

# CONTACT

Official Publication of the National Association of Free Will Baptists

December 2001

New York Spirit  
What About the Star?  
Rachel Weeping  
Day the World Changed  
Waiting for the Grass to Grow



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# THE SECRETARY SPEAKS



Melvin Worthington

## John's Portraits of Jesus

**E**ach year during the celebration of Christmas great emphasis is given to the birth of Jesus. Countless articles have been written about the birth of the Babe in Bethlehem. However, He is that and more . . . He is Emmanuel—God with us; He is the Messiah—the anointed one.

The four Gospels were written to give a comprehensive view of Christ. Matthew describes Him as the King of the Jews. Mark designates Him as the Humble Servant. Luke denotes that He is the Son of Man. John delineates Him as the Son of God. Matthew appealed to the Jews, Mark to the Romans, Luke to the Greeks. John is distinctly different in that it appealed to the entire world.

In each chapter, the Apostle John answers the following questions: (1) Who is Christ? (2) What is faith? (3) What is life?

### John's Purpose

John writes with a specific purpose in mind. His purpose is to convince his readers that Jesus Christ is the divine Son of God.

This purpose is stated by John when he says, "And many other signs truly did Jesus in the presence of his disciples, which are not written in this book: But these are written, that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye might have life through his name," (20:30-31).

### John's Presentation

John commences his Gospel with the truth of the *pre-existence* of Christ. He asserts that Jesus Christ was the eternal Son of God who existed from

all eternity, "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning with God," (1:1-2).

John continues his presentation by emphasizing the truth of the *pre-eminence* of Christ in creation, "All things were made by him; and without him was not any thing made that was made. In him was life; and the life was the light of men," (1:3-4).

John then declares the *personhood* of Jesus Christ. He notes that the Word became flesh and dwelt among men. The pre-existent and preeminent Christ became a man—a human being.

He affirms the *incarnation* of Christ, the fact that He became a man, "And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth," (1:14).

John concludes his presentation by declaring the *passion* of Christ. He notes this as he records the introduction of Jesus by John the Baptist, "The next day John seeth Jesus coming unto him, and saith, Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world . . . And I saw, and bare record that this is the Son of God," (1:29, 34).

### John's Portrait

Each chapter in the Gospel of John provides a distinctive portrait of

Jesus Christ. Each chapter answers three questions: (1) *Who is Christ?* (2) *What is faith?* (3) *What is life?*

Jesus is pictured in chapter one as the *divine Son of God*.

Faith is *receiving Him*. John declares, "But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name" (1:12). Life means to be a *child of God*.

Jesus is pictured in chapter two as the *son of man*.

Faith is *obeying him*. Life is *supernatural joy*.

Jesus is pictured in chapter three as the *divine teacher*.

Faith is *believing on Him*. Life is *being born again*.

These chapters give an example of how John answers the three questions in each chapter. During this Christmas season, take time to read and reflect on the Gospel of God.

The Lord Jesus Christ—the Babe born in Bethlehem—is the divine Son of God. He satisfies the longings in every heart. He is the Master Soulwinner (4), Divine Physician (5), Bread of Life (6), Water of Life (7), Light of the World (8), Defender of the Weak (9), Good Shepherd (10), Resurrection and Life (11), Humble Servant (13), True Vine (15), Royal Comforter (16), Heavenly High Priest (17).

The Lord Jesus Christ is all we need. The comprehensive view of the Babe born in Bethlehem brings freshness and excitement to the celebration of Christmas. ■

### The Secretary's Schedule

December 2001

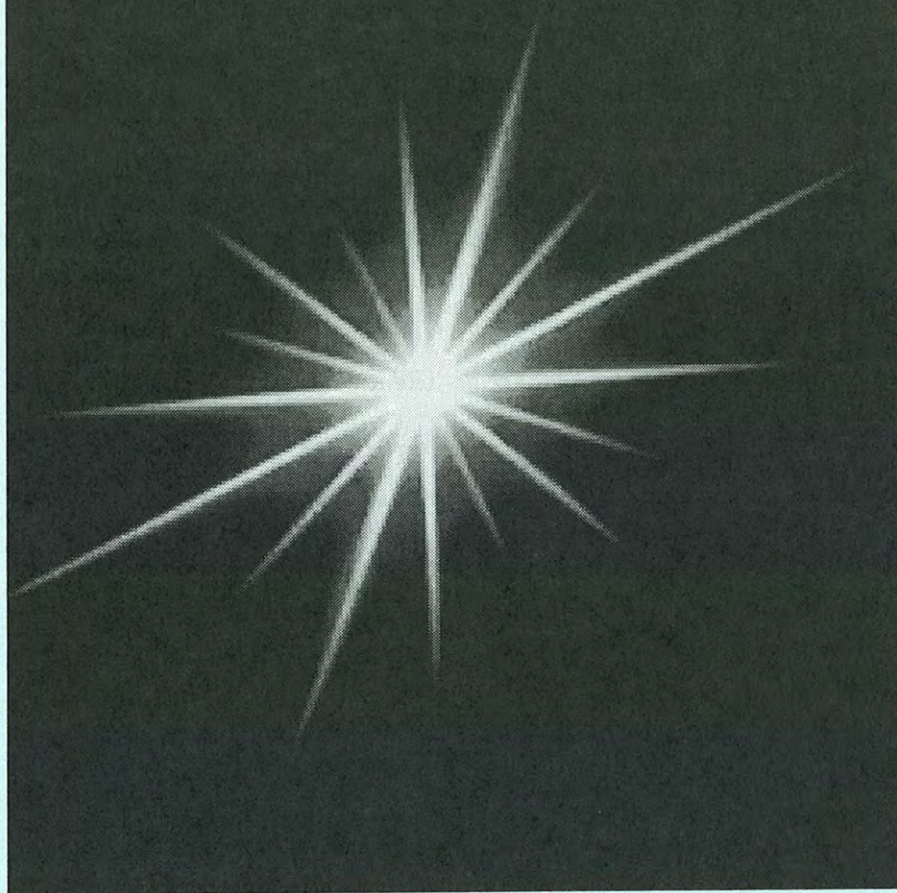
3-4 Leadership Conference

5-7 Executive Committee Meeting



# What About the Star?

By Sam Henderson



It's called a global positioning system . . . linked to satellites high over the earth. This modern electronic marvel allows you to pinpoint where you are at any particular time with an accuracy down to three feet. In fact, the military's "GPS" can do it down to less than one foot. You can have it built into the dash of your car, and it can tell you how far to the next town, where to make the next turn, or even the location of the nearest McDonald's!

There are hand-held devices, too, that you can carry around with you

wherever you go that help you know right where you are all the time. You need never feel lost again. With your friendly eye in the sky, you can know exactly where you are. And don't worry . . . even though you can determine where you are, no one else will know, because your GPS only receives; it doesn't send. Yet.

But GPS isn't all that new; it's been used by ocean-going vessels for years and actually goes back further than that: ancient mariners used a global positioning system called stars. They'd take out their sextant, do some calcu-

lations, and "Voilà! We're right . . . here!" They may not have always known exactly where "here" was, and they may not have known what lay ahead, because their maps ended at what was thought to be the end of the earth, a few hundred leagues back.

But the stars gave them a sense of *conformity* and security. As long as they could see the stars, they could figure out where they were, because the stars were constant, fixed, dependable.

There was a "Rubes" cartoon last Christmas that showed the three wise men out in the night, pointing upwards at a brilliant star. The caption read: *The Three Wise Men might never have made it to Bethlehem had it not been for their global positioning system.* That's pretty accurate. You see, God used a GPS one night long ago to show the world where the Savior was born.

*Now when Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea in the days of Herod the king, behold, there came wise men from the east to Jerusalem, saying, Where is he that is born King of the Jews? for we have seen his star in the east, and are come to worship him, (Mt. 2:1-2).*

## Men of Mystery

Not much is known about these wise men. Some say they might have been Jewish scholars who had re-



mained in Babylon after the Exile. They may have been eastern scholars or astrologers, men who studied ancient manuscripts from around the world, and watched the movement of the stars, thinking these determined the course of man's life on earth.

Others think they may have had a special message from God—a direct revelation, directing them to seek out the Messiah.

Tradition calls them "kings," probably because of the expensive, kingly gifts they brought with them, and due to the fact that they perhaps had been following the star on their journey for almost two years . . . which would take a kingly sum to afford.

Again, tradition says that there were three of them, because there were three gifts mentioned. But we don't know exactly where they came from or who they were or even how many there were. And how did they know that the wonderful new star they beheld represented a King . . . a Jewish King, in fact?

Whoever they were, these wise men must have had access to the ancient writings of the Jewish prophets like Micah, Isaiah and Daniel, or maybe even books of Moses which would include the prophecy of Balaam, found in Numbers 24:17: *I shall see him, but not now: I shall behold him, but not nigh: there shall come a Star out of Jacob, and a Sceptre shall rise out of Israel . . .*"

### Men of Purpose

Whoever they were, these men from the East recognized that something great, something wonderful was about to happen: A king was about to be born. A special King, a divine King, for His coming was foretold by the prophets of God and heralded by His stars above.

But these astrologers were interested in The Star, not just stars; in a heavenly Body, from the third Heaven; not just another light in the second heaven, the firmament above. They were seeking The Light, from God; not just a vast array of hot, luminous celestial bodies found distributed throughout the universe, but a Person of preeminence and prominence and fame. The leading Performer on the stage of the life story of man.

They came seeking The Star; to worship The Star; to know The Star of God. And to them, it was worth all the effort, all the expense, all the energy it took to seek Him out, *Whoever He was.*

But we know Who He is, don't we? It was Jesus the Messiah. The Star of eternity past and eternity future. Even when most of God's chosen people in Israel did not know Him, these wise men, these gentiles perhaps, these *foreigners* did. And notice how they responded when they found Him, because it's a good pattern to follow.

### Men of Decision

First, even though they had come a great distance, at great expense, perhaps even with much difficulty, their worship showed they felt it was worth the trip. It was important to them: to be there on time, to see the King, the Star, To welcome Him and know Him and serve Him.

Why is it, in these days of modern highways and fast, comfortable, affordable cars, some folks still have a thousand reasons for not attending church . . . that's just down the street or one of the many just across town. But for these wise men, no distance was too inconvenient, no cost too great to see the King, the Star. *And men, they were even willing to stop and get directions.*

Second, as soon as they arrived, they rejoiced and worshiped before Him, despite the fact that they had come such a long way. . . . *when they were come into the house, they saw the young child with Mary his mother, and fell down, and worshipped him."*

You see, this wasn't just another baby, one of perhaps thousands in Judea at that time. Someone has said recently that "a million babies will be born around the world today! But it only takes one of them to change the world." This one changed history. In fact, all of history is His - story.

The wise men knew that *this* baby was divine. His coming was proclaimed from the heavens; His coming was a message, a gift, an appearance from God. And He was surely worthy, and worth any inconvenience or any trouble they had had to go through. Whatever it took, because He was the King—the King of kings and Lord of lords. He was and is The Star.

Third, when they came, they worshiped and rejoiced and brought expensive, lavish gifts for Him. . . . *and when they had opened their treasures, they presented unto him gifts; gold, and frankincense, and myrrh.*

What they gave from their treasures, their offerings were their very best. They had planned ahead and prepared in advance, and now that they were there, they freely gave. For He was worthy of their offerings: He was The Star.

How much the wise men brought to Jesus doesn't matter any more than what you bring and give in worship. *"It's the thought that counts . . ."* That's what Jesus declared when He pointed out the widow's offering of two pennies. *Silver and gold have I none . . .*" Peter told the beggar at the gate. But what Peter gave that day, money could not have bought. What the widow gave that day *was from her heart*, for she gave all she had.

The wise men had gone out of their way to bring Him their gift. And we can see that what they gave was, no doubt, the best they could offer, because they were presents worthy for a King. They brought gifts and worshiped Jesus for who He was. And their *act of service* was as great an honor to Him as the offering they bore. This is the essence of true worship—honoring Christ with what you have for who He is.

We worship Him because He is the perfect, just and almighty Creator of the universe, worthy of the best we have to give. These wise men are examples to us in their giving, in their worship and in their diligence to seek and serve . . . and know the Lord. Because this is not just *a* star, not just one of a million other heavenly bodies: This is Jesus: The Star! ■



ABOUT THE WRITER: Reverend Sam Henderson pastors Green Rock Free Will Baptist Church in Colona, Illinois.



Where were you September 11?

# The New York Spirit

By Chris Lewis

I'm a New Yorker by choice. I was there September 11 when terrorists crashed two airliners into the World Trade Center. Like everybody else, I've tried to make some sense of the terrorist attacks.

All my life I've believed that God has a plan for each of us . . . that even though He gave us a free will, He's still in charge. Something like this could not be part of that plan. I guess that's what faith is all about . . . that after September 11, we still believe in Him.

I admit there have been days during the last several weeks that I've questioned and even fought with the Lord. I know that evil doesn't come from Him. I know that because we were created with a free will, people can choose to do horrific things to each other. I know these things in my head, but I never wondered about the existence of God until that beautiful fall morning in New York City.

## Day of Terror

I live in midtown Manhattan, a few blocks from Times Square. I moved here five years ago from Nashville, Tennessee, to pursue an acting career. There have been several *survival* jobs along the way.

I'm now helping a friend open his first restaurant, and for the last two months, we've been working with the construction crew on the new place. When the restaurant opens, I will be general manager and maitre d' while I continue singing and touring with my vocal jazz group.

I was on my way to work the morning of September 11 when I heard the news. My friend lives several blocks from the World Trade Center. He called to tell me he was running late and to make sure I would be there to let the workers into the building. While we were on the phone, I heard his wife in the background telling him that she heard a plane flying too low overhead and she thought that it was going to crash.

My friend and I continued talking about work. A couple of minutes later, in the middle of our conversation, he said, "Oh my God, a plane just crashed into the World Trade Center!" They could see the smoke from their apartment. The seriousness of the event didn't register at that moment.

While I knew it was bad if a plane crashed into a building, I thought it was probably a small, off-course commuter plane that had clipped the top of the tower. Five minutes later, my mother called to ask where I was. Knowing that she knew I lived nowhere near that part of town and that most mornings I would never have even been up so early, I sarcastically told her that I was at the World Trade Center. Fortunately, she knew I was joking and began filling me in on the news.

I still didn't believe the situation was that serious. People in New York are always overreacting, and everything from traffic jams to stalled subway cars have been blamed on terrorist plots. We tend to be more annoyed that our morning commutes are affected.

## Moment of Fear

After arriving at work, we watched on television as the second plane hit the south tower. It still didn't seem real, but seemed more like a scene from a movie. An hour passed and only one member of the crew had shown up for work. By this time subways, bridges and tunnels were all closed. It was when I left the restaurant and started home that the reality of what was happening hit me.

In just one hour the city changed. Sirens wailed in the distance while fire trucks and police cars raced south on northbound avenues. People walking to work had no idea what was happening, and then there were others crying as they walked.

An image I will always remember, the one that took me out of this scene from an action movie and made everything real for me, was an older man



screaming and crying, frantically running through the traffic trying to hail a cab. His friend running behind him kept telling him that he was "sure she was okay and that they would find her."

That was the first time I felt fear. This was no longer something happening to someone else, something I would watch on television until I was bored with it. This was happening to me.

As events unfolded in those next hours, I felt that I was in a war zone. No one knew what would happen next. I had to do something. I couldn't sit in my apartment and watch on television what was happening several blocks away.

## Night of Vigilance

The Red Cross put out a call for blood donors. That would be something I could do to help, but within two hours of the first plane hitting, the Red Cross was inundated with donors. They turned me away. I tried a nearby hospital and found chaos. They, too, were overloaded with blood donors but were desperate for volunteers. I spent the rest of the day working at St.



Luke's Hospital.

In situations like this, hospitals are considered prime terrorist targets, so for most of the day I was part of a security team responsible to keep the area around the hospital clear. I was stationed at the emergency room entrance where a hundred doctors and nurses paced, anxiously awaiting the first rush of victims. We were told that every hospital in the city would be overcrowded with the wounded.

As the day wore on, we began to understand that we would not see any victims. There was no need for all those blood donors. There would be few survivors.

At one point, I noticed a firefighter standing near the corner where I was stationed. He was alone and covered from head to toe in white ash. He was the first person I met who had been at Ground Zero. I asked if I could help him since he seemed to be somewhat dazed.

As I walked him to the emergency room, he told me he had been trapped inside one of the buildings before it collapsed. He described the terrible smell and spoke of how difficult it was to breathe. This man wept as he told me about watching people jump from windows trying desperately to escape.

When I went home that night, the city was deserted. Many things can be said about New York City, but one thing that would never be said is that New York City is a quiet place. For the next several days and nights, there was no roar of traffic, no horns honking, no people yelling at each other, no street cleaning trucks, no jack hammers pounding—just the wail of sirens in the distance and military jets circling overhead. It was terrifying.

### Time of Frustration

The next day I volunteered at St. Luke's. My job was to help organize the crisis center to aid people in finding friends or family members who were missing. There was still hope . . . then.

In the days after, there was less need for volunteers because so many people stepped up to help; some came from other parts of the country. There was little anyone could do. No one was allowed at ground zero except rescue workers.

It was frustrating because, living here,

we felt such a part of what was happening and yet we were unable to help. Some friends and I bought and donated supplies to the rescue effort—items like socks and underwear, aspirin, water, food, work gloves and boots. We did all we could to feel a part of the effort.

It was the next week before things started to happen again in the city. We were told the time had come to move forward. I hadn't worked all week. We couldn't do any work in the restaurant after the eleventh because no one living outside Manhattan could get into the city, nor could we get the deliveries of materials.

As devastating as losing a week's pay was, and as important as it was to start making up for lost time building the restaurant, it was hard going back to work. Nothing seemed as important as what happened on September 11. I didn't want things to return to normal. Thousands of people were still lost in our city. Rescue workers were at risk trying to locate survivors.

### Weeks of Change

Three weeks after the attack, there are times I'll forget for a minute what happened. I no longer sit glued to the television news day and night. But just when I forget and everything seems normal again, a word or a picture jolts me back to reality.

A police officer friend told me about one of his jobs in the rescue effort. He spent a 17-hour shift searching the area around the World Trade Center for body parts. His precinct has four officers. The fire station in my neighborhood lost 13 men, so far. How can we ever get back to normal?

I've been changed. Our nation has been changed. It has been amazing to see us come together. New Yorkers have rallied and started reviving our city. Each week now, things here change dramatically.

After the first week, we were told to prepare for the worst. The tourism industry would suffer and the market would crash. Broadway shows were forced to close and hundreds of actors, stage hands and musicians would be out of work. Restaurants and hotels were firing workers.

Not to say that it won't take time before New York is back to what it used to be, but already things are better.

Tourists are coming to New York again. Broadway shows are selling out and business everywhere is picking up. We will end up stronger than before.

### Renewal of Faith

I'm still happy living in New York City. I'm not afraid to be here. I still believe God has a plan for my life. If anything, during the last few weeks my faith has grown stronger. Not because I've found some answer to why these things happened or some justification for them. I don't know that I ever will, but I see His presence as we begin to heal and recover and as we grow stronger as a society.

I have so many unanswered questions. I've seen things that will always be with me and will affect every part of my life from now on, and I know that without God, I could not recover from this.

We read in the Bible that at the sound of the trumpets, the walls of Jericho came tumbling down. That was orchestrated by God for a purpose. But on September 11, 2001, a heinous plan, devised and orchestrated by man, was carried out and the walls came roaring down. We do not despair. God is still in control. As people struggle with their losses, the recovery effort continues and everyone returns to some kind of normalcy, New York eyes turn heavenward for the first time in a long time. ■

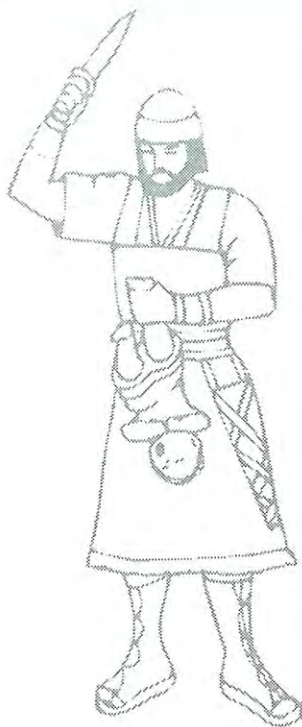


**ABOUT THE WRITER:** Chris Lewis is a Free Will Baptist preacher's kid who was a member of the first Youth Evangelistic Team (Y.E.T.) formed in the 1980s as an opportunity for young people to witness through music and drama. He graduated from East Tennessee State University before relocating to New York to pursue an acting career. His father, Ray Lewis, serves as associate director of the Board of Retirement and Insurance; his mother, Ida Lewis, is publications editor for the Home Missions Department.



# Rachel Weeping

By Dave Nobles



**T**he Wise Men from afar, the beautiful Star of Bethlehem that led them and a beautiful baby born to a Jewish couple. What could be more beautiful? This is especially true as we consider that the child was Jesus, the Son of God, born to bring "peace, good will toward men."

We look back and rejoice. Christmas carols ring out while theatrical productions and programs of all types are presented to celebrate the occasion. Families gather to rejoice as did Mary, Joseph, the shepherds and the angels of Heaven. What a joyful time both then and now.

However, not everyone was ready to rejoice at the birth of Christ. There he was, Herod the Great—a paranoid, nearly psychotic old man. He sat on his throne like a bantam rooster. He protected his position as passionately as a hen protects her nest or a she-bear her cubs. Any and all comers beware!

To what lengths would he go? He

would go so far as to viciously kill those of his own family he might consider a threat (children, wives, anyone). No one was safe.

When the wise men told him that there was one called the "King of the Jews" born somewhere nearby, he went into a panic. What if there really was a true king of the Jews born? He knew he was not truly a Jew, nor could he claim the title. He had maneuvered the appointment as "king" from Rome. What if this child could be proven to have rank over him? He could not let this happen.

He cooked up the scheme to trick the wise men into bringing the whereabouts of the child back to him. Since the chief priests and scribes had provided the general location (Bethlehem in Judah), he would only need from them the specific location. He would then kill the child and the threat would be over.

The only problem with the scheme was that God could not be tricked,

then or now. He warned the wise men in a dream to return another way without letting Herod know the location of the child. As a protection against Herod's threats, God sent Joseph and Mary with the child into Egypt.

Herod was not to be dissuaded, however. He decided to kill all the children near the age of the child. Based on information from the wise men and the span of time since they were there, he could make an estimate. To be doubly sure, he would kill all in Bethlehem and the surrounding area who were two years and under. How vicious he must have been to conceive such a hideous and unspeakable plan.

Can you imagine the heartbreak and pain of the mothers and fathers? Matthew quotes from the prophet Jeremiah 31:15.

*(Matt. 2:18) In Rama was there a voice heard, lamentation, and weeping, and great mourning, Rachel weeping for her children, and would not be comforted, because they are not.*



In the context of Jeremiah's time, this prophecy referred to the mothers weeping for their children being taken into Babylonian captivity. According to Matthew under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, the prophesy was truly fulfilled over 600 years later in the women of Bethlehem. Rachel was identified with Bethlehem having been buried nearby.

My mind is overwhelmed as I attempt to imagine the cries and weeping of horrified parents. They watch as Roman soldiers slaughter their small children in cold blood. As a parent, I can not imagine such cruelty.

What is even more difficult to comprehend is that just a little while earlier, there was rejoicing in the town as the Christ-child was born. No, not all the town rejoiced or even recognized Him. Yet, in that young mother's heart, there was great joy. Now, in family after family, there was sorrow and pain.

Jesus said later that He came not to bring peace but a sword. The Prince of Peace came to bring peace into the world. But when His presence is rejected, there will always be sorrow and pain. Herod rejected the Light and brought darkness and pain to many.

When Christ was born, Heaven rejoiced. The angels rejoiced and proclaimed His coming.

When the children were murdered and the parents cried out in sorrow, when the cries of innocent babies were heard in the throne room of the Creator of all life, Heaven wept. I can not but believe that God called all of Heaven to welcome into His presence those precious, innocent babies legally murdered by a man only concerned for his own position.

Heaven still weeps at the pain and sorrow brought by the rejection of the Messiah today.

- *Heaven weeps* as innocent babies are still being legally murdered by abortion mills across our land.
- *Heaven weeps* as families are destroyed by immorality of every kind. Adultery, incest, perversion, pornography—the list goes on.
- *Heaven weeps* as lives are left for Satan's garbage heap by alcohol and other substance abuse.
- *Heaven weeps* as the Herods of our day care only for their own position and will do anything to protect it. They pass laws that bring greater pain and sorrow in our land. They allow evil to be

called good, and good is called evil.

- *Heaven weeps* as the cries of mothers and fathers lift Heavenward while demons of Hell (like the Roman soldiers) tear from our arms the next generation. Laughing with glee, they deceive and destroy them, leading them to the pits of Hell.
- *Heaven weeps*, families weep, and, oh, the church needs to weep! The destruction is all around us.

But that is not the end of the story. God protected the Christ-child from Herod. He not only was able to escape the massacre, but also grew to be a man. He healed the sick, raised the dead and lived a sinless life. He gave His life on Calvary, rose the third day conquering death, Hell, sin and the grave.

By doing so, He made joy and peace available to all men. Even through the weeping and pain of the families of Bethlehem, the Light was not overcome. He was protected so that His light could bring eternal life.

You see, weeping is not new. It started in the Garden of Eden. The first mother to cry over the loss of a child was Eve. Sin played havoc in her family as Cain killed Abel, his brother. Then, because of his defiance of God, he was banned to the land of Nod. She lost two sons—one to death, one to darkness. She and Adam surely wept bitterly, knowing that their choice to disobey God had caused this great pain. Adam's sin brought sin to the entire human race, including his own sons.

From that day to this, mothers and fathers have cried and wept over the pain and sorrow sin brings. Sin, pain, sorrow, weeping was not new then, nor is it new now. If you listen closely, you can hear it in homes across America and around the world.

Yet, Christ came to end the pain. He provided a means for joy. He gives peace and heals the pain.

Heaven rejoices at the salvation of a lost soul. When a person comes into the light from the darkness of this world, Heaven rejoices.

- *Heaven rejoices* at the drunk or dope addict whose life is changed by the blood of Christ.
- *Heaven rejoices* at the young person who turns to Christ and commits his life.
- *Heaven rejoices* at the husband and wife who rebuild that broken and fractured marriage in the forgiveness of Christ.

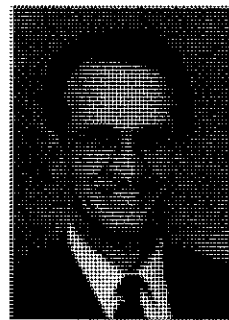
- *Heaven rejoices* as that sinner, no matter who he is or what his sin is, comes to Christ.
- *Heaven rejoices* at men, women, boys and girls walking in the light as He is in the light.

Darkness was on the face of the earth before God said, "Let there be light." Darkness was on the earth for the space of three hours while our Savior hung between Heaven and Hell, giving Himself as our sacrifice.

When God said, "Let there be light," there was light. When the sacrifice was complete on Calvary and He walked out of that grave on the third day, He brought with Him the light of all of Heaven. When by faith men trust Him, that light shines in that heart and the darkness is dispelled. When a soul in the darkness of sin cries unto God and weeps in his pain and sorrow in faith and repentance, God says, "Let there be light—and there is light, Jesus the light of the world!"

Yes, there was a dark side to the birth of Christ. It stands, however, as a reminder that the darkness was already here. When Christ was born, He brought the light. He is the light.

(Jn. 1:4-5, 9-12, emphasis added) "In him was life; and the life was the light of men. 'And the light shineth in darkness; and the darkness comprehended it not.' That was the true Light, which lighteth every man that cometh into the world. 'He was in the world, and the world was made by him, and the world knew him not. 'He came unto his own, and his own received him not. 'But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name:



ABOUT THE WRITER: Reverend Dove Nobles pastors Bethel Free Will Baptist Church in Woodbridge, Virginia.



# Greatest Thing You Can Do for America

By Jeff Cockrell



**S**eptember 11, 2001: American commercial jetliners were high-jacked and crashed into the World Trade Center in New York and the Pentagon in Washington. For the first time ever, the Federal Aviation Administration closed all United States airports. The President declared the attacks as “acts of war.” Thousands of lives were lost.

In wake of the terrorists attacks, Americans want solutions to the nation’s woes. People have differing ideas for fixing the problems of America. Many say the solution is political. Some say the solution is economic. Others conclude that the solution is moral. The Bible declares the solution to any nation’s ills is the changed lives and prayers of its people.

In response to the September 11 attacks, President Bush, in a televised address to the nation, declared the need to turn to God. He stated, “Tonight I ask for your prayers for all those who grieve, for the children whose worlds have been shattered, for all whose sense of safety and security have been threatened. And I pray that they will be comforted by a greater power than any of us spoken through the ages in Psalm 23: ‘Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I fear no evil for you are with me.’”

The President proclaimed September 14 a National Day of Prayer and Remembrance. In I Timothy 2, Paul reminds Christians of the need to pray for their nation. Prayer is the greatest thing a citizen can do for his country.

## The Exhortation to Pray

Paul begins I Timothy 2 by exhorting Christians to pray. The word “exhort” carries the meaning “to beg, entreat, urge.” We are to pray for international concerns (v. 1, “all men”).

The phrase “all men” refers to people without distinction of race, nationality or social position.

Many have expressed the need to pray for all people connected with the terrorist attacks on America. We are to pray for the families of the victims, for governmental officials, even for the Muslim groups that were instrumental in the attacks.

There are seven nouns for prayer in the Bible, and Paul used four of them in I Timothy 2. “Supplications” are petitions offered for certain needs. “Prayers” is a general word that carries the thought of reverence in prayer. “Intercessions” refer to pleading in the interest of others. The expression “giving of thanks” points to the spirit in which the prayers are to be offered.

Christians are exhorted to pray for national concerns (v. 2, “kings and for all that are in authority”). We find the Jews praying for governmental authorities in Ezra (6:9-10; 7:27-28; 9:6-9).

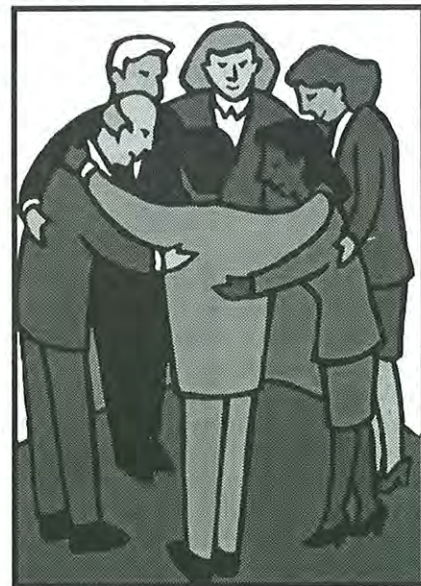
The purpose of such national prayer is stated to be twofold. One, “that we may lead a quiet and peaceful life.” The indication is that national prayer will bring about a life free from outward disturbance and inward distractions. Sadly, the lives of some Christians and others have disquieted our land.

Two, Christians are to live lives of “godliness and honesty.” Christians must live a devoted life before God and a respectful life before others.

## Reason to Pray

Christians must pray because of God’s concern. It is God’s desire for all to be saved. Although the attacks on America were devastating, God has used the occasion to bring people to Himself. On the Sunday following the attacks, churches were overflowing in attendance.

II Peter 3:9 tells us that God is “not willing that any should perish, but that



all should come to repentance.” Thus, praying for the lost is “good and acceptable in the sight of God” (I Tim. 2:3). Christians are to pray that during such tragic times, God will speak to people’s hearts. We must also pray because of God’s claim. Christians are not to pray to Allah, Buddha and Jesus. There is one God. God said through Moses in Deuteronomy 6, “Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God is one Lord.” In Romans 3 Paul said God was the God of both Jews and Gentiles.

Further, there is only one way to God. Jesus proclaimed, “I am the way” (John 14:6). Christ gave Himself voluntarily for the salvation of mankind. Christ even gave Himself for all people.

America has many ills. There are economic, political and moral ills. However, America is still a great nation. America has accomplished numerous feats that have benefitted the world and the American people. The greatest character of America is her dependence on God. In fact, such dependence is expressed in our motto and on our currency—“In God We Trust.” Thus, the greatest thing one can do for America is to recognize our dependence on God in prayer.

Ethel Barrymore once said, “When life knocks you on your knees—well, that’s the best position in which to pray isn’t it?” God bless America! ■

ABOUT THE WRITER: Reverend Jeff Cockrell pastors Satilla Free Will Baptist Church in Hazlehurst, Georgia.



While she was on a mission trip, a family emergency changed everything.

# The Day the World Changed

By Kendra Stovall

**E**arly in August, my mom and I sang as we drove to the airport. I was on my way to Mexico as team leader for a group of girls who were about to get their first taste of missions. Mom was a prayer warrior. When we arrived at the airport, she had the girls and their mothers join hands in a circle so we could pray. Her voice carried through the airport.

I remember thinking, *Mom, you don't have to pray so loud! God can hear you just fine!* But that was Mom. She didn't care what others thought. She was not ashamed of Jesus.

Just before I boarded the plane, she took my hand, raised it up and said, "Lord, here she is. I give her to you." Then she hugged me and told me that she was proud of me. I didn't know that was the last time I would feel her arms around me.

During our time in Mexico, I saw the greatest poverty I had ever seen. I had to call home and tell Mom. The other girls had set up a prayer chain so that any messages sent home went to all the families. I was the first to call. We kept it short, and I cried as I told her about the deep needs of the people I had met. That was our last conversation.

After four days in the remote mountains, we made it back to Oaxaca. For some reason, I had a premonition that all was not well at home. It was Wednesday and a message was waiting for me: There was a family emergency. I immediately called home, expecting my mother to answer. Instead, I heard the voice of my father.

My parents had been divorced since I was two years old. My father was living in South Carolina. So I knew something was terribly wrong. My father told me that on Tuesday night my mother's car hydroplaned on the interstate and she had been killed immediately. I was stunned. Not only had I lost my mom; I also lost my best friend.

I remembered conversations we had shortly before I left for Mexico: her telling me where the insurance papers were; her insistence that, no matter what, I follow the Lord all my life; how she was willing to give anything to know that my father and my brother, Kenny, were right with the Lord. It all came back.

The next hours are a blur. I could not get a flight out of Mexico before Friday. Those days were some of the longest I have ever known. The girls on my team offered comfort and encouragement, but I only wanted to get home. I knew my mother was with the Lord and that all was well with her, but I just had to be with her one more time.

The flight home included a layover in Dallas. To my surprise (and delight), my father was waiting for me there. We flew back to Nashville together and, at midnight, found nearly 20 people waiting for us.

Mom's funeral was on Sunday. The funeral home was full. Some months before, Mom had told our pastor, Derek Bell, that if anything should happen to her, she wanted

him to preach her funeral. "And I do mean preach!" she told him. "Invitation and all!"

Laughing, she had added, "And if anything happens to you, I will preach your funeral!"

Just like Mom requested, Brother Bell preached; he really preached. The funeral home was packed. And when he gave the invitation, seven people came forward, right there in the funeral home! Four were saved, including my father and my mother's two sisters and a brother. Three others rededicated their lives, including Kenny. Mom's prayers had been answered!

God has been so faithful to our family. He has been preparing us for this time and He has brought so much comfort to us. A few weeks ago, my family was broken up and many were headed for Hell. Today, we all have our names written in the Book of Life.

Now I am back at Free Will Baptist Bible College for my junior year. Friends and teachers surround me and help me make it through each day.

I know this is what Mom wanted. ■

**ABOUT THE WRITER:** Kendra Stovall is a junior at Free Will Baptist Bible College, majoring in elementary education. She is a member of New Life Free Will Baptist Church in Lewisburg, Tennessee.



Kendra Stovall and her mother, Theda.



## Matt Pinson Named FWBBC President

NASHVILLE, TN—On October 1, Rev. Gary Fry, chairman of the Free Will Baptist Bible College Board of Trustees, announced that the board selected James Matthew Pinson to serve as the college's fifth president.

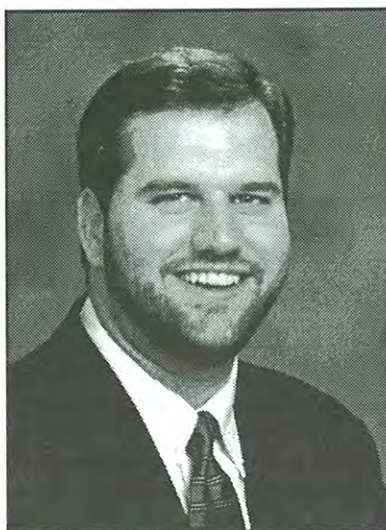
"The Board is certain that Matthew Pinson's dedication to the Lord, this college and our denomination will result in our continuing to produce the leaders and workers our denomination needs," he said.

Rev. Pinson attended the Bible College in 1985-86 and graduated in 1990 from the University of West Florida, pursuing an interest in law. He later received his M.A. at the University of West Florida (1993) and his M.A.R. at Yale University (1994). He is currently completing Ph.D. studies at Florida State University.

Rev. Pinson says:

As president of Free Will Baptist Bible College, I am committed to service to our denomination. Our college must not only be interested in what the denomination can do for it. We must be concerned about what we can do for our denomination. We should strive to instill in our students loyalty to our denomination and our confession of faith. We must reaffirm our commitment to graduating, in large numbers, the best ministers and missionaries possible to serve Christ through our denomination.

Since 1994, he has pastored Colquitt FWB Church in Colquitt, Georgia. But his activities have taken him far from the south Georgia community where he pastors. He



has taught at Bainbridge College in Bainbridge, Georgia, and at Florida State University. He has also been a featured speaker on the FWBBC campus and at ministers' retreats in Michigan, Missouri and Georgia.

As a fifth-generation Free Will Baptist, his interests in theology and history, especially Free Will Baptist history, run deep. Those interests have opened doors for him to both speak and write. He was featured speaker at the Bible College's 1996 Heritage Week series where he spoke on "Free Will Baptists before 1776."

He also held a seminar entitled "A Christian Response to Postmodernism" for the Commission for Theological Integrity at the 1998 National Association of Free Will Baptists. His many articles for *Contact* magazine include "America's First Free Will Baptists," "Our Tra-

dition of Feet Washing" and "Benjamin Laker: Layman for God."

His published books are: *A Free Will Baptist Handbook: Heritage, Beliefs, and Ministries* (Randall House, 1998) and the forthcoming *Four Views on Eternal Security* (Zondervan, 2002).

When Rev. Pinson was pastoring in Alabama, he felt God calling him to bivocational ministry: to both pastor and teach. "Thus, I began preparing myself educationally for this dual role," he says. He will take his doctoral comprehensives by February 2002, and plans to be at the college by the end of February. Matt will bring with him his wife, Melinda, and an 18-month-old daughter, Anna.

As he joins the college, he will be working near two former presidents, Dr. Charles Thigpen (the college's third president) and Dr. Tom Malone (its fourth president). Both maintain offices on the campus. Dr. Thigpen serves as promotional director of the Tennessee State Association of Free Will Baptists. Dr. Malone will continue to serve the college as chancellor.

Board chairman Gary Fry says:

We are grateful to the Lord for his provision for Free Will Baptist Bible College through the many years of our existence. It has been His hand that we have marked, especially in times of important decisions such as the selection of a new president. We are confident that His provision has continued our long line of able leadership at FWBBC with the selection of Matthew Pinson as our fifth president.



## Missouri Minister, Dale Skiles, Retires

SPRINGFIELD, MO—Reverend Dale Skiles, pastor of South Fremont FWB Church in Springfield for the past 20 years, retired in October. The 67-year-old minister found himself in the spotlight October 7-8 when family, friends and church members hosted a two-day celebration in his honor.

Skiles' three daughters—Crystal Jones, Carla Krueger and Laura Clay—planned the retirement party at South Fremont FWB Church. They presented Reverend and Mrs. Skiles a quilt depicting the highlights of his ministry.

Russell McDavis wrote and sang a satirical piece about Reverend Skiles' ministry to the tune of "Sixteen Tons." Then Pastor Skiles and Dale Huddleston entertained the crowd with guitar picking and singing.

Sunday morning, Pastor Skiles told the congregation that after delivering 2,132 messages and 2,166 lessons for prayer meeting, it was with mixed emotions that he was delivering his last message as pastor of the church. His final message was a challenge for the congregation to achieve a greater faith, a



greater faithfulness, a greater fearlessness and to finish their course.

After lunch served at the church, attendees gathered for an afternoon service to roast and commend Skiles. Richard Robinson, moderator of the Missouri State Association, and Nathan Ruble, Missouri's executive secretary, presided. Three ministers told how they had been led to the Lord by Dale Skiles and how they had been encouraged and helped in their ministry by him.

Deacon Richard Pointer read letters of congratulations and thanks from U. S. Congressman Roy Blunt and U. S. Senator Kit

Bond. Pointer said the one word that characterized Brother Dale was "consistency." He said Skiles was consistent in doctrine and in his life style. He then presented Dale and Elaine Skiles each an engraved watch to commemorate 20 years of ministry at South Fremont.

The Skiles served as home missionaries in Bettendorf, Iowa, and in St. Joseph, Missouri. They also pastored four Missouri churches—Richwoods FWB Church, Myrtle FWB Church, First FWB Church in West Plains and South Fremont FWB Church.

Brother Dale has served as moderator of the Missouri State Association, chairman of Missouri Youth Camp Board, chairman of the Missouri Home Missions Board, and presently serves as director of Missouri State Home Missions. He has also served on the national General Board and Executive Committee.

After 43 years as a pastor, Skiles will continue to work part-time for the state Home Missions Board. He will also be available for revivals and pulpit supply.

## Kevin Scott Joins Stephen Ministries

ST. LOUIS, MO—Reverend Kevin R. Scott, a 1993 graduate of Free Will Baptist Bible College, has been appointed to the pastoral staff at Stephen Ministries in St. Louis. He began working at Stephen Ministries while studying at Covenant Seminary. Scott completed his M.A. degree in May and was immediately invited to join the pastoral staff.

Stephen Ministries is a not-for-profit Christian training organization that equips laypeople to serve the local congregations through two ministry systems: The Stephen Series system of one-to-one lay caring ministry and the ChristCare Series system of small group ministry. Lay leaders and pastors learn to implement these ministry systems by attending a seven-day training course taught by Stephen Ministries faculty.

Nearly 40,000 people from 8,000 congregations have attended Stephen Ministries training courses. Participants come from all 50 states, 9 Canadian provinces and 20 other countries.

Kevin joins five others on the pastoral staff of



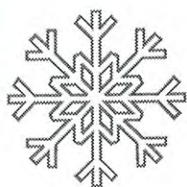
Stephen Ministries. His current responsibilities include directing and teaching training courses, coordinating Caring Ministry Workshops, writing and editing materials for training and publicity, and providing consultation for Stephen Ministry congregations.

Kevin said, "I see this as a wonderful opportunity to use the gifts God has given me to equip the saints for significant ministry. Stephen Ministries is a thoroughly Christ-centered organization and is committed to excellence in practical, distinctive Christian ministry."

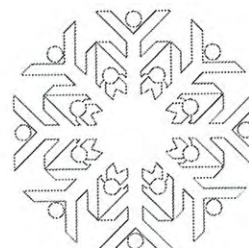
Kevin's wife Debbie manages the Scott household and cares for their two daughters, Courtney (age 6) and Lauren (age 2). They are members of Trinity FWB Church in Bridgeton.

To learn more about the training resources offered by Stephen Ministries, contact Kevin at Stephen Ministries, 2045 Innerbelt Business Center Drive, St. Louis, MO 63114. Phone 314/428-2600 or visit [www.stephenministries.org](http://www.stephenministries.org) on the internet.





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Pastor **Gordon Sebastian** reports 20 new members at **Peace FWB Church** in **Wilson, NC**. The church also sponsored a child protection workshop for individuals who work with children. The class is required for all children's and teens' workers.

Members completed a major renovation to remodel the sanctuary at **Bridgeport FWB Church** in **Newport, TN**. The congregation's Sunday morning worship service is broadcast live over radio station **WLIK- 1270 AM**. Pastor **Hal Kirk** has led the church for 16 years.

The **Florida State Association** of Free Will Baptists began a ministry for seniors called **OASIS—Older Adult Saints In Service**. The ministry provides opportunities for fellowship and service for senior adults. Pastor **Bill Whipple** serves as coordinator for the **OASIS** program. Persons relocating to or already in Florida who are looking for a church home can e-mail Pastor Whipple at [browhipple@yahoo.com](mailto:browhipple@yahoo.com) or call 352/307-3147.

Took a long time to get them in the water, but 81-year-old **Howard Griffith** and 89-year-old **Brother Osborne** were baptized by Pastor **Winston Sweeney** at **Fellowship FWB Church** in **Kingsport, TN**. **Larry Laughlin** coordinates the church's van ministry providing transportation for youth on Wednesday nights; **Jim** and **Zeable Queen** coordinate Sunday van rides.

**New Hope FWB Church** in **Joelton, TN**, presented a plaque to **Charles Raymer** for 45 years of faithful service as an usher. **Barry Simpson** pastors.

Members of **Bay FWB Church** in **Hartsfield, GA**, honored Pastor **S. E. Newberry** with a Saturday fish fry and a Sunday surprise that included a card of appreciation, a cash gift and a time of recognition.

Pastor **Billy Bevan, Jr.**, reports five conversions at **Camden FWB Mission** in **Kingsland, GA**. Attendance topped 60 on Sunday mornings. A baptismal service for seven people is planned.

Pastor **Tim Rabon** reports an increase of 207 people at **First FWB**

**Church in Raleigh, NC**. The church averages 1,117 on Sunday mornings. Some 106 people have been converted and 79 new members joined the church.

Fires that burned more than 2,200 acres in **California** stopped a quarter-mile from the front of **Sloan Canyon FWB Church** in **Castaic**. Pastor **Keith Bartlett** says the church plans to open the first child care facility in the area.

**Faith FWB Church** in **Milwaukee, WI**, send two vans to the Milwaukee Rescue Mission every Sunday. Pastor **Terry Hardison** reports that 20 men from the mission ride to services. Two of the men have joined the church and minister with other members. The congregation also conducts an outreach in a local prison. The church ladies reported 28 conversions at a shelter for homeless women.

President **Tom Marberry** says 14 students enrolled for the fall semester at **Seminary of the Cross** in **Reynosa, Mexico**. Ninety people from area churches attended the opening service. **Jesus (Chuy) de la Rosa**, moderator of the Northwest Mexico District and a Monterrey pastor, delivered the sermon. The seminary ministry is in need of a reliable van to transport students to church services.

The week after the September 11 terrorist attack on America, more than 30 people crowded the altars during revival services at **Woodlawn FWB Church** in **Russellville, AR**. A high attendance of 130 people heard Evangelist **Jim Walker** preach. **Mike Phillips** pastors.

**West Virginia** evangelist **Caudle Adkins** signed a contract with radio station **WEMM-FM, 107.9**, in **Huntington**, marking 24 consecutive years he has conducted his preaching ministry on the Christian station. Brother Adkins is in his fifth decade as a Free Will Baptist evangelist.

Health concerns required **Billy Tabb**, editor of the **Mississippi Messenger**, to step away from his writing, editing and traveling responsibilities this summer. Executive secretary **J. L.**

**Gore** agreed to serve as temporary editor while Brother Tabb recuperates.

**Sarah Malone**, a graduate of Free Will Baptist Bible College, has been named Asia Vice President for English Language Institute China. Her position in Asia is equivalent to the executive vice president here in the states. Sarah will be working with ELIC heads of countries and programs as well as with government leaders.

**Shafter FWB Church** in **Shafter, CA**, celebrated 50 years of service to the community. State director of ministries **Nuel Brown** presented a plaque to Pastor **Dean Long** and the congregation.

Members of **Felker FWB Church** in **Valliant, OK**, dedicated their new fellowship hall and educational facilities, according to Pastor **Bill Haddox**. Executive director **Ernest Harrison** preached in the morning worship service.

**First FWB Church** in **Ponca City, OK**, celebrated its 25th anniversary. **David Bigger** pastors. The church recently remodeled entrance hallways and the educational wing. The church completed its first building program in 1977 and a 9,000-square-foot addition in 1995.

Pastor **Rick Schultz** said that **Spring Hill FWB Church** in **Lexington, OK**, celebrated 100 years of service. Seventeen men have been called into the ministry from the congregation. **Wade Jernigan** was the first full-time pastor. ■



## For Such a Time as This

By Marjorie Workman

**W**omen Nationally Active for Christ announces 2002 theme, *New Horizons: For Such a Time as This*. The new theme is based on the story of Esther.

**L**ong before September 11, 2001, WNAC's board met and decided the themes for Women Nationally Active for Christ for the first five years of the 21st century. Did we pray prior to the selections? Yes. Do we really believe that God is interested in our themes? We do if we believe Matthew 10:30. Our God who knows the number of hairs on our head must surely care about what we emphasize and study.

**A**lthough unknown to the planners how each theme would fit into the scheme of events each year, God knew. He knew that the 2001 theme, *New Horizons: Sharing Hope and Healing*, would be appropriate in light of the terrorist attack on America on September 11. All year, women's groups have concentrated on ways to share hope. Hope to those suffering physical ailments, hope to the grieving, hope to the single parent caring for a family while working a job, and most importantly, hope to the unsaved. And now, hope to a nation healing from terrorism.

**F**rom emerging stories that come from families who lost loved ones in the World Trade Center, the Pentagon and the plane crashes, there is a theme—love and faith. Oh, how our priorities have changed! Isn't it strange how losing someone makes us realize more fully the value of what we have lost.

**T**he realization may have come through a phone call, a look from the rescuer's face, the sound of a building collapsing or a gripping hand relaxing and letting go. There is that moment when we know someone dear to our heart is no longer there to laugh

and love or to smile and touch. Instantly, entertainment and possessions cease to have meaning. Television shows and movies seem frivolous. Sporting events are put on hold. In their place, prayer meetings spring up everywhere; people

make their way to places of worship. Bible sales soar.

**W**NAC's priority has always been and continues to be—making Christ known. Offering hope beyond the material world.

**A**s we move into the year 2002, our thoughts and study will be directed toward Queen Esther. Esther is noted for her willingness to rise to the occasion to save her people, the Jews. Her Uncle Mordecai did not hesitate to point out that perhaps she had been made queen for "such a time as this." It was up to her to make a difference.

**We** live in troubling times. Even more so since the collapse of the WTC. Families are torn apart, businesses are suffering financial loss, children are coping with their number one fear—death of a parent. And Americans have lost their security. Could it be that we are alive for "such a time as this"? Like Esther, let's rise to the occasion and be used of God. Let's not be afraid to take a stand. Let's make a difference.

**W**omen Nationally Active for Christ not only wants to share hope and healing; we also want to equip women with tools to help them find purpose and meaning in life. Through books, *CoLaborer* magazine and other printed materials, retreats and seminars, WNAC makes resources available. We want to encourage and strengthen our women's walk for "such a time as this." ■

Women Nationally **WNAC** Active for Christ



**"Is** there anything you wish you had done differently in the design of the building?" That question was recently put to Leslie E. Robertson, 34-year-old chief engineer when construction of the World Trade Center towers began in the early 1970s.

**T**he question came at the close of an emotionally choked presentation before a gathering of structural engineers reviewing the construction of those towers. As silence fell across the room, Mr. Robertson paused, scratched his head and said, "I guess I wish I had made it stand up . . ." As his voice trailed off, he began to sob.

**T**he steel girders supporting those towers stood up under the impact of 2,000° jet fuel inferno for 40 minutes in one tower and over an hour in the other. The other engineers gave him a standing ovation after one of them broke the silence with, "I think you did a great job."

**S**eptember 11 will live in the memory of the American people for reasons too numerous to list. Hopefully, nothing similar will ever happen again.

**Y**et, day by day, each of us face our individual tests. The pressure of immediate financial decisions, moral issues or even health decisions are based on the superstructure of our lives. The World Trade Towers took over seven years to construct and were toppled in less than two hours.

The question for me and you is how will our life stand up when our September 11 comes?

*in teg' ri ty, n.*

[*L. Intergritas, wholeness, soundness, from integer, untouched, whole, entire.*]

1. the quality or state of being complete; wholeness, entireness; unbroken state.
2. the entire, unimpaired state or quality of anything; perfect condition; soundness.
3. the quality or state of being of sound moral principle; uprightness, honesty, and sincerity.

**T**hat is Webster's definition. Each of us as pastor, husband, father, friend, neighbor, citizen is building his life by the choices he makes. The basis of those choices are the structural skeleton of our lives and will determine future direction and consequence. Remember Jesus' story of the wise and foolish builder? Decision determines consequence.

## Why Do We Do What We Do?

By William W. Evans

**W**ell, you may be asking by now, "Just what does all that have to do with the Board of Retirement?" In some ways, very little, in other ways, a lot.

**O**ur office faces questions of honesty, fairness and appropriateness every day. Occasionally, participants or prospective participants ask to bend or even break

the rules: rules established by government agencies, contract and relationships or our plan document. Often the request is made from a lack of knowledge, sometimes from a blind spot but almost always from a personal, monetary pressure.

**F**or instance, no one should pay more tax than is required. However, no one should cheat to do so. The only way to do the one and not the other is to follow the rules set forth by the IRS. It's not a matter of finding someone who agrees with our opinion.

Some questions our office faces frequently:

Tax-sheltered funds: Do they come from the employer or are they Salary Reduction?

Housing allowance for the retired minister: How does the Board report him? How does the retired pastor report them? What happens if the minister dies?

Participation: Who can enroll? What are the requirements for participation?

Loans: Who can get a loan? When? How much? What is the consequence to the account? May I have more than one loan?

Insurance: Who qualified for coverage? What type of insurance is it? When does it cancel? Who decides these issues?

**A**lthough individuals are constructed with bones and not steel frames, it is our integrity, constructed over our lifetimes that determines ultimate consequences.

**P**ersonal integrity affects our principles of faith and practice. It will enable us to stand in the time of trial and keep us firmly anchored in times of victory. It also tempers our assumptions of knowledge and rightness while suffering, even wrongfully, through life.

**I**ntegrity is a personal issue, but it affects and effects everyone we meet and everything we do. Our office not only seeks to accomplish good for individual participants, we aim to do so with integrity. ■

Retirement



& Insurance



**R**ick Cash, Richard Hendrix, Danny Williams and I left Birmingham, Ala., on September 3, 2001, at 12:45 p.m. We had good connections at Chicago O'Hare and Washington Dulles airports.

We arrived in Frankfurt, Germany, just before noon on September 4. Steven Simpson met us carrying a sign, "Welcome rednecks." Steve is a Free Will Baptist Army chaplain from Sulphur Springs church in Northport, Ala. He has seen action in Macedonia and Serbia.

We flew to Moscow September 5. Vladimir, our guide around Moscow, met us. We were tired by bedtime, but everyone was in good health. The next day we visited Red Square, saw Lenin's tomb and visited other sites.

On September 7 we went to the Baptist Union offices and visited the new \$600,000,000 Orthodox church that has real gold (hammered and sprayed) throughout. We visited the souvenir market and had an evening of fellowship with Tim Thompson and his family. Tim is a Free Will Baptist serving as principal of the MK school of TEAM (The Evangelical Alliance Mission) in Moscow.

**W**e traveled to Krasnodar on September 8. On Sunday we preached in three different churches. Danny preached to about 1,000 people at the "Ark" (Kovcheg) church on Sunday morning. Richard and Rick preached to approximately 350 people at that church on Sunday evening. Two people were saved. Pastor Anatolij told Nikolay that Danny, Richard and Rick were the best Americans to visit. Many Americans had preceded us attempting to convert them to Calvinism.

**N**ext, we went to Novorossiysk and the Black Sea to a Christian camp called Gorny Rodnik, which means Mountain Spring. Forty-nine senior pastors, 52 second and youth pastors plus six Americans and Nikolay Sobolev were on hand for the pastor's conference. A total of 107 were registered. Others visited during the week.

The brothers received us warmly and we shared our hearts with them. They had arrived indifferent for the most part, but they left charged up, con-



*Jimmy Aldridge speaks at the pastor's conference. Inset includes Jimmy Aldridge, Rick Cash, Richard Hendrix and Danny Williams.*

## Alabama FWBs Minister in Russia

By Jimmy Aldridge

United States on September 15.

**I** participated in the very first missionary conference in Krasnodar Kraj. Nikolay had invited 40 people, but 51 came, including representatives from three missions that are helping Baptists in Russia: Gideons, The Bible League, and Light to the East. We went from 10:00 a.m. to 3:20 p.m. with no scheduled break! People drifted to the restrooms as they had to. Lunch was served at 3:45 p.m. People were elated and interested.

On September 16 I preached to a full congregation at the Ark church. Then on September 17 I flew to Moscow and on to Chelyabinsk. We participated in the screening process of the new students in the second year of the Bible institute on Tuesday. I gave a missionary challenge from Ecclesiastes 12.

That afternoon we toured the new Bible institute building. Mike and Igor Maksakov have led the restoration work and have done well since the Corleys returned in June with \$10,000 for construction. I took another \$4,232 that had been raised in Oklahoma.

**M**ike and Igor have done a tremendous job managing the funds. Volunteers from Ohio completely remodeled the offices. Their example helped mobilize Russian volunteers to work on the building.

We pledged to send \$1,500 with Leroy Forlines in October and committed to try to raise the \$20,000 still needed by the end of the year.

We returned to Birmingham on September 20, tired but satisfied that God had used us.



**Who?**

**Master's Men** in partnership with  
**WNAC** invite couples to come and  
hear **Drs. Richard and Rebekah Land**

**What?**

**National Couples Conference**

**When?**

**April 5-7, 2002**

**Where?**

**Pigeon Forge, Tennessee**

**Why?**

**An opportunity to fortify your  
marriage, family and church**

Dr. Richard Land has championed the interests of American families for more than a decade as president of the SBC Ethics and Religious Liberty Commission. He reaches more than 1.5 million listeners each week on more than 550 radio stations across the country through the 30-minute weekday program, *For Faith and Family*.

Dr. Rebekah Land is a psychotherapist in private practice in Nashville, Tennessee.

Registration fees include two nights' accommodations at the Smokey Shadows Conference Center, Saturday evening banquet, continental breakfast and all conference sessions.

**Conference Agenda****Friday**

4:00 p.m. Check in at Smokey Shadows Conference Center  
7:00 p.m. First Session Dr. Richard Land

**Saturday**

8:00 a.m. Continental Breakfast  
9:00 a.m. Second Sessions  
Men Only Dr. Richard Land  
Women Only Dr. Rebekah Land  
10:45 a.m. Third Session Dr. Richard Land  
7:00 p.m. Fourth Session / Couples Banquet Dr. Richard Land

**Sunday**

8:00 a.m. Continental Breakfast  
9:00 a.m. Fifth Session / Worship Service Dr. Richard Land

*If you have questions or need information, call our  
toll-free number: 1-877/767-8039.*

**Master's**



**Men**

# National Marriage Enrichment Conference



*Dr. Richard Land*

## National Marriage Enrichment Conference

**April 5-7, 2002**

**Pigeon Forge, Tennessee**

### Registration

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

State/Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_\_  
area code number

#### We are registering for

- ☐ Couples Registration • \$175  
☐ Conference and banquet only, no lodging • \$60

#### Mail Registration to:

**Master's Men  
P. O. Box 5002  
Antioch, TN 37011-5002**

**Registration Deadline: March 1, 2002**





Garnett Reid

## Amos, The Burden-Bearing Prophet (Part XI) The Final Visions: End and Beginning

**W**hen we began our look at Amos, we noted that Old Testament prophets performed two roles: that of *covenant prosecutor* and *kingdom visionary*. The first is by nature mainly negative, exposing Israel's sin and calling the people to repentance in light of God's judgment. The second is more positive. God's promise to bless His covenant partners in a glorious kingdom He is building highlights these oracles of salvation.

Curse and blessing, judgment and salvation—the final two chapters of Amos ebb and flow between these destinies as the northern kingdom plummets toward destruction. Two last visions appear to the prophet. In the first, a basket of summer fruit portends Israel's fate.

### The Harvest and Famine

Amos sees a basket of summer fruit in the vision that opens chapter eight. A wordplay in the Hebrew links the fruit to the lesson it illustrates. After Amos identifies the "summer fruit," the Lord explains: "The end is come upon my people Israel." The Hebrew words for "summer fruit" (*qayis*) and "end" (*qes*) sound very similar. So, too, just as the summer fruit is ripe and harvest nears an end, the "end" of the northern kingdom rapidly approaches.

Verses 4-6 expose the sad reality of Israel's spiritual condition. Her leaders can't wait for worship and festival days to end so that they can get back to their business—namely, cheating their customers and abusing the needy.

In essence they were saying, "I wish Sunday and church would hurry up and be over so I can raise my rates and gouge my clients next week." So much for heart-felt loyalty to God. Don't forget, though, that Amos has already noted this hypocritical strand in

Israel's religion (4:4-5; 5:21-24).

As a result, God will devastate the land (8:7-10). He will "turn your feasts into mourning, and all your songs into lamentation." His judgments will course through Israel like a flood. The nation will mourn its end like the death of an only son—"a bitter day," indeed.

Yet the worst judgment of all awaits. Famine and thirst will stalk the land—though not a literal dearth of food and water, as bad as that is. This drought is one "for hearing the words of the LORD," (v. 11). Whether eighth century B.C. Israel or 21st century A.D. America, or any other nation, disaster falls when God withdraws His truth. Make no mistake, when God's Word is spurned and scorned, those people who refuse it may forfeit their access to its health and counsel.

### Demolition and Construction

Amos' final vision opens with a stunning revelation: "I saw the Lord" (9:1). In contrast to what we might expect, however, this sight offers the nation little comfort. God's appearance here at the illicit Bethel temple is to bring judgment. Just as He shakes the top of the pillars to bring them down, so the Lord will also "bring down" His guilty people (v. 2). No matter where they try to hide, His hand will find them. Even if they flee to mountain caves, reminiscent of modern terrorists, "I will search and take them out," says the all-seeing Holy One (v. 3).

In the final "hymn" of Amos (see the earlier ones in 4:13 and 5:8-9), God identifies Himself once more as the Creator and Sustainer of heaven and earth, "the Lord God of hosts," who now intervenes to strike the land with fire and "flood."

Lest Israel presume to defend itself with a claim of covenant privilege, verse 7 presents a powerful lesson in

God's universal purpose. While it is true that He has uniquely chosen Abraham's descendants to fulfill His promises (see 3:2a), it is also true that He loves and deals with all nations in the scope of His plan.

In that sense, other countries along with Israel have experienced His gracious deliverance. Israel dare not assume, then, that only they are exempt from the demands of His holiness (see 3:2b). Even the "sinful kingdom" of Israel faces destruction (v. 8).

Despite impending doom for Israel in the eighth century B.C., Amos' final words reach down through time and offer hope. God's "sifting" judgment in Israel so long ago spared a remnant in Judah, the southern kingdom ("the house of Jacob," v. 8). Remember that the rulers of Judah descended from David himself, to whom God had promised an eternal throne and a son who would reign forever over a kingdom of absolute peace and righteousness (see II Sam. 7; I Chron. 17; Psalm 89).

That promise now gives hope to Amos' generation. Even though Judah will suffer defeat and exile for her unfaithfulness, God will eventually "raise up" David's dynasty ("the tabernacle that is fallen," v. 11), re-build it, and bring all nations under its dominion (v. 12).

So, too, this promise should give us particular hope *this season*, for its fulfillment is none other than the King whose birth we celebrate. No wonder Zacharias could extol "the Lord God of Israel (who) . . . hath raised up an horn of salvation for us in the house of David," (Luke 1:68-69). This is Jesus, the one promised to Mary: "The Lord God will give Him the throne of His father David," (Luke 1:32). And so to Him we also sing, "Glory to the newborn King!" ■





Melinda Pinson

## Dealing with Adversity and Discouragement

**A**dversity and discouragement contribute more than anything else to burnout and lack of effectiveness among pastors and their wives. This column looks at key biblical passages that help pastors' wives deal with adversity and discouragement in the ministry.

### Don't Retreat

First Corinthians 16:8-9 reads: "But I will tarry in Ephesus until Pentecost. For a great and effective door has opened to me, and there are many adversaries." Paul anticipated and recognized adversity in the ministry. Did he retreat and run in the opposite direction? Absolutely not.

He trudged forward with godly wisdom, dressed in the whole armor of God, prepared "to stand against the wiles of the devil" (Eph. 6:11). And he instructs us to "take up the whole armor of God, that you may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand" (Eph. 6:13).

### Christ Endured Suffering

Ministry will bring adversity and discouragement, as pastors' wives are well aware. But we must face it as Christ faced it. We should compare our sufferings to those Christ endured on our behalf: "Consider Him who endured such hostility from sinners against Himself, lest you become weary and discouraged in your souls" (Heb. 12:3).

### You Must Endure Suffering

To deal with adversity and discouragement, we must realize that enduring difficulty is part of the Christian life. As Paul said to Timothy, "You therefore must endure suffering as a good soldier of Jesus Christ" (II Tim. 2:3). Realizing the inevitability of hardship and our duty to endure it as good sol-

diers of Christ gives us courage in the midst of discouragement.

### You Are Not Alone

Yet we cannot face discouragement alone. We must rely on divine grace to give us the courage we need in the midst of trouble. God will act on the behalf of His faithful servants.

When we feel alone and abandoned in the face of adversity, let us as ministry wives remember the psalmist's words: "Be merciful to me, O God, be merciful to me! For my soul trusts in You; And in the shadow of Your wings I will make my refuge until these calamities have passed by." We move forward, knowing by faith that God will offer us refuge and safety in the midst of life's worst calamities.

Oswald Chambers captures this attitude in *My Utmost for His Highest*: "God says—'I will never leave thee,' then I can with good courage say, 'The LORD is my helper, I will not fear'—I will not be haunted by apprehension. . . . I will be full of courage like a child 'bucking himself up' to reach the standard his father wants. . . . It does not matter what evil or wrong may be in the way, He has said, 'I will never leave thee.'"

### God Refines Us

Another comfort in the midst of adversity is that often God uses trials to make us better people, to draw us closer or as the Psalm says, to test and refine us: "For you, O God, have tested us; you have refined us as silver is refined" (Psalm 66:10). As the song says, "O rejoice in the Lord; He makes no mistake. He knoweth the end of each path that I take. So when I am tried and purified, I shall come forth as gold."

### Problems Drive Us to Prayer

Adversity and discouragement drive

us to prayer—or at least they should. Pastors' wives must be committed to facing these trials of life with a disciplined prayer life. Be diligent in prayer at all times. This will not only help you deal with trouble, it will also help you grow in Christ.

### Trust in God, Not Circumstances

When times are good and your comfort level is high, do not begin to trust in your circumstances. Trust in God. Circumstances change; God does not change. A persistent attitude of trust will result in a deep, abiding joy that is not contingent on your circumstances at a particular time.

Let this joy of the Lord be your strength, in the good times as well as the bad. "The Lord is good, a stronghold in the day of trouble; And He knows those who trust in Him" (Nahum 1:7).

### Conclusion

Adversity and discouragement may seem insurmountable at difficult times. But we must view them as assets. If we are never pushed outside our comfort zone, if we never venture out to experience any difficulty beyond what we know we can handle or overcome within our own power, then we will never truly know the greatness of God—the infinite power and wisdom and love of Him who gave Himself to make us His own. ■

**Editor's Note:** This is Melinda's final column. She and her husband Matt will move to Nashville in 2002 where he will serve as president of Free Will Baptist Bible College.

"The Pastor's Wife" column will continue in 2002 with a guest writer each month.



## THE PREACHER'S PERSPECTIVE



Randy Sawyer

### No More "Business as Usual"

**W**e sat in stunned silence as United Flight 175 sliced into the South Tower of the World Trade Center. Twenty minutes earlier, my wife phoned the church office to inform me of a tragedy unfolding in New York City. A staff member hooked up a television set in the receptionist's office. I walked into the room as he got the makeshift antenna to work, clearing up the fuzzy picture. At that moment a second explosion occurred. As the huge ball of orange flame rolled upward, glass, metal, office furniture and people tumbled to the streets below.

We watched the horror for an hour or so, mostly in silence. Then someone noticed it was past time for our usual Tuesday morning staff meeting. We filed into the conference room and tried to get back to work, only to find that we couldn't. No more "business as usual." Not that day, and maybe not in the foreseeable future.

Freedom had been assaulted. Terror, so prevalent for most of the world, had arrived on the shores of America. As the twin towers crumbled, not only were hundreds of lives cut short, but our peaceful, drowsy, almost bored existence ended as well.

My wife called again with near panic in her voice, giving me the latest information concerning the attack. An attack, here, on fortress America? It was all surreal, like a disaster movie that wouldn't end. As the number of dead and missing rose, questions came fast and furious. Who did this? How could it happen here? How will we respond? How should we respond? Should we expect more terrorist activity?

As the weekend approached, I tried to get ready for my usual task of preaching God's Word. During several previous months, I had been working my way through the Gospel of Matthew with my congregation. But try as I might, I could not get into the

text for that week. I could not make it work, not in the aftermath of the attack, not with so many unanswered questions and so much doubt.

There are times when an event is so momentous, so captivating, that a preacher must address it. There are times when the questions are so profound, that to ignore them would be the height of malpractice. There are weeks when it must not be business as usual.

#### *A Particular Time*

Preaching historian Hughes Oliphant Old (*The Reading and Preaching of the Scriptures*) believes that five major genres of preaching have appeared and reappeared throughout church history. One of these is what the professor termed "the prophetic sermon," "a particular word for a particular time and a particular place." The history of preaching makes clear the fact that God's men have often been called to speak the Word of God into some particular episode.

Augustine's ministry took place against the backdrop of widespread cultural decay, as well as the eventual collapse of the once proud Roman Empire. Augustine spoke to his times through his preaching and writing. His classic work, *The City of God*, sets the dying empire in contrast with the "enduring city, which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God," (Heb. 11:10).

Roughly a thousand years later, Girolamo Savonarola sounded another great "prophetic" message. In the fall of 1491, Charles VIII of France surrounded Florence with 40,000 troops and 100 siege guns. Throughout the crisis Savonarola preached "to swollen and frightened crowds," promising that God would eventually vanquish every enemy of His people.

#### *A Particular Word*

The great line of prophetic voices

reaches the length and breadth of church history, as generation after generation of preachers have spoken a "particular word for a particular time and a particular place." The demand for such preaching is self-evident for several reasons.

First, when God breaks the routine with some unusual event, it must mean that He has something to say which cannot be proclaimed in ordinary circumstances. The preacher must be ready at that point to interpret what God is trying to say in the present with what He has said in the past. If the man of God can't or won't add the clear-headed understanding of God's Word to a situation, who will?

Second, when God breaks the routine with some unusual event, it most certainly will raise many questions. These questions may include everything from how to respond, to why it happened. We may not be able to provide a definitive explanation for every inquiry, but we must offer what we can.

Third, when God breaks the routine with some unusual event, that's when instruction, encouragement and comfort will be needed. This is the primary work of pastoral ministry. In such times, it must not be business as usual.

But what do we say? How do we "speak God's Word" into the situation?

#### *A Particular Place*

In order to have God's message for a particular time the preacher must know the scriptures. If he has not made the study of the Word his routine during normal times, he will not be able to discern God's message for abnormal times. As one man observed, "No man becomes suddenly different from his habit and cherished thought."

Further, in order to have God's message for a particular time, the preacher must have an understanding of those times. He must be a student, not only



of scripture but also of culture. Preaching serves to bridge the gap between yesterday and today. The newspaper must be interpreted in light of the scripture. The CNN commentary must be understood against the backdrop of God's Word.

In order to have God's message for a particular time, the preacher must understand the needs of his people. He must anticipate the questions they will raise, the emotions they will feel and the doubts that will arise. The preacher must, therefore, speak God's Word into an event for a particular group of people, his people. It must not be business as usual.

On September 16, I took as my text Psalm 20:7, "Some trust in chariots, and some in horses; but we will remember the name of the Lord our God." It was not business as usual for my people; it couldn't be so for me either. ■

## Directory Update

### CANADA

James Pittman III to Holmesville Church, Bath, New Brunswick

### GEORGIA

Jerry McArthur to New Salem Church, Colquitt

### MISSISSIPPI

Bruce Walley to Lovewell Church, Richton from Lee's Chapel Church, Waynesboro as youth minister

### OTHER PERSONNEL

Todd Horne to First Church, Jesup, GA, as minister of youth and music

# THE TOGETHER WAY

September 2001

Receipts:						
State	Designated	CO-OP	Total	Year To Date Designated	Year To Date CO-OP	Year To Date Total
Alabama	\$ 498.12	\$ .00	\$ 498.12	\$ 3,506.55	\$ 1,461.30	\$ 4,967.85
Arizona	.00	.00	.00	30.00	329.00	359.00
Arkansas	17,103.81	17,383.00	34,486.81	180,585.17	156,462.76	337,047.93
California	.00	2,093.44	2,093.44	883.54	10,322.19	11,205.73
Colorado	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00
Delaware	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00
Florida	137.38	.00	137.38	374.54	9,999.00	10,373.54
Georgia	27,471.06	1,149.18	28,620.24	288,249.13	14,783.75	303,032.88
Hawaii	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00
Idaho	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00
Illinois	9,777.29	2,692.27	12,469.56	79,174.48	18,820.49	97,994.97
Indiana	2,123.57	318.29	2,441.86	17,897.04	2,066.88	19,963.92
Iowa	.00	.00	.00	.00	2,188.63	2,188.63
Kansas	.00	133.94	133.94	.00	318.71	318.71
Kentucky	843.74	1,249.96	2,093.70	3,363.29	9,210.39	12,573.68
Louisiana	.00	.00	.00	60.00	20.00	80.00
Maryland	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00
Michigan	9,807.77	827.23	10,635.00	185,326.97	20,863.95	206,190.92
Mississippi	15,515.49	1,459.42	16,974.91	78,762.01	6,193.27	84,955.28
Missouri	32,417.86	11,337.28	43,755.14	364,296.36	128,660.65	492,957.01
Montana	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00
Nebraska	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00
New Jersey	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00
New Mexico	362.89	21.45	384.34	3,761.72	435.88	4,197.60
North Carolina	858.80	3,692.02	4,550.82	12,685.85	27,647.75	40,333.60
Ohio	9,976.97	1,319.31	11,296.28	121,405.66	26,830.86	148,236.52
Oklahoma	48,839.99	10,734.73	59,574.72	476,562.18	99,420.21	575,982.39
South Carolina	39,823.76	46.99	39,870.75	415,136.80	1,098.76	416,235.56
South Dakota	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00
Tennessee	18,173.67	2,391.06	20,564.73	118,318.51	19,713.44	138,031.95
Texas	11,055.28	284.85	11,340.13	71,615.94	2,677.95	74,293.89
Virginia	.00	.00	.00	3,502.75	1,185.11	4,687.86
Virgin Islands	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00
West Virginia	819.80	132.24	952.04	17,997.28	1,144.38	19,141.66
Wisconsin	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00
Canada	492.36	10.32	502.68	5,620.32	100.74	5,721.06
Northwest Association	.00	.00	.00	1,035.26	.00	1,035.26
Northeast Association	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00
Other	.00	.00	.00	.00	(0.21)	(0.21)
<b>Totals</b>	<b>\$ 246,099.61</b>	<b>\$ 57,276.98</b>	<b>\$ 303,376.59</b>	<b>\$ 2,450,151.35</b>	<b>\$ 561,955.84</b>	<b>\$ 3,012,107.19</b>

### Disbursements

Executive Office	\$ 1,636.90	\$ 25,774.64	\$ 27,411.54	\$ 17,146.92	\$ 252,880.26	\$ 270,027.18
Foreign Missions	148,474.22	7,245.53	155,719.75	1,410,108.12	71,087.40	1,481,195.52
FWBBC	17,975.16	7,245.53	25,220.69	214,891.46	71,087.40	285,978.86
Home Missions	66,649.42	5,670.42	72,319.84	678,793.40	55,633.65	734,427.05
Retirement & Insurance	481.72	4,410.34	4,892.06	4,392.99	43,270.65	47,663.64
Master's Men	422.27	4,410.34	4,832.61	3,787.08	43,270.65	47,057.73
Comm. for Theo. Integrity	45.59	157.51	203.10	926.31	1,545.32	2,471.63
FWB Foundation	353.10	1,890.14	2,243.24	3,057.53	18,544.55	21,602.08
Historical Commission	26.00	157.51	183.51	285.25	1,545.32	1,830.57
Music Commission	2.59	157.51	160.10	94.29	1,545.32	1,639.61
Media Commission	132.18	157.51	289.69	1,245.33	1,545.32	2,790.65
Hillsdale FWB College	1,517.08	.00	1,517.08	16,821.27	.00	16,821.27
Other	8,383.38	.00	8,383.38	98,601.40	.00	98,601.40
<b>Totals</b>	<b>\$ 246,099.61</b>	<b>\$ 57,276.98</b>	<b>\$ 303,376.59</b>	<b>\$ 2,450,151.35</b>	<b>\$ 561,955.84</b>	<b>\$ 3,012,107.19</b>



# 2002 National Student & Children Workers Conference!



February 8-10, 2002 Branson, MO  
 Stonecroft Conference Center  
 February 22-24, 2002 Glasgow, KY  
 Barren Lake State Resort Park



Mark Roberts is a former youth pastor from Alpharetta, Georgia. Mark has an incredible passion for reaching lost students in the high schools and junior highs of the world. He now works with Campus Revolution, an organization that is responsible for the Fish! campus evangelism strategy.



Sandy Sprott is a gifted children's teacher with many years of experience in working with kids. Together with her husband Sam, they have begun a ministry called "Something Special for Kids" that exists to bring children into a relationship with Jesus Christ. Sam and Sandy live in Springfield, Missouri.

*Conference registration includes two nights lodging, three meals (four in Branson) and full access to all conference events.*

## Schedule of Events

### Friday

3:00-5:45 p.m.	Check-in / Registration
6:00 p.m.	Dinner (Branson only)
7:00 p.m.	Opening Activities
7:15 p.m.	Praise & Worship
7:45 p.m.	General Session # 1
	Speaker: Mark Roberts-
	Comittment to Excellence
9:00 p.m.	Break

### Saturday

8:00 a.m.	Breakfast
8:45 a.m.	General Session #2
9:00 a.m.	Group Sessions
	Youth Ministry Session
	Mark Roberts-The Time is Now
	Children's Ministry Session
	Sandy Sprott-Storytelling
	Anyone Can Do.
10:30 a.m.	Break
11:00 a.m.	Super Seminars
12:15 p.m.	Lunch
1:00 p.m.	Youth Ministry Session
	Mark Roberts
	Children's Ministry Session
	Sandy Sprott-Overcoming
	Saturday Night Lesson
	Preparation Blues
2:30 p.m.	Free time
7:30 p.m.	Beat the Clock!!!
8:30 p.m.	Break
9:00 p.m.	Youth Ministry Session
	Mark Roberts
	Children's Ministry
	Sandy Sprott-How to Host
	A Neighborhood Bible Club

### Sunday

8:00 a.m.	Breakfast
9:00 a.m.	Sunday Worship at NSCW
10:00 a.m.	Closing prayer

Don't miss out on the chance to learn and fellowship with other FWB youthworkers! Early bird rates and discounted rates for conference alumnus are available through November 30, 2001.

Call 1-800-877-7030, Ext. 345 for more information or register online at [www.randallhouse.com](http://www.randallhouse.com)

*Brought to you by:*







Thomas Marberry

## The Message of Hosea

By Derek Kidner

(Downers Grove, IL: Inter-Varsity Press, 1981, 142 pp., paperback, \$13.99).

**D**erek Kidner is one of the leading evangelical Old Testament scholars of the English-speaking world. He has written commentaries on a number of Old Testament books including Genesis, Ezra and Nehemiah, Psalms, Proverbs, Jeremiah and Ecclesiastes.

This commentary on Hosea was originally published in 1981 under the title *Love to the Loveless*. This study was virtually unavailable for a number of years before being republished by IVP as part of its *The Bible Speaks Today* series. This series presents the major teachings found in biblical books and then applies those teachings to the Christian life today.

The struggle between good and evil, between God and Satan, is one of the most important and most common themes in the Bible. It is not a struggle that exists only in the abstract; it touches every one of us every day of our lives.

We look at this struggle from a human perspective, and we are often tempted to ask, "If God is all-powerful and all-good, why does He not simply rid the world of all evil." Hosea looks at this struggle between good and evil from God's perspective. He soon finds that the issues are complex and the problems not easily resolved.

God is compared to the father in a family, but his family is no ordinary one. It is fast falling apart because of sin and rebellion. His wife leaves him and returns to a life of harlotry. He is estranged from his children. His wife, even after falling into the depths of sin and degradation, makes no attempt to return to him. He must go and buy her back.

According to Kidner, Hosea speaks directly to the relationship between God and His people, the nation of Israel. It also speaks indirectly to the special relationship that exists be-

tween God and His people today, the church. There are many lessons that we can learn from Hosea. Kidner notes three of the most important.

First, we learn that God works "within the very limits and freedoms that can make or break a marriage, a family, a people or a person." In other words, God could magically destroy all evil, but that is not the way He has chosen to operate His universe. He has created us with freedom, and He respects that freedom.

Second, "He loves the loveless, and values the otherwise worthless—enough to let the ransom for them cost Him everything." Although we have done nothing to deserve God's love and redemption, He loves us and always seeks that which is best for us.

The third, and perhaps most difficult lesson we learn, is that God will not be content to be just one side of a triangle. He will not share us with other gods. He loves us completely and He expects and demands our total devotion in return.

The God of the book of Hosea is no ordinary deity. He is a God "who meets us, exposes us, wrestles with us, and, if we will, heals us." He will not force himself on us, but he will totally transform our broken lives if we will allow Him to do so.

Hosea is not an easy book to interpret, and this author gives us the necessary tools to help us understand and appreciate the prophet's message. He explains the historical background of the eighth century B.C.

During the first half of that century, Israel's wealth increased considerably. Along with the increasing prosperity came increasing decadence and sin. Assyria was soon to march on Palestine with terrifying force. Within a generation the Northern Kingdom would be destroyed.

Kidner also explains the important

Hebrew terms and concepts found in Hosea. He notes that Hosea named his son Jezreel, the name of the valley in which Israel had suffered one of its greatest military defeats. It would be like a father in the United States naming his son "Valley Forge." In 1:5 Hosea promises that God "will break the bow of Israel in the valley of Jezreel," Kidner explains what it meant to "break the bow."

Gomer bore two other children; the Bible does not say that they were Hosea's. They were named "Not Pitied" and "Not-My-People," names of great prophetic significance. These names indicate that "Israel might be nominally the Lord's, but in fact she was the child of her times and her pagan world."

Kidner does not limit the promises of the book of Hosea to the Old Testament era. Hosea 1:10 says that

Those who were not my people  
I will call "my people",  
And her who was not beloved  
I will call "my beloved."

He writes, "The prophecy, in fact, after touching down in the post-exilic age, leaps into the present and names us who are believers 'the Israel of God', whether we are Jews or Gentiles."

This volume is a good introductory commentary on Hosea. The author helps the reader understand the basic message of the book without overwhelming him with a mass of detailed information. In most modern churches Hosea does not receive the attention it deserves; this brief commentary can help us to preach and teach it with greater effectiveness. ■



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- In part one, articles are listed in order of title, author, issue and number of the page on which they appear. The authors' division is alphabetized according to last names.
- Columns are listed in chronological order.
- The Newsfront index is alphabetized in six main sections: churches, ministers, laity, state ministries, national ministries and other.

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Bible College Breaks Ground for New Campus	February, 16	Matt Pinson Named FWBBC President	December, 12
Bible College Enrolls 281	November, 18	Mexico Arbitration Committee Set	March, 19
Bible College Hosts "Jonathan Thigpen Day"	February, 18	National Convention Announces College Intern Program	March, 17
Bible College Senior Dies in Accident	January, 18	New Columns Debut in January	January, 18
Bob Hill, Master's Men Founder Dies	February, 17	Nominating Committee Announces Nominees	April, 17
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FWBBC Sets Scholarship for Pastors' Children	August, 19	Trymon Messer Retires	July, 17
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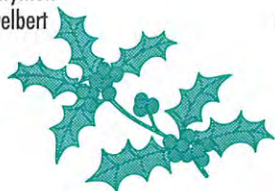


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## Remember

Free Will Baptist Bible College's

Paul J. Kettelman  
Memorial Christmas Drive  
Give Generously







Jack Williams

## Waiting for the Grass to Dry

**O**ne Saturday while I waited until the grass dried enough to mow, my multi-talented wife who believes everything can be done immediately and with perfection, said, "Do you need something to do while the grass dries?"

Too late, the male alarm began ringing in my head. For the record, husbands never need wives to find something for them to do Saturday morning while the grass dries. She suggested that I edit the bedroom closet and give everything I didn't need to the Salvation Army. There went my membership in the Men's Macho Union.

"Men don't clean out closets," I whined. "That's woman's work. If I put something in the closet, I intend for it to stay there."

**The first item to land** in the Salvation Army pile was an evil bamboo duck that embarrassed me mightily in 1986 on a flight from Fort Worth to Nashville when I endured unkind remarks from men across the aisle. I always hated that duck. I hope the Salvation Army feeds it to a hungry goat.

A vintage pair of jeans unworn since Watergate surfaced. When I commented to Janis (the wife) about their durability, she wiggled her index finger toward the growing Salvation Army pile.

**To my horror**, she wanted to toss my one and only suitcase bought in 1961. What if we move and I need it? She rolled her eyes. Women are so unfeeling in these matters. We negotiated. The brown suitcase stayed, but four mature sweatshirts hit the floor along with my doctoral gown and hood worn once in 24 years. I didn't like the gown anyhow.

But I drew a line on the bedroom carpet when she made a hostile move toward my holstered Colt .32 caliber pistol that last fired when Tom Landry rode herd on the Dallas

Cowboys. A hunting knife with a slightly nicked blade and trail-worn scabbard barely survived her inquisition. A second place basketball trophy from 1958 didn't. I hope Coach Arlon Adams never hears about this.

**Then we stumbled** across 15 years of canceled checks from 1962 to 1977 when I was a Tennessee pastor, an almost-seminary student in New Orleans, an Arkansas pastor and a college dean out West. That's when I also discovered why a checkbook reveals more than a diary does.

I'm happy to report there were four times as many tithe checks as payments to Sears, the electric company and Ma Bell.

**Two checks from 1966** fulfilled the Great Commission, one written to foreign missionary Bobby Aycock for \$10. That was a huge amount back then, nearly 20 percent of my weekly paycheck. Bobby preached at our church and explained his work in Brazil. We wanted to do something special for him.

The other 1966 check was written three months later to World Book Encyclopedia for \$17.96, the final payment on a set of encyclopedias. Where is that set of books now? Probably somewhere in Brazil, because we gave them to Bobby that Sunday. If the Aycock siblings can't explain how the Electoral College works, don't blame me. All they had to do was look in Volume E.

**Weird checks.** Check number 488 must have been written late at night after a stressful day. It was \$1.50 made out to the "Miracle Slipper Offer." I can't explain it.

The \$3.00 check to Ron Niebruegge for a used Greek New Testament was a terrible investment. Niebruegge drained the good stuff from that testament before he sold it to me, because what was left earned nothing higher

than a C- in Greek Exegesis.

**Two of my favorite** checks were written to hospitals. A 1964 check for \$42 to St. Thomas Hospital paid for a small professor at Free Will Baptist Bible College. That check brought home what is now Dr. Rebecca W. Deel, acting chair of the business department at FWBNC.

However, on January 3, 1969, the Bradley County Memorial Hospital required \$429.80 to send home what is now the minister of music at Temple FWB Church in Greenville, North Carolina—Brad Williams. We fed the future music minister 12 months before we got a tax deduction; he didn't have the courtesy to be born four days earlier.

**Just so you'll know**, a \$2.00 check from 1968 paid for a one-year subscription to *Contact*. I've been a cash customer for a long time.

We found a suspicious \$10 check from 1965 made out to now Georgia pastor Burt Hall for "gas mileage." Why was I paying Burt gas mileage 36 years ago?

The best \$25.95 check in the collection went to now home missionary Ken Doggett in 1968 for a *Dickson New Analytical Study Bible*. Although it's road weary and heavily marked, I still brandish that unique Bible when it's time to slay dragons.

**Believe it or not**, the check that makes us laugh most was written in 1969 to the Internal Revenue Service... for 98 cents. Yep, the IRS cashed that bad boy. Uncle Sam has been back around every year since wanting a large check.

When the Salvation Army pile on the bedroom floor reached chin deep, I meekly informed Janis that I had edited her closet as requested. If she wants the other three closets emptied, I nominate that high-tech, labor-saving device known as a son-in-law. ■



CONTACT

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