

CONTACT

Official Publication of the National Association of Free Will Baptists

July 2002

Youth Camp Gold Mines
Anger: Almost Danger
How to Beat Temptation
Revival
Ministry Behind Bars



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THE SECRETARY SPEAKS



Melvin Worthington

Dealing with Deadness

Sardis is described as a dead church (Rev. 3:1). The church had a reputation that did not reflect reality. It was alive in name only. This was a fickle church with a reputation that they were Christians, but they were dead. They did not have the life of God in their souls and had not walked consistently before the Lord. The shell was there, but the kernel was not.

Sardis was the capital city of Lydia and was known as one of the most ancient and famous cities of Asia Minor. The city was noted for its fruits, wool and the temple of the goddess Cybele, whose worship resembled that of Diana of Ephesus.

The church in Sardis had no conflict with foes within or without, because it had not faithfully witnessed by word or example. The message to Sardis is an unmixed message of rebuke and censor and almost devoid of any word of commendation. The sad condition of this church was due to the sinful surroundings where it was located. It was in the midst of people who practiced the grossest forms of idolatry.

Christ's Character

Jesus is revealed as the One who has the seven Spirits of God and seven stars. He is writing to this dead church in His capacity as judge rather than comforter. He will come upon them possessed with all the power of the Almighty.

Christ declares that He has the seven stars in His hand. These stars are the pastors of the churches. It is in His

power to protect and shield them, but He will also hold them to strict account in fulfilling the work entrusted to them.

Church's Condition

Christ does not commend this church as a whole but acknowledges they have not defiled their garments. It was a church busy with meetings, promotion and committees. It had a reputation for being alive, wide-awake, a going, growing church.

In spite of its reputation, Sardis had no name with God. It was functioning in the past and living on yesterday's glories and successes. While the church could boast of its large membership, finances and organizational operation, it lacked quality.

This church was untroubled by heresy. A church that has lost its vital force will not be attacked nor troubled with opposition from without, because it is not worth being attacked. It is lifeless. Churches that are alive will be subject to persecution in order to silence that voice.

Challenging Counsel

The church is exhorted to watch. This is the only solution to its impending ruin. The church is counseled to keep the commands of the gospel.

Clear Consequences

This church is admonished to repent. The church needed to confess its deadness, put away its sin, be filled with the Spirit, and put life and meaning into its works.

Without repentance, they could expect sure judgment. They were to be on guard in order that judgment would not catch them unawares.

Commend Company

Christ does not abandon the faithful few. The believers in Sardis who lived pure and separated lives are not ignored. This faithful company was consistent in a city marked by materialism and worldliness. We must remember that God is in the "remnant" business today. Our Lord still works with a few.

Conqueror's Compensation

Christ promises that conquerors will be clothed in white raiment which reminds us of festivity, victory, purity and the resurrection body. Conquerors will not have their names blotted out of the Book of Life. They will be confessed by Christ before His Father and the angels. ■

The Secretary's Schedule

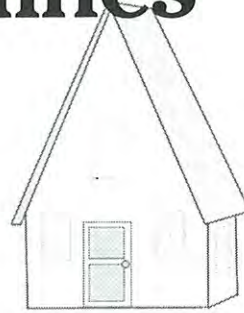
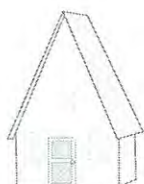
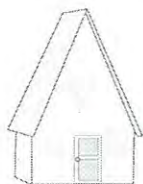
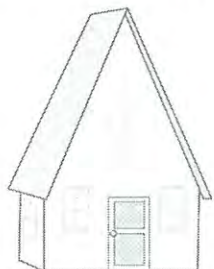
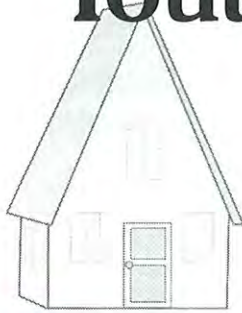
July 2002

- 16-18 Pre-Convention Meetings
- 20 Executive Committee Meeting
- 21-25 National Convention
Memphis, TN
- 25-26 Post-Convention Meetings

The exciting story of how Camp Beaverfork began in Arkansas.

Youth Camps Are Gold Mines

By Pat Baze



During the 1951 session of the Arkansas State Association at Mt. Zion Free Will Baptist Church near Springdale, it was as though a fire ignited. The State League Board made the following report, "We have purchased a two acre lot at Conway, Arkansas, for \$495. The property has been cleared. Several district associations have pledged funds for the purpose of erecting a youth camp building." Somebody made a motion. It passed . . . and the fire spread.

At the 1957 session, offerings and pledges of \$1,200 were made so that the youth camp could be opened in Conway by 1958.

Founding of Youth Camp

However, the decision was made to have a youth camp in 1957 at a campsite owned by the Cumberland Presbyterian Church. Some 130 young people

attended. It is best said in the words of the secretary of the State League Convention, Mary Kay Kelley.

"The young people of Arkansas Free Will Baptist Churches assembled under the tabernacle at Camp Peniel (North of Morrilton, Arkansas), at 11:00 a.m. on June 17, 1957, for the first service of the first youth camp sponsored by the State Convention. From that moment until the final 'Amen,' the camp was marked by a spiritual fellowship unequaled in any other gathering in recent years.

Twenty-six accepted Christ as their Savior; and numbers of others yielded to the will of the Lord for full-time service. Earl Smith was the camp superintendent. John Rich was the evangelist. Lawnie Coffman, Clarence Burton, and Dale Munkus were the instructors."

From that first session back in 1957 and the vision of those faithful people, God has blessed Camp Beaverfork with 62 acres of land and facilities that will accommodate 325

campers. There is a full-time director and groundskeeper.

Function of Youth Camp

There are many elements involved in the day-to-day operation of a youth camp. Camp Beaverfork is governed by the Arkansas State Youth Board, consisting of six men elected to three-year terms by the state association. This board works closely with the director in the areas of administration and promotion.

The camp is blessed to be part of the Arkansas Cooperative Plan of support. Through this support and individual contributions, we are able to keep camper registration fees at a minimum.

With steady growth comes the need for expansion and improvements. Year-round camp rentals help with the cost of these improvements. However, there's more to camping



Retreat at Camp Beaverfork.



Open-air dining hall at Camp Beaverfork.



Tabernacle at Camp Beaverfork.



Even the cabins are air-conditioned these days.

ministry than the revenue rental camps generate. The more important dimension is the opportunity to serve the community in which we live, since many churches and Christian organizations do not have camp facilities. These rentals have opened the door of outreach ministry (to other than Free Will Baptists) for our camp.

Camp sessions would not be possible without the many volunteers. From across the state, lay people willingly spend their vacation time to be counselors, teachers, activity directors, security and kitchen help. Still others donate their time and skills in the areas of maintenance, such as plumbing, electrical, carpentry and various other trades. Through the generosity of these faithful servants, much is accomplished.

Fruit of Youth Camp

Camp Beaverfork holds a special place in the hearts of those who have attended sessions through the years. What a joy to hear people say, "I love that camp; that's where I was saved."

Over the 44 years of Arkansas youth camps, there has been an average of 730 campers per year (statistics for six of those years were not kept.) However, the 38 years for which records are available show a total attendance of 27,712. The number of first-time decisions since 1980 averages 105 per year. This does not count the number of rededications and/or other decisions.

Worth it? Yes! That's 2,205 conversions in 21 years. The lowest attendance was the first year of camp when 130 registered and 26 were

saved. The highest attendance was in 1992 when 1,156 attended one of the four weeks of camp. The number of conversions that year was 124.

In June 1997, six young men answered the call to preach the gospel in one service. In every area of ministry across our denomination today, we can see the impact of our Free Will Baptist youth camps.

Future of Youth Camp

Excitement fills the air as we look to the 2002 season. Spring retreats and summer camps are set and work is in progress as we anticipate another great year. As I look out the window of my office across the campgrounds today, I'm reminded once again of God's great goodness.

The blessings we enjoy today came through prayer, dedication and sacrifice of those great visionaries who met at the State Association in Springdale, Arkansas, back in 1951. Through that initial \$495 gift of love, God opened the window of blessings that we enjoy today. Truly, "little is much when God is in it."

We at Camp Beaverfork today share in that same vision to reach young people from across the state for the cause of Christ.

To ensure that we stay focused, the State Youth Board has adopted the following mission statement:

1. We will teach that the work of God is inherently powerful to save and equip those who respond in faith to its message. We are committed to communicating the whole counsel of God in its

timeless relevance.

2. We believe the only message that will change the eternal destiny of the lost is the gospel. We are determined to teach and encourage the youth of our state to be involved in missions. We will encourage our young people to make missions their life's vocation.
3. We will faithfully promote our scriptural legacy as Free Will Baptists. We will develop programs that will promote our Free Will Baptist heritage by encouraging our youth to be faithful to their local church and to attend a Free Will Baptist college.

As we focus on tomorrow, we do so with great expectations. At Camp Beaverfork we realize that our greatest investment is in our youth. What does the future hold for our youth camps? I believe we will recognize it in the future lives of our young people: "They are the true gold mined at our youth camps!" ■

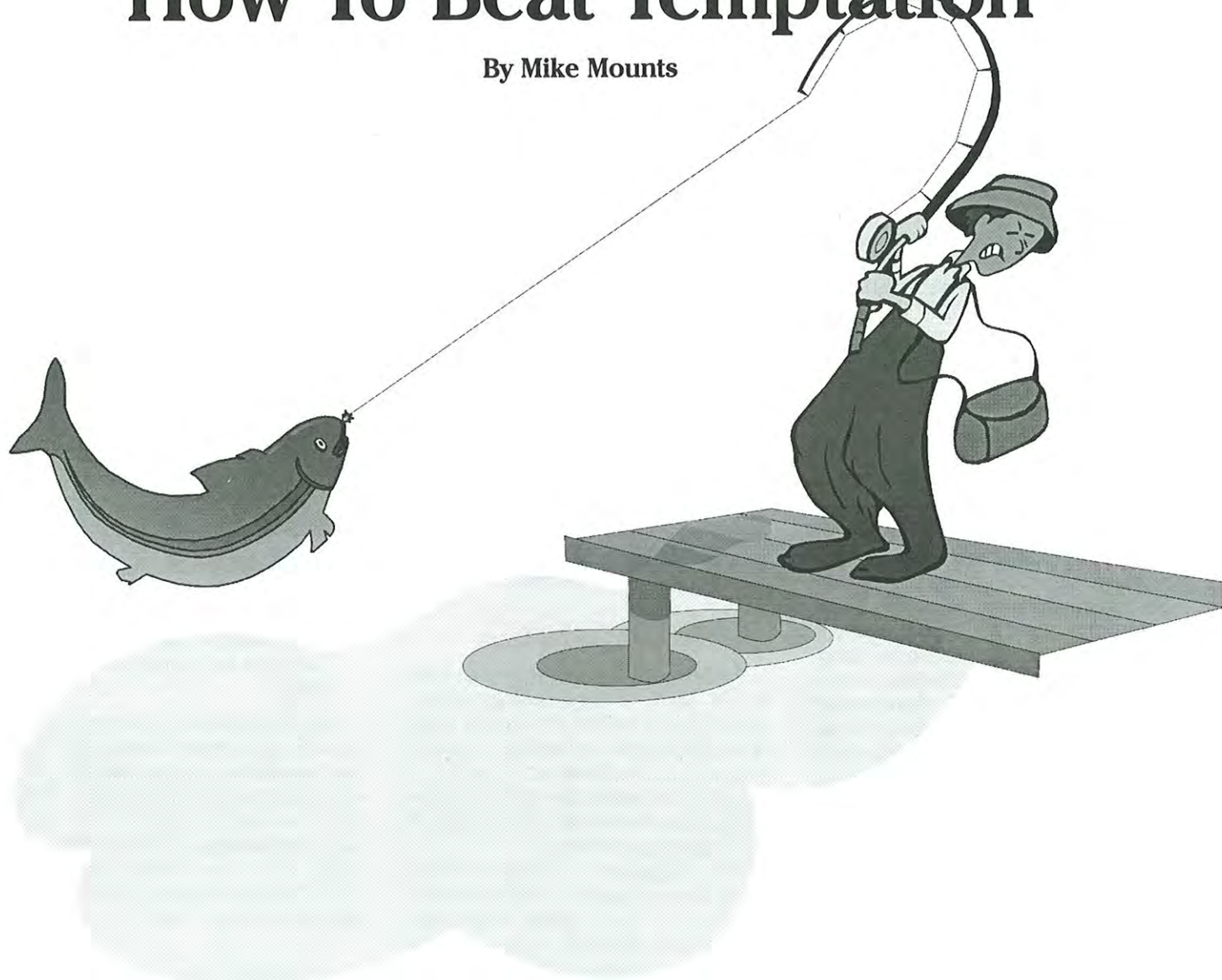


ABOUT THE WRITER: Reverend Patrick Baze serves as director at Camp Beaverfork in Conway, Arkansas.

Ten sure ways to face down life's temptations

How To Beat Temptation

By Mike Mounts



It's near midnight. The moonlight casts its reflection on the warm waters of Tampa Bay. There's a gentle southwest breeze. A perfect night . . . for fishing. For the last four hours I've walked the southeast side of the Skyway Bridge, trolling an eight-inch Cisco Kid up and down the bridge, with one thing in mind: land a snook (Florida's game fish).

Because of the time, and because I was on my honeymoon (I wouldn't recommend this to all newlyweds), I needed to leave. But before I left, I wanted to make one more cast. Just

one more trip to the bend and back.

Then it happened. Something took the bait. I felt the strike—looked out—and there in the light of the moon, jumping out of the water—a snook!

With my heart in my throat, I began to reel, but the fish continued to take line. After several minutes, I began to reel in the tired fish. Because of his size, I was concerned about trying to reel him out of the water and up to the bridge. So I decided to walk back to my tackle box, dragging him through the water.

I finally made it to my tackle box, tightly gripped the rod-and-reel,

reached into my tackle box and pulled out a snitch hook with a long nylon rope tied to it. I lowered the rope alongside the line, snatched the fish and raised him up and over the bridge. All 24 pounds and 36 inches!

Now in today's no-fault, guilt-free world, the snook might claim he's a victim of circumstance. He may blame his capture on learned behavior. Perhaps he was neglected as a little snook, and it's his way to release pent-up anger. Maybe he's suffering from low fish-esteem. Then there's always the old fish-demon behind every rock.

Assume Responsibility

It's interesting that James uses a fishing term to describe our enticement to sin (like baiting a hook) and a hunting term to describe the drawing us away to sin (the baiting of a trap): "But every man is tempted, when he is drawn away of his own lust, and enticed," (James 1:14).

Yes, we're tempted by Satan and the world-system, but how we respond to the bait is our own personal responsibility. We are drawn away by our own lust—our own individual sinful and selfish desires. When man sins, he has only one person to blame—himself.

Meditate on God's Word

While in the wilderness, Jesus faced the tempter and resisted him through the scriptures. Jesus used the Word of God to detect the bait, disarm the trap and defeat the tempter.

The psalmist wrote, "Thy word have I hid in mine heart, that I might not sin against thee," (Ps. 119:11). As God's Word fills the mind and controls the thinking, we are then equipped to apply it in everyday, real-life situations. Use "the sword of the Spirit" with precision to detect and beat temptation.

Trust God and Not Yourself

The moment you think you stand, look out for the big fall! (I Cor. 10:12). Without God's saving, sustaining and sanctifying grace, we're no match for the world, the flesh or the devil. When our brother or sister lapses into sin, that's prime time to guard ourselves against the sin of pride and comparison.

We'll say, "Oh, that would never happen to me," or "I would never do that." But Paul said, "Consider thyself, lest thou also be tempted," (Gal. 6:1).

Fear the Lord

Solomon wrote, "And by the fear of the LORD men depart from evil," (Prov. 16:6). To successfully and consistently beat temptation, we must live in the awareness of God's presence. He watches and weighs our every word, thought, motive, action and deed (Prov. 5:21b).

David wrote, "Stand in awe, and sin not," (Ps. 4:4a). A high and holy view of God should stop us dead in

our tracks when we even consider sin, let alone commit it. God's holiness is motive for our holiness when He says, "Be ye holy; for I am holy."

Make No Provision for the Flesh

There was a story told of a little boy excited about going to summer camp. Because of his recent illness, his parents made it clear that if he went to camp, under no circumstance should he go swimming.

When he returned from camp, his mother found his swimming trunks among his dirty clothes. Immediately she went to him and asked, "Didn't we tell you to not go swimming?"

"Mommy," he said, "I didn't go swimming."

"Then why did you take your swimming trunks?" she asked.

"Just in case I was tempted to go swimming," he replied.

In his case, he did what others so often do . . . "make provision for the flesh," (Rom. 13:14).

You know what your own particular weakness is, so don't feed it. Don't fan the flame. If you're made out of dynamite, don't stoke blast furnaces!

Consider the Consequences

When lust is conceived it gives birth to sin, and when sin is finished, it gives birth to death (James 1:15). Sin is out for the kill. It will kill our joy and testimony. It kills: marriages, families, ministries, relationships, jobs and careers, even local churches.

Be Accountable

Because we're members one of another, we must be accountable to one another. For instance, we're called to consider one another, provoke one another unto love and good works, admonish and exhort one another.

Accountability helps prevent us from falling, but if we fall, accountability also helps in the purifying process (Eccl. 4:9-10).

Watch and Pray

Jesus said to His disciples, "Watch and pray, that ye enter not into temptation: the spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak," (Matt. 26:41). Watching keeps us alert for our adversary, while

prayer acknowledges our weakness and God's ability.

In the model prayer, Jesus reminds us that our need to confess sin is a constant reminder to trust God and not ourselves (Luke 11:4).

Be Filled with the Spirit

Paul said, "Walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfill the lust of the flesh," (Gal. 5:16). Day-by-day, moment-by-moment, we are to continually yield to the Spirit's control. Only through a Spirit-filled and scripture-filled life, are we able to resist and conquer temptation.

Focus on Christ

Did you know that according to His divine power, Jesus has already given us all things that pertain to life and godliness? (II Pet. 1:3). When we give in to temptation, it's simply our failure to appreciate our full satisfaction in Christ, and apply the all-sufficiency of Christ.

Temptation is common to us all. But, because Jesus Himself felt the full force of temptation, He is ever-ready and able to run to your cry and give you aid (Heb. 2:18, 4:15-16). ■



ABOUT THE WRITER: Reverend Mike Mounts pastors Westerville Free Will Baptist Church in Westerville, Ohio. He also serves as assistant moderator of the Ohio State Association of Free Will Baptists.

A Free Will Baptist evangelist takes a closer look at revivals yesterday, today and tomorrow.

Revival—A Point of View

By Evangelist Bobby Jackson



“Write the things which thou hast seen, and the things which are, and the things which shall be hereafter,” the Lord instructed John on the Isle of Patmos.

The only possible position from which to view “things” is the present point in time and space. Therefore, this is a view of revival from the first month, of the second year, of the first century, of the third millennium, in America, after more than 50 years, and over 16,000 evangelistic and revival services among Free Will Baptists.

Looking Back— Revivals of the Past

The year was around 1828 near Rome, New York, where widespread interest in Charles Finney and the re-

vivals that had followed him in many rural communities attracted Finney to that neighborhood. Upon arriving, he was invited to an extremely dull and discouraging prayer meeting. Finney rose to speak and declare the prayer meeting a hypocritical mockery.

The angry listeners appeared ready to break up the meeting when the lay leader broke into tears, fell on his knees to pray, followed by every man and woman weeping, confessing sins and broken before God. The result was that revival ran through the community and whole families were converted.

In 1858, Finney was invited to Whitefield Tabernacle in London, pastored by Dr. John Campbell. He began with several weeks preaching to Christians.

Finally, the time came for the invitation to “after meetings.” Upon Finney’s request for an inquiry room

the pastor offered a kindergarten that would accommodate 30-40 people. Finney insisted on a room that would hold several hundred. In amusement the pastor suggested a lecture room a city block from the Tabernacle which would accommodate over 1,500.

The revivalist made it perfectly clear that neither professed Christians nor careless sinners were invited to the after meeting. “Only those who are not Christians, but anxious for the salvation of their souls,” he insisted.

At the dismissal of the regular meeting, the astonished pastor watched the crowds, hundreds, make their way up the street to fill the inquiry room to overflowing, seeking the Savior.

This was so long ago and so far away.

The year was 1962, the month of April, the place, a rural community, the church, Pleasant Grove Free Will

Baptist. A newspaper article in the *Coastal Piedmont Leader*, dated October 25, 2001, written by J. N. Bryant, recently received from Mrs. Bronco West, gives this account.

The first real revival I was ever in was in 1962, with Brother Bobby Jackson as the evangelist. Bobby Jackson was a full-time Free Will Baptist evangelist and well known in our area. Brother Bronco West who had just been converted from a medicine show comedian to a devout Christian was in charge of advertising. Our church building would seat about 100 people with two side rooms that would seat 50 more.

The meeting started on Sunday night with the building almost filled. By Wednesday night there was standing room only. As word spread over the area about the moving of the Spirit of the Lord, people came from about all the churches in the area. The building overflowed with standing room only inside, and many standing on the outside around the windows to hear the preaching. The meetings continued for 21 days. While the church was being revived, over 100 souls were saved, and several young men were called into the ministry.

There is no space to look at D. L. Moody, Billy Sunday, Mordecai Hamm, Oliver Green, Oral Roberts, Billy Graham, nor the limited ministry of Bobby Jackson before and after 1962. No one denies that the past is filled with fruitful revivals.

Looking Around— Reality of the Present

Straining, looking in all directions, nothing comes into view bearing any resemblance to the meetings of the past.

What is visible is a religious world that looks very much like Israel in Isaiah's time to whom the Lord said, "To what purpose is the multitude of your sacrifices . . . I am full of the burnt-offerings. Bring no more vain oblations . . . the new moons and Sabbaths . . . and calling of assemblies . . . it is iniquity . . . When you make many prayers, I will not hear," (Isa. 1:11-15).

The Sunday morning feel-good, have-a-big-time religion, indulging every appetite, ignoring all the rules of ethics and morality, making religion convenient, with no self-denial, no sacrifice, motivated by making

money and having fun, must nauseate God as it did in Isaiah's day.

The moral world looks a lot like Israel in the days of Hosea. "The Lord hath a controversy with the inhabitants of the land . . . By swearing, and lying, and killing, and stealing, and committing adultery, they break out, and blood toucheth blood. Therefore shall the land mourn," (Hosea 4:1-3).

From here the view of the present looks like a revival is desperately needed.

Looking Ahead— Reasonable Prediction for the Future

Not being a prophet, predictions are not easy. Predictions are difficult because God created man a person with a great degree of freedom. Revival depends much on how men respond to God in the future—unless you are a Calvinist, that is, and then you must predict when and what God will arbitrarily do.

"Revival is an act of a Sovereign God who by irresistible power at His pleasure and direction brings His wandering people back into spiritual health." Worded in one way or another this is the general Calvinistic-colored definition of revival. Neither the Bible nor Christian experience supports this definition.

Finney's concept is more accurate. "Revival of religion is not a miracle, but rather the result of the right use of the appropriate means." Revival is no more a miracle than growing a crop of corn. God grows corn but a corn crop is conditional.

To the wicked religious generation of Isaiah, the Lord said, "Wash you, make you clean; put away the evil of your doings . . . cease to do evil . . . learn to do well. Come now, and let us reason together . . . though your sins be as scarlet they shall be as white as snow. If ye be . . . obedient, ye shall eat of the good of the land; But if ye refuse and rebel, ye shall be devoured with the sword . . ." (Isa 1:16-19).

Is revival possible in the future? Certainly! It is not only possible, it is a reasonably safe prediction, if God's people meet His conditions.

Solomon's request of the Lord at the Temple dedication was, "If your people go into sin and go astray, if they return with all their heart and with all

their soul saying, We have sinned, we have done amiss, and have dealt wickedly, then hear from heaven, and forgive thy people which have sinned against thee," (II Chron. 6:36-39).

God's answer is backed by His integrity. "If my people, which are called by my name, shall humble themselves, and pray, and seek my face, and turn from their wicked ways, then will I hear from heaven and will forgive their sin and will heal their land," (II Chron. 7:14.)

The key to future revival is: if . . . if . . . if . . . ■



ABOUT THE WRITER: Reverend Bobby Jackson is a Free Will Baptist evangelist who resides in Greenville, North Carolina. He served nine years as moderator of the National Association of Free Will Baptists.

Revival Comes When . . .

- ☐ We Pray
- ☐ We Repent
- ☐ God Hears
- ☐ God Forgives
- ☐ Men Preach
- ☐ Sinners
- ☐ Respond
- ☐ Churches
- ☐ Change

An experiment in Christian education blossoms in Tennessee

Saturday at Mid-Tenn

By Larry Hampton

Saturday, April 20, some 432 Free Will Baptists excitedly gathered on the campus of Free Will Baptist Bible College for the first annual Mid-Tenn Christian Workers' Conference. Participants chose from 55 seminars offered by 39 presenters.

The topics covered ranged from "How to Handle the 'Wild Child'" taught by Lisa Jones to "Who's That Weird Family Next Door?" taught by Eddie Payne. Seminars were divided into five tracks—Early Childhood, Elementary, Teen, Adult and Administrative/Pastor.

In addition, Dr. Bill Taylor, director of Network Partnerships of LifeWay Christian Resources, and Dr. Alton Loveless, general director of Randall House Publications, delivered major addresses to the conferees. Yvonne Thigpen, interim president of Evangelical Training Association, spoke briefly to conferees during the opening session.

Keith Kenemer, director of Christian Education at First FWB Church in Dothan, Alabama, observed, "Free Will Baptists are achieving high standards in Christian education with this conference. Fifty-five workshops with 39 presenters—all of whom attended and were on time—is unheard of in the Christian education conference arena."

The Mid-Tenn Christian Workers' Conference was conducted in connection with the course "Sunday School Ministry" taught at Free Will Baptist Bible College by Mr. Kenemer. Members of his class helped make the conference run smoothly.



Mid-Tenn conferees on Free Will Baptist Bible College campus.



They even had time to sing while they learned.



Everybody stands in line.

Ron Hunter, general director-elect of Randall House Publications, and Steve Lindsay, minister of education and youth at New Hope FWB Church in Joelton, Tennessee, served as co-chairmen of the committee that planned the conference.

Registrants came from 44 churches scattered throughout Tennessee, Alabama, Kentucky and Arkansas. The largest group came from the New Hope FWB Church in Tennessee. Pastor Barry Simpson and 36 members of his congregation participated in the day-long Christian education event.

The conference received high marks on the evaluation sheets turned in by attendees. Their comments reflected an appreciative spirit. One respondent captured the upbeat mood of the conferees—"Learned a lot. Enjoyed the day. Would encourage others to attend next year."

Next year's conference is scheduled for Saturday, April 12 at Free Will Baptist Bible College. Dr. Thom Rainer, author of *High Expectation Churches*, will be the featured speaker.



ABOUT THE WRITER: Larry Hampton serves as adult curriculum editor at Randall House Publications.

Beyond Belief





Part seven
of an eleven-part series
on
"Habits of Highly Successful People"

Anger: One Letter from Danger

By Kevin Riggs¹

Habit #6 –
A Successful Person
Understands the Importance of Family

My children play video games, but I monitor what they play and how often. I admit, however, there is one thing that happens when Zach plays Donkey Kong that causes me to twinge a little. Periodically the game will not go the way he wants, and out of frustration he will say to no one in particular, "Oh man, I got *killed*," or, "I'm going to *kill* you." There is something about hearing the word "killed" that makes me uncomfortable.

The Sixth Commandment

Commandment Six reads, "Thou

shalt not kill."² The Hebrew literally says, "No unlawful killing." The prohibition is killings that violate justice, premeditated killing, or killing with malice and forethought, murder.

Commandments One through Five make me uncomfortable because I know I am guilty of breaking them. But this Commandment is different. I read this Commandment and start to relax, thinking, "Finally a Commandment I have not broken . . . or have I?" I have kept the letter of the law, but have I kept the spirit behind the law?

The Sixth Commandment teaches that all of life is precious, but human life is priceless. Every human being—

regardless of age, race, intelligence, health, ability to contribute to society or criminal record—is created in the image of God.³ I am not an animal, and neither are my ancestors! We all are people in whom God Himself has breathed life.⁴ Therefore, human life is to be treated with highest respect.

Habit #6

Everyone agrees—at least in theory—that the willful, premeditated, unjust taking of another human life is wrong. If this were all Commandment Six had in mind, I would be home free, but there is more behind this Com-

mandment than murder. What habit of a highly successful person can be drawn from the Sixth Commandment?

The answer is found from the words of Jesus, "Ye have heard that it was said by them of old time, Thou shalt not kill: and whosoever shall kill shall be in danger of the judgment: But I say unto you, That whosoever is angry with his brother without a cause shall be in danger of the judgment: and whosoever shall say to his brother, Raca, shall be in danger of the council: but whosoever shall say, Thou fool, shall be in danger of hell fire."⁵

Based on Jesus' words, the sixth habit is as follows: *A highly successful person knows how to control his temper.* Proverbs warns, "A fool uttereth all his mind: but a wise man keepeth it in till afterwards."⁶ An old Chinese proverb states, "The fastest horse cannot catch a word spoken in anger."

I can't count the number of times my anger has *killed* the spirit of a family member, friend or coworker. I can think of numerous times my spirit has been *murdered* by someone's anger towards me.

The Truth about Anger

I know what you are thinking because I thought the same thing: "Uncontrolled anger is bad, but how can it be equated with murder?" Ephesians 4:26-27 gives guidance to understanding how.

Anger, in and of itself, is not a sin.

Ephesians says, "In your anger do not sin."⁷ Anger is an emotion given by God that can motivate me to do what needs to be done. God expresses anger toward sin.⁸ Jesus became angry when people turned the church into a marketplace.⁹ God cannot sin, and Jesus did not sin in His anger.

My problem is that while anger is not a sin, I usually sin in my anger. When I don't control my temper, it becomes easy for me to lash out in anger, saying things I don't mean, killing the other person with my words. The anger may not be a sin, but the way I respond when angry can quickly become a sin.

Settle the issue immediately.

Have you ever gotten angry with someone and gone to bed angry?

What happened? If you are like me, you didn't get a good night's sleep, then woke up irritable and grouchy. That is why Paul wrote, "Let not the sun go down upon your wrath."¹⁰

In other words, when I feel myself becoming angry, I need to resolve the issue as soon as possible. This doesn't mean I say the first thing that comes to my mind and overreact. What it means is that I need to take time to cool-off, regain my composure and then express my anger in a calm, acceptable manner.

Easier said than done, I know. But anger is like a ball submerged in water: I cannot keep it down forever. Sooner or later it will surface, and if it is not constrained, it will explode to the top. When angry, I need to resolve the situation quickly to keep my anger from turning into bitterness and hatred, two well-known sins.

Satan uses anger to destroy relationship.

The Bible says, "Neither give place to the devil."¹¹ When I fly off the handle, saying things I don't mean, and then don't seek immediate resolution, choosing to let things simmer and boil, Satan will use that opportunity to step in and destroy my relationship with the other person. My goal is reconciliation, not blame casting or argument winning.

Jesus said, "Therefore, if thou bring thy gift to the altar, and there rememberest that thy brother hath ought against thee; Leave there thy gift before the altar, and go thy way; first be reconciled to thy brother, and then come and offer thy gift."¹²

Jesus taught that it doesn't matter if I was the one who did the offending or if I was the one who was offended, it is always my responsibility to take the first step toward reconciliation.

Reconciliation starts with sincere, complete, heartfelt forgiveness. Even though I may never forget what the other person did or said, true forgiveness doesn't bring up the past, reopening old wounds. This type of forgiveness is as much for my sanity as for the person whom I am forgiving. When I refuse to forgive, I murder the relationship, and the Sixth Commandment states, "Thou shalt not murder."

When I am guilty of losing my temper, my only recourse is to repent, asking God to forgive me. I may also need to go and ask forgiveness from

the person I have offended. If someone has offended me, it is still my response to seek reconciliation. I need to remember to attack the problem not the person, and to express my anger in an appropriate way.

Maybe the reason Jesus equated anger with murder was because anger, left uncontrolled, is the first step toward murder. Have you ever in the heat of anger said, "I could just kill you?" or, "I wish you were dead?" Even though you didn't mean it, you can see how anger and murder are connected. Anger is just one letter short of danger.

Do you consider yourself a success? Do you know how to control your temper? Are you guilty of breaking the Sixth Commandment? Do you need to repent? ■

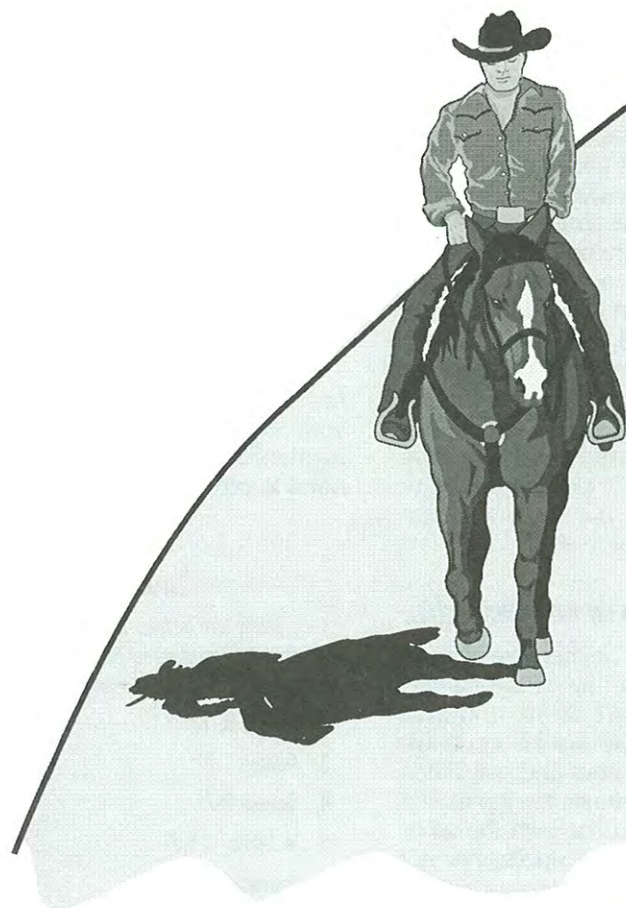
Endnotes

1. I would love to hear from you with your questions and comments. Please feel free to email me at kevin@franklincommunitychurch.org.
2. Exodus 20:13.
3. Genesis 1:27.
4. Genesis 2:7.
5. Matthew 5:21-22.
6. Proverbs 29:11.
7. Ephesians 4:26.
8. Psalm 7:11.
9. John 2:12-17.
10. Ephesians 4:26.
11. Ephesians 4:27.
12. Matthew 5:23-24.



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

Tribute banquet honoring Dr. Alton Loveless



Where the Trail Parts

By Eric Thomsen



A Note from the Editor

During an April 30 banquet at Opryland Hotel in Nashville, several people spoke in tribute regarding Dr. Alton Loveless' years of leadership at Randall House.

One of those tributes rode a horse down a mountain ridge and found two friends at a crossing where the trails of life part.

The riders pulled their tired horses to a stop as they topped the ridge. Before them, the waning rays of the afternoon sun bathed the valley floor with golden light. The dim trail they had followed much of the day wound its way down the steep incline and crept across the valley to lose itself in fields of corn and alfalfa. The green, fertile crops stood like sentinels around a small

town—if indeed it could be called that, for it consisted of little more than a cluster of adobe huts and clapboard shacks with tendrils of smoke rising lazily from their leaning chimneys.

For a long minute neither rider spoke, each content to watch the evening shadows creep slowly toward them. A faint, evening breeze shouldered its way up from the valley,

brushing their faces with cool and welcome respite from the desert heat.

To any casual observer it would have been obvious that this pair had watched many sunsets together, comfortable in the silence of their companionship. With unvoiced regret the elder rider broke the spell of silence. "Well, pardner, this is it. This is where we part ways."

At his unexpected words his younger companion jerked as if stung. "What! You have to be kidding! We've come so far! Just a few more miles and we'll be there. You . . . you can't leave now!"

His dark eyes burned as the younger rider turned and faced his companion. "Down there in that little bunch of shacks is the job we came to do, the mission we set out to accomplish. Weren't you the one who convinced me to drop everything to come with you? Wasn't it you who said that this was the most important thing I would ever do? Didn't we spend months working, practicing . . . getting ready for this moment? How can you think about leaving now?"

A quiet chuckle met the passionate, somewhat accusing speech. The old man turned slowly with a wistful grin on his face. "The truth is, son, I'd love to go charging into that town with you tomorrow. I'd love to see the looks on their faces when you confront them. It wasn't so long ago that I was just like you—ready to take on the world with nothing but courage and a fast horse! But now . . . well, now my path lies yonder across them mountains. I done my job, and my time

is gone. I showed you how important this mission is, and I taught you everything I know to help you pull it off. You're ready all right, with or without me.

"And don't go gittin' the wrong idea. I ain't riding off into the sunset or planning to hang up my spurs anytime soon. I'm gonna be busy with some plans of my own . . . plans I've put off a long, long time jest to get you ready for tomorrow."

Their eyes locked, student and teacher, each trying desperately to read the thoughts of the other. Suddenly, the eyes of the younger softened. Swinging down from the saddle, he walked over to his friend, reached up, and put a rough hand on his arm.

"You're right, Doc," he said gently. "I reckon it's time. But that don't mean I have to like it. How many trails have we ridden together? How many tight spots have we fought our way out of? How many times have we had our backs to the wall and a prayer on our lips? How many times have I watched you handle something that would make most men crumble? But that never stopped you from doing right!"

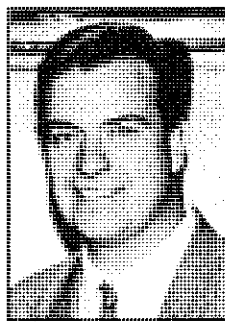
"Well, let me tell you something. Tomorrow morning, when I walk down the street of that little town, you're walking with me . . . even though you're not really there. When they see me, they'll see you. When they hear me, they'll remember your voice."

"And when it comes to a showdown, well, I'm gonna to do exactly what you taught me to do. I'm gonna look 'em in the eye and give it my best. And no matter what happens, I know you'll be somewhere down the trail praying for me."

For a brief moment, tears glimmered in Doc's eyes, but then, after clearing his throat, he swung down from the saddle and began rummaging through his pack. "Whaddaya say we make some good, strong coffee? It's been a long day, and I'm not planning to pull out 'til first light . . ."



Past, present and future directors of Sunday School and Church Training Department: Director-Elect, Ron Hunter (L); Present Director, Alton Loveless; Former Director, Roger Reeds.



ABOUT THE WRITER: Eric Thomsen is youth pastor at Bethlehem Free Will Baptist Church in Ashland City, Tennessee. He serves as as marketing manager of Randall House Publications.



Fran can't seem to stay out of jail. She's there every week.

Ministry Behind Bars

By Fran Gist



The Lord is busy in the Tehama County (California) Jail, and I could have missed it. My fear and anxiety were no match for His love and the desires for His socially forgotten daughters, our sisters.

Jail is where I really met Jesus, up close and personal.

It was the least likely place, from my personal perspective, to be sent into service. However, it is where He told me to put into practice what He had given me by hating the sin while loving the sinner. By His grace, He forgave my sins and taught me how to forgive my brother's murderer. This too, He asked me to put into practice, and extend to *every* person in need of

His love, regardless of circumstances.

The First Time

The first time I went to jail, I was full of fear and anxiety, feeling somewhat like a deer caught in headlights. My imagination had been working overtime. By the end of our two-hour service and fellowship, the Lord had taught me that He walks the halls, sits on the bunks, holds their hands, dries their tears, listens to every heart and calls each one to abide in Him. Jesus conquered the fear

and it hasn't returned, because I *know* He is *always* there.

I could have missed hundreds of blessings but for *His* strength to put my right foot in front of my left foot, get in the car and go. You might wonder if we make a difference. Jesus *is* the difference for all of us. We've seen Him exercise His authority over situations from disgruntled deputies to satanic worshipers. He has arranged one-on-one time for a frightened and timid lady who wouldn't ask for herself. We've seen Him bring 21 of 24 women incarcerated into services. (All 21 women are now daughters of The Most High God.)

The Difference God Makes

The Lord has made a difference on both sides of the bars and heavy doors. Brenda is a nurse now and raising her three young children as a single parent. Wanda holds a position in the education field where she makes high stress look like a walk in the park.

Yvonne was with us almost two years. Her rebellious nature gave way to submission. As Yvonne begins her 25-year prison sentence, she is doing very well on the prison Praise Team. Cassie is studying theology in prison and will have just enough time to complete her studies before her release and planned service through Prison Fellowship.

Opportunities are unlimited behind the cinderblock walls and steel doors. New ladies sometimes come to church as a means of escaping the close confines of their cells or out of curiosity because another cellmate is anxious to join us. Frequently, we meet ladies who have never heard that Jesus wants to have a personal relationship with them. Sharing His love is always a joy.

Being involved in the jail and prison ministry has been a tremendous blessing to me, because He has taught me in ways I would never have considered on my own. I thanked the Lord for changing my heart to love and accept "them" in the beginning. Now, with time and growth, I can't thank Him enough for touching their hearts to love and accept me.

During opening prayer time, we often pray that the Lord will protect the deputies, staff and their family members. We thank Him for our brothers and sisters in Christ who are employed at the jails and prisons. We also ask the Lord to continue calling the lost to Himself.

Each service conducted, each letter written, each Bible handed out,

each study lesson, each encounter near or far is ripe with opportunities.

I'm in a constant state of awe as I think of the countless times the Lord has opened doors through conversation to the topic of this ministry and the misconceptions about inmates.

The House Rules

Yes, people are arrested, tried, convicted and sentenced. Those found innocent of the charges and released at least had the opportunity to attend church during their stay and are less intimidated to attend with their *temporary peers*. Those that remain have a debt to pay to society. Society, unlike the Lord, tends to convict and condemn for a lifetime.

Every facility has its own set of rules. It is important to remember that we are Ministry Behind Bars guests. Church services are a privilege, not a right. As guests, we carry the responsibility of complying with our host's requirements for the welfare of all concerned, including future workers. I might mention that we are twice as fortunate in Tehama County since we are permitted bi-weekly services.

The jail team I participate in represents several denominations. Our primary focus is on salvation and growth in the Word. The Lord has demonstrated repeatedly that He will use each person's gifts, talents, personality and experiences. Diversity is highly desirable.

Fear, doubts, criticism, assumptions and a wide variety of fiery darts have assailed us in order to hinder the Lord's work. As each method fails to stop us, another is planned and executed.

The Courage to Continue

An avid supporter of the ministry

once introduced me as her friend, "the jail bird." I'm not sure which of us was more surprised, but I was more amused. Did I mention that the doors the Lord has opened are sometimes unusual?

Discouragement, like a virus, is easy to catch and hard to shake off. However, it taught me first hand that it is *vital* to stay in the Word, wear our full armor daily, pray without ceasing, have the covering of our churches, fellowship with other believers and witness to the world about the privilege of serving our Master in this mission field.

The Lord has overcome discouragement with *encouragement*. It is a mighty blessing to be a participant in the Lord's work as He refines and re-defines our sisters and the jail team members. Regardless of the obstacles, it is worth every one when we see a lady come to the Lord or rededicate her life. Joy overflows as we see the fruit in the vineyards behind jail and prison bars.

"Yes, Lord, you are very busy in the Tehama County Jail and I could have missed it. Thank you, Lord, that I didn't."



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

**Day of Prayer
for
Free Will Baptist National Convention
July 14**

Suggestions for keeping your voice healthy from a busy pastor who preaches three times every Sunday.

Keep Your Voice Healthy

By Rob Morgan



Preachers must keep their voices healthy to communicate effectively. Professional actors and vocalists go to great lengths to preserve and protect their voice quality, but most preachers never bother to consider the importance of voice maintenance. Here are some simple rules every public speaker should follow:

Drink lots and lots of water.

Have a bottle of water available before and after the sermon, and drink several glasses per day for several days before and after a preaching event.

Relax your hands during sermon delivery.

When your body is tense, your voice muscles are also tense, and strain results. It's difficult for your body to remain tense when you consciously attempt to relax your hands.

Get plenty of sleep before preaching.

Since your throat and voice are part of the human body, they will be just as rested or fatigued as the rest of the body, and strain could result from the preaching endeavor. A good night of sleep keeps the throat relaxed and refreshed for its work.

Exercise.

Exercise several times a week with a vigorous workout that opens the lungs.



Drink lots and lots of water.

One easy way of drinking three extra glasses of water is to develop the habit of drinking a glass every time you finish brushing your teeth.

Wash your hands often.

Upper respiratory infections often involve the vocal cords, leading to hoarseness. Good and frequent hand-washing can reduce these infections.

Avoid loud coughing.

When you do get a cough and cold, avoid coughing loudly. Learn the "silent cough" technique, as harsh coughing can damage already-swollen vocal cords. Also avoid "clearing" your throat.

Warm up your voice.

Warm your voice up before preaching by quoting scripture softly, then at conversational pitch. Consciously breathe deeply, letting the words flow out on the exhale.

Avoid voice abuse.

Avoid all voice abuse, such as yelling, screaming and loud crying.

Drink lots and lots of water.



ABOUT THE WRITER: Reverend Robert J. Morgan pastors Donelson Free Will Baptist Church in Nashville, Tennessee. He has written 12 books, including the *Preacher's Sourcebook*, an annual publication of sermon ideas and outlines for pastors and Christian workers.

Excerpted from *The Preacher's Sourcebook: 2003*, Robert J. Morgan, editor (Thomas Nelson, 2002).

Oklahoma Church Celebrates 70 Years

SAPULPA, OK—Members of Blue Bell FWB Church in Sapulpa, Oklahoma, gathered March 10 in a 70-year celebration event, according to Pastor Glen T. Hood. Reverend Hood is the 21st pastor to lead the congregation since it organized in 1932. He has led the flock since 1991.

The anniversary day events included recognition of three former pastors present for the activities—Reverends Millard McGuire (1962-63), Ray Price (1975-77) and Leon Shepherd (1970-75).

Another significant moment came when church leaders burned the mortgage on the new parsonage purchased in 2000.

The Blue Bell Church started in

1931 after a revival in the community led by Reverends Boyd Williams and Jack Eaton. The church organized in 1932 with 28 charter members. The last surviving charter member, Mrs. Eula Mae Yocham, died in May at age 84. She was a preacher's wife, a preacher's daughter and a preacher's sister.

Twelve men have been called into the ministry from the Blue Bell FWB Church:

D. B. Hellard
Jim Lemons
Joe Braddy
Hurley Lemons
Stub Yocham
Clifton McGuire
Orville Woolery
Everett Hellard

Larry Tuttle
Jerry Banks
Joe Upton
Chris Lindsey

The first three deacons to serve the congregation were Oliver Ashton, Robert Warren and Staughter Yocham.

The church voted in 1933 to buy one acre of land near Blue Bell School for the purpose of "building a tabernacle for our church building." Their first piano purchased in 1934 cost \$37.50 which was paid in monthly payments. Since those early years, the church has undergone several building programs and additional land purchases.



Blue Bell FWB Church in Sapulpa, Oklahoma.

Virginia Church Turns 50

RICHMOND, VA—More than 250 members and guests rallied at First FWB Church in Richmond, Virginia, for the golden anniversary. Pastor James Bullock who is in his fifth year with the church, said that the theme for their 50th anniversary celebration was "... celebrating 50 years of ministry and presenting Christ in our community and around the world."

The April 7 event featured a sermon by former pastor Dr. Billy Melvin who led the congregation five years (1953-58). Dr. Melvin spoke on the life of the church and its role in today's world.

First FWB Church organized on April 29, 1952, through the untiring efforts of Mr. and Mrs. M. E. Howard. Three charter members received plaques and gifts—Mrs. Ozella Howard, Bruce and Mary Smith.

Pastor and Mrs. James Bullock presented a new pulpit Bible to the church in recognition of the 50th anniversary.

Pastor Bullock stated, "It is exciting to see what the Lord will do at and through First Church in the next 50 years."

44 Attend Arizona District

PHOENIX, AZ—Moderator George Harvey, Jr., was reelected during the March 9 session of the Arizona District meeting. Forty-four people registered for the meeting including nine ministers, six delegates and two deacons. They met at North Valley FWB Church in Phoenix.

Keynote speaker for the event was Executive Secretary Melvin Worthington who spoke from Psalm 119. Board of Retirement general director Bill Evans addressed delegates on "True Riches" in his afternoon devotional.

Delegates adopted a constitutional change requiring churches to report at quarterly meetings.

Members of North Valley Church served the noon meal for attendees.

The 2003 district session will meet in March at First FWB Church in Tucson.

New Mexico Elects Mark Shores Moderator

HOBBS, NM—Delegates to the 34th annual New Mexico District Association elected Home Missionary Mark Shores as moderator before the session concluded. He succeeds Leslie Skeens. Shores pastors Mt. View FWB Mission in Albuquerque.

The April 4-6 meeting at First United FWB Church in Hobbs registered 29 delegates, ministers, deacons and visitors.

The theme was "Today is the Day, Now is the Time." Executive secretary Melvin Worthington preached Saturday morning. He also spoke during Friday's NMWAC worship service.

Delegates voted to continue financial support to First FWB Church and Mt. View FWB Church, both in Albuquerque. The Mt. View Mission was accepted into the district.

The New Mexico Women Active for Christ sponsored a Friday banquet that featured an address by Pat (Mrs. David) Shores from Illinois. Twenty-six people attended.

The 2003 district meeting is set for April 10-12 at Lighthouse FWB Church in Carlsbad.

Papers Solicited for Theological Symposium

NASHVILLE, TN—An invitation is extended to pastors, teachers, laymen, students and others to submit papers to be read at the annual meeting of the Free Will Baptist Theological Symposium at Free Will Baptist Bible College, November 4-5. The symposium is sponsored by the Commission for Theological Integrity of the National Association of Free Will Baptists.

Papers should be 10-15 pages, double-spaced, and should relate to the Bible, theology, Christian culture or related topics.

Papers may be submitted to FWBBC president J. Matthew Pinson and should be sent by August 1.

*Pastor Appreciation Sunday
September 8*

Remember the Pastor and his Family.

currently

Pastor **Troy Staires** reports a record attendance of 427 with three conversions at **Lewis Avenue FWB Church in Tulsa, OK**. Pastor Staires began his 21st year at the church in March.

Got \$10 for a good book? That's what it will cost to get a postage-paid copy of *By the Way* sent to you. It's the 143-page, 17-chapter autobiography of **Raymond Riggs**. Brother Riggs has served as a pastor, evangelist, promotional secretary, missions director and a lot more. Order from his son, Dr. Ken Riggs at 7233 Birch Bark Drive, Nashville, TN 37221. Or call him at 615/646-8314.

Pastor **Doug Carey** wrote a powerful editorial in the May 2002 issue of *The Lowery Link*, publication of **Lowery FWB Church in Twin Oaks, OK**. The editorial cites why the pastor is a Free Will Baptist, and it sounds a much-needed note of balance.

The **Northern Quarterly of Tennessee's Cumberland Association** raised nearly \$31,000 for Free Will Baptist Bible College in a Sunday night rally this February. Over the past 20 years, the quarterly rally has produced more than \$415,000 for the college.

Ina FWB Church in Ina, IL, averages 160 in attendance. Pastor **Brad Ryan** said the congregation raised \$9,660 for Free Will Baptist Bible College in April.

Oh, the February issue of "Currently" mentioned *The Musings of a Man*, a 276-page book by retired minister **George C. Lee**. The bad news is that the book sold out the first printing in 60 days. The good news is that the book has now been reprinted. So, if you missed getting a copy of the first printing, you can still purchase the book for \$19.95. Order from George Lee at 303 Veronica Lane, Goldsboro, NC, 27534 or e-mail him at gcllee@esn.net.

Home missionary **Bill Phillips** reports nine conversions at **Valley FWB Church in West Valley City, UT**.

Members of **First FWB Church in Inman, SC**, honored Pastor **Earl Hendrix** for 35 years of leadership. The mayor came, the chief of police came, all the

members came . . . and the church was filled with best wishes, cards of appreciation and promises of prayer. Pastor Hendrix has come a long way from that first Sunday 35 years ago when the church employed him for \$10 a week.

Great Commission FWB Church in Lancaster, SC, dedicated a camping and recreation area which will be used for outdoor preaching and singing events. **Eddie Hinson** pastors.

Tenth anniversary activities at **Gloryland FWB Church in Rock Hill, SC**, were conducted on a Saturday so that other local pastors and believers could attend. Executive secretary **Mike Jones** preached the morning message and led dedication services for the new sign. The church paid off a 10-year, \$50,000 loan in four years. **Phil Lemons** pastors.

Grace FWB Church in Lake City, SC, renovated their sanctuary. Pastor **Carroll Bryan** said the renovations included a baptistry, choir loft and pulpit area.

Pastor **Kenneth Cash** led 25th anniversary activities at **Una FWB Church in Una, SC**. Pastor Cash has led the flock 25 years. Members gave him a plaque of appreciation and an extra week of vacation. The church then burned the mortgage on their fellowship building and broke ground for a new sanctuary just across the street.

After 75 years at the same location, **Arcadia FWB Church in Spartanburg, SC**, is on the move. They sold their facilities to a Russian congregation and began construction on a new sanctuary near a large mall. **Kevin Smith** pastors.

Some 144 people attended the first annual youth retreat sponsored by the **South Carolina State Youth Camp Board**. Youth from 15 churches shared in the April event.

Pastor **Joe Grizzle** introduced 10 new members to **First FWB Church in Norman, OK**.

Founding pastor **Wallace Hayes** preached the 30th anniversary and homecoming service at **Fellowship FWB Church in Antioch, TN**. **Bill Van**

Winkle now pastors.

Pastor **Gordon Sebastian** reports seven new members at **Peace FWB Church in Wilson, NC**.

Donelson FWB Church in Nashville, TN, witnessed six baptisms and added 11 new members. Pastor **Rob Morgan** reports more than 30 people saved and 30 rededications on Easter Sunday.

The news gets bigger and better at **First FWB Church in Raleigh, NC**. Pastor **Tim Rabon** reports 2,576 on Friend Day weekend with 601 first-timers and 252 conversions. Wonderful!

Contact welcomes **The Anchor**, publication of **Cornerstone FWB Church in Nashville, TN**. Members of Calvary FWB Church and Priest Lake FWB Church merged to form the new congregation. **Cliff Donoho** pastors.

First came the hail that damaged Pastor **Waldo Young's** car. Then the next Sunday night after church, burglars vandalized his car and truck causing \$1,600 in damages. The burgled Pastor Young sings first tenor with the Oklahoma Ministers Quartet and pastors **Northwest FWB Church in Oklahoma City**.

Pastor **Tom Scott** reports nine conversions and 18 rededications during revival at **Red Bay FWB Church in Red Bay, AL**. Evangelist/pastor **Cliff Donoho** called the revival the best attended in his ministerial experience. ■

Looking Back

By Alton Loveless

I became general director of the Sunday School and Church Training Department on January 1, 1994. My job has been to oversee the publishing wing of the denomination which involved printing a complete Sunday School curriculum in both English and Spanish. We now have over 40 denominations using the materials we publish.

Overview

During my tenure we printed nearly 100 books which were made available to both the Christian bookstore and American bookstore markets. These products are sold through Ingram Distributors, Barnes and Noble, and Borders Books—along with other book chains. They are available over the Amazon Internet website. Over 50 of our titles have been placed into three electronic book formats. Our books were recently made available to the British Commonwealth through a print-on-demand company in London, England.

Other chores involved speaking at district, state and national meetings and conducting workshops and seminars in local churches or conventions. Writing articles also required a portion of my time. The accomplishments of our staff have been the source of most of my pleasure.

Leadership Adjustment

I attempted to transfer to every manager the responsibility for his/her employees.

Equipment and Technology Updates

In 1994 our technology was lacking. Since that time we purchased 50 computers with companion printers. Many scanners and color printers for proofing work were purchased to give workers the tools needed to fulfill their jobs.

We purchased a collator, folder, three printing presses, imagesetter, film processor and plate processor in the printing division. A new computer mainframe and software to link all our departments with order processing was purchased and another new updated system.

A direct-to-envelope addresser printer, new tabber, labeling machine, inserter and shipping computer system were added to our Shipping Department.

Building and Grounds Improvements

Many offices were remodeled with new work stations. Carpets have been laid in the business, editorial, bookstore and administrative offices. New flooring has been put in the upstairs kitchen.

We repaired the parapet, sealed the roof, paved the parking lot, purchased a loading lift for the back dock and added a new sign to the building. We purchased a new phone system and voice mail equipment to give us better communication abilities. We were able to sell the land on the backside of our property which gave us some capital at a critical time.

Sales and Marketing

We began to market beyond ourselves giving us new accounts and allowing us to keep unit production steady and prices lower than our competition. This department

developed a Randall House website. They developed *Outreach* magazine to share ideas for church growth, including the spring and fall campaigns to help our churches with growth programs.

Product Changes

In 1994 we had few quarterlies with color covers. Today, all Sunday School and Church Training Service periodicals are in full color. All Sunday School courses have been revised or newly-written except the Nursery and Pre-School department courses. The new series called *Destination Reality* was introduced by our youth editor for youth workers.

Randall Bookstore

The bookstore saw sizable growth during this period. We were able to purchase a computerized inventory system. We later added electronic lookup software that enabled the clerk to see if a product was in our distributor's warehouse and advise a customer if we could ship immediately.

Spanish Adjustments

This department caused us to have a continued obsolescence each year, so we began to give free literature to all our Spanish-speaking churches. We give curriculum to our Spanish speaking churches—nearly \$8,000 worth yearly.

External Ministries

It was my privilege to conduct over 100 seminars and workshops and speak at numerous Sunday School conventions, and state and national conventions during my tenure.

We have seen a continued growth in the NYC and SCM ministries seeing much fruit from their outreach. We print *Co-Laborer* and *Contact* magazines at a savings to both organizations. We have provided complimentary printing for the Stewardship Commission, printed *Integrity* for the Commission for Theological Integrity, and have printed and given free books to our Russian and Korean brethren.

We print and distribute free the *Free Will Baptist Yearbook* to all our churches. We have given surplus curriculum to Russia, various mission fields, rescue mission and prison chaplains. We give free literature to all home missionaries under the auspices of the state or national home mission boards who request it.

Celebrating 40 Years

We are celebrating our 40th anniversary in 2002. In 1994 we were heavy with long-term indebtedness, but ending 2001 we had no long-term debts and our financial picture is good.

Randall House Publications staff are great people, and I enjoyed working with them and appreciate their efforts. The Sunday School and Church Training Service Board have been dedicated to this ministry. I will always remember their kindness to me. ■

Alton Loveless, General Director 1994-2002

Randall



House

Psalms 121 is the second of the fifteen psalms of assents. Faithful pilgrims who would make their way from the outlying areas to the three great worship feasts at Jerusalem sang these songs. It is believed that at various points they may have paused and sung these psalms while traveling toward Jerusalem, which was the highest point of elevation in Palestine; thus the songs of assents. Many scholars agree that these songs typify various stages of maturity in the Christian life.

These faithful pilgrims were going through dangerous territory in order to worship the Lord. This particular song gives encouragement and perspective for the hazardous trek. The song speaks of looking to God for stability and deliverance. It speaks of protection and security. Then, in the last verse we are given a summation: *"The Lord shall preserve thy going out and thy coming in from this time forth, and even for evermore."*

As a believer, I have made the decision, not to go to Jerusalem, but to make my way toward the ultimate worship festival at the end of the age. While I do not have to face bands of roving marauders or endure the dangers of animal attacks, I too am on a pilgrimage. This psalm speaks to me on my earthly pilgrimage toward heaven.

By the time this article is printed, I will have assumed a new role and ministry as Executive Director of Arkansas Free Will Baptists. As I now write in anticipation of that ministry and in reflection on my time here at Free Will Baptist Bible College, my heart swells with gratitude for God's provision. The last seven years have been difficult in terms of raising support for the college. It has been hard to garner support for "education" even though the obvious heart of this ministry is about training men and women to serve Christ and His Church. The truth is we have never reached the level of support necessary for the college to flourish. It has been a difficult road to travel. Yet, God has sustained us, even in the worst of times.

However, the last part of this year is proving different. As of this writing, we are running almost 18% ahead of last year's support. There is reason to expect a record year of support. Deep in my

Going Out and Coming In: Psalm 121

By Tim Campbell
Director, Stewardship Development

heart, I long for this to be a tangible sign that the denomination is awaking to the need for higher Christian education. God has moved on the hearts of many different people to give a one-time gift or to commit to regular support for the college. It has made a tremendous difference. We are not where we really need to be, but we are well on our way. God has moved on our behalf.

Isn't it good to know that whether we are going or coming, the Lord is with us. The blessings of this year merit our highest praise. I hope you do

not think ill of me for personalizing or spiritualizing my final days at the college, but I believe that this is an indication that He has preserved my going out. I really think this might be the dawn of a new day for this ministry. My dream for this institution and for my denomination may actually come true. Because of that faithfulness, I trust Him to preserve my going in to a new ministry.

As my last official act for Free Will Baptist Bible College, I thank each one of you for your acceptance of me and your kindness toward me as I have traveled throughout our denomination. May God preserve your going out and coming in until we reach our final destination where we will dwell ages upon ages and we will wander no more. ■



Tim Campbell has worn several hats during his 10 years at the college—dormitory supervisor, Dean of Students and Stewardship Development Director.

He is returning to his beloved Arkansas to serve as Executive Director of the State Association of Free Will Baptists.

Tim will be missed, as will Janie, his wife, and Ben, their son. We commend them all to God and to the good people of Arkansas, with our prayers for His richest blessings in the days ahead.

Note: If you would like to give monthly to the college, write or call for information on bank drafts:

Free Will Baptist Bible College
3606 West End Avenue
Nashville, Tennessee 37205
615-844-5000

Free Will Baptist Bible College

Risk

By William Evans

Financial risk generally refers to the possibility of losing money because an investment declines in value or gets battered by inflation. The stock market has recently taught us that stocks may go up or they may go down.

So what should an investor do?

The first step to sound investing is to recognize the types of risks in the market. Why is that important? Because protection from one type of risk may expose you to serious risk of another kind.

Economists recognize two major classes of risks—they are referred to as systemic and non-diversifiable or non-systemic and diversifiable.

Systemic (non-diversifiable) risk involves the kind of risk that is so broad it affects entire economies. One of the most recognized systemic risks is simply the fluctuating prices of securities. An example is the 1929 stock market crash which was our part of a worldwide depression. The more recent market downturn that began in January 2000 has effected almost every U.S. stock. The Japanese market has been depressed for the last 10 years.

A second type of systemic risk involves interest rates. Anyone who has invested in bank CDs over the last 25 years will recognize this. Rates that were as high as 15% in the early 80s are now closer to 5%. Changes in interest rates not only effect return but also change the market value of principal. A simple illustration is a teeter-totter with the interest rate on the one end and asset value on the other, when one end goes down the other goes up. In fixed-rate investments when interest rates rise, principal value goes down. If, on the other hand, rates go down, principal values go up.

This is the reverse of the rising tide raising all boats. Market declines that are system wide will always affect all investments although not all in the same proportion. That is the reason these are also referred to as non-diversifiable risk.

Closely associated with interest rates is the reinvestment risk. Those who have CDs maturing today that they bought five years ago can quickly understand this risk. It

is impossible to get the same rate today. Therefore, the investor's income is reduced by this reinvestment risk.

Another risk we face each day is that of inflation. Investments that fail to match or exceed the rate of inflation actually lose purchasing power. Thankfully our national rate of inflation has been below average for several years. When CDs were earning 15%, inflation was over 20%, so value was being lost at a rapid rate.

A final area of systemic (non-diversifiable) risk involves the exchange rate. Most people who hear about the exchange rate fail to relate that to our investments, but we should. International commerce is so important that imports and exports do make a difference to each of us. A strong dollar means our products cost more to export and imports cost less. That directly impacts U.S. investments.

These five types of risk are beyond control by any individual or nation and are, therefore, called systemic risk. Wisely chosen investments may, to a small degree, moderate the consequences of these risks but cannot avoid them.

Risks that are not system wide, that is non-systemic or diversifiable, are classified as that associated with an individual firm. This involves not only the business of the company but its operation and methods of financing. For illustration, compare investments in G.M. and Ford. Both are in the same business, but the investment risks are different. If car companies are having trouble, it effects both, but a problem with tires or gasoline tanks in one line will affect only the company involved. On the other hand, there was a Studebaker and a Nash several years ago also making cars. Individual businesses can get too far in debt, lose management, market share and go bankrupt or simply fail to make enough to remain viable.

With all the risk involved, should we continue to invest? Certainly, but only with a measure of caution, a degree of comfort and enough information to do so wisely. Though risk cannot be eliminated it certainly can be reduced. ■

Free Will Baptist



Foundation

Roll Call Revival Brings Harvest for Home Missionaries

By Rev. Larry A. Powell

Roll Call Sunday is a big day in our denomination. Pastors and their people put forth great effort into preparation for the day. It is a wonderful method of outreach for any church. Large and small churches alike try to win as many lost souls as possible. Contacts can be made prior to this day, invitations sent out, special meals and a time of fellowship planned. Individual churches take this opportunity to honor members of their congregations for outstanding work. Roll Call Sunday is a wonderful time to bring in those for whom we have been praying so that they can experience the joy of the Lord's house. For all the events that take place on this day, the most important is to see the lost come to Christ. Putting our best foot forward helps pave the way to bring in our loved ones, co-workers, friends and neighbors and place them under the sound of the gospel.

Many may wonder what all of this has to do with missionaries. The home missionary is struggling to gather a congregation, make himself known to the community, explain the meaning of being a *Free Will Baptist*, find a place to live and help his wife and children become established as well, and trying to find a suitable place where people can meet. Roll Call Sunday can help the new mission.

In Home Missions we believe that Roll Call Sunday, when used properly, is one of the greatest outreach tools available to us today. It helps create a reservoir of new contacts among friends, relatives, work associates and neighbors. Roll Call Sunday has become one of the most effective methods missionaries use to build contact lists for outreach in their areas. Because they are often in isolated places, anything the missionary does towards Roll Call Sunday can help.

A number of our new missionaries are on itinerant and have not begun services yet. We would like to share with you some statistics for Roll Call Sunday, 2002, from our participating missionaries. Space prohibits mentioning everyone, but here are some churches that have been established at different times.

In San Antonio, TX, where we are just now starting a new Free Will Baptist church, home missionary Don Bailey had 42 in his first Roll Call Sunday service with

five first-time visitors. At the present, there is no other Free Will Baptist church in this city. Pastor Keith Bartlett in Castaic, CA, showed an increase in attendance from 31 last year to 119 this year.

Scott Cheatham, Northglenn, CO, experienced his first Roll Call Sunday with 52 present, six souls saved, and 10 first-time visitors. Bob Lewis in Grand Junction, CO, showed an attendance increase from last year's figure of 35 to 70 this year. He had 25 first-time visitors and six people saved.

Jeff Crabtree, Fredericton, NB, Canada, had 15 who attended last year, and 45 who attended this year, with three saved and 12 first-time visitors. A new mission church in Marquette, MI, began services in 2001, and for their first Roll Call Sunday had 112 in attendance with two souls saved and 60 first-time visitors.

Jerry Rayburn, home missions pastor in Sierra Vista, AZ, has been in charge of the Desert Springs FWB Church for some time. While he was doing double duty as pastor and also away in the Armed Forces, his family and church members kept the church going. Attendance this year was 53 with six first-time visitors.

Home Missions pastor Randy Puckett in Sugar Land, TX, showed an increase in attendance from 46 to 82 with two souls saved and 15 first-time visitors.

Is Roll Call important to the mission church? A resounding, "Yes!"

Just for our home missionaries this year the totals are as follows:

Attendance	3,234
Salvations	40
First-time Visitors . . .	489

This gives new hope for future prospects for salvation and workers for the Lord to be trained in the local church. Roll Call is a wonderful outreach tool for our Home Missions churches. We rejoice in the good attendance records, souls saved, and new commitments made through the efforts of our missionary church planters on this special day. ■

Home



Missions

GREEN TREE BIBLE STUDY



Garnett Reid

“Sez Who?” (Job 31, Part I)

Recently I chuckled at a picture that ran in our local newspaper. The accompanying article described ACLU efforts to thwart lawmakers' attempts to post the Ten Commandments in county courthouses across Tennessee. Yet the picture showed a county official pointing to those same commandments already on display in one courthouse. There they were, as big as life, permanently etched in bronze.

What sparked my amusement was the fact that this displayed Decalogue had occupied its prominent place for several decades, and apparently no one had raised the slightest objection for all those years! Now, suddenly, in our “enlightened,” postmodern age of political correctness, revisionist history and constitutional activism, God has no place in government life.

Think-tank theorists and secular scholars have shoved Christianity to the fringes of society, labeling it “fanaticism” and lumping its followers together with the Bin Ladens, Farakhans and Koreshes of the world.

Never mind that the Supreme Court of these United States deliberates in chambers adorned by the same commandments. Never mind that each day's session of the U. S. Congress opens with a chaplain-led prayer. Never mind that government officials pledge allegiance to the flag as citizens of “one nation under God,” or that elected representatives take an oath of office attested by the witness of the Holy Bible resting beneath their left hand.

I suspect that what lies beneath at least some of this posturing is not really a concern for the Constitution, the first amendment, civil liberties, equality or any other “noble” secularist goal. No, my hunch involves something more basic, more intrinsic. The depraved human heart in-

nately resists God's standard of righteousness. There's the rub. Our problem is not legal, cultural or educational, but theological.

The power-brokers of our day will do anything to rid society of the notion that fixed, moral absolutes exist beyond public consensus. Our generation, by and large, has bought into the notion that no one can say to someone else, “What you're doing is wrong,” based on any fixed moral standard.

In his thoughtful work, *Reason in the Balance*, Phillip E. Johnson observes: “As Yale Law School professor Arthur Leff remarked . . . the all-purpose response to assertions of authority in our society is ‘the grand sez who.’ By this whimsical expression Leff meant that . . . there remains no universally accepted source of moral authority.”

Therefore, any charge of wrongdoing based on such an authority is met with the response, “Says who?”

This attempt to escape or diffuse accountability won't work. Our human nature reflects the holy character of God. All human endeavor and motive finds its measure next to the universal constant of His eternal, righteous existence. We all answer to Him.

When He made us in His image, God “programmed” us with a moral “chip” built into our hardware, to borrow computer lingo. We may dispute and even resist labels of “right” and “wrong,” but we cannot deny their existence.

Thus our concern with moral issues predates Moses, Sinai and the Ten Commandments. In this regard, we often overlook the testimony of Job. This remarkable man of faith was probably a contemporary of Abraham and Isaac, living around 2000 B. C. If so, then he is an early biblical witness to God's absolute moral standard.

Chapter 31 of Job presents this

moral dimension as clearly as any chapter in the Old Testament. Its premise is unique, however. Here Job wrestles with issues of right and wrong against a backdrop of his own suffering. His concern is not merely theory, his situation not mythical.

We must, as Job does, test the moral code in our hearts on Monday morning at the workplace, through the week with our families, and, as often as not, through tear-filled eyes, with lives hurting and broken. Let's be sure to post the commandments *there*. ■

Next Month: We survey Job's “oath of innocence” in chapter 31.

Directory Update

MISSOURI

Rick Batten to First Church, Cabool
Alan Kinder to Central Church, Grandview from
Heritage Church, Fredericksburg, VA, as assistant
pastor

TENNESSEE

Roy Harris to Woodbine Church, Nashville from
FWBBC as director of advancement

WEST VIRGINIA

James Cox to Sophia Church, Sophia from
FWBBC as director of institutional effectiveness

OTHER PERSONNEL

Barry Raper to Red Bay Church, Red Bay, AL,
as associate pastor

Tim Campbell to Arkansas State Association
as executive director from FWBBC as director of
stewardship development

David Williford to FWBBC as director of advancement from First Church, Chipley, FL

THE PREACHER'S PERSPECTIVE



Randy Sawyer

Building Mature Men

It was one of those phone calls that every pastor receives during his ministry, and always dreads. Shortly after 2:00 a.m. on January 12, I was awakened with the news that a tragic accident had claimed the life of a man in his mid-thirties.

"I found your phone number in his wallet," said the hospital representative, "So, I assume you're his pastor." I swallowed hard and asked for the victim's name. I did my best to control my response, but the sob in my voice was noticeable even through the receiver.

"Are you all right, Pastor?" she asked. "Give me a minute," was about all I could get out.

My mind raced with a thousand questions. How did it happen? Was his death instant? Has his wife been informed? And his children, what about his son and daughter? After getting a few of the details, I headed across town to awaken a family with news that would alter their lives forever.

Though it's been several months since that awful night, the emotion is still white hot for everyone involved. That is no less true for me as his pastor or for the church who loved him dearly.

Greg Phillips came into my life a little over six years ago. Though he was not a believer at the time, his amiable personality made him easy to get close to almost immediately. One of the highlights of my ministry was the Tuesday afternoon I led him to faith in Christ.

After following the Lord in baptism, Greg quickly established himself as an active member of our church, and from his initial step of faith made great strides in his Christian life. At the time of his death, Greg had become a go-to-guy for his pastor, church and family. He was truly an exemplary Christian and the ideal church member. How did this happen? How does a church effectively disciple men?

Deliberate Discipleship

Developing spiritually sensitive men has been the challenge of almost every age, but none more so than today. With the moral free-fall of western society so blatant, the cry of competing truth claims so deafening, and the failure of church leaders to exemplify genuine godliness so obvious, the community of faith has been left without a spiritual compass.

The drift is ever downward, and the men of the church have been caught on this slippery slope, sliding steadily away from responsible leadership. As men shun their God-given roles in the home, church and society, the downward spiral accelerates, leaving the wreckage of broken families and ineffective churches scattered along the pathway.

The need of the hour is for developing deliberate discipleship. That is, for churches to consciously and deliberately develop programs that target the spiritual maturation of men in the church. Though we have a long way to go in the process, our church has taken several steps toward building mature men of God.

I readily admit that Greg Phillips was unique in many ways, but it is obvious to all who knew him that he flourished in a ministry that intentionally seeks to promote spiritual growth for its men. Let me share with you how we do it.

DAWN

DAWN is an acronym that stands for "Discipleship and Weekly Nurture." This pastor-led Bible study and accountability program meets at DAWN, at 6:15 a.m. on a weekday. Basically, I meet with between eight and 15 men over breakfast once a week. The meeting occurs in a local restaurant, where we have breakfast and discuss the chapter of whichever book has been assigned for that study.

We have studied Kent Hughes' *The Disciplines of a Godly Man*, Gary Small-

ey's *The Hidden Value of a Man and Living Supernaturally in Christ* by Bill Bright. There are numerous others works that would fit well in such a context.

I have a long list of books I intend to use in the future. Once we have discussed the material for the day, we pray for each other before going off to work.

This program enables me to establish a relationship with a number of men in the church and personally mentor those men following the pattern of our Lord, Who took His disciples aside for meals and spiritual instruction. I have conducted as many as three different DAWN studies during the week, allowing me to disciple more than two dozen men at a time.

The next step will be to have the men of our church staff, as well as mature layman, lead their own DAWN study. As you can see, this will multiply the deliberate mentoring of men. It has been amazing to see men like Greg Phillips display unbelievable personal and spiritual growth as a result of this planned discipleship program.

Dramatic Results

DAWN can be effective in any size church. But let me caution you—don't get involved in this program unless you want your church to grow. When the men of the church step forward to assume their God-given role of leadership, dramatic things will happen. Lives will be changed, family patterns will be altered, and the church will experience a new vitality and power.

So if that's not what you want, stay away from DAWN. But if you want to deepen the foundation of your work and develop men with a true servant's heart, men like Greg Phillips, then get up a little earlier and invest your life in men whom God will use to bless and expand your own ministry. We'll look at *Building Mature Men* a little more next month. Happy Mentoring! ■



Be sure
to stop by
Executive Office's
Booth
in Memphis
to
check out
this year's
convention
specials
for
Contact.



THE TOGETHER WAY

April 2002

Receipts:	Designated	CO-OP	Total	Year To Date Designated	Year To Date CO-OP	Year To Date Total
State						
Alabama	\$ 497.38	\$ 477.82	\$ 975.20	\$ 1,796.40	\$ 1,042.36	\$ 2,838.76
Arizona	.00	.00	.00	.00	154.40	154.40
Arkansas	14,569.04	24,759.93	39,328.97	45,692.55	73,799.68	119,492.23
California	.00	1,126.01	1,126.01	.00	4,111.26	4,111.26
Colorado	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00
Delaware	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00
Florida	30.00	.00	30.00	270.64	2,268.00	2,538.64
Georgia	41,654.00	2,121.76	43,775.76	121,997.36	6,946.25	128,943.61
Hawaii	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00
Idaho	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00
Illinois	11,063.16	1,917.80	12,980.96	45,117.94	8,538.35	53,656.29
Indiana	1,907.39	184.27	2,091.66	7,864.69	875.39	8,740.08
Iowa	.00	.00	.00	.00	2,058.78	2,058.78
Kansas	.00	.00	.00	26.55	156.26	182.81
Kentucky	125.00	1,453.97	1,578.97	684.36	4,022.89	4,707.25
Louisiana	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00
Maryland	.00	.00	.00	.00	131.25	131.25
Michigan	18,687.27	1,065.30	19,752.57	79,525.17	8,261.37	87,786.54
Mississippi	11,839.04	800.27	12,639.31	52,853.41	2,882.17	55,735.58
Missouri	46,768.32	17,761.01	64,529.33	169,753.89	67,525.38	237,279.27
Montana	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00
Nebraska	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00
New Jersey	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00
New Mexico	923.38	59.70	983.08	2,830.48	188.26	3,018.74
North Carolina	1,090.95	2,541.36	3,632.31	4,801.99	14,755.59	19,557.58
Ohio	13,398.48	2,238.53	15,637.01	60,399.63	12,301.04	72,700.67
Oklahoma	54,297.46	11,880.82	66,178.28	219,159.35	49,052.74	268,212.09
South Carolina	54,734.83	36.96	54,771.79	122,561.21	167.52	122,728.73
South Dakota	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00
Tennessee	16,087.12	2,405.13	18,492.25	38,873.03	5,294.57	44,167.60
Texas	7,308.11	299.18	7,607.29	46,211.03	1,683.21	47,894.24
Virginia	334.56	131.25	465.81	1,036.40	131.25	1,167.65
Virgin Islands	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00
West Virginia	127.42	.00	127.42	6,119.38	325.66	6,445.04
Wisconsin	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00
Canada	609.60	15.68	625.28	2,483.06	46.62	2,529.68
Northwest Association	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00
Northeast Association	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00
Other	.00	(0.09)	(0.09)	.00	(0.08)	(0.08)
Totals	\$ 296,052.51	\$ 71,276.66	\$ 367,329.17	\$ 1,030,058.52	\$ 266,720.17	\$ 1,296,778.69

Disbursements:						
Executive Office	\$ 2,681.97	\$ 32,074.54	\$ 34,756.51	\$ 8,093.31	\$ 120,024.13	\$ 128,117.44
Foreign Missions	175,275.74	9,016.49	184,292.23	585,236.40	33,740.07	618,976.47
FWBBC	28,936.83	9,016.49	37,953.32	95,573.16	33,740.07	129,313.23
Home Missions	78,632.27	7,056.38	85,688.65	299,739.13	26,405.29	326,144.42
Retirement & Insurance	469.05	5,488.33	5,957.38	1,480.04	20,537.51	22,017.55
Master's Men	583.42	5,488.33	6,071.75	1,591.98	20,537.51	22,129.49
Com. for Theo. Integrity	80.69	195.99	276.68	301.54	733.45	1,034.99
FWB Foundation	363.56	2,352.14	2,715.70	1,226.54	8,801.79	10,028.33
Historical Commission	61.12	195.99	257.11	213.26	733.45	946.71
Music Commission	32.02	195.99	228.01	104.83	733.45	838.28
Media Commission	101.59	195.99	297.58	513.11	733.45	1,246.56
Hillsdale FWB College	2,472.22	.00	2,472.22	9,583.39	.00	9,583.39
Other	6,362.03	.00	6,362.03	26,401.83	.00	26,401.83
Totals	\$ 296,052.51	\$ 71,276.66	\$ 367,329.17	\$ 1,030,058.52	\$ 266,720.17	\$ 1,296,778.69



Thomas Marberry

“Jeremiah and Lamentations,”

in The NIV Application Commentary

By J. Andrew Dearman

(Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2002, 488 pp., hardback, \$24.99).

This is the latest volume in a series of commentaries that focuses on contemporary application of the biblical message. Many commentaries do an excellent job of explaining the original meaning and context of biblical passages, but they may not provide a great deal of help to the preacher or teacher who seeks to interpret and apply that message centuries later in a very different context. Dr. Dearman has done a fine job explaining the meaning and message of Jeremiah to readers in the 21st century.

The author is professor of Old Testament and academic dean at the Austin Presbyterian Theological Seminary in Austin, Texas. He holds a Ph.D. from Emory University and is the author or editor of several other books on Old Testament themes.

The author presents a traditional approach to the date and authorship of Jeremiah. He notes that the book is the second longest book in the Hebrew Old Testament. He also notes that the Greek version of the book differs rather sharply from the Hebrew text; it is about one-sixth shorter and the material is arranged differently. It is quite clear that the oracles are not arranged in chronological order, and it is sometimes difficult to determine when in Jeremiah's long career that a particular passage was written.

Dearman considers Jeremiah himself to be the principal author of his book, but he recognizes that Jeremiah's disciples probably arranged the oracles into the form that we have them now.

In the introductory section, the author gives an overview of how Christians should read and interpret an Old Testament book like Jeremiah. He writes, "Reading Jeremiah as instruction for Christian faith means reading the book as the revelation of the God and Father of Jesus Christ, as an anticipation of the gospel revealed in and

through Christ the Redeemer, and in dependence on the Holy Spirit, who convicts one of sinfulness and assures one of forgiveness in Christ."

He argues that the book has much to say to the Christian church today because, "The church inherits the promises made to and essential responsibilities expected of Israel in the Old Testament."

Jeremiah was the greatest prophet of the Babylonian period in Israel's history. One of his goals was to explain and interpret Judah's defeat at the hands of the Babylonian army.

Dearman explains, "All of Jeremiah's criticism of the people for their failures is predicated on the two convictions that God had chosen Israel as his people and expected loyalty and obedience on their part (cf. 22:9). The corporate failure of Israel/Judah, complete with all its institutions and leadership, is the dominant theme of this book."

In short, the fall of Judah should not be interpreted as God's fault; it should be seen as God's act of judgment against His rebellious and obstinate people.

The author's analysis of the text of Jeremiah is insightful. He deals with the most important Hebrew words and concepts found in the book. He explains the political, historical and religious context. He also seeks to apply the teachings of the book in a fair and reasonable way to the Christian community today. At times his modern application may challenge our traditional thinking.

For example, he argues that "Jeremiah's celibacy reminds Christians of the cost of discipleship. In certain circles of the church today, the family has taken on nearly idolatrous status." He points out that "The call to the ministry may include celibacy."

The last portion of the commentary is devoted to the book of Lamentations. As the author correctly notes, this book consists of five chapters of Hebrew po-

etry that are "joined together by the common themes of sorrow over the destruction of Jerusalem in 586 B.C. and the humiliation of Judah's population."

The Hebrew text mentions no author; the Greek version attributes the book to Jeremiah. Jeremiah and Lamentations do not stand together in the Hebrew text. Jeremiah is in the second division of the Hebrew Old Testament (the prophets); Lamentations is in the third division (the writings). It is Dearman's view that the book was written within Jeremiah's lifetime but that the author was probably someone other than Jeremiah.

Lamentations has a powerful message for Christians today. It teaches us that "nothing made with human hands can save—not even something as significant as the house of the Lord." God alone can save and we must turn to Him.

In this series of Hebrew poems, the people of Judah expressed their bitterness and despair to God after the fall of Jerusalem; they were honest and open with God as they should have been. God could and did destroy; He also can and does raise up through his Son Jesus Christ.

As Dearman explains, "The great miracle of the gospel is that the One to whom despair and bitterness are directed is the One whose only Son suffered the travail of the cross. God, who strove against Jerusalem and Judah, also engaged the principalities and powers to gain an eternal victory for His people."

This is a well-written and useful commentary on these two important Old Testament books. Many preachers and teachers bypass these books because they are difficult to interpret and apply to our contemporary situation. The greatest contribution of this commentary is that it helps us to see these books in light of the New Testament revelation we have in Jesus Christ. ■

THE 2002 TRUTH & PEACE STUDENT LEADERSHIP CONFERENCE

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Jack Williams

Bumper Talk

The bumper sticker seemed to be shaking a fist and yelling at me from the rear of a high-riding, black Ford Explorer. I stopped, backed up and looked twice—sure that I'd misread the words. I hadn't. "My Child Was Inmate of the Month at County Jail."

Something caught in my throat as I re-read the arrogant words glaring from the bumper. A coarse attempt at humor? Perhaps. Surely that sign belonged to someone without children. No parent, and I mean *no parent*, boasts of a child doing time in jail. What a depressing view of life.

Two bumper stickers in the same row of vehicles called attention to themselves with a different message. A maroon Chevy declared, "My Child Made Principal's List at . . ." (naming the school). A silver Honda announced, "My Son is an Honor Student at . . ." (naming the school).

That was better. What is it about bumper stickers on vehicles that say so much so quickly and cause us to both chuckle and shudder? Of course, that's the intent of bumper people with an agenda. They toss their message in your face with a devil-may-care flippancy and drive away. It works. At least it did for me on several occasions.

The first time some bumper sticker pundit sent me scrambling for a pen and paper happened on Christmas Eve 1982 in Nashville. I'd stopped behind a tired green Chevrolet at a traffic light when I spotted the sign. At first, I smiled. Then I cringed inside.

"I Spell Relief D-I-V-O-R-C-E," shouted the bold words. Wondering who would drive around with that declaration of hopelessness on a vehicle, I moved alongside the sedan and glanced into the car. A woman in her late 20s sat behind the wheel, smoking a cigarette and screaming

at a car full of small children. Nobody seemed to have any relief in that sad little band. I wanted to weep.

Some man had broken her heart and burned her dreams. The only way she knew to get society's attention was to paste those snarling words on her car. Those who go through divorce will tell you there's not much relief in the process. No sticker can put the pieces back together again.

Two years ago while on my way downtown to pick up artwork for *Contact*, I paused behind a Saturn at a four-way stop. A green sign with white lettering spit four words from the rear bumper that stunned me: "Islam Makes the Difference."

Frankly, I'm not ready for anyone in America to think that Islam is anything more than a false religion. The only difference Islam makes is the degree of spiritual blindness and bondage it inflicts on its followers, the level of anger it directs at Christianity and the political fear it instills wherever it's in the majority.

Sixty days later as I drove past a Free Will Baptist church in Nashville on Sunday afternoon, another green sign reached out from the rear bumper of a Nissan and punched me in the heart. The sign boasted: "Islam is the Way of Peace, Joy and Security."

I didn't believe either Islamic sign. I remembered those two green lies on the morning of September 11, 2001, when people began dying in New York and Washington. It was a reminder that while Islam uses America's freedom to drive down Main Street, USA, and poison minds with false hope, that same freedom of religion stops at the border of all Islamic states. "Convert or die" is the word wherever the Islamic crescent rules.

Maybe it was a sign of the times. However, I did wonder if a feminist owned that Ford Ranger in the Kroger

parking lot, the one with the three-word bumper sticker that called God a liar with a wink and a smirk.

"Eve Was Framed," the short theology lesson asserted. Did the driver even believe that Eve was an historical person? Or did the driver simply use the name "Eve" to slap at Bible believers?

Eve was not framed. She was deceived (I Tim. 2:14) and, like her husband, she sinned (Gen. 3:1-20). But 20 years later I can't forget those three barbed words. Nor can I forget a similar sticker I saw on my last trip to California: "God is Not Dead; I Talked to Her Today." Cute. And just as unbiblical as the *Book of Mormon*.

One of my favorite bumper sermons showed up in South Nashville on the back of a blue Plymouth Reliant. After reading the sign, I checked to see who was driving down Nolensville Road with a bumper smile proclaiming, "Real Men Love Jesus."

Yep, the driver was a woman. And why not? If her husband loves Jesus, no wonder she wants others to know about it. At least her theology was straight. Real men *do* love Jesus. They also love their wives and children, and pay their tithes and taxes.

Someone with a sense of humor hauled this change of pace bumper snicker around town: "Honk, if You Love Peace and Quiet." I laughed with the quiet honker.

One recent Thursday night on Blue Hole Road, I waited behind a white Oldsmobile at a stop sign. The older gent gripping the wheel seemed at peace with himself and the slow traffic.

I checked out his bumper. No signage. However, his Tennessee vanity license plate did carry this reminder from a gentler day: "UB Kind." ■

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