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Official Publication of the National Association of Free Will Baptists

January 2001

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VOLUME 48, NO. 1

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Editor-in-chief: Dr. Melvin Worthington

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Circulation: Dari Goodfellow

Printed by: Randall House Publications

Contact (ISSN 0573-7796), published monthly by the National Association of

Free Will Baptists, 5233 Mt. View Road, Antioch, TN 37013-2306. Address all correspondence and subscriptions to Post Office Box 5002, Antioch, TN 37011-5002. Phone 615/731-6812.

Annual subscription rates: Individual—\$15 per year, Church Family Plan—\$15 per year, Church Bundle Plan—\$15

per year. Periodical postage paid at Antioch, Tennessee, and additional offices.

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USPS 130-660



Melvin Worthington

The Pathway to Prosperity

One of the key issues confronting local churches is funding. Where will the financial resources come from to enlarge ministries at every level of denominational life? Global outreach, educational institutions, denominational agencies and a host of para-church organizations face funding problems in spite of the fact that America's economy is booming. What is wrong?

Seriousness of the Problem

As a denomination we need a significant increase in financial resources in order to *evangelize*. Multitudes at home and abroad need to hear the gospel. We need individuals to take seriously their financial responsibility to give systematically and sacrificially.

We need a significant increase in financial resources in order to *educate*. Free Will Baptist colleges need money to upgrade their facilities, faculties and existing programs to expand their curriculum offerings. Salaries for pastors, denominational workers and missionaries need to be increased. Scholarships need to be made available for students at all our colleges.

We need a significant increase in financial resources in order to *edify*. The process of edification takes time and money. The denomination's literature program needs to continually upgrade the quality and content of the curriculum. This takes talented and trained individuals, well-versed in new technology and sophisticated equipment.

Source of the Problem

The need for increased finances is not a new problem. A number of elements have contributed to the fund-

ing dilemma.

One source of this problem is *ignorance* of God's plan for financing His work. The *Treatise* states, "Both the Old and New Scriptures teach tithing as God's financial plan for the support of His work." This statement suggests that those who organized the National Association of Free Will Baptists understood the biblical plan for financing God's work. We have neglected to teach this basic biblical precept.

A second source of this problem is *ignoring* God's plan for financing His work. Alternative methods and means have been developed as substitutes. But choosing to ignore God's plan brings serious consequences.

God's people have the necessary financial resources to finance God's work. Free Will Baptists have the necessary resources to fund all denominational programs. We should not expect others to fund our efforts.

A third source of this problem is *interpreting* God's plan for financing His work. There are some who teach that tithing is "Old Testament" and not required or relevant for today's Christian. They say that the New Testament emphasizes "giving" not tithing.

I suggest that the New Testament

teaches both. You can not give 20% without giving more than 10%—the tithe. Surely we would not suggest that giving under grace would be less than giving under the law. Besides, tithing was practiced before the Mosaic Law.

Solution to the Problem

There are no financial needs in the denomination that could not be met through tithes and offerings. God's plan for financing His work has not been altered, is not antiquated and will always be adequate. What we need to do is to face God's ownership, our obligation in light of His ownership and respond in obedience.

What is the solution to having the financial needs of every ministry met? We can *start* by giving tithes and offerings as worship and adoration of God.

We can *share* that God demands the tithe, deserves the offering, defends saving, directs spending, detests selfishness and dispels subjectivity. Tithes and offerings are objective ways to measure spiritual development.

We can *see* that God blesses those who give tithes and offerings. Embracing God's plan for financing His work will bring abundant blessings to the individual and organization.

Malachi was not wrong when he said, "Bring ye all the tithes into the storehouse, that there may be meat in my house, and prove me now herewith, saith the Lord of hosts, if I will not open you the windows of heaven, and pour you out a blessing, that there shall not be room enough to receive it," (Mal. 3:10).

Faithful adherence to the practice of giving tithes and offerings is the pathway to prosperity. Tithes and offerings—that's God's way. He requires no more; He expects no less. ■

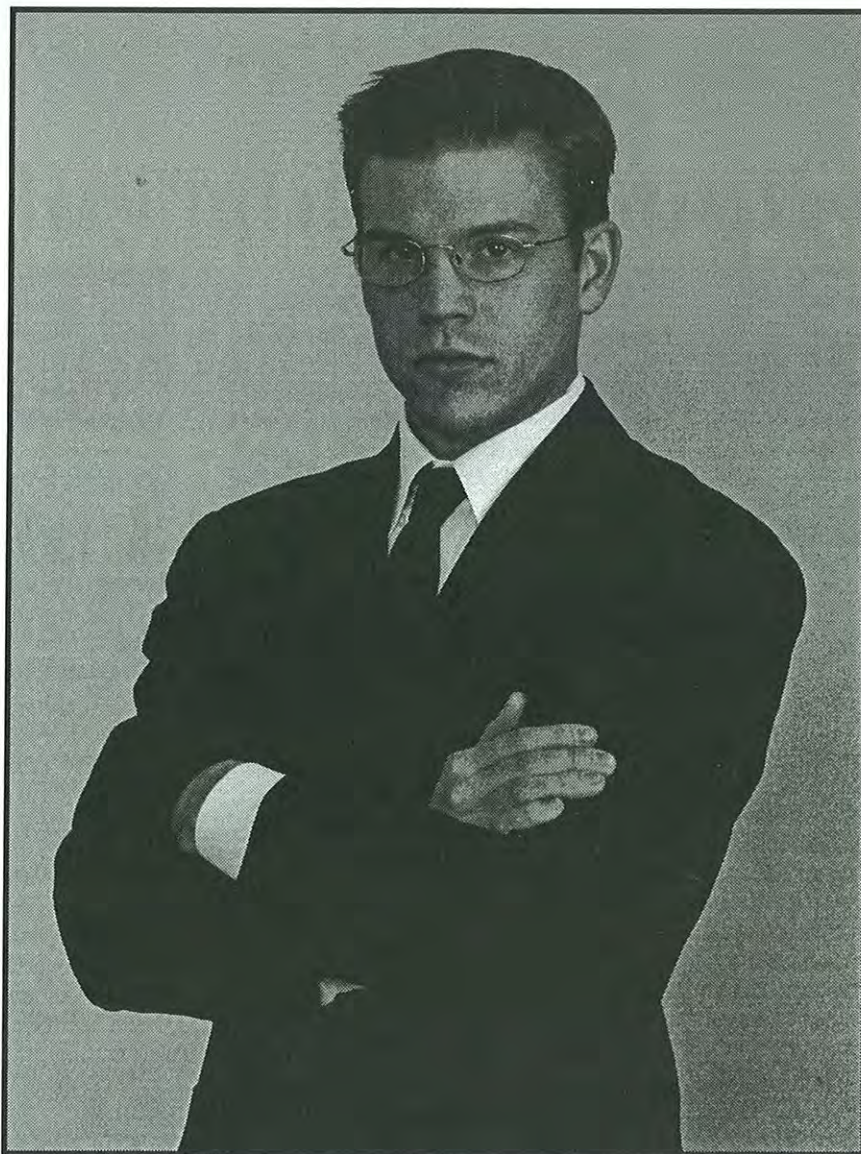
The Secretary's Schedule

January 2001

- 5-6 Educational Task Force
Nashville, Tennessee
- 15-19 Convention Planning Trip
Detroit, Michigan
- 20 First Louisiana District Association
- 29 RCMA Board Meeting
- 30-2/2 RCMA Annual Conference

How to Fight Without Feuding

By Bill Hayes



Let's face it. We all encounter times of disagreement. It's a fact of life. We make decisions every day and sometimes someone disagrees with one of those decisions. What do we do if another person has a different point of view?

Sadly, that's usually when relationships teeter. This doesn't have to be the case. It is possible to disagree without being disagreeable. It is possible to have closure within a disagreement and not give up on your job, your marriage or your church.

Pride and selfishness always get in

the way of making rational decisions. We don't decide for the good of those around us. We form an opinion based upon what we want. This causes friction within our relationships.

Dr. Richard Patterson says that making decisions this way is an "abuse of power." We have the power to go in any direction we want and, more often than not, we demand that things go our way.

For instance, churches have disagreements about various issues. A major one is often musical selections. Over time, your church music begins

to change and you disapprove. There are several ways to react.

You can show your disapproval by leaving the church. You could stand up in a testimonial service and just happen to make a comment about your dislike of the music. You could start a prayer chain (a.k.a. "gossip chain") and have people pray for the pastor and music director.

You could join the choir and try to learn the new songs, or you could talk to the music director and pastor of the church about your concern. The first few reactions are usually the

ones chosen.

In order to react appropriately when we disagree, here are a few things to consider.

Be Informed

An uninformed decision is always a poor decision. We make the mistake of not considering others or respecting their opinions.

Philippians 2:3 says, "Let nothing be done through strife or vainglory; but in lowliness of mind let each esteem other better than themselves." Considering others is not just a nice thing to do—it's biblical.

Proverbs 13:10 says, "Only by pride cometh contention: but with the well advised is wisdom." In just about every disagreement, pride is the major component. We lapse into a childish frame of mind and "me," "mine" and "I" become our basis of defense. God says that being well advised is the wise way to handle our disagreements.

We often pre-judge one another's motives or intentions before we know the whole story. Don't take a stand until you know you have "a leg to stand on." Be considerate of others. We don't always know at first glance all the information necessary to make an informed decision. Be patient, investigate and pray for God's will.

Be Tolerant

I'm not suggesting tolerance of just about anything. We *must* take a stand on core issues. At the same time, we need to be tolerant of the views and ideas of others.

Sometimes we demand that things go our way or no way at all. This attitude is unfair and unhealthy and destroys homes, churches, denominations and businesses all the time.

In his book *The Purpose Driven Church*, Rick Warren discusses the touchy issue of music. One of the points he makes goes a long way in understanding tolerance in any situation.

He states that those who think the music performed in a church has to be a certain style are guilty of "cultural elitism." The Bible nowhere states what style of music or, for that matter, what style of preaching a church must adhere to. It's a matter of preference.

We must be tolerant of each other and make decisions with others in

mind. Relationships are more important than our own personal preferences.

Don't Get Personal

When we are faced with a difference of opinion, we often lose our sense of fairness and become personal. We begin to attack people instead of considering others. In marriage counseling, that's called "hitting below the belt."

Our human nature tends to lead us to lash out when someone disagrees with us. We feel we've been attacked personally. This is usually not the case and is a spiritually immature way of handling issues.

Let's look at it this way. A couple has a discussion one day and the wife wants to go to her family's house for Christmas dinner. Now, they've always gone to his parents' house and it has become somewhat of a tradition. She insists on fairness and that Christmas dinner should be observed at her parents' home this year.

Both parties dig in and then the personal attacks begin: "You never did like my family" and on and on it goes. At this point, the disagreement is out of control. Fairness and tolerance are no longer the issue. Now, it's me against you!

We must stick to the facts and be considerate of the feelings of others. Remember that when a disagreement becomes an argument and anger gets out of control, you will not accomplish anything. We never say anything wise when we're angry.

Get Over It

The Bible says, "Be ye angry, and sin not: let not the sun go down upon your wrath," (Eph. 4:26).

What do you do if you disagree with someone or something doesn't go the way you like? You sit down and talk it out. Investigate, interview or whatever else is necessary for you to make an informed/impartial decision.

Then, get over it! Life is too short to hold grudges or bad feelings toward someone and, besides this, it's also a sin! (Matt. 5:23-24; 18:15-20).

Make this commitment in every relationship. Be at peace with everyone before the sun goes down at the end of the day. Don't demand that everyone accept your personal prefer-

ences. Whether it's a disagreement in a board meeting, a church, at the office, within your denomination or at home, pick your battles carefully. Stand for those things that matter most, but be considerate and compassionate of the feelings and ideas of others, and allow them to have an opinion too. People are more important than our point of view! ■



ABOUT THE WRITER: Reverend Bill Hayes pastors Hillview Free Will Baptist Church in Reynoldsburg, Ohio.

Directory Update

FLORIDA

Chris Hawkins to Christian Home Church, McDavid

Walter Baxley to Damascus Church, Marianna

GEORGIA

Clifton Buchanan to Mt. Gilead Church, Brinson
from Pleasant View Church, Walnut Hill, IL

SOUTH CAROLINA

Brian Tolliver to New Prospect Church, Pamplico
Robert Bragan to First Church, North Charleston from Free Will Baptist Bible College as resident director

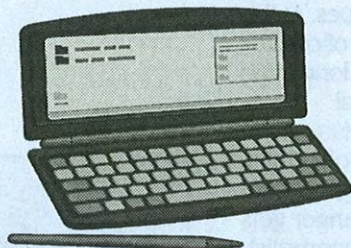
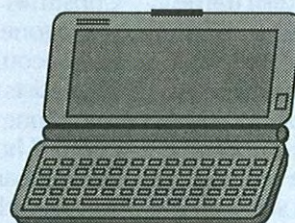
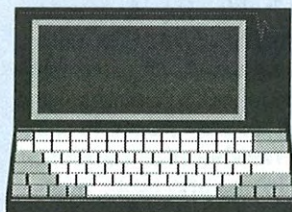
Phil Bozeman to Bethany Church, Timmonsville from Woodlawn Church, Russellville, AR
Tim Larrimore to Liberty Church, Lancaster from South Conway Church, Conway

Pete Bove to King's Way Church, Enoree

How to put technology to work in the pastor's study

What's That On Your Belt?

By Randy Corn



What's that on your belt? I've gotten that question quite a few times of late. It's too big for a beeper and the wrong shape for a cell phone, so what is it? It's my PDA. That answer, though, almost always leads to another question, *What's a PDA?*

In a world that seems filled to over-

flowing with acronyms, this one means "personal digital assistant." If you are still in a fog, let me clarify things a bit more. A PDA is an electronic device which looks like a handheld calculator and can keep up with all sorts of information for you.

Some of the basic functions which all PDAs have in common are a To Do

list, a directory of names, addresses and phone numbers, a clock, a calculator, a calendar with the capacity to note scheduled events and a way to make notes. It is smaller than a Day Runner and not as limited as an annual pocket calendar. In my pastoral work I have found it allows me to keep a great deal of the information from my

church office with me all the time.

The Beginning

In fact, it was in my church office where my PDA pilgrimage began. I had come to a new church and though there were quite a few things I liked a great deal about it, the size of the pastor's study was not among them. Once I got all the essential things in, the amount of the work area on my desk was far less than I had hoped.

I began looking at how to condense things, and the first thing which caught my eye was the Rolodex the previous pastor had used. It wasn't just big, it was huge. I set out for the office supply store for a more compact way of keeping up with names and phone numbers.

When I arrived at the store I asked where to look for a small Rolodex and the clerk asked if I was looking for a manual or electronic Rolodex. An electronic Rolodex? You have to remember this was a decade ago and I was unaware of the coming wave of miniaturized electronic devices.

I came home that day with a pocket organizer, the ancestor of a PDA, with 16K of memory which meant it was capable of holding up to 500 names and phone numbers. I figured I was set for life.

A Good Beginning, but . . .

As I played with my pocket organizer, I saw that I could do more than keep names and phone numbers on it. I could also use the built-in alarm function to remind me of scheduled events. I also started using the To Do function to keep up with what I had to get done. Early on I realized that this little device, which fit easily into my shirt pocket, had great potential as a productivity tool.

I decided to go to the library and look up what *Consumer Reports* had to say and learned that Sharp and Casio were dominating the market. I wrote for catalogs from both companies and began to justify in my own mind (and to my wife) why I really needed to upgrade my organizer. I eventually bought two more organizers each with more memory and functions.

The Next Generation

For good or for ill the digital world is always on the move. Electronic organizers were being overtaken by what were originally called "palm tops," a play off of the phrase "laptops." One innovation was the disappearance of the keyboard from the unit. It was replaced with either a digital image of a keyboard where one taps on the letters with a pen-like instrument called a stylus, or by an area where one writes the letters and the unit turns them into typed text. This innovation allowed the units themselves to become smaller.

Another leap forward was to connect the organizer or PDA to a computer. This allowed entry of information much more rapidly into the PDA. In fact, most PDAs are designed to work with productivity programs like *ACT!*, *Lotus Organizer* or *Microsoft Outlook*. This means that all the information you have carefully squirreled away in one of these programs can be downloaded directly into your PDA.

It wasn't long after connecting PDAs to computers that someone thought of tying them into the internet. The results were such things as email, ebooks, and downloads from news services which could be loaded directly into your PDA.

A Day in the Life of My PDA

I currently own a Palm Pilot IIIxe. It has eight megabytes of memory which is a far cry from my first 16K machine. Like my earlier electronic organizers, it helps me keep up with my To Do list, addresses, phone numbers and scheduled events, but it goes further.

There is also a note-taking application where I can scribble directly on the screen with my stylus and save the note for future reference. Think of it as an electronic post-it note.

There is a text application where I can download articles and even entire books directly into the unit from the internet. Currently, I have some of the devotional classics like *Power Through Prayer*, a collection of sermons by Jonathan Edwards, and about half of the New Testament. I am never caught without something worthwhile to read when I have my PDA with me.

There are literally thousands of ap-

plications which have been developed for PDAs—everything from databases and spreadsheets to just about every game imaginable like Tetris, Pong, Solitaire or Chess. Recently, I added a map application to my Palm. It allows me to zoom in and out of a map of my county and the surrounding area. I can ask the Palm to show me a particular address on the map as well.

All of this has made me a more productive pastor. I'm not scribbling down notes on random scraps of paper or trying to keep up with three different kinds of calendars. Updating my address and phone list is a snap, and I seldom miss an appointment or forget an important date. One of the greatest advantages of a PDA for me is allowing me to do so much of my work on the move.

It's Geek to Me!

Like the pocket protectors and slide rules of a past generation, the PDA on your belt may be a sign you are a Geek. Obviously, not everyone is as excited by the potential of these little electronic wonders as I am. I've had more than one friend say that as long as they make paper and number two pencils they will have no need for a PDA. Perhaps that is true for them, but we are living in an information age and my PDA puts a great deal of the information I work with into a more useable and mobile form. ■



ABOUT THE WRITER: Reverend Randy Corn pastors Bethlehem Free Will Baptist Church in Ashland City, Tennessee.

God Has No Closets


By Joanna Felts



My nine-year-old son sometimes watches a special nature show geared for children.

The characters on this show go to their closet when looking for something. They get to the closet, look into the camera and make a statement like, "We know what's going to happen." Then, when they open the closet, everything, including the kitchen sink falls out. It's obvious that they are not all that organized.

Think of the closets in your home. In my teenage son's room, I expect to find that he's missed the laundry basket in the bottom of the closet—again. Dress shirts are hung on the hangers wrong, jeans are sometimes straight and dress pants have a new permanent crease in the wrong spot.

 The games and outgrown toys that are still not quite ready to be given to the younger brother are stacked (or thrown) with no rhyme or reason. The dresser drawers are no better.

Closet Challenge

My younger son, the nine-year-old, definitely needs a lesson in how to use hangers. He does a great job picking everything up when he's finished playing—but wear a helmet if you open the side of the closet where he stores toys and games.

The closet I share with my husband stays fairly neat. We tend to hang up our clothes properly and make sure they are where we can find them. We actually hit the laundry basket and the

shoes are where
they should be.

However, the top of our closet also serves as a bookshelf. The bottom of our closet serves as the camera storage. We are not talking about a small Polaroid or APS, but about my husband's 35MM cameras and lenses as well as his medium format camera. So, you see, it is not simply a place to put our clothes.

We have one other closet in the house and that's the coat closet. Coats really are stored there . . . as well as wrapping paper, ribbons, gift boxes, the iron, a typewriter, an old stamp collection, a pillow, a blanket, some old pictures in frames, and . . . well, you get the idea.

Because of our lack of closet

space and storage space, we bought some more "closets" to put in the garage; you know, to house Christmas supplies, books (we really do have a few bookcases, also), craft supplies, extra canned goods, etc.

One other thing about my part of our closet: it's used as storage for Christmas gifts before they're wrapped. I found some forgotten gifts planned for Christmas in there this past summer.

A Better Way

As I drove around town last week, I listened to one of the Christian radio stations where a DJ was contemplating the scripture that reads, "As far as the east is from the west, that far God has removed our transgressions from us."

He then went on to say that God keeps no closets. That started me thinking about my closets. What do I hide in there? Do I store stuff there that I have trouble getting rid of? Do I pile them so full of useless things that they can't be used as closets?

God never *hides* our sins; He casts them away, under the blood of His Son so that they can't be seen anymore. He doesn't file them away under "use for a guilt trip if necessary." He simply eliminates them.

Neither does He *hide* His gifts from us either. He gives us His peace, His presence, His understanding, freely, not hiding it away for us to accidentally find later but to lavish upon us just as He lavished on us the gift of eternal life through the death of His Son.

He never *piles* our lives so full of "stuff" that we can't take time to worship Him and do His will. We are the ones capable of filling our lives too full all on our own. Instead, He says, "My yoke is easy, my burden is light."

He is never *indecisive* about what to throw away and what to keep. He says, "Take off the old, and put on the new." "Cultivate the fruit of the Spirit—love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, meekness; take off the sinfulness of the flesh and all that it resembles."

He never *hangs* our garments in the wrong place or on the wrong type of hanger, which causes harm and wrinkles to the clothes. Instead,

(continued on page 11)

THE TOGETHER WAY

October 2000

Receipts:						
State	Designated	CO-OP	Total	Year To Date Designated	Year To Date CO-OP	Year To Date Total
Alabama	\$ 732.07	\$ 143.14	\$ 875.21	\$ 4,199.70	\$ 1,621.87	\$ 5,821.57
Arizona	69.00	.00	69.00	69.00	127.00	196.00
Arkansas	8,389.14	8,478.81	16,867.95	140,866.21	153,340.92	294,207.13
California	.00	1,205.05	1,205.05	.00	8,818.17	8,818.17
Colorado	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00
Delaware	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00
Florida	.00	.00	.00	714.55	6,000.00	6,714.55
Georgia	33,877.23	1,658.33	35,535.56	313,578.48	16,958.05	330,536.53
Hawaii	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00
Idaho	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00
Illinois	3,586.73	1,202.11	4,788.84	83,896.34	19,977.90	103,874.24
Indiana	1,362.13	121.01	1,483.14	13,163.55	1,918.47	15,082.02
Iowa	.00	.00	.00	625.00	2,748.25	3,373.25
Kansas	.00	.00	.00	.00	487.01	487.01
Kentucky	.00	405.35	405.35	13,582.59	9,968.74	23,551.33
Louisiana	.00	.00	.00	60.00	155.00	215.00
Maryland	.00	.00	.00	.00	459.36	459.36
Michigan	7,860.58	577.00	8,437.58	227,678.64	29,907.63	257,586.27
Mississippi	4,057.75	641.63	4,699.38	67,055.63	6,044.93	73,100.56
Missouri	42,191.44	12,042.79	54,234.23	408,044.81	136,286.57	544,331.38
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	.00	.00	.00	6,069.61	416.87	6,486.48
North Carolina	584.74	3,112.87	3,697.61	12,867.39	25,233.00	38,100.39
Ohio	15,619.33	3,415.49	19,034.82	134,361.41	30,556.16	164,917.57
Oklahoma	55,793.38	9,660.22	65,453.60	572,972.30	108,330.26	681,302.56
South Carolina	.00	.00	.00	452,290.49	403.13	452,693.62
South Dakota	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00
Tennessee	26,874.95	2,080.99	28,955.94	132,208.24	19,391.77	151,600.01
Texas	7,818.96	263.90	8,082.86	97,369.02	3,040.62	100,409.64
Virginia	1,169.94	131.25	1,301.19	6,687.98	297.80	6,985.78
Virgin Islands	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00
West Virginia	103.20	50.00	153.20	14,167.36	772.42	14,939.78
Wisconsin	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00
Canada	292.95	9.11	302.06	6,229.30	116.00	6,345.30
Northwest Assoc.	.00	.00	.00	708.86	.00	708.86
Northeast Assoc.	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00
Other	.00	.00	.00	.00	.43	.43
Totals	\$ 210,383.52	\$ 45,199.05	\$ 255,582.57	\$ 2,709,847.67	\$ 583,378.33	\$ 3,293,226.00

Disbursements:						
Executive Office	\$ 1,911.15	\$ 20,339.57	\$ 22,250.72	\$ 19,540.84	\$ 262,520.11	\$ 282,060.95
Foreign Missions	114,402.48	5,717.69	120,120.17	1,600,541.79	73,797.34	1,674,339.13
FWBBC	14,128.64	5,717.69	19,846.33	190,512.23	73,797.34	264,309.57
Home Missions	68,023.94	4,474.69	72,498.63	742,506.74	57,754.40	800,261.14
Retirement & Insurance	584.09	3,480.33	4,064.42	4,813.68	44,920.12	49,733.80
Master's Men	929.87	3,480.33	4,410.20	4,807.99	44,920.12	49,728.11
Com. for Theo. Integrity	49.05	124.30	173.35	1,106.74	1,604.35	2,711.09
FWB Foundation	497.69	1,491.55	1,989.24	3,353.74	19,251.50	22,605.24
Historical Commission	28.04	124.30	152.34	251.74	1,604.35	1,856.09
Music Commission	29.97	124.30	154.27	195.41	1,604.35	1,799.76
Media Commission	40.99	124.30	165.29	673.42	1,604.35	2,277.77
Hillsdale FWB College	1,520.44	.00	1,520.44	17,748.26	.00	17,748.26
Other	8,237.17	.00	8,237.17	123,795.09	.00	123,795.09
Totals	\$ 210,383.52	\$ 45,199.05	\$ 255,582.57	\$ 2,709,847.67	\$ 583,378.33	\$ 3,293,226.00



The man of God went to the mountains to heal or die.

Be Still and Know What?

By Dan Steigman

As a pastor of a small church, I find that it is often hard to be still and know anything. The fact that there are four children in school, two grown sons working and living nearby, nurses who come to our home everyday to care for my oldest daughter, three dogs and a cat must all be considered. It also seems that there are enough problems in the flock's life to fill two lifetimes.

After a particularly long summer with the kids, (it's a small church and my wife works), school once again was in session. I looked forward to getting on my motorcycle and disappearing. But you know how it happens. There is a crisis and once again you are called into action, your own condition notwithstanding.

Three days after school started, I was finally able to hide. I went to one of my favorite places, Shasta Dam. What a relief to be able to be still and know something, anything.

Peace at Shasta Dam

I like Shasta Dam because it reminds me of what man is capable of. The huge wall of cement and metal holds back the equivalent of a small ocean of water. Whole towns are buried under the lake with all the memories that went with them. There is an odd feeling that comes as you look at water pouring from the face of the dam, knowing that is leakage from the monolith before you.

"Be still and know what?" I ask. What is it I am missing when I am running at full speed to the next emergency? A friend told me that if I didn't take time to think on God I might lose track of what really mattered to me. So I closed my eyes and listened intently.

I could hear the constant whining of the powerhouse feeding electricity to hundreds of thousands of people. I could hear the chirping of birds as they made their places in this world known. There was the rat-a-tat-tat sound of a diesel pickup as it crossed over the

dam. There was even the sound of my own breathing as I listened to the world around me.

Finally, there was no sound at all as I drifted into unconsciousness allowing myself a moment of rest and recuperation. But the question that haunted me was, "What can I know from all this?"

I know this. If I had not forced today's escape I would not have spent nearly as much time in prayer or thinking about the Lord as I did. I would not have felt the tension fall away from me as if it were being washed down the face of the dam. I would have simply been found by all those who may have wanted something from me instead of relying on their relationships with one another.

Yes, the salesman from the medical equipment company would have found me. The nursing service would have told me about filling a vacancy. I would have been there to give someone a phone number in-

stead of her calling someone else in the church to help.

The Elijah Syndrome

I am reminded of I Kings 18-19 where Elijah came face to face with his exhaustion and broken heart. He had just battled with 450 prophets of Baal and won. Amazingly, Yahweh was the almighty God and showed the Jews His power. Elijah must have been in a daze, as people all around him wanted something.

"I have forgotten God. Is there any hope for me?"

"I really didn't mean to follow Baal, but my parents did so I did too."

Then, in the midst of the triumph, Queen Jezebel heard about the destruction of the false prophets and threatened Elijah's life. Elijah fell apart and ran. He didn't run to the city for safety in numbers. He ran to the country to find safety and a good hiding place.

There is no doubt that Elijah must have been physically, emotionally and spiritually drained. After all, being a prophet is a lonely job. Who could he really talk to? Where could he go for advice? Some people make light of Elijah running away from Jezebel, but I understand.

The 450 prophets of Baal were predictable, but a woman and a queen, no less? No hope! Seriously, we all have areas where we just don't have the strength or faith to call on to get help. So Elijah went into the mountains to heal or die; I don't think he really cared at that moment.

God's reaction is one of the great stories of the Bible. God took care of His wounded soldier, allowed him the rest he needed, then placed him in a position where he had time to once again consider spiritual things.

It took Elijah 40 days to reach Mt. Sinai and find a nice cave where he could hide. Just as he thought he might get a break, God started in on him. Some people say Elijah was having a pity party. But what do you do when you're the only Christian, I mean Jew, left who worships God?

God put on a show for Elijah that demonstrated once and for all who was the power in this earth. Wind, earthquake, fire and then a gentle voice beckoning Elijah to come from

the cave to meet God. It was only when Elijah came to the quiet that he could once again hear God.

The God Who Hears

What was it that Elijah needed to know? He needed to know that even if he was the only true worshiper left, that God was still there. He needed to know that he counted and was remembered by his Lord. He needed reassurance that he was on the right path. He needed healing from the business of life.

Are we really so different? I cannot claim overwork. I can claim a burdened soul for my flock. It often weighs heavily on me as I try to help the lambs grow and prosper in their walk with God.

How many times, oh Lord, before they will hear and understand and turn to You? When can we feed them solid food without rebellion? Is there no end to this? And just as the questions and pain increase beyond my ability to cope, God sends me on a day trip to Shasta Dam where I can pray, commune, consider, refresh and hear His ever-present gentle voice.

I have no great formula to share, but it seems to me that if we as servants of God get so busy that we have no time to hear our Master, we ought to reconsider what truly matters. So today I walked inside Shasta Dam, listened to the water running through it, watched the great generators pump out electricity to the masses and slowed down long enough to hear God for a moment as He refreshed my soul. I pray you may choose to do the same.

Oh, no! The kids just got home! ■



ABOUT THE WRITER: Reverend Dan Steigman pastors Liberty Free Will Baptist Church in Cottonwood, California.

Closets ... (continued from page 8)

He promises a pure robe of righteousness that will never fade, become outdated or grow too small.

He never *misses* the laundry basket. He knows exactly what needs to be cleaned out of our lives, and He proceeds to gently (or not so gently) convict and lead us to bring the filthy rags to Him so that He can clean them up, mend them and clothe us with purity again.

He always wants us to let Him *fix* the things that are broken, old, torn, outgrown and unused. He doesn't let the outgrown toys hinder our relationship with Him; He doesn't let the broken relationships stagnate. He is the God who is able to heal and mend in ways that we cannot comprehend.

A New Day

What is really so wonderful is that He doesn't have closets in which to allow these things to happen. He has no storage rooms, no extra storage in the garage where He can put away things that could be used against us later.

He is a God of forgiveness, a God of understanding and a God of grace. He balances His justice with mercy and gives His blessings new every morning. There's no need to go to the closet to see what's there. What we need is available straight from His hand to clothe and refresh our hearts. ■



ABOUT THE WRITER: Mrs. Joanna Felts is ministries coordinator at First Free Will Baptist Church in Clovis, California.

The day when “stuff” became treasure and treasure became “stuff”

Lessons from a Yard Sale

By Carol Reid



Eleven years have passed since that yard sale in Rolla Smith's basement. But the lessons I learned that Saturday have stayed with me, impressed me, shaped me since then. I was just learning to know my step-family on a different level; my widowed mother was marrying a widower. Both had long, stable, Christian marriages and had been alone for over two years.

Rolla could mow grass, balance check books, take care of cars. Mother could bake cornbread; it was a wonderful match! And, even more since the years have passed, I'm convinced that it was a providential arrangement.

That weekend, though, with my step-father, Rolla, and my step-sister, Beth, I met the one they had lost, Agnes Smith, through new eyes. As we sorted through fabric scraps and patterns, I said to Laurie, her granddaughter, "So anything you asked for, your grandma would make."

"She made it before we asked for it," was Laurie's reply.

And the remnants of her grandmother's life were spread out there for us to stick price tags on and for strangers to haggle over.

Lesson

1: Deal with grief and leave it.

"The Lord giveth and the Lord taketh away. Blessed be the name of the Lord," (Job 1:21).

Beth and Rolla took Agnes Smith's pots from her cupboards, pictures from her walls, knickknacks from their cubbies and went on with life. They didn't hug them and hoard them and hover over them. They said goodbye to the past gracefully and went on with joy.

They were not heartless and unfeeling; they were practical and positive and graceful. Beth wasn't saying, "I didn't have a mother." Instead she was saying, "I no longer have a mother and I submit to God's sovereignty in the situation."

You may not yet have met grief in that proximity, but you will. Don't let it

swallow you. Life is still waiting for you, and you cannot build shrines and memorials out of "stuff." Grace is sufficient for you—each day, every day.

Lesson 2: Your works follow you.

"She eateth not the bread of idleness . . . She seeketh wool and flax and worketh willingly with her hands . . . She perceiveth that her merchandise is good. Her candle

goeth not out by night . . . She reacheth forth her hands to the poor. She maketh fine linen and selleth it. Her clothing is silk and purple," (Prov. 31).

Agnes Smith was an industrious, generous woman—a true picture of the Proverbs 31 woman. Her sewing was her avenue to giving; her crafts were her artistic contribution. She reflected the creativity and beauty of her Heavenly Father in her handiwork. What a model for other women. Even if a needle and thread seem frightening to you, some creative expression, some industrious use of your time and talent should mark you as a virtuous woman.



I'm Supposed to be a Free Will Baptist

By Kenneth Akers

I all started at a Methodist hospital in Pikeville, Kentucky, but it didn't end there. As a child growing up in the hills of eastern Kentucky, I wasn't raised in a church-going family. I occasionally went to church at Easter or some special time, but not on a regular basis.

When I was in fourth grade, we moved to another holler called Sookey's Creek. Each holler had at least one church; ours was Free Will Baptist. At this stage of my life, I began to get out and meet people, and one of the best

places was church.

Most of the big events for the holler happened at church—weddings, funerals, revivals, events where people would go. As I reached my teen years, this became a great place to meet girls. I think they may have had the same idea about meeting boys.

After I graduated from high school, my parents suggested I try the work force to see how I liked it. So I got a job and then a car. I could get out and meet people. As I began dating girls other than those who went to the

church in my holler, they all still seemed to lead me to Free Will Baptist churches.

Toward the end of the summer of 1978, my employer wanted to try an experiment to see if they could get along without me. After waiting for a couple of months, I decided I had given them enough time and moved just outside of Nashville, Tennessee. I attained a position with another employer and began a new life without hills and hollows.

(continued on page 28)

Lesson 3: Make memories that will outlast you.

Every scrap of fabric brought a memory from Beth and Laurie. "That was my favorite dress."

"Oh, remember your Easter dress that Grandma made from that?"

"Grandma made that when . . ."

Every dish ("Those were the popcorn bowls!"), every keepsake spoke of her, of good times, of thoughtful moments.

Sometimes I'm afraid my family will only remember me fussing and grouching and hurrying. I'm afraid they'll only remember me complaining about their clothing choices, their spending habits, their remote-control-hogging.

I'm afraid that I've cared more about company coming than family staying. I want my home to be a safe place, a happy place, a place where Mom is their best cheerleader and truest fan. The other "stuff" doesn't really matter.

Lesson 4: We don't all have the same measuring sticks.

I put a 10¢ price tag on a plate; Beth changed it to \$3. I put a 50¢ price-tag on a knickknack. Beth put it in the give-away bag. We have different priorities, different measures of success. But there is plenty of room

for a variety of opinions, for diversity and individualism.

If we all "seek first the Kingdom of God," we don't have to have everything exactly in the same order after that. There can be some overlap of priorities, some harmony—even counterpoint—in the rest of the song.

Lesson 5: All in one barrel.

"Where your treasure is, there will be your heart also," (Matt. 6:21).

Mother's new neighbor, Janie Aldridge, veteran missionary from Côte d'Ivoire, stopped by the yard sale on Saturday. Janie and I marveled at the basement full of "stuff" we were selling. Janie told me that in Africa, when health problems had fully dictated that their return to the States would be permanent and that they would not be back to continue their work, she had stood in her home and looked around.

"One barrel," she said. "I decided that everything I really wanted to take with me, everything I really valued, would fit in one barrel."

What is really valuable in your life? What consumes your time and energy and effort? Be sure you have "eternity's values in view."

When Lorene Miley, another veteran missionary from Côte d'Ivoire, returned home from a serious hospital-

ization, she told us her first priority. "I got a big garbage bag and started going from room to room, gathering stuff I didn't need."

Mrs. Miley is one lady who really understands traveling light—holding loosely what God has put into her hands. She and Janie Aldridge and Agnes Smith would all understand that life is not measured in accumulating things.

Don't spend your life just gathering "stuff" that someone will only have to sell at a yard sale after you're gone. Lay up your treasure in Heaven—in Heaven's work, Heaven's good news, Heaven's promises—moth-proof, rust-proof, theft-proof wealth for eternity. ■



ABOUT THE WRITER: Mrs. Carol Reid serves as librarian at Free Will Baptist Bible College. She is a member of Cross Timbers Free Will Baptist Church in Nashville, Tennessee.

She never took her eyes off God and His work.

Live So As to Be Missed

By Joanne Less

Lois Blalock, a long-time member of Central Free Will Baptist Church died at age 90 on December 3, 1999. Better known as Mollie to her friends, she was a consummate Christian lady who lived her life for the Lord in obedience to His will.

To Pastor Milton Worthington who knew her for 23 years, Mollie was loyal to the pastoral ministry, totally involved in the local church, sincere in her devotion to her family and friends.

Mollie was always available whenever asked to transport friends or neighbors. Kathryn Hudson told me that Mollie wanted to drive her to church Sundays and Wednesdays when she learned that Kathy always walked. Frequently, they made shopping trips and shared birthday dinners by eating out at restaurants. "Like a sister," Kathryn described their relationship.

One year a storm left Kathryn without power for several days. Mollie called Kathryn, inviting her to stay with her. In Kathryn's freezer 10 quarts of raspberries had thawed and she believed they had spoiled. With her usual cheerful attitude, Mollie spoke up, "We will make jelly."

"To this day," Kathryn said, "I still have some of that jelly!"

In Valeta Boehnlein's words, "Mollie was ageless, a cross-generation person. Young and old alike loved her."

At church, Valeta recalled, they used to talk about cooking various dishes. When Valeta told Mollie she would like

to learn how to make chicken and dumplings, Mollie showed up at the home of the Boehnleins soon after to show Valeta, then a young mother of four boys, the way to make them.

Neatness was not preeminent in those communal preparations, but plenty of fun was on the menu. "To this day," Valeta added, "the boys remember this incident."

Tim Boehnlein described Mollie as a prayer warrior. Physically disabled by a stroke, Mollie spent her last four years in a local nursing home. During their family visits to the home, the Boehnleins prayed with her. Their children, five sons, loved those occa-

sions when they could visit "Grandma Mollie" in the nursing home.

Six-year-old Alexis Kent, the older daughter of Brandon and Dawn Kent, also looked forward to their visits with Mollie. Their second child, born January 1997, just after Mollie entered the nursing home, has her namesake.

"She's feisty, like Mollie B.," said Brandon. "She is also a loving child, like Mollie B.!"

Dawn said, "Mollie truly believed it was better to give than receive."

Mollie apparently felt Brandon and Dawn were too generous bringing her gifts to the home, among them numerous tapes of Bible messages. Brandon



Peggy Messenger (L), Kathryn Hudson, Ginny Messenger and Lois Blalock.

recalled Mollie's daily prayers for him in the nursing home, and believes her prayers remain the principal reason he is so blessed today.

Always a testimony to the unsaved, she never complained during her years of illness. In Peggy Messenger's words,



Lois Blalock at 1986 Mother-Daughter Banquet in Central FWB Church.

"She was always thankful to the Lord that she could witness to others."

Rosemary Fairchild recalled fondly, "There would be Mollie, driving her wheelchair, witnessing and spreading sunshine to those around her."

Until her mid-80s, Mollie was an avid bowler with the Central FWB Church league. Her bowling partner Brandon Kent believed she loved to bowl; she was fun. Kathryn Hudson agreed. "Even though I didn't bowl, I

went with her and watched her bowl."

Pastor Worthington told me Mollie's favorite saying was, "God is too wise to make a mistake, and He loves us too much to hurt us." The hymn she loved most was, "It's Real." The words from this verse spoke to her heart:

So I prayed to God in earnest
and not caring what folks said,
I was hungry for the blessing,
my poor soul it must be fed.
When at last by faith I touched Him,
and, like sparks from smitten steel,
Just so quick salvation reached me;
I bless God, I know it's real!

(H. L. Cox © 1935 Renewal Lillenas Publishing Co.)

This Christian lady lives in the hearts and wills of these and countless others. As Don Theisen ob-

served, "She allowed God to work in her life with an uncompromising faith." Theisen is the father of five children to whom Mollie Blalock became a source of encouragement.

At the close of Mollie's funeral service, her granddaughter confided in Tim Boehnlein that she was envious because she missed hearing Mollie's testimony before the Central FWB Church family, and believed they were richer than she because of the spiritual legacy she had left them.

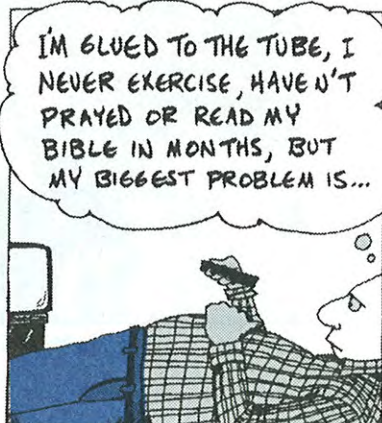
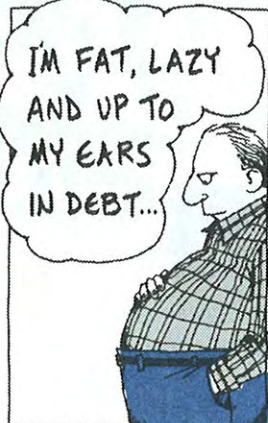
Speaking of her legacy, it may be accurately stated that one of Mollie's great concerns was that her own children, as well as others, would have a personal, vital relationship with the Lord Jesus Christ, evidenced by faithfulness in attendance to the Lord's house and a genuine concern for the Lord's Word and work.

Her eyes were ever upon Him; she was ready when God called her home.



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

Beyond Belief



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Arsonist Burns Mississippi Church

IUKA, MS—Fire destroyed the Poplar Springs FWB Church in Northeast Mississippi on September 15, 2000, according to Pastor Malcolm Garrett. The 3:00 a.m. blaze “gutted the church all the way down,” reported Tishomingo County Sheriff David Smith. “The bricks are the only thing standing.”

State and federal agents were called in to investigate the fire after a red swastika was found painted on the church’s brick front.

Chief investigator Bobby Flynt said, “We do know it’s arson, but we don’t know what happened.”

The church is located 12 miles north of Iuka on Highway 25. By the time officials were called at 3:00 a.m. on Friday, the church was too far gone to be salvaged.

The fire started on the upper level. A few items (piano, refrigerator, stove, books) were pulled from the full basement before they burned. However, everything inside the church sanctuary was lost.

Pastor Malcolm Garrett led members in an 11:00 a.m. service in the parking lot on the first Sunday after the fire. “We will rebuild,” he said. “The only things we’ve lost are the building and its contents. The church is people. My heart is with the people.”

In a November 3 interview, Pastor Garrett said that the church hoped to conduct services in a new building by January.



Fire burned Poplar Springs FWB Church; only walls remain.



Pastor Malcolm Garrett (L) stands in front of burned church.

Anne Worthington Retires



ANTIOCH, TN—After serving 18 years in the Executive Office as *Yearbook* Coordinator, Anne (Mrs. Melvin) Worthington retired in November 2000. She worked one day a week (1982-86), then came on board four days a week as her duties expanded into other areas.

Anne served as building receptionist at times, worked 15-hour days in the convention office each July and performed secretarial work for both executive secretary Melvin Worthington and *Contact* editor Jack Williams. During her tenure with the Executive Office, Mrs. Worthington also logged 20 years as secretary for the Tennessee Women Active for Christ. She taught a Sunday School class at Donelson FWB Church in Nashville where she is a member.

Contact editor Jack Williams said, "Anne was willing to do whatever needed to be done. If the hours were long, you could depend on her to stay until the job was finished. If the work wasn't in her job description (and it frequently wasn't), Anne took hold and made things happen." Williams continued, "One of Anne's best traits was her ability to work behind the scenes taking care of details while others got the spotlight. She is one of the most unassuming people I've ever met. She's a good public speaker, an effective writer, a genuinely spiritual woman and a good friend. We're all going to miss her quiet strength, especially me."

Before moving to Nashville in 1979 with her husband and two children, Anne lived as a Free Will Baptist pastor's wife in church parsonages for 20 years. She graduated from Columbia Bible College with a bachelor's degree, then earned a master's degree in education at Georgia State University.

She will now serve as primary caregiver for her 91-year-old father-in-law in Ayden, North Carolina.

Angie Williams Joins Executive Office Staff

ANTIOCH, TN—Mrs. Angie Williams joined the Executive Office staff in October 2000 and will serve as receptionist for the National Offices Building. She succeeds Anne Worthington who retired in November.

Angie previously worked 18 months in the building as secretary to Dr. David Crowe, director of missionary assistance for the Home Missions Department.

Angie and Billy Williams are members of Horton Heights FWB Church in Nashville. They have two sons, Billy, Jr. (22) and Bobby (20).

Dr. Melvin Worthington, executive secretary, said, "We are delighted to have Angie serve as building receptionist. She is a proven professional who brings a number of skills and experience to the office."

Mrs. Williams is an alumnus of Free Will Baptist Bible College. She worked 10 years in the Nashville real estate market, completing more than 300 hours in continuing education. She holds a Broker's License, earned the GRI designation (Graduate of the Real Estate Institute) and is recognized as a Certified Residential Specialist (CRS).

She also worked two years as a nurse's assistant, and three years as bookkeeper/secretary with Shoney's Restaurant.



Mississippi Re-Elects Walden Moderator

TISHOMINGO, MS—Delegates to the 36th annual Mississippi State Association elected Booneville layman Charles Walden to his fourth term as moderator, according to J. L. Gore, executive secretary.

The November 3-4 conclave met at Burgess Creek FWB Church in Tishomingo. Clerk Benny McKinney said that 28 ministers, 19 deacons and 10 lay delegates were among the numerous people who attended.

Five preaching services highlighted the two-day meeting. Friday morning, County Line FWB Church pastor Gary Walters preached on "Living in the Shadows." Then Home Missions staffer Richard Atwood preached on "Our Responsibility to Warn the People." Pastor Glen Jones (Mt. Pisgah FWB Church) closed the morning sessions by preaching on "Paul's P.S." from I Corinthians 16:13-14.

Dr. John Chang, coordinator for Asian Ministries, preached Saturday morning on "How Can We Fulfill the Great Commission?" *Contact* editor Jack Williams spoke Friday night.

Delegates approved a recommendation from the state Executive Board to conduct an annual All-Boards Conference each January. They also changed the constitution to adjust representation fees to the state and National Association.

Master's Men staffer Ken Akers spoke during the Saturday morning Master's Men Breakfast. *Co-Laborer* editor Rhonda McReynolds spoke to attendees at the Friday Mississippi Women Active for Christ Banquet.

The 2001 state association will meet November 2-3 at Fulton FWB Church.

Oklahoma Elects Keith Burden Moderator

OWASSO, OK—Delegates to Oklahoma's 92nd annual state association named 46-year-old Locust Grove pastor Keith Burden as moderator. The October 9-12, 2000, session met at Rejoice FWB Church in Owasso. Burden succeeds Moderator David McDougal who served six years.

Four hundred seven people registered for the four-day event. That included 126 ministers, 47 lay delegates, 28 deacons and 12 missionaries, as well as 194 visitors.

Delegates approved a \$4.7 million state budget. Executive Director Ernest Harrison said the 2001 budget includes \$480,000 in Cooperative Funds with 24% going to national ministries and 76% distributed to state programs: State Executive Board (22%), State Mission Board (15%), Christian Education Board (6%) and Hillsdale FWB College (33%).

Five resolutions won approval. One resolution required a constitutional change allowing the General Board to meet on Tuesday of the state association instead of Monday.

Another resolution called for a five-member committee to study the feasibility of creating a new state board to help shoulder some of the activities and programs currently sponsored by the Christian Education Board. The study committee will bring a recommendation to the 2001 session. Roy Dale Smith will chair the committee.

In other action, delegates authorized Hillsdale FWB College to begin construction on the proposed

\$3.9 million Chapel/Classroom Building as soon as "cash and believable commitments have been received." President Carl Cheshier announced that the Mabee Foundation had awarded the college a \$150,000 matching grant.

Thursday morning several questions arose regarding a request from the Christian Education Board to authorize \$60,000 for a possible 157-acre land purchase. The land could be used to build a year-round state youth camp and retirement center.

The state association theme was "Continuing the Work." Four ministers preached sermons developing the theme. James Coffelt spoke on "Continuing in the Doctrine," Brad Ransom on "Continuing in Christian Education," Jim Harris on "Continuing in Missions" and Junior Phillips on "Continuing in Church Growth."

Master's Men Staffer Ken Akers spoke during the Monday Master's Men Conference. Missionary Elaine Holland spoke to the Oklahoma Women Active for Christ on Tuesday.

Some 164 preachers attended the Tuesday Minister's Conference to hear Larry Messer, Jerald Bass and Quinton Kay speak on the conference theme, "The Spirit of Teamwork."

As the state association prepared to adjourn, Moderator David McDougal called Hillsdale president Carl Cheshier to the front and asked all ministers present to lay hands on the president and pray for him.

The 2001 state association will meet October 15-18 at First FWB Church in Ada.

Bible College Senior Dies in Accident



NASHVILLE, TN—Will Hall, a senior at Free Will Baptist Bible College and a youth ministry major from Garner, North Carolina, was killed in an accident on a rain-slick access ramp in Nashville on Saturday afternoon, November 4, 2000. Will was a member of the college's 1999-2000 Rejoice Ministry Team and a member of Garner FWB Church.

The college held a memorial service on Monday, November 6. A large number of students and faculty/staff traveled to North Carolina for the funeral, which was held November 8 at Garner FWB Church. College representatives included President Tom Malone, members of the faculty and staff, the current Rejoice Ministry Team and numerous members of the student body.

New Columns Debut in January

ANTIOCH, TN—Two new columns debut in the pages of *Contact* this month. North Carolina pastor Randy Sawyer will write "The Preacher's Perspective" while Georgia's Melinda Pinson will write "The Pastor's Wife."

Reverend Sawyer pastors First FWB Church in Gastonia, NC. He also chairs the Free Will Baptist Music Commission and coordinates music for the annual Free Will Baptist national convention.

Mrs. Melinda Pinson is a member of Colquitt FWB Church (GA) where her husband Matt pastors. She is a Yale University graduate, has served as a hotel manager and bank loan officer. She is now a full-time mother and homemaker.

Oklahoma Proclaims "Sadie Harrell Day"

OKLAHOMA CITY, OK—When Sadie Harrell turned 110 years old, Oklahoma's Governor Keating declared September 25, 2000, as "Sadie Harrell Day." Harrell's State Senator (Brown) and State Representative (Calvery) were on hand to present two proclamations from the governor and the state legislature.

A television crew and two newspaper reporters recorded the special event. When the journalists asked her secret for living so long, Sadie told them, "By living right, being honest and acting like a human being ought to act."

Sadie Harrell is a member of Trinity FWB Church in Oklahoma City where her grandson, Reverend Stan Konopinski pastors. Converted at age 16 and baptized in mid-winter in a creek, Sadie has been a Christian 96 years and a Free Will Baptist for 58 years. She may well be the oldest Free Will Baptist in the world.

Fellow church member Darla Hunter wrote an 18-verse poem titled "A Lady Named Sadie" describing the vibrant grandmother's life.

Pastor Konopinski said about his grandmother, "She is awfully proud of her Free Will Baptist heritage. She has been a joy and an inspiration for our family. We have looked to her for wisdom for many years now."



110-year-old Sadie Harrell with Senator Brown and Representative Calvery.

Florida Church Honors Retired Missionary

VERO BEACH, FL—In an outburst of appreciation, members of Ryanwood Fellowship FWB Church in Vero Beach sponsored a "Week of Encouragement" that focused on retired missionary Dan Merkh. Pastor Randy Bryant said that for a week the church sent cards of thanks to Reverend Merkh for his 50-year ministry.

Pastor Bryant then presented a plaque to Merkh recognizing his years as a pastor and foreign missionary.

Brother Merkh was ordained to preach in 1950 and then pastored churches in Tennessee, Florida, South Carolina and Virginia. Dan and Margaret Merkh served as missionaries to Ivory Coast and France before returning to the United States to pastor.

The Merkhs now reside in Fort Pierce, Florida, and work in Ryanwood Fellowship FWB Church.

Church members also celebrated Pastor Appreciation Day in October by presenting Pastor Randy Bryant with a cash gift and orders to "take a weekend off."



Pastor Randy Bryant (L) presents plaque to Dan Merkh.

Texas Church Celebrates 125 Years

HENDERSON, TX—Members of Good Hope FWB Church in Henderson turned Sunday, October 15, 2000, into a day-long celebration to commemorate the church's ministry in the community, according to Pastor David Rudd.

The day began with a 10:00 a.m. prayer meeting to prepare attendees for the day's theme, "An Old-Fashioned Sunday." The 10:30 a.m. worship service featured special music by the

church choir, a soloist and a trio. Sixty-eight people attended.

Adethia Rudd presented a devotion titled, "What Was Going On in 1875?" She encouraged guests and members by showing how that 125 years ago a group of people had a vision for a Free Will Baptist church.

Church clerk Shirley Green presented a history of the church after Holli Bridges read a poem she had composed for the occasion. Pastor

David Rudd preached on the topic, "He Remembered Home."

The afternoon festivities included a balloon release by church youth, dinner on the grounds, a singing and other activities.

Pastor Rudd said, "We are trying some unusual things to bring people to church. One of our new programs is a youth-oriented service Sunday nights. God has blessed this church for 125 years, and He is not through yet."

currently

Missouri home missionary **Lynn Beck** led the **Moberly Mission** to self-supporting church status when the group was organized as **Terrill Road FWB Church** on August 13, 2000. The new church's first order of business was to call Lynn Beck as pastor. Home Mission Board member **Roger Harwell** delivered the organizational message. **Dale Skiles**, director of State Home Missions, presided. The church is a member of the Northeast Missouri Association. Pastor Beck serves as the association's moderator.

Sandy Hicks directed a successful VBS at **Bear Point FWB Church** in **Sesser, IL**, with 143 attendees, 25 workers and six converts. The church which averages 158 in Sunday School celebrated its 129th anniversary in October 2000. **Larry Cook** pastors.

Pastor **Ronnie Mitchell** reports five conversions at **First FWB Church** in **Mt. Vernon, IL**.

Pastor **Raymond Capps** baptized three converts at **New Hope FWB Church** in **Spring Garden, IL**. The congregation raised \$1,400 for the American Cancer Society.

The **Hugo FWB Mission Church** in **Hugo, OK**, now has 10 members, according to Pastor **Jimmy Howell**. Two people, **Hiram** and **Faye Bright**, completed new convert classes. The mission work sponsored by Oklahoma's Southeastern Association is situated in a population center with 6,000 people.

Trinity Fellowship FWB Church in **Fayetteville, GA**, conducted services in their new 6,500-square-foot building on September 3, 2000. Home missionary pastor **Paul Smith** said 14 first-time visitors attended that day. Dedication services for the structure which sits on a 17-acre site were conducted November 4. The congregation had worshiped for two years in rented facilities.

Five Points FWB Church in **Washington, NC**, celebrated their 38th anniversary, according to Pastor **Phil Smith**. Some 178 people attended the

special services; the congregation gave a Harvest Day Offering of \$8,759. The church began with 35 charter members in 1962 and called **Charlie Dixon** as their first pastor. Church reporter **Jean Waters** wrote and published a 17-page, spiral-bound history of the church for the homecoming service.

Here's another church that reached self-supporting status: **Lake Hills FWB Church** in **Hot Springs, AR**. Arkansas promotional director **David Joslin** spoke to 81 people on Saturday, September 9, 2000, in a special worship celebration. Hillsdale FWB College president **Carl Cheshier** preached Sunday morning. Pastor **David Taylor** said the congregation averages 100 in attendance. The church raised \$20,000 for a new van.

Members of **Tom's Creek FWB Church** in **Ivel, KY**, purchased a house adjacent to their church property last year for \$41,000. Pastor **Chuck Ferguson** said that the house was paid for by year's end. The 100 members plan to build a new fellowship hall, lengthen the church sanctuary and add more pews.

Pastor **Ken Dodson** reports 46 conversions at the **Free Will Baptist Church and School** in **Virgin Islands**. **Neil Morgan** (along with Pastor Dodson) led the revival. The congregation gave a \$715 offering for India.

Pastor **Jim Maddox** says that **Tabernacle FWB Church** in **Kinston, NC**, has triumphed over Hurricane Floyd which shoved five feet of water into the church. The new church auditorium seats 450 and is located on higher ground. The church lost eight Sunday School rooms to flood waters but plans to build 25 new rooms, plus a prophet's chamber and a room for Spanish-speaking ministry.

Glad Tidings FWB Mission in **Asheboro, NC**, is making progress on their auditorium, according to Pastor **Robert Edmondson**. The wiring is finished and paid for; the congregation is now saving to pay for installation of duct work for heating and air conditioning. The congregation of 45 people expressed ap-

preciation for the \$6,000 contribution from the state Book Store last summer.

Some 300 people attended Friend's Day Sunday at **Traveler's Rest FWB Church** in **Altha, FL**. **Kenneth Jackson** pastors.

New Home FWB Church in **Tulsa, OK**, broke a 30-year attendance record in Sunday School by averaging 124, according to Pastor **Roy Dale Smith**. The church averages 175 for worship services. This marked the 13th month of growth for the congregation.

Contact welcomes **The Victory Vision**, publication of **Victory FWB Church** in **Jackson, TN**. The first issue was printed in October 2000. **Vernie Hersey** serves as editor. **Terry Booker** pastors.

Congratulations to **Dan Harper** who retired after 27 years as pastor of **Skyridge FWB Church** in **Noble, OK**. Harper was converted in 1963 at age 30 and began pastoring Skyridge in 1972 at age 39. The church has been his only pastorate, an unusual record for a minister.

Shahan FWB Church in **Coweta, OK**, celebrated 100 years of service, says Pastor **Bill Walker**. The church began with seven members in a one-room log cabin and was originally called "The Dirt Dauber Church." The church was called Red Barn FWB Church in 1929, then became Shahan FWB Church in 1949. It is the oldest church in the South Grand River Association.

Reverend **I. L. Florence** (87), a Free Will Baptist minister for 65 years died June 15, 2000. He pastored in Oklahoma, Arizona, New Mexico and Missouri, working six days a week as a bivocational minister to support his family. He preached his first sermon in 1935 at age 22. ■

No, I'm not talking about a gathering in Washington, D.C. I'm talking about Free Will Baptists contacting one million people during the month of March. I feel confident that we

will have put the gospel in a million homes by the end of the year 2000. Already, we are seeing this effort become one of the greatest things we have ever done.

Just today, I have received two good reports from churches who've saturated their areas. One church in South Carolina reported that their attendance doubled. Now, I would like to see us make a concentrated effort to reach out to one million people in one month. This can lead to Free Will Baptists having their biggest day ever on Roll Call Sunday!

Roll Call Sunday is March 25. Just as there was a great need for evangelism in year one of the church, there is a great need in the year 2001. Sometimes the task can seem as overwhelming as I'm sure it seemed back then. Instead of cursing the darkness, we have to let "this little light of mine shine." The largest previously recorded attendance for Roll Call Sunday was 273,718 in 1991. With prayer and hard work, we can break that record. It will take all of us working together.

Why Have A Roll Call Sunday?

1. Although it's not just to report attendance, it does help to see where we are and if we are going in the right direction.
2. Having a big day can cause excitement among the church people and among our whole denomination. It gives the people of your church a feeling that they are a part of something that is important and successful.
3. It gives a sense of unity to your church and to our Free Will Baptist movement.
4. It helps your church people understand the command of Jesus to evangelize.
5. Roll Call Sunday can enlarge the vision of your church. It helps everyone see what is possible.
6. It provides a list of prospects to reach in the future.
7. It gives everyone a time and way to do what they know they should do. I'm more likely to do what is right when I know others are doing it, too.

Now is the time to start planning for March. Here is a sample plan that a pastor could implement:

January

- * Announce on the first Sunday of the year that you plan to have the church's biggest day ever on March 25.
- * Have a planning meeting with your church leaders and Sunday School workers. Set a goal for how many contacts you can make in March. Some churches will want to attempt to reach 2001 in 2001.

Million Person March

By Richard Atwood

* Work on getting the church cleaned and in good repair.

February

* Make it a month of prayer.

- Wednesday night services that are all prayer — 24 hours of prayer
- Home prayer meetings - Fast and pray - Prayer partners established
- * Make it a month of training for *teachers, ushers, greeters, altar workers* and *visitation workers*.

March

- * Have each Sunday School class make a special effort to enroll new students during the month.
 - * Have a special outreach effort each week.
 - * By the first Sunday of March, get commitments for people inviting others to church. Give everyone a card to fill out. The pastor should start by announcing that he will invite 25 people to church for March 25. Then have it pre-arranged with a few leaders to publicly commit to invite 15 or 20 people. Ask others who will invite 20, 15, 10, etc., to raise their hands.
- Then finally say that surely everyone else will invite at least one person. Have the people fill out their cards and bring them to the front of the church at that time. Let them know you will be announcing the total commitments and displaying the cards.
- * By the second Sunday, the pastor should let them know that he's been inviting and that some have said yes.
 - * Make sure your special service is "special." Plan, involve a lot of people, and don't make the service last too long.

How A Church Of 100 Can Contact 1000 People In A Month

Personal Invitations	-	200
Distribute door hangers like "Got Peace?"	-	500
Phone Calls	-	100
Distribute tracts at work, etc.	-	100
Mail letters, brochures, etc.	-	100
Total	-	1,000

- * You may simply elect to pass out 1,000 door hangers. When you report for Roll Call Sunday, you'll only have one thing to add and that will be to tell how many contacts were made during the month of March. Then we'll celebrate our victories. Let's make March, 2001 a Million Person March!

Please check the Home Missions website in January for an update and for more ideas. To access this website, go to <http://www.nafwb.org>, then click on the Home Missions home page. ■

Home



Missions

Commissioned to Teach—Part IV

By Alton E. Loveless

IV. Goals in Teaching

A. Be Aware of the Real Message

In Mark 1:16-39, Jesus sets the picture of a real teacher.

1. He found His students.
 - a. Visitation is a must.
 - (1) This helps you to know your students.
 - (2) This aides you in dealing with relevant issues.
 - (3) Jesus practiced visitation: Matthew 4:18-19, 23; 26:6; Luke 8:22; Luke 7:36; 14:1; 19:5, 7; Mark 1:29.
2. He called His students.
 - a. Let your students know your desire to help them learn.
 - b. Gain their attention by creating a responsive atmosphere.
3. He taught them when He had them.
 - a. Don't waste time with non-essentials.
 - b. Deal with important issues.
 - c. You can teach them more when you know them better.
 - (1) Make a file on each student.
 - (a) Notebook album
 - (b) File folder
4. He showed them.
 - a. Remember: Teaching is not just telling.
 - (1) Set an example.
 - (2) Motivate with life-relatedness.
5. He sent them.
 - a. The message is spread faster as we send them out also.

B. Be Aware of the Real Mission.

1. The mission is to reach and teach them.
 - a. It is difficult to improve on the scriptural objectives listed by W. H. Bynes:
 - (1) Investigation (Luke 19:10)
 - (2) Evangelization (John 4:35)
 - (3) Identification (Colossians 2:6-7)
 - (4) Information (II Peter 1:14-19)
 - (5) Sanctification (John 3:18)
 - (6) Consecration (Romans 12:1-2)
 - (7) Supervision (II Timothy 2:15)
 - (8) Perfection (II Timothy 3:17)

C. Be Aware of Your Materials

1. Be sure they meet the needs of your class.
 - a. Determine by personal evaluation.
 - (1) Can I use it to produce interest?
 - (2) Does it give me the aid I need? Example: background, visual, etc.
 - (3) Does it allow for student expression and permit participation?
 - (4) Is the graphic such as to invite learning?

- (5) Is it Bible-based, Christ-centered and pupil-related?
- b. Determine by student evaluation.

- (1) Give review tests to determine depth of learning.
 - (a) Multiple choice
 - (b) Completion
 - (c) True-False
 - (d) Matching
 - (e) Essay
 - (f) Objective

D. Be Aware of Your Mastery.

1. Mastery comes from organization.

- a. Keep a file of:
 - (1) Teaching materials
 - (2) Illustrations
 - (3) News articles of interest
 - (4) Pictures
 - (5) Outlines or study notes
 - (6) Notes on pastors' sermons
 - (7) Notes of your students
 - (8) Good books to aid class

- b. Keep records of your students, class, etc.

Records reveal much if kept right.

- c. Provide interest for students.

This can be a great aid for you.

Conclusion: In personal evaluation, you should ask yourself:

- A. Did I define the lesson points well?
- B. Did I allow for enough discussion?
- C. Was sufficient time given to let the student decide how he should apply the lesson to himself?
- D. Was I able to determine if the teaching was such that the student will do that which was promoted for him to put into action? ■



ABOUT THE WRITER: Dr. Alton Loveless is general director of the Sunday School and Church Training Department.

Randall



House

What parents of college-bound kids need to know

(but may not think to ask).

By Peggy Hampton

If you have a son or daughter planning to attend FWBBC...or any other college, here is some good advice from the lady who directs the Bible College's financial aid programs.

A phone call will connect you with a living, breathing person who will be glad to help you with any questions about financial aid.

- Be sure your son or daughter takes the ACT test during their junior year so it can be retaken if necessary.
- Look for possible sources of financial aid. Check with the high school counselor, your association, local civic clubs, the financial aid office at FWBBC, library books and online scholarship sites.
- **Beware of scholarship scams.** Do not pay for a "scholarship search."
- Let FWBBC help your son or daughter look for scholarships. Request and complete a Scholarship Search Application and let our Scholarship Search Office do some of the work for you.
- Remember that applying for federal aid is free!
- Apply for Federal Financial Aid by completing and submitting the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) as soon after January 1 as possible. The FAFSA is available from high school guidance counselors, from our Financial Aid office or online at <http://www.fafsa.ed.gov>. **Do not log on to <http://www.fafsa.com> to apply for aid;** there is a charge at that site!
- **If you forget everything else, remember this—** your son or daughter should apply for aid as early as possible after January 1. Some grant aid has a priority deadline of April 15. Early applicants get the most aid!
- Be sure your son or daughter applies for admission and has a completed admission file on or before April 15.
- Parents can assist the student by completing their IRS tax return as early as possible. Your son or daughter must have access to those figures in order to apply for federal aid. (You are not required to mail it until later, but go ahead and prepare it so prior year income information is available for completing the FAFSA.)
- Encourage your son or daughter to respond promptly to all requests from admissions or the Financial Aid Office once the process of applying has begun.
- Remember: Students apply for aid once each year. You get to do this all over again each January! ■



Peggy Hampton has worked with FWBBC's financial aid programs since 1985. She is a 1963 alumna whose invaluable work has benefited hundreds of students and their families by helping them find the means to attend

college when family incomes were stretched to—and beyond—the limit.

For more information, call the college's Financial Aid Office (615-844-5249). There you will find someone warm and friendly and eager to help.

Free Will Baptist Bible College

Attorneys, economists and accountants are often accused of speaking a different language. These professionals are constantly being urged to please "put it in plain English." Many of the legal documents the Free Will Baptist Foundation deals with are legal mumbo jumbo to most of us. Here, in common English, are descriptions of some of the legal documents that may be used in planned giving or estate management, control and transfer.

Simple Revocable Trusts. These trusts are referred to as Money Management Trusts in our brochures. They are designed for organizations (church, district, state association, regional and national ministries) or individuals. The Foundation acts as trustee by managing the trust. The individual/organization is generally the beneficiary of the trust. The Foundation only handles trusts that have some charitable benefit to a Free Will Baptist ministry.

For individuals, this is done by the individual selecting a ministry to receive the trust or a portion thereof if the individual(s) should die without revoking or exhausting the trust. Revocable trusts are designed for individuals who need income from their assets, want to retain access to these funds, but who want a final benefit to go to some Free Will Baptist ministry.

Irrevocable Trusts. These trusts are completed gifts to a Free Will Baptist ministry and at least a portion of the gift is tax deductible. The most simple irrevocable trust is an Endowment. Endowments provide income to the chosen ministry forever, while the principal is managed by The Foundation. Since this is a completed gift, the entire gift is tax deductible for the donor.

Gift Annuities are another type of widely used irrevocable trust. Gift Annuities provide income to the donor(s) based on a fixed percentage rate for life. When the donor(s) dies, the remaining balance is distributed to the chosen ministry. Partial tax deductions are permitted for this type of trust.

Assorted Legal Documents

By David Brown

Another type of irrevocable trust is a Charitable Remainder Trust. These trusts can be very flexible providing lifetime income to the donor at a fixed amount or a fixed percentage. Highly appreciated assets are a good choice to fund these trusts since they can be shielded from capital gains taxes. As its name implies the remainder of this trust goes to ministry at the donor's death and only a partial tax deduction is generated when funded.

Power of Attorney. A written authorization for one person to act as an agent for another. There are two basic types—*limited* and *general*. A limited power of attorney restricts the power to act to a certain period of time and/or to specific transactions. An example would be a person authorizing another person to withdraw funds from their checking account during a hospitalization. A general power of attorney is an authorization to do any and all things necessary to carry on with a person's legal affairs. Common law provides for the termination of an ordinary power of attorney upon the principal's incapacity.

Durable Power of Attorney. This is a special type of power that has been specifically created to deal with the incapacity of the principal in the basic power of attorney. Thus a durable power of attorney is a statutory written power of attorney that will not terminate upon the principal's incapacity. Both principal and agent must be of legal age and competent at the time the power of attorney was signed.

The durable power of attorney remains in duration until either the principal revokes it, it expires by its terms, or the principal or agent dies. The scope of powers conferred on the agent may be limited or broad as the situation demands. It can also be designed to become effective only upon the occurrence of a certain event. A durable power of attorney can be a valuable document for estate planning.

Legal documents are subject to state law. They may or may not be approved for your state. ■

Free Will Baptist



Foundation



Garnett Reid

Profit from the Prophets

The subject of prophecy always raises eyebrows and prompts reactions. Some think of predicting the future when they hear "prophecy" discussed. People such as the 16th century French philosopher Nostradamus or, in a modern setting, Jeanne Dixon or Edgar Cayce may come to mind. Others associate prophecy primarily with Christ's second coming. Images of a crusty old desert-dweller wearing camel hair, eating locusts, and spouting a "gloom and doom" message may be the way some caricature a "prophet."

Jeremiah 18:18 identifies three offices of spiritual leadership in Israel: priest, wise man and prophet. Since prophecy occupies a leading role in the unfolding of God's redemptive plan in scripture, we need an accurate understanding of what prophecy is and who these people called "prophets" were.

God's Servants, The Prophets

The Hebrew word translated "prophet" in the Old Testament is *nabi*; it refers to one who speaks on behalf of another. Old Testament prophets were indeed God's spokesmen. Thus Robert Picirilli observes that, strictly speaking, prophets were not so much "fore-tellers" or "forth-tellers" as they were "for-tellers." They spoke on God's behalf.

Other biblical titles describing a prophet include "man of God," "servant of God," "messenger," "shepherd" and "watchman."

Prophetism developed through several stages over the Old Testament period. Beginning with Abraham (Gen. 20:7), then Moses (Deut. 18:15-18; Num. 12:6-8), prophecy appeared only occasionally in the time of the patriarchs and the Pentateuch.

Prophets made more frequent appearances during the time of Samuel and in the early monarchy, culminat-

ing with reformer prophets such as Elijah, Elisha and Micaiah. The classical period of Old Testament prophecy, notably the eighth century B. C., witnessed the work of the great writing prophets: Hosea, Isaiah, Micah and Amos stand out as examples.

Amos—Covenant Prosecutor, Kingdom Visionary

During this year of studies, I want to focus on this courageous man Amos. His work is included among the Minor Prophets of the Old Testament. In the Hebrew Bible, Amos is part of "The Twelve." These books carry the label "minor" only because of their shorter length when compared to "major"—longer—prophetic works such as Isaiah and Jeremiah. Certainly there is nothing "minor" about the great truths Amos presents!

Along these lines, I think it helps us to understand prophecies such as Amos's by viewing the ministry of all the prophets in a dual sense. First, keep in mind that they were *covenant prosecutors*. Using the analogy of our modern legal system, the prophets brought indictments against God's people for violating the Mosaic covenant (Law).

Second, however, they were also *kingdom visionaries*. They encouraged the nation by reminding them of God's promises to Abraham and David, promises about a King who would rule over a Kingdom of peace and righteousness.

Amos delivered this word to a generation not unlike our own. The northern kingdom of Israel in the eighth century B. C. maintained a semblance of religion in form only. "Religion" was popular but truth was not. As with so many cultures today, a bent toward pluralism in belief plagued God's covenant people.

Idolatry and syncretism surfaced in Israel on a recurrent basis.

The most tragic element in all of this mixture was the fact that the people were still going through the motions of worship. "Come to Bethel, and transgress; at Gilgal multiply transgressions; and bring your sacrifices every morning," chided the prophet (4:4).

The rituals were there, but with no reality, no heart. Nominal religion produced no obedience, and a fruitless faith is a false faith. Amos preached to a generation lavished with prosperity but riddled with moral and spiritual decay.

Similar to our own global perspective, Amos, too, embraced many nations with his oracles. He revealed a God who intervenes in history, One whose program was on track in spite of impending judgment for a wayward nation. The Lord will keep His covenant promises even when all looks dark, Amos affirms.

Perhaps more now than ever, the words of this Tekoan seer deserve a hearing. ■

Next month: More about Amos and his message to the world.



Melinda Pinson

Relaxed Availability

Over the next several months in this column, we will reflect on a number of issues facing pastors' wives. This month we will focus on "relaxed availability." Pastors' wives, caught up in the routines of their husbands' ministries—and sometimes burnt out—often fail to renew their minds so they can minister to those they meet in the world.

Recently I was introduced to the idea of "relaxed availability," and I think an attitude of relaxed availability is necessary to life as a productive pastor's wife, inside and outside the church. By the word "relaxed," I mean a Christian state of the mind being renewed, though physical relaxation can aid in the development of a renewed mind.

Renewal

Paul describes in Romans 12:2 how our minds should be renewed by the power of God, "And be not conformed to this world; but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect will of God."

This passage reminds us that the spiritual refreshment and rejuvenation that comes with Christian mind-renewal is connected to the way we live out the Christ life.

Christ-Centeredness

Being renewed by the Spirit involves being centered on Christ rather than being self-centered. Focusing on the worries of our daily routine or our husband's ministry routine can cause us to become overly "ego-centric"—self-centered and so not centered on Christ.

C. E. B. Cranfield says in his commentary on Romans, "It is as the Holy Spirit renews the fallen mind, loosening the bonds of its egocentricity so that it begins to think truly objectively [honestly] instead of egocentrically,

that [one's] whole life is transformed."

This moving from self-centeredness to Christ-centeredness will involve the pastor's wife in a movement from an over-concern with her problems to a renewal that allows Christ to work through her to focus on others. However, we as pastors' wives must realize that we need to have our time alone with God in order to have this renewal take place so we can be available for God and others.

Availability

This is where the concept of "availability" comes in. Spiritual mind-renewal allows us to "relax" from the tensions we face as we live out our faith in the world. It allows us to be *transformed*, rather than being conformed to the spirit of the age. This process daily changes the way we live.

By undergoing daily spiritual mind-renewal, we can become more open to the needs and gifts of others and in the process become better Christian witnesses. Through the renewal that the Holy Spirit can bring, we make ourselves available to others and to God, freely opening ourselves to God's presence and the working out of His will in our lives.

Communication

In future columns, I want to talk about ways the pastor's wife can relax and retreat from the everyday pressures of real life and ministry. Yet, true spiritual renewal and relaxation and refreshment always begin with daily communication with God through Bible reading and prayer, which opens us up to real intimacy with Him.

Often pastors' wives get so caught up in the habits of everyday life and ministry that they often forget to be refreshed by their own personal time with God. Daily refreshment through

communication with God is like a good talk with your husband or a close friend, only better. It has the possibility of unclouding your mind and bringing tranquility. Then, it enables you to interchange with others more effectively and more freely and thus have an impact on their lives.

Impact

This relaxed availability that only union and communion with God can produce enables us to minister and be ministered to so much more effectively and profoundly than when we are unrelaxed and tense. When our minds get cluttered with the mundane happenings of daily life, we run the risk of becoming closed off to the possibilities of impact we can have on others.

Next month we will look at how this attitude of relaxed availability allows us as pastors' wives to have an impact on others. By expressing the beauty of human relationships that Christ brings, we can be a witness to the watching world.

A pastor's wife, perhaps more than most women, encounters a great deal of stress in everyday life and can easily be tied up with the everyday routines of her husband's ministry. Yet, by practicing "relaxed availability," you as a pastor's wife can become what the Lord wants you to be for the church and the world. ■



Randy Sawyer

Why Preaching?

A pastor in today's world wears many hats, and is defined by various activities. It would be appropriate to speak of the pastor as *shepherd, administrator, mentor, husband or father*, to name a few. However, the definitive role which a pastor is compelled to occupy is that of preacher.

Paul insists that it is by the "foolishness of preaching" that God has chosen to "save them that would believe," and the apostle asks, "how shall they hear without a preacher?" Yet the question begging for an answer is *why preaching?* With other means and methods available for the dissemination of the gospel, why did God select preaching?

Jesus Came Preaching

Why did preaching occupy so prominent a role in the life and ministry of Jesus? Mark starts his account of Christ's ministry by telling us, "Jesus came into Galilee, preaching the gospel of God..." (Mark 1:14-15). Each Gospel gives unforgettable accounts of Jesus as an itinerant evangelist, with great multitudes following after Him.

"Never man spake like this man," was the observation. When tempted to give place to other methodology and to promote other themes, Jesus the Incarnate Word placed the proclamation of the Word at the center of His personal mission. But why did He utilize preaching?

Early Church Expansion Through Preaching

When preparing to return to the Father, Jesus emphasized preaching as the central task of His Church. The final scene of Matthew's Gospel has left a strong impression on the church. It is often spoken of as the Great Commis-

sion by which Christ sent out the apostles to evangelize all peoples.

Matthew reports that Jesus sent the disciples out to "teach" the commandments of Christ. This suggests a correlation between "preaching" and "teaching," that the words can be used synonymously. Central to the mission of the church, then, is the preaching of the gospel of salvation and the teaching of the Christian way of life. But again, why preaching?

When we turn to Luke's historical account of the early church, the undeniable fact emerges that preaching is central to her explosive growth. Whether considering Peter's Pentecost sermon, Stephen's address before the Sanhedrin, Paul's message in the synagogues of the diaspora or Paul's discussion with the philosophers of Athens, we see preaching repeatedly as the key to the church's initial development.

In Acts 6 we hear the apostles determine to give "attention to prayer and the word;" in chapter 8 we note that "those who had been scattered preached the word wherever they went;" in chapter 12 we observe that as the "word of God continued to increase and spread," the church added multitudes. But once again we ask, why preaching?

That preaching was priority in the ministry of Paul is without question. The apostle made the claim, "Christ did not send me to baptize, but to preach the gospel." In two separate passages in his Corinthian correspondence (I Cor. 1:17-2:5; II Cor. 2:12-4:6), he defines what preaching is and should be.

G. Campbell Morgan says of this portion, "Perhaps nowhere in the New Testament is the subject of the ministry set forth in its sublimity as it is here." Boldly Paul declared, "We preach not ourselves, but Jesus Christ as Lord," (II Cor. 4:5). Yet once more, why preaching?

Church History Echoes the Refrain

Leaving the pages of scripture, turn to the annals of church history and likewise hear many voices extolling the primacy of preaching. Listen carefully and perhaps you will hear John of Antioch lift his "golden voice" above the chaos of his day, or hear the brilliant rhetorician and theologian Augustine of Hippo urge the preachers of his age "that is it more important to speak wisely than eloquently."

Follow the echo of preaching through to the magisterial reformers, Luther, Calvin and Zwingli, and observe the reforming power of a biblical ministry. Hear the Puritans pick-up the refrain on two sides of the Atlantic, and observe their "plain preaching" re-form one nation and shape another.

Enter the Victorian era and sit at the feet of the incomparable Spurgeon, the indomitable Dale or the impassioned Robertson. Attend a revival with Finney or ride the circuit with Cartwright, and though the personalities were varied, preaching remains preeminent. These, all of these, could well boast with Wesley, "I do indeed live by preaching." Yet, we must ask, why preaching?

Today's Glaring Neglect

Were these men mistaken? Did they misuse their gifts and mispend their lives? Was there a more effective methodology, or a better form of communication? To raise this question is certainly not futile or meaningless in today's world.

During the past few decades a plethora of church growth method books have flooded the evangelical marketplace. The sheer volume of such works testifies to the constant search for effective church growth strategies among today's Christian

leaders. Interesting, however, is the almost glaring absence of any emphasis on the ministry of preaching.

In *Power Preaching*, David Eby noted that after studying 10,000 pages on church growth from numerous works in this genre, he was amazed to discover only 50 of those pages devoted to preaching (p. 103). How can we account for such a departure from God's method? Has our generation discovered something that God Himself overlooked? Why preaching?

Preaching—God Communicating Through Man to Men

Unless we are willing to indict God with ignorance, we must conclude that He has chosen preaching because it is the form of communication that most completely represents who God is and what He is doing in this world. In other words, we preach for theological reasons.

The question is not merely, why preaching? But what is it about preaching that allows us to see and know God? The answer can be found by understanding that God is a communicator and that He has always chosen to communicate Himself to humans, through humans.

In an essay titled, "Why Preach," J. I. Packer writes that it was through the prophets, apostles and "supremely" Jesus Christ, the incarnate Son, which God has spoken. Into this succession the preachers of today are called to stand. Packer is careful to note that the "Bible text" is the real preacher, and the man in the pulpit is simply to let the "word" say what it says.

However, even here God is communicating through men, for scripture is a Divine/human book, God "breathing" out His message by men. So the question remains: Why is it that God can communicate Himself to man most clearly by man?

Phillips Brooks helps us get to the an-

swer with his definition that preaching is "truth through personality." The "truth" is discovered through scripture, and the scriptures as well as the contemporary setting shape the personality of the preacher. In this way the timeless truths of the Word can be communicated to a given contemporary audience.

The preacher is the "bridge," bringing the world of the Bible to the world of the hearer. In a similar, yet infinitely more effective manner, Jesus, the incarnate Word, stepped out of eternity into time to bring God to man. Even so, the preacher incarnates the message and speaks God's truth for Him.

It is precisely because God's desire to speak to each successive generation that He utilizes preachers and preaching. Therefore, we have no right to adopt any methodology that minimizes preaching. "He has chosen preaching," and by His grace invited and enabled today's preachers to "hold forth the word of life." May we be faithful to that high and holy calling. ■

Supposed to be FWB . . . from page 13

After three months, I had an opportunity to move to Cookeville, Tennessee, with my new employer. Before I moved, I had dated a couple of girls. One went to a Church of Christ, and I don't think the other had any religious affiliation.

Two days into my new job in my new city, I saw the most beautiful young lady ever. There was something different about her. I got up enough courage to call her on a Wednesday night. She wasn't home; she was at church—a Free Will Baptist church. After I finally got in touch with her, we talked, then dated and now have been married for over 20 years.

I really didn't know much about Free Will Baptists other than it seemed they were everywhere. As I began to study the Bible and Free Will Baptist doctrine, they seemed to match. As I looked at the Free Will Baptist covenant, I believed this was the conviction I had too.

I believed we should give ourselves fully to God and that His Word should be our guide. I believed we

should be different from the world. As a child growing up, I saw the bad things that came from alcohol, so I believed that part too.

I believed we should study the Bible, pray and do good works, that we should be faithful to our church and pay our tithes. I believed we should get along and accept Christian guidance when we make mistakes. I believed we should support missionaries around the world, so it seemed this is where I belonged.

January 2001 makes 21 years since I got saved. I have an Associate Degree in Christian Training, a Bachelor's Degree in Biblical Studies and have heard great preachers like Raymond Riggs, Jack Taylor (my first pastor), the man who led me to the Lord (Lloyd Locklear) and Carson Whittaker. I've heard some younger men preach like David Crowe and Rick Locklear who continue to carry on the work of these godly men who have been such strong Free Will Baptist leaders.

I still believe that the Free Will

Baptist denomination is the group where I can find what God's Word says we should be. I don't think Free Will Baptists are the only group that will make it to Heaven. I know many godly men and women from other denominations who have been great soul winners and prayer warriors. But for me, it seems from the way God has worked in my life, that I'm supposed to be Free Will Baptist. ■



ABOUT THE WRITER: Kenneth Akers serves as director of ministry development for the Master's Men Department.

2001



STUDENT & CHILDREN MINISTRIES

JANUARY - APRIL

National Student & Children Workers' Conference

February 9-11 Branson, MO

February 16-18 Prestonsburg, KY

Truth & Peace 2 Junior High Student Leadership Conference

March 8-11 Lake Fort Smith State Park, Arkansas

March 22-25 Camp Hope, Illinois

April 5-8 The Oaks, Tennessee

MAY - AUGUST

National Youth Evangelistic Team

June 10-24

Truth & Peace Student Leadership Conference

July 2-19 Nashville, TN & Detroit, MI

National Youth Conference

July 15-19 Detroit, MI

SEPTEMBER - DECEMBER

Reach That Guy Overseas Youth Worker Trip to Africa

September 14-28

For more information about any of our upcoming events or to be added to our mailing list* please call or write us.

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Nashville, TN 37217

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If you are on our mailing list, we will keep you updated with all our events, including our quarterly publication **Direction.*



Thomas Marberry

Does The Owl Still Call Your Name?

Bruce Brand, ed.

(NP: Indian Life Books, 2000, 347 pp. paperback, \$8.95).

Pete Grey Eyes was born in 1927, the son of a Navajo medicine man. He left home at age 14 to work on the railroad; many Navajos worked on the railroads during World War II. Several years later he returned home, farmed, raised livestock and followed in his father's footsteps as a medicine man. His reputation as a medicine man spread far and wide. He became an influential man in his community.

In 1974 everything turned sour. He became ill, as did his wife and three daughters. At one point, the doctors sent his wife home to die saying that there was nothing else they could do for her. His animals began to die for no apparent reason. The coyotes came around the place at night and began to howl. That is a very bad sign for the Navajo.

Worst of all, the owls began to gather and hoot at night in the juniper trees around the house. They began to talk to Pete in the Navajo way. They began to say, "We are going to kill you." Pete knew that the owls themselves were not speaking. As he explains, "They were demons sent by another medicine man to an owl."

In desperation, Pete took his family to a worship service in a local church. There the entire family found Christ. They found the hope, forgiveness, cleansing and healing that only Christ could give. Today the owls no longer gather in the juniper trees and hoot.

This is a book about survival. It is a book about many of the owls that haunt many Native American communities to this day. More than anything else, it is a book about the power of God to help, sustain and heal in the midst of life's greatest crises.

It is filled with stories of people who fought against owls such as alcoholism, sexual abuse, fetal alcohol syndrome, gambling, AIDS, pornography, solvent

addiction and suicide. These kinds of problems are epidemic in many sectors of our society, including many Native American communities. These enemies destroy the lives of many young people and adults every year.

The greatest enemy of native peoples today is alcohol. Arthur Holmes is an Ojibwe Indian from the state of Wisconsin. He was an alcoholic for 35 years. Because of his drinking, he lost everything that was near and dear to him including his career in the ministry. His wife finally put him into treatment. He came out sober and has remained so ever since.

Today he ministers to those who still struggle with the bottle. He writes, "Almost 100 percent of crimes for which American Indians are put in prison were committed under the influence of alcohol and 75% of the fatal accidents among Native people are alcohol related."

Dorothy Wright is a First Nation Cree from the northern part of the Canadian province of Alberta. She grew up in an alcoholic home. She was abused—sexually, mentally and physically—during her childhood. She found Jesus Christ and now lives a life of hope, meaning and purpose.

AIDS and other sexually transmitted diseases are spreading rapidly within Native communities and in society as a whole. As this book points out, "AIDS comes mostly as the result of sin, either through an immoral lifestyle or the result of another person's sin. But many people have or will get infected through no fault of their own."

According to Dr. Allan Ronald formerly of the University of Manitoba, "There would be no HIV virus if there were no multiple sex partners. The whole spread of AIDS is because we have multiple sex partners. If we had one-partner relationships there wouldn't be any spread of HIV."

In one sense this is a sobering book. It documents several of the serious social and moral crises that the western world today is facing. These are problems that cannot be ignored. At the same time, they are problems that demand a Christian witness and response. They are the result of sin, and Christ is the ultimate answer to the problem of sin.

In another sense, this is a hopeful book. It contains the stories of real men and women who have overcome these evils through the grace and power of Almighty God. It is a book that can be very helpful to pastors, youth workers and others who counsel young people and adults. It is well written and easy to read. It makes a powerful impact on the reader. Perhaps it is a book that God can use in your life or in the life of a friend or relative. ■

Coming Next Month

- ☐ No Reason Not to Die
- ☐ The Mud Lily
- ☐ Leadership Conference Report
- ☐ How to Plan a Special Event
- ☐ 2001 State Associations



Jack Williams

Burn the Ships

When Spanish explorer Hernando Cortes landed at Veracruz on the Gulf of Mexico in the 16th century, one of the things he did was burn his ships. An unpopular decision with his men, but a necessary decision. Here's why.

Cortes' goal was to conquer the new land by pushing west to the Pacific. By burning his ships, he eliminated the possibility that his men would lose heart and sail back to Spain. The presence of the ships gave Cortes' force an alternative if they lost the fight that lay ahead.

Burning the ships gave his men a powerful motive to win. Perhaps one of the things we should do on this first day of the new year is to . . .

Burn the ships. Who needs to burn his ships this year? Maybe the preacher. While we need bivocational ministers to lead struggling congregations, a growing number of churches (full-time and bivocational) can not find pastors.

This means somebody has a ship anchored at Veracruz in case the ministry turns hard. And ministry always turns hard. The company retirement plan looks more inviting than the church retirement plan.

Who needs to stay with the bivocational ministry and who needs to burn his ship? Only God and the preacher know. For the record, "... they which preach the gospel should live of the gospel..." is still in the Book (1 Cor. 9:14).

Bake a cake. Nothing makes a house smell better than a cake in the oven. The aroma goes everywhere and puts a smile on the most sour face. The kids stop growling. Dad turns down the football game.

Trust me on this. I'm a professional cookie-eater and cake-taster. But as good as fresh-baked cookies and cakes taste, the fragrance from the

process sells the product. The simple act of mixing the right ingredients, heating up the results and waiting for the outcome is one of life's most satisfying moments.

At the choke points in life when others grump and complain, a fresh batch of enthusiasm mixed with love and heated with a generous spirit will thaw the coldest relationships. No, that won't solve the problem, but it does get two smiling people in the same room. That's a great place to start.

Build a bridge. I don't always agree with the public statements of civil rights leader Jesse Jackson. But he was on target when he said, "It's time for us to turn to each other, not on each other."

Sometimes we allow criticism from others to spoil the moment, ruin the day or poison lifelong friendships. Criticisms by those who disagree with us are not decrees from on High. They're usually one man's opinion, one man who probably had a bad day.

Remember Fred Allen's sage advice, "If criticism had any real power, the skunk would be extinct by now."

Bite the bullet. Make the right financial decision today if you want a plan that works. This means to boldly operate on God's principle—which is to tithe 10 percent of your salary.

I'm uneasy around Christians who won't tithe, who ignore God's plan to finance the church and who offer wonderful substitutes like car washes instead. Let's put a sharper point on that: Maybe we should baptize them again, and this time include the checkbook.

A man who steals from God by not tithing may lie about other things too. The Christian who doesn't tithe is like the citizen who doesn't pay taxes. Both get a free ride on somebody else's dollar.

The first step to getting ahead financially is to tithe. Yes, I realize that tithing is not one of the "weightier matters" (Matt. 23:23) . . . as long as you do it, that is. But it's hard to take a man seriously on matters of faith and mercy (two of the weightier matters) when he can't get tithing right.

Buy some books. Notice, I didn't suggest "borrow some books." While I might loan you one of mine, you need books of your own.

You can't go everywhere. You can't know everything. You can't meet everybody. That's where good books make the difference. Why just last week, me and old Tell Sackett got ourselves cornered down under the Mogollon Rim by 40 gunslingers. We hunkered down behind some rocks in the high grass until help rode in, and then gave the bad guys what for.

Yesterday, theologian Ravi Zacharias explained to me why God is not responsible for my pain. That book's a keeper. You need a copy in your library.

Today, I jumped into *The Fourth Frontier* with Stephen Graves and Thomas Addington who whacked the idea that hard work is less honorable than sitting around coffee shops philosophizing with layabouts who don't tithe.

See what I mean? Good books let you keep a better class of company, plus they give you something warm to curl up to on those nights when the electricity goes off and the computer goes down. Light a candle and read.

The new year starts off in darkness every January. We must go on; we can't go back. And we need light for the road, big light. Jesus said that He would build His Church and the gates of Hell would not prevail against it. What is my small ship compared to so great a need? Burn it. ■

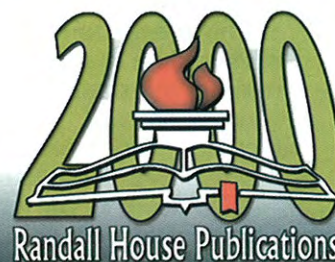
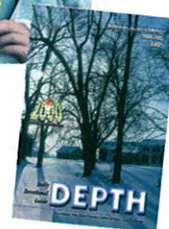
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