly, thinking very intently but very briefly about each petition.

I don't know if this is exactly what our Lord meant when He said, "After this manner prayer ye" in His "Sermon on the Mount" or when He gave this prayer to the disciples in response to their request "Lord, teach us to pray." But this seems to me to be a good practice.

What About Kneeling?

Obviously, the posture of the body in prayer is not nearly as important as the posture of the soul. Some of my most piteous, most impassioned prayers have been given in non-kneeling positions: for instance, like bouncing around in a car as it went off an icy road into a ditch.

But on the other hand, we have numerous scriptural examples of people kneeling in prayer and 2000 years of Christian practice to recommend it. When I was a boy, my family knelt together every evening for prayers. Our Free Will Baptist ancestors used to kneel together frequently in public prayer. It's good for the body to learn that discipline.

But, as C. S. Lewis says, "A concentrated mind and sitting body make for better prayer than a kneeling body and a mind half asleep." When should you or your family have your devotional hour? My family had theirs in the early evening. I remember reading in Corrie Ten Boom's wonderful book *The Hiding Place* how her family gathered at the table after breakfast each morning for scripture reading and prayer—and they included their hired help and, later, the Jews they were hiding from the Nazis.

Whenever you do it, do it regularly and devoutly. Don't make a big show about it, just make it a normal part of a normal, balanced Christian life.

Let me give a large disclaimer. By choosing this subject I don't mean to imply at all that I am an expert prayer, or even that I really have a handle on this art of prayer (and it is an art). I'm still very much a freshman in the school of prayer. But, in this as in all things, practice makes perfect—or, if not perfect, at least better.



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.

WNAC LOCAL DELEGATE CARD —2000—

| | 2000 | |
|---|-------------------------------|--|
| THIS CERTIFIES | S THAT | |
| is a duly authori the | zed delegate to the WNAC Conv | ention of Free Will Baptists from women's group |
| of | (Group Name) | Free Will Baptist Church |
| | (Church Name) | 1100 Will Dupital Charles |
| Signed | (Church Address) | |
| | Coordinator) | (Local Secretary) |
| A second | | |

IMPORTANT: This card properly signed and accompanied by a \$5 registration fee entitles a local delegate to register for voting privileges in the WNAC convention. Only one delegate allowed per church.

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

The Sin of Pride

By Kevin Riggs¹



n June 7, 1998, on a country road 100 miles northeast of Houston, Texas, three men dragged 49-year-old James Byrd, Jr., three miles to his death. The three men were white—one a self-proclaimed white supremacist. Mr. Byrd was black, the only reason given for the horrendous crime. In his closing argument, prosecuting attorney Pat Hardy described the three men as "robed riders coming straight out of hell."

Few people would disagree with that description. The law calls this a

"hate crime," but where does such hate come from? How can one person hate another person, whom they have never met, simply because their color is different? If the seven deadly sins are the root of all evil, what is the root of such an inhuman act?

The root of this monstrous deed was pride. The perpetrators believed their color made them superior to another human being. What an evil mentality. What an arrogance, so great it causes one person to see another as lower than animals.

I do see the ugly side of pride in my

life. I am tempted with pride each time someone tells me how much they appreciate my ministry. Even when someone criticizes me, pride rears its ugly head and whispers in my ear, "They don't know what they are talking about. No one could do as good a job pastoring this church as you have done."

Pride deceives me into believing I deserve a fat raise. Pride convinces me I am the smartest and hardest-working person around. Pride tells me the church would not survive without me.

If I am not careful, pride will tempt

me to think all my good deeds will make God smile on me. If I keep up the good work, pride tells me, I will get a bigger slice of Heaven (or at least a shinier crown) than everyone else.

Such thoughts convict me and show me I am no better than the Pharisee who prayed, "God, I thank thee, that I am not as other men are . . . or even as this publican" (Luke 18:11). Instead, my prayer should be, "God be merciful to me a sinner" (Luke 18:13).

Mother of all Sins

Pride is the deadliest of the seven deadly sins.² C. S. Lewis said it was pride which made the devil the devil.³ The Bible records Lucifer's fall in Isaiah 14:12-15, and it says the reason for his demise was "I problems."

Not only did pride make the devil the devil, it was pride that caused Adam and Eve to fall, and tumbled all mankind into sin. The Tempter said to Eve in the Garden, "For God doth know that in the day ye eat thereof, then your eyes shall be opened, and ye shall be as gods, knowing good and evil" (Gen. 3:5).

How arrogant for anyone to think they can be like God! Yet every time I sin, at that moment, I am saying, "God, I know more than You. I don't need You. I can be just like You, deciding what is good and evil."

Pride is the "lie" Paul refers to in Romans 1:25. C. S. Lewis best defined pride as "the complete anti-God state of mind."

Dangers of Pride

Why is pride dangerous? One reason is because pride keeps me from God. The Bible tell me, "God resisteth the proud, but giveth grace unto the humble" (Jas. 4:6). My pride keeps me from being humble, and it keeps me from repenting of my sins, asking God's forgiveness.

James writes, "Humble yourselves in the sight of the Lord, and he shall lift you up" (Jas. 4:10). Pride also ruins relationships. I don't like to be around people who are full of themselves, and I am sure people don't like to be around me when "me" is all I talk about.

Second, pride keeps me from loving like Jesus loves and forgiving like God forgives. Pride keeps me from apologizing when I have done someone wrong and forgiving when I have been wronged by someone. Pride keeps me from putting the other person first, and it gives me permission to run roughshod over anyone who gets in my way.

Pride causes arguments in the home, in the work place, at school and at church. The proud person has few friends because all he cares about is himself.

Third, when I am filled with pride I exaggerate my importance, and that is dangerous. Paul warns me that I am not to think more highly of myself than I ought (Rom. 12:3). I need to remember "Pride goeth before destruction, and an haughty spirit before a fall" (Prov. 16:18). A wise person once said⁵ "Don't let your pride get inflated, you may have to swallow it someday."

A fourth reason pride is dangerous is because it perverts motives. There is a great temptation to do right things for wrong reasons. This is an incredibly dangerous temptation, because no one but me ever knows my true motivation. Pride tempts me to volunteer, not so I can meet a need, but so I will be nominated "Volunteer of the Year."

Pride causes me to help a person less fortunate because doing so gives me the "warm fuzzies," not because the needy person really needs help. On the other hand, Jesus said I am to help others and meet needs, not for recognition and rewards, but because serving others is how I serve Him.

Pride is deadly because it keeps me from God, ruins relationships, exaggerates my importance and perverts my motives. Pride eats away at a person's soul like a spiritual cancer.

Conquering Pride

Pride, like all sins, can be overcome, but it is not easy. The moment I say, "I have conquered pride," at that moment pride rears its ugly head. I am, however, learning ways to control pride—and even overcome it—in my life.

First, I overcome pride when I see myself the way God sees me. He sees me just the way I am. He sees me as sinful and imperfect. He sees me in my weakest moments and in my darkest hours, but He loves me anyway. He sees me as a lump of clay He fashioned and to which He

gave life. He sees me through eyes of love and compassion (Matt. 9:36).

Seeing myself the way God sees me keeps me balanced. On the one hand, I am a dirty rotten sinner with no reason to be proud. On the other hand, God loved me so much He sent His only Son to die for me. To love that much means there is something about me worth loving.

A second thing I am learning to do is recognize who I am in Christ. My self-worth, and self-identity, are not wrapped up in who I am and what I have accomplished. Rather, they are wrapped up in who Jesus is and what He has accomplished. I can be a total failure—and many times I have felt like one—but if Jesus is Lord of my life, I am an eternal success.

Jesus said, "I am the vine, ye are the branches: He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit: for without me ye can do nothing" (Jn. 15:5).

In Christ, my sins are forgiven, I have new life, new hope and new direction. In Christ, I am a better husband, father, son, pastor, than I would ever be without Him. Without Christ I am nothing, but in Christ I have everything.

Third, to control pride in my life I am learning to develop a healthy humility. The problem with humility is the harder I strive to have it, the farther away I am from obtaining it. What is a healthy humility? It is neither thinking of myself too highly or too lowly. In fact, humility is not thinking of myself at all. A healthy humility is seeing myself the way God sees me and recognizing who I am in Christ.

Conclusion

On Monday morning the donkey awakened, his mind still savoring the afterglow of the most exciting day of his life. Never before had he felt such a rush of pleasure and pride. He walked into town and found a group of people by the well. "I'll show myself to them," he thought. But they didn't notice him. They went on drawing their water and paid him no mind.

"Throw your garments down," he said crossly. "Don't you know who I am?" They just looked at him in amazement. Someone slapped him across the rump and ordered him to move.

"Miserable heathens!" he muttered to himself. "I'll just go to the market where the good people are. They will remember me." But the same thing happened. No one paid attention to the donkey as he strutted down main street in front of the market place.

"The palm branches! Where are the palm branches!" he shouted. "Yesterday, you threw palm branches!" Hurt, rejected and confused, the donkey—the one Jesus rode into Jerusalem the previous day—returned home to his mother.

"Foolish child," his mother said gently. "Don't you realize without Jesus you are just an ordinary donkey?"⁶

More than anything else, that story keeps me humble. Without Jesus I am just an ordinary donkey. But because of Jesus, my life has been transformed, and I am a work in progress. Jesus Christ wants to make me more than I could ever be without Him. "But God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world" (Gal. 6:14).



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

Endnotes

- I would love to hear from you with any comments, questions or opinions. I can be reached via email at gkriggs43@aol.com, or snail mail at 149 Arsenal Dr., Franklin, TN 37064, or by telephone at 615/790-3229.
- 2. The seven deadly sins are laziness, lust, anger, pride, envy, gluttony and greed.
- C. S. Lewis. 1980. Mere Christianity. New York: Simon & Schuster.
- 4. C. S. Lewis, Mere Christianity, 110.
- While I have no idea who this "wise person" was, I have no doubt that whoever said it was, indeed, wise.
- 6. Wayne Rice, More Hot Illustrations for Youth Talks, 138.



January 2000

| Receipts: State | Designated | CO-OP | Total | Year To Date Designated | Year To Date CO-OP | Year To Date Total |
|---------------------|---------------|--------------|---------------|----------------------------|-----------------------|---|
| Alabama | \$ 328.90 | \$.00 | \$ 328.90 | \$ 328.90 | \$.00 | \$ 328.90 |
| Arizona | .00 | .01 | .00 | .00 | .00 | .00 |
| Arkansas | 21,117.10 | 20,232.73 | 3 41,349.83 | 21,117.10 | 20,232.73 | 41,349.83 |
| California | .00 | 945.0 | 945.09 | .00 | 945.09 | 945.09 |
| Colorado | .00 | .00 | .00 | .00 | .00 | .00 |
| Delaware | .00 | .00 | | .00 | .00 | .00 |
| Florida | .00 | .00 | | .00 | .00 | .00 |
| Georgia | 37,308.85 | 2,248.40 | | 37,308.85 | 2,248.40 | 39,557.25 |
| Hawaii | .00 | .00 | | .00 | .00 | .00 |
| Idoho | .00 | .00 | | .00 | .00 | .00 |
| Illinois | 7,228.73 | 1,840,33 | | 7,228.73 | 1,840.32 | 9,069.05 |
| Indiana | 1,136.34 | 119.04 | | 1,136.34 | 119.04 | 1,255.38 |
| | 175.00 | 1,158.80 | | 175.00 | | |
| lowa | 0.000 | | | | 1,158.80 | 1,333.80 |
| Kansas | .00. | 237.77 | | .00 | 237.72 | 237.72 |
| Kentucky | 1,623.44 | 503.80 | 747 877 5 | 1,623.44 | 503.80 | 2,127.24 |
| Louisiana | .00 | .00 | | .00 | .00 | .00 |
| Maryland | .00 | .00 | | .00 | .00 | .00 |
| Michigan | 11,827.26 | 5,046.75 | | 11,827.26 | 5,046.75 | 16,874.01 |
| Mississippi | 7,889.68 | 565.48 | 8,455.16 | 7,889.68 | 565.48 | 8,455.16 |
| Missouri | 38,205.42 | 14,831.77 | 53,037.19 | 38,205.42 | 14,831.77 | 53,037.19 |
| Montana | .00 | .00 | .00 | .00 | .00 | .00 |
| Nebraska | .00 | .00 | .00 | .00 | .00 | .00 |
| New Jersey | .00 | .00 | | .00 | .00 | .00 |
| New Mexico | 554.28 | 17.14 | | 554.28 | 17.14 | 571.42 |
| North Carolina | 847.41 | 2,377.46 | | 847.41 | 2.377.46 | 3,224.87 |
| Ohio | 17,725.75 | 1,607.44 | | 17,725.75 | 1,607.44 | 19,333.19 |
| Oklahoma | | 9,482.84 | | | | 10 A |
| | 52,389.76 | 77. | | 52,389.76 | 9,482.84 | 61,872.60 |
| South Carolina | 55,657.69 | .00 | | 55,657.69 | .00 | 55,657.69 |
| South Dakota | .00 | .00. | | .00 | .00. | .00. |
| Tennessee | 19,300.86 | 2,938.23 | | 19,300.86 | 2,938.23 | 22,239.09 |
| Texas | 8,623.40 | 308.70 | | 8,623.40 | 308.70 | 8,932.10 |
| Virginia | 491.69 | .00 | | 491.69 | .00 | 491.69 |
| Virgin Islands | .00 | .00 | | .00 | .00 | .00 |
| West Virginia | 758.86 | 114.56 | | 758.86 | 114.56 | 873.42 |
| Wisconsin | .00 | .00. | | .00 | .00 | .00 |
| Canada | .00 | .00 | .00 | .00 | .00 | .00 |
| Northwest Associat | ion .00 | .00 | .00 | .00 | .00 | .00 |
| Northeast Associati | ion .00 | .00 | .00 | .00 | .00 | .00 |
| Other | .00 | .13 | .13 | .00 | .13 | .13 |
| Totals | \$ 283,190.42 | \$ 64,576.40 | \$ 347,766.82 | \$ 283,190.42 | \$ 64,576.40 | \$ 347,766.82 |
| Disbursemen | ts: | | | | | |
| Executive Office | \$ 2,376.10 | \$ 29,059.33 | \$ 31,435.43 | \$ 2,376.10 | \$ 29,059.33 | \$ 31,435.43 |
| Foreign Missions | 153,438.97 | 8,168.89 | | 153,438.97 | 8,168.89 | 161,607.86 |
| FWBBC | 20,023.59 | 8,168.89 | | 20,023.59 | 8,168.89 | 28,192.48 |
| Home Missions | 96,804.00 | 6,393.05 | | 96,804.00 | 6,393.05 | 103,197.05 |
| | | | | | | |
| Retirement & Insur | | 4,972.38 | | 650.64 | 4,972.38 | 5,623.02 |
| Moster's Men | 453.11 | 4,972.38 | | 453.11 | 4,972.38 | 5,425.49 |
| Com. for Theo, Int | | 177.61 | 437.11 | 259.50 | 177.61 | 437.11 |
| FWB Foundation | 463.00 | 2,131.04 | | 463.00 | 2,131.04 | 2,594.04 |
| Historical Commiss | | 177.61 | 199.16 | 21.55 | 177.61 | 199.16 |
| Music Commission | 35.91 | 177.61 | 213.52 | 35.91 | 177.61 | 213.52 |
| Media Commission | 47.99 | 177.61 | 225.60 | 47.99 | 177.61 | 225.60 |
| Hillsdale FWB Colle | ege 1,956.43 | .00 | | 1,956.43 | .00 | 1,956.43 |
| Other | 6,659.63 | .00 | | 6,659.63 | .00 | 6,659.63 |
| | \$ 283,190.42 | \$ 64,576.40 | | \$ 283,190.42 | \$ 64,576.40 | \$ 347,766.82 |

A teen looks at the consequences of suicide

Suicide

By Jonathan Moore

n the beginning of time God created the heavens. He created the stars and planets that drift over us nightly as we gaze in awe at His creations. He made the earth, and with the earth, He carefully designed every beast and creature that roamed it.

In all the crystal clear waters that trickled down the grassy hill-side and the mighty rivers that rampaged down the majestic mountains, even with the beauty of His creations that roamed His earth, and the glorious sound of the whale's cry in the deep oceans of His creation, He still was not happy.

For He had a creation so beautiful and so magical, but no one to admire and appreciate it. So. . . . He added to His creation, His most prized possession. He created man. He put His hardest work into man. He carefully designed us in His own image. We were to have an eternal life in His new heaven. That is until, as we now do every day, man turned his back on God and disobeyed Him.

You know the story, so I won't go into detail about it. But after man's first and most destructive sin, God paced His punishment . . . punishment came in the form of one single sentence, "It is appointed unto man once to die, and after that, the judgment."

Every person is appointed to die at least once. The key to that sentence is the word "appointed." God didn't say, "Every man shall live as long as he desires, and then exterminate his life." God has a plan for each and every one of us. And no matter what the circumstances may be, it is not our place to change that plan.

Sadly though, in the world we face each day, we can't help but sometimes feel overwhelmed. Something may happen that leaves us with a feeling of hopelessness. For those who are

"there a voice you cannot hear,
that tells me I cannot stay.
I see a hand you cannot see,
that beckons me away.

Although one day life may be as sweet
Although one day live me again
as you saying you love me again.
I feel it would be easier to end this all,
I feel it would be easier to end this all,
simply by following the hand
simply by following the hand
simply by following to do this,
You told me not to do this,
You told me not to do this,
but sadly it isn't your choice.

So as you read this suicide poem,
So as you read this suicide poem,
Jonathan A. Moore
Jonathan A. Moore

as strong at heart, and for some of those who may think that they are, this world and the blows we may take from it are too much for them to handle alone.

The end result of their repressed feelings is . . . suicide . . . the intentional taking of one's life. Your body is a temple. Intentionally harming your body is a sin. Killing is a sin, so how someone can justify suicide is beyond me.

What far too many don't realize is that the key to survival in this brutal world is to go back to where it all started...God. Too many try to walk alone, but it can't be done. And unless we reach out to those who need help, the numbers of suicide victims will increase every day.

What is scary about those who end their life is that the highest suicide rate is in teenagers ... us ... our future! And what is even scarier is their future. Their future is nothing. Everyone must die once ... but their future is the second death ... the bottomless pit of pain, agony and horror that they never knew of on this earth.

Some may argue and say that I don't know what it's like to feel what they may be feeling. They say I don't

understand what they are going through. They say it's not worth living through the next day, only to take pain and anguish the world that we have created has to offer.

If you are one of those people, I say I know what you are feeling, because I have felt it; I say I understand what you are going through, because I have seen it. I have been through it.

And I say, if you want worthless, then I'll give it to you. Worthless is taking your life to escape pain and trials, only to find them beyond the point that your mind can comprehend. Worthless is putting your family through a simulated Hell of their own as they are eternally banished from your presence, while you are separated from God for all eternity. Worthless is the true definition of suicide!

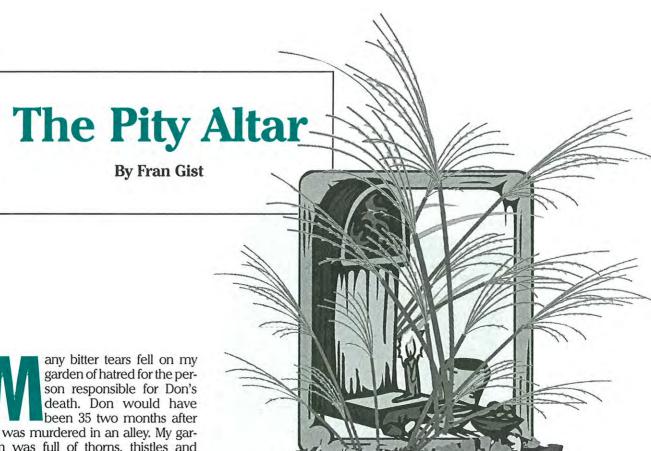
At the age of 11, I watched as a member of my family who was like a big brother to me, fire a 22-caliber pistol into his head ending his life. This happened in my front yard. I have seen the bruises on someone

close to me who was beaten. I have helped bury family members. I have had friends betray me. I have had girl friends break up with me. And I promise you: none of this, nor any other reason, is worth ending your life.

However, if it were not for my walk with God, I wouldn't realize how valuable my life is, and I may have ended up as another number in the count of teenage suicide victims. So, please, do as I am trying to do today, and reach out to those who need it, even to those who you may not realize need it. Help to slow this cancer of mass suicide, because with it, our future does not exist.



ABOUT THE WRITER: Jonathan Moore is a junior in high school. The 16-year-old is a member of First Free Will Baptist Church in Sylacauga, Alabama.



garden of hatred for the person responsible for Don's death. Don would have been 35 two months after he was murdered in an alley. My garden was full of thorns, thistles and creepy things that lurk in dark places. It overflowed with hatred and bitterness. The seeds were sown from rejection, ridicule, injustice, pride and willfulness. But, most important of all, they came from the altar of self-pity.

Pity altars are always self-made. In today's society we give them more acceptable names like *victim*. My mother hates me and beats me, my sister gets me into trouble, my dad left me, and on we go building our altars.

Do you remember this? "Nobody likes me, everybody hates me, I'm gonna go eat worms." Today we sing it, "Nobody likes me, everybody hates me, I'm gonna go smoke dope."

Maybe you could insert shoot up, hang with my bros from the hood, teach that guy a lesson or get drunk—whatever means you use to feed your garden of hate. After all, my homeboys care about me but my old lady, she's passed out on the couch. When my dad is home, he's beating on my little brother and me. Poor, poor, pitiful me. I have some fresh mud to build my altar.

I had a massive self-pity altar where I stored the rankest seeds. I had every variety I could possibly hope to use. I took those seeds and scattered them in the garden. Right in the middle stood my altar.

My mama did beat me. Use the mud. My brother was murdered. Use the mud. I had no self-esteem, so I used the mud of pride to enlarge my hate.

The tears that watered my garden flowed from bitterness and were more acidic than a human should touch. But my garden flourished.

One wonderful day God's rains came and started eroding my pity altar. The tears fell as if they would never stop, and a force I couldn't imagine drove them. No wind, no electricity to charge them, but they had power. Such tears I'd never seen—tears sweet with love. Loving tears destroyed my altar, and they destroyed my garden.

I had been proud of my sign at the foot of the altar—"Where hatred goes, nothing grows . . . except more of the same." Those tears even made the letters run off like wet paint.

Now I have no pity altar, but in its place is another—God's altar. Mine was destroyed but His stands. The blood of Jesus

Christ has cleansed my garden. What grows there now? Rain-

bows and promises kept. Beauty and wonder and joy. Peace. Abundant hope.

Frannie, Frannie was quite contrary, now how does her garden grow? Watered by loving tears and His light so bright it overflows, she awaits the call to take flight.



ABOUT THE WRITER: Fran Gist serves as renewal services coordinator with Hands of Liberty Ministry.
Hands of Liberty is an outreach of Liberty
Free Will Baptist Church in Cottonwood,
California. The ministry focuses on
prison and jail evangelism.

Men appointed to handle conflict resolution in the church

Deacons in Different Caps

By David L. Burgess

a Navy Chaplain I found myself in an unusual situation. I could wear the uniform of the U. S. Navy, U. S. Marine Corps or U. S. Coast Guard. It all depended upon where I was serving.

Deacons face a similar predica-

Deacons face a similar predicament. Do I put on my business administrator cap? Or my thinking cap as a teacher of God's Word? Do I wear my construction cap as we build the new building? Which cap do I put on today? The most fundamental cap that a deacon wears is the firefighter's cap!

Conflict Resolution

When did deacons become firefighters? Acts 6 gives us clues.

Most Bible readers see a definite association between the first apostolic helpers and the consequent position of deacon. While it is accurate that the helpers were not designated "deacons," their responsibilities (Acts 6:1, 2) are cited as "the daily ministration" and as "serving tables." The circumstances in Acts 6 furnished conditions which afterward blossomed into a lasting position in the early church.

The apostles' fundamental vocation was two-fold: evangelism and the assembly's spiritual benefit (Acts 6:4). The initial apostolic helpers were chosen to release the apostles from commonplace duties which were essential to the church's work (Acts 6:2, 3).

Many fail in their analysis of Acts 6 to see the basic underlying task of deacons. The assumption has been that the specific tasks in the passage are a general job description. Upon closer examination, we note that the tasks those men were to carry out in assisting the apostles were only one basic deed.

The deacons were to squelch division in the church. With this in mind, one can see why the chores assigned to deacons seem to vary greatly from church to church. Deacons may need to take on many differing functions in various churches.

Consequently, on the foundation of the conditions in Acts 6, the role of deacon developed

into an established position with the chief function to help the pastor resolve church conflicts. Ultimately, the requirements for the first apostolic helpers (Acts 6:3) essentially correlate with the qualifications of deacons in I Timothy 3:8-12.

Men of Character

Paul says that deacons must be "grave" (honorable or earnest). They must be thoughtful individuals who display an authentic perception of duty. Could any other type person calm a divided church?

Deacons must not be "double-tongued." They must be individuals recognized for honesty, not relating one account to one individual and another account to someone else. The term may be far-reaching enough to apply to any mishandling of speech, encompassing libel or rumor.

While executing their responsibilities, deacons would have numerous opportunities to be gossips as they call on the church's constituents. A gossip is harmful to a divided church.

Deacons must "not" be "given to much wine." The term employed here indicates literally "not holding to much wine." A drunkard would not bring unity where dissension exists.

The concluding qualification is that deacons must "not" be "greedy of filthy lucre." The term involves such as craving for affluence that one would be a crook to acquire it. Finances are "filthy

lucre" solely when they are inappropriately acquired. Congregations need funds to function, and the unselfish contribution of a Christian is an honored labor of trust. Yet finances can create division.

Spiritual Men

Although deacons may minister more to the material hardships of the assembly, they also are required to be godly individuals. The first deacons were to be "full of the Holy Ghost," individuals who were genuinely godly, although on the surface their commission seems to have been to deal with material necessities (Acts 6:3). Godly men are more likely to calm troubled churches.

The deacons Timothy was to choose at Ephesus were to be "holding the mystery of the faith in a pure conscience." Pastors are charged with expounding Christian belief, but deacons must also be committed to it. It should belong to them as individuals. Fundamental Christian belief is essential for unity in a congregation.

The expression "of the faith" points to the good news in its entirety, the fullness of Christian teachings. The definite article at the beginning of "faith" strengthens this exegesis. It is not "the mystery of faith," but "the mystery of the faith." Deacons must be orthodox. They must express the church's beliefs, and their doctrinal convictions should be beyond condemnation.

Paul specifies the way in which deacons should adhere to Christian doctrine, "in a pure conscience." They must stand for this doctrine sincerely. There must be no evidence of insincerity in a deacon. They must not merely adopt Christian dogma; they must, furthermore, behave as if they believe it. Hypocrisy spreads division.

Tested Men

Precisely as a pastor should not be a

beginner, Paul cautions regarding deacons, "And let these first be proved." This is not alluding to a trial period for possible deacons who carry out the chores directed by already-appointed deacons. If congregations desire to maintain this sort of trial phase for deacon candidates, it is acceptable and possibly advantageous.

However, that is not what Paul is addressing in this passage. He is instead pointing to an interval of time being fulfilled after conversion before being appointed as deacons. A novice will be consumed in a church conflict.

The term for "proved" connotes a lapse of some duration for appraising the authenticity of the deacon candidate's profession of faith. No exact span is dictated either for ascertaining when a possible pastor is not a beginner or when a possible deacon has been adequately tested.

Christian maturity is a question of personal assessment. Since this is true, it cannot be assigned as exact interval of time. Some Christians develop spiritual-

ly quicker than others.

Whenever an adequate interval of testing by means of steady Christian behavior has elapsed, Paul declares, "Then let them use the office of a deacon, being found blameless." The experience of being a deacon consists of ceaseless responsibilities in the church.

If the pastor attempts to handle every task and react to every material demand of his church, he will have inadequate opportunities left for the other responsibilities regarding the spiritual vitality of his church members. Competent deacons keep the pastor's time from being consumed in conflict resolution.

Deacons can be appointed after their period of validation in Christian living if they are "blameless." This term literally connotes "not to be called into reckoning." There must be naught in the possible deacon's manner of living which will damage Christian witness or bring contempt within the assembly of believers. Deacons with obvious flaws in character will be noted quickly and will be ineffective as they attempt to squelch division in the church.

Married Men . . . Usually

"Even so," rendered "likewise" in verse 8, indicates that the deacons'

wives should likewise fulfill some demanding requirements if their husbands are to fill the position. Their assistance to their husbands in carrying out the responsibilities of deacons to calm divisions would be extremely significant.

These wives must be "grave" (earnest, devoted, honorable). This was the initial qualification for the deacons themselves (v. 8). They must "not" be "slanderers," cruel busybodies who disperse stories in their visitation ministry and bring about chaos and difficulty in the church. The term rendered "slanderers," when employed with the definite article, denotes "the devil." Hence, one observes that a tale bearer is engaging in that which the devil enjoys most.

In addition, a deacon's wife ought to be "sober" (level-headed, clear-headed, having common sense). She, furthermore, ought to be "faithful in all things." One of the most admirable attributes of any person is faithfulness. This concluding qualification for the deacon's wife accentuates her significance in the discharge of the deacon's ministry of helping the church maintain unity.

It is as essential for deacons to be a right model in their home life as it is for pastors. Deacons also ought to be the "husbands of one wife, ruling their children and their own houses well." If he is not single, he has to be "the husband of one wife." This does not call for a deacon to be married.

The essence of a deacon's duty is such that the majority of those who engage in it will be married. In the majority of situations it is likely best that they are married; however, there could be and are deviations from this principle devoid of any complication developing.

Once-Married Men

Individuals who have been divorced and remarried carry a stigma on their lives which cannot be thoroughly removed. The requirement is logical. If a man has failed at conflict resolution in his home, how can he be effective on a larger scale in the church? Possibly the most outstanding standard that a deacon is called to maintain is his home life. As much as is plausible, it should be blameless. It is not an issue as to whether a transgression has been absolved. It is an issue of example.

The church ought to be cautious in

appointing any individuals with damaging flaws in their history until they have continued as Christians a sufficient period of time to demonstrate their integrity. The fundamental determining factor should be the prospect of the individual to be an admirable witness of home life to the church, because this factor will impact the ability to resolve conflict in the church.

A divorced man, or a man who has been divorced and remarried, who is currently maintaining a committed life for God can function, in my opinion, in any position in the church except the two ordained offices—pastor or deacon.

Many individuals in such a circumstance have encountered marital catastrophe in their younger years, but are presently exceptionally consecrated and have excellent promise for effectiveness in the church. If otherwise acceptable, they should be utilized without reluctance. Although divorce imparts lasting marks, it must not be conceived as the unforgivable transgression.

Obedient Children

In the Christian community, the relationship between a husband and wife generally gets more consideration than the relationship between the parent and child, but that is not so in the Bible. When a deacon and his wife do not control their children, they display a bad specimen of leadership to the church. Bad leadership hinders conflict resolution. A Christian man who does not meet this consequential qualification to control his children ought not be appointed as a deacon.

May God favor His church with scripturally-worthy deacons. ■



ABOUT THE WRITER: Dr. David Burgess, a former Navy Chaplain, is a member of Liberty Free Will Baptist Church in Millington, Tennessee.

CONVENTION HERALD

NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF FREE WILL BAPTISTS, ANTIOCH, TENNESSEE

Volume 64, No. 1

April 2000

Registration Important

ANTIOCH, TN—Convention officials note that registration for the national convention in Anaheim is important for all attendees.

Registration gives officials a more accurate attendee count plus other vital statistics important for this and future conventions. Registration provides badges for attendees. Badges are required for convention events.

Badges help identify registered visitors and delegates to the convention. Proof of registration (i.e. badge) allows attendees to participate in convention events. Pre-registration is open to all who plan to attend (see related story elsewhere on this page for badge preview).

All badges identify attendee, status (visitor, minister, local church delegate, etc.), convention(s) registered for, and voting status.

Pre-Registration Perk



Check Out Web Page

ANTIOCH, TN—Pre-registration materials for the convention are available at www.nafwb.org for the following items:

- · Pre-Registration Form
- Housing Form
- Delegate Cards

Print the form, fill out completely and mail to appropriate address (see below).

For the first time, you will have the option of pre-registering on line if no money is involved (i.e. meals, delegate fees, NYC fees, etc.). ANTIOCH, TN—As a special incentive, convention attendees who pre-register will receive attractive full-color badges in a quality vinyl pouch with bulldog clip and pin for attaching. Convention 2000's badge has a palm tree and sun design.

On-site registrants will receive plain black and

white badges with no graphics. These badges come in plastic covers with only pin-on attachments.

See above sample of pre-registration badge. The real thing will be in full color.

Don't delay.
Pre-register now!

Convention Hint: Wear comfortable shoes!



In This Issue

April, May and June issues of *Contact* contain forms for pre-registration including the following:

Pre-Registration Form Housing Form Local Church Delegate Card WNAC Delegate Card

Fill out forms completely (one person to a form, please) and mail to the proper address. Take special note of each address for each form. Mailing addresses:

Pre-Registration P. O. Box 5002 Antioch, TN 37011-5002

Housing Form Mail, FAX, phone or email to the hotel of your choice (addresses on form).

Local Church Delegate Card Attn: Melody Hood P. O. Box 5002 Antioch, TN 37011-5002

WNAC Delegate Card WNAC P. O. Box 5002 Antioch, TN 37011-5002

Affention Pre-Registrants

Early pick-up available at
Hillon Analheim
for those who
pre-register
by June 9.

Times:

Saturday, July 15 4:00 - 7:00 p.m. Sunday, July 16 1:30 - 6:30 p.m.

At the Convention:

Stop—at Executive Office booth Renew—*Contact* for 2 years Receive—durable canvas tote



www.nafwb.org

Pre-Registration Form

for

National Association of Free Will Baptists Women Nationally Active for Christ National Youth Conference Anaheim, California / July 16-20, 2000

DEADLINE: Must be postmarked on or before June 9, 2000

| Name:Name desired on badge | Last Name | | | |
|--|--|---|--|--|
| Home Address: | City | State Zip | | |
| Phone #: () | | | | |
| Church Name: | City | State | | |
| | | | | |
| Pastor's Name: | this form. (Badges requi | red for convention events.) | | |
| National Association Registration Voting Delegates: All voting delegates must be members in good standing of a FWB church. Check only one: National Board/Commission Member (nbm) State Delegate (nsd) Local Church Delegate—\$50 (nld) Foreign Missionary (nfm) Home Missionary (nhm) Ordained Deacon (nde) Ordained Minister (nor) Non-Voting Attendees: Licensed Minister (nli) | For identification purposes: all NYC participants and all You must pay \$22* Pre-F • You are in Grades 1-1 • You are Ages 3-6 and | 12 and plan to attend NYC events plan to attend Pre-School Worship | | |
| WNAC Registration Voting Delegates: Check only one: National Officer (wof) State President (wsp) State Field Worker (wfw) State Delegate (wsd) Local WNAC Delegate—\$5 (wld) Non-Voting Attendees: Visitor (wvi) Missionary (wmi) | Check Grades 1-12/attending NYC events—\$22 (y12 one: Ages 3-6/attending Pre-School Worship—\$22 (y2 Visitor (yvi)) Birthdate: Age: Grade completed Spring 2000: Parent/Guardian: Youth Leader: | | | |
| Payment enclosed for: | | | | |
| Tickets: Youth Workers Reception—\$15 WNAC Fellowship Luncheon—\$28 FWBBC Luncheon—\$25 Delegate Fees: | Quantity x \$1: Quantity x \$2: Quantity x \$2: | 5\$ 8 5 | | |
| Local Church Delegate—\$50 (Must enclose signed delegate Local WNAC Delegate—\$5 (Must enclose signed WNAC delegate) Youth Registration Fee: | egate card; see <i>Contact</i> , page 9 or www. r | | | |
| Send one check for total amoun No refunds afte | t — payable to FWB (er June 9, 2000. | Convention. | | |
| P. O. Box 5002 (Contact us if you | ters will be mailed. I do not receive one.) 767-7659 | For Office Use Only Date Rcv'd Amt From | | |

18 Contact, April 2000

Housing Form

National Association of Free Will Baptists / National Convention Anaheim, California • July 16-20, 2000

Print or **type** all information requested and phone, mail or FAX form to the hotel of your choice by **June 16**, 2000. If form is faxed, keep your transaction report as proof of transmittal. You will receive acknowledgment of your hotel assignment by mail within two weeks of the time the form is received by the hotel. All reservations, changes and cancellations should be made directly with the hotels.

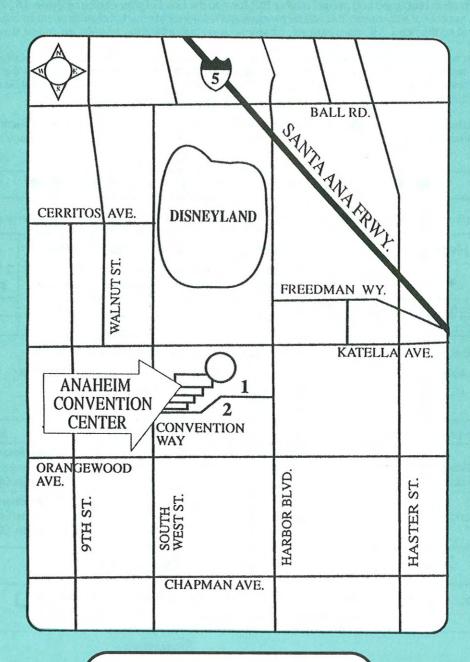
<u>Deposit Required</u>: An advance deposit of \$135 per room is required. Your deposit will be charged to your credit card by providing the information requested below. Deposits being made by check should be for \$135 per room payable to the hotel of your choice and mailed to the address below. Forms received without credit card information or a check for the deposit will be returned and reservations will not be processed. Hotel refund policies vary. The hotels *prefer* credit cards rather than checks.

Changes or **cancellations** should be made directly with the hotel. Check your hotel confirmation for instructions regarding cancellation policies and check-in times. Reservations received after June 16, 2000 (or once block is full) will be on a space and rate available basis.

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| Check Hotel choice | (Rooms with two bed | | SINGLE 1 bed / 1 person | DOUBLE | DBL/DBL | TRIPLE | QUAD 2 beds / 4 persons | SELF PARKING |
| | Hilton Anaheim (Headquarters | s) | \$119 | \$119 | \$119 | \$119 | \$119 | \$9 day in/out |
| | Anaheim Marriott | | \$119 | \$119 | \$119 | \$119 | \$119 | \$10 day max |
| | | Wheelchair Access Rollaway (Upon a [Only one rollay | availability at a way per room] | | rge.) | Crib Offier | D. W. 7 | |
| Four v | Four ways to make reservations: By Intern Hilton Anaheim: hilton.com (Headquarters Hotel) Group CodeA | | In CA:1-800/233-6904 Outside CA: | | 714/740-4737 | 777 Con | Attn: Reservations 777 Convention Way Anaheim, CA 92802-3497 | |
| | Anaheim Marriott: | (not available) | | 750-8000 or /228-9290 | 714/748-2449 | 700 We | eservations est Convention Way m, CA 92802-3483 | |
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| CITY/STATE, | /Zip | | | | | form | n per | room. |
| PHONE (| 1 | FAX (| 1 | | | | | |

April 2000, Contact 19

Anaheim, California



Hotels

- 1. Hilton Anaheim Hotel
- 2. Anaheim Marriott Hotel







64th Annual Session

National Association of Free Will Baptists

R. Edward Cook Arkansas



Anaheim, California July 16-20, 2000









Tim Owen Florida



David Shores Illinois





Free Will Baptist

mewsfromt

Reverend J. E. White Dies



Warren, AR—After 70 years as a pastor, evangelist and church organizer in Arkansas, the Reverend J. E. White died January 10. He was 94 years old, three weeks short of his 95th birthday.

Reverend White was converted at age 12 and ordained to the ministry at age 25 in 1929. The son of a Free Will Baptist preacher (Rev. W. P. White), he dedicated his life to God and asked Him to watch over his wife and eight children as he launched his mostly bi-vocational ministry just as the Great Depression hit.

Brother White labored in south Arkansas and north Louisiana, pastoring 14 churches and organizing three. He officiated at more than 700 funerals and finally lost count of the number of converts he baptized.

During what he considered his best revival, he baptized 33 people in the Saline River but lost his job at a Warren lumber mill because he took time off for the revival. He earned \$7 for the revival and didn't tell his church that he lost his job over it.

Reverend Ben Scott, who preached the funeral, said, "Brother White was a typical old-fashioned, Bible-toting, hard-hitting preacher down there where the action was. He was very forthright, but at the same time very tender and loving."

J. E. (Ebb) White's influence in Arkansas' Saline Association was without equal. He was elected as moderator and served on the Executive Committee and the Examining Board, as well as other positions of responsibility. He was well known for his doctrinal sermons and his compassion for the lost.

Contact editor Jack Williams said, "Brother Ebb preached the sermon the night I got saved in 1958. He's the reason I'm a Christian. Few men have impacted my life like he did. He set an example for us all. His sermons echo in my soul 40 years later. He was truly a father in Israel."

Funeral services were conducted January 13 at Willoughby FWB Church in Warren. Reverends Ben Scott and Jon Landers (Rev. White's grandson) officiated.

Reverend White is survived by two sons, six daughters, one brother, one sister, 24 grandchildren and 35 great-grandchildren. He was preceded in death by his wife of 68 years, Mrs. Sally White, and four brothers.

Home Missions, Bible College Join Hands to Plant Churches

NASHVILLE, TN—The Home Missions Department and Free Will Baptist Bible College are joining forces to establish a new Free Will Baptist church in Nashville that will serve as a training site for student preachers to go out and plant more new churches, and to provide academic and practical preparation for the church planters.

Rev. Clifford Donoho, a Free Will Baptist home missionary who has established two churches, will pastor the new work. Rev. Terry Forrest, who established a new church and served for some 15 years as chairman of the Arkansas State Home Missions Board, will coordinate the Bible College's side of the program. Rev. Forrest is the college's director of lifetime learning.

The college will add courses to its present curriculum for pastors that will further prepare them to plant churches. It will also direct pastoral trainees in an internship program with Rev. Donoho to help them gain valuable hands-on experience.

"Our goal is to reach new people for Christ and to train students as church planters," says Trymon Messer, general director of the Home Missions Department.

Delmer Priest, Former FWBBC Trustee, Dies

PHOENIX, AZ—Delmer Priest, a layman who served 18 years on the Free Will Baptist Bible College Board of Trustees, died December 27, 1999. He always had a warm heart for youth and considered it both an honor and opportunity to serve as a trustee.



Brother Priest was a pioneer in the California work during the 1940s, 50s

and 60s. During that time, he served as a deacon at First FWB Church in Richmond.

He worked for the Richmond Police Department where he was director of the Juvenile Bureau for two decades. He was instrumental in establishing juvenile police work in California.

Delmer retired in the early 1970s, and he and his wife, Goldie, moved to the Phoenix area. He is survived by his son, Coy Priest of Tacoma, WA, and his daughter, Kaye Priest Sturgeon (a former FWBBC student) of Glendale, AZ.

FWB Foundation Delivers Endowment Gifts

ANTIOCH, TN—The Free Will Baptist Foundation delivered more than \$94,000 in endowment gifts to various Free Will Baptist ministries in 1999, according to William Evans, director. The gifts came from endowment funds managed by the Foundation.

For the entire year of 1999, these gifts were delivered to the following ministries:

| Foreign Missions | \$29,462.29 |
|-------------------------------------|--------------|
| Master's Men | 11,326.82 |
| The Together Way | 5,262.43 |
| Free Will Baptist Bible College | 8,621.48 |
| Home Missions | 7,891.37 |
| Board of Retirement | 11,382.08 |
| Free Will Baptist Foundation | 561.54 |
| Contact | 1,005.75 |
| Women Nationally Active for Chr | ist 1,332.92 |
| Hillsdale FWB College | 1,587.67 |
| Free Will Baptist Family Ministries | 501.65 |
| State and Local Ministries | 15,825.64 |
| Total | \$94,761.64 |
| | |

Endowments are permanent gifts invested so that income is available for ministry. These gifts continue to give year after year. The Foundation manages gifts for every national agency and will accept gifts to these endowments in any amount. For information about endowments, please contact the Foundation.

Bible College Trustees Propose to Modify Name

NASHVILLE, TN—The Free Will Baptist Bible College Board of Trustees voted unanimously to propose that the college name be expanded to "Palmer College: The Free Will Baptist Bible College." The action was taken at their December 1999 meeting in Nashville.

Board Chairman Gary Fry says, "About five years ago, then Foreign Missions director Eugene Waddell, began making the National Association aware that the name, 'Free Will Baptist Bible College,' was causing our graduates to be excluded from access as missionaries to many of the world's least evangelized countries. Upon learning this, the FWBBC Board and administration began to consider a name change."

He stressed that "Free Will Baptist" will remain part of the college's name and that the modification is not a precursor to converting the school from a Bible college to a Christian liberal arts institution.

The new name would honor Paul Palmer, a pastor, teacher, evangelist and church planter who established the first Free Will Baptist church in North America in 1727. Matthew Pinson, a student of Free Will Baptist history, says, "Had it not been for his dedication to God's work and to General Baptist principles, the National Association of Free Will Baptists would not exist."

The process for the change involves presenting it to the National Association of Free Will Baptists this year and voting on it the next year.

President Tom Malone says discussions on the college's name go back to when he was a member of the board. "I assure the denomination that modifying the college's name does not change who or what the college is," he says. "We are 100% Free Will Baptist and we are 100% a Bible college. It is not my intention that either be changed."

Reeds Scholarship Fund Set

NASHVILLE, TN—Randall House Publications has established the Dr. Roger C. Reeds Scholarship Fund which will be a part of the Heritage Scholarship Fund at Free Will Baptist Bible College. This fund is an endowment fund which can be contributed to by any of his friends.

General director Alton Loveless said, "Dr. Reeds gave over 32 years to Randall House Publications. A scholarship in his name is the least we could do. It is my hope that many friends of Dr. Reeds will send an offering to the Dr. Roger C. Reeds Scholarship Fund in care of Mrs. Peggy Hampton at Free Will Baptist Bible College, 3606 West End Avenue, Nashville, TN 37205."

Discount Air Fares to National Convention Available

ANTIOCH, TN—The National Association of Free Will Baptists has made special travel arrangements for attendees and their families who will be flying to the national convention in Anaheim, California, July 16-20, according to Executive Secretary Melvin Worthington.

Artists Travel Corporation in Nashville has been selected as the agency of record to provide members attending the convention with discount travel services.

Discounts for air travel to Anaheim have been secured on Delta Air Lines. The airline offers a 5% discount on excursion rates and 10% discount on full coach fares. These fares cannot be purchased through another travel agency or directly with the airlines. These are contracted group air fares. First class tickets may also be booked if desired.

Special note: Book your ticket 60 days in advance and receive 10% discount on excursion rates.

Artists Travel Corporation has contracted for travel dates July 12 through July 24 for the convention.

To book airspace at the offered discounted rates, call Artists Travel Corporation toll free at 1-800/489-2009. Ask for **Janice Jakobik** and identify yourself with the Free Will Baptist national convention. The agent will need the following:

- · your name
- · number of passengers
- home phone number
- · correct mailing address
- · city of flight origin
- business phone number

For easy billing, have a **current credit card** ready at the time of booking. Artists Travel will process and mail the tickets to you.

Southeastern Sets Camp Meeting

Wendell, NC—Six ministers will preach during "Camp Meeting 2000" at Southeastern FWB College, according to college officials. The April 17-19 gathering will also feature the Dove Brothers Quartet as well as college groups.

The six preachers include Evangelists Calvin Evans and Jack Lassiter, in addition to Frank Woods, Barry Goodman, Christian Powell and Scott Wright.

The college's April 16-18 Get Acquainted Days for prospective students coincides with most of the Camp Meeting.

Southeastern hosted a Principal's Recruitment Conference on February 17-18. Five men addressed attendees during the two-day meeting—Joe Haas, Jr., Russ Moots, Mike Paramore, Dann Patrick and Ricky Tippett.

Randall Ministers Fund Established

Nashville, TN—Dr. Alton E. Loveless, president of Randall House Publications and the Sunday School Department, announced the establishment of a Minister's Trust that would enable Randall House to raise funds so the company can print and give free of charge at least one book a year to Free Will Baptist preachers.

Loveless said, "It has been my burden to print and mail a book on our doctrine or Sunday School and church growth to every preacher in our denomination each year. Since we do not have funds to do this alone, I am asking churches, ministers and individuals to contribute to this project. Many ministers have small libraries and would welcome our assistance."

Send offerings to Randall Minister's Fund, Free Will Baptist Foundation, P. O. Box 5002, Antioch, TN 37011-5002.

"It is my desire that this fund be well established and self-perpetuating from the interest enabling its purpose," said Dr. Loveless.

Call National Offices Toll Free

ANTIOCH, TN—Calls to the seven national agencies located in the National Offices Building (5233 Mt. View Road in Antioch) can now be made toll free, according to Melvin Worthington, executive secretary.

"We need to make it easy for people to call us," said Dr. Worthington. "That's why we made the change, to make it convenient for Free Will Baptists to reach us."

| Executive Office | 877/767-7659 |
|-----------------------------|--------------|
| WNAC | 877/767-7662 |
| Home Missions Department | 877/767-7674 |
| Foreign Missions Department | 877/767-7736 |
| Retirement & Insurance | 877/767-7738 |
| Master's Men Department | 877/767-8039 |
| FWB Foundation | 877/336-7575 |

currently

One hundred students made the Dean's List at **Free Will Baptist Bible College** the first semester, according to school officials. This means that the students made grade averages of "B" or higher. Another 14 students finished the semester with a straight "A" average.

Pastor Robert Posner of Collin Creek FWB Church in Plano, TX, announced plans to break ground for a \$665,000 educational building on March 26. The 8,000-square-foot structure will give the 10-year-old church needed space for classes. The congregation averages 130 in attendance.

Just over a year ago, members of First FWB Church in Cushing, OK, purchased a 36' x 120' metal building that was about one-third finished. They used that space immediately for classes, then remodeled another 2,200-square-feet into a kitchen and fellowship hall. Pastor Jerry Banks presided over dedication services in December.

When Western Hills FWB Church in Fort Worth, TX, relocated and renamed itself Cityview Fellowship FWB Church, they began meeting in an elementary school. But on December 13, 1999, members closed on three acres overlooking a development scheduled to hold 1,800 new homes in the next three years. Louis Nettleton pastors.

Pastor Wiley Perkins reports six baptisms at Samantha FWB Church in Leesburg, OH.

Ohio evangelist Clovis Vanover conducted 31 revivals in 1999, filled 91 appointments and reported 106 professions of faith.

Pastor **Tim Simpson** baptized eight converts at **Oak Hill FWB Church** in **Oak Hill, OH.**

Here's another busy Ohio pastor. Pastor Scott Bumgardner reports six new baptisms at Friendly FWB Church in Columbus.

The purchase of a new 15-passenger van was an answer to prayer at Wyandotte FWB Church in Mansfield, OH. Brian Phillips pastors.

More than 200 people filled out visitors' cards at Canaan Land FWB Church in Grove City, OH, last year. Pastor Tim Stout reports five baptisms and four new members.

Forty conversions and rededications in nine months has made Robert Bradley a happy man. He pastors Campbell Chapel FWB Church in Ironton, OH.

When four young men were converted at Rock of Ages FWB Church in Cleveland, OH, they soon learned how to serve as ushers and are working under the leadership of Pastor Tim Hamblen.

Ask Pastor Wayne Keith about a special two-month harvest season at Pleasant Hill FWB Church in Delaware, OH. During a 60-day period, the congregation experienced 20 conversions, nine baptisms and nine new members.

Eighty-eight people showed up in December for ground-breaking ceremonies at Sloan Canyon FWB Church in Castaic, CA, according to home missionary pastor Keith Bartlett. The 2.5-acre site in a fast-growing Los Angeles suburb will soon hold a two-story worship center. Plans call for a 10,000-square-foot building to include sanctuary seating for 200, classrooms, offices, a kitchen and day care facilities. Four members of the Castaic town council attended the activities. Former council president Greg Ferrier is an active part of the Sloan Canyon congregation.

Pastor Claudie Hames reports 15 altar decisions during a revival at First FWB Church in Bakersfield, CA. Sunday School averages over 500.

Pastor Randy Jones baptized five converts at Rescue FWB Church in Whittington, IL. The church celebrates 100 years of service this month.

Members of White Oaks FWB Church in Macon, GA, dream of welcoming 1,000 new believers into their fellowship, according to Pastor Charles Barnard. That same dream includes 20

acres as well as a worship center, family life center, educational center, day care and Christian school. They also hope to start a new church every two years.

Barry Powers has been named assistant director at Camp Caleb near Flat Gap, KY. Powers came on board in January. He is a graduate of Free Will Baptist Bible College.

They're cheering at Lowery FWB Church in Twin Oaks, OK. Pastor Doug Carey said that the congregation set an attendance record in December when 205 people showed up for Sunday School.

Perhaps as early as 1790, but no later than 1803—that's the word on when Post Oak Shade FWB Church near Cookeville, TN, was established. That makes it one of the oldest Free Will Baptist churches in Tennessee—perhaps older than the state itself. Dow Allen pastors. The congregation has plans underway for a new sanctuary.

Reverend Burl Cox, a Free Will Baptist minister in Kingsport, TN, died November 23, 1999, at age 74. He pastored four churches during his ministry. His pastor, George Winegar, said that the words, "loved, limit and leaving" characterized Rev. Cox, because he loved the Lord's work, would go the limit in that work and in leaving demonstrated that he was a true soldier of Jesus Christ.

Pastor **David Taylor** reports 15 conversions, 22 new members and nine baptisms at **Lake Hills FWB Church** in **Hot Springs, AR.**

Limestone FWB Church in Limestone, TN, raised \$30,000 during the annual Don Sexton Foreign Missions Walk-A-Thon. Alfred Cutshall pastors this congregation of high steppers.

ey! Who turned out the lights?"

"You did! Or you just failed to turn them on."

"How?"

"You didn't pay the electric bill. You wanted your money designated for other 'ministry-related' things. Remember?"

"What do you mean?"

"You said you didn't want your money to go for any office upkeep, administrative personnel or other general overhead costs. That happened to include the electric bill."

Does that dialogue

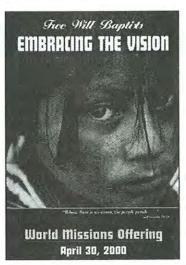
strike any familiar chord? Have you ever said or heard someone say, "I don't want my missions gifts to go to anything but the missionary and his or her ministry overseas. I certainly don't want those people in the missions office to spend it. I want my money to go toward winning people to Jesus in areas where He is not known."

Well, those words are admirable! They do reflect the interest of our Lord who wants every person in this world to hear the gospel. But the logic of saying "I don't want to support the missions office" is like saying you don't want to put money into gasoline because you want your money "where the rubber meets the road." Yet, the rubber meeting the road will accomplish little without the gasoline for the engine.

of the denomination and the Foreign Missions office. I agree that these costs can escalate to a seemingly unreasonable amount at times, but to refuse support is almost like pulling the plug on a life support system.

You see, the Support Services provided to every missionary and made available to every church, pastor and lay person are services which help make ministry possible in the regions beyond. These services keep the missionary on the field and functioning as efficiently as possible. They take many of the mundane things from the missionaries' shoulders and provide services otherwise difficult or impossible to obtain on their fields.

General Director James Forlines has asked the questions, "Are We Really Needed?" and "What



Turn on the Lights By Don Robirds

place does the home staff fill in getting the gospel to the ends of the earth?" He responds by likening it to the needed services of the "frontline" soldier in wartime. If soldiers are confused, discouraged or distracted, it will not be long before they are defeated. Frontline soldiers need two things: supplies and logistics.

Supplies include the necessary ammunition, food, etc. to continue. Logistics means taking care of the 10,000 details needed to allow the soldier to focus on the objective.

The missions office **supplies** ingredients necessary for adequate up-to-date prayer support, recruitment of new missionary personnel, and the groundwork for getting missionary ministry financially underwritten. Other special services, materials, and supporting ministries also are provided, and the new member care division of Support Services affords help to missionary families when they need encouragement or special intervention.

ogistics, or services, also are provided. Travel arrangements and coordination along with document processing take up a great deal of time and energy. Other services include insurance processing, computer technical support, promotional efforts, media resources, income tax preparation, bookkeeping and receipting, legal consulting, and public relations efforts among the Free Will Baptist constituency.

Do we need electricity? Well, we could get along without it. But life would be much harder and accomplishments would be much less. Missionaries might survive without a stateside staff, but the millions of unseen, unexpected, and unplanned details would greatly hamper their ministry.

Support Services provides these things for the missionaries and the denomination. We need your help as we seek to get the entire denomination to EMBRACE THE VISION of a mobilized church. This year's **World Missions Offering** on **April 30** will help every missionary on every field through Support Services.

You can turn on the lights this year or you can leave the missionaries to work in the dark!



Two Opportunities for Free Will Baptist Women

By Marjorie Workman

WNAC National Convention

naheim, California is the place to be July 16-20. Three conventions packed into one location for all Free Will Baptists. It happens once a year, and it has been happening since 1935 for Women Nationally Active for Christ. For the National Association, this will be the 64th annual session. The youngest convention of the three is the National Youth Conference which will be convening for the 33rd time. There's something for everyone so bring the family.

Why not plan a vacation before or after the convention. There are many opportunities enroute or in California. More importantly, plan to attend the conventions.

The WNAC Convention is offering a seminar on "Dealing with Cancer." Joanna Felts, a young pastor's wife, will share with the audience first hand the devastating experience of hearing the words, "it's malignant." She will take you through her personal journey of despair and victory.

This seminar will enable the attendee to know how to be more sensitive to those who are suffering. Also, you will learn what to and what not to say to those who have cancer. The seminar meets Monday afternoon in the Hilton Anaheim. This is a great opportunity to gain wisdom from one who has been there.

change of pace will greet attendees this year as WNAC will host a Fellowship Luncheon instead of a dinner. The luncheon will follow the Tuesday

eleven o'clock missionary service. Seating is limited. Make your reservation early by purchasing your ticket through pre-registration. Special guest speaker for the event is Pat Clary, founder of Women's Ministries Institute. She is an outstanding speaker and encourager.

Ridgecrest Retreat September 14-16, 2000

ake reservations now for a great weekend escape to Ridgecrest, North Carolina, for the eleventh WNAC retreat. Join over 500 women from across the United States in fellowship, singing, praying, learning and laughing. It is a great weekend for relaxation and spiritual refreshing. Meet and hear your women missionaries share experiences from their field of service.

The retreat will be filled with musical applications for Christian growth as guest speaker Gail Smith develops the theme, "Keys to Growth." Gail has a unique way of using music to stimulate Christians to think about biblical principles. Also, she will demonstrate ways of teaching children through music.

ou will hear her sing some of the great hymns of the church as she brings to life some of the stories behind the hymns. But singing is not her only talent. Gail is often referred to as the Lady of Piano. She uses her love for music as a teaching tool. Her accomplishments are many, and we are excited that she will be with us September 14-16, 2000. ■

Women Nationally



Active for Christ

ccording to the U.S. Government Social Security Administration Office, "93% of Americans over the age of 65 are flat broke." Are you one of them? They state that people need to continue working or are dependent upon family, charity or friends to support them during retirement years. Although

the U.S. is the wealthiest civilization ever known, most Americans are financially unprepared for retirement. Therefore, the golden years become years of struggle.

A good example of this involved a personal acquaintance who retired in the mid 60s. He was a career accountant for a large utility company. Even though he had a wife, he chose a single-life annuity because the joint-life paid a few dollars per month less than the single-life. They lived quite well for about 15 years on his annuity.

Then he died, but his wife lived another 20 years. Because he had chosen a single life annuity, all payments stopped upon his death. He did not believe in life insurance either, so his wife lived for 20 years on nothing but social security. She had to spend her last few years living with relatives. This situation was a result of making the wrong choices.

pproaching retirement means facing decisions that will affect the rest of your life. If you have a retirement plan, one decision you must make is which settlement option to choose, assuming you have options. The Board of Retirement offers several, including: lump sum withdrawal, partial withdrawal, systematic withdrawal by specifying a specific dollar amount or a specific number of payments; an annuity for one or two lives.

Generally, we recommend our participants choose one of our six annuity options. There are several reasons for doing so:

An annuity guarantees an income for life, regardless of how long you live.

With other settlements you could easily out-live and deplete the entire value of your account.

A joint-life annuity pays a guaranteed income to you and a survivor, generally your spouse, for both your lifetimes. Not only does this option provide lifetime security, it can automatically satisfy minimum required distributions after reaching age 70½.

Another annuity advantage is that the Internal Revenue Service permits ordained ministers to designate up to 100% of their Board of Retirement annuity to be designated as housing allowance.

The amount of the annuity that can be excluded from the minister's taxable income is limited to the lesser of (1) the amount actually spent

Retirement

Making The Right Decision Is Important

By D. Ray Lewis

by the minister for housing expenses, or (2) the fair rental value of the home, including furnishings and utilities. Ordained ministers need not report housing allowance as income when they file their federal tax return.

Ministers are personally responsible to report to the Internal Rev-

enue Service any annuity income that exceeds the amount they are entitled to exclude as housing allowance. The housing designation does not apply to any lump-sum withdrawals nor is it available to the surviving spouse of the ordained minister.

or annuitants who are not ordained, in January of each year the Board of Retirement will send you a 1099-R Form, which we will also file with the Internal Revenue Service, showing your gross annuity for the preceding year and the taxable amount. Any personal contributions you make to your retirement account are not taxable in retirement.

There are six annuity options available through the Board of Retirement:

- Single life provides income for the life of the annuitant.
- Single Life 10-year guarantee ensures that if the annuitant dies in the first 120 months of retirement, the remaining value for the 10-year period will be made to the estate or to a named beneficiary. If the annuitant lives beyond the 120-month period, annuity payments continue until his/her death.
- Single Life 15-year guarantee same as above except payments are guaranteed for 180 months.
- Joint Life provides income for the life of the annuitant and his/her spouse/beneficiary.
- Joint life 10-year guarantee ensures that if both the annuitant and the spouse die in the first 120 months of retirement, the remaining value for the 10-year period will be paid to the estate or to a named beneficiary. If the member and/or spouse live beyond the 120-month period, annuity payments continue until both die.
- Joint life 15-year guarantee same as above except payments are guaranteed for 180 months.

n deciding which annuity option to take, you must base your decision on your circumstances. As you can see in the illustration above, it is even possible to select the wrong annuity option.

Don't become one of the 93% of retirees who are flat broke. Let us help you, not only accumulate retirement funds, but also help make the decision that is right for you.

& Insurance

GREEN TREE BIBLE STUDY



Garnett Reid

The Greatest

onversation about "the greatest" person in any field sparks lively debate. The greatest athlete—is it Muhammad Ali, Wayne Gretzky, Michael Jordan or another favorite, maybe Babe Didrikson Zaharias? John Hay referred to Abraham Lincoln as "the greatest character since Christ." To Beethoven, Handel as a composer was "the greatest of us all." Time recently named Albert Einstein the greatest person of the 20th century.

While the idea of greatness may make for interesting coffee break chat, most of us live on a lower plane. We grapple with simple issues of success one day at a time: How's my marriage doing? Is my job worth the effort?

Why do we seem to struggle with day-to-day living? For the believer, the ultimate approval—real success—comes only from the One who knows everything truly, the One who sees exactly. What if *He* said that you were the greatest?

Last month we heard Jesus' words of assurance to John in response to two questions. The latter question John asked was, "Art thou he that should come, or do we look for another?" (Matt. 11:3) The Lord's answer leads us to consider a second aspect of their relationship: Jesus' words of commendation about John the Baptist.

After John's disciples left to report their findings, Jesus turned to the crowd and inquired about their "take" on the Baptizer. What did you expect when you came to the desert to see this man, He wonders. A weak man, like a reed blowing in the wind? A soft man, like a king clothed in velvet? Talk about wrong impressions!

No, Jesus said, the man you see in John is a strong man, a great man—in fact, "more than a prophet." The history of God's people Israel was replete with these servants who spoke for God. John was a prophet without

equal, though, because his was the final voice preceding the arrival of Messiah Jesus. Citing Malachi 3:1, the Lord Himself noted John's role as His precursor: "Behold, I send my messenger before thy face, which shall prepare thy way before thee."

A man of first-rate character, John performed his advance work admirably. He fulfilled his role with unflinching devotion, refusing to back off his resolute demand for repentance or to soften his stand on sin. Eventually he paid with his life. Yet hear Jesus' summary tribute to His cousin: not a greater man than John has ever lived (11:11).

If one key to John's greatness was his character, the other involved the nature and timing of his mission. As we noted, he represented the culmination of the Old Testament line of prophets, the end of an era. The time of promise and preparation was over; now came the kingdom incarnate in the King Himself.

Jesus, therefore, not only commends John in verse 11, He also elevates the position of the *least* kingdom saint above this great prophet. You and I share kingdom resources John and other Old Testament prophets saw only from a distance (see Heb. 11:40).

Jesus' commendation of John provides you and me, today's readers, with valuable lessons. First, His words should prompt humility on our part. Ours is a privileged place only grace affords.

A second reminder involves the kingdom's place of preeminence. The new covenant in Jesus' blood was what the old was constantly moving toward, what Jesus anticipated sharing with His followers (Matt. 26:28-29).

A third lesson, perhaps the most needed, is only implied by this incident. It is the echo of Jesus' words on another occasion when He corrected our mistaken perception of greatness: "But Jesus called them unto him, and said, Ye know that the princes of the Gentiles exercise dominion over them, and they that are great exercise authority upon them. But it shall not be so among you: but whosoever will be great among you, let him be your minister; and whosoever will be chief among you, let him be your servant: Even as the son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many," (Matt. 20:25-28).

In His kingdom, those who serve the best surpass the rest. There only the least are greatest. ■

Especially for Young Preachers



Dennis Wiggs

Confidentiality

astors are entrusted with privileged information that should not be shared with others. The young preacher must learn early in the ministry that this information must be kept confidential. An effective ministry depends upon a trusting relationship between church member and pastor. If a parishioner cannot trust the minister, who can be trusted?

Long Arms of Confidentiality

The young preacher must learn to be extremely careful:

When giving sermon illustrations,

When preparing members to visit inactive church members,

When nominating church officers and workers, When listening to church members listing the faults

of other church members, When writing a message in the bulletin or church newsletter.

When talking with the spouse or a family member, When giving prayer requests,

When conversing with a former pastor,

When conversing with the incoming pastor,

When giving advice or counsel over the telephone.

Confidential Information

A church member will often seek counsel from a trusted pastor. The grieving, guilty member will confess wrongdoing, sin or thoughts of transgression. The confession should lead to repentance, either in the pastor's study or at a church altar. The Lord forgives the sin. We preach that the Lord forgets. So should the pastor. To use privileged information in the pulpit, even if names are not used, is wrong.

I heard one minister say, "Illustrations should not go beyond me." That may be good advice. The young preacher can use himself as an illustration, but going beyond that may be treading on dangerous territory.

Pride can creep into the young pastor's mind when he knows something no one else knows. It may boost his ego when he says, "Yes, I know . . . ,' when another church member mentions a person who has fallen into sin. Better to say, "Let's pray for _____," and leave the discussion at that.

If the sinning church member truly repented in the pastor's study then the whole congregation will eventually see a changed life. I have found that it is better if the sinner testifies of the forgiveness rather than I testify for him.

What Should Be Told?

When someone approaches the young preacher for counsel, that person may say or imply, "You are not going to tell anyone, are you?" It may be wise to declare, "You can trust me; however, if you tell me something that indicates you are going to harm yourself or someone else, then I may be forced to share this information.'

Otherwise, the one seeking counsel should be able to trust the young preacher with utmost confidence. But a word of warning. It would be better if the person only confesses the sin, not details of the transgression. The young preacher does not need to hear when, why, where and how of a sin.

Share the scriptures. Ask the guilty to confess the sin to God. Lead the person to promise God that he will never do it again. Give the person verses of scripture to read. Encourage the forgiven sinner to be faithful in church.

Never discuss the confessed sin again unless the person brings it up. Even then, attempt to assure the one forgiven that God has forgiven and forgotten. If continued counsel is necessary, it would be best to not discuss the confessed sin but give scriptures that assure the person of spiritual growth and victory.

Tell Your Wife?

I have made it a practice not to share with my wife what has been revealed to me in counseling sessions. Her relationship to the congregation will be purer and stronger if she does not know what is revealed to her husband in secrecy. Who does the pastor tell? No one! Remember, the only person in the church who does not have a pastor is the pastor. He must confide in the Lord and leave it there.

Tell Your Children?

My wife and I had a policy never to discuss church matters at home. Even when certain individuals were determined to ruin our ministry, we refrained from telling the children. I believe that conversations should be optimistic, upbeat and challenging at the pastor's table. Too many parsonage children turn against the church or the ministry because of pessimism and criticism that are expressed in the pastor's home.

Tell the Officials?

Some state statutes require mandatory reporting in cases of child or adult abuse. The young preacher may be wise in seeking wisdom from a local professional counselor about procedures to follow in cases of abuse. You may find it helpful and relieving if you refer some people to professional counselors or medical doctors.

Sacred Trust

The young preacher will probably hear more confessions of transgressions than anyone else. The successful, fruitful ministry depends upon trust. Once that trust has been damaged, it is almost impossible to restore.

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Bruercase



Jack Williams

Five Things I Gave Up

eorge Bernard Shaw flopped trying to write novels before writing plays. One rejected manuscript was tossed into a corner of his living quarters in London where rodents nibbled at it in the night. Later Shaw commented: "Even the mice couldn't finish it."

Which brings me to five things in life that I gave up. As Dirty Harry once said, "A man has got to know his limitations." And now I do.

First, I gave up the Greek language. This revelation will further tarnish my image, since I passed 22 semester hours of Greek in college.... So many hours that the graduate dean waived Greek entrance exam requirements when I entered seminary. For which I could have kissed his feet.

Twelve volumes on Greek language stand within hands-reach in my library. This includes two massive lexicons, one well-thumbed grammar and four other grammars which lie about how easy it is to learn Greek.

After 38 years of sweating over second declension nouns, I can track a Greek word through the grammatical underbrush and eventually beat enough of a confession from it to determine if the King James Version needs clarification, which it doesn't. But I feel brave for having tried. Plus, to a degree, it absolves my former Greek instructors of guilt by association.

Second, I gave up being a handyman. This is embarrassing since my father with a mere ninth grade education could fix anything from hay bailers to a 1957 Chevy with clothes hangers and duct tape. I watched by the hour as he repaired the innards of a John Deere tractor. The trouble started when he'd ask me to hand him a 15/16 open-ended wrench from a pile of look-alike tools.

I vividly recall the day he told me to

hand him a Phillips head screwdriver. There were four screwdrivers in the toolbox—a big one with a blue handle, another sporting a clear plastic handle, a small red-handled job and a green number. I gave him the blue one, and he gave me a multi-colored lecture on paying attention. Which I had been. Honest. Who knew that "Phillips head" meant *point?*

How do I survive in a fix-it world when my handyman IQ would shame a slug? Easy, I married a mechanic. My wife can sew, paint, repair or tack. She also carries her own Phillips head screwdriver. My nimble-fingered son replaces struts, assembles archery sets, repairs dinged trumpets and can dismantle a pistol blindfolded. I wouldn't trade my wonderful son-in-law, otherwise known as "Mr. Goodwrench," for all the toggle switches in Detroit.

For my protection, the office where I work employs a diesel mechanic named Marilyn who moonlights as a computer guru and desktop publishing expert. She installs mother boards, turns up thermostats, unjams temperamental copiers and rips apart my editorials.

Third, I gave up singing in the choir. The great awakening came during my freshman year at Free Will Baptist Bible College when some klutz relegated my bass voice to the first tenor section in Beginning Chorus where we sang "A Mighty Fortress" during chapel. The handlers shoved me to the front row between two evil tenors equipped with knife-edged voices.

I went up with those tenors until my face turned blue and I squeaked like I'd swallowed a plug of Brown's Mule. That's when I backed off and hit some manly bass notes. When the semester ended, no one suggested that I audition for the college choir.

Two decades later when we returned to Nashville, I regained enough

courage to try another choir. Since I drove my musical family to church anyway, I was sure I could find a quiet place in the bass section. After all, my daughter played the piano, my wife sang soprano and my son sang whatever part he pleased.

So for three Sunday nights, I went to choir practice determined to show those freshman-year skeptics how wrong they were. No problems . . . until the choir director told us bass singers to sound out the notes by ourselves.

Did you ever hear a choir practice parts? The only part that sounds normal by itself is the lead. Bass notes resemble a pack of wild dogs treeing a possum. The tenors sound worse. We went over the same notes until I got mental carpal tunnel syndrome. I wanted to strangle the choir director. How on earth do people endure the self-flagellation of unending and repetitive choir practices?

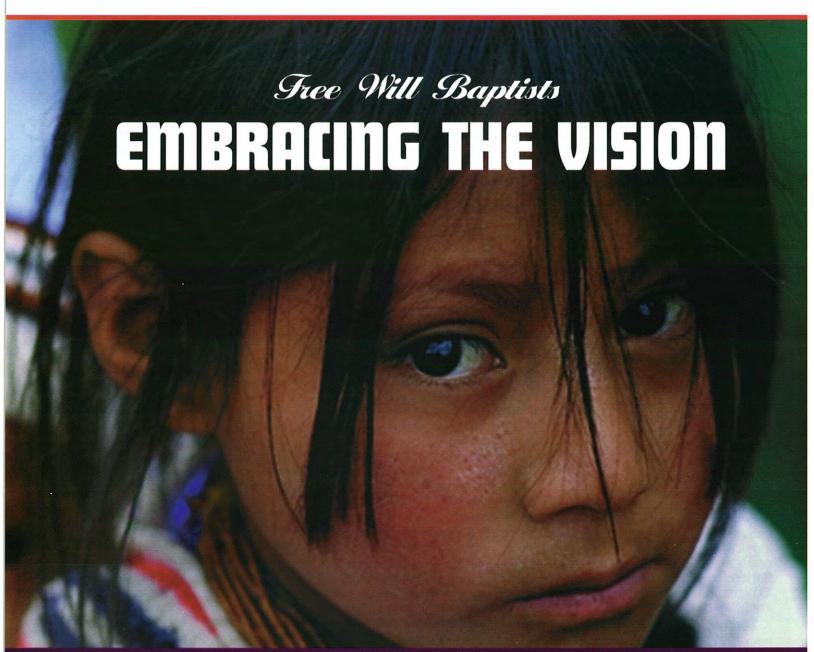
By the third session, nobody would sit beside me. When I mumbled that it was dumb to rehearse a song 20 times when preaching a sermon once seemed quite sufficient, you'd have thought I ordered a steak at a vegetarian convention. No one complained when I took Sunday night preaching appointments somewhere else.

Fourth and fifth, I gave up trying to dunk a basketball and understanding women. I learned to dunk using the children's backboards, but it seemed awkward pushing aside third graders to prove my point.

As for not understanding women, any man who thinks he does gets tossed out of Eden for his efforts, gets a haircut by the Philistines for trying to outfox a female or he sleeps on the couch until he regains his sanity. Maybe that's God's best laugh on the sons of Adam, And if it isn't, I give up.

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"Where there is no vision, the people perish "

—Proverbs 29:18

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