

# CONTACT

Official Publication of the National Association of Free Will Baptists

August 2000



## PASTOR APPRECIATION ISSUE



## ARTICLES

### 4 Real Life in the Smaller Church

There's a special magic at work in small churches. They offer something that can't be found anywhere else.

### 6 That Woman in the Parsonage

She's a wife and mother first. But she also belongs uniquely to the congregation, just like her husband.

### 8 The Michigan Surprise

How one church honored its pastor.

### 10 A Tribute to God's Clown: Bronco West

He grew up in circus wagons and vaudeville. He fought in the Battle of the Bulge. Then God called him to preach. But he was always a clown—God's clown.

### 12 High and Holy Calling

Every pastor is a work in progress.

### 13 Dealing with Judas

What does a pastor do when he has been betrayed? Read about the six principles that really work.

### 16 When the Saints Go Marching In

An Arkansas Free Will Baptist layman wrote one of America's most loved hymns.

### 17 How Many Really Great Preachers Are There?

Now and then a fellow can ask one question too many.

## COLUMNS

### 3 The Secretary Speaks

Complete Christians

### 23 The Department Pages

### 27 Green Tree Bible Study

Deliver Us From Evil

### 28 Especially for Young Preachers

The Prayer Meeting

### 29 Youth Update

### 30 Top Shelf

### 31 Briefcase

The Baddest Pastor in Town

## NEWS

### 19 Free Will Baptist Newsfront

Child Care Emergency Shelter

Michigan State Association

J. L. Van Winkle Dies

FWBBC Students Witness 645 Decisions

Bible College Graduation

### 22 Currently

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Melvin Worthington

## Complete Christians

**G**od has given all that is necessary for the edification, establishment and equipping of those who have been redeemed. Paul reminds the believers at Ephesus of this truth, when he asserts, "And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists and some, pastors and teachers: For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ . . ." (Eph. 4:11-12).

Equipping means to make ready or competent for service or action. It includes the ideas of preparation and qualification. God's equipping program prepares by training or experience those Christians who have the necessary skills and knowledge to do the work of the ministry for the edifying of the body of Christ.

### Offices Established

God establishes four offices in the Church and gifts the individuals with supernatural gifts who serve in the offices. God gives and governs the supernatural gifts. The Lord has made provision for the equipping of the saints and the extension of the Church.

The four offices include: (1) *Apostles*—Apostles are ambassadors of the gospel, officially a commissioner of Christ with miraculous powers.

(2) *Prophets*—Prophets are foretellers or inspired speakers.

(3) *Evangelists*—Evangelists are preachers of the gospel—messengers of good tidings. This is the only place the word is used, and it probably refers to those whose main business was preaching and who were not engaged in the government of the

church. This office was distinct from that of pastor, teacher and prophet and was manifestly an office in which preaching was the main thing.

(4) *Pastors and Teachers*—"Pastor" means shepherd and "teacher" means an instructor. The pastor/teacher is one person who performs a two-fold task—shepherding and teaching.

These offices are divine, distinct, designated, designed, directed and distributed for the well-being of the Church. Functioning properly, they provide all that is necessary for the development, discipleship and deployment of individual Christians for ministry.

### Objective Explained

God's *Purpose* (Eph. 4:12). "Perfecting" means to complete. The various officers were appointed in order that everything in the Church might be well arranged or put into proper order. God's ultimate goal includes perfection, productivity and progress. The perfecting process brings Christians to a state of completeness, enables them to make a contribution and produces a cohesiveness in the edifying of the body.

God's *Product* (Eph. 13-15). The product which is produced includes: (1) *The Advancement in Christ*. Paul affirms this when he declares, "Till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of

the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ" (v. 13).

(2) *The Allegiance to Christ*. Paul denotes this when he says, "That we henceforth be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive" (v. 14).

(3) *The Articulation for Christ*. Paul confirms this when he asserts, "But speaking the truth in love, may grow up into him in all things, which is the head, even Christ" (v. 15).

### Outcome Expected

The Church is an *organism*. Paul describes the church as a body. It is a living organism with many members. The Church is an organism which is *ordered*. It is fitly framed together. Every member is in his proper place.

The Church is an organism which is ordered and *outfitted*. It is knit or sewn together with a perfect fit, united in harmony and fitly framed in every joint.

The Church is an organism which is ordered, outfitted and *operates* as a unified, united, unselfish, unique and universal entity. The Church is one body with many members.

The ordained offices are designed to equip the saints. This equipping is personal, perceptual, progressive, practical and prescribed. It is done through preaching, teaching and practicing. As pastor/teachers we have the task of perfecting and bringing to completeness the saints in order that they might effectively, earnestly and enthusiastically do the work of the ministry. ■

### The Secretary's Schedule

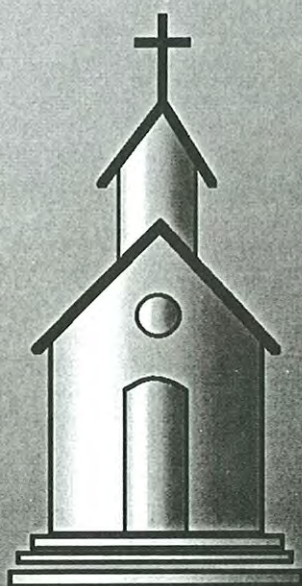
August 2000

8-9 Arkansas State Association



# Real Life in the Smaller Church

By Tim Owen



**T**hey said they liked the church, and I thanked them and asked if they would tell me what had attracted them to our church. Friendliness and warmth were mentioned, and then to my horror they said a “small congregation.” Talk about a rollercoaster of emotions.

I was happy because they liked us, but sad because they had used the “S” word, “small.” Living under the *misguided* impression that a small church and a spiritual church were anything but synonymous, I was numb.

Seminars led by pastors of megachurches experiencing explosive growth year after year headlined conference mailers I received. Reading over their material compounded my impression. Was I lazy, apathetic or not spiritual enough?

While any or all three were possibilities, I grew to realize that size doesn’t necessarily equate with success in God’s scheme of things. As stewards our success is measured by faithfulness. Churches, both small and large, when they are good stewards, bring honor to God. I’m for the church, large and small, and believe in it.

However, there are those who see the small church as weak and unable to minister effectively in today’s complex society. I’m of a different opinion. I believe there is nothing the church cannot do for His glory with His enabling grace. Believing that, I look at the church and see potential regardless of its size.

Seeing potential in smaller communities made the late Sam Walton the richest man in America. Walton

wrote, “It turned out that . . . there was much, much more business out there in small-town America than anybody, including me, had ever dreamed of.”

Small churches, like small towns, still do a good business. Like the couple mentioned earlier, there are people who are seeking a small church.

So what’s the small church to do?

## Pay Attention

Several years ago there was an article about a bank in Morton, Illinois, which had resisted the trend of mergers and acquisitions. The bank had not only braved those storms but at the same time experienced rapidly growing assets (a 20% increase the past year alone).

The bank president was quoted as



saying, "The trend toward big banking has actually fueled the growth of this small-town bank because it offers something increasingly hard to find, namely personal relationships with customers." Is it any wonder the bank's slogan was: "We pay interest and we pay attention."

What made that small-town bank special is what also makes the small church special—paying attention. Unfortunately, size limits you from doing all that you would like to do, but it need not keep you from giving attention to the details. I feel as though I'm still a rookie in this area, but cards, phone calls and visits still make the difference. They communicate to others that you care and that you are paying attention.

Earlier this week a 10-year-old in the church had tubes placed in his ears and his adenoids removed. Would I have known had it been a large church? Perhaps, but there might not have been someone there to pray with that young boy and his family. The small-town church pays attention, and that makes it special.

### Strive for Excellence

It's easy to find yourself sinking in the quicksands of comparisons. Surely I'm not the only one who has driven by a church facility that compares in size to a mall and assumed that whatever they were doing it was better than what our small church could do. However, excellence in ministry cannot, nor should it be, measured by the size of buildings, acres of land or numbers alone.

Regardless of size, we can strive for excellence in our worship emphasizing its importance and relevance. A 60-voice choir, orchestra and sermon via PowerPoint may be nice, but they are not imperative to worship. Use what you have and do it right!

The educational arm of the church, including Sunday School and VBS, are vitally important. Because we want to see people growing, we must strive for excellence here. In the end, growing people become involved people.

Warren Wiersbe wrote, "Not all works are going to be big in the eyes of men and be known around the world. But that's not the important thing. The important thing is that we

do our work well so that it will be big in the eyes of God."

### Keep the Home Fires Burning

Ever notice that it isn't the large church that artists use on Christmas cards? Rather, it's small church buildings. They promote closeness and care of days gone by.

One of my pet peeves is the lack of customer service these days. Where have all the smiles gone? When did it become bothersome to ask for a simple refill on your drink? Warmth and friendliness may be bygone qualities of the drive-through window, but they should be standard in the church. Scarcity of resources is no excuse here.

The small church may not be able to offer a smorgasbord of programs or facilities requiring a map, but what they do offer is a unique and distinct worship experience.

Author Keith Drury tells of dropping by to worship in a church on the coast of Oregon one Sunday. He found himself immediately impressed. He thought, "If the mainline church is dead, then somebody forgot to tell these people."

The congregation totaled 52 on that Sunday. Undoubtedly, no one had been kind enough to tell them of their pending death, nor that they were a church growth failure. Instead they were joyful, happy and serving the Lord at 52.

They discovered what every church searches for—value. We'll never find it trying to live up to the expectations or criteria of some church growth guru. The church's value is based on who you are first, and then how many you are. ■



**ABOUT THE WRITER:** Reverend Tim Owen pastors Piney Grove Free Will Baptist Church in Chipley, Florida. He is also moderator of the Florida State Association of Free Will Baptists.



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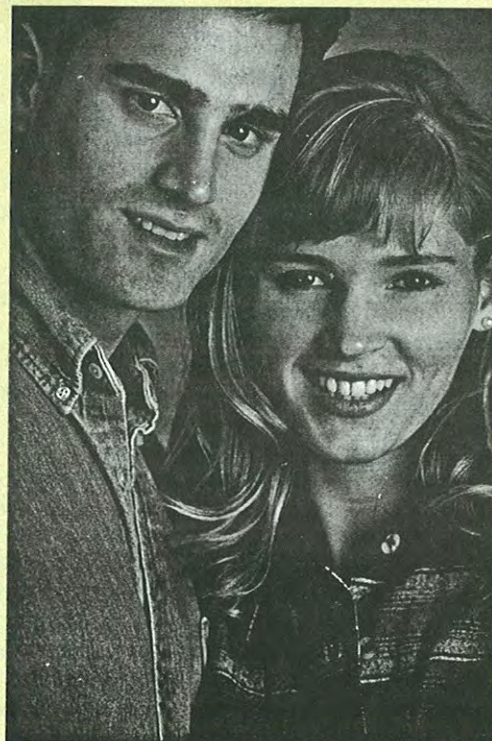
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# That Woman in the Parsonage

By Melinda Pinson



**H**ow do you find yourself in the role of pastor's wife? One of two scenarios occur: You either marry a man who is already serving as a pastor or you marry a non-pastor who sooner or later answers the call to pastoral ministry. In either case you wake up one morning wearing a new identity, "pastor's wife," through no effort of your own.

How does the identity as pastor's wife differ from that of plant manager's wife or farmer's wife? All married women can in some way be identified with the occupation or service of their husbands.

A pastor's wife, however, is uniquely identified with her husband's occupation in ways other women are not. She is automatically given a role to fill with certain expectations. That role can become an occupation in and of itself by virtue of her husband's job.

How does a woman adjust to such an awesome position that is complete with specific expectations? Not easily! The role of pastor's wife is a position for which there is little or no training; that is, unless you were fortunate enough to observe a mother or grandmother, and most pastors' wives weren't.

For most there is no advance preparation. Unlike the intensive preparation available for pastors, pastors' wives do not formally train for their

roles. If you are a pastor's wife, on-the-job training is your tutor.

## Dealing with Others' Expectations

How can a woman become a pastor's wife and not be overwhelmed? Sometimes others' expectations are unrealistic and virtually unachievable by anyone less than a superwoman. Just read the following job description provided by a church to a pastoral candidate's wife.

Recorded in *The Diary of a Minister's Wife* from the 1880s: "Applicant's wife must be both stunning and plain, smartly attired, but conservative in appearance, gracious and able to get along with everyone, even women. Must be willing to work in the church kitchen, teach Sunday School, babysit, run multilith machine, wait table, never listen to gossip, never becoming discouraged."

One has to wonder whether this specific job opening was ever filled, or if it was, exceptions must have been made and numerous human imperfections forgiven. Yet often, modern-day pastors' wives face similar unrealistic expectations. How have Christian women managed to fill such lofty roles?

The biblical responsibilities of a pastor's wife are not unlike those of a layman's wife. However, all pas-

tors' wives are a bit overwhelmed from the outset.

As a new pastor's wife at age 24, I was both excited and frightened of my new position. Only two weeks earlier I had married this man who answered the call to pastor at his first church. I was hardly familiar with my role as wife before I assumed an additional one as pastor's wife.

Instantly I was bombarded with questions expectant: Do you sing in the choir and play the piano? Do you teach Sunday School? Do you like working with children? Do you and can you cook? What kind of a pastor's wife are you? Do you plan to work outside of the home? I wondered if I were supposed to feel unqualified, since playing the piano and other musical gifts were not part of my spiritual repertoire.

I soon related to pastor's wife Mary Thompson, played by actress Susan Hayward in the old film "I'd Climb the Highest Mountain." The scene set in the hills of North Georgia in the days of circuit-riding preachers traveling by horse and buggy captured the uncertainty and nervousness of a newlywed woman married to a pastor (William, played by William Lundigan) on his



first assignment at a church.

Mary stepped into the doorway of a new world where she was greeted by the expectations of making homemade biscuits, keeping a fine house, gently handling antagonistic church members, enduring harsh criticisms of her husband, ministry to men, women and children dying from an influenza epidemic, and on and on.

### Conforming to God's Expectations

Through all the trials, lofty expectations, tragedies and hurt feelings, Mary remained faithful to God and exuded the qualities of a biblical, godly woman and a faithful wife. This film reminded me that being the proper pastor's wife is not my primary goal.

Rather, what is of paramount importance is living a Christ-centered life as His child, responding to life's challenges in a manner pleasing to Him. How pastors' wives live their lives has less to do with their husbands' being pastors and more to do with how successfully they are living out their faith, reflecting their growth or lack of it as Christians.

As pastors' wives we must focus on conforming our behavior to God's standards and biblical principles, thereby exhibiting a good testimony to the watching world, rather than striving to satisfy a list of others' expectations. However, we must realize that this is a spiritual goal that is a lifetime struggle. Sometimes it is difficult not to take our eyes off God's expectations and seek to please others.

When people make stereotypical remarks or have unrealistic expectations, do not take offense. View the comments as honorable that people have such a lofty view of your position. Generally people mean no harm in stereotyping you, even though their comments seem critical. Others just see you as someone special who is in a place of honor, and they naturally assume you can do almost anything.

As you are able to arrive at a realization of who you are in Christ, recognizing the unique gifts He has and has not given you, you are able to become unburdened by the expectations of others and even receive criticism better. We must be realistic about our gifts, recognizing that God has a *unique* plan

of service for each pastor's wife.

### The Biblical Blueprint

The Bible is the only blueprint for a pastor's wife, just as the Bible should be the blueprint for all Christian women. As you search the scriptures for direction, you will find no double standard for the pastor's wife and layman's wife. See Proverbs 31:10-31 for God's characteristics of a godly, virtuous woman.

Even though God does not expect laymen's wives to be any less godly than pastors' wives, the pastors' wives are in a special position with high visibility. Being married to the spiritual leader of a church means that people look to you as well as the pastor for spiritual direction and guidance. Pastors' wives will be more closely observed and, therefore, need to be positive role models for other women.

Paul's discussion about the qualifications of deacons' wives in I Timothy 3:11 is equally applicable to the wives of all Christian leaders: "Even so must their wives be grave, not slanderers, sober, faithful in all things." Pastors' wives, like the wives of all Christian leaders, have a special responsibility in the church not to discredit Christ's ministry.

As pastors' wives we must give serious consideration to the position in which we find ourselves. It is a privilege and a place of honor to hold the title "pastor's wife." You are responsible for an area of Christian service that receives such respect and attention. Therefore, you have great potential to influence the lives of others for Christ in a unique and far-reaching way that many other women are not granted.

### Developing Friendships

No matter how well you might cope with the privilege and responsibility of being a pastor's wife, you must develop some secure friendships for sharing burdens, questions and personal feelings. Seek out both younger and older pastors' wives to gain wisdom and understanding.

Use discernment and wisdom when selecting a confidant in your own church with whom to share your thoughts and feelings. Whomever you choose to confide in, caring for your

own emotional health is essential to your spiritual growth. Do not feel inadequate or weak by requesting any kind of advice or sharing a burden with a female friend.

H. B. London of *Focus on the Family* receives letters from pastors' wives that account for 20% of his inquiries. Realizing our weaknesses, identifying ways we need to grow in Christ and seeking spiritual guidance from others in those areas are signs of Christian maturity.

If you are a veteran pastor's wife, seek out a young or new pastor's wife in your area. She would love to have your support and draw from your experiences. You veterans have a responsibility to train the inexperienced (see Titus 2:4).

For those who are not pastors' wives, befriend a pastors' wife. Get to know her as an individual who has an identity of her own, just as you do. She needs friends just as all women do. As Christian women, you will find you have much in common.

### Conclusion

The role of a pastor's wife carries with it high expectations and sometimes unrealistic demands. Yet the pastor's wife should strive to conform to God's expectations, follow His blueprint in scripture and develop meaningful Christ-honoring friendships. By doing these things, she will not only effectively complement her husband's ministry but also develop into the mature Christian woman God desires for her to be. ■



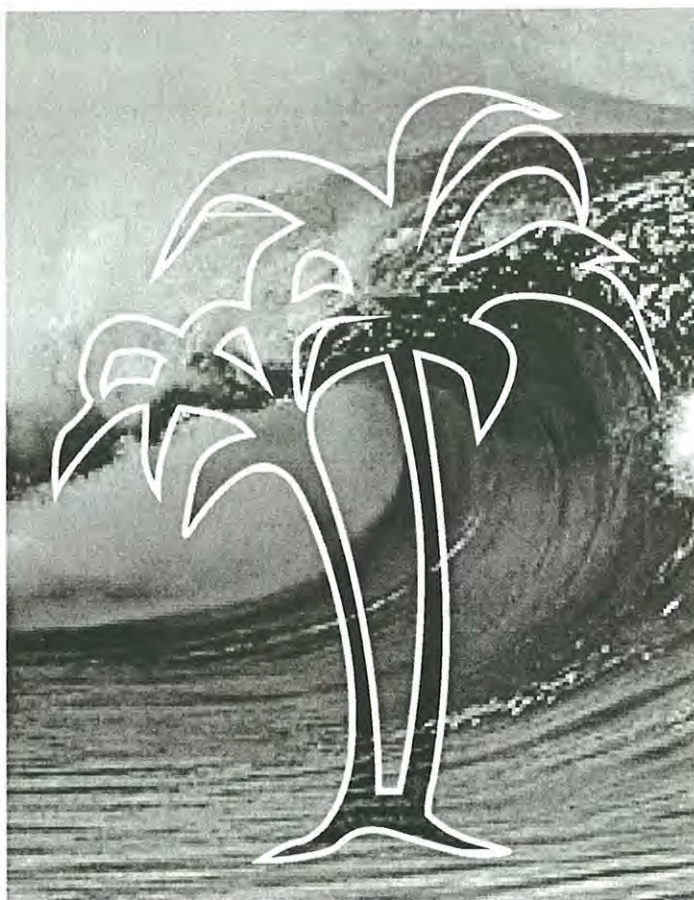
ABOUT THE WRITER: Melinda Pinson is a pastor's wife and member of Colquitt Free Will Baptist Church in Colquitt, Georgia, where her husband Matt pastors. A graduate of Catawba College and Yale University, she has served as a hotel manager and bank loan officer. She is a full-time mother and homemaker.



How one church honored its pastor

# The Michigan Surprise

By Joanne Less



October 3 last year was designated Pastor Appreciation Day at our church to honor Pastor Milton Worthington and his wife Dianne for 23 years of faithful service; the event was a surprise for them.

Several weeks earlier, letters from Central FWB Church in Royal Oak, Michigan, had been sent to all members announcing the special service set for the morning worship hour. A potluck dinner was planned to follow.

Members were encouraged to provide photos of the years Pastor Worthington had served the church. The gift of money would be used for a one-week vacation to Hawaii.

The choir in place, choir director Trent Walley opened the service with the congregation singing a hymn. But suddenly the stage was transformed as members set up two arm chairs and a table with a large arrangement of flowers. The choir exited. The pastor and his wife, obviously perplexed, were invited to take the seats of honor. That's how it began.

Gary Faust, our moderator, welcomed the guest speaker—our pas-

tor's brother, Dr. Melvin Worthington, and his wife Anne.

In a look back over 23 years, three members of the congregation reflected on their relationships with the pastor and his wife.

Jan Craig, in her personal anecdotes about events shared between their families, spoke of the "boundless energy" generated by the Worthington couple. Together they attended numerous sports events in which their children participated.

Of Dianne, she said, "Her mind is always at work whether planning a ladies' Bible study or working on window treatments for her customers." Jan's closing remark, "This portion has been brought to you by Worthington Windows," caused laughter throughout the auditorium.

Mike Beitel recalled his first visit to Central FWB Church and meeting the pastor 10 years ago. Pointing to the vast collection of Christian books in his study, Pastor Worthington invited this young, eager convert to use them. He encouraged Mike to learn more about Jesus. Today Mike is an instructor in our Primary Sunday School Department.

In my testimony, my remarks were directed to Pastor Worthington's patience and practical wisdom. His practical wisdom demonstrated during our countless counseling sessions kept me focused on Jesus . . . "the One who frees us from our sinful nature."

My questions continually challenged him; he encouraged me to ask them. I spoke about my mother who had spent four years in a nursing home in Ohio. Pastor and Dianne always found time to visit with Mother whenever I was able to bring her up here.

Their faithful visits led to Mother's conversion. In closing I said, "This pastor has led me to the reality of truth . . . Jesus Christ and His promises of eternal life."

Following the testimonies, Gary Faust presented the gift of a check for over \$4,000 for a trip to Hawaii. In her search for words, Dianne could only utter, "I'm too busy!" An articulate and fluent communicator, Pastor Worthington could only say, "I am flabbergasted!"

Dr. Melvin Worthington gave an entertaining tribute to the couple. In his opening remarks he reminded us that today also marked the 40th wedding



anniversary for Milton and Dianne. His tribute focused on "the making of a minister" as a process. "God always begins with a conversion experience."

In 1954 the Worthington brothers were converted. The call to preach came a year later. They were already singing in a quartet. Milton was ordained in 1957 when he committed himself to preaching the Word. Dr. Melvin commended his brother for his consistent stand on denominational issues and his dedication to preach the Book.

This pastor's contributions—personally, professionally and pastorally—the speaker extolled, demonstrated involvement in the lives of every member of the congregation. His long years of service on the Sunday School Board and the Foreign Missions Board resulted in a formidable body of literature and the mission outreach to Korea.

Dr. Worthington concluded, "Milton is a pattern for others to follow."

The service closed with taking a special offering for the North Carolina Flood Relief Fund.

We adjourned downstairs for a time of food and fellowship. Many gathered around the photo display board contributed by our members. Especially notable were pictures brought by Dr. Melvin Worthington—Milton's favorite cow, baby pictures of the twin brothers and the early quartet.

In a letter of thanks that followed, Milton and Dianne wrote, "Paul's words to the Philippian believers, 'I thank my God upon every remembrance of you' (Phil. 1:3) expresses our sincere appreciation for your graciousness, thoughtfulness and generosity on Pastor Appreciation Day. P. S. Hawaii, here we come!" ■



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

# THE TOGETHER WAY

May 2000

Receipts:						
State	Designated	CO-OP	Total	Year To Date Designated	Year To Date CO-OP	Year To Date Total
Alabama	\$ 766.83	\$ 302.43	\$ 1,069.26	\$ 1,707.91	\$ 914.86	\$ 2,622.77
Arizona	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00
Arkansas	12,550.62	23,175.51	35,726.13	69,016.88	81,836.89	150,853.77
California	.00	1,130.14	1,130.14	.00	4,520.50	4,520.50
Colorado	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00
Delaware	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00
Florida	.00	.00	.00	130.00	.00	130.00
Georgia	29,260.77	1,681.44	30,942.21	160,365.38	9,229.10	169,594.48
Hawaii	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00
Idaho	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00
Illinois	9,150.35	1,703.16	10,853.51	49,453.23	10,091.63	59,544.86
Indiana	2,069.25	843.90	2,913.15	7,203.30	1,378.48	8,581.78
Iowa	.00	.00	.00	295.00	1,978.80	2,273.80
Kansas	.00	162.99	162.99	.00	400.71	400.71
Kentucky	2,026.84	1,185.78	3,212.62	7,615.55	5,308.55	12,924.10
Louisiana	20.00	.00	20.00	20.00	155.00	175.00
Maryland	.00	.00	.00	.00	328.11	328.11
Michigan	71,455.55	7,399.60	78,855.15	141,320.69	19,229.37	160,550.06
Mississippi	8,038.41	1,098.92	9,137.33	42,761.85	3,848.85	46,610.70
Missouri	54,909.21	15,209.03	70,118.24	214,554.25	70,481.98	285,036.23
Montana	.00	.00	.00	30.00	.00	30.00
Nebraska	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00
New Jersey	.00	.00	.00	351.21	.00	351.21
New Mexico	819.45	26.73	846.18	3,254.91	209.49	3,464.40
North Carolina	2,923.79	1,663.45	4,587.24	6,988.42	10,805.42	17,793.84
Ohio	13,073.77	3,860.19	16,933.96	75,384.57	15,952.16	91,336.73
Oklahoma	76,002.69	11,156.26	87,158.95	296,722.35	51,340.21	348,062.56
South Carolina	66,227.56	131.93	66,359.49	281,700.35	131.93	281,832.28
South Dakota	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00
Tennessee	20,392.48	1,977.84	22,370.32	62,168.71	9,001.22	71,169.93
Texas	9,350.25	253.16	9,603.41	48,071.95	1,607.56	49,679.51
Virginia	603.79	.00	603.79	3,284.85	.00	3,284.85
Virgin Islands	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00
West Virginia	1,205.35	38.64	1,243.99	7,768.48	432.62	8,201.10
Wisconsin	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00
Canada	1,230.42	28.38	1,258.80	2,937.45	67.05	3,004.50
Northwest Association	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00
Northeast Association	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00
Other	.00	(0.02)	(0.02)	.00	.19	.19
<b>Totals</b>	<b>\$ 382,077.38</b>	<b>\$ 73,029.46</b>	<b>\$ 455,106.84</b>	<b>\$ 1,483,107.29</b>	<b>\$ 299,250.68</b>	<b>\$ 1,782,357.97</b>

## Disbursements:

Executive Office	\$ 2,374.22	\$ 32,863.27	\$ 35,237.49	\$ 9,827.59	\$134,662.77	\$ 144,490.36
Foreign Missions	226,583.86	9,238.23	235,822.09	872,030.17	37,855.22	909,885.39
FWBBC	20,058.14	9,238.23	29,296.37	96,176.31	37,855.22	134,031.53
Home Missions	87,982.59	7,229.92	95,212.51	399,136.50	29,625.81	428,762.31
Retirement & Insurance	1,033.76	5,623.28	6,657.04	2,644.44	23,042.31	25,686.75
Master's Men	460.16	5,623.28	6,083.44	2,010.88	23,042.31	25,053.19
Com. for Theo. Integrity	160.80	200.82	361.62	871.37	822.94	1,694.31
FWB Foundation	312.59	2,409.97	2,722.56	1,770.33	9,875.28	11,645.61
Historical Commission	37.11	200.82	237.93	135.57	822.94	958.51
Music Commission	27.22	200.82	228.04	99.71	822.94	922.65
Media Commission	42.69	200.82	243.51	189.34	822.94	1,012.28
Hillsdale FWB College	1,933.54	.00	1,933.54	9,153.57	.00	9,153.57
Other	41,070.70	.00	41,070.70	89,061.51	.00	89,061.51
<b>Totals</b>	<b>\$ 382,077.38</b>	<b>\$ 73,029.46</b>	<b>\$ 455,106.84</b>	<b>\$ 1,483,107.29</b>	<b>\$ 299,250.68</b>	<b>\$ 1,782,357.97</b>



# A Tribute To God's Clown: Bronco West

By Vernie H. Hersey



"Jake the Hobo" as presented by Bronco West.

**1919**—Under the circus tent the audience laughed as a small four-year-old boy in clown make-up and a bulgy suit, with puffy sleeves and ruffles around the collar and cuffs, mimicked an older clown, his father, in a costume just like his.

After the routine the small clown climbed up to the seats and sat next to a little girl his size. To everyone's amusement he chose one girl after another for his attentions.

Meanwhile, other performers in the white-yellow light from the gasoline pan torches kept the center rings lively—jugglers—clowns—comedians—dogs, ponies, horses—a trapeze artist doing the iron jaw, the Spanish web.

**1987**—A youngish 72-year-old preacher in clown make-up and suit shuffles on stage. It is fun-time at a church fellowship, revival, youth camp, senior adult meeting, Vacation Bible School or Kids Crusade.

Young and old alike break into gales of laughter as the clown and his sidekick bring to life "Jake the Hobo" with their slapstick hokum comedy. You'd think the clown had just walked around the corner from a medicine show or vaude-

ville act of the early 1900s.

Well, he did. The small clown in the first paragraph and the ordained clown are one and the same, Bronco Franklin West. His sidekick is wife Mozelle.

**1915**—Born in Erwin, North Carolina, to vaudeville parents, Bronco spent 27 years on the performing circuit. For the past 28 years he has preached the gospel and shared fun and laughter with God's people.

Bronco's first memories are of the wagon circus and performing with his father. He recalls the excitement of the crew of laborers putting up and taking down the show; horses and wagons moving out with the performing animals hitched to the back, hauling 15 to 20 performing dogs in cages like chicken coops; dirt roads turning into mud and clay; meals served in a cookhouse tent, and living in a tent.

Over the years Bronco and his fam-



Bronco as evangelist and chalk artist.

ily performed in a variety of shows. "Once we worked with a railroad circus," he says. "Some seasons we worked the vaudeville circuit with our own acts, at times with other troupes."

"As time went on," he recalls, "we learned the medicine show spiel and worked that routine. At age 16 I played the leading roles and was the featured comedian. Eventually I produced the show, taking care of rehearsals, props and programming. I could produce programs for a three-week stay without putting on the same act twice.

"We performed in tents, schools, theatres, opera houses, courthouses, churches, in whatever was available. The shows were about the biggest thing in the country, and we drew



crowds from 200 to 2,000. When we arrived in a town, we drove up and down the streets and advertised the show with a megaphone."

"I didn't go to church," Bronco admits. "But I would go to announce our show. I would tell the people to come to prayer meeting and stay for the show afterwards. In the rural traveling vaudeville show there was nothing offensive."

"However, now that I'm a preacher," he adds, "I wouldn't allow such an announcement in church."

**1935**—the West family act came to a halt when Bronco's father lost an arm to blood poisoning. Bronco joined Charlie and Bill Monroe, the Bluegrass Boys, in Raleigh, North Carolina, for radio and personal appearance shows. After his father recovered, they went back on the road together.

In 1942 at age 27 Bronco was drafted into the 7th Army and was assigned to entertain troops. From time to time he saw combat and fought in the Battle of the Bulge where he won two Bronze Stars and a Purple Heart.

Speaking of his combat experience, Bronco says, "I recall wondering why I was not hit by the bombs and shells that fell all around me. I'd move forward and one would fall where I had just been."

"I was not a Christian then, but I remembered a joke about prayer and told it to my Christian buddies. They told it to the chaplain who asked me to tell it at church. On Sunday morning in a barn loft with shells falling all around us, I told my joke."

"That was my first participation in any religious service anywhere," he adds with amusement. He had no way of knowing that someday he would preach the gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Bronco was wounded in one hand and leg when a shell exploded near his half-track. Because of infection, he nearly lost his leg. The doctors decided to try a new drug, penicillin. It worked and only part of the bone was removed.

After the war Bronco returned home, still not knowing Christ as Savior. He went back on the road with his own show. By then, vaudeville was on the way out. After two years he joined his parents who operated a grocery store.

**1951**—he met Mozelle Phillips, and they married within the year.

God's timing would soon be right. He would place the talented entertainer on the visitation route of a new mission work whose members considered it their duty to lead Bronco to the Lord.

"They visited in the community and came by the store asking for donations," he relates. "We helped a little but we were interested in the mission only from a business standpoint."

"When they invited me to church I always promised to go, but never went. They must have asked me 25 times before I visited their church."

Bronco remembers feeling he should give his heart to the Lord, but he just didn't. "Then, one day," he shares, "I helped an older lady carry her groceries. As we passed the church I noticed a sign advertising their revival."

"Walking past the church on my way back, I was convicted. I talked to the Lord the best I knew how. I promised that if He would save me I'd go to church that night, confess Him publicly and try to live for Him."

"About 10 days later, Mozelle accepted Christ. In three or four weeks, my father and mother trusted the Lord. So, our whole family got things straightened out and lived for Lord from then on."

Soon afterwards, Bronco joined Free Will Baptists. "There was some trouble in the church and I quit going," he explains. "I visited many churches. The pastor at Old Field FWB Church, now named Pleasant Grove, talked about witnessing, soul-winning and visitation. I liked that and I stayed."

After a couple of years, the Lord dealt with Bronco, "sure enough," he remembers. "I felt the call to preach. For a year I didn't tell anyone. One day I said to Mozelle, 'Suppose I'd tell you I felt the Lord calling me to preach?'"

"What makes you think the Lord's calling you to preach?" she asked.

"That's a good question," I responded. "I haven't had a burning bush experience, and no dove has perched on my shoulder. But, attending church and participating in services are just not enough. I feel the Lord is calling me into the ministry."

"Well," she answered, "if you feel

that's what the Lord is calling you to do, then maybe you'd better do it.' "

A few days later 44-year-old Bronco enrolled at Bob Jones University. The next fall Mozelle joined him. There he discovered his show business talent could be used in the Lord's work.

"I did some of my comedy routines at college entertainment programs," he explains. "Students asked for my help in youth rallies and church promotions. I stayed busy doing comedy to communicate the gospel but felt guilty. I was not preaching enough."

That all changed by graduation when Bronco entered the ministry full time with preaching taking first place. Chalk talks and comedy took second place.

Bronco's evangelistic crusades have taken him into several states while his pastorates and missions work have centered in North Carolina.

"My first pastorate was with Tarboro FWB Church," he relates. "Next I served Fellowship FWB Church at Durham as assistant pastor. From there Mozelle and I went on to establish mission churches in Roxboro, Winston-Salem and Dunn."

**1984**—at age 70, Bronco retired from his final mission and pastorate at Dunn where he had served for 13 years. However, he continued his preaching and entertaining appointments until 1993 when health problems forced him to retire. He was 78 years old.

When asked about his show business background and if he would change the past, Bronco remarks, "I liked show business and was a fair comedian. Before I was saved I used to say I wouldn't change a thing. Now, being saved, I'd change everything."

"I was 40 years old when I accepted the Lord, 44 when I enrolled in college and 47 when I entered the ministry. Yes, I'd change everything. I'd work for the Lord while I was young." ■

Editor's note: Bronco, along with other former vaudeville performers, was videotaped by The Smithsonian Institute in Washington, D.C. Occasionally, the program is shown on PBS Television.

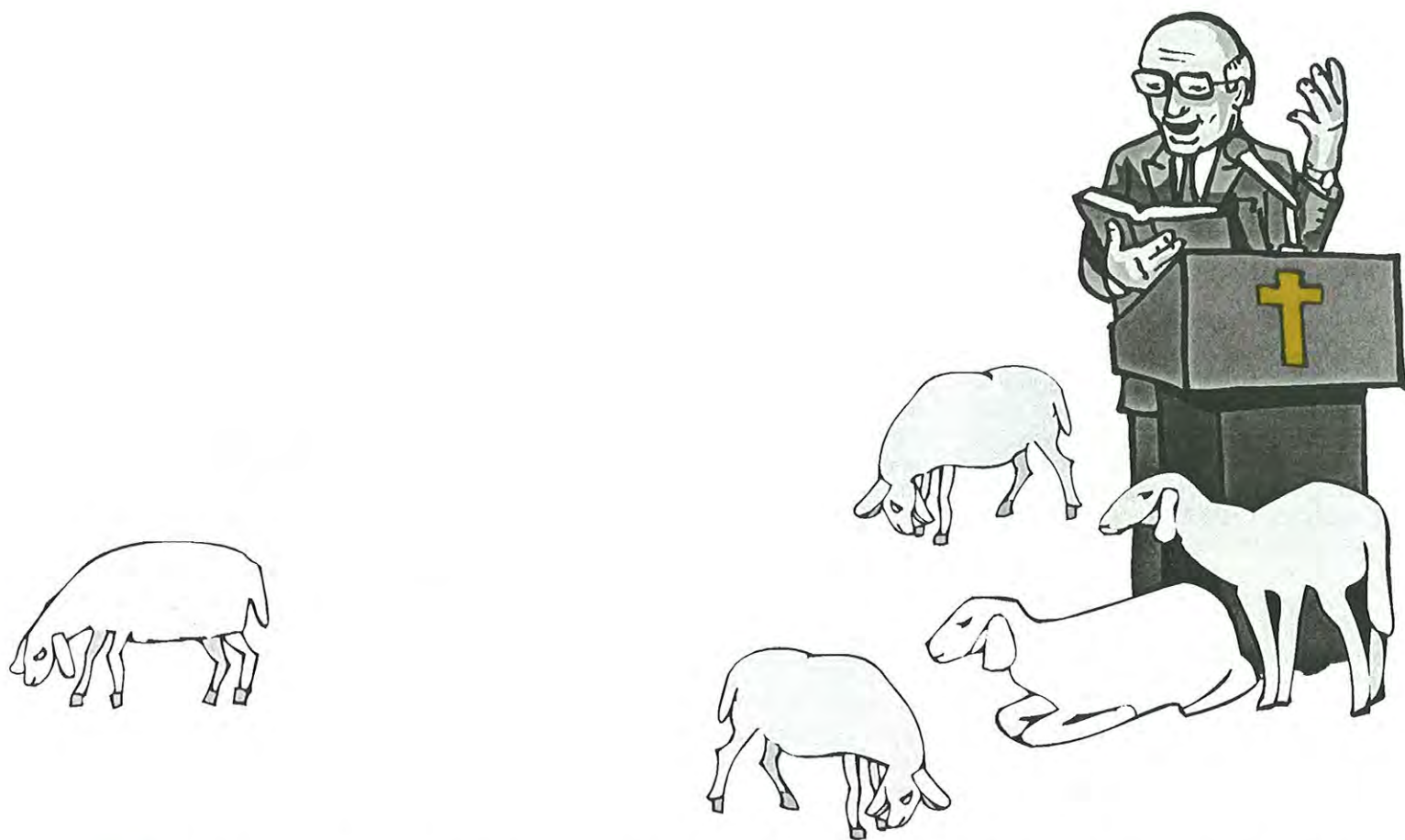
ABOUT THE WRITER: Mrs. Vernie Hersey wrote this article in 1987. It was published in the Fall 1987 issue of *Happenings*.

Special Notice. Reverend Bronco West died April 30, 2000, at age 84. He is survived by his wife of 49 years, Mozelle West, several cousins, nephews and nieces.



# High and Holy Calling

By Larry Hampton



**P**astor, you have a high and holy calling. You watch for the souls of men. One day you will give account of your performance to God.

It is not easy to lead a congregation of people. There's a good reason why scripture compares us to sheep. We are prone to want our own way. We wander off alone.

That's why discipline is necessary—to restore the sheep to fellowship with the Good Shepherd.

Pastors are human. Sometimes they have trouble getting along with certain church members. The members rub the pastor the wrong way. Perish the thought, but the pastor may even rub a member the wrong way.

It seems that at times that despite his best efforts, a pastor just can't gee and haw with some members. A

counselor might say these two have a personality conflict.

On occasion a pastor may feel threatened by a gifted layman. This may lead the pastor to misinterpret the layman's actions and even ascribe improper motives to them.

At other times, people in the church talk about the pastor. They spread rumors in an attempt to undermine his authority. They may even be so bold as to try to run him out of town.

What's a pastor to do? Pray. Pray for wisdom. Pray for the person who is a burr under his saddle. Pray that he will not give in to the temptation to use "the system" to get rid of the irritating person. (Remember, pearls are formed as the result of sand irritating an oyster.) After all, discipline is designed to restore an erring brother, not to get even with him or run him off.

BPGIFWMY—Be Patient God Isn't Finished With Me Yet. These wise words apply to both the pastor and his people.

You have a high and holy calling. Walk worthy! ■



**ABOUT THE WRITER:** Larry Hampton serves as adult curriculum editor at Randall House Publications. He is a member of Woodbine Free Will Baptist Church in Nashville, Tennessee.



What does a pastor do when he has been betrayed?

# Dealing With Judas

By J. Grant Swank, Jr.



**W**hen I was first in ministry, I wondered why older clergy and their spouses frequently looked tired and aloof. At gatherings they would be somewhat distant. It was as if a screen had been put up between their inner selves and the rest of the world.

Even among the more gregarious, there was that subtle, wary look that kept the eyes surveying the scene, a protective radar at work.

I would say to myself, "Aw, come on, let your hair down and be yourself. Open up a bit. Enjoy!"

Yet the shielding continued, so that for years I never really knew some of the colleagues I would see the most often.

Now I have been in the pastorate over 30 years. I believe I have figured out

why the older ones had been distant.

With some of them, they had died inside due to betrayal. With others, they were struggling to survive. What brought this on?

In large part it had been the surprise of betrayal—not realizing that it was really there. Those pastors and pastors' wives started in the ministry with the sincere desire to save the world for Jesus. They wanted to be a friend to mankind on behalf of a kind Creator.

However, as time went on, they discovered that their naive, open vulnerability cost them something.

*Betrayal's sword the worst to bare.  
For friendship promised, treason seized,  
And thus dared prostitute the name  
Of honored Friendship, crushed its reed.*

Betrayal is an experience that we do not want to admit to; therefore, we do not talk about it. After all we are professionals; many of us are perfectionists with extremely sensitive personalities.

Most of us have lofty achievement aspirations; to admit defeat in friendship bindings can be traumatic. Consequently, it is one of the most painful of the occupational hazards.

Too often as giving pastors and wives, we have been regarded by our parishioners as being so close to God that we have no feelings. If they turn on us—subtly or obviously—they think we can take it, for we are not all that human. We can withstand anything.

However, we are human; and aching desperately to embrace the human race for God, we are cut deeply



by these surprise attacks from our parishioners.

No one told us that when we visit regularly and try our best to deliver those stirring sermons, and at the same time craft a smoothly operating church program to meet the needs of the young and old, there would still be some who would turn in dissatisfaction "to do us in."

I have had fellow parsonage couples say to me, "The very ones I gave my blood for have turned on me."

"I thought I was doing what they wanted done; now they tell me I'm not doing anything right."

"The ones I had in for evening meals are the ones who have set up the coalitions to get rid of me."

"The ones I had thought to be trusted are the ones who have been the most vicious."

Because we fear being considered inferior to the task, the wounds of the job are whispered only in private with the very select; and even they are held in guarded suspicion.

After all, political snares are here and there, who knows where? After a while, we wonder if anyone, especially within the ecclesiastical machine, can be truly trusted with the inner questions of the occupation.

I recall one pastor and wife who—in an off-guarded moment—opened up to his superior. He candidly spilled out his frustrations, only to be grilled by the very one who should have extended an understanding hand.

In sharing this with still another parsonage couple, the minister seeking help reasoned that his superior had attacked him because of the latter's own jealousies of the pastor's accomplishments in other endeavors.

Somehow there has to be a solution, at least a partial one, if we want to conclude that it is too soon to die inside.

### **Admit Reality**

For starters, we must admit to reality. We must confront the truth of betrayal in the ministry, some of it coming from parishioners and some coming from other clergy.

It is simply one of the negatives of existence. To gloss over it is to submit to a positive thinking that is not true to fact.

Some of us think we are unspiritual if we admit that betrayal exists in the church. We are always playing a game of erasing the hurting facts.

We keep manufacturing mirages, usually furnishing these with traditional, religious clichés. All of this merely complicates the process of analysis and solution seeking. Calling a spade a spade is not admitting to being an unspiritual disciple. It is using the logic of Jesus, who commanded His followers to be as wise as serpents.

### **Take it to God**

We must turn the betrayals over to God, even though this is particularly difficult emotionally. When we give so much to help certain persons, only to have those same individuals silently leave or stab us in the back, the shock is hard to take.

Nevertheless, the wounds are to be given over to the Lord for His balm. Thankfully, He can heal our pain. After all, He has been betrayed since the Fall.

We are the visual victims of the continuing betrayal against God. Imagine the ache that has been forced upon the eternal heart. If anyone can empathize, it is He.

### **Inform the Family**

We must share the frustrations of the vocation with our family. They will sense our dilemma, for many times we have taken our hurt out on them.

We need to ask for their understanding during the severe seasons by telling them about our disappointments. They will surround us with special care. This can often be the life that God uses to keep our inner self alive.

Sometimes we keep our hurts to ourselves rather than burdening our spouses. In turn our spouses may also harbor their own bruises rather than communicating them to us.

Eventually, the pileup of pain produces a network overload. Something, then, has to give. And more times than not, the "giving" is not pleasant.

The wise move is to share the hurt with our spouses. Dialogue develops understanding. Opening up eases the hurt and gives a more precisioned perspective. A practical, team spirit forms, which enables both partners to have

greater strength in carrying the load.

Coupled with this, we need to keep our families in high priority. This does not set well with those of us clergy who have been taught to put family way down in the listing, thinking that such sacrifice is expected by the Lord.

Nevertheless, nowhere in the Bible does God ask such from the pastors; instead, it has been a part of the ministerial myth, particularly within religiously conservative groups.

As the wounded pastors and wives, we can find great solace from our families if we have been keeping close to them all along.

This obviously means then that we enjoy our spouses and children by spending time with them—partying, picnicking, making time for recreation, sharing the children's homework, reading to the younger ones, buddying up with the older ones.

We can then conclude that if any persons can finally be trusted not to be betrayers, it will be those under our own roof. What a boon!

### **Develop Outside Friends**

We must develop meaningful friendships outside the congregation. It is so easy to become so housebound with our parishioners that we put aside to a future date the making of companionships "on the outside." Yet when betrayals surface, where will we go? To whom will we turn?

After all the ones within the congregation cannot be our closest friends. Parishioners want a respectable, professional distance with their clergy even in this supposed relaxed age when everyone is trying to be so open with one another.

The Bible commissions us to perfect our people in the image of Christ; this can be best done when we do not allow ourselves to be open to compromise for the parishioners' laxities.

Instead, by maintaining a proper distance with our own in the church, we give ourselves the leverage to still pronounce with freedom, "Thus saith the Lord." Friendships outside the congregation are a must. These may be with other clergy. More importantly, they may be with clergy of other groups.

The latter, after all, pose little if any threat when it comes to betrayal.



They are not a part of the political machine in which we find ourselves.

Making ties with laity outside the local church is also helpful. Such alliances permit friendship sharing that will not revolve around the shoptalk of the local group. These friendships engender freer relationships. Fellowship on the outside may find a meaningful level by mail and telephone contact.

I have a good friend who lives 3000 miles away; yet we communicate openly by letter. Another minister friend is half a continent removed; he phones regularly for an hour's chat!

When betrayals surface, these friends will be used by God as legitimate buffers. They will be there—tried and trusted.

They will listen. They will empathize. They will understand.

### Part of Life

Understand that betrayal is a part of life in general. The hurts of the ministry are especially deep in that frequently the betrayals are double-edged—betraying God and the minister of God.

Further, the betrayals often trigger eternal consequences with the chance that souls may be forever lost.

Yet on lesser levels betrayals are common to the Fall. Therefore, to sympathize with laity who experience the death inside, we must also walk that path just as Jesus walked it.

### Take the Long Look

Look on betrayals from the long range. Ten years from now it will be difficult to recall the names of most who betray today.

Yet how often do we wake in the morning with the faces of the opposition staring at us from the mirror? Let us wipe away those faces as best we can and move on to other things, putting into working practice the guidelines above.

Moving on to other things can healthily mean that we do something other than church work for a day or two. Get away to another part of the country. Go to the library or coffee shop for a day. Enjoy some sport. Travel overnight to some relatives.

It is encouraging to note how the change of scenery—even for a short

while—can drain our retaliatory feelings relating to betrayal. Simply seeing another environment, chatting with other people, moving the body into other activity does rejuvenate the mind. Then when returning to the job, the air is clearer. The burden is lighter.

One day a friend of mine phoned from out of state. He wondered if he could bunk out at our parsonage for several days.

He had been undercut; the pressure was too great at home base so that he simply needed to get away. Fortunately, we had been friends for years, so that his house was always open to me, and my house was always open to him.

After he had completed his visit, he thanked me for "the island" our home had provided him—an escape from the vice that had been squeezing him in.

At least he had sense enough to deal positively with his emotions when under fire. He had realized that a change of place was what he needed in order to get back on the track. This holds true for pastors' wives as well.

Having experienced betrayal, we are more cautious in choosing close friends.

However, we must not be so gunshy as to give up. There are those out there whom God will reveal to be true.

I know what it has been to be tossed about by ones I counted on as friends; and I also know—thank God—that He has provided others to fill in the vacuum. And these others are more dear to me than life itself. ■



ABOUT THE WRITER: Reverend J. Grant Swank, Jr., is a free-lance writer who resides in Windham, Maine. He pastors the New Hope Church.

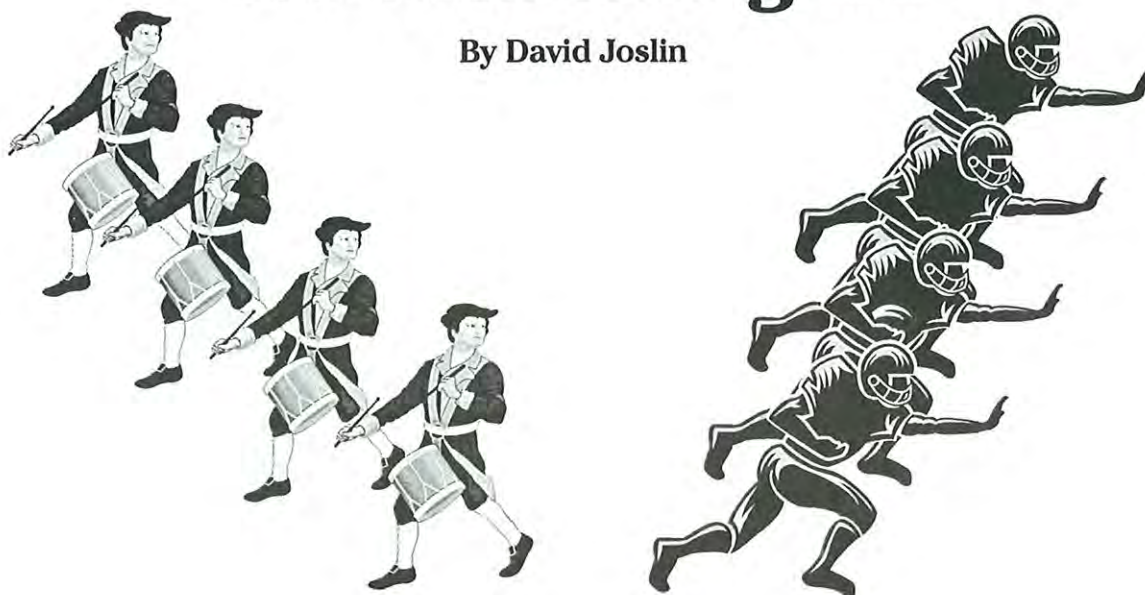
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- 💡 *Then give him computer lessons.*



# When the Saints Go Marching In

By David Joslin



**W**hat do the New Orleans Saints football team and Free Will Baptists have in common? At first thought, not much. But there's more.

The New Orleans Saints are the only professional football team who come storming into their stadium to a theme song composed by a Free Will Baptist deacon from Arkansas, the late Luther G. Presley of Pangburn in White County.

The lyrics and music were written by Brother Presley and arranged by him and Virgil O. Stamps. The Stamps-Baxter Music Company obtained the copyright in 1937.

The chorus of the song:

**When the saints go marching in,  
When the saints go marching in,  
O Lord, I want to be in that number,  
When the saints go marching in.**

Luther G. Presley, author, music composer and teacher was born in Faulkner County, Arkansas, on March 6, 1887. His study of music began at age 14 in singing schools.

In 1905 he attended a singing school taught by J. D. Patton of Red Level, Alabama, where he had his first

lessons in harmony and composition. This instruction laid the foundation for his musical career which followed.

That same year the boy student conducted his first singing school in his home community. Other schools followed in surrounding communities.

For 14 years he was associated with the Central Music Company in Little Rock, Arkansas. In 1928 he moved to Hartford, Arkansas, and spent two years with the company which was directed by the late E. M. Bartlett.

Presley returned to Pangburn, Arkansas, in 1930. He became affiliated with the Stamps-Baxter Music Company of Chattanooga, Tennessee, and Dallas, Texas.

In his ministry of music, he conducted hundreds of singing schools. His published songs number more than a thousand.

Brother Presley became involved in the work of Arkansas Free Will Baptists during the earlier years of the state association. He was first mentioned in 1919 when he directed the singing at the 22nd session when it convened at Mt. Bethel FWB Church near Rose Bud in White County.

He directed the singing for many years thereafter at state associational

meetings.

He was also involved in the formation of the Mountain Grove Association of Free Will Baptists in 1922.

J. R. Baxter, president of the Stamps-Baxter Music Company, wrote: "Mr. Presley was a life-long member of the Free Will Baptist church, open-minded in his views, consistent in his practice, consecrated in his service, and a believer in a Christian faith which puts God first." ■



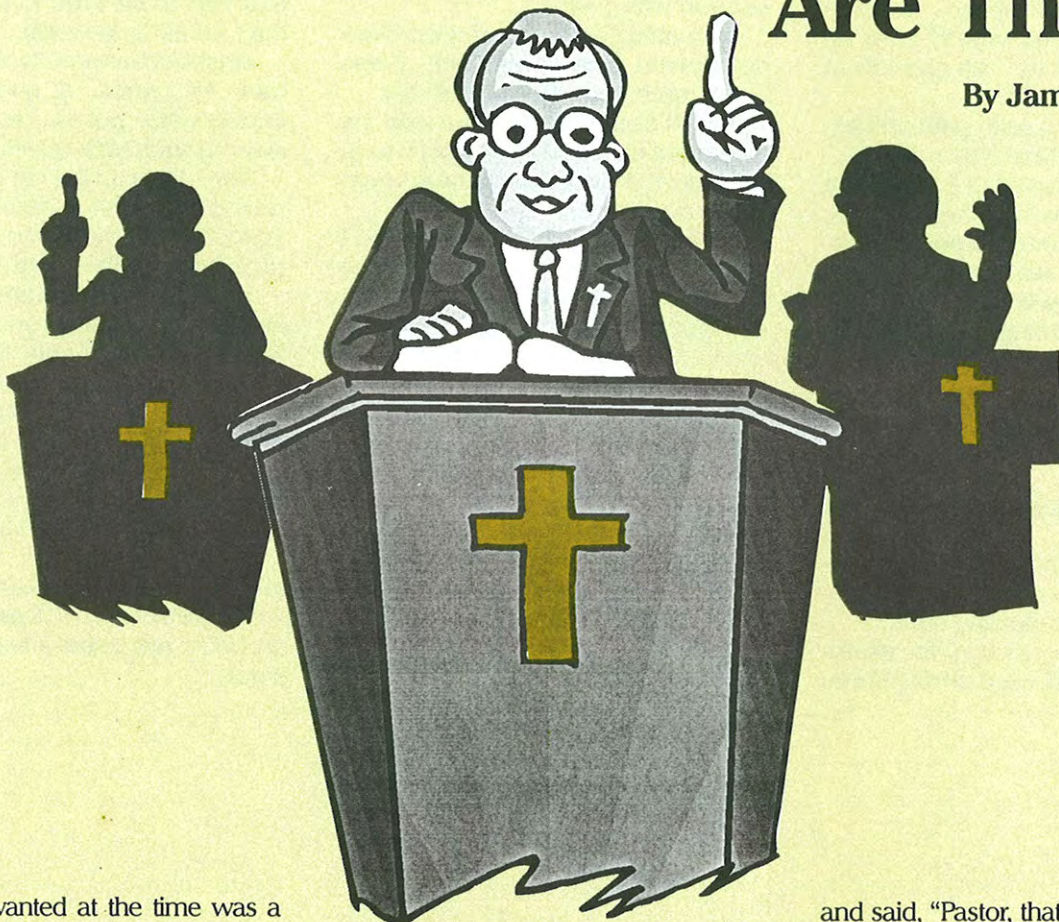
**ABOUT THE WRITER:** Reverend David A. Joslin is executive director for Arkansas Free Will Baptists.

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# How Many Really Great Preachers Are There?

By James L. Snyder



**A**ll I wanted at the time was a simple answer to a humble question. OK, maybe the question wasn't exactly humble but a simple answer was all I was seeking. All I wanted to know was how many really great preachers there were in the world?

Preachers are really concerned about this. After all, preaching is our business, so to speak.

We, like everyone else, are susceptible to such flights of vanity. We simply want to do our work as best we can.

For example, in my first church there was an old elder by the name of Elmer. As a young minister, I looked up to him. On my first Sunday he made a hit with me. As I greeted the people after the service, Elmer shook my hand warmly and said, "Pastor, that was a great sermon. The best I ever heard."

Imagine how that affected me. I thought I had arrived. An old elder had complimented me on my preaching. I reasoned that he, of all people, knew great preaching when he heard it.

Then about the middle of that week, it really hit me. I was under the gun now. I had preached a great sermon. Brother Elmer, God bless him, had said so.

I had to repeat the feat that coming Sunday. I can tell you now, I was nervous. Anyone, I suppose, can preach one great sermon. But two! In a row! Impossible!

That fateful Sunday came and I was feeling the pressure. Following the service, as I greeted the people, I kept an eye out for Brother Elmer. Sure enough, he came and shook my hand warmly

and said, "Pastor, that was a great sermon. The best I ever heard."

I had arrived. To preach two great sermons in a row was next to impossible, but I had done it. I had to buy a bigger hat that week, but the extra expense was well worth it.

This went on for weeks. Then we had a Bible college musical team come to our church. We gave the entire service to the young people for a splendid concert. They were wonderful and everyone enjoyed them.

As I greeted the people leaving church that morning, old Brother Elmer grabbed my hand like an old friend and said, "Pastor, that was a great sermon. The best I ever heard."

I discovered what everyone in the congregation knew, that old Brother Elmer was full of raspberries. At any rate my stock in his compliments fell



so low I was forced to sell them.

It was a valuable lesson to learn as a young minister.

Several years later, at a different church, I again stood in line greeting the people leaving the church. In line was young six-year-old Billy.

As I stooped over to shake his hand, Billy looked up into my face and said, "Preacher, when I grow up I want to be rich so I can give lots of money to the church."

"Well, Billy," I said patronizingly, "that is wonderful and I'll pray for you."

Now, I could have left it right there and all would have been well with the world. But I had to take it one step further, which was one step too many.

"Billy," I said with a St. Francis of Assisi smile beaming down on him, "why do you want to give money to our church?"

"Because my daddy says you're the poorest preacher our church has ever had."

Who said honesty was the best policy?

You would think I would have learned my lesson, but oh, no. History has a way of repeating itself.

Just a few weeks ago, for example, my wife and I were driving home

from the Sunday worship service, I was feeling my homiletical oats.

The service was wonderful. The music was stirring and the special music was outstanding. But that was not what was making me feel so good about the worship service. If I say so myself, and I guess I will, the sermon was great.

Everything in my sermon that Sunday flowed quite remarkably. I was even impressed with my delivery.

I went from point to point with the greatest of ease and must say, I was in rare form. A preacher knows when things are falling into place.

I felt good about that sermon and I thought I would explode in the car. The problem was, my wife did not even mention my sermon. "It was a nice service," I plied.

"Yea. I guess it was a nice service," she replied coolly as she looked out her window.

Then she was silent. She did not catch my cue. Now, I could have left it there and luxuriated in my own opinion of my sermon. But did I? Oh, no. I had to ask a question. So with all the coolness I could muster, I asked my dear spouse, "Honey, how many really great preachers are there in the world?"

Let me point out right here that wives (at least the one I married) have not quite mastered the art of dodging difficult questions like their male counterparts. If a wife asks her husband questions such as; "Honey, how old do I look?" Or, "Honey, am I getting fat?" every husband knows that this is the time to play "dodgeball" for all he is worth.

Maybe wives aren't into sports like their husbands. A good husband knows when not to give a direct answer to such trick questions.

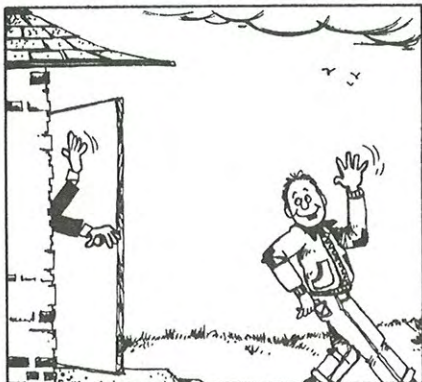
The silence in the car only prompted me to put the question before her again. "Honey, how many really great preachers are there in the world?"

Without even looking at me she snapped, "Honey, one less than you're thinking of right now."

Two verses from the Bible came to my mind just then. "Wherefore let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall" (1 Cor. 10:12). And, "Pride goeth before destruction, and an haughty spirit before a fall" (Prov. 16:18). ■

**ABOUT THE WRITER:** Reverend James Snyder resides in Ocala, Florida. In the past 25 years, the author and preacher has been involved in three church-planting projects.

## BEYOND BELIEF



© 1988 Roger Judd



## Rev. J. L. Van Winkle Dies



GLENCOE, OK—Reverend James Lewis Van Winkle (71) died March 10 in Stillwater, Oklahoma, after 42 years in the ministry. He began serving as an ordained Free Will Baptist preacher in 1958.

Van Winkle pastored seven Oklahoma churches—Sulphur, Madill, Weatherford, Sayre, Stillwater, Kellyville and Lone Chimney. Though active in ministry until his death, he also taught auto body repair at Tulsa Vo-Tech for 17 years, retiring in 1991.

Brother Van Winkle was drafted into the armed forces in 1953 and was commissioned to serve with the special services missile unit in Washington, D.C. He later served in Germany.

Funeral services were conducted by Joe Conn and Muril Wilson.

He is survived by his wife of 46 years, Billie Van Winkle; two sons, Dean Van Winkle of Barnsdall and Carl Van Winkle of Pawnee; two daughters, Banetha Buchanan of Pawnee and Brenda Cramer of Glencoe; 10 grandchildren, three sisters and one brother.

## Group Breaks Ground For \$665,000 Shelter

DUFFIELD, VA—The Harvest FWB Child Care Ministries broke ground February 14 for a 5,600-square-foot emergency shelter. Executive director Newl Dotson said, "This building will care for hundreds of children by providing 24-hour care staff, counselors, therapists, in-house education and progress assessments as well as educational needs assessments."

Dotson explained that children in need of an emergency out-of-home placement will be given a 45-day stay at the shelter with the Harvest staff able to make long-term recommendations based on their evaluations during that time.

The cost for the new emer-

gency shelter is estimated at \$665,000. Harvest has been in operation since 1993 and has served 267 children during that time.

Robin Neal, part of the ministry team for four years, was named director of emergency services and will head the program.

Dotson and Neal joined other Harvest supporters in officially turning over the first shovels of dirt (see picture). Dotson said that the first scoop would honor the 267 children already served while the second would anticipate the hundreds to be helped.

A February campaign raised nearly \$34,000 for the emergency shelter building project.



Groundbreaking for emergency shelter in Virginia.



## Bible College Students Witness 645 Decisions

NASHVILLE, TN—Students at Free Will Baptist Bible College led 645 people to make decisions during the 1999-2000 school year, according to John Murray, Christian Service director.

In his final report for the year, Murray submitted the following:

Persons Led to Christ .....	180
Other Decisions .....	465
Messages Delivered .....	829

Musical Numbers .....	4,860
Classes Taught .....	1,401
Tracts Distributed .....	2,613

Every student at the college does supervised Christian service weekly. Assignments range widely and include such ministries as preaching, ministering in jails and nursing homes, and conducting church music programs.



Jennifer Stone (Va.) receives Christian Service Group Leader of the Year from Director John Murray.

## Directory Update

### FLORIDA

Tim Owen to Piney Grove Church, Chipley from Pathway Church, Winter Haven

### GEORGIA

Shane Carter to First Church, Blakely  
Robert Bragan to First Church, Thomaston

### KENTUCKY

Wayne Price to Southside Church, Paintsville from Trinity Church, Bowling Green

### OTHER PERSONNEL

Joe Picklesimer to Emmanuel Church, Wabash, IN, as associate pastor from First Church, Crossett, AR, as youth pastor

## Michigan Re-Elects Varney Moderator

ANN ARBOR, MI—Retired minister Rev. J. B. Varney was elected to his third term as moderator by delegates at the 44th annual Michigan State Association. The 70-year-old preacher was founding pastor of Kirby FWB Church.

The May 19-20 gathering convened at the Quality Inns and Suites in Ann Arbor, according to Promotional Secretary Gene Norris. Twenty-four ministers registered for the meeting as well as deacons, delegates and visitors.

Executive Secretary Melvin Worthington preached the first message. Three Michigan pastors also preached—Milford Byrd (Community FWB Church, Ypsilanti), Steve Thrasher (Ten Mile FWB Church, Madison Heights) and Louis Tolbert (Whittaker FWB Church, Whittaker).

Delegates adopted a \$250,000 Together Way budget to be allocated: Local Association (15%), State Association (35%), National Association (50%).

A change in the meeting time for the state association required a constitutional change. The change states that the association will meet "during the week prior to the third Saturday in May."

The 2001 state association will meet May 17-19 at a site to be determined.

*PASTOR APPRECIATION DAY*

*SEPTEMBER 10*

*DON'T FORGET!*



# Bible College Graduates 42 Students

NASHVILLE, TN—Free Will Baptist Bible College graduated 42 students in commencement exercises held on campus on Thursday, May 11. Reverend David Shores, promotional director for the Illinois State Association of Free Will Baptists, brought the

challenge to seniors.

The Class of 2000 represents 18 states and one foreign country, Spain. The programs they completed range from Pastoral Training, Missions and Youth Ministry to Business, Sports Medicine and Psychology.

Five seniors gave testimonies to their years at the college. Reverend Ernie Lewis, president of the Alumni Association, welcomed them to the ranks of more than 5,000 FWBBC alumni.

## Bachelor of Arts Degrees

Rachel Leigh Callaway  
Madrid, Spain  
Micah Jon Derby  
Fresno, California  
Kimberly Ann Douglas  
St. Anne, Illinois  
Shiloh Cameron Hackett  
Boiling Springs, South Carolina  
Rebecca Marie Hale  
Taylor Ridge, Illinois  
Ronald E. Hunter, Jr.  
Jacksonville, Florida  
Walter Timothy Lee  
Florence, South Carolina  
Kari A. Milburn  
Marion, Illinois  
Joseph Paul Postlewaite  
Florence, South Carolina  
Mark R. Sass  
Nashville, Tennessee  
Brenda Yvonne Wendlandt  
Stigler, Oklahoma

## Bachelor of Science Degrees

Anna Laurie Beck  
Norfolk, Virginia  
Justin N. Bradley  
Mountain Grove, Missouri  
Amanda Lynne Branch  
Los Alamos, New Mexico  
Mary Kathleen Britton  
Nolensville, Tennessee  
Amy Loretta Campbell  
Kinston, North Carolina  
Adam James Carnes  
Decatur, Alabama  
Jeffrey B. Cates  
West Plains, Missouri  
Janice Renee Donoho  
Silvis, Illinois  
Jason A. Evans  
Waterford, Michigan  
Kimberly Sharon Farmer  
Shallowater, Texas  
Marie Cardell Guyton  
Colona, Illinois

John C. King, IV  
Pinson, Alabama  
Jennifer Renee Koester  
Park Hills, Missouri  
Phillip Scott Lytle  
Nashville, Tennessee  
Danelle Lee Mann  
Buckeye, Arizona  
Matthew S. Markins  
Sharpsville, Indiana  
Briana Nicole McMillan  
Smithville, Mississippi  
Mackenzie Lynn Price  
Columbia, Tennessee  
Jacqueline Diane Rasar  
Decatur, Illinois  
Anthony T. Robertson  
Nashville, Tennessee  
Jeremy Leon Robinson  
Swannanoa, North Carolina  
Brian Odell Sargent  
Nashville, Tennessee

Kristie Geraldine Sargent  
Turbeville, South Carolina  
Debra Lynn Scott  
Beckville, Texas  
Laura Anne Sides  
Millersville, Missouri  
Sara Dawn Watson  
Springdale, Arkansas  
Melissa Joy Wilhoite  
Nashville, Tennessee  
Chris A. Woodard  
Micro, North Carolina  
Angela Catherine Young  
Canal Winchester, Ohio

## Bachelor of Music Education Degree

Tia R. Wilson  
Mt. Vernon, Illinois

## Associate of Arts Degree

Jodie L. Stephens  
Plant City, Florida



The FWBBC Class of 2000.



# currently

Pastor **George Harvey, Jr.**, reports five baptisms and two conversions at **North Valley FWB Church in Phoenix, AZ**. The home mission work hopes to go self-supporting in the next five months.

Ten conversions and 10 baptisms have Pastor **Roger Raper** smiling at **First FWB Church in Fort Collins, CO**.

Home missionary **Paul Collins** reports nine baptisms at the **Harrisonburg, VA**, mission work.

**Heritage FWB Church in Springfield, IL**, set a new monthly attendance record with a 79 average, according to Pastor **Ken Doggett**. The group also reported two conversions and four rededications. They plan to build a worship area to seat 150 people.

**Hillsdale FWB College in Moore, OK**, added two staffers. **David Archer** has been named pastoral ministry director; **Jerry Banks** is now director of missions. Both men came from Oklahoma pastorates to their new roles.

Forty men registered for **Indiana Men's Retreat** at Lake Placid Conference Center. **Roy Harris** (staffer at FWBCC) keynoted the conference.

Two **Oklahoma** retreats attracted 380 people. Some 120 registered for the Ministers' Retreat, while 260 people from 41 churches enjoyed the Seniors' Retreat.

The Dean's List at **Free Will Baptist Bible College** included 102 names following final exams in May. The scholars by class were 21 seniors, 25 juniors, 27 sophomores and 29 freshmen. Eighteen of that number made straight-A averages for the semester.

Pastor **Marcus Clagg** reports 80 parking spaces added at **Covenant FWB Church in Soddy Daisy, TN**. Attendance at the six-year-old church has reached 200. Plans are underway to build a 10,000-square-foot family life center.

Members of **First FWB Church in Wichita Falls, TX**, celebrated 20 years of ministry with Pastor **Thurmon Murphy**. In addition to numerous cards and letters and cash gifts, the Murphys

were given a trip to the holy land.

After Pastor **Joe Buttgen** moved to town 75 Sundays ago, members of **First FWB Church in Newport, AR**, noticed immediate changes. Attendance jumped from 70 to 102. Seventeen new members joined the church family, and Pastor Buttgen baptized 11 converts. Offerings rose \$300 weekly. There's a new roof on the church, a new van in the parking lot, a new copier in the church and a new computer in the pastor's study.

Pastor **Joe Grizzle** reports seven baptisms at **First FWB Church in Norman, OK**.

**Emmanuel FWB Church in Wabash, IN**, is on the move—about two miles closer to town on 16 acres, according to Pastor **Douglas Phillips**. The group reports 23 conversions, 12 baptisms and six rededications. Pastor Phillips said that the first building on the new property will give the congregation 25,000-square-feet for ministry. More than \$500,000 has already been invested in the project.

Pastor **Larry Collins** reports five conversions among the young people who have been riding the van to services at **First FWB Church in Hutchinson, KS**.

After a record attendance of 94 at **Bethel FWB Church in Kansas City, KS**, Pastor **Clifford Ball** found himself out in the parking lot directing traffic. No complaints, however, since the church also witnessed 32 conversions and 12 baptisms.

Pastor **Parnell Aldridge** reports a May 21 "Ralph Lightsey Day" at **Piney Grove FWB Church in Bristol, GA**. The event celebrated Lightsey's 60-year ministry which began when he preached his first sermon at the Piney Grove Church.

Pastor **Curtis Booth** reports 10 conversions and five baptisms at **Gahanna FWB Church in Gahanna, OH**. Six new members joined the church.

The word from Pastor **Herb Davis** is

seven conversions and baptisms at **Forest Valley FWB Church in Springfield, OH**.

Ohio evangelist **Clovis Vanover** preached 10 revivals this spring with 26 conversions.

Pastor **Paul Finney** reports 11 conversions and five baptisms at **First FWB Church in Clyde, OH**.

The 25-year mortgage that **Urbana FWB Church in Urbana, OH**, signed in 1981 was paid off seven years early, reports Pastor **Roger Childers**. Among five recent baptisms was a 74-year-old man.

**Community FWB Church in Silver Grove, OH**, welcomed four new members, witnessed three conversions and watched Pastor **Kevin Bice** baptize six people.

New paint and new carpet spruced up **Liberty FWB Church in Norton, OH**. Pastor **Cecil Farmer** reports five conversions, two baptisms and two new members.

Pastor **Mike Nabors** reports eight conversions at **First FWB Church in Dayton, OH**.

The baptistry has been busy at **Samantha FWB Church in Leesburg, OH**. Pastor **Wiley Perkins** baptized 21 converts; the church received 12 new members.

**Lebanon FWB Church in Lebanon, OH**, reports seven baptisms, three conversions and three new members. **Gene Peak** pastors.

Veteran **Ohio** minister **Lucian Mounts** died this spring after 48 years in the ministry. He pastored six churches in the state, served as a hospital chaplain and conducted a radio program for 37 years. He was converted at the Mechanicsburg FWB Church in 1948, and later pastored the church. His son, Rev. Mike Mounts, preached the funeral. ■



## Two By Two

By Marjorie Workman

**R**ecently I was sitting in a church business meeting that had been called for the purpose of hiring a new church employee. I was intrigued by the number of comments about the assets of his wife. She was not the one being hired, or was she?

**S**eptember has been designated by Free Will Baptists as Pastor Appreciation Month. Every month should be pastor appreciation. As you are thinking about what to do for your pastor, remember that behind that good pastor is a good wife who is supportive, loving and caring. Be sure to appreciate her too.

**U**nderstanding the pastor's wife will help you know how to support her. As a mother, she is the primary care-giver for their children while he is away caring for and listening to the congregation's children. She administers to the sick of her own household while he is visiting church members in the hospitals.

**A**s he is on the phone listening to church concerns, she is listening to the constant chatter of the kids. While he is busy helping a senior saint or a transient who is passing through town, she is home helping the children with school work.

**F**ighting loneliness can be a constant battle for the parsonage wife. She often sleeps alone while her husband is away in conferences, revivals or sitting with others who are in crisis. Occasionally, she may curl up on the couch to watch TV or read a book, but her husband is at the church for a meeting with the deacons, trustees or some other committee, and she is alone.

**S**he longs for a week to go by without a meeting. Even her best laid plans for an evening with her husband get thwarted by an emergency in the

church family. Vacations are interrupted by a phone call that there's been a death in the church.

**T**he pastor's wife is aware of the high expectations the congregation has for her. She feels the pressure to smile and always be friendly. She is not allowed to have bad days. She knows she can't be too busy, tired or sick to accept invitations to showers, weddings, birthday and anniversary parties. Of course, she is to be at all church functions pitching in with the cleaning, cooking or whatever is necessary.

**S**he lives in a glass house, so all the congregation watches her and her family. They see the mistakes that make the parsonage family human, but their expectations are for perfection.

**L**ook for creative ways to show your love. Encourage the pastor and his wife to take time off to visit with their families if they live a distance away. Give them adequate vacation time. Attending the National Association is a service on behalf of the church, and not a vacation for the pastor. But do send the entire family to the convention and pay their expenses.

**F**or the pastor's wife with children, give her a night out with her husband by insisting on sitting with the kids. Invite her to go shopping with you and your kids. Or invite the kids over to your house in order to give her time alone at home.

**L**ove the pastor's wife. Take care of her. She is priceless. In caring for her, you are caring for the preacher. If she is happy, so is he. They come as a pair! ■

Women Nationally



Active for Christ



**T**he Work Incentives Improvement Act of 1999 opened a two-year window of opportunity during which ministers may revoke their exemption from Social Security taxation on their ministerial earnings. To revoke the exemption a minister must file Form 2031 no later than the due date for filing his 2001 taxes plus any extension. Ministers will not be required to make up previous years' taxes but must simply pay the self-employment tax due for the year they opt back in.

**E**xemptions filed before 1999 allowed those who were conscientiously opposed to accepting benefits of private or public insurance to opt out. The entire declaration is quoted below.

"I certify that I am and continuously have been a member of (name of religious group) since (date) and as a *follower of the established teachings of that group, I am conscientiously opposed to accepting benefits of any private or public insurance that make payments in the event of death, disability, old age or retirement or makes payments toward the cost of or provides services for medical care. Public insurance includes any insurance system established by the Social Security act.*" (Italics added)

**B**ased on this statement alone, it is clear that the decision could not be based on financial factors but on a conscientious objection. Additionally and even more bothersome for a Free Will Baptist minister was the declaration that the decision is based on their being "a follower of the established teachings" of our denomination. Since our denomination has never taken a position against Social Security, we do not have an established teaching forbidding participation. Therefore, it is questionable whether Free Will Baptist ministers could really qualify for exemption.



## Social Security Window Open for Ministers

By David Brown

**T**his is a rare opportunity for those who may have opted out in the past. The Board of Retirement will be happy to help you file the appropriate forms to revoke this choice.

**M**any may not have realized the gravity of this decision. Opting out of Social Security is more than just refusing retirement benefit. Social Security also offers benefits if you are disabled. Since most pastors do not have disability insurance, this is a tremendous benefit.

**Y**our survivors may also collect benefits should you die with children under 18 years of age. In this case your benefit is calculated on the date of your death as if you were retiring at age 65, and the monthly check is divided between your children until the last child reaches age 18.

**P**erhaps the most important and far-reaching benefit offered by Social Security is the availability of Medicare insurance. Those who opt out will be faced with the prospect of finding an insurance company willing to insure a 65-year-old who may have had serious health problems. Most health insurance available to 65-year-olds is supplemental to Medicare. Without Medicare it may be impossible to find anyone willing to provide health insurance coverage.

**B**ecause of these factors, the Board of Retirement believes it is in the best interest of Free Will Baptist ministers to stay in the Social Security system if you are already covered, and to opt back in if you have filed an exemption. Form 2031 can be downloaded from the IRS website at [www.ustreas.gov/prod/](http://www.ustreas.gov/prod/) or you can call the IRS at 800-829-3676. We also have the form available in our office. Write or call our office toll-free at 877-767-7738. ■

Retirement

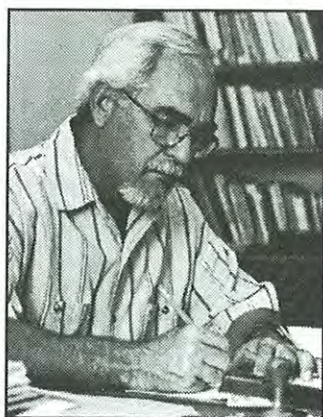


& Insurance



For many years Free Will Baptist Foreign Missions has desired to work more closely with Free Will Baptist colleges in challenging students for missions and training those who have indicated their commitment to serve in the regions beyond. Interest in helping the colleges broaden their base of training to better equip servants for overseas ministry has also been growing.

Now that appears to be happening!



*Clint Morgan and Patsy Vanhook  
Missionaries in Residence at FWBBC*



## *Missionary in Residence*

By Don Robirds

In May the Board of Foreign Missions approved a Memorandum of Understanding between Free Will Baptist Bible College and Foreign Missions through which a Missionary in Residence (MIR) will be provided. This will provide the current missions faculty opportunity to pursue the development and implementation of a revised and enhanced missions curriculum.

This past year missionary Clint Morgan of Côte d'Ivoire was the Missionary in Residence teaching along with missions professor Tom McCullough. Clint carried on a limited stateside ministry on weekends in addition to being present on campus to encourage and give guidance to students. Miss Patsy Vanhook of France will serve as MIR starting with the fall semester of 2000. She returned to the United States in June.

On the new campus of FWBBC a house will be provided by Foreign Missions for the MIR. The missionary will live on campus and interact with students. He or she also will teach missions courses to enable the resident professor of missions to pursue curriculum development.

A mandatory cross-cultural internship also will be implemented. Missions students will be required to fulfill this internship either overseas or in a cross-cultural setting in the United States following their junior year in college. They will receive college credit for this part of their training.

The Board of Foreign Missions and the FM staff are developing guidelines for providing Missionary in Residence personnel for other FWB colleges as well. Basic criteria for such provi-

sions include four items: (1) The current missions curriculum must meet the present requirements for missionaries to serve with FWB Foreign Missions; (2) the college must have a full-time missions professor and be committed to an ongoing missions program; (3) the college must be willing to make the necessary changes to its program to include experiential components and field internship modules; and (4) MIR's will be assigned to the college as available.

The Foreign Missions staff sees this as an essential step toward accomplishing the objective of doubling the overseas force and mobilizing the entire denomination for world evangelization. It also will potentially shorten the time of candidate preparation before final approval by the board.

### **Serious Teens Needed for TEAM Cuba 2001**

Would your teenager like to do something significant with three weeks of his or her life next summer?

#### **Here are the needs:**

- Teens with musical and dramatic giftedness
- Teens with some ability in Spanish  
(Perhaps you could learn a lot of Spanish during the next ten months.)

**Request an application now!**

**TEAM**

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

**Foreign**



**Missions**



**D**oors, we use them every day. I doubt that we give much thought though to how important they really are.

**N**aaman (II Kings 5) was the captain of the armies of Syria, a man of position and power. He was also a man with a serious problem. He was a leper. Because of the faithful testimony of a young woman who was a servant in Naaman's home, he learned of a prophet in Israel who could help him with his affliction.

**V**erse 9 says, "So Naaman came with his horses and with his chariot, and stood at the door of the house of Elijah." Naaman did not comprehend that he was at the door of opportunity. He almost let his pride keep him from experiencing the healing he so desperately needed.

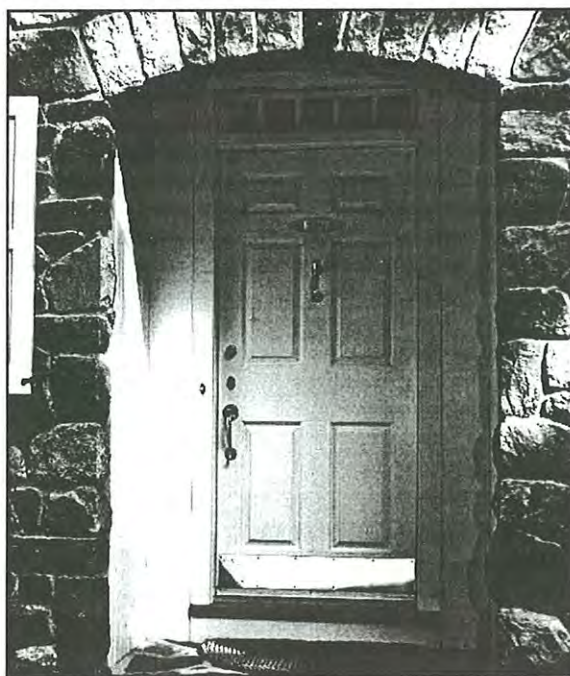
**A**s Free Will Baptists, we stand at the door of opportunity. What opportunity? The opportunity to put the gospel in more than 100,000 homes in a single morning.

**O**n September 30, 2000, Free Will Baptist men, women and young people will rally to more than 40 national Home Mission churches to distribute packets of information and make contacts on behalf of the mission churches. This event is called Operation Saturation. Think of what the results could be as thousands of homes are contacted and the seed of the gospel is planted.

You can do four things to make this event a success.

**1** **PLAN** . . . to be involved on September 30, 2000. A missionary near where you live would be blessed by your concern and assistance.

**2** **PRAY** . . . that Operation Saturation will be a vehicle by which thousands will be exposed to the saving message of Jesus Christ. Pray that Free Will Baptists will respond to the open door. Pray that the homes contacted will be responsive. Pray that souls will be saved.



## An Open Door

By Tom Dooley

**3** **PARTICIPATE** . . . Decide that you are not going to miss this blessing. Get involved and enlist others to join you. Perhaps you cannot travel to a home missions site. You can participate by praying. You can also be part by helping financially. Each mission church will be distributing a packet of material to the homes in their communities. That packet will contain a booklet, "When You Need A Friend," a written presentation of the gospel. Your gifts would help underwrite the expense of preparing the materials.

**4** **PREPARE** . . . If you plan to be a part of Operation Saturation, prepare your heart. It is not enough for us to focus on being available to the Lord. We must also be useable (II Timothy 2:21). Preparation for this event has the potential to spark fires of revival among our churches.

We stand at the door. We must not pass it by.

### Will You Be A Part of Operation Saturation? ■

**Yes, I will be a participant in Operation Saturation.**

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_

Zip \_\_\_\_\_ Phone \_\_\_\_\_

Local Church \_\_\_\_\_

Please check all that apply: Age: ☐ Under 9 ☐ 9-12 ☐ 13-17

☐ 18-25 ☐ 26-35 ☐ 36-45 ☐ 46-55

☐ 56-65 ☐ 66-75 ☐ 75 and above

- ☐ I will pray for Operation Saturation.
- ☐ I plan to go to \_\_\_\_\_ to participate in Operation Saturation.
- ☐ I will bring an offering to the Operation Saturation event.
- ☐ Please contact me about a mission church near to where I live.
- ☐ I cannot go to a mission site on September 30, 2000, but I will send a gift to help with the cost of materials.

Please mail your Operation Saturation Commitment Form to:  
Operation Saturation  
P. O. Box 5002  
Antioch, Tn. 37011

Master's



Men





Garnett Reid

## Deliver Us From Evil

One of my favorite comic series of recent years is Gary Larson's *The Far Side*, with its bizarre assortment of characters and creatures in all sorts of hilarious episodes. In Mark 5:1-20, Jesus and His disciples journeyed to a "far side"—actually, Mark calls it the "other side" of the Sea of Galilee.

Here, on the lake's eastern shore, Jesus experienced one of the most unusual confrontations in His earthly ministry.

### *Evil's Existence*

Before we examine Mark's narrative more closely, I need to let you in on two important "givens." These assumptions flow from a conviction that the Bible is true and that it should govern the way we view all of life.

Based on this biblical framework, we must acknowledge, first, that an objective realm of evil actually exists. While some may deny the existence of evil or may view it as merely a subjective concept relative to the "eye of the beholder," neither of these two options does justice to the biblical evidence.

Instead, scripture teaches the reality of the "other side," a spiritual domain of wickedness opposed to God and His goodness, led by the evil one, a powerful adversary assisted by spirits (demons) in his efforts to destroy God and His kingdom.

A second "given" is that as believers, we battle these forces of evil every day. Demonic forces still exert influence in our times, where we live, and through the power God provides, we must resist their destructive onslaughts.

### *A Man from the Tombs (vv. 1-5)*

Mark tells us that when Jesus and His company arrived in the area of the Gerasenes (also called "Gadarenes" because both cities, Gerasa and

Gadara, were prominent in the region), a man possessed by an unclean spirit met them.

His antics displayed the tragic nature of his bondage. He was constantly screaming and cutting himself with stones. Ironically, chains could not "bind" him; a far greater power—evil's spirit-chains—held him. Mark notes three times that this tormented soul lived "among the tombs," with the dead, so to speak, as if to remind us of where evil leads.

### *"We Are Many" (vv. 6-10)*

One of the demons, perhaps the most powerful, addressed Jesus by name. "What have I to do with thee . . . thou Son of the most high God," he asked, acknowledging the supreme authority of Jesus' name and person.

In response to Jesus' inquiry, the demon identified itself as "Legion." "Legion" is a Latin term denoting a Roman army battalion of about 6,000 infantrymen. Its use here suggests the far-reaching extent and severity of how the demons had possessed this man, of how evil binds its victims.

### *Drowned in the Sea (vv. 11-13)*

Despite the power of these demonic forces, Jesus exercised His unmatched dominion over evil by casting them out of the man and into a herd of pigs. Whether through their request the demons were hoping to avoid a worse fate or to instigate the locals against Jesus for destroying the herd is uncertain. Whatever the case, these evil beings recognized and submitted to the Lord's will.

Jesus gave permission for them to enter the pigs. The entire herd then charged across the plateau down the bank and drowned in the sea. No matter how formidable its numbers, no matter how impressive its strength seems, evil is no match for the power

of God's Son. His triumphant will alone is why evil fails.

### *"In His Right Mind" (vv. 14-17)*

Word of this dramatic event spread throughout the area. No doubt people were stunned when they saw this wild man, this one whom no one could control before, now controlled by sanity and restraint: "(they) see him that was possessed . . . sitting, and clothed, and in his right mind" (v. 15). D. Edmond Hiebert summarizes the change like this: "He was now a rational, self-controlled being, no longer yelling in frenzy under the domination of demons."

Such is the power of Christ to change a life. My missionary friend Clint Morgan tells of a similar case he observed in Côte d'Ivoire, Africa. Clint vividly remembers being terrorized and threatened by a demon-possessed man, only to see the same man later transformed by Christ's gospel into a believing brother. That's what happens when evil leaves.

### *"Go Home...Tell Them" (vv. 18-20)*

After Jesus had changed his life, this man's natural response was to follow the Lord. Instead Jesus sent him back to his home as an evangel to his family and friends. Our last look at him is through Mark's eyes: "He departed, and began to publish in Decapolis how great things Jesus had done for him: and all men did marvel" (v. 20).

The Lord knew then, as He knows now, that this Gadarene was not the only one whom evil seeks to influence and control. His family and friends were vulnerable to Satan's attack, just as we are. Yet as was true with them, we can also seek the only place of victory and deliverance—the strong name of Jesus. Remember the Lord's prayer concludes, "For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever." ■





Dennis Wiggs

## The Prayer Meeting

**M**id-week service in most Free Will Baptist churches meets on Wednesday evening. The service is often called "prayer meeting." A good name, but in many churches very little praying is done. If the mid-week service is going to be labeled "prayer meeting," then shouldn't we practice just that?

### *Make it truly a meeting of prayer.*

First, promote the mid-week service as a family meeting. Provide a program for the children. Several organizations offer challenging programs for boys and girls, even teens. Try to dismiss by 8:30 p.m. so that school children can be home in time to get to bed at a satisfactory hour.

Second, squeeze as much as possible in an hour. For the adults who usually meet in the church sanctuary, two hymns, an offering, a few testimonies and a short message can be conducted in 30 to 40 minutes. Spend the rest of the time in prayer.

Third, the pastor is usually the leader. He should spend preparation time to lead the congregation in a rewarding session of prayer. Here are a few suggestions.

### *Conduct a sanctuary prayer session.*

Before prayer needs are made available, the pastor could designate several believers to pray at the conclusion of the request time. They would pay better attention to the requests. Then, ask for prayer requests that involve physical needs. Write down the names and the needs.

Second, ask for spiritual prayer requests, such as the names of the unconverted.

Third, give the names of several missionaries who have specific needs. Some of that information can

be received from the Foreign Missions Department. Each Wednesday the department issues prayer requests via telephone and e-mail.

Fourth, receive other types of requests from the congregation. Then, ask everyone to come to the church altar or kneel beside their pew. Call on the designated ones to lead in prayer. The pastor could close in prayer.

### *Conduct a separated prayer session.*

Ask choir members, nursery workers and ushers to go to three different classrooms. Designate someone to lead the prayer session. The remaining people could stay in the sanctuary. Prayer requests could be taken. Then, divide the men from the women. Let the women go to the altar and the men go to the back of the sanctuary.

### *Assemble the Sunday School classes in their rooms.*

The Sunday School teachers lead in the prayer session. Visitors or those who do not attend Sunday School could assemble in the sanctuary with that Sunday School class. If the teacher is absent, encourage the assistant or another person to direct the prayer time.

### *A prayer bulletin is helpful.*

The pastor or someone he designates could prepare the bulletin on the afternoon of the mid-week service. The pastor's sermon outline could be printed. Prayer requests could be listed—the sick, college students, names of missionaries, specific church needs, with spaces for added requests.

Fruitful praying demands preparation, usually on the part of the pastor. His goal should be to accomplish as much as possible in the time allotted.

Prepared materials to be placed in the hands of those in attendance can encourage more people to pray.

Those requests will be taken home to be remembered throughout the week.

Some churches prepare a large prayer bulletin board that is rolled out each mid-week service. The names of missionaries, college students, servicemen and women, church projects, are permanent requests. Other requests are added and removed from week to week.

Every now and then, a different type of prayer meeting could be scheduled. For instance, plan a praise meeting rather than a prayer meeting. Spend the entire time praising the Lord. Entertain no requests. The pastor should have a long list of items for which to praise the Lord to add to the list that comes from the congregation.

Also, the pastor could prepare slips of paper that state verses of thanksgiving. Distribute the paper in the offering plate. Those who take a verse could read the verse aloud, making comments of thanksgiving. The meeting could conclude with several prayers of thanksgiving.

The young pastor is challenged to work at making the mid-week hour a spiritual oasis in the middle of the week. Church members laboring in the secular workforce need this spiritual uplift. ■

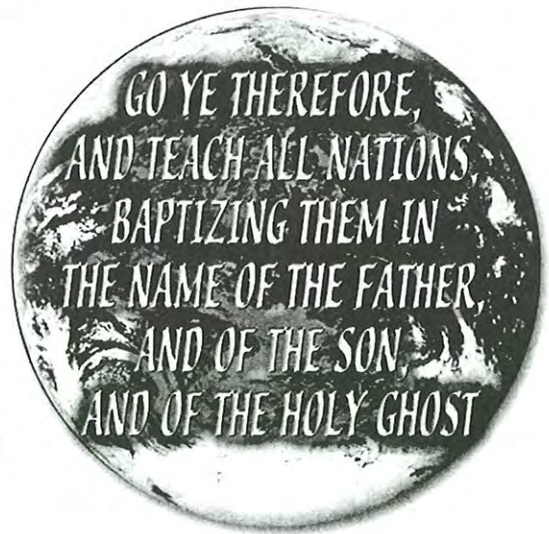


# YOUTH UPDATE

## National Student & Children Workers' Retreat



NO RESERVES ☺ NO RETREATS ☺ NO REGRETS



### Paul Borthwick

Paul Borthwick has served as the Youth Minister and Missions Minister for over 24 years at Grace Church in Lexington, Massachusetts. He has coordinated over 100 short term missions teams and commits himself to mobilizing others for cross cultural ministry.

### Jeff Nichols

Jeff Nichols has served for over 7 years as Executive Pastor/Minister of Children at Donelson Free Will Baptist Church in Nashville, TN. He has led Children's Ministry seminars around the country as a presenter for the International Network of Children's Ministry at their one day Children's Ministry Seminar.



**BRANSON, MO FEB. 9-11 - PRESTONSBURG, KY FEB. 16-18**





Thomas Marberry

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

Craig S. Keener

(Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 2000, 576 pp., hardback, \$24.99).

**T**his is the latest volume in Zondervan’s commentary series that focuses on how the contemporary church can apply the teachings of scripture to its life and ministry today. Most commentaries devote their attention to determining what the biblical text meant in its original time and context. Comparatively little attention is devoted to how the church can apply that meaning to the modern world. This series gives more emphasis to how the church can use the biblical message in its preaching and teaching today.

The author of this volume is Dr. Craig S. Keener who holds a Ph.D. from Duke University. He is professor of New Testament at Eastern Seminary in Wynnewood, Pennsylvania. The author is theologically conservative; he accepts the inspiration and authority of scripture.

Dr. Keener is an African-American with a long history of ministry in the African-American community. Throughout his ministry he has emphasized both social responsibility and personal evangelism. The following quotation illustrates his involvement in personal evangelism.

“I and my multicultural teammates had the opportunity to lead many African-Americans, many Puerto Ricans, and a few Anglos to Christ doing personal evangelism in New York City . . .” He also notes that “On several occasions in street ministry I have been beaten or had my life threatened.” This is certainly not a typical testimony for a seminary professor.

Dr. Keener brings to the writing of this commentary a unique combination of conservative theology, high academic skills, and active ministry within the African-American community. This varied background has enabled him to produce a commentary that is valuable and rather differ-

ent in its approach.

The author has an extensive knowledge of Hebrew literature including both the Old Testament documents and extra-biblical Jewish literature. He notes that Revelation is perhaps the most Jewish book in the New Testament. It makes extensive use of terms, ideas and concepts that are found in the Hebrew literature.

In his interpretation of Revelation 17:1-5, Keener notes that “The Old Testament prophets often portrayed Israel as a woman, either God’s faithful bride when pure or an adulteress when unfaithful to him.” His understanding of Jewish symbolism makes it possible for the author to interpret more correctly the symbols in Revelation.

In his analysis of chapter 14, the author raises the question of why the 144,000 are celibate. He notes that “in ancient Israel’s armies only men could participate in holy war, and they were apparently required to stay away from women.”

He then applies this point to modern Christians in these words, “The symbolism thus makes a strong point: Christians must be pure and faithful to Christ if they wish to be prepared for and engage in the Lamb’s holy war. Unlike the world, believers cannot indulge in divided interests.”

Chapter 20 is, of course, the most controversial chapter in Revelation, and Keener’s treatment of it is quite valuable. He summarizes how this difficult passage has been interpreted through the centuries.

He notes that, “The two millennial views most widely held in different sections of Christendom today are premillennialism and amillennialism. Each has more arguments in its favor than advocates of the opposing position generally recognize.” He notes that if an interpreter starts a study of eschatology with Revelation 20, he will

probably end up a premillennialist. If he starts with most New Testament passages about the end time and then goes to Revelation 20, he will probably end up an amillennialist. As Keener writes, “Each view makes sense on its own presuppositions . . .”

The author points out that the book of Revelation has a powerful message for Christians today. It challenges Christians to be faithful to Christ in difficult and decadent times. It challenges the materialism and emphasis on economic prosperity that characterizes so much of Western society (including many Christians). In an age that destroys the lives of many unborn children, the Book of Revelation emphasizes the value of human life. According to Keener, the book has a rich and necessary message for contemporary Christians.

This is not a traditional commentary on Revelation. Many recent commentaries find in the book of Revelation a detailed plan of future events. That is not the approach of this work. This commentary emphasizes the abiding themes of Revelation and how we can use those abiding themes in our lives and ministries today. The Book of Revelation stresses the ultimate victory of the Kingdom of God, but it is also a book of incalculable value for this age and every age.

This commentary may challenge some of our traditional assumptions about apocalyptic literature. It may shake our tree a bit, but sometimes our tree may need to be shaken. ■





Jack Williams

## The Baddest Pastor in Town

**P**ssst! Rumor has it that the baddest pastor in town hangs out at your church. Speak right up, I'm taking notes here. You say his sermons leave scuff marks on your Nikes? And he's against everything except the History Channel? What's that about his uniform of the day—polyester suits and black wingtips? And he's weird about money, thinks you should tithe?

Uh-huh, sounds like a real hard case. Make you a deal. Let's trot him alongside five other preachers, run a few comparisons, and then we'll get back to your problem.

**While surfing church** history, I uncovered these five guys. No, you won't like them any better than the one down at your place, but it might put things in perspective.

Why won't you like them? Four reasons. First, they're single, and you know how fickle singles can get. Second, they're all Jews, which means they're intense and don't laugh much.

Third, they're men. Believe me, this group is what people were afraid of when they invented political correctness. Fourth, they hawk a one-size-fits-all approach to ministry. They cut no special deals for youth groups or women's outreach and give no senior adult discounts.

**Problem Preacher One.** Better unwrap this package carefully. He's single, a classic loner, exhibits depression symptoms, talks about ending it all, thinks his best days are behind him, dresses funny and was once considered something of a marathon runner. Probably a survivalist with anti-establishment leanings, gets his jolies insulting government officials.

Fellow by the name of Elijah the Tishbite. Disappears regularly and nobody can find him. He preached twice in four years—one sermon created a 42-month drought, the second curled

King Ahab's toes. Before moving into a widow's house for a year, he got quite chummy with a flock of ravens.

**Problem Preacher Two.** Oh, this guy's a doozie. Single, surly, a closet racist who flat-out refused to take a series of meetings in Nineveh. Took a Mediterranean cruise instead. Goes by the name of Jonah the son of Amittai. Not a happy camper.

After a mid-cruise adjustment that's a fish story you won't believe, he shows up to preach the Nineveh crusade with only one sermon. Kept repeating it day after day. And then the craziest thing happened.

The whole town went to the altar, which seemed to irritate Pastor Jonah. He whined and sulked as if he preferred they all go to Hell. Said as much, in fact. He stormed off carrying a dried-up gourd and mumbling under his breath.

**Problem Preacher Three.** Same M. O. as the first two. Single, travels a lot, tends to repeat himself, never stays anywhere longer than three years, rough on those who cross him.

This guy's a bad'un. There's an old murder rap in his background. Seems that he helped kill a deacon some years back.

Does quite a bit of writing for a guy who's always on the scrap. He's educated and formally trained in reputable schools, so he knows the right people. But he can't get beyond an incident that happened outside Damascus. Left him dazed, hallucinating about seeing God. He even changed his name from Saul of Tarsus to Paul. Calls himself an apostle now.

**Problem Preacher Four.** This one's different. For one thing, he's younger. Single, a bit on the sensitive side, tends to be sickly, drinks a little wine now and then claiming it's for medicinal purposes only. I heard that.

Goes by the name of Timothy and considers Paul his hero. Wants to be just like him, says he's Paul's "son in the ministry." The boy comes from a good family. His mother and grandmother are both real nice folks.

**Problem Preacher Five.** Again—single, Jewish, from a respectable family, but with whispers that his father is not really his father. You know what I mean.

Claims to be God but doesn't have a place to live. Always draws a crowd. His cousin was killed after some trouble with the government. They say he can read minds. Usually travels with a dozen men, calls them disciples.

One of those disciples sold him out for a few bucks. Another denied publicly that he knew him and cursed. All 12 squabbled over who was the greatest. When some women claimed that he died and rose from the dead, a disciple named Thomas almost laughed at them. His name? Jesus of Nazareth.

**Back to your problem.** How's your pastor looking so far? Betcha he's married, and preaches more than twice in four years like that Elijah fellow. He's probably delighted when you repent, unlike Pastor Jonah.

Chances are he's lived in the community long enough to call people by name, doesn't instigate riots like Paul, nor skip town one jump ahead of the sheriff. And his HMO primary care physician doesn't prescribe wine as a cure for ulcers.

Take a second look at your pastor—dresses better than Elijah, a better attitude than Jonah and in better health than Timothy. He doesn't know as much about you as Jesus does, but he loves you anyway.

Repeat after me: "Pastor Appreciation Day." Demonstrate those three magic words once a year and you'll get more than a smile from Old Grumpy. ■

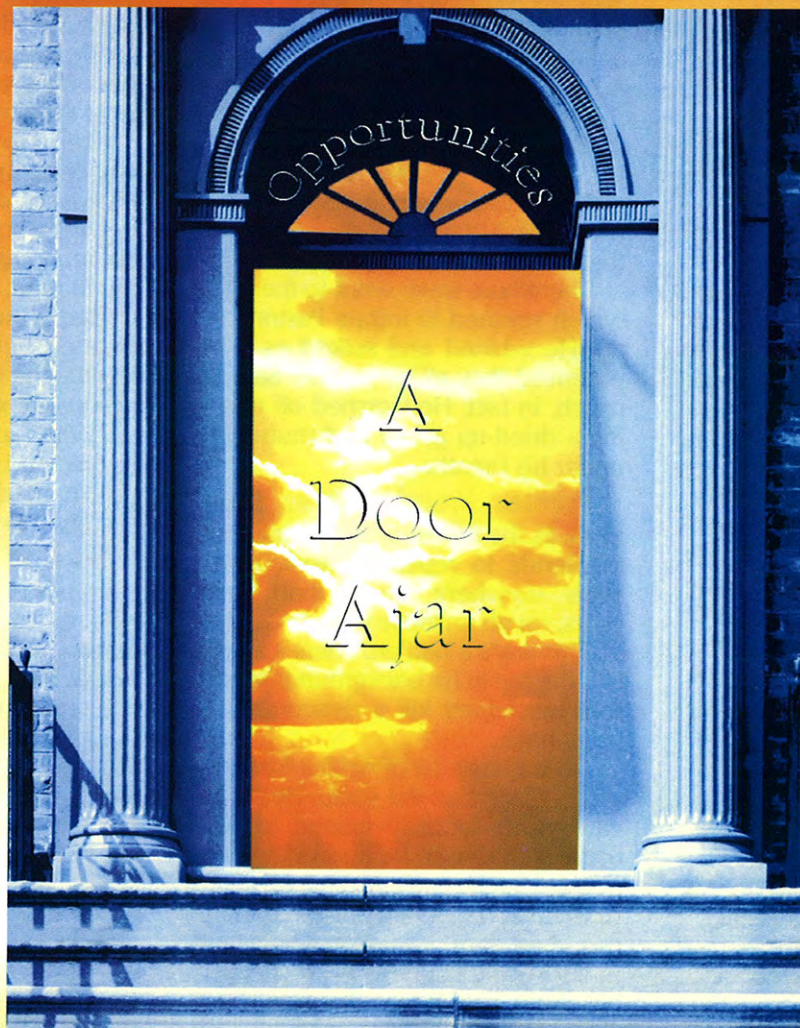


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