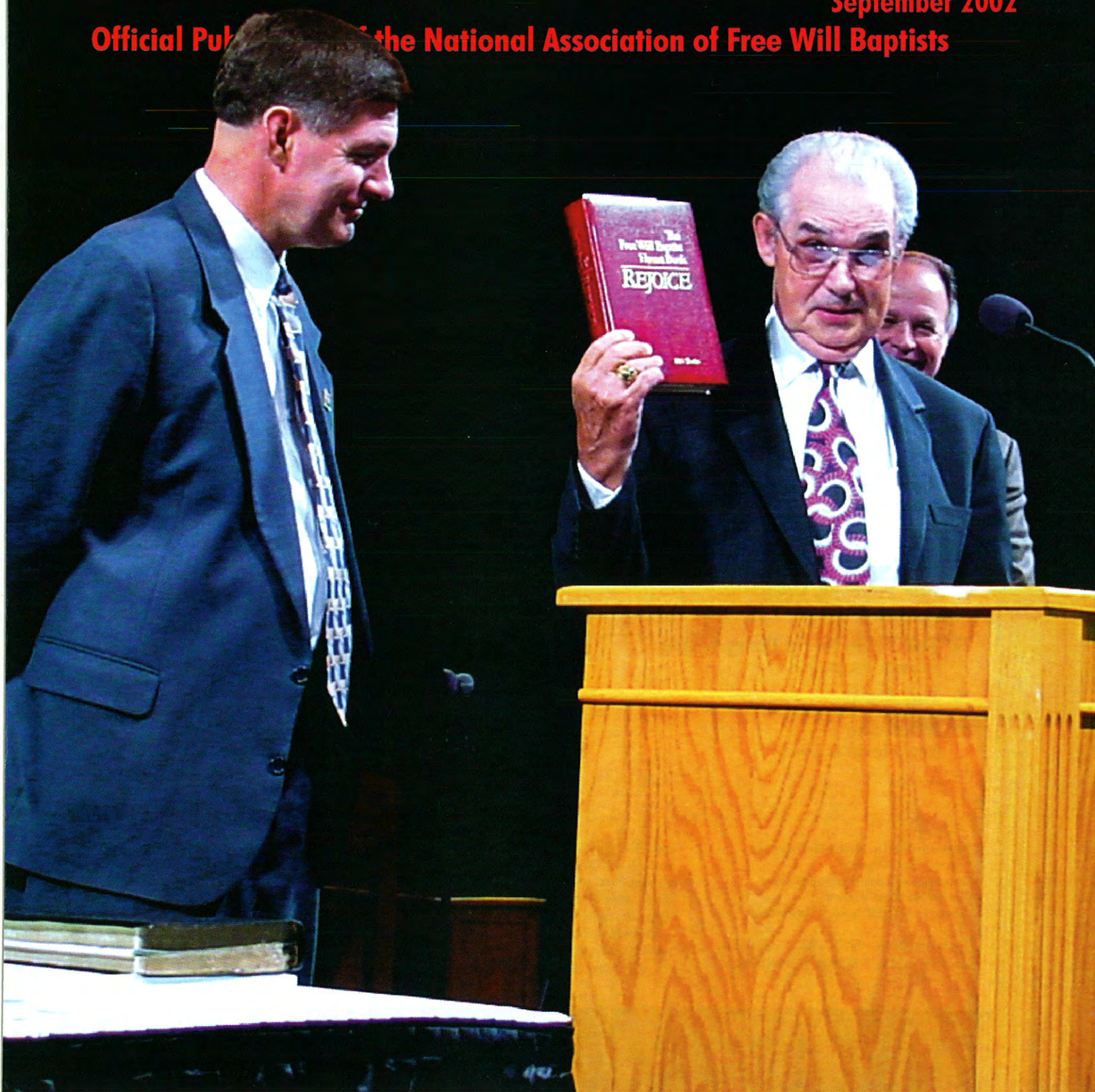


CONTACT

September 2002

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Melvin Worthington presents leather-bound hymnal to his successor, Keith Burden, while moderator Carl Cheshier looks over his shoulder.

Convention Photos

Courtesy of Danny Conn, pastor of Soul's Harbor FWB Church in Pensacola, Florida, and editor of *Coordinator*, publication of the Florida State Association of Free Will Baptists.

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Melvin Worthington

The Complacent Church

The letter to the church at Laodicea (Rev. 3:14-22) is the final letter. This letter addresses a self-complacent church. Christ charges this church with being lukewarm. Beneath the condemnation of lukewarmness, there is an even more heart-searching lesson. The result of self-complacency is lukewarmness, and it is impossible for self-complacent people to be anything other than lukewarm.

The Noble Savior

Jesus is described as the "Amen," reminding us of His own way of speaking. Jesus is the one whose statements are true and whose promises can be trusted.

Jesus is the "faithful and true witness." Everything He says is true. There is never any minimizing or exaggeration. As He speaks of the church, He speaks the whole truth and never says a thing that is untrue.

Jesus is the "beginning of the creation of God." This statement reminds us that He is the King of Creation. He was the moving cause of all creation.

The Nauseating State

Christ condemned their attitude of indifference. Indifference is one of the hardest feelings to combat. The basic problem of modern evangelism is not hostile opposition but complete indifference. It is impossible for the Christian to be neutral. Those who will not help Christ are a hindrance to Christ.

It is better not to start on the Christian way than to start and then to slip and drift into a Christianity of respectability. No leader finds any value in a loyalty that

has turned into indifference.

The Needed Severity

This church was convinced of its wealth and blind to its poverty. By human standards there was not a more prosperous city in Asia. Yet by spiritual standards, there was not a more poverty-stricken community. Laodicea prided itself in its financial wealth, clothing trade and famous eye salve.

The church claimed it was rich, increased with goods and had need of nothing. This was not the evaluation of Christ. He said they were wretched, miserable, poor, blind and naked. They were proud of themselves, but the Lord felt sorry for them. This was a poor rich church blind to its own spiritual condition.

The Noted Summons

Jesus exhorted them to repent and reminded them that He chastens those He loves. Many are living close enough to the world to be chilled by it and close enough to the church to be warmed by it.

Christ stands at the door and knocks, which means that Christ pleads with us and offers salvation, and that human beings have the responsibility to open the door and allow Christ inside. His plead-

ing and offering are of no avail if men will not open the door.

The Notable Seat

Christ promises the overcomers that they will reside with Him in Heaven. John declares, "To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with me in my throne, even as I overcame, and am set down with my Father in his throne," (Rev. 3:21).

Hershel Ford tells the following story, "One night a group of men were sitting around the fireside of a Swiss hotel, discussing the difficulties of climbing a nearby Alpine mountain. After listening for awhile, one man said, 'I am not afraid of that mountain. Tomorrow morning I am going to climb it without a guide.'

"The next morning when the other men arose, they learned that this man had gone out alone. All day they watched for him and he didn't return. The night came on and still he didn't return. The next morning a party started out to look for him. Halfway upon the mountainside they came to a post to which every successful climber attached his card. They found this man's card there with a notation on it, 'without a guide.' He had come that far in safety, but where was he now?

"The men climbed a little farther and came to a deep crevice. There they found the body of the stranger. He had decided to climb without a guide and had lost his life. You and I are climbing the steep slope of life. Oh, what folly to try to go along without the Great Guide, Jesus Christ! Reach out and clasp His hand. He knows the way. Let Him cleanse you from sin and lead you to life and into eternal joy." ■

The Secretary's Schedule

September 2002

2-5 Convention Planning Trip, Tampa, FL

8-11 First FWB Church, Albany, GA

23-25 Michigan Ministers Retreat

Star-Spangled Convention

By Jack Williams



If you didn't get to Memphis in July when the Free Will Baptist national convention hit town, you missed a rousing, star-spangled, flag-waving meetin' by the river. There's been nothing like it in 66 years of conventions. We heard some rompin', stompin' sermons. We said goodbye to retiring leaders and wept together through the memories, and we disagreed sharply during business sessions before the gavel fell.

The large, boisterous crowd at Memphis Convention Center came to town to celebrate and did. It had been

17 years since 8,000 Free Will Baptists met together in one place, and that was the record-setting 1985 convention in Nashville.

This year the expanded exhibit area was colorful and exciting with eye-popping bargains and door prizes. Seminars overflowed with attendees paying attention and taking notes. Pre-registration topped the 3,800 mark for the first time, and nobody seemed to mind the four-block walk to several convention hotels. Umm, all right, a few of us did mind and said so.



Welcome, Keith Burden

While we did many things well in Memphis, we did one thing we had not done in 23 years—we elected a new executive secretary. You'll like him. His name is Keith Burden. He's 48, an Oklahoma pastor, moderator of the Oklahoma State Association and clerk of the National Association of Free Will Baptists. Keith and his wife, Debbie, have two children—Jennie (24) and Katie (17).

Reverend Burden was elected by a unanimous vote Wednesday morning

just after retiring executive secretary Melvin Worthington gave his final report to delegates. Burden was recommended to the voting body by the General Board after being recommended by the Executive Committee following interviews with several candidates. He was elected as the ninth executive secretary since 1941.

Burden takes the reins September 1 and will hit the ground running with a convention planning trip to Tampa the first week in September to meet with the 2003 convention steering committee. He and Melvin Worthington will work together for a time to clear up the fog of transition. Both men will participate in the October triennial session of the International Fellowship of Free Will Baptist Churches, Inc., which meets near Nashville.

Goodbye, Dr. Worthington

A gala Tuesday evening reception for 1,000 people at the Memphis Marriott made it official—the man who championed a new national office building, a new hymn book and a new financial program for the denomination was retiring. Guests laughed at a continuous slide show of candid Worthington photos, gazed at a uniquely designed ice sculpture, admired a 10-foot retirement banner, read tribute letters, signed the guest book and fellowshiped with the out-going executive and his family.

Dr. Worthington greeted friends and well-wishers for two hours Tuesday evening. He returned to the convention center Wednesday to make his final report to delegates. He did not leave empty handed. He walked away with a plaque of appreciation, a tribute book of letters from admirers, the keys to his personally selected retirement car (a Ford Taurus) and the distinction of being the only man in Free Will Baptist history to be named "Executive Secretary Emeritus."

A special tribute issue of *Contact* magazine (August 2002) with a picture of Dr. Worthington on the front cover was available for convention attendees. The magazine included 14 pages of articles, pictures, a timeline of his life, a chronological listing of denominational service and verbal salutes to the Man from Ayden, known to certain tribesmen in Africa as "The Chief of all Free Will Baptists."



Dr. Charles Thigpen
welcomes delegates to Memphis.

Gettin' Down to Business

By the time delegates cast their first votes Wednesday morning, the Executive Committee and the General Board had already worked more than 12 hours in marathon sessions to hammer out 10 recommendations for consideration. All 10 recommendations were approved. Some of the more important elements included:

\$22 Million Budget

Delegates averaged \$3 million per hour when they began reviewing reports and adopting budgets. They heard reports from 12 national agencies with combined \$22.2 million projected budgets for 2003. That took just under seven hours. While \$22 million is big business, it's still \$330,000 less than combined 2002 budgets.

Badges Required

Terrorist attacks on America September 11, 2001, will change the face

of future Free Will Baptist conventions. Effective with the 2003 convention in Tampa, badges will be required for attendance at all events. No exceptions.

Security measures have ramped up in numerous convention cities. To insure the safety of attendees, delegates solidly affirmed mandatory identification badges at future events. This means that convention pre-registration becomes more important.

It also means that registration personnel will be required to staff on-site registration outlets from Saturday preceding the opening session until the Thursday morning closing. In previous years, registration opened Sunday afternoon and closed at noon Wednesday. That all changed on 9/11.

Representation Fees Rise

Escalating convention costs made it necessary to raise the national representation fee from \$50 to \$100 per church. The increased fee takes effect with the 2004 convention.

Delegates debated raising the fee to \$100 during the 1999 Atlanta convention when soaring union costs depleted reserve funds. Heavily unionized Detroit (2001 convention) further eroded reserves.

In a precautionary move, delegates authorized the Executive Office to secure financing for the 2003 convention in Tampa if it became necessary to do so in order to meet convention obligations.

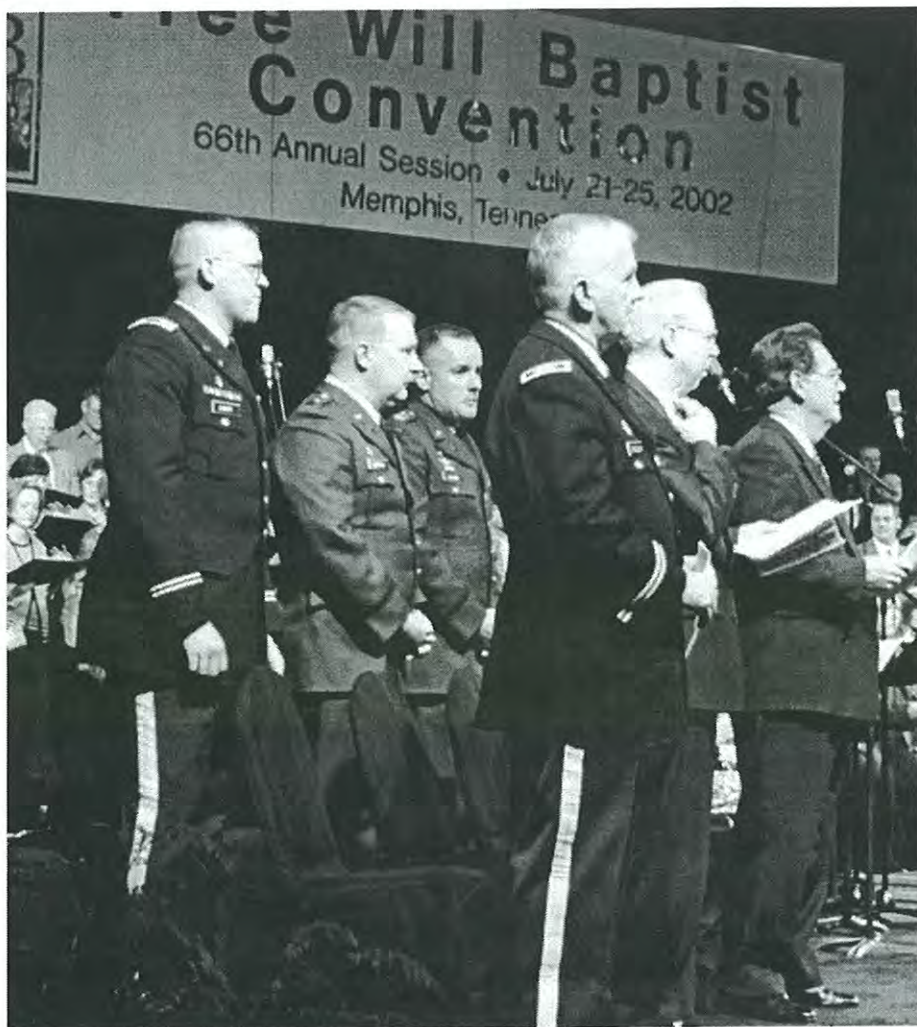
Mexico Again

For the third consecutive convention, delegates debated issues surrounding Mexico, local church autonomy and the late James Munsey. Delegates adopted three recommendations in an effort to resolve the matter.

The first vote adopted the Executive



North Carolina's Lange Patrick leads the song service.



Free Will Baptist chaplains at attention during Monday night's patriotic salute to America.

Committee's investigative report concerning the Home Missions Department which indicated that procedural errors were made in the department's dealings with Reverend Munsey.

The second vote placed the Mexican Association on probation for one year. If the Mexican Association brings its documents into conformity with the *Treatise*, regarding autonomy of the local church, probation will be removed.

The third vote accepted the Association of the Free Will Baptists of Mexico (the aggrieved minority) into the National Association of Free Will Baptists as a district association.

Committee Focus

Publications Committee

The Publications Committee appointed in July 2001 to study the feasibility of combining six national publi-

cations into one (*Aim, Contact, Heartbeat, Master's Men Newsletter, FWB-BC Bulletin* and *Outreach*) met with the various editors December 2001 and subsequently determined that they needed to conduct a readership survey. That survey will be mailed to approximately 6,000 readers this fall.

Committee chairman Nathan Ruble said he hopes to have survey results in time for the 2002 Leadership Conference in December. Members will then analyze the data and determine what recommendations to present to the national convention next July.

Educational Task Force

The Educational Task Force, appointed in 1999, has developed surveys for high school students, college students, ministers, donors and parents. More than 600 surveys have been returned, according to Tim Eaton, vice-president

of academic affairs at Hillsdale FWB College. Work continues on the project.

The surveys can be accessed through the National Association's website at www.nafwb.org and will be updated monthly until the end of the calendar year. The final results will be presented in the Task Force's report at the 2003 Tampa convention.

Departmental Highlights

FWB Foundation

Director Bill Evans said, "The Free Will Baptist Foundation exists to serve as a money generator for the denomination." He predicted that planned giving will be one of the major drivers for the movement's financial future as the great transfer of wealth from one generation to another continues.

Even though agency assets increased by \$900,000, Evans encouraged delegates to revisit stewardship, principles of generosity and their commitment to God. He also announced that retiring executive secretary Melvin Worthington will serve as the east coast representative for the Foundation.

Board of Retirement

The Board of Retirement now man-



Chaplain John Carey prays with a fellow serviceman.

ages \$24 million for Free Will Baptists enrolled in the retirement plan. Over the last 10 years, the agency has averaged a 9% annual increase in returns on investments.

Although economic downturns resulted in a 22% loss the past six months, director Bill Evans reminded delegates that long-term results warrant confidence in the program. He urged participants to resist panic, consider returns over the history of the department, and exercise restraint when considering any moves to restructure their retirement funds.

Home Missions

General director Larry Powell reported that the immediate cross-cultural strategy calls for all workers to be placed on designated giving. The agency plans to partner with state and district associations and projects long-term goals that include training institutes. Home missionaries made 211,000 contacts in their communities last year and won 1,000 converts. Five new missionaries were sent out in 2001, and five more applications to begin new churches are on hand now. Total mission churches attendance averaged 2,200. Powell gave plaques to eight home missionaries whose churches went self-supporting.

Powell reported that the Church Extension Loan Fund has made 210 loans to churches and missions to build facilities and purchase land. The loans top \$2.4 million.

Master's Men

Director Ken Akers gave his first report to attendees and reminded them that the re-stated Master's Men charter required final approval. The agency will sponsor three national retreats this year.

Eleven new chapters were added as well as a first-time Father's Day offering. Master's Men continues to partner with home missionaries for Operation Saturation, an effort to raise awareness in communities where new churches are beginning.

Free Will Baptist Bible College

Gary Fry, chairman of the Free Will Baptist Board of Trustees, introduced J. Matthew Pinson to delegates as the fifth president of the college. Pinson made his rookie report to the national



Foreign Missions director James Forlines (L) and Home Missions director Larry Powell.

convention after coming on board in the spring. He saluted efforts of his predecessors and thanked the denomination for a dramatic 21% increase in giving that reduced a \$600,000 deficit to \$45,000.

Pinson said, "We value excellence," and addressed measures to upgrade campus maintenance. "My number one concern is to rebuild our student body," the 34-year-old president affirmed. The college is retooling the pastoral ministry program, placing relocation plans on hold, seeking ways to increase grant funds, exploring new pro-

grams to equip laypeople as servant-supporters in local churches and offering course-work for a history major.

President Pinson led a tribute in honor of the late Dr. L. C. Johnson, the college's first president, who died this summer. He also presented a plaque to Larry Montgomery who served 12 years on the board of trustees.

Foreign Missions

Foreign Missions director James Forlines spoke at length regarding three types of fields where Free Will Baptists work—receptive fields, resistant fields and restricted fields. He urged prayer support, financial undergirding and a strong belief in future possibilities.

The agency reported missionaries in 10 countries with 290 organized churches, 335 mission works, 66 ordained national pastors and 304 national licensed and lay preachers. Some 176 students now study in nine Bible institutes in seven countries. Sunday School attendance climbed to 18,892, which means it has tripled since 1992.

Director James Forlines said, "A passion for world missions should be what characterizes Free Will Baptists." Eight new career missionaries and six short-term missionaries were sent to the fields in 2001.

Sunday School and Church Training

This was a transition year for the Sunday School and Church Training



Melvin Worthington reaches a high point during his Tuesday evening sermon.

Department as retiring general director Alton Loveless gave his final report to delegates. He announced that the agency has no long-term debts, and handed over the reins to the new director, Ron Hunter.

Hunter told the convention, "It's not about me; it's about your classrooms." He reminded attendees that "Randall House is a business and a ministry." In that light, he announced a Spanish initiative which will re-evaluate the Spanish curriculum and determine how to better retool efforts to reach the Hispanic community.

Hunter confirmed that Dr. Loveless will serve as team leader in the agency's "Christian Education Church Training Teams" effort to equip lay teachers. Board chairman David Sutton received a plaque of appreciation for 15 years of service. The convention honored Dr. and Mrs. Alton Loveless during a Monday evening reception at the Marriott Hotel.

Commission for Theological Integrity

The agency sponsored a seminar Tuesday morning in which missionary Ron Callaway presented a paper titled, "The Omniscience of God and Open Theism." A standing-room crowd of more than 400 people heard a fast-paced analysis of the question regarding God's knowledge of future events.

Chairman Leroy Forlines announced that a second issue of *Integrity, A Journal of Christian Thought*, will be published later this fall. The 2002 Theological Symposium will meet November 4-5 at Free Will Baptist Bible College.

Media Commission

Chairman Steve Faison reported that the Media Commission continues to provide commercial products for television, radio and print media, as well as logo and stationery design. The Church Video Brochure provides a market tool explaining who Free Will Baptists are. The commission also provides custom web design for churches.

Music Commission

Commission member Chris Truett told delegates that a companion to the Free Will Baptist hymn book will be published by the 2003 convention in Tampa. The agency published as its 2002 project, *The Worship Leader's Cookbook: 50 Recipes for Blended Worship*.

The Music Commission plans an extensive survey to assist them in their work to publish a new hymn book. Commission members plan the music for the annual national convention.

Historical Commission

The Historical Commission's two on-going projects are to publish a Free Will Baptist historical guidebook and help furnish a history room on the campus at Free Will Baptist Bible College. They have committed \$20,000 to the history room project. Their 2003 project includes laying groundwork to publish a pamphlet series highlighting historical issues and distinctives of Free Will Baptists. They are considering sponsoring a history writing contest.

Worship Services

Preaching and singing have long been two staples of Free Will Baptist worship experiences. This year the worship cup ran over with an incredible array of music from talented musicians. Under the direction of Scott Bullman, the musical package raised the mark for future conventions.

The music stirred us, challenged us, made us weep and shout, called us to worship in majesty. We experienced it all from vocal solos to instrumental offertories, from rousing choir presentations to four-part quartet harmony. This may well have been our finest hour musically.

Sunday School

Deacon Gary Head told attendees, "Some of the bickering





Oklahoma pastors Curtis Linton (L) and Connie Cariker, North Carolina pastor Lorenza Stox, and Arkansas executive director David Joslin.

genes from the Philippian Church came on down to the present time." The Tennessee resident spent 45 minutes explaining Philippians 2:1-24. "Don't use others as stepping stones to get your way," he warned. "After all, as Christians we have the same goal, same love and same purpose."

Sunday Morning

Dr. Alton Loveless got right to the point in explaining the six principles that define what happens when we go to church. He said, "We congregate, we celebrate, we commemorate, we communicate, we consecrate and we contemplate." He recalled a time early in his life when he got a second chance. He called on hearers to love God deeply, love the Bible dearly, love sinners as Jesus did.

Sunday Evening

Did we begin a new tradition in Memphis? The 90-minute Sunday night service was an experiment in music. Except for a 13-minute sermon by Moderator Carl Cheshier in the middle of the evening, we heard/sang/experienced trios, solos, quartets, choirs and a bit of congregational magic.

Director Scott Bullman assembled brass and string instruments, 150 of the finest voices in the land, and blended it all into a Gaither-style homecoming celebration of Free Will Baptist music. Worshipers left the high-energy session saying to one another, "Let's do this again next year."

Monday Evening

Call it a spectacular night of flags and patriotism. Attendees waved 5,000 miniature flags in an evening when Free Will Baptist chaplain Kerry Steedley dared delegates to "stand up and do some-

thing." He stepped out in full dress uniform and told worshipers, "God is looking for more than 'amen' tonight." He also pleaded with the denomination to "stop being our own worst enemy."

Tennessee's promotional secretary Dr. Charles Thigpen welcomed the convention to the state, and clerk Keith Burden called the convention to order and introduced moderator Carl Cheshier who made committee appointments. Home Missions director Larry Powell introduced 11 Free Will Baptist military chaplains, one of whom was leaving for Afghanistan in seven days.

Tuesday Evening

It was a night of goodbyes as Dr. Melvin Worthington, retiring executive secretary, preached on the subject, "Our Obligation to Obey." After reading Luke 5:1-11, Worthington read the words to the hymn, "Trust and Obey." He said the entire duty of the believer comes down to three elements, "I must hear the Word of God, heed the Word of God and herald the Word of God." Keith Burden, who introduced Worthington, read a rhyming tribute he had written in honor of the retiring executive.

Wednesday Evening

The altar was full, lives were changed, and the largest crowd of the week heard Oklahoma pastor Curtis Linton deliver an emotionally-charged sermon from Romans 12 using the key word, "Unconditional." Dr. Linton said that God demands unconditional surrender, unconditional sacrifice and unconditional service. When he finished, he threw down a white flag to symbolize surrender and invited others to do the same. Many did.

Presider David Joslin nudged attendees early with his challenge,

"What do you say? Let's have church tonight!" The traditional introduction of home and foreign missionaries brought standing ovations.

Something Extra

A Different Convention

We all sensed that there was something different about the Memphis convention, some unusual spark, another level of enthusiasm and efficiency. But it was Tennessee moderator Terry Eagleton who found the right words to express it on Thursday morning. Those words were "Dean Jones."

Eagleton praised the 38-year-old convention manager for his organizational skills, his flexibility, his professional preparation. Jones just completed a master's degree in event management and stands at the apex of the



Wednesday night speaker Curtis Linton waves the white flag.

meeting planning profession.

The Memphis convention and hotel personnel agreed with Eagleton's assessment of Dean Jones' expertise saying that "the Free Will Baptist convention was the best organized they had ever seen." The hotels wanted to use Jones' forms and meeting procedures as examples for other organizations that plan events in the city. Dean Jones is our meeting planning treasure.

A Unique Devotion

Moderator Carl Cheshier requested that 74-year-old evangelist/church planter/educator Wade Jernigan bring the Wednesday morning devotion (Moderator's Message). Jernigan is different and so is his deliberate preaching style. Dressed in a dark suit, red shirt, and blazing USA flag tie, the North Carolina native told delegates, "It's time to let Christ speak for Himself."

He read from Matthew 12, Mark 3 and Luke 8, and then spoke on the subject, "This Man." When Jernigan finished, we knew that Jesus spoke with authority . . . and so do His preachers. He reminded listeners, "We are not run-of-the-mill Baptists. We are Free Will Baptists." He quoted the late Oklahoma minister Clay Ricky who said, "There are no irresponsible children of God."

A Learning Time

The Monday afternoon Pastors/ Laymen Conference featured a 75-minute challenge by Stan Toler, a Church of the Nazarene pastor and writer. He spoke pointedly about building a ministry team based on Romans 15:10. He called for a re-examination of the pastor's role, explained the barriers to

2003 The Together Way Allocations

The budget committee recommends that gifts received through The Together Way Plan be allocated to national ministries* on the following basis:

1. Underwrite the Executive Office Administrative Budget above designated gifts, not to exceed 45% of cooperative gifts.
2. Disburse the balance of cooperative gifts to the following national ministries according to these percentages:

Free Will Baptist Bible College	23.0%
Foreign Missions	23.0%
Home Missions	18.0%
Retirement and Insurance	14.0%
Master's Men	14.0%
Free Will Baptist Foundation	6.0%
Commission for Theological Integrity	0.5%
Historical Commission	0.5%
Music Commission	0.5%
Media Commission	0.5%
Total	100.0%

* All ministries receive funds through The Together Way Plan except for the Sunday School and Church Training Department which is self-sustaining.

2003 Budgets Adopted

Executive Office (Includes)	\$	796,897.91
Administrative	\$	425,000.00
Contact		93,105.00
Convention		278,792.91
Free Will Baptist Bible College		4,661,090.00
(Includes \$1,300,00 in unrestricted gifts)		
Foreign Missions		7,408,887.85
(Does not include VISION and other projects totaling \$4,953,770)		
Home Missions		5,000,000.00
Master's Men		135,920.00
Retirement and Insurance		391,359.00
Free Will Baptist Foundation		135,200.00
Sunday School and Church Training		3,644,863.52
Commission for Theological Integrity		6,500.00
Historical Commission		4,600.00
Music Commission		34,060.00
Media Commission		10,000.00
Total	\$	22,229,378.28



2002 Registration Report*

National Convention	3,593
Ordained Ministers	720
Ordained Deacons	144
Licensed Ministers	22
Local Church Delegates	50
State Delegates	84
Home Missionaries	56
Foreign Missionaries	28
Board/Commission Members	47
Visitors	2,442
National Youth Conference	3,398
Women Nationally Active for Christ	968
Grand Total	7,959

* This report reflects the total number who registered for the three combined conventions: National Convention, NYC and WNAC. By actual count, some 6,097 individuals registered, some for one or more conventions. At the same time, several hundred attend each year who do not register.



Retiring Sunday School and Church Training director Alton Loveless (L), director-elect Ron Hunter and Board Chairman David Sutton listen intently during the General Board meeting.

team building and told how to grow an effective ministry team.

Tuesday afternoon featured Southern Baptist church growth specialist Richard Harris during the two-hour Foreign/Home Missions Rally who addressed the theological underpinnings of church planting. Harris said that the goal of every church should be to plant healthy, reproducing churches with evangelistic passion. He warned that "baby churches" tend to be dependent and need to be nudged firmly to an indigenous level.

And Finally

The Memphis convention ended with the second highest attendance in 66 years, just 41 short of 8,000 attendees. It also ended with a new hand at the helm of the denomination—a pastor's hand, a new grandfather's hand, an Okie's hand—the hand of Keith Burden. The Memphis convention marked the beginning of something more hopeful, something younger, something built on yesterday, something reaching higher. The transition of leadership is almost complete. Tomorrow is here for Free Will Baptists. And it's in good hands. ■



Moderator Carl Cheshier (C) and officers confer during a General Board break.

Elected in Memphis

The following were elected during the 66th annual session of the National Association and will serve until the dates indicated:

General Officers

Moderator:	Carl Cheshier	(Oklahoma)
Assistant Moderator:	Tim York	(Kentucky)
Clerk:	John Hibbard	(California)
Assistant Clerk:	Randy Bryant	(Florida)

General Board

2003	Mike Stokes	(Ohio)
2004	David Womack	(Florida)
2005	Chris Clay	(Indiana)
	Zane Brooks	(Kansas)
	James Patton	(Kentucky)
	Carlos Rubio Montoya	(Mexico)
	Luis Felipe Tijerina	(Assoc. of FWB of Mexico)
	Gene Norris	(Michigan)
	Jay Baines	(Mid-Atlantic)
	J. L. Gore	(Mississippi)
	Nathan Ruble	(Missouri)
	William Brown	(New Jersey)
	Mark Shores	(New Mexico)

Executive Committee

2005	J. L. Gore	(Mississippi)
	Gene Norris	(Michigan)
	Nathan Ruble	(Missouri)

Free Will Baptist Bible College Trustees

2004	Terry Pierce	(Mississippi)
2008	Archie Ratliff	(North Carolina)
	Greg Ketteman	(Tennessee)
	Gene Outland	(Illinois)

Foreign Missions Board

2004	Danny Williams	(Alabama)
2008	Bill Jones	(Texas)
	David Williford	(Tennessee)
	Bill Van Winkle	(Tennessee)

Sunday School and Church Training Board

2004	Tim Owen	(Florida)
2008	Danny Dwyer	(Alabama)
	David Reece	(Virginia)
	Nuel Brown	(California)

Commission for Theological Integrity

2007	Leroy Fortlines	(Tennessee)
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Media Commission

2006	Monte McKenzie	(Tennessee)
2007	Kevin Norris	(Michigan)

Music Commission

2007	Doug Little	(Arkansas)
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Historical Commission

2007	Jack Williams	(Tennessee)
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2002 WNAC Convention Analysis

WNAC—Different but Good

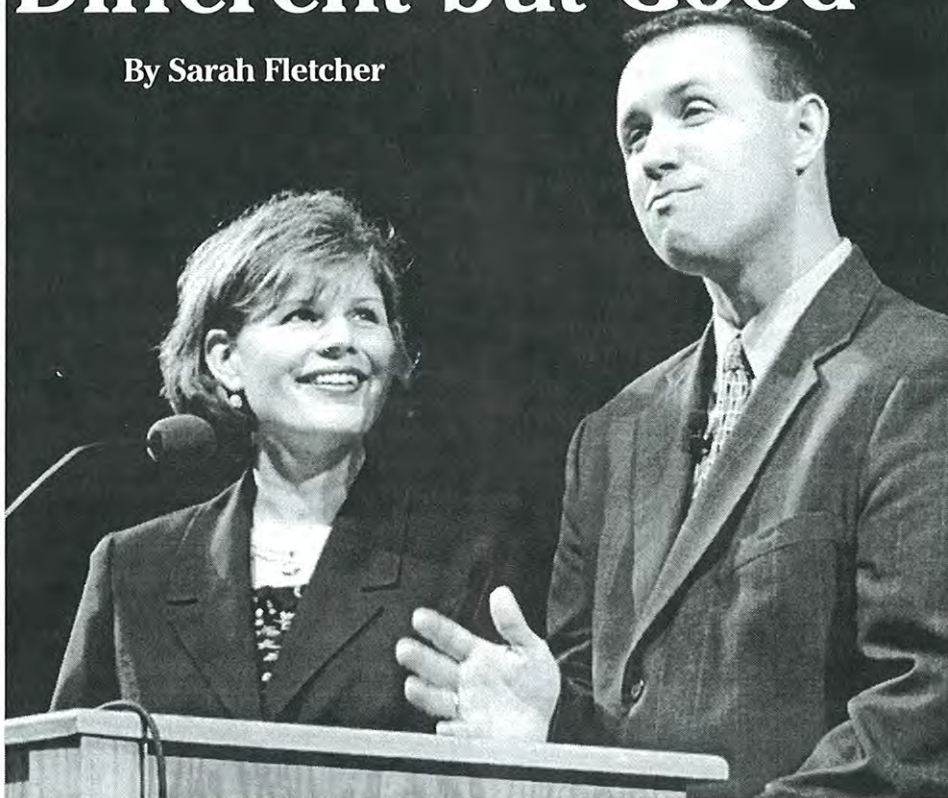
By Sarah Fletcher

"A different kind of convention," came the remarks, nearly always qualified by the phrase, "It was good." Nine hundred sixty-eight conventioners met for the 66th annual session of Women Nationally Active for Christ, July 22-23, in Memphis. From the first welcome to the last hymn, God's moving was evident. Women wept, laughed, lifted hands in prayer and praise, and worshiped the Lord together.

Different Kind of Monday

Almost 400 women crowded into the Marriott Ballroom to view an afternoon drama presentation. "Is There Hope for Me?" focused on the lives of the five women mentioned in Matthew's genealogy of Christ. Women from Grifton FWB Church in North Carolina portrayed these individuals and told their seemingly hopeless stories.

Narrator Diane Bridgman stated, "If God can use these women to be in His lineage, then He can use you for such a time as this." The presentation included musical selections by soloist, Beth Mitchell. The entire session resounded the themes of grace, acceptance and hope.



Tuesday morning keynote speakers, Kristi and Tim Johnson.

WNAC president Debe Taylor addressed over 250 pastors' wives and ministry leaders concerning the topic, "Having a Difficult Time." A PK herself with over 20 years' experience as a pastor's wife, Debe shared God's Word and her personal reflections about ministry difficulties with cash, the church and children. Over 30 women came forward to join in praying for prodigal children.

Powerful, emotional and encouraging, the Monday sessions drew many first time attendees and visitors.

Different Type of Worship

"God has a purpose for you being here," began worship leader Susan Forlines. Using hymns, choruses and scripture, she encouraged women to rejoice in trials and seek to be used of God. A special presentation of drama, sign language and song by the National YET team emphasized sharing the gospel with others.

The main worship session began with the testimony of Karen Pfeiffer, a deaf individual from Johnson City, Tennessee. She pleaded with the crowd to begin a work to this unreached people (Nearly 95% of the deaf population is unchurched.).

Scripture reading by Carol Reid prepared hearts for a song by Beverly Riggs. The "Alabaster Box" once again echoed the message of grace and for-



WNAC honors executive assistant Yvonne Hampton (L).



WNAC president Debe Taylor.



A Fellowship Buffet centerpiece.

giveness. Even the offering contributed to worship. Pam Flannigan (Florida) prayed, "May we give out of obedient hearts because we love You." That love was evidenced in the \$2,600 given.

Tim and Kristi Johnson teamed to present a missionary challenge. Each attendee received a packet of saffron. The Johnsons compared the church in Spain to this valuable native herb. Like this most precious of spices, the church in Spain is difficult to harvest.

Tim remarked, "If we can influence just a handful of people for Christ, we will have done what we were called to do." Referencing the story of Esther, the couple reminded listeners that Christians are "here by God's appointment, in His keeping, under His training, for His time."

Different Order of Business

Appointed committees, recommendations and resolutions comprised the WNAC business session. Delegates voted unanimously to:

1. Give three \$1000 scholarships from the Cleo Pursell Foreign Student Scholarship to:
 - Two Ivorian students (Pastor Paul Ameizi and Robert Housesou)
 - Brazilian seminary student, Osmir
 - Eighteen seminary students at Cedars of Lebanon Seminary in Cuba.
2. Go on record opposing same-sex marriages, urging ladies to con-

tact legislators to encourage traditional family values.

3. Be committed to pray for youth that they may be saved at an early age and continue carrying the gospel to future generations.

However, this year's business session also included several recognitions. President Debe Taylor honored Secretary Debbie Burden for her efforts compiling the new WNAC Cookbook, *The Fruit of our Hands*. She received an autographed cookbook, an apron and a standing ovation. Executive Assistant Yvonne Hampton was recognized for 16 years of service in the WNAC office. Mrs. Workman presented her with three pieces of antique Heisey glassware, which she collects.

Mrs. Workman relayed the pressing financial needs of WNAC and encouraged women to subscribe to *CoLaborer* magazine. She also explained the new WNAC Faith Promise plan, affording women opportunity to support WNAC through a \$10 monthly pledge.

A PowerPoint presentation by Laurie Horne (North Carolina) introduced a national project for furnishing the Missionary in Residence House at FWBBC. Using the illustration of the Shunamite's gift of a "prophet's chamber" for Elijah, she reminded women that givers are often the recipients of blessings, and encouraged women to give to this unique ministry project.

Different Sort of Luncheon

Sold out! Response for the WNAC Fellowship Luncheon was tremendous. Tickets were gone before the convention began. For the 350 who held those valuable slips of paper, their early purchase was rewarded. Long buffet lines of baked catfish and fried chicken led to tables decorated with birdhouses of every form and fashion.

Yet it was Viney Mae from Fruithill, Kentucky, who captured the audience. In her comical portrayal of this simple backwoods woman, dramatist Teri Peacock moved listeners from laughter to tears. Her presentation ended with a clear gospel message—Christ gave Himself for all.

Different but Good

Throughout the conference, attendees were reminded that God can use women—all women, "For Such a Time as This." During the sessions and around the convention, women conveyed a spirit of genuine care and concern. Hugs were plentiful; tears flowed freely.

A new cookbook, a fresh approach to Monday meetings, limited business, focused worship—these are but a few of the differences noticed in Memphis. WNAC is striving to meet the changing needs of women. ■

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ABOUT THE WRITER: Mrs. Sarah Fletcher serves as editor of *CoLaborer* magazine.



Marjorie Workman (L) and Sarah Fletcher review changes with Deb Hash.

All His Ways, All My Days

By Becky Gwartney



Michigan's Don Myers rehearses a group of young singers.

Describing the experience of NYC 2002 is like trying to describe the taste of a hot *Krispy Kreme* donut. Nearly impossible. Here's a glimpse of what happened as nearly 4,000 children, teens and youth workers gathered in the Memphis Convention Center.

Reaching the Youngest Preschool

Try this math: six learning and activity centers + over 80 three- to five-year-olds + 15 workers. What does that equal? Tons of fun during preschool worship!

As the youngest worshipers entered their service, they were greeted by a friendly and loving staff. They worshiped God through stories, prayer and songs. Every activity and snack correlated to the Bible story of the day, and everything was age-appropriate.

The day they learned about Queen Esther, the children had a parade as they switched to the next center. They sang a song about this famous queen, made and wore crowns, made snack mix and then served each other.

Each time preschool children left this fun-filled room, they took home something that would remind them of the Bible story, the challenge to make a world of difference for the cause of Christ and huge smiles. They were told that God can use them, even at their young age, where they are. Some day, many of these youngsters will remember their challenge and succeed at making a difference for God.

Children

If you noticed a family dressed in military attire, it was probably the family of Dean and Lisa Stone marching to the children's worship area. As Dean mesmerized the kids with magic and the family told Bible stories with puppets or played videos, the children soaked up lessons from God's Word on their level. The four days were spent teaching first- to third-graders about the cost and benefits of being in God's army.

Tweeners

The Denton Brothers were a big hit again this year as they entertained and

ministered to fourth- to sixth-grade children. One child said, "They tell real good stories." These talented brothers do much more than tell good stories!

They taught kids how to juggle (even had a juggling clinic by their



Mark Roberts wows the teens.

booth after service), sang great songs that taught scripture, played games and taught memory verses with hand motions. Kids were involved in every part of the service. One minute the kids would be roaring with laughter and the next, serious about spiritual things.

Upon entering the tween worship service, one would see a room full of kids captivated by these young men. Were young hearts stirred and changed in this worship time? Most definitely! Many made decisions to follow Christ, and some were challenged to live a Christ-like life wherever God placed them.

Reaching the Oldest

As students and youth workers crowded into the teen worship room Sunday night, everyone realized the problem at hand—no more room. Each night the crowd grew larger and more adults gave up their seats for teens. Finally, adults were stopped at the door and asked to wait outside until all students were seated. What a great problem.

Why all the excitement in teen worship? It could have been because of Mark Roberts, teen worship speaker for the week. Just call him "Mr. Wow!" Question: Was he a speaker? Storyteller? Comedian? Awesome communicator? Answer: All of the above.

Each night, Mark hit the spot with the message of God's Word. Students were challenged to surrender their wills to God, be sincere in their walk, be consistent as Christians, seek God's face, renew their minds with God's Word, love God, love others and be sensitive to God's voice.

The most stirring service came Tuesday evening. As worship time began, students joined in singing praises to the Lord. Before Mark uttered a word, students began flooding the altar. Several made first-time decisions, some answered "yes" to God's call on their lives, and many recommitted their lives to Christ.

For about 30 minutes, students poured their hearts out to God all across the large banquet hall. When Mark was finally able to give his last challenge, the Holy Spirit continued to work. What a tremendous climax to a week filled with God's power.



Small groups of younger children received personalized attention.

Reaching for Excellence

With over 700 entries in competition this year, there is no question that our denomination is filled with talented young people. God's handiwork was exhibited through music, drama, preaching, art, writing, electronic media and puppetry. Bible competitors amazed us with their knowledge of scripture and ability to compete with speed and accuracy. God has truly blessed Free Will Baptists with a bright future.

Reaching All Ages Through Activities

During the day, activities and events at the National Youth Conference were available for every age group. Each day began with *Spiritual Caffeine*, morning devotions for youth workers. Each night ended with fun-filled activities for all ages, including a stormy cruise on the Memphis Queen Riverboat.

During the day, as competitors and spectators assembled in large meeting rooms, smaller rooms were filled with workshops or fun times for chil-

dren and teens.

Preschoolers met for story time—an active alternative to sitting in competition or a business meeting, and allowing a break for the parents.

Children and tweeners gathered to make crafts. Some children learned songs to perform Wednesday evening before the awards ceremony.

Youth workers and children's workers met for workshops, young adults met for fellowship, and many served Memphis through *Reach That Guy* service projects.

During NYC 2002, hundreds of students and adults were challenged to fully dedicate their lives, goals and hearts to Jesus 24/7. As the theme "All His Ways, All My Days" was proclaimed throughout messages and songs, many made the decision to serve Christ each and every day, in any way God led. Praise the Lord for changed hearts and lives! ■

ABOUT THE WRITER: Mrs. Becky Gwartney is a member of First Free Will Baptist Church in Locust Grove, Oklahoma.



Because of space restraints, we are unable to list all available tapes for this year's convention.

Once again this year, youth worship services were audiotaped—this year's speaker was Mark Roberts. Each of the four tapes are available at the regular price: \$4 per tape (plus \$2 for the whole order's postage).

The cost is \$15 each (which includes postage and handling).

Space below is available for you to indicate which of these video and/or audio tapes you would like to order.

This image shows a single sheet of white paper with horizontal blue lines, resembling notebook paper. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page. There are no margins, text, or other markings on the paper.

NATIONAL ASSOCIATION MESSAGES ON AUDIO CASSETTE TAPES

<u>Tape No.</u>	<u>Speaker(s)</u>	<u>Subject</u>	<u>Quantity</u>
<i>Convention Messages</i>			
1.	Alton Loveless	Sunday Morning	_____
2.	Carl Cheshier	Sunday Evening	_____
3.	Kerry Steedley	Monday Evening	_____
4.	Melvin Worthington	Tuesday Evening	_____
5.	Curtis Linton	Wednesday Evening	_____

Women Nationally Active for Christ

6. Debe Taylor	Pastors' Wives Seminar	_____
7. Tim / Kristi Johnson	Missionary Service	_____
8. Teri Peacock	Fellowship Luncheon	_____

Seminars

9. Ron Callaway	Theological Trends Seminar	_____
10. Alton Loveless	Sunday School Workshop	_____
11. Ronnie Lee	Master's Men Seminar	_____

Miscellaneous

12.	Stan Toler	Pastors/Laymen Conference	_____
13.	Richard Harris	Foreign/Home Missions Rally	_____
14.	Gary Head	Adult Sunday School Class	_____

Other Available Tapes

- ← Convention Worship Service Videotapes (list individually at left)
- ← NYC Audio Cassette Tapes (list individually at left)

Please complete the following:

Name _____

Address _____

City/State/Zip _____

Total Tape Cost _____

Plus Postage **\$2.00**

Amount Enclosed _____

Please send **Check or Money Order** to:
Mike Anderson • 6521 Mercomatic Court • Nashville, TN 37209

Dr. L. C. Johnson, First Bible College President, Dies

NASHVILLE, TN—Dr. L. C. Johnson, who served 34 years as president of Free Will Baptist Bible College and two years as chancellor, died June 26 in Norfolk, Virginia. Linton Carroll Johnson was 88 and had been a Free Will Baptist minister 68 years. The Alma, Georgia, native was converted at 14, licensed to preach at 19 and ordained at 20.

Johnson attended Middle Georgia College (1932-'33) and earned a bachelor of arts at Bob Jones College (now Bob Jones University) in 1939. He pursued graduate studies at both Winona Lake School of Theology (1943) and Bob Jones Graduate School (1945). Bob Jones University bestowed the honorary doctor of humanities (L.H.D.) degree on him in 1952.

The Free Will Baptist denomination asked 28-year-old L. C. Johnson to lead the movement's educational dream in 1942 after the National Association voted to launch a Bible school. He shaped the philosophy of the college, insisted on Christian service assignments for all students, scheduled annual Bible conferences to challenge students and faculty, and championed evangelism and missions.

Asked in a 1978 interview about his thoughts when tapped to lead the college, Johnson chuckled, "I was dumbfounded when L. R. Ennis told me the news. It was a very emotional time for me. In September 1942 I came to Nashville and found an empty building with Paul Ketteman standing on the front steps looking toward Illinois."

Johnson returned to the pastorate for three years (1944-'47). Asked what brought him back to Nashville in 1947, he said, "The first time (1942), it was the tears



of L. R. Ennis and the brethren. The second time I came to the college under a deep personal conviction . . . the same deep inner conviction that led me to retire as president in 1979."

While at the college, Johnson became well-known and respected in academic circles. He was listed in *Who's Who in American College and University Administrations*, served on the Executive Committee of the American Association of Bible Colleges, participated on the program of the 1976 World Congress of Fundamentalists in Edinburgh, Scotland, and was a member of the Overview Committee for the *New King James Version* of the Bible.

He considered Free Will Baptist Bible College his great life work and never allowed anything to distract him from that focus. "I have needed no other work in which to find fulfillment," Johnson said. Even when preaching revivals out of state, he felt like a poor evangelist because his heart and mind remained in Nashville, bound up in the business of the college.

Dr. Johnson preached six times at the Free Will Baptist national convention (1944, '45, '47, '53, '78 and '85). He was twice elected as moderator of the National Association of Free Will Baptists (1947, 1948). As a young minister, he pastored as many as four churches at once in Georgia (1940). His pastorates included churches in Georgia, Tennessee, Florida and Mississippi (1934-'47).

Dr. Charles Thigpen, who served with him at FWBBC, said of Johnson's preaching, "I have said many times, when Dr. Johnson is at his best, he is the best preacher in the Free Will Baptist denomination. Dr. Johnson in his preaching can 'play marbles on the tails of comets and walk the Milky Way.'"

Johnson's influence marked the denomination for almost 70 years. In a 1999 tribute, Dr. Robert Picirilli wrote of him, "When the history of Free Will Baptists in the last half of the 20th century is written, the role of Dr. L. C. Johnson will be prominent, perhaps the most prominent of any."

Funeral services were conducted June 30 at Pine Level FWB Church in Alma, GA, with four ministers officiating: Dr. Charles Thigpen, Dr. Robert Picirilli, Rev. Rolla Smith and Rev. Eric Brown.

Dr. Johnson is survived by his wife of 62 years, Ruth Masser Johnson; two sons, Paul Johnson of Darien, GA, and Mark Johnson of Murfreesboro, TN; one daughter, Mary Nell Beck of Norfolk, VA; nine grandchildren and three great-grandchildren.

The family requested that memorial gifts be sent to Free Will Baptist Bible College in memory of Dr. Johnson.

North Carolina Elects Ange Moderator

GREENVILLE, NC—Delegates to North Carolina's 40th annual state association elected Pastor Nate Ange as moderator during the June 3-4 session at Parker's Chapel FWB Church in Greenville.

Reverend Ange pastors Landmark FWB Church in Cary. The 46-year-old minister succeeds moderator Randy Stone who had served two years and was not eligible for re-election. Delegates gave a standing ovation to Stone for his service as moderator.

Promotional director Jim Marcum said that 216 registered for the two-day gathering, including 127 ministers, 17 lay delegates and six missionaries.

Delegates adopted a \$109,000 budget for the Promotional Department and a \$295,000 budget for North Carolina Home Missions.

Dr. David Gibbs spoke twice to attendees. Gibbs is affiliated with the Christian Law Association. Promotional director Jim Marcum and Huntersville pastor Ral Alsbrook also preached sermons during worship services.

The 2003 state association will meet June 2-3 at Cramerton FWB Church in Cramerton.

Eric Thomsen Named Randall House Marketing Manager

NASHVILLE, TN—Reverend Eric Thomsen, 29-year-old editor of teen curriculum at Randall House Publications, has been named marketing manager, according to general director Ron Hunter. Thomsen succeeds Billy Brown who resigned to pursue a counseling ministry. Thomsen assumed his new duties July 1.

In an internal memo to employees, Ron Hunter told the Randall House staff that the marketing position required a person skilled at layout and design, proficient in the various technologies of print and advertising, and strong in interpersonal relationships.

Hunter said, "That person is Eric Thomsen. He has a professional grasp and history of utilizing the major graphic software such as PhotoShop, Quark Express, PageMaker, MS Word and others. The key thing is his ability to visualize the finished product, which is something you cannot train. His ability to write copy and know our people as an editor will be invaluable."

Thomsen, a 1995 graduate of Free Will Baptist Bible College, has



served at Randall House seven years. He coordinated the National Youth Conference (1995-'98) and was teen curriculum editor (1998-2002). He has written curriculum and edited the work of others. He is pursuing a master's degree.

For the past 10 years, Eric has been youth minister at Bethlehem FWB Church in Ashland City, Tennessee. He was converted at a young age, graduated from Trinity Christian Academy in Florida, answered the call to preach and will seek ordination later this year.

Eric and Jennifer Thomsen have one daughter, Victoria, who is three.

Missouri Adopts \$610,000 Budget

LEBANON, MO—When the business ended at the 89th annual Missouri State Association, delegates had adopted a \$610,000 state budget which included \$450,000 Show-Me-Plan Funds and \$160,000 in Cooperative Plan funds.

The June 3-5 session met at Cowan Civic Center in Lebanon. Executive secretary Nathan Ruble said that 338 registered for the meeting. That included 84 ministers, 21 lay delegates and 15 deacons.

Moderator Richard Robinson

was elected for a second term. Delegates voted to move \$100,000 from the Conference Center fund to the Youth Camp fund for a paving project.

Tennessee pastor Robert Morgan led a ministers' workshop on developing sermons. He also preached during the Tuesday morning worship service.

Four men preached sermons developing the association theme, "Comprehending the Scope of His Love." Pastors Rick Dablemont (Cuba FWB Church, Cuba), Lee

Neil (Macedonia FWB Church, Purdy) and Dale Cochran (Hannibal FWB Church, Hannibal) shared the pulpit with Foreign Missions director James Forlines.

Warren Livingston received a plaque, golf clubs and a golf course membership for his work of 21 years as manager of the Lebanon Bible Book Store.

The 2003 state association will meet June 2-4 at Cowan Civic Center in Lebanon.

Ohio Establishes Pastors' Retirement Plan

GAHANNA, OH—Delegates to Ohio's 64th annual state association voted to establish the "Ohio Pastors' Retirement Plan," according to executive secretary Edwin Hayes. The plan includes six stipulations for participating churches and pastors.

Five percent of undesignated Cooperative Plan funds from a church would be placed in the retirement plan. Participating pastors must set up an account with the national Board of Retirement and notify the Ohio state office of their intentions.

The June 21-22 session met at Gahanna FWB Church in Gahanna. More than 250 people attended the meeting, including 69 ministers and 27 lay delegates.

Moderator Robert Prichard was elected to his ninth term in office. Delegates approved a \$468,000 state budget to be allocated: State Office (47%), National Association (30%), State Missions (15%), Ohio Pastors' Retirement (5%) and State Youth Ministry (3%).

In other action, delegates adopted two resolutions. One reaffirmed their stand on the blood of Christ, the other reaffirmed the stance that ministers be men of high moral character.

Three men preached sermons developing the association theme, "Jesus—In Times Like These." Speakers included Ohio pastors Roy Bennett (Antioch FWB Church, Wheelersburg) and John Meade (Southwest FWB Church, Columbus), and Home Missions general director Larry Powell.

The 2003 state association will meet June 26-27 at Gahanna FWB Church in Gahanna.



Executive Office personnel Dari Goodfellow (L) and Melody Hood.

Texas Adopts \$300,000 Budget

DUNCANVILLE, TX—Delegates to the 88th annual Texas State Association adopted a \$300,000 budget for 2003, including \$76,000 for TEAM, according to Moderator Keith Woody. Some 189 people registered for the June 5-7 session, which met at First FWB Church in Duncanville.

The Texas Home Missions Board reported six new English-speaking missions in the state and three new Spanish-speaking missions.

Moderator Keith Woody, who was elected to his fifth term, said, "The Texas State Association was marked by great preaching, outstanding music and complete unity. It was a time of rejoicing over what God is doing in Texas."

FWBBC chancellor Tom Malone delivered two sermons on the association theme, "Past Time or Perfect Time."

During Thursday's Pastor's Conference, attendees heard three sermons on "God's Spiritual Habitation." The messages were preached by Texas pastors Bobby Ferguson (First FWB Church, Houston) and Clarence Hearron (Cornerstone FWB Church, Denison), and Oklahoma pastor Mike Hutsell (Grace FWB Church, Broken Arrow).

Delegates adopted a resolution urging caution in selecting youth and children's workers for local churches.

The Texas Women Active for Christ, meeting in conjunction with the state association, reported a 2003 project to raise \$7,500 to rebuild Cuban churches and to underwrite TEAM.

Two retiring denominational executives were recognized for their service to the Free Will Baptist people—executive secretary Melvin Worthington and Alton Loveless, general director of the Sunday School and Church Training Department.

The 2003 session of the Texas State Association will meet June 4-6 in San Antonio.

Florida Seeks Executive Secretary

CHIPLEY, FL—The Florida State Association of Free Will Baptists seeks to employ an executive secretary. The position is currently offered as a bivocational ministry with a salary of \$1,000 per month for 2003. Use of state vehicle and budgeted expenses for state business will also be provided. Send resumes to

Search Committee
1783 Piney Grove Road
Chipley, FL 32428.

Job Description is posted at www.fwbfsa.org/sjp.html

For information call 850-638-7064

or email FloridaFWB@aol.com

Michigan Honors Robert Trimble

BATTLE CREEK, MI—In a special tribute to retiring home missionaries Robert and Nancy Trimble, delegates attended a missions banquet at the Michigan State Association at McCamly Plaza Hotel in Battle Creek. Speaker Keith Bartlett traveled from Castaic, California, to address attendees and praise the Trimbles for a ministry well done and well finished.

The 46th annual Michigan State Association met May 16-17 with 63 registered for the session. Twenty-four ministers and 24 lay delegates conducted association business.

A resolution adopted by delegates will move future sessions of the state association back to local churches, rather than meeting in hotels and convention centers. That same resolution specified that the association will meet on Friday and Saturday in the future instead of the current Thursday/Friday schedule.

Delegates also recognized Milton Worthington for his years of service as a pastor and clerk of the state association.

Four men preached sermons developing the association theme, "Kept the Faith, Completed the Course." Speakers included pastors Rudy Shankel (First FWB Church, Ypsilanti), Robert Trimble (Berea FWB Church, Battle Creek), Milton Worthington (Central FWB Church, Royal Oak) and Wayne Jacobs (Stoney Creek FWB Church, Ypsilanti).

Bible College Accreditation Reaffirmed

NASHVILLE, TN—The Commission on Colleges of the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools (SACS) (1866 Southern Lane, Decatur, Georgia 30033-4097; Telephone number 404-679-4501) has reaffirmed Free Will Baptist Bible College's regional accreditation for 10 years, according to Dr. Milton Fields, Academic Dean. This means that FWBBC will not have to undergo another SACS examination until 2011.

Dr. James T. Rogers, Executive Director of SACS's Commission on Colleges, made the announcement.

FWBBC President Matthew Pinson says, "We are very happy about the recent decision of the Commission on Colleges to reaffirm our accreditation. SACS accreditation assures the transfer of our credits to other colleges as well as the quality and credibility of the education we offer."

The Bible College is also accredited by the Accrediting Association of Bible Colleges, which is expected to reaffirm its accreditation later this year.

The college's teacher education program is approved for licensure by the Tennessee State Department of Education, further evidence that a FWBBC education is a quality education.

273 Attend West Virginia State Meeting

WILKERSON, WV—The 57th annual West Virginia State Association registered 273 attendees, according to state clerk, Norwood Webb. The June 7-8 session met at Mona Hill FWB Church in Wilkerson.

Moderator Ivan Asbury was re-elected for a second term. Delegates elected Dr. James Cox, pastor of Sophia FWB Church, as promotional director. Cox previously served as director of institutional effectiveness at Free Will Baptist Bible College.

The association theme was "Where is the Fire?" and featured sermons by West Virginia pastors F. A. Giles (Emmaus FWB Church, Alum Creek) and Daniel Kelly (Chesapeake FWB Church, Chesapeake), and executive secretary Melvin Worthington.

Fifteen churches were recognized for their gifts to Home and Foreign Missions. Delegates adopted a Co-operative Plan budget with funds to be allocated: Promotional Director (20%), Mission Board (20%), State Paper (15%), General Fund (22%), National Convention Fund (10%), C. E. Board (9%) and National Co-op (4%).

In other action, delegates adopted a resolution voicing opposition to using non-Free Will Baptists to speak at the 2002 national convention. They also passed a constitutional change requiring licensed or ordained ministers to surrender their credentials if they begin pastoring churches that teach eternal security, multiple works of grace or speaking in tongues.

The 2003 state association will meet June 6-7 at Central FWB Church in Huntington.



Newly-elected executive secretary Keith Burden looks toward the future.

currently

Guess who has attended every session of the **Florida State Association**—all 58 of them? **Ernest Owen** did it. He also served 26 years as state treasurer. Care to guess who has attended 56 of the state associations and also served as president of the Florida Women Active for Christ? Yep, **Etha Mae** (Mrs. Ernest) **Owen**.

The four-lane highway in front of **Southside FWB Church in Aiken, SC**, is finally open and makes for easier access by members. But Pastor **Todd Smith** discovered the county requires a buffer road of trees and shrubs to shield the noise. That's a \$3,000 project. **Billy Powell**, who owns a nursery in Edgefield, donated the shrubs and trees to the church, significantly reducing the project cost.

Tennessee minister, Rev. **Glenn Mulkey**, died April 13 at age 76. He pastored **First FWB Church (Knoxville)** for 26 years and **Loudon FWB Church** for 11 years. He and his wife, Francis, were married 56 years. Reverend Mulkey served four years in the U.S. Navy during World War II.

Pastor **Kenneth Jackson** reports 147 conversions during their Friend Day campaign this spring at **Traveler's Rest FWB Church in Clarksville, FL**. Some 960 people attended the two-day effort that included Sunday services under a 1,000-seat tent.

Members of **Hannibal FWB Church in Hannibal, MO**, dedicated their building on May 5. Pastor **Dale Cochran** led the service which was followed by a well-attended open house.

Mrs. **Ocie Ella Medders Cauley** has been an active member of **Pine Level FWB Church in Alma, GA**, since 1935. After her husband of 41 years died in 1963, the now-100-year-old great-great-grandmother lived alone on the family farm until she was 96. **Eric Brown** is her pastor.

Pastor **Tim Rabon** reports 120 conversions during a one-week revival this spring at **First FWB Church in Raleigh, NC**. People from ages 11 to 70 were among the converts. More than 25 young

people made professions of faith.

When 18 people turned up for visitation at **Bear Point FWB Church in Sesser, IL**, Pastor **Larry Cook** expected some specific results. He got them in the form of seven new members and five baptisms.

Pastor **Toby Youngblood** reports nine new members at **Faith FWB Church in Glenpool, OK**. The church's next goal is an attendance of 750 and 35 acres of land.

Oak Hill FWB Church in Oak Hill, OH, reports three conversions, three baptisms and four rededications. **Tim Simpson** pastors.

Pastor **Robert Bryant** witnessed three conversions, baptized three and welcomed five new members at **Newark FWB Church in Newark, OH**.

Good Shepherd FWB Church announced that two young men have answered the call to preach—**William Toney** (26) and **Josh Blevins** (16). **Randy Hall** pastors the **Hamilton, OH**, congregation.

During a missions conference at **Westerville FWB Church in Westerville, OH**, members raised \$6,000, hosted a breakfast and banquet for attendees, and heard preaching by Foreign Missions personnel **Ron Callaway** and **James Forlines**. Pastor **Mike Mounts** baptized five teens.

Several churches from across **Ohio** sponsored an appreciation day for Evangelist **Clovis Vanover**. **Westside FWB Church in Columbus** hosted the event. A dozen ministers and numerous other friends attended the evening worship service and gift-giving. Brother Vanover received a \$1,870 love offering, two suits, a fishing pole and a Christian flag.

Pastor **Carlie Lloyd** reports seven conversions, four baptisms and 21 first-time visitors at **Twin Valley FWB Church in Middleton, WI**. Brother Lloyd's immediate goal is to develop 20 families who are committed to tithing and getting the mission church to self-supporting status.

Pastor **Waldo Young** baptized seven

converts at **Northwest FWB Church in Oklahoma City, OK**. An average of 20 young people attend Wednesday evening services.

A news item in the June 2002 issue of *Contact* (p. 16) indicated that the late missionary and church planter **Dan Merkh** served in the U.S. Navy. **Margaret** (Mrs. Dan) **Merkh** called to clarify Brother Merkh's military service. He served with the United States Marine Corps. We regret the error and are happy to set the record straight.

First FWB Church in Savannah, GA, plans a jubilee gathering in 2003 to celebrate 50 years of service to the community. Former pastor **Rolla Smith** preached the 49th homecoming message in May. **Steve Hughes** pastors.

Pastor **Rob Morgan** reports five baptisms and four new members at **Donelson FWB Church in Nashville, TN**.

Pastor **Will Harmon** welcomed 12 new members at **Cavanaugh FWB Church in Fort Smith, AR**.

Pastor **Matt Crain** reports two conversions, three baptisms and five new members at **First FWB Church in Johnston City, IL**. Retired minister **George Ritter** preached at the church February 17, exactly 50 years to the day when he was ordained from that same pulpit.

The **Free Will Baptist Children's Home in Eldridge, AL**, completed a new cottage to house a couple and 10 children this spring. Dedication services for the \$160,000 project on April 27 were led by Alabama promotional director **Rick Cash**. **Randy Key** directs the children's home.

Pastor **Dave Nobles** at **Bethel FWB Church in Woodbridge, VA**, published a 132-page paperback book titled *Whosoever Will*. The book discusses Arminianism and Calvinism from the Free Will Baptist perspective. The book costs \$10 and can be purchased from Bethel FWB Church at 3713 Pennington Lane, Woodbridge, VA 22192. The church website is www.bethelFWBaptist.com. ■

With the passing of Dr. L.C. Johnson on June 26, so many felt the loss. For some it was the loss of a husband or father. Others lost an example. Some lost a model of wisdom and character. Some lost a hero, an icon.

I lost a friend.

It wasn't always that way. Like many who were his students, there was a time that I revered him. He was the preacher I admired. The leader who inspired bed-rock confidence.

But I admired him from a distance, thinking he was too great (and he was great) for me to approach him. Don't laugh. Others felt the same way!

How wrong I was.

Even as an employee of the college, I avoided his office, not out of fear but out of respect. He is so busy, I thought. He is guiding the affairs of a great institution. I mustn't distract him with my petty problems and questions.

How wrong I was.

I can't remember any exact day I learned that I was wrong. But over time—a word here, a brief exchange there—I found that I enjoyed him. What a revelation! And I came to feel (and I hope this isn't presumptuous) that he seemed to enjoy our visits, too.

So, the visits became more frequent. And longer. Five minutes. Twenty minutes. An hour! The time flew by. He never seemed too busy. I never felt like I was imposing. We just visited.

One visit, to me, is more memorable than all the others. I was struggling, as never before in my life, with depression. It was a new and painful experience. For the first time, I did not enjoy my work. I dreaded the days. I wanted to run away. And I didn't know how to tell anyone, it seemed so crazy.

It was just after lunch and, out of necessity, I approached him in his office about some college business. He answered my question and, as I was about to leave, he asked, "And how are you doing?"

I don't recall any hesitation. I just told him. I poured it all out, right there in his office. My sleepless nights. The haunting fears. The dark pit I felt trapped inside. I couldn't believe I was saying those things!

Then he smiled. I wasn't prepared for

I Lost A Friend

*By Bert Tippet
Public Relations Director*

that. Concern, perhaps, even a mild scolding. But not a smile!

Before I knew it, he was describing my state of mind in terms I had never used. He was telling me about myself and analyzing things I had been afraid to face. How did he

know? How could he possibly understand? I gaped in amazement. And I asked him how he knew.

"I went through it too, when I was in college. I know just how you feel."

Of all the people I might have thought would understand my fear and confusion, he would have been the last. I had never seen him afraid of anything. And confusion? I never knew a more confident man in my life!

He gave me advice, good advice. He encouraged me and assured me everything would be okay. He even complimented me, in a way. "Happy-go-lucky people don't usually go through this," he said. "Just conscientious people."

We talked all afternoon. No one tapped on his door. I don't recall that his phone rang. The office was closed and everyone had gone home when he escorted me out.

And from that day my fears began to lift, like a morning fog. Within a short time, my depression was gone.

My relationship with him had changed, too. I knew I didn't have to be afraid to share a personal need. I knew he would help me, if he could—and the odds were that he could!

The world became a little darker and little colder on June 26. It lost a great man.

And I lost a friend. ■

**Dr. L. C.
Johnson**

**Feb. 3, 1914-
June 26, 2002**



Free Will Baptist Bible College

Wills—The Final Legal Documents

By David L. Brown

Why do we never get around to making out our wills? It is one of the few documents that will actually be used, since (unless the Lord comes back in our lifetime) none of us are getting out of here alive.

Wills are important for a lot of non-financial reasons. A will determines the person's choice of who will take care of his minor children. If a person dies without a will, the state makes that determination. Wills can also be used as a final expression of our faith and testimony and perhaps even a final witness to those who do not know the Lord.

Mostly wills are to give our input as to how we wish our assets to be distributed. Again, if we die without wills, the state will distribute our assets according to state law.

Some may think their estate is not large enough to require a will. All estates need a will regardless of size, but the truth is we may have a larger estate than we might think. The value of a house alone can be significant. Most people have multiple vehicles, retirement assets, checking and savings accounts, mutual funds or brokerage accounts, house furnishings, collectable items or antiques and other valuable assets.

It is important to know that some of these assets are good assets and bad assets for your heirs from an income tax standpoint. For instance, even though your estate may be exempt from estate taxes, your heirs may owe income taxes on some assets. Good assets are appreciated stock or mutual funds. They are good because, even though they have appreciated in value,

the heir will owe no capital gains taxes on these items if they sell, since the heir gets a "stepped up" basis. This means that when the asset is sold the basis is stepped up to the date of death instead of the original basis.

Other assets in an estate are bad assets for the heir. Retirement plan assets are one of the worst assets for an heir to acquire. Many times a retirement plan requires that these assets be paid out in a lump sum at the time of death. These assets are usually tax-deferred and fully taxable to the heir. A lump sum distribution can often push heirs into a higher tax bracket, and they may lose as much as 40% of the asset to taxes.

Another concept that needs to be emphasized is tithing on your estate. The Lord has richly blessed us in allowing us to accumulate our estates. We should give back at least 10% to the Lord's work. You can perpetuate a gift to your favorite ministries by making this tithe an endowment through the Free Will Baptist Foundation.

You can also utilize the Foundation to help you tithe on your estate before your death. Using a planned gift, you can move a bad asset out of your estate to use as a tithe. Since you were planning to tithe on your estate anyway, this allows you to help your heirs by removing an income taxable asset from the estate to use as your tithe. You will also benefit from the tithe of your estate while you are alive, as it will give you an income tax deduction and an income stream during your lifetime. Contact the Foundation toll-free at 877-336-7575 to talk with us about your estate tax plans. ■

Free Will Baptist



Foundation

Operation Saturation

Time is quickly approaching for Operation Saturation 2002. This is a special time set aside for as many people as possible to go and help our home missionaries spread the gospel in their respective areas. Many have participated in this event the last two years and are already making preparations to do the same this year. For those of you who have not yet joined in this effort, please consider doing just that. It will be an experience that you will never forget. Doors of opportunity are opened to us every day, and we do not need to delay getting the Word of God out to the lost people in our world.

The terrorist attack of September 2001 definitely brought home to everyone just how short our time here on earth can be. We never know when our last opportunity to reach others may come and go without our realizing it, and we do not want to waste any chance we may have to let others know about the love of God.

On Operation Saturation Day, Free Will Baptist men, women and young people will rally to our national Home Mission churches to distribute packets of information and make contacts in various areas on behalf of the mission churches. Think of what results could be as thousands of homes are contacted and the seed of the gospel is planted. This is a wonderful tool for providing a prospect list that the Home Missions church can use in making important contacts for salvation and church membership.

Denominational leaders will also join in the event as they go out to Home Mission churches and walk the streets with missionaries and their people and minister to them in their services. Many home missionaries plan festivities for this special day that include the leaders of their respective communities. This is another way to get out the word that Free Will Baptists have a church in that city and that their doors are open to any who will come. Home Mission churches are there to help people for the cause of Christ.

Young people seem to enjoy getting together and participating in a constructive activity. They make new friends and sometimes get to see old friends, and everyone enjoys working together. Doing something for the Lord is extremely rewarding. It is a time of sharing what the Lord has done for us as Christians, introducing home missionaries to the people in their designated places of service, and having a time for fun and fellowship as well.

Why not:

1. Plan . . .

to be involved on September 28. A missionary near where you live would be greatly blessed by your concern and assistance.

2. Pray . . .

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

3. Participate . . .

Decide that you are not going to miss this blessing. Get involved and enlist others to join you. If you cannot travel to a Home Missions site, you can participate by praying. You can also be a part by helping financially. Each mission church will be distributing packets of material to homes in their communities. Your gifts would help underwrite the expense of preparing the materials.

4. Prepare . . .

If you plan to be part of Operation Saturation, let me encourage you to prepare your heart. It is not enough for us to focus on being available to the Lord. We must also be useable (II Tim. 2-21). Preparation for this event has the potential of sparking fires of revival among our churches.

Your opportunity will be here again September 28. Home missionaries across America are preparing for Operation Saturation 2002. They will be going into neighborhoods in their cities to let people know they are there. You can help. Everyone can do something. Pray about it and act now. Don't let this opportunity pass you by.

For information about a home missionary you can help or for other information on the ways you can be of service, please contact the Home Missions Department at 877-767-7674 (toll-free) or Master's Men at 877-767-8039 (toll-free). ■

Will You Be A Part of Operation Saturation?

September 28, 2002

Home



Missions

The Family-Friendly Sunday School

By Keith Fletcher
Creative Director, Randall House Publications

A single mom and her two small children, the matriarch with a score of grandchildren, the struggling college student, the harried mom and dad and their five growing children, the lonely widow facing the end of her life alone. Do all these people find a place in your Sunday School? Do your Sunday School classes help equip them to function effectively in the body of Christ?

Sunday School is a wonderful place where people of all ages can learn the Bible and how to apply it to their lives, but not always within the context of "family." Most churches channel children and teens into age-specific, departmentally-graded classes—and with just cause. This proven method focuses on developmentally appropriate educational objectives and is reflected in curriculum from Randall House and most other publishers. In many churches, adult classes are also divided according to age and marital status.

So how do these divisions impact the family? Certainly no one need assume that the Sunday School hour is the only legitimate time and place the family has for Bible study. However, the Sunday School must complement the ministry of parents and grandparents to help members of the younger generation learn about God's mighty deeds as witnessed by the elder generation. The Sunday School must be a place where every family and individual finds a home. It must be a friend to the family.

Sunday School is a family-friendly place when every child and teenager has a committed and compassionate teacher who is prepared to teach an age-appropriate Bible lesson. Trained teachers empowered by God come with prepared hearts and minds, no matter what age group their classes include. Families with young children need to see that the church offers an educational ministry that is consistent in quality and effectiveness from one department to another. The playing field should be level from the toddler to the teen. No parent wants to sacrifice the education of a preschool child for the sake of a dynamic junior high class. The fledgling teacher of the nursery class deserves just as much in resources and respect, prayer and praise as the 50-year veteran teacher of the senior adult class.

Sunday School is a family-friendly place when parents and teachers can work together to make the lesson aim survive in the mind and heart of the student long after the dismissal bell rings. Hands-on Bible learning activities, memory verses, daily Bible readings and take-home papers bring the Bible to life not just on Sunday morning, but throughout the week.

Sunday School is a family-friendly place when teachers recognize the turmoil many children face in their families today. Children of divorced parents often spend alternate weekends or summers at the "other" parent's home and frequently miss out on regular class activities. Teachers need to become familiar with each child's family life and keep in touch when children miss because of parental visits. If one or more of the parents are not supportive of the child's involvement in church, carefully minister to the child as opportunities arise, letting the whole family know that you have their best interests at heart. Don't drive a greater wedge between mom, dad and child by pitting the whole church against an unrepentant spouse or unsupportive parent.

Sunday School is a family-friendly place when teachers help students see the value of inter-generational ministry and education. For example, children's classes can minister to the homebound, teens can organize service projects for the elderly, and adult classes can encourage student missionaries through prayer and financial support. Sunday Schools can sponsor family camp-outs and retreats where the perceived generation gap can be bridged by exciting encounters in God's creation in light of His Word.

Sunday School is a family-friendly place when everyone—the widow, the fatherless, the single parent, the unmarried adult—feels a sense of belonging. Classes become "family" as members minister to each other's needs with a Christ-like spirit. Ministry to every person in the "family of God" must be intentional and individualized. After all, we are all "brothers and sisters," eternally related to one another by the blood of Christ. No one who has saving faith in the Son of God is an orphan. Every family member has a welcome place and a vital role in the kingdom of God. Make sure your Sunday School reflects this truth as it embraces every family and family member. ■

Randall



House



Garnett Reid

A Very Good Place to Start (Matthew 1)

This month we cross the bridge into the New Testament with our look at neglected chapters in the Bible. Where better to start than the first chapter? Matthew 1 may not get the attention it deserves for two reasons. The first is obvious: just look at all those names. Verses 1-17 form a genealogy—a family tree, something everyone just *loves* to read.

Seriously, the reader might ask why the New Testament begins with a list of names. Shouldn't we expect the gospel account to begin with a story, some gripping vignette, anything to grab our attention? But a genealogy?

Another reason we too quickly flip by the first page or two of the New Testament is our familiarity with *Luke's* account of Jesus' birth. After all, that's where we find Elizabeth, Gabriel and Mary. Luke records Mary's *Magnificat* and Zechariah's prophecy. He, not Matthew, mentions the decree from Caesar Augustus, the swaddling clothes, the manger, the shepherds and "peace on earth, good will to men."

Yet the first chapter of Matthew plays a vital role in scripture, linking Old Testament prophecies to New Testament fulfillment and introducing the whole world to the Messiah who is at once both the son of David and the Son of God.

Jesus, Son of David: His Earthly Heritage (1:1-17)

Written genealogies were important in the ancient world. They often provided legal evidence to settle inheritance questions and property disputes. In Judaism, these family records traced tribal descent—vital information when it came to official positions and duties, at the temple, for example.

In a larger sense, genealogies give continuity to biblical history. They provide a sense of identity as they remind us that God cares for individuals.

Think of these lists as an ancient "ID card" for each person they include.

This particular genealogy is critical to the purpose of Matthew's gospel. The Jews questioned Jesus' background: Is He related to David (John 7:40-52)? Is He a Samaritan (John 8:48)? Is He illegitimate (John 8:41), the son of Joseph and Mary (Luke 4:22), or really the Son of God (Luke 22:70)?

Matthew 1 stakes a decisive claim: "Jesus Christ, the son of David, the son of Abraham." Jesus is indeed the Messiah, and His earthly heritage verifies His identity.

Three other facets of Matthew 1:1-17 deserve comment. First, the structure of this unit divides Israelite history into three periods of 14 generations each: (1) from the patriarchs to the monarchy (2-6); (2) the monarchy, ending with the Babylonian captivity (7-11); and (3) the post-captivity era up to the coming of Christ (12-16). This layout is in keeping with Matthew's purpose of tracing God's plan of redemption through history.

A second matter is the relationship between this genealogy and that of Luke 3. Why the differences between them? What is their relationship? One possibility is that Matthew traces Joseph's heritage while Luke provides Mary's. Another suggestion is that Matthew 1:1-17 gives a "royal" genealogy of Joseph, including his ancestors who were kings in the line going back to David (for more on these and other possibilities, see D. A. Carson, "Matthew" in *The Expositor's Bible Commentary*).

Third, Matthew's record surprises us with some unexpected names. While some omissions exist in the genealogy (compare v. 8 with 1 Chron. 3:11-12), Matthew does something almost unheard of in these ancient records: he includes women! Tamar, Rahab, Ruth and Bathsheba (though he does not name her)—all of whom likely were non-Israelites—remind us that God's

grace extends to men and women from all nations and all kinds of backgrounds.

Jesus, Son of God: His Heavenly Father (1:18-25)

The Greek word translated "generation" (*genesis*) in 1:1 is the same word translated "birth" in 1:18, marking the beginning of the second part of the chapter. If 1:1-17 traces the historical record of Jesus' earthly origin, 1:18-25 features God's supernatural working to bring about His birth. Jesus' nativity is a miracle, a one-of-a-kind event testifying of His deity.

Several parts of the story support this claim. Mary is with child "of (from, Greek *ek*) the Holy Ghost" (1:18, 20). Joseph is not the father (note the careful wording of 1:16 also); yet no illicit premarital relations are involved. This "special delivery" is from none other than God Himself.

When Joseph's integrity prompts him to end the engagement by a quiet "divorce," an angel appears to him and explains the truth behind Mary's condition. The angel even calls Joseph "son of David," linking the impending birth to the record of 1:1-17.

Further proof of Jesus' divine nature comes in verse 21 where the angel reveals the significance of His name and mission. "JESUS," the equivalent of the Old Testament "Joshua," means "the LORD saves." This one named "Jesus" will "save his people from their sins." Another one of His names, "Emmanuel," meaning "God with us," reminds us who Jesus really is (v. 23).

Finally, Matthew affirms that all of these events fulfill Old Testament prophecy. Seven centuries earlier Isaiah had announced the miraculous fact that a "virgin" would deliver this Savior.

Who is Jesus, then? People still debate the question. Matthew 1 is a good place to begin to find the answer. ■

THE PASTOR'S WIFE



Melba Hibbard

This Is God's Will

By Melba Hibbard

Hopes and expectations run high when you move to a new pastorate. Doubt should be the last thing on your mind but it seems to slither in like a serpent in a garden.

After only a week at our new church, Susan invited me to lunch to get acquainted. Our conversation soon turned to our common denominator, the church. Susan reaffirmed what I already knew: Due to much prayer, we were in the right place, my husband was the right man, and we would have a wonderful ministry in the right congregation.

I spoke with wisdom (obviously the Holy Spirit), "Hang on to that thought. Keep the confirmation you've received from God in your heart. It will soon be tested." It was.

The Egypt Connection

As we packed, prodded and poked everything we owned into the back of the U-Haul®, we were sure this was the right move. But when we rolled up at our new address, doubts started popping into mind as all of our stuff exploded out the back door. It didn't take long to forget all that God had done to get us to this point.

We began to grumble. Everything that went sour was all Dad's fault for "bringing us to this foreign land."

We would have rather stayed where we were. The Hibbard family sounded like first cousins to the family of Israel.

How did we get through the first

round of doubt? The promise of Romans 8:28. We recited, "And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to His purpose," and again received affirmation, "This is God's will." Those four words would sustain us all until we came to believe it with our whole heart.

Dropping Anchor

Our china is my proverbial anchor. Twenty-five years ago, like most couples, we registered for a china pattern before our wedding. The place settings arrived packed in sturdy boxes. Just right for storing and . . . you guessed it, moving. They traveled almost the entire stretch of California and had never once been permanently unpacked.

Science tells us, "An object in motion wants to stay in motion, and an object at rest wants to stay at rest." It's true. It would have been easy to keep on movin'. We had not dropped anchor here.

There was no name to list on the children's school emergency cards, no doctor or dentist in town with a chart which bore our name and no friends to reminisce about old times. At the first sign of trouble it would have been easier to cut and run than to unpack the china.

If I was confident just a few weeks ago, a few days ago, even a few hours ago that this was right, God hadn't changed His mind. ". . . For I know whom I have believed and am persuad-

ed that He is able to keep that which I have committed unto Him against that day," (II Tim 1:12).

And committed, I had: my husband, his ministry, our children, their education, my job, our home, our future. I found Him to be trustworthy in the past, so I dropped anchor and unpacked the china because . . . this is God's will.

After the Honeymoon

New pastorates have a honeymoon period. But after the honeymoon how do you stay when doubts arise? Paul answers it like this, "Being confident of this very thing, that He which hath begun a good work in you will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ," (Phil 1:6).

Paul was able to endure the beatings, imprisonment and persecution because he was confident . . . this is God's will. It will require this same assurance to stay through the ups and downs, the thick and thin of ministry at your church.

Even when you've prayed, been convinced and acted on God's leading, doubts may still haunt you. It's then you stand firm in knowing "this is God's will." It's been enough to sustain me and will be enough for you too. ■

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ABOUT THE WRITER: Mrs. Melba Hibbard is active in the California Women Active for Christ. She is a member of Village Chapel Free Will Baptist Church in Ceres, California, where her husband, John, pastors.

Don't Forget! Pastor Appreciation Day
September 8
(And Don't Forget His Wife!)

THE PREACHER'S PERSPECTIVE



Randy Sawyer

Seaside Sabbatical

Late! Deadline missed! That was the message I received when I called in last week. I knew exactly what it meant. My articles for *Contact* are to be submitted by the first of each month. Usually I'm right on schedule, but not this month. This time I'm a week late and counting.

The reason for my tardiness is simple. I'm on vacation, and it's been difficult for me to force myself to get down to work. I realize I should have completed the task before leaving town, but alas, I did not—too many things to get done, too many time demands. So I might as well get it over with. Here goes!

Need for a Seaside Sabbatical

As I write this article, I'm sitting comfortably on the balcony of a condo we rented in a little seaside community on the Atlantic coast. The sun is just cresting over the horizon and salubrious breezes fill the morning air with the taste and smell of the ocean. Not much is happening here, which is exactly why my wife and I chose to spend the first two weeks of July on this island.

We needed a few days away from cell-phones, call-waiting, answering machines, deadlines and demands. Also, we looked forward to spending time with our children, whose schedules seem almost as crammed as ours these days.

Now when I say two weeks away, that's exactly what I mean. That includes two Sundays as well. I know what you're thinking. Preachers can't possibly be away that long, especially when it comes to Sunday services. That's how I used to feel.

In fact, in the past my vacations have been ordered just like most other pastors I know—leaving on Monday and returning the following Saturday. That way, no Sundays are missed and everything continues to flow smoothly. The min-

istry is too important for vacations and holidays, we feel. And the church can't possibly get along without the pastor, not even for one weekend, much less two.

Benefits of a Seaside Sabbatical

That's the way I used to feel, I said. I now believe that there are many compelling reasons for a pastor to get away for an extended period of time. A *seaside sabbatical* (or mountaintop or any destination of your choice for that matter) is beneficial for *stress relief*.

Ministers and their families are called on to carry an enormous amount of emotional, mental and spiritual stress. Even in the best of situations, the ministry is packed with pressure. Pastors must hold the hands of those who face sickness and death, must bear up under intense scrutiny and harsh criticism, and must suffer spiritual attack for the entire congregation. Added to these are the difficulties of leadership in a largely volunteer organization.

A *seaside sabbatical* is also important for the pastor's *spiritual renewal*. Sometimes the most spiritual thing a man of God can do himself is "be still" before the Lord. Likewise, at times the best thing a preacher can do for his people is get away to replenish and re-fill his spiritual tank.

The average preacher must prepare three to four Bible lessons and messages each week. In larger, multi-ministry churches, the speaking demands can be even greater. The work necessary to be fully prepared for every speaking event is a tremendous challenge. A preacher knows that sometimes he runs out of gas, so to speak, and he knows when there is nothing left in the well to bring up in the bucket.

A few weeks away from the pulpit serve to re-energize the preacher and his preaching for the days ahead. So a *seaside sabbatical* provides retreat and rest

from the significant pressures of the ministry, helps replenish and refill the pastor's spiritual reservoir, and re-energizes his mind and body for future challenges.

Suggestions for a Seaside Sabbatical

In order to make a *seaside sabbatical* meaningful, let me offer a few suggestions that I have found helpful. First, make it *longer rather than shorter*. That is, take a two-week vacation each year as a minimum. If you leave town on Saturday for example, you may have one Sunday off, but during your week away you must prepare for your return Sunday. That means working while on vacation, which is not really a vacation at all.

By the way, I realize that money is an issue here. For that reason planning ahead is crucial, and searching for bargain destinations a necessity. But it can be done.

Second, make it *less intense rather than more*. That is, don't schedule something every minute you're away. Give yourself plenty of downtime; sleep later, rest longer, relax more. Don't try to pack in so many activities that you will later need a vacation from your vacation.

If reading is your thing like it is mine, don't read theology or sermon books. In short, stay away from books related to what you do. Read novels, biographies, and short stories. Give your mind a break as well as your body. Take long walks with your wife, but as you do, avoid churchy topics. She's tired of hearing you complain about your work anyway. Give her a break as well, and give her your undivided attention for a change.

Word to Laymen about a Seaside Sabbatical

Finally, let me offer a word to laymen on behalf of the pastor. Every four years or so give your pastor an extend-

ed *seaside sabbatical*. By that I mean, give him a month off, and even take a special "sabbatical offering" to help with his expenses. He serves you faithfully, and is available 24/7. He feeds your family spiritually, and he is God's gift for building up the body of Christ of which you are a part.

Such a pastor is worthy of double honor (1 Tim. 5:17-18). Don't take a begrudging attitude toward the man of God; generously provide for his needs in every way. I promise you, when he returns from a *seaside sabbatical*, the fire and passion you once observed in his preaching and ministry will be rekindled, and his desire to serve the body of Christ will be more intense than ever.

P. S. By the way, Pastor, don't do what I did and leave yourself with an article to write while you're away. That cuts too much time out of your relaxation. But at least I have finished. Now, let me get back to those salubrious breezes and my seaside sabbatical. ■

Directory Update

FLORIDA

Tim Hutchinson to Marvin Chapel Church, Marianna from First Church, Dublin, GA

Bill Buckland to Wesconnett Church, Jacksonville

Ed Hutchinson to Pleasant Hill Church, Bonifay

ILLINOIS

Nick Hollis to Oak Grove Church, Scheller

MICHIGAN

Tom McCullough to Central Church, Royal Oak from Free Will Baptist Bible College as missions program coordinator

SOUTH CAROLINA

Lee Patrick to First Church, Florence

Lamar Smith to New Town Church, Lake City

Steve Satterfield to New Covenant Church, Spartanburg

Rusty Conyers to Jefferson Road Church, Sumter

TEXAS

Mike Fields to First Church, Carthage

THE TOGETHER WAY

June 2002

Receipts:	Designated	CO-OP	Total	Year To Date Designated	Year To Date CO-OP	Year To Date Total
State						
Alabama	\$ 288.55	\$.00	\$ 288.55	\$ 2,488.24	\$ 1,200.92	\$ 3,689.16
Arizona	.00	.00	.00	.00	154.40	154.40
Arkansas	12,597.35	22,260.71	34,858.06	69,418.07	107,752.51	177,170.58
California	.00	1,113.95	1,113.95	.00	6,252.78	6,252.78
Colorado	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00
Delaware	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00
Florida	137.92	3,402.00	3,539.92	408.56	5,670.00	6,078.56
Georgia	30,427.19	1,556.15	31,983.34	196,932.20	9,760.88	206,693.08
Hawaii	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00
Idaho	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00
Illinois	13,210.76	2,257.53	15,468.29	74,172.85	12,320.66	86,493.51
Indiana	.00	60.00	60.00	9,690.85	1,153.04	10,843.89
Iowa	.00	.00	.00	.00	2,058.78	2,058.78
Kansas	.00	67.61	67.61	26.55	504.53	531.08
Kentucky	.00	372.41	372.41	1,128.66	5,168.82	6,297.48
Louisiana	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00
Maryland	.00	.00	.00	.00	131.25	131.25
Michigan	12,681.58	958.72	13,640.30	115,458.11	15,733.38	131,191.49
Mississippi	20,015.68	1,170.11	21,185.79	72,869.09	4,052.28	76,921.37
Missouri	62,190.57	13,151.95	75,342.52	276,416.93	96,762.45	373,179.38
Montana	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00
Nebraska	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00
New Jersey	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00
New Mexico	490.08	35.04	525.12	4,007.14	242.84	4,249.98
North Carolina	318.06	25.00	343.06	7,453.55	16,954.31	24,407.86
Ohio	15,529.19	1,859.49	17,388.68	98,832.08	18,998.36	117,830.44
Oklahoma	48,410.08	11,735.30	60,145.38	324,139.45	73,741.08	397,880.53
South Carolina	34,272.45	40.18	34,312.63	203,448.01	245.69	203,693.70
South Dakota	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00
Tennessee	10,419.84	2,294.84	12,714.68	72,282.04	9,177.55	81,459.59
Texas	10,194.77	281.62	10,476.39	64,347.13	2,412.41	66,759.54
Virginia	1,352.40	82.20	1,434.60	2,500.45	478.69	2,979.14
Virgin Islands	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00
West Virginia	3,254.42	81.94	3,336.36	12,071.47	717.73	12,789.20
Wisconsin	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00
Canada	.00	.00	.00	3,042.19	59.12	3,101.31
Northwest Association	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00
Northeast Association	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00
Other	.00	.03	.03	.00	(.18)	(.18)
Totals	\$ 275,790.89	\$ 62,806.78	\$ 338,597.67	\$ 1,611,133.62	\$ 391,704.28	\$ 2,002,837.90
Disbursements:						
Executive Office	\$ 1,456.37	\$ 28,263.04	\$ 29,719.41	\$ 11,351.51	\$ 176,267.02	\$ 187,618.53
Foreign Missions	171,257.43	7,945.04	179,202.47	932,184.01	49,550.55	981,734.56
FWBBC	23,888.70	7,945.04	31,833.74	151,277.46	49,550.55	200,828.01
Home Missions	70,847.98	6,217.87	77,065.85	453,709.27	38,778.75	492,488.02
Retirement & Insurance	296.88	4,836.11	5,132.99	2,226.47	30,161.26	32,387.73
Master's Men	274.87	4,836.11	5,110.98	2,302.38	30,161.26	32,463.64
Comm. for Theo. Integrity	41.04	172.74	213.78	424.97	1,077.16	1,502.13
FWB Foundation	253.55	2,072.61	2,326.16	1,857.03	12,926.25	14,783.28
Historical Commission	21.47	172.74	194.21	297.57	1,077.16	1,374.73
Music Commission	21.47	172.74	194.21	160.44	1,077.16	1,237.60
Media Commission	91.04	172.74	263.78	707.86	1,077.16	1,785.02
Hillsdale FWB College	1,877.99	.00	1,877.99	13,701.94	.00	13,701.94
Other	5,462.10	.00	5,462.10	40,932.71	.00	40,932.71
Totals	\$ 275,790.89	\$ 62,806.78	\$ 338,597.67	\$ 1,611,133.62	\$ 391,704.28	\$ 2,002,837.90



Thomas Marberry

The Musings of a Man

By George C. Lee

(Goldsboro, NC: Muser Publishing Co., 2002, 276 pp. paperback, \$19.95).

The author of this entertaining book is George C. Lee, a veteran Free Will Baptist pastor who retired from the pastorate of the Victory FWB Church in Goldsboro, North Carolina. He continues to serve that congregation as its minister of music.

George C. Lee was born in Calhoun City, Mississippi, on May 19, 1931, the son of a Free Will Baptist pastor and his wife. He was the only son; there were seven daughters, one of whom died in infancy. George grew up during a difficult time in America's history. His earliest memories are of the depression days of the 1930s and the beginning of World War II.

He grew up in a home that was poor in this world's goods but rich in the things of God. As he writes, "Mom and Dad instilled virtues into my mind from which I never departed. Honesty, arriving on time, paying my bills and being a good citizen was what I was taught."

This book is basically a family memoir. Lee describes it as "an effort to record some of my early childhood experiences while growing up in a small Mississippi town. Musings was written to leave a written trail for my children."

In reality, the book is much more than an enjoyable family history. It reflects a considerable amount of thought on a lifetime of Christian service. It confronts the trials, difficulties and blessings of 40 years of pastoral ministry. It offers the kind of lessons that can only be learned as one walks with God for an extended period of time.

We may think that parents and other people have little influence on our development. As this book clearly shows, that is not the case. Much of the content of this book is devoted to stories about people. The two characters mentioned most often are Lee's parents. Although both have been dead for many years, their influence lives on. His father was a pioneer preacher

in Mississippi. He never made much money; during his 60-year ministerial career he pastored mostly small rural churches. In the early years he traveled by horse; in later years he got an automobile.

As the author explains, "When my father would travel to his preaching appointments, sometimes his pay was a few gallons of syrup, some eggs, a slab of bacon and perhaps a bushel of corn. He never got much money. No one had much."

The book also notes the great contribution George's mother made to his life. Lee describes her, "My mother did not seek the spotlight. She was not the one out front. She never marched in a parade or sang a solo in church. She was not the president of the Woman's Auxiliary. She never taught a Sunday School lesson as far as I know. But she was faithful. She was there when you needed her and often came to my rescue when I was in trouble with my dad."

The author confronts frankly the difficulties that servants of Christ often face. He talks about the financial burdens of completing an education while trying to support a young and growing family. He remembers leaving Free Will Baptist Bible College and going to a mission work in Nebraska. The Home Missions Department fell on hard times, and he received no pay for several months.

The author writes briefly about some of the difficult days that our denomination encountered in the late 1950s and early 1960s. He and other pastors were pressured to support certain aspects of the North Carolina FWB State Convention. They were silenced and excommunicated when they refused. Such memories are difficult to share, but they are a part of what it means to serve the Lord in good times and in bad.

Sometimes the author turns philosopher and shares conclusions he has

reached. As he reflects upon a well-planned Presbyterian funeral service, he writes, "I used to think there was no fundamental church other than Free Will Baptists. As I got older, I discovered that is not true. Some may do things a bit differently from us, but in reality much of what is done in our churches is not found in the Bible. We are all creatures of tradition and habits that have been passed down. That does not make them wrong but we must not be bound by tradition."

Sometimes he turns preacher. For example, he posits that, "God does not require perfection from us, but He does ask for our faithfulness. He can and will use just about any old clod." He also writes, "Bloom where you are planted. Stay where God places you and He will use you."

The book is well written and easy to read. There are no long chapters; the material is generally presented in one or two page sketches. In one sense it is a light and amusing book; in another sense it is a much more profound work. It challenges the reader to think and to examine his own walk with the Lord. ■

Coming Next Month

- ★ Tribute to L. C. Johnson
- ★ What Happened to My Teens?
- ★ Takers and Givers
- ★ Gone to the Dogs
- ★ When God Comes Near



Jack Williams

New Sheriff in Town

There's a new sheriff in town. He's a brown-eyed Okie who doesn't wear cowboy boots, a husband still holding hands with the same girl after 29 years and a preacher whose sermons were stolen by an ex-con who lived behind the church.

The name on the badge says "Keith Burden." The 48-year-old six-footer is the first graduate of Hillsdale Free Will Baptist College to be elected executive secretary of the National Association of Free Will Baptists.

He preached his best and worst sermons under the big top at the Free Will Baptist national convention. The best one came with 1,200 people listening during the 1981 Bible Conference in Louisville, Kentucky—a 40-minute sizzler titled "Beyond the Burning Bush" that brought the house down. Keith says he never felt anything like it before or since, a day when the pulpit seemed charged with thunder, lightning and spiritual rain.

His worst sermon came three years later when he fired blanks as his homily on the Ethiopian Eunuch crashed and burned during the Sunday night service at the National Youth Conference in Little Rock. The red-faced Okie admits he put his size 10½ foot in his mouth. When someone finally prayed the benediction, he wanted to run and hide rather than face the NYC sponsors.

But he didn't run. He confronted one of life's most embarrassing moments and lived to preach again. Two men surrendered to the ministry even after hearing him explain to 1,000 teenagers why the Ethiopian was called a eunuch. Umm, let's just keep this between us.

Except for three years in California, his 27-year pastoral ministry has been an Oklahoma ballad. He pastored four Oklahoma churches: First FWB Church, Holdenville (1975-'77), First FWB Church, Locust Grove (1977-'80, 1999-2002), West Tulsa FWB Church, Tulsa (1983-'87) and First FWB Church,

Ada (1987-'99).

Keith is a man of The Book and has retired four preaching Bibles, including a Thompson Chain Reference, a Nelson and a Royal. He now preaches from a Holman Bible—text only—no references, no concordance. Yep, it's a King James Version, in case you wondered.

He's also a reader. His personal library includes nearly 1,000 volumes of commentaries, dictionaries, biographies, lexicons and more. He relaxes while reading after educator and preacher, Haddon Robinson. His favorite book is Martin Lloyd Jones' analysis of the Sermon on the Mount.

Keith started preaching as a 16-year-old high school junior in Poteau under the ministry of Pastor Bailey Thompson. He remembers a time during his freshman year at Hillsdale College when he wanted to quit, transfer to another college and play football with his former high school teammates.

But when Bailey Thompson, his pastor for 17 years, heard about those plans, he drove four hours one-way to spend 10 minutes with Keith in a parked car on the Hillsdale campus.

"When Bailey got through with me," Keith chuckles, "I was a changed man. My grade-point rose, my attitude cleared up and my future as a Free Will Baptist preacher was firmly set. Who knew what a difference 10 minutes could make? He's my hero!"

Before the graduate school at Free Will Baptist Bible College closed, Keith earned 12 semester hours of graduate work there. He completed a master's degree at Moody Bible Institute Graduate School. He's the only executive secretary to attend two Free Will Baptist colleges.

He knows his way around a business meeting. He learned the ropes at the district level serving on credentials committees, mission boards and executive boards, then moving on to district moderator. He spent 18 years as assistant clerk of the Nation-

al Association and 15 years as clerk of the Oklahoma State Association.

For the past three years, he has served as clerk of the National Association and moderator of the Oklahoma State Association. He handles a gavel or a yellow legal pad with equal skill.

He's a writer, a statistician, lead singer in a men's quartet and an admirer of legendary Oklahoma football coach, Bud Wilkinson. His most prized possession is his great-great grandfather's Bible that traces his spiritual heritage back to the 1840s. He plays a guitar well enough not to be booed.

He's the father of two daughters and became a grandfather in June. Debbie, his talented wife, is both a preacher's wife and a preacher's daughter; her dad is the late Jerry Dudley. She's a pianist, children's choir director, leader in Women Active for Christ and served seven years on the Hillsdale College Board of Trustees.

The new executive secretary—a Boomer Sooner fan with every ounce of his 210 pounds—tolerates cats, thinks dogs should live in the yard, can eat his weight in fried chicken and hates chicken livers. For what it's worth, he also dislikes peaches, pears and pineapples and will not shed a tear if he never sees another banana. Chiggers and mosquitos walk a mile out of their way to bite him.

There's a new sheriff in town who doesn't wear spurs but is fast on the draw with his computer. He likes helping people become better at who they are and what they are. He plans to listen when the people talk, learn what the people want and lead where the people will follow.

It's high noon, and the name on the badge says "Keith Burden." You can count on him to tip his hat to the ladies and take his turn at the heavy end of the log. Look for him next year at your state meeting. He'll be the guy in the white hat. ■

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REST OF THE FAMILY OFFERING • SEPT 29