

CONTACT

Official Publication

Free Will Baptists

October 2002

A black and white portrait of Dr. L. C. Johnson, an older man with glasses, wearing a suit and tie. The portrait is the central focus of the cover.

Dr. L. C. Johnson
1914 - 2002

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THE SECRETARY SPEAKS



Melvin Worthington

Patmos Postscript

This final editorial dealing with the Asian Assemblies summarizes the lessons learned from the letters by way of inferences and implications set forth in Revelation 2-3. The seven letters are relevant today and for the church in any age.

The letters were addressed to seven churches that existed in John's day, and they deal with circumstances in John's day. Similar conditions and circumstances exist today. The spiritual needs of the seven Asian Assemblies are like those found in varying degrees in all churches of all times. These seven letters were dictated to John by the Lord and addressed to seven very real churches under John's ministry at the time he penned them. They are Christ's *final message to the Church*.

Present/Contemporary Value

The warnings and exhortations were particularly designed to address problems and needs of congregations existing at that time.

These letters were not from an absent Lord, but a Lord who was engaged in the solemn act of inspection and decision. They are introduced impressively, implying their solemnity and importance. They are a vital part of Revelation and contain the last words we have directly from Him.

Permanent/Continual Value

These addresses reveal a condition lasting through the entire history of the Church and imply a process in Church history. Ephesus left its first love; Smyrna was persecuted; Pergamos patronized

the world; Thyatira allowed corruption to exist in its midst; Sardis needed reformation and revival; Philadelphia had an open door for evangelism; Laodicea was in danger of apostasy.

Their supreme permanent value lies in the unveiling of Christ as the Lord of His Church. The letters have a representative character and comprehend the entire Church of all places and ages. No part of the New Testament is more searching than these letters.

Prophetical/Chronological Value

There is a measure of truth contained in this view. These letters can be pictorial and prophetic. The professed church is a mixed society, embracing the intermingling of good and evil from its beginning to end. Christ acknowledges that the evil is constantly cumulative and growing.

The grave matters that have disrupted, divided, distracted and despoiled the Church throughout history are set forth. They are Christ's own history of His Church. They are Christ's own criticisms upon all its characteristic features for nearly 2,000 years.

Practical/Comprehensive Value

These addresses are a comprehensive warning from Christ to His Church. They are still practical for the Church today. Churches in contem-

porary society need to hear what the Spirit is saying to the churches today.

The church at Ephesus points out the danger of leaving our first love, that fresh ardor and devotion to Christ. The church at Smyrna addresses the danger of the fear of suffering. In the modern day when persecution of the saints has been revived, the Church may well heed the exhortation, "Fear not."

The church at Pergamos warns us of the constant danger of doctrinal compromise, which is often the first step toward complete defection. The present day Church that has forsaken so many fundamentals of biblical faith needs to heed this warning. The church at Thyatira illustrates the danger of moral compromise. The Church today needs to take heed of its departure from moral standards.

The church at Sardis addresses the danger of spiritual deadness, of orthodoxy without life or mere outward appearance, of being, like the Pharisees, whited sepulchers. The church at Philadelphia, commended by our Lord, is nevertheless warned against the danger of not holding fast. The church is exhorted to keep "the word of my patience," to maintain the "little strength" that they did have and to patiently wait for the coming of the Lord.

The church at Laodicea records the crowning indictment, a warning against the danger of lukewarmness, of self-sufficiency and of being unconscious of their desperate spiritual need.

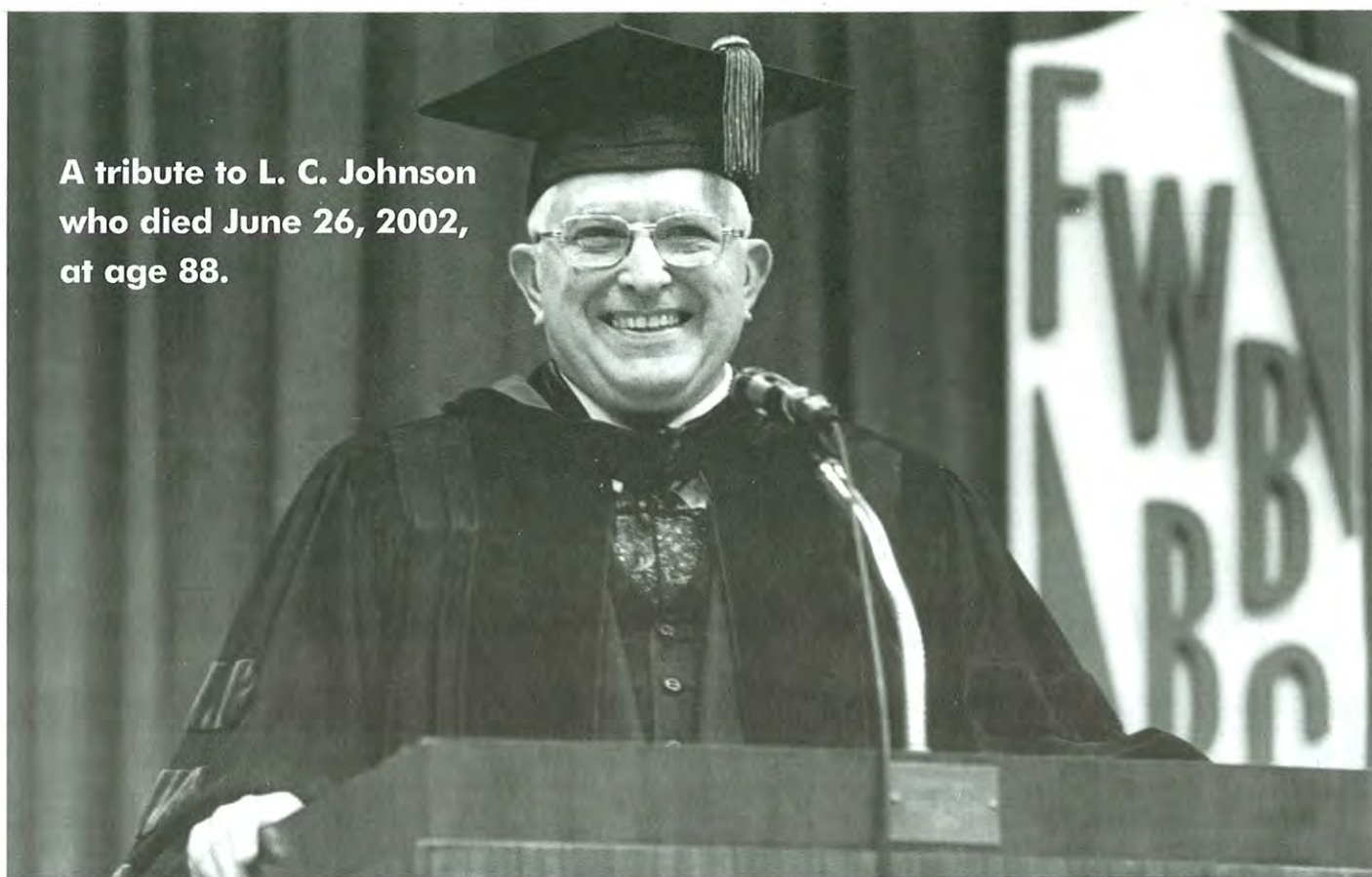
Christ's admonition, "He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches" (Rev. 3:22) is relevant for churches today. ■

The Secretary's Schedule

October 2002

6-11 IFOFWBC General Assembly
Dickson, Tennessee

A tribute to L. C. Johnson
who died June 26, 2002,
at age 88.



L. C. Johnson: 20th Century Visionary

By Robert E. Picirilli, Retired Dean/Registrar, FWBBC

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. His leadership has been manifested in various ways: pastor, moderator and speaker at various associations, including the National Association, member of the Board of the Accrediting Association of Bible Colleges. But the main reason his name will be "writ large" among us is his leadership at Free Will Baptist Bible College, from its founding.

Linton Carroll Johnson was born February 3, 1914, to Thomas and Mary Jane Johnson. That Linton grew up an only son with four sisters—Lollie, Lola, Lexie and Lennie—may help us understand something of the personality of the man. One thing is sure: For us who know him, he has always been the very epitome of a southern gentleman. He must have learned that very early.

The Johnsons were part of the "landed gentry" of southern, rural Georgia. They farmed for a living, and the young Linton learned early to do his share of the work, including plowing—though given his dignity that may be hard for us to imagine.

During high school, he worked part time in the Quality Grocery Store in nearby Alma, where his leadership qualities were soon recognized and he rose to the unofficial position of store manager. That is *not* difficult for us to believe.

The Johnson family attended church at Pine Level. At the age of 14, Linton Johnson went forward during a revival to "join the church," as invitations were often worded in those days. Three years later, under the ministry of I. J. Blackwelder, he found the settled assurance of salvation that he had struggled hard for. He perceived that seeking, and the resolution of it, was a source of great confidence and strength.

Here are a few things about L. C. Johnson that you may not know.

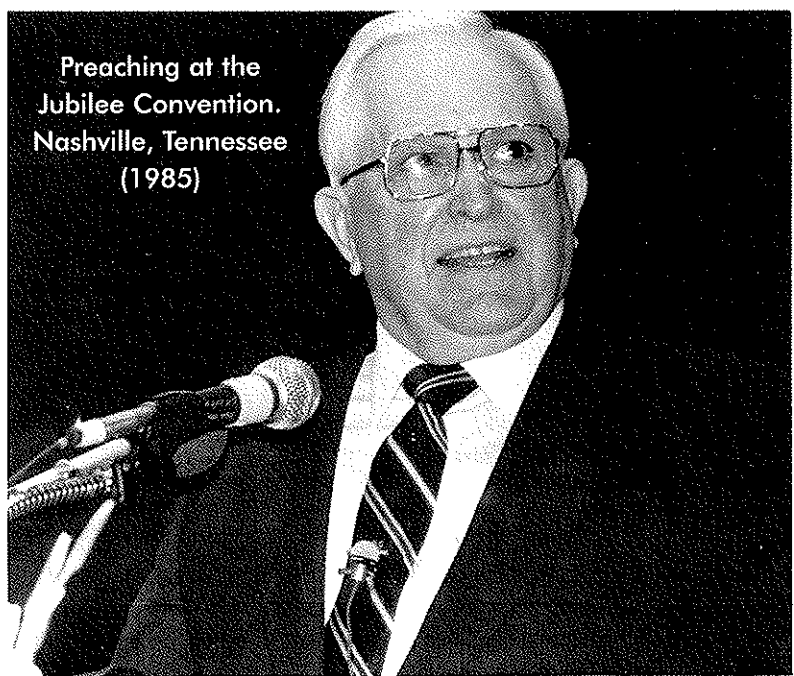
- As a teenager, he often led services in his church.
- In spite of the difficulties of the depression years, he completed a year at Middle Georgia College.
- When his pastor, J. R. Davidson, would ask him to preach in his absence, he began his messages insisting he was not a preacher.
- He agreed to be licensed at age 19 because Brother Davidson and some of the Pine Level men felt he should.
- When he was ordained a year later, in 1934, he had already become pastor of his home church.
- When he enrolled at Bob Jones University in Cleveland, Tennessee, in 1936, his first date—arranged by friend and fellow student Chester Pelt—was Ruth Masser, who graduated later that year and had to wait three years to become his wife. By the way, he *mailed* her engagement ring to her for Christmas 1939; and when they were wed in March 1940, their honeymoon consisted of riding back to Georgia with the Pelts.

- At Bob Jones, along with his studies and long-distance courtship, he was both his society president and leader of the intersociety basketball championship team for three years.
- He was also selected "Mr. Pulchritude," for being the handsomest man on campus, in both his junior and senior years.
- While still a student, he became the commuting pastor of Ashland City FWB Church in middle Tennessee. This twice-monthly, 150-mile trip, one way, was usually made by train and bus, and the church paid him \$25 for each visit.
- Not long after graduation, he accepted the pastoral call back to Georgia. In 1940, for example, he was pastor at four churches: Glennville, Ebenezer, Alobaha and Stoney Hill.
- At the 1942 session of the National Association, the Board of Education and Brother L. R. Ennis asked him to head up the new Bible school, scheduled to open in September. He said he could not understand this, but could only submit, once again, to the obviously spiritual judgment of the older, more experienced men who seemed sure of God's leadership.

And so it came to pass, that on September 1, 1942, Brother L. C. Johnson arrived at 3609 Richland Avenue, with his family, to prepare for the opening of the new Bible school on September 15. He and his family, along with all the student body, moved into the building and started what we might call a "great experiment": an attempt to establish a successful educational program for a denomination without one.



Preaching at the
Jubilee Convention.
Nashville, Tennessee
(1985)



Indeed, this was education for a people who were not all that sure they wanted education. To do that is not an easy task. Nonetheless, we shall have to judge, at this point 60 years later, that the great experiment has been successful. That success can be attributed, more than to any other one person, to Dr. L. C. Johnson.

Here are some of the important things we must not overlook:

- While some of those first leaders thought only in terms of a Bible institute, Dr. Johnson led the new college to a well-rounded program that includes both sound biblical content and a generous care of Christian liberal arts.
- Some of the most important features of life at Free Will Baptist Bible College were begun by Dr. Johnson, including the annual Bible Conference and the requirement of Christian Service assignments for all students.
- From its inception, the Bible College has emphasized missions and evangelism. These are largely due to things Dr. Johnson did: bringing Miss Laura Belle Barnard to the faculty that first year, for example; and the beginning of the Christian Workers' Association for soul-winning efforts.
- When the Bible College was founded, there was little teaching about the assurance of salvation in the denomination. That has changed for the better, and the lion's share of the credit must go to Dr. Johnson, who often had to withstand personal attacks as a result of his emphasis on being saved and kept by faith alone.
- There was also little theological sophistication in those days. Dr. Johnson undertook courses like Arminian theology and literally introduced a denomination to its own theological heritage.
- Furthermore, there were many different ideas abroad about Christian living. Dr. Johnson insisted that this institution maintain high standards of clean, Christian living, and through that influenced a denomination.
- At that point in time, most Free Will Baptist churches had part-time pastors. Dr. Johnson gave the college a vision of full-time ministry and of a conscientious, faithful pastorate majoring in the Word of God.

Any number of such things might be mentioned. A good way to summarize is to point out what may not be so obvious. When the Bible College began, the denomination might literally have been led in any of several different directions. Education has that potential—for bane or blessing.

Free Will Baptist Bible College helped shape the course of the denomination for a new day. At the helm, Dr.

L. C. Johnson shaped the course of the college.

For those of us who were there with him for some of that time, there are many things to remember.

- Who can forget his calm thumbing through the pages of his New Testament and Psalms during the opening chapel song?
- Who can forget the times he called out the name of someone sleeping in chapel?
- Who can forget the picture he often painted, of preachers standing before God with mimeograph ink on their hands?
- Who can forget his admiration for the determination of a bulldog?
- Who can forget his admonition to pastors against sleeping in and letting the milk sour on the front porch, or the morning paper yellow in the sun?
- Who can forget the marvelous devotional impact of the Psalms, or the eminently practical lessons from the Proverbs?
- Who can forget those rare occasions when serious misbehavior got him really riled and he shot right from the hip—but always shot straight and true?

How does one summarize or characterize such a man? We can only be selective, at best. Here are four things that stand out, things that any tribute to him must surely include.

Rich Devotional Life

It is altogether clear that he was a man with a rich devotional life. Nothing else can account for the depth of the extemporaneous sermons, or his readiness to talk about the Word at the drop of a hat. Some of us have heard him speak in chapel, literally, for years on end. What seems clear, as unbelievable as it sounds, is that he never preached the same sermon twice.

Christian Gentleman

As already mentioned, L. C. Johnson was himself the definition of a “Christian gentleman.” He was equally at home on the farm and at the finest banquet table, the very model of refinement, modesty and restraint. You never heard any shady story from his lips. He was never crude. He was always courteous and temperate. The closest he ever got to having fun at someone else’s expense was when he introduced Herman Hersey and Bill Gardner and observed, wryly, that we certainly were not going to have any “long-



Johnson explains FWBBC construction to campus guest Rolla Smith.

haired” music that day! Even such innocent fun was so out of character that we all rolled with laughter.

Strong Character

Closely related, Dr. Johnson was a man of right and strong character, clean and firm in his convictions. His life matched his preaching, and his preaching held forth the highest standards. Dr. Johnson’s words and life upheld qualities like honesty, purity, graciousness and right.

Man of Vision

Dr. Johnson was always a man of vision—indeed, a man far ahead of his times. He was not ignorant of the hurdles; in fact, he saw them more clearly than most. But in spite of them he saw—always realistically, however—what Free Will Baptists might be, and what Free Will Baptist Bible College might contribute to that. And his vision was largely realized.

When he was a student at Middle Georgia College, the dorm supervisor made a special point of thanking young Linton Johnson for his positive influence on the other young men in the dormitory. We can only wonder how many young men L. C. Johnson has positively influenced—a number too large to reckon, to be sure. This writer certainly numbers himself among them.

When young Linton was licensed to preach in 1933, his pastor, J. R. Davidson, reported *at the time*: “One of the outstanding things that happened was the licensing of Bro. Linton Johnson to the Christian ministry. He is a young man to be appreciated, for he has a real Christian character back of his work. The boy is only 19 years of age, and he has had one year in college. He bids fair to be one of the greatest powers in the ministry in our entire connection.”

We are forced to agree that Brother Davidson was a trustworthy prophet!

We give tribute, where tribute is due, to one of the truly great people who have walked with us: to Dr. L. C. Johnson, and to the grace of God that saved him and called him and gave him to minister to us. ■

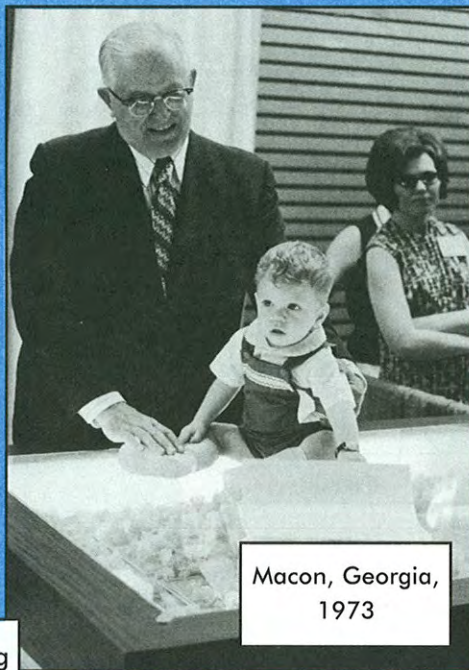
Johnson announces retirement at National Convention in Kansas City, Missouri (1978).



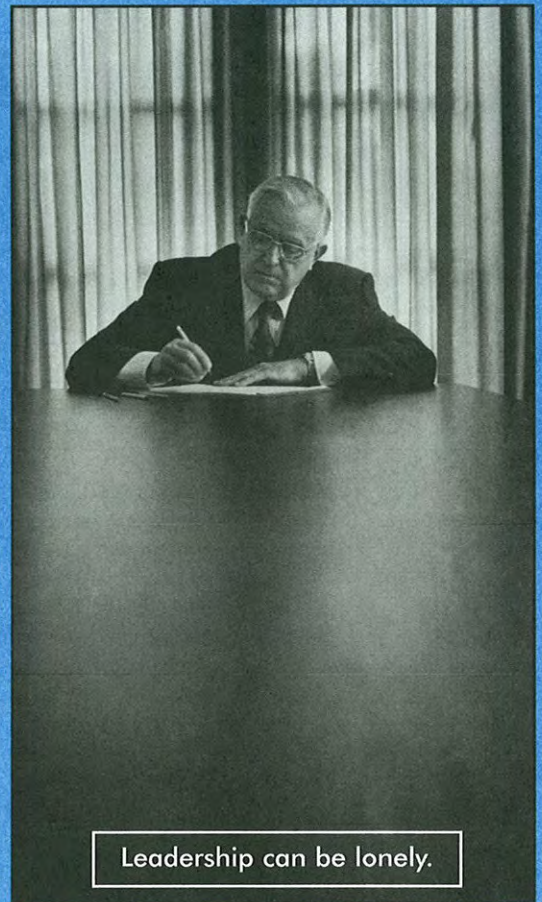
A Many-Faceted Man



Johnson at service station
in Alma, Georgia (1935).



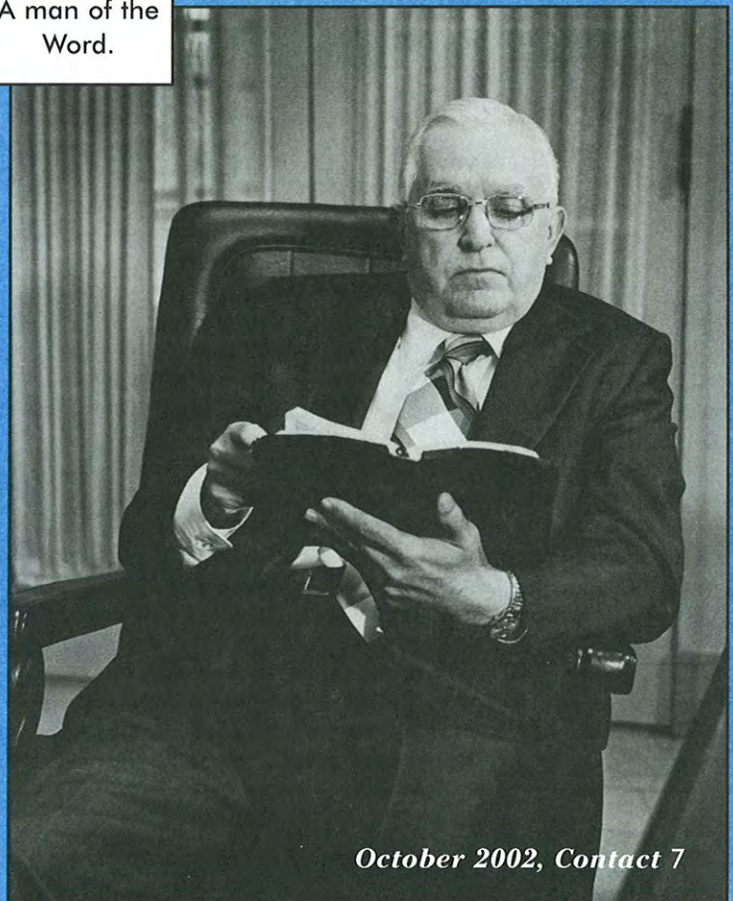
Macon, Georgia,
1973



Leadership can be lonely.

L. C. and Ruth Johnson's wedding
day March 30, 1940.

A man of the
Word.



October 2002, Contact 7



Dr. L. C. Johnson

In his lifetime . . .

Born: February 3, 1914
Died: June 26, 2002

Education:

1932-1933	Undergraduate studies	Middle Georgia College, Cochran, GA
1939	Bachelor of Arts	Bob Jones College, Cleveland, TN
1943	Graduate Studies	Winona Lake School of Theology, Winona Lake, IN
1945	Graduate Studies	Bob Jones University, Greenville, SC
1952	Doctor of Humanities (Honorary)	Bob Jones University, Greenville, SC

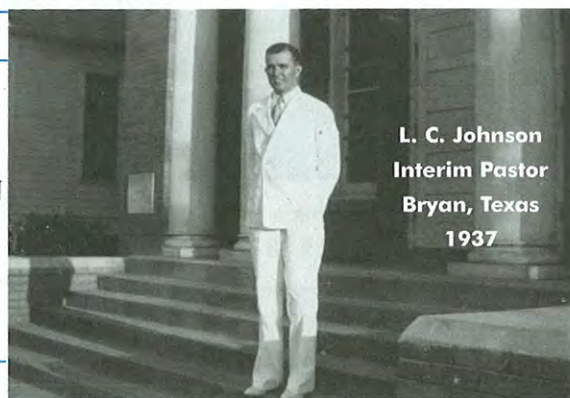


L. C. Johnson
Age 15

Ministry: October 1934 Ordained

Pastorates:

1934-1935	Pine Level FWB Church	Alma, GA
1935-1936	Corinth FWB Church	Alma, GA
1937-1939	Ashland City FWB Church	Ashland City, TN
1939-1942	Glennville FWB Church	Glennville, GA
1939-1942	Ebenezer FWB Church	Glennville, GA
1941-1942	Alabama FWB Church	Blackshear, GA
1941-1942	Harmony FWB Church	Lake Butler, FL
1944-1947	East Tupelo FWB Church	Tupelo, MS



L. C. Johnson
Interim Pastor
Bryan, Texas
1937

Denominational Positions:

1934-1942	Various offices and duties	South Georgia Association, Georgia
1942-1944	President	Free Will Baptist Bible College
1947-1948	Moderator	National Association of Free Will Baptists
1947-1979	President	Free Will Baptist Bible College
1979-1981	Chancellor	Free Will Baptist Bible College

Other:

—	Executive Committee	Accrediting Association of Bible Colleges
1970	Biographical Entry	<i>Who's Who In American Colleges and University Administrations</i>
1975	Overview Committee	<i>New King James Version</i> (Bible)
1975	Program Personality	World Congress of Fundamentalists

Personal:

March 30, 1940	Married Ruth Masser
Two Sons:	Paul Johnson
	Mark Johnson
One Daughter:	Mary Nell (Johnson) Beck

Talking business in the Bible College booth (Louisville, Kentucky, 1981).
Paul Kettelman (L), Ronald Creech,
L. C. Johnson, Tom Malone



A busy pastor tries to balance social ills with the gospel imperative.

Political Outrage!

By Brent Nix

Pro-

Anti-

No More

I just got off the phone with someone trying to convince me that I should be outraged enough about a recent political scandal to send money in support of an effort to do something or other about it. To be honest, what really happened was that the guy who called hooked me up with a recorded message designed to persuade me. After listening to it for a couple of minutes I hung up That's why I'm not sure what the final plan was going to be.

Rude, you say? Perhaps, but I'm growing weary with these kinds of calls. The sad part is that I'm generally in agreement with the groups who are calling. I guess that's why I'm on their lists.

This small episode brings to mind a question I've been contemplating a while. *What is the responsibility of a local church and/or individual Christians with regard to social reform?* I may need to clarify myself a little.

I'm not talking about reaching out to those in the community who are hurting. Instead, I'm talking about being involved with groups and organizations whose goal is to re-establish high moral standards and virtue in our nation. In this attempt, they make use of various forms of media, lobbying efforts in Congress and appearances in court to file briefs and argue weighty cases.

This has become a topic of some debate in recent years among believers. Some groups and leaders in Christian ranks (James Dobson and his organization, *Focus on the Family*, for example) are committed to pushing as hard as they can for reform. They point out that Christians are commanded to be salt and light in the world.

Others (syndicated columnist Cal Thomas, for one) believe that the existing social structures—public schools, state universities, media and entertain-

ment industries—are beyond redemption. They say that time and effort should not be wasted on trying to change these institutions. They advocate a withdrawal of Christians from these arenas with an eye toward creating our own establishments.

An example of this type response is found in the Protestant reformers who separated from the Roman Catholic Church because the corruption of the gospel had become too entrenched to be eradicated.

As for me, I do not believe its wasted effort to seek to influence our society. Some abominations present in our midst must be resisted (like abortion). I am grateful and glad for the legislative and legal victories that stifle, or at least slow, such evils. I have supported the efforts with my time and money. I have encouraged my members to be involved. I am not for completely disengaging from the conflict.

But as a pastor trying to lead my church and as an individual Christian, my question is: *How much priority should I put on these kinds of social reform efforts?* Especially in cases where I may hold a position but the Word of God does not give a clear mandate.

To answer this for myself I have tried to glean from the examples of Jesus and one of His apostles, Paul. It seems to me that both were balanced in their approach to government and society. Inasmuch as it did not conflict with the commands of God, they submitted to the lawful authorities by such actions as paying taxes and living in an orderly fashion.

Paul, in particular, used his Roman citizenship to his advantage when possible. Neither of them disconnected from nor revolted against the governing powers (which were at least as corrupt as those with which we contend).

There were sundry social issues, but neither organized marches or petitions to address them.

What they did do to change society was emphasize the life-changing power of the gospel. They did not get so entangled in side issues that they neglected the only thing that will ever make a real difference. I think they understood something we sometimes forget, namely, that lasting reform only comes from the inside out.

As the old saying goes, "A man convinced against his will is of the same opinion still." We can get the laws passed, but until hearts and attitudes are transformed, nothing has really been gained.

Am I for righteousness? Yes. Do I think we Christians should sit on our hands and let evil prevail? Of course not. But the question is: *How will I spend my time and resources?*

I submit that the best way to change our communities and our country is to introduce people to Jesus one at a time. Social ills come and go, human life is at best a vapor, but a soul won for Christ will live eternally. ■



ABOUT THE WRITER: Reverend Brent Nix pastors New Hope Free Will Baptist Church in Kent, Washington.

Reprinted by permission from *New Hope News*, Spring Quarter 2001.

Prayer brought a family through difficult times.

The God Who Comes Near

By Rebecca Deel



Ever heard Bette Midler's rendition of a song called "From a Distance"? I really hate the words to that song with its premise that God is watching us from a distance. The words insinuate the existence of a god who doesn't care enough about his children to get involved in their lives. Yet Psalm 91:15 pointedly reminds us of God's promise to answer if we call upon Him. The catch is we might not get the expected answer.

Praying Through Surprises

A few months after I finished my doctoral work, I received a letter in the mail from The White House in Washington, D.C., inviting me to apply for an internship. I was reasonably sure of acceptance if I applied. After all, I didn't know many other women with doctorates in economics.

The letter emphasized that this chance was to be offered only once. If I didn't submit my application by the February deadline, I would not be giv-

en another opportunity.

I was ready to pack my bags, ask for a year's leave of absence from the Free Will Baptist Bible College, and take my husband and son to Washington. My husband prepared to resign from his job and become Mr. Mom for a year. The Lord and I talked about this application. He said "No."

I felt sure He would change His mind, so I filled out the application, sealed the envelope, and tried for eight weeks to mail it. Each time I lifted it from my desk, He said "No."

The last day for postmarks came and I asked the Lord again about that application. I was hoping He would give in like the story Luke 18 relates about the harassed judge and the frazzled widow. But His only response was a quiet, "Trust Me."

One morning about 15 months later, I awoke to the media's breaking news story revealing a scandal involving the President and an intern. I would have been interning in The White House during that time. God answered my prayers by protecting me from hidden danger. I'm glad God didn't watch from a distance.

Praying Through Crisis

When my son Austin was four, he contracted strep throat. We did a round of antibiotics and Tylenol at bedtime. Around midnight, he woke with a fever of 101. I gave him more Tylenol and kisses. By 2:00, it was obvious that neither my kisses nor the Tylenol were working. Austin's fever skyrocketed to 105.

For the first time, fear paralyzed me. I couldn't pray coherently. That night I witnessed Romans 8:26 in action.

While calling the doctor, I finally squeaked out a three-word prayer: "Wake up Dad!" Around 2:05, two miles down the road, God roused my dad and urged him to pray for Austin. By 2:15, I knew he was praying. How did I know? The grip of fear began to ease. The battle with Austin's temperature raged until 4:30, when the fever finally broke. Dad felt the crisis pass at 4:30. I'm glad God didn't watch from a distance.

Praying Through Silence

A simple blood test while I was carrying our second son taught my husband and me to pray through a smothering blanket of silence. That test revealed the possibility our child had Down's Syndrome.

After the shock wore off, I dealt with this potentially traumatic life change the way most teachers handle the unknown. I read everything I could lay my hands on about Down's Syndrome.

One article confidently proclaimed Down's Syndrome a genetic mistake. Recardo and I knew God couldn't make a mistake. We be-

lieved James 1:17 when it said every good and perfect gift comes from our Heavenly Father. If Andrew had Down's Syndrome, then God meant for us to be care-givers of this special gift. We stopped praying for God to miraculously repair Andrew's genetics, and prayed for our own ability to joyously receive and care for this boy.

Two silent weeks passed. A new ultrasound revealed a large, but healthy baby. We rejoiced, but emerged different from that experience. Sometimes God changes our circumstances. Sometimes He changes us.

Praying Through the Unexpected

In June 2000, my family and I attended the funeral of a dear friend. While waiting at a stoplight the following Friday, June 22, the Lord and I had a weird conversation concerning my wish not to be buried in a brown casket. The next week, the Lord and I had another strange stoplight conversation about my finishing the job of raising my children.

On Friday, June 29, my children and I were waiting at yet another of Nashville's stoplights. The light turned green. I hesitated a couple of seconds, and pulled out slower than usual. Halfway through the intersection a car ran the red light and slammed into the front end and driver's door of my one-year-old car. The car was totaled—the boys and I had four scratches between us. My family is glad God didn't watch from a distance.

Praying Through Life

If God watched from a distance, He wouldn't care about any of those conversations I had with Him. A God who watched from a distance wouldn't find great delight in the prayers of my children for the family dog.

Maybe we ought to pray more like children. To them, Philippians 4:6 vibrates with life. They believe God is interested in everything about their lives—from the color of their shirt to the hiding place of that favorite elusive crayon. They know God will answer prayer. If it's not the answer requested, it must be better.

Prayer ought to be as natural as breathing; it ought to be a running conversation. You don't even rack up long distance charges. Why? Because our Heavenly Father is not watching from a distance. He is carrying us in His arms.



ABOUT THE WRITER: Dr. Rebecca Deel is a member of Fellowship Free Will Baptist Church in Antioch, Tennessee. She teaches in the business department at Free Will Baptist Bible College.

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Thirty Oklahoma teens can never forget that night at youth camp.

What Happened to My Teens?

By Randy Bishop

The story you are about to read is true. The names have not been changed to protect the innocent. It all began back in April 2002.

April

Church notified. Teens notified. Not much interest in Teen Camp . . . at least by the teens. But sponsors and cooks were ready, eager and willing.

May

Pastor is handed a list with the names of 24 teenagers and eight sponsors. Eight sponsors and cooks? Who ever heard of eight adults *willingly* volunteering to go to *teen* camp? (Four of them are over 60.)

June 16

One more teen and a sponsor's name are added to the list. The total is now 25 teenagers and nine sponsors. What is happening? How are we going to transport this many people to camp?

A van committee was appointed back in March and given authority to borrow up to \$7,000 to purchase a van for the church. The *committee was unsuccessful in this venture*. However, they did present the church with a 2001, 15-passenger Dodge van . . . fully paid for! What is happening?

June 23

9:00 a.m. • Two vans, two cars and one pickup truck pulling a fully-loaded trailer, leave for teen camp at Talihi-na, Oklahoma.

June 23-25

Horrible time at teen camp. Kids pulling extreme pranks. Brothers and sisters fighting. Counselors irritable. Ready to pack up and take everyone home if one more thing occurs. What happened? (If it weren't for the delicious food, we would have been gone. Thanks, cooks.)

June 26

11:00 p.m. • Just another devotion given by Julie Biggs, or so we thought.

June 27

7:00 p.m. • Just another worship service, or so we thought. Just the same music from the "Pool Boys."

8:15 p.m. • Just another sermon from Barry Sinclair, or so



we thought. It's hot, it's muggy, and everyone is ready for it to be over.

9:00 p.m. • Just another invitation, or so we thought. At least that's the way it started. One of our teenagers stepped out to go to the altar. Then others went. And more. Soon they were all at the altar. But not for long. The entire youth group from Greenbrier FWB Church and Hillcrest FWB Church left the tabernacle and went out into the adjacent sports field. Their pastor and the other sponsors join them. What is happening?

9:30 to 12:00 p.m. • You won't believe what happened in the next two and a half hours. Every teen in that gathering was weeping and crying out to the Lord. I call it "crying in the Lord." They formed a circle. One began hugging the others, and then everyone joined in.

Some went off by themselves, but not for long. One or two would join them. Brothers telling sisters that they loved them. Sisters asking their sisters' forgiveness. Teenage boys hugging each other. They all were so concerned about the other teens in the group that only one young person left that field unconverted, and she got saved in the cabin.

Youth were praising God for His greatness. Teens walked through the field and raised their hands to the heavens thanking their Lord for creating them. Some shouted for joy and wonder that the God of the universe would love them. Some fell to the ground, lay on the grassy field or sat and cried out to God, confessing their sins and asking His forgiveness. We pastors and sponsors could do no more than hold them, love them and praise God with them.

For whatever reason (and believe me, I don't have the answer), from those present at teen camp, God had chosen the



The church's 2001 Dodge van.

Greenbrier and Hillcrest group to manifest His Holy Spirit in their lives. It wasn't something that was prayed down. It wasn't something that was worked up. It was just the good pleasure of an infinitely, loving and gracious God to do what He wills.

These 30-plus youth missed the end of the invitation in the tabernacle. They missed the break time. They missed the video highlights. They missed the time for lights out. But they didn't miss what the Lord had in store for them. They didn't miss the outpouring and infilling of the Holy Spirit.

Just so you can get the whole picture: They were (they aren't now) your average Free Will Baptist youth. They were from two churches.

Some 900 people attended that teen camp. I wonder what the 870 in the tabernacle thought about the 30 or so out in the field.

What are they doing? Why aren't they in here with the rest of us? Why are they crying, weeping and shouting? Now you know. But the story doesn't end here.

12:00-5:30 a.m. • As everyone was in the cabin sharing what happened, the blessings of the Lord were still being poured out. Though they had cried for nearly three hours, there were no red eyes. That's why I call this "crying in the Lord."

June 28

Time to go home. Not many slept the three and one-half hours going home. There was a holy energy. Some still cried tears of joy. All of us were amazed at God's grace.

June 30 (Sunday)

9:00-10:00 a.m. • The teen group at Greenbrier holds a prayer meeting with the pastor and sponsors, praying that God will continue to work in their lives and that the Holy Spirit will move in the morning service.

10:00-Noon • The morning began with no Sunday School. It was one continuous praise and worship service. For the next two hours, teens and sponsors testified about their wonderful, spiritual experiences. Hands were raised in praise, and songs from teen camp were sung.

About 11:30 a.m. the Lord said to give an invitation. As the "Pool Boys" song "Are You Ready?" was played, people — young and old, male and female — began moving to the altar. So many came that they were on the stage, the altar and backed up to the second row of pews. Rededications, salvations, praise, thankfulness — people came to God.

What is happening? No one who was present for those events will ever be the same, including this pastor. All I can say is, "Devil, look out." God is raising up an army of spiritual soldiers to fight the good fight of faith. Free Will Baptists, get ready. It won't be long before these young people will be leading this denomination.

What does God have in store for Greenbrier FWB Church? I don't know. But God had already planned for the recent events. In 1999 we began a building fund for a new sanctuary. For the next two years, except for fund raising, God blocked all our efforts. Then something strange happened in a Building Committee meeting in 2001.

In five minutes, everyone agreed that the direction we were going was not God's will. God wanted the church to build a 7,500-square-foot multi-purpose youth center and fellowship hall with additional classrooms. As of this writing, the metal structure is almost finished.

What does God have in store for Greenbrier FWB Church? I'm the pastor at Greenbrier, and all I can say is what God has already said:

"But as it is written,
Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard,
neither have entered into the heart of man,
the things which God hath prepared
for them that love him"
I Corinthians 2:9.

Oh, don't worry about the 30 or more missing teens —
God found them. ■

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ABOUT THE WRITER: Reverend Randy Bishop pastors Greenbrier Free Will Baptist Church in Adair, Oklahoma.



Construction continues on the multi-purpose youth center and fellowship hall at Greenbrier FWB Church.



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

Are You a Giver or Taker?

By Kevin Riggs¹

Habit #8 –
A Successful Person
is a Giver instead of
a Taker.

Several years ago I read a story about a thief who decided to siphon gas from a motor home in Seattle, Washington. The owner of the motor home heard a noise, and when he went outside to investigate, he discovered the thief curled up on the ground vomiting. Intending to suck up the contents of the gas tank, the thief—a 14-year-old boy—put his hose into the wrong hole. Instead of stealing gas, the boy sucked up the contents of the sewage compartment.

The Eighth Commandment

Literally, the Eighth Commandment reads, "Not steal"—straight to the point, no explanations. What does God mean when He says, "Thou shalt not steal?" Does this Commandment go beyond taking someone else's property? What is the principle behind the Command?

In the early days of America there was a settlement whose major source of income was the lumber business. As the town grew, the citizens decided they wanted a church, so they built a beautiful building and called a minister.

One afternoon the minister hap-

pened to see some of his church members dragging logs out of the river. These logs had been floated down the river by another town upstream. Each log was clearly marked with the owner's stamp on one end. To the minister's great distress he saw his parishioners pull the logs from the river, sawing off the end where the stamp appeared.

The following Sunday he preached a strong sermon on, "Thou shalt not steal." At the close of the service, his people lined up, shook his hand and replied, "Wonderful message, Pastor. Mighty fine preaching." But the following week, he saw them down at the river pulling out logs and sawing off the ends.

The next Sunday he preached the same sermon but gave it a different, more practical ending. He concluded his message by saying, "Thou shalt not cut off the end of thy neighbor's logs." When he got through, the congregation ran him out of town.²

As long as the Bible talks about the faults of *other* people, I can handle it, but when the Bible speaks directly to me, I sometimes get angry. Commandment Eight speaks directly to me. As I see it, there are two ways to steal.

Stealing from People

It should be obvious that taking something that does not belong to me is stealing. But there are other ways I steal from people besides taking their possessions. If I continually tell my children they are failures, I am robbing them of self-worth. If I constantly call my wife names, neglecting her needs, I make her feel less than she is, robbing her of her dignity.

A harsh word here, some slander there; a well-placed put-down here, a little gossip there, all rob from a person, making them feel worthless.

I can also steal a person's time. When I loaf at work I am stealing. When I work too much and take time away from home, I am stealing time from my family. When I don't use my time wisely, I am stealing from myself.

Stealing from God

How can I steal from God? Hypocrisy is one way I steal from God. When I say I believe one thing, but live another, I am robbing God of His reputation. If I claim to have put my faith in God, I am His representative on earth.³ How I live my life is a

reflection on Him. My actions tell others about God, and I don't want to be guilty of stealing His good name.

I also rob God by not giving Him my tithes.⁴ Tithing is giving back a portion of my income to God. The amount is between God and me, but I am convinced it needs to be at least a tenth of all I receive. I tithe, not because God needs it or the church begs for it, I tithe because doing so is recognition that all I have belongs to Him.

Habit #8

Commandment Eight is negative, but the habit springing out of it is positive. God asks me not to steal because my life should be characterized by giving instead of taking. Therefore the eighth habit is as follows: *A highly successful person is a giver instead of a taker.*

It is easy to think I have a God-given right to have all my needs met . . . right now. It is easy to deceive myself into thinking it is everyone's responsibility to meet my needs. If I am not careful, I will spend my life taking.

In the middle of my selfishness, God says I am to be a giver. How do I know if I am a giver or a taker? Four attitudes characterize a taker. First, a taker's attitude is, *get all you can and can all you get*. A taker hoards what he does have and does not share. A taker lets the needs of others go without notice.

Second, a taker thinks, *everyone owes me*. A taker has a chip on his shoulder. A taker doesn't feel bad when

he cheats on his taxes or loafes at work.

Third, a taker's attitude is to *look out for number one*. A taker's wants and desires come before anyone else's.

Closely related to this attitude is the fourth attitude—*me, me, me, me*. A taker is selfish. If anyone gets in the way of what a taker wants, the taker runs over them.

On the other hand, a giver recognizes, *all I have comes from God and belongs to Him*. This keeps things in perspective. A giver gives back to God knowing it all comes from Him in the first place. A giver gives to others because he knows God will meet his own needs.

Second, a giver continually asks, *is there a need in someone's life I can meet?* A giver sacrifices to meet the needs of his spouse and children. Furthermore, if there is someone at work, church, school, neighborhood or even a complete stranger who has a need, a giver strives to meet that need.

Why does a giver look for needs to meet? Because the third attitude of a giver is the attitude: *I want to be a blessing to others*. Closely related is the fourth attitude: *I am here to serve, not be served*. A giver puts the other person's wants and desires ahead of his own. A giver realizes true satisfaction comes from helping and serving people.

My basic human instinct is to be a taker. It goes against my nature to be a giver, but truth is truth: *A highly successful person is a giver instead of a taker*. What is it that transforms a taker into a giver? It is the grace of God.

When I come to a full realization of all God has given me, and all He has sacrificed for me, it will motivate me to give back to Him and give to others.

Are you a taker or a giver? Do you need to change your attitude? Have you stolen from others by taking something? Have you robbed someone of their dignity through your words or actions? Do you need to seek forgiveness? Do you need to make restitution? Have you robbed from God? What do you need to do to change from being a taker to being a giver? ■

Endnotes

1. I would love to hear from you with your questions and comments. Please feel free to email me at kevin@franklincommunitychurch.org.
2. Haddon Robinson, *Mastering Contemporary Preaching* (Multnomah Press, Portland, OR, 1989) 63-64.
3. II Corinthians 5:20.
4. Malachi 3:8.



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

BEYOND BELIEF



The new millennium arrived with many of the 20th century's problems still intact. Staggering crime rates. The gay revolution. Battered women and children. An epidemic of illegitimate births. AIDS and a score of other sexually-transmitted diseases running rampant. Abortion on demand. Divorce. Widespread drug addiction. More than a half million homeless men, women and children. Bizarre religions.

Several years ago a prominent theologian wrote, "The overriding issue of the 20th century is the crisis in *authority*. Are there any rules? If so, who makes them? How are they enforced and by whom?"

Darkest Hours

Unfortunately, nothing has changed except for the worse. The arrival of Postmodernism caused an increasing number of Americans to deny the existence of absolutes. It's little wonder that many, including our nation's leaders, refuse to yield to a higher authority than their own self-interests.

Sometimes it seems as if we have returned to the days of the judges when "every man did that which was right in his own eyes," (Judges 21:25).

Francis Schaeffer referred to personal peace and material affluence as the chief values of modern man. The United States owns roughly half the world's wealth and consumes more than 30% of its annual produce while comprising a scant 5% of the world's population. Thanks to a robust economy, most Americans are well along on their quest for material prosperity. That may be a precarious position to occupy in a world starving to death. Particularly when that world has set aside all rules.

Paul warned us we were in for hard

times (II Tim. 3:1). Clearly, the world is in a mess. Frankly, I think we can expect it to get much worse. Still, this is no time for hand-wringing. The Bible which foretold these "perilous times" also assured us the gates of hell shall not prevail against the church (Matt. 16:18).

Time to Shine

This may well be the world's darkest hour. If so, it can also be the church's finest hour. After all, the church really "shines" in the night of sin. Put a bit differently, the world at its worst demands the church at its best.

If the church is going to bring light to this dark age, we must trim our lamps.

We must remember that though we are in the world, we are not of the world. We must live like Caleb "who wholly followed the LORD," (Josh. 14:14). Only then will our lights shine to the glory of God (Matt. 5:16).

Holiness is the basic attribute of God. Holiness is to be the hallmark of Christianity. "Follow peace with all *men*, and holiness, without which no man shall see the lord," (Heb. 12:14). The church at its best is pure and holy.

The church at its best is loving in an unloving world. In fact, the expression of love among church members was cited by Jesus as an indication of discipleship (Jn. 13:35).



The darker the night of sin, the brighter the Church shines.

The Church at Its Best

By Larry D. Hampton

Call for Unity

Unity characterizes the church at its best. However, unity is not uniformity. Leroy Forlines has written, "We must have unity on fundamental doctrines and basic principles, but we must have room for difference on some points of detail. The only way to have absolute unity is to have one person do the thinking for the rest of us. God has not commissioned anybody to furnish mind and conscience for the masses."

"We are to commit ourselves to the authority of the Word of God. We are challenged to study it and apply it to the situations of life. When we share the same basic commitment, we will not be far apart on major issues. When we think for ourselves, we will not see eye to eye on all details. In areas where we differ, we should discuss these areas frankly and forthrightly, but with love and respect for each other."

The church at its best is led by Spirit-filled men. We must steadfastly resist the temptation to ordain men who are themselves new Christians. We must not succumb to the pressure to place successful businessmen in leadership roles. No matter how skillful or successful a businessman is, he is not fit to be a spiritual leader unless he is a Spirit-filled believer (Acts 6:3).

The Holy Spirit has gifted every believer. When the church is at its best, each member of the body performs his function. Thus, we must help our fellow Christians identify and use their spiritual gifts.

Back to Basics

Worship (which involves giving) is the fundamental act of the church at its best. It is to be the basis for our work for God. That is, our service for God should be the outgrowth of our worship of God.

The church at its best devotes itself to a study of the Word of God. Proper recognition of and a return to God's authoritative Word is the answer to the current crisis of authority.

Prayer is essential to the health of the body of Christ. To be at its best, the church must maintain contact with its risen Lord.

The church at its best will experience growth. Surely, a unified body

comprised of holy, loving believers led by Spirit-filled men and women will grow. If Christians faithfully exercise their spiritual gifts, worship God, study His Word and commune with Him in prayer, they will be consistent witnesses of the gospel of Jesus Christ.

William James said that religious people fall into two categories: those in whom faith is a "dull habit" and those in whom it is an "acute fever." For the church to be at its best, its membership must consist of those for whom faith is an acute fever.

"Set our souls afire, Lord. Set our souls, afire." ■



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

Share what you have!

What happens to **Contact** magazine when you finish it?

Is there someone in your life who doesn't receive the magazine but who might enjoy it?

Don't toss your "used" copy in the trash can. Share it . . .

- *with the shut-in across the street*
- *with your nephew in the armed forces*
- *with patients in your doctor's office (with the doctor's permission, of course)*
- *with an unsaved neighbor*
- *with _____ (you fill in the blank).*

Don't think of it as "used." It's just getting broken in when you've read it.



Mississippi Church Honors Veterans

MANTACHIE, MS—A special community-wide service at Farm Grove FWB Church in Mantachie honored 22 veterans on June 30, according to Pastor Vern Gunnels. Preceding the 1:30 p.m. service, an all-American picnic and a musical prelude by Mark and Amanda Hysaw saluted each branch of the military.

The Veteran Honors Service began with the presentation of colors by Boy Scout Troop Pack 2, Den 15 from Mantachie, followed by the song, "God Bless the USA," by Anna Franks, 10-year-old granddaughter of Coylen Franks, a WWII Navy veteran honored that day. Three Franks brothers were recognized during the service. Mr. Franks was accompanied by his two brothers—Harvey Franks, a WWII Army veteran, and Rudolph Franks, a Navy veteran.

State Representative Jamie Franks recognized each branch of the military, asking each veteran to stand when his or her corresponding branch was announced. The Mantachie Elementary School Sign Language Class showed their support by participating in the patriotic musical, "Land of the Free."

Jamie Franks called all veterans to the stage and awarded each a Valor and Sacrifice Certificate, including his own father, James Franks, a U.S. Army veteran. A moment of silence was held in memory those who served and never came home, paying the ultimate sacrifice for freedom.

John Brown of Mooreville (88), a WWII Navy veteran, was awarded the gift for the Most Mature Veteran in attendance. Julie Pogue of Baldwyn, an Air Force veteran, was awarded the gift for Youngest Veteran in attendance. M. J. Hysaw of Columbus, a veteran of the Army (Korea) and retired career Navy veteran (Vietnam), was awarded the gift for Most Years of Active Military Service with 26 years served.

Twenty-two veterans were recognized, ranging from Desert Storm to WWII service times. Patriotic



John Brown, WWII Navy veteran, receives patriotic afghan.

daisy arrangements were provided as decoration in honor and in memory of veterans and active military personnel by family and friends. Many of those attending expressed interest in learning more from veterans and hearing about their experiences while serving in the military.

Theology Symposium to Meet

NASHVILLE, TN—The Commission for Theological Integrity is sponsoring the annual Free Will Baptist Theology Symposium on November 4-5 at Free Will Baptist Bible College. Guests will assemble Monday evening, November 4, at 6:30 p.m. and continue Tuesday, 8:30 a.m. through the evening.

There is no pre-registration and the cost for a bound volume of papers is \$20, payable at registration. College students will receive a complimentary volume for attending the sessions. Direct any questions to Leroy Forlines at 615-383-1340 or leroyf@fwbbc.edu.

Virginia Congregation Honors Pastor

BRISTOL, VA—Members of First FWB Church in Bristol know they have a unique pastor in Dr. Darrell Pickle who has led the congregation 19 years. Effective June 2002, the church became debt-free under Dr. Pickle's leadership.

In the past 15 years, the Virginia church, a member of Tennessee's Appalachian Association, has generously supported denominational ministries and invested more than \$500,000 in land, houses, remodeling, signs, paving, landscaping and more.

When Dr. Pickle completed his doctor of ministry degree in June, the church gave a reception in his honor, a \$5,000 raise and an extra week of vacation. Deacon Howard Miller, a member of the church for over 50 years, led the special time of honor and recognition.

Dr. Pickle said, "I thank God for Free Will Baptists who have given me such a wonderful opportunity to pastor and preach the Word of God. I'm thankful for all our national ministries and our Bible colleges. I stepped out by faith in 1970 to become a full-time pastor, resigned my job and trusted God to take care of my family. Through Free Will Baptists, He has always met my needs."

Dr. Pickle has pastored full-time for 32 years, serving congregations in North Carolina and Virginia. The golf- and music-loving minister has been married to his wife, Judy, for 40 years. They have two children and two grandchildren.

Kentucky Establishes Historical Commission

LOUISA, KY—When delegates to Kentucky's 63rd annual state association left their June 14-15 meeting, they had voted to establish a Historical Commission, according to Tim York, assistant moderator.

Registration officials reported 192 at the Friday evening worship service. Some 53 ministers, 13 deacons and 60 lay delegates registered for the meeting at Catalpa FWB Church in Louisa.

Moderator Tim Hall was elected to his eighth term. Delegates worked through discussions concerning several constitutional changes.

In other action, delegates agreed to supplement six months salary for Hispanic outreach. During that time period, the minister will assist Hispanic work throughout the state and raise his own support.

Missionary to Japan, Nathan Snow, addressed worshipers on "Salting Your Light." Pastor Vennie Vanhoose preached from Luke 5.

A plaque for 10 years of faithful service was presented to Kentucky Women Active for Christ president, Phyllis York, who declined the nomination to serve again.

The 2003 state association will meet June 20-21 at Lovely FWB Church in Lovely, Kentucky.

Florida Steering Committee Meets

TAMPA, FL—The Florida Steering Committee met Thursday, September 5, for a day-long orientation in Tampa to expedite plans for hosting the 67th annual national convention July 20-24, 2003. Convention manager Dean Jones said that plenary sessions will convene in the new Tampa Convention Center.

Executive secretary Keith Burden blocked 850 rooms in downtown hotels to house delegates.

The convention brochure which includes housing and pre-registration forms, will be printed in the April and May issues of *Contact*. The forms will also be made available to state papers and posted on the National Offices web page.

The Florida contingency includes the steering committee, state moderator, state WAC president and an NYC advisor:

State ModeratorTim Owen
Hospitality CommitteeRandy Bryant
Prayer CommitteeJim Christian
Ushering CommitteeJimmy Aldridge
FWAC PresidentDiana Bryant
NYC AdvisorDanny Conn

The Steering Committee met 8:30 a.m. - 1:30 p.m. gathering information, reviewing committee assignments and discussing convention facilities. Committee members will meet twice in 2003 (January and May) to assess convention plans.

Nominating Committee Requests Nominees

LEBANON, MO—The seven-man Nominating Committee that will serve through the 2003 national convention in Tampa, Florida, is ready to receive nominees for the 30 positions on boards and commissions to be filled, according to Nathan Ruble who chairs the committee. Reverend Ruble serves as executive secretary for the Missouri State Association of Free Will Baptists.

The following boards and commissions will need positions filled: Board of Retirement and Insurance (3), Home Missions Board (3), Master's Men Board (3), Commission for Theological Integrity (1), Media Commission (1), Music Commission (1), Historical Commission (1), General Board (10), Executive Committee (3), General Officers (4).

The committee will meet during the December 2-3 Leadership Conference in Nashville, Tennessee, to consider names of nominees sent to them. The committee will then compile their report and submit it to delegates at the national convention next July. They will submit one nominee for each position.

Those wishing to submit names for the Nominating Committee to consider may contact chairman Nathan Ruble. He can be reached at:

Reverend Nathan Ruble • P.O. Box 991 • Lebanon, MO 65536
417/532-6537 • MOFWB@webound.com

currently

Home missionary **Greg Floars** reports 11 baptisms at **Sawyer FWB Church** in **Marquette, MI**. This was the first baptismal service for the new work. Five months before 68-year-old **Ed Treloar** died of cancer, he came to a service at Sawyer Church and heard the gospel for the first time. Pastor Floars was with Ed when he died and heard his last three words: "Jesus loves me."

Retired Free Will Baptist minister **George C. Lee** has written 150 songs and choruses in recent years. Eight of his songs were published in five different songbooks this year. George has produced three cassette tapes that include 31 of his songs. The cassettes may be purchased for \$10 each or all three for \$25. The cassette titles are "What a Great God," "Will You Be Ready" and "Walk With the Lord." Call or write Reverend Lee at 303 Veronica Avenue, Goldsboro, NC 27534. Phone 919/734-7670. E-mail: georgelee@esn.net.

Bloss Memorial FWB Church in **Arlington, VA**, voted to join the Arlington Chamber of Commerce. Pastor **Steve Faison** said the move provides a link to the Chamber's web site, being included in up to 900 mailings annually when people/organizations request information about the city, as well as a brochure in the racks at the Chamber office. The church will also receive a monthly list of new residents moving into Arlington.

Members of **Collin Creek FWB Church** in **Plano, TX**, completed a \$650,000 construction project. The 8,000-square-foot upstairs will house five classrooms and a kid-friendly children's worship center. The project theme, "Let the Children Come," permeates the building architecture with geometric shaped windows and bright colors. **Robert Posner** pastors.

Pine Prairie FWB Church in **Huntsville, TX**, celebrated their 90th anniversary in June. **Rick Futch** pastors.

Northwest FWB Church in **Oklahoma City, OK**, celebrates its 45th anniversary October 13 with guest speakers **Jack Richey** and **James Murray**. Dr. **E. E. Morris** organized the church

in 1957. Pastor **Waldo Young** said that anniversary activities and Friend Day efforts will be combined.

Members of **Westfield FWB Church** in **Katy, TX**, invested in a parking addition this spring. They also sent Pastor **David Ferguson** and his wife on a week-long sabbatical to Lazy Hills Guest Ranch.

South Carolina initiated a statewide Hispanic ministry, sponsored by the state Home Mission Board. The **Geraldo Antonio Rodriguez** family will head up the work. They rented a home in Inman and began the Hispanic work in July using the old Una FWB Church building in Spartanburg. The Una congregation relocated to new facilities.

While some churches surprise their pastors now and then, Pastor **Danny Keen** turned the tables on members of **Landmark FWB Church** in **Anderson, SC**. He created a "Surprise Sunday" in June and provided a gift for every member. He also gave a plaque to **Betty Alexander** for her work and scheduled a surprise guest speaker—South Carolina executive secretary **Mike Jones**. The church's high attendance topped 200.

The Benjamin Randall Offering takes the spotlight across the denomination in November. For the past three years the same church has led all others in giving on that special day—**Victory FWB Church** in **Hanover, PA**. Pastor **Lifus Riffe** and his generous members gave over \$15,000 in 2001. This might be a good time to challenge the lively Pennsylvania congregation. Any takers?

Charles Austin, a deacon at **First FWB Church** in **Albany, GA**, serves as project manager for the new Georgia state office building in Cordele. Each Georgia Free Will Baptist has been asked to give \$25 to underwrite the capital stewardship campaign. Funds will be gathered on October 27 in a "State Office Commitment Day." Ground breaking ceremonies are set for November 2 in Cordele. **William Smith** serves as Georgia's executive secretary.

Pastor **Brent Nix** challenged members of **New Hope FWB Church** in **Kent WA**, to raise \$100,000 toward a new build-

ing by September. He underestimated the people's vision. By March the church had \$108,000 in its building fund. Pastor Nix said that most of that amount would probably go toward site development.

New Salem FWB Church in **Colquitt, GA**, honored 10 pioneer members for their faithfulness. Each member honored was 80 years old or older, according to Pastor **Jerry McArthur**. They received plaques, flowers and a bronze bookmark. The 10 pioneers honored were: **Blonnie Prickren**, **Annie Lou Wells**, **Zora Richardson**, **Emory Richardson**, **Louise Richardson**, **Frank Newberry**, **Sarah Newberry**, **Eva Middleton**, **Brewton Middleton** and **Collie Mae Nix**. Some 152 people attended the services and heard the message, "Who's Gonna Fill Their Shoes?"

Trinity FWB Church in **Bridgeton, MO**, reports seven baptisms.

Congratulations to members of **First FWB Church** in **Simpsonville, SC**, who paid off a 20-year mortgage in seven years. Pastor **Chris Jackson** reminded the congregation during the mortgage-burning ceremony, "You build a building with blocks, but you build a church with baptisms."

When Pastor **Tony Miles** and members of **Little Star FWB Church** in **Johnsonville, SC**, welcomed the Central District WAC meeting, they did so with a new sign in front of the church.

Take this one-question quiz: When is a pounding not a beating? To find the answer, contact Pastor and Mrs. **Jeremy Rigg** at **Sand Hill FWB Church** in **Coward, SC**. Members "pounded" the Rigg's family with household and cleaning supplies to welcome them to the community.

Wakefield FWB Church in **Wakefield, NB, Canada**, reports seven baptisms and seven new members. **Carl DeMerchant** pastors.

The first annual Layman's Day at **Crossland FWB Church** in **Norman, OK**, featured three men from the church who spoke: A printer, a U.S. Marine Corps captain and a U.S. Air Force sergeant. **Wade Jernigan** pastors. ■

The goal of every retirement program should be to provide a generous, reasonable benefit to each of its participant. It certainly is in our case.

There are various IRS recognized retirement programs—401(k), 403(b), 412, IRA, SEPA, Deferred Compensations, etc. Some of these are named for the section of the IRS code that controls them. Under close examination, however, there are just two basic types using different ways to accomplish their goal. One type is referred to as defined benefit, the other as defined contribution. Defined benefit programs have a schedule of benefits based on years of service at given employment or pay levels. These programs place all investment and management risk on the employer.

Defined contribution plans provide benefits based on the amount of contributions and earnings accumulated for each individual through the years. The Free Will Baptist Retirement plan is a defined contribution plan. As a result each participant is responsible not only for the amount of contributions but also the method of benefits that will be received at settlement. Asking questions will help make a wise decision.

What should happen when a participant begins to seriously consider retirement?

First, begin the planning process early. Ask questions. What do I have? How can I maximize the value of these assets? Which assets do I need to draw first? How should I arrange income? How do I protect me and my spouse into the future? Retirement is not a one size fits all situation. Please call our office (877-767-7738) toll-free to discuss your personal account and settlement options. We may be able to help you in your planning.

You deserve the best retirement choice your personal situation allows. The advice we give is without obligation or cost to you. Seek the help of others also, but remember that some advisers have a vested interest in your decision. Then choose the best solution for your personal situation. Remember:

1. Who will be involved? Is there more than one person to consider? Such as a spouse, dependent children, others.
2. Health needs of all concerned.
3. Money management ability of those concerned, now and in the future.
4. How does retirement income fit my total financial picture? What about taxes? Income levels today? What about income 5, 10, 20 years from now?

When it is time for me to take retirement income from my account, what options do I have?

You have 10 basic choices (See side bar). Included

What Happens at the End?

By William Evans, General Director

among them are two lump sum settlements—a direct cash payout or a tax-sheltered rollover, multiple self-directed payments tailored to your specific needs and account values. In addition to six types of lifetime annuities—which provide income for life to you and, if you

choose, your spouse. Each agreement has strengths in relationship to personal needs and account balances. Call our office to discuss the specific details application of these options to your personal needs.

Lump Sum Distributions	• Direct Rollovers
Self-Directed Distributions*	• Set Number of Months (12-120) Set Monthly Amount to Exhaustion
Annuity Distributions	• Single Life Single Life—10 year guaranty Single Life—15 year guaranty Joint Life Joint Life—10 year guaranty Joint Life—15 year guaranty
(*Subject to IRS requirements)	

Does the value of my account continue to earn during my payments?

Yes, it does. All monthly payout options are based on earning 5% on the decreasing balance for the entire payment period involved.

The regular retirement funds suffered a loss recently; will my settlement payments be subject to losses also?

No, not after a settlement is made. All settlement agreements are contracts and require consistent payments. Investments supporting these contracted payments are made separate from the funds of active participants to sustain the required payout.

Annuity payments which involve the participant's lifetime and, when chosen, a spouse's lifetime are increased when earnings exceed required levels. Annuity payments contracted in 1992 have increased totaling over 3.5% to date. Increases cannot be guaranteed in the future, but once payments are increased they will never decrease.

What happens to those who have made a settlement?

Payments that increase help offset the effects of inflation. Remember there are several different types of settlements and there are specific guidelines for each one. A settlement decision is very important but once made cannot be changed. Retirement is a challenge. Make sure you consider your options and make the best decisions possible. ■

Retirement  **& Insurance**

The summer of 2002 was monumental in the history of Free Will Baptists. Through local church mission trips, Truth and Peace, YET, the Overseas Apprentice program, and E-TEAM more Free Will Baptist students were mobilized for Christ worldwide than ever before. We at Free Will Baptist Foreign Missions were honored to be a part of that.

This year E-TEAM sent six groups to minister in Japan, France, Mexico, Puerto Rico, St. Croix, and Chicago. Sixty-three students, 13 leaders and six interns spent approximately two weeks in ministry, work and learning. God is blessing our denomination and the E-TEAM ministry. We have seen consistent growth over the past three years.

For the summer of 2003 we have a potential of 11 destinations: Chicago, Nashville, the Rocky Mountains, Mexico, Cuba, Panama, Brazil, Uruguay, France, Côte d'Ivoire and Japan.

Students are understanding God's call to take the gospel to their friends, neighbors, country and around the world. These are a few of the comments students made concerning their E-TEAM 2002 experience:

"I discovered much about the role of a missionary. By seeing it firsthand in Japan, I've gained such a burden for the people who haven't heard." —AMY LAWRENCE, E-TEAM Japan

"I realized mostly that God doesn't want everyone in the deep dark jungles. He needs folks reaching the inner cities also. I really think He laid a call to my life." —ALAN SKILES, E-TEAM Chicago

"This was my third year with TEAM and I think I was most affected this year. I really saw how neces-



By Matt Markins

LAWRENCE, E-TEAM France

"I wouldn't trade the experience for the world." —DANIELLE Z. SLADE, E-TEAM St. Croix

"God has opened my eyes the past three weeks. It made me realize how lost our world really is. God has given me the desire to go and reach out to the unsaved." —RACHEL ELLIOTT, E-TEAM Puerto Rico

"The only reason I even wanted to come home was so that I could share my experience with everyone. I have learned to have so much respect for all the Christians in France." —JULIE POTETE, E-TEAM France

"Seeing the world and culture around me . . . I'll take away a love and respect for missions, especially in foreign countries." —JUSTIN ATWOOD, E-TEAM Puerto Rico

"I never really saw myself as someone who could actually go somewhere and be a foreign missionary, but my views have changed. So I just have to see what He has planned." —REBEKAH FORLINES, E-TEAM Puerto Rico

"I believe that I will leave with a greater vision for missions, both foreign and domestic. I also will leave with wonderful memories."

—JOSHUA DETHERAGE, E-TEAM Mexico

Students interested in an E-TEAM experience may obtain an application from **Foreign Missions**. See the web at www.nafwb.org/fm, e-mail Matt Markins at matt@nafwb.org, or call 1-877-767-7736. ■



Foreign



Missions

If You Are Willing . . .

You Can

By Marjorie Workman

The place was Black Jack Free Will Baptist Church in Pitt County, North Carolina. The date was June 13, 1935. The birth was a national Free Will Baptist women's organization. That same year in November, the National Association of Free Will Baptists organized and accepted the women's group. WNAC has been in existence ever since.

Birthing an organization is not an easy task. Keeping it going takes prayer, people, time, effort and money. What are the steps to organizing a Women Nationally Active for Christ group?

First, determine the interest of your women. It only takes two or three to start a group. A few committed women can share their vision with others.

The next step is to motivate your women. Talk up the idea to others. Be excited about the opportunities to minister as a group. Don't rush formal organization. Take your time. If you attempt to start a group and fail, it will be harder the second time.

Prior to the 1935 meeting, there had been attempts and some success in organizing a national women's group. But none had been able to survive. When it finally happened, Mrs. Agnes Frazier, one of the first officers of the new organization, said she had been anticipating that day for six or seven years.

Beginning something new often yields criticism. Plan carefully and allow time for others to "catch the vision." Cultivate good rapport with all women, but target those who have the greater interest.

Include your pastor in the planning. You must have his support to maintain a successful women's group in your church. Not every pastor understands the purpose of Women Nationally Active for Christ. Once you gain his approval, keep him informed. Good communication is a must. Remember, too, that the pastor is an ex-officio member of every group in the church. Invite him to your organizational meeting. Ask him to offer a prayer of dedication for the newly formed group. Enlist his prayer and moral support. You need his encouragement just as he needs yours.

See the help of others. Contact the WNAC office (877-767-7662) about your plans to organize. We will send you free of charge the year's *Program and Plan Book*, copies of the current issue of *CoLaborer Magazine*, a *Manual for Free Will Baptist Women's Organization* and other helpful materials.

The organizational structure of WNAC is similar to that of the National Association. Local groups are the grassroots of the organization. These groups join together to form districts. The districts comprise a state association. And state associations together become Women Nationally Active for Christ. Leaders of these district and state associations are willing to assist in the organization of a local group.

Once your group is organized, be sure to join the district or association near you. We are stronger together than in independent groups. Before the 1935 birth, women longed to be united in fellowship and labors. Individual groups, scattered from North Carolina to Texas, met and carried on their own works.

Mrs. Fannie Polston, first national field secretary, took advantage of every opportunity to encourage and unite FWB women across the country (*Sparks Into Flame*, p.33). The purpose for uniting then and now is the same—to help each woman find her place in fulfilling the Great Commission in the home, the church, the community and around the world.

Even in its earliest days, the arms of our organization were far reaching. In 1919, Dr. Alfred William Anthony wrote, "Its gracious influences have been of greater value in the wide circle of the Kingdom of Christ than most of us realize." (*Sparks Into Flame*, p.14).

Today our ministry continues to broaden and build the Kingdom.

Can you begin a women's ministry in your church? Sure you can. I'm reminded of the leper in Matthew 8, who in essence said to Jesus, "If you are willing, I know you can heal me." To which Jesus responded, "I am willing." The leper was healed. Most often it is how you answer the question, "Are you willing?" that will make the difference. ■

Women Nationally  Active for Christ



Thomas Marberry

Paul, Apostle of God's Glory in Christ

Thomas R. Schreiner

(Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2001, 504 pp., hardback \$29.95).

The author is well versed in Pauline studies. He serves as professor of New Testament at Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in Louisville, Kentucky. He has written three previous works on Paul's life and ministry.

The author's goal is "to write a textbook on Pauline theology for students at both college and seminary level." Although his work reflects a high degree of understanding of the viewpoints of other scholars, his purpose is not to engage them in an academic debate. His purpose is rather to give the student a good overview of the major issues in the study of the theology of Paul.

Paul's theology is "complex and presented in occasional letters written to churches." Paul was a busy man, heavily involved in planting and developing new churches in various parts of the Roman Empire. He dealt with a multitude of different problems on a daily basis. He never had the luxury of sitting down in a quiet office and writing a theology textbook.

As a general rule, Paul wrote his letters in the heat of battle as he wrestled with complex doctrinal and practical problems in the infant churches. Seldom did he have the opportunity to present all his ideas on a given subject in one place; he wrote what the church needed to hear in a specific situation.

Schreiner, like all who study the theology of Paul, seeks to determine the central idea or ideas that bind the apostle's thought together. Leading scholars have proposed key theological themes such as justification, reconciliation, salvation history or being "in Christ" as the key which helps us to understand Paul's thought. Some have suggested eschatology as the dominant idea. This author rejects such approaches. In his view, each of these theological themes is important, but to exalt one is to downplay the impor-

tance of others. For this author, Paul's missionary ministry is the idea that binds his theology together. Paul's goal is to present the gospel in the most effective way in a missionary context.

In Schreiner's view, Paul's theology resembles a house. As he explains, "God is not only the foundation of the house; he and his Son, Jesus the Messiah, are the means by which the house is built." The goal is not the house itself, for God "has built the house to bring honor and praise to himself."

Each chapter in this textbook develops an important theme in Paul's preaching and teaching. Chapter eight examines "God's Saving Righteousness—The Basis of a Right Relationship with God." Paul's goal as a missionary was to preach the gospel, the message of salvation, to all people. The cross of Christ is a central element in this message because it reveals both God's love and his righteousness. This author emphasizes the forensic nature of this righteousness. As he explains, "Believers are in a right relationship with God forensically on the basis of Christ's sinless life and his atoning death, (II Cor. 5:21)."

This chapter also analyzes Paul's concept of faith. The author notes, quite correctly, that "Paul does not commend faith in general; instead he commends trust in what God has done for believers in Christ . . ." This faith is not passive but active. It leads the believer to obedience. He writes, "Obedience and faith are not equal partners because obedience flows from and is rooted in faith."

Chapter 11, which deals with "Faith and Hope Ground of Perseverance," is the most difficult and troubling chapter in this otherwise excellent book. The author simply ignores the fact that believers can revert to fleshly behavior and adopts the familiar Calvinistic thinking that those who revert to the

flesh were never truly saved.

He cites the example of Hymenaeus and Philetus in II Timothy. He argues that they were never true believers in spite of the fact that Paul says that they "have deviated from the faith." After his discussion of this passage he concludes, "No true believer will ever apostatize because Christ's love will not let them go."

A few pages later Schreiner addresses the issue of perseverance. He recognizes that Paul repeatedly exhorts believers to persevere in the faith. He writes, "The summary of the gospel in I Corinthians 15:1-4, asserts that the Corinthians are saved by the gospel 'if you hold it fast, unless you believed in vain' (I Cor. 15:2). Eschatological salvation is conditioned on perseverance in the gospel."

Near the end of this chapter the author presents his own rather confusing conclusion. He writes, "On the one hand, God has promised to sustain believers until the end so that their faith will not fail. On the other hand, believers are to persevere until the end, vigilantly maintaining their faith, and ensuring that their hearts do not grow cold."

It is certainly true to say that God does not abandon the believer; all Heaven's resources are pledged for his support. The teachings of Paul, however, are quite clear. Believers can abandon the faith through their own deliberate rebellion against God.

In spite of its confusing treatment of the issue of perseverance, this is an excellent study of Paul's theology. It clearly outlines the most important points in Paul's complex thought. It recognizes, as many others do not, that Paul was not first and foremost a theologian. Above all, he was a missionary sharing the good news of Jesus Christ in a lost world. ■



Garnett Reid

Skipper, Barney Fife and the Jerusalem Council (Acts 15)

Call me "Skipper," he told us at our first practice. "You know, like on Gilligan's Island." "Skipper" was Elmo Fitzgerald, the new coach of my 11-year-old Little League team. I've always thought this nickname was his attempt to soften his image—one which the team soon discovered was really a no-nonsense, "my way or the highway," Bear Bryant sort of approach that belied Skipper's genial blue eyes and grandfatherly appearance.

His insistence that we get it right prompted Skipper to call for "nail-it-down" practices, as he termed them. These grueling sessions usually followed games where we (to put it honestly) stunk, in a Bad News Bears sort of way. "You boys need to get back to basic baseball! Settle some things, and get it straight," he would shout, though usually in more direct, less standard sandlot English.

Acts 15 offers an occasion to the early church to "get it straight" and settle some key questions. Or as Barney Fife would say, to "nip it in the bud."

We might tend to overlook this pivotal chapter for several reasons. Paul's impressive first and second missionary journeys bookend the weighty events described in chapter 15. The Jerusalem council seems more of a business meeting than a revival meeting.

Yet Acts 15 is one of the most significant chapters in the New Testament because it confirms essential elements of truth.

Confirms the Primacy of Grace

Verse one exposes the threat to the gospel: "Keep the law in order to be saved" (see the Mosaic law of circumcision in Lev. 12:3). The Jews had misunderstood the Old Testament in thinking that conformity to law brought salvation (see Gen. 15:6; Deut. 6:5). I. H. Marshall explains, "We probably underestimate what a colossal step it was

for dyed-in-the-wool Jewish legalists to adopt a new way of thinking."

Yet the good news is that all, Jew and Gentile alike, "should hear the word of the gospel and believe" (v. 7). At this early juncture in history, the church sounds the clear tone of grace in salvation's song. Years ago in a college class on Acts, Dr. Charles Thigpen commented on this passage, "When anything is added to grace, grace is nullified."

Confirms Scope of the Gospel

The most divisive issue in the first century church was Gentile salvation. In spite of the Abrahamic covenant and Old Testament teaching about God's light reaching the Gentiles, converted Jews struggled to accept them with equal standing in Christ. These *goyim* (non-Jews) were not God's chosen people and were ceremonially unclean. "How can they belong to us?" wondered many Jews.

Paul celebrates the "conversion of the Gentiles," though (v. 3). Peter contends that all along ("at first") God visited the Gentiles to call a people to Himself (v. 14). In verses 15-17, James agrees, explaining that the Old Testament prophets (here Amos 9:11-12) had foretold Gentile salvation. As if to emphasize the point, he even quotes the Amos passage from the *Greek* Old Testament.

Confirms Faith as the Condition for Salvation

Not only has God chosen to save Gentiles, but He has also required of them the same condition as He has the Jews: faith. Peter, perhaps thinking of his encounter with the Roman Cornelius in Acts 10, declares that God "put no difference between us (Jews) and them (Gentiles), purifying their hearts by faith" (v. 9). In verse 11, he does *not* say, "These Gentiles are saved like we are." Rather, he *reverses* it: "We Jews are saved like they (Gentiles) are."

Confirms the Value of Debate and Consensus

Sometimes conflict is inevitable. Few of us like debate and dissension, but a study of the historic church councils reminds us that doctrine often needs defending. Through give-and-take exchange in a context of Christian love and respect, "iron sharpens iron." Shared understanding need not compromise but may clarify truth.

This plan to assemble for discussion "pleased the apostles" (v. 22). As a result of the forum, they were "of one mind" (Greek *homothumadon*, v. 25). Verse 28 is striking. After much debate (v. 7), "it seemed good to the Holy Ghost, and to us," Luke records the leaders' comment. Evidently we sometimes know the will of the Holy Spirit *through* debate and discussion!

Confirms the Need to Respect a Brother's Conscience

The council's summary resolution relayed in the letter (vv. 19-20, 29) apparently involves Gentiles avoiding practices that would offend the consciences of their Jewish brothers. As Machen concludes, "The apostolic decree was simply a particular case of becoming to the Jews as a Jew that the Jews might be gained." Remember that unsaved people usually see our testimony *before* they see the truth behind it.

Confirms Blessing through Disagreement

Verses 36-40 describe the argument ("sharp contention") between Paul and Barnabas over Mark. Whatever we think about who was right or wrong in the dispute, God brought blessing regardless. My friend Bert Tippet, writing on this incident, reminds us that: (1) good Christians may disagree; and (2) God may advance His work even when His people "pull in opposite directions."

Though I'm not so sure Skipper would have ever said that to our team! ■



Susan Burgess

When I Made My Last Move

By Susan Burgess

Two preachers and two preacher's kids in a car. The journey begins, and in a rare moment of silence the five-year-old PK belts out, "On the Road Againnnnn!"

For many PKs and their families, hitting the road for church, conference and/or convention occurs weekly, quarterly and annually at a minimum. Throw in packing blocks in the washing machine, and the road trip becomes a one-way street.

Moving to a new home in a different area involves a major upheaval of all that is familiar, safe and sane. Stress charts rank moves at the top of stress producers along with divorce and death. And that's not just on the people involved. The U.S. Navy (which has proudly provided much of the real-life experience for this article) has a saying that "three moves are equivalent to a fire" on your furniture's good looks.

Involve Entire Family

Responding to a calling from God to a new work is the pastor's responsibility. As ruler of his own house (I Tim. 3:4), the husband will answer to God for the willingness of the family to follow God's leading. As guider of the home (I Tim. 5:14), the pastor's wife is responsible for supervising the execution of the plan so that no reproach is brought on the family.

Her attitude will lead the way forward. Nothing is so sweet about a place of ministry as the arrival and the leaving. Everything can look golden when you have to leave it behind. I once bemoaned moving from a spacious home with the lament, "But we'll never have a house this big again." God has blessed us with four larger houses since that move.

By setting an example of positive expectation mingled with loving memories of the ministry left behind, a mother can offset much of the fear and possible rebellion that children may feel. Make sure there is a definite time for saying

goodbye to those who are important to a child. Maintain comfortable rituals during the move. This is not a time to try to make them grow up. Children need to be securely rooted to grow.

But children can be assigned definite jobs that will help them know they are also responsible for the success of the move. During a move by Mayflower, our daughter was assigned to monitor the packing of her bedroom. She instructed the packer to lay all her stuffed animals in the box face up, and then he had to punch holes in the box so they could breathe. That was all it took for her to be assured that the new home would also be a loving, comfortable refuge.

Collect Vital Documents

Since faith without works is dead (Jas. 2:26), remember some practical bits of advice for a successful move. Collect vital documents in a special holder to have in your possession at all times. Include insurance policies, car title (never leave this in your car for a thief's convenience), mortgage records, birth certificates, and people and pet immunization records.

Even a moving pro can get caught unprepared without these prized documents. From kindergarten through high school, our daughter attended nine schools, including a different school for each of the four years of high school. (Yes, a Christian teenager can go to new schools, make excellent grades, enjoy friends from many cultures and have a great senior year.)

Experienced as we were with school changes, on a move from Tennessee to California in August, we allowed our vital documents to be packed because we knew that California schools did not start until after Labor Day.

But in another bit of brilliant moving strategy, we had contracted to have our furniture stored for six weeks while we found a home. Our daughter had an even longer summer vacation, and

her mother felt like an illegal alien trying to smuggle her child into school without immunization records.

Move Essentials Only

Move only what you can use. Your treasures are in heaven. Give away what someone else can use and appreciate more than you. On the same move to California, while our six weeks of furniture storage was expiring, we found a home immediately. We slept on chaise lounges, ate off plastic, and microwaved. The microwave came with the apartment, and the beds doubled as balcony furniture. It was the least stressful time we ever had.

Keep it Clean

We've all heard horror stories of church members who came to help and left the moving family in emotional tatters. One volunteer pulled out a drawer and dumped cookbooks and mouse calling cards into the packing box with equanimity. Another willing worker cleaned windowsills while telling passers-by, "This is the dirtiest house I've ever seen." Cleaning saves you a most valuable possession: your dignity.

The preceding stories are surely hearsay only. Our family has always had wonderful help moving and appreciated all help immensely. Remember that in case we ever need moving help again. My husband/pastor adds his one bit of advice: Move before your in-laws get too old to help.

Thirteen moves in 34 years have proved our wedding song to be potently prophetic. But like Ruth, I still promise, "Whither thou goest, I will go; and where thou lodgest, I will lodge: Thy people shall be my people, and thy God, my God," (Ruth 1:16). ■

ABOUT THE WRITER: Mrs. Susan Burgess is a member of Oak Valley Free Will Baptist Church in Geff, Illinois. A former editorial assistant with *Contact*, Susan travels extensively as a professional speaker and writer.



Randy Sawyer

Close the Back Door

Close the back door; were you raised in a barn or somethin'?" These are words that every child has heard. The point of the admonition is to slow down, and make sure to shut the door after leaving a room or the house. Of course, I have been in a few places where it has been advantageous to leave a door or two open. Such as when it is suffocatingly hot or when you drip grease on the burner or when you need to allow some noxious odor to escape.

Focus on Discipleship

So what does this have to do with pastoral ministry? One of the most difficult questions related to church growth has to do with "closing the back door." That is, how do you keep folks after you've made contact with them? In many ways, it seems to be easier to get them than it is to keep them. This all speaks to the issue of assimilating and discipling new believers.

The core of Christ's commission to the church, the *great commission*, is to "make disciples among all nations," and making disciples requires *going, baptizing and teaching*. *Going* implies evangelization, penetrating the culture with the gospel and aggressively seeking to win souls to Christ. *Baptizing* stresses the identification of a new believer with Christ, as well as the assimilation of the new believer into the body of Christ. *Teaching* engages all believers with the precepts and practices that aim toward spiritual maturation.

So the *great commission* entrusts the church with the task of capturing souls for Christ, then carefully nurturing them into the image of Christ. "Making disciples" is not a program, it is a process, and each phase of the process must be *deliberate* and *intentional*. When a church intentionally works toward the maturation of believers, they are seeking to close the back door.

Make it Deliberate

The need of closing the back door came home to me several years ago when we had experienced a wonderful season of growth in our church. Over a six-month period we had taken nearly 100 folks into our fellowship. Yet barely six months later, almost 50% of the new additions were nowhere to be found.

While we could rejoice that the front door was wide open, we were obviously grieved that the back door was equally wide open. The resulting draft, which seemed to blow as many folks out of the church as in, was a cause for deep concern. After studying the problem carefully, we concluded that a more intentional approach to assimilation was needed.

In order to close the back door, the "Pastor's Newcomers Class" was initiated. This pastor-led class meets during the Sunday School hour for seven weeks, with a new class beginning approximately every eight weeks. The course material is divided under three main headings:

1. Connecting to Christ
2. Connecting to the Church
3. Connecting to First Church

In *connecting to Christ*, we spend a couple of weeks dealing with new convert issues, such as, how to be saved, how to be sure you're saved, how to grow in grace, arming yourself for spiritual warfare and more.

The second set of lessons, *connecting to the Church*, offers the newcomer a brief overview of church membership, its privileges and responsibilities. During these two weeks we consider the need for regular church attendance, for giving and for serving.

It is here that we include a discussion of local church government and structure, as well as deal specifically with the roles of pastor, deacon and trustee. This material informs the in-

quirer as to how budgets are adopted, how policies are made, how staff positions are created and filled, and how programs are initiated.

For the final three weeks of the class we deal with *connecting to First Church*. This section begins with a look at Free Will Baptists in general, before moving on to First Church in particular. In discussing Free Will Baptists, the newcomer is given the opportunity to see how our doctrine compares with that of other denominations and fellowships, such as Southern, Missionary and Independent Baptists, Wesleyan, Nazarene and Holiness groups, Presbyterian and various Reform groups, and those of the Charismatic persuasion. The discussion is usually lively here, and always promotes a greater appreciation for Free Will Baptist doctrine.

Then we deal with the history and development of First Church specifically. After tracing the hand of God on the church to this point, participants are given a look at the church's strategic plan for the next five to 10 years. They see an artist's rendering of our proposed property development, get a glimpse of our vision for future staffing, and hear the pastor share his heart about our dream of putting arms of love around our community and the world for Christ's sake. The seven-week series is concluded with a spiritual gift inventory test, and the challenge to find their place of service within the First Church family.

Expect Dramatic Results

Since initiating the "Pastor's Newcomers Class," the percentage of folks who have come into First Church and have remained has gone up dramatically. The retention rate is nearly 90% of those who go through the full seven weeks. The challenge now, of course, is to capture more people for Christ and get them into the class. We have a long way to go, but we'll keep working at it. And we'll do our best to keep the

back door closed.

If you have any questions regarding our "Newcomers Class," you may contact me at drsawyer1@yahoo.com. Now mind your manners, and close the back door! ■

Coming Next Month

- The Right Way to Split a Church
- The Birthday Cake
- FWB Colleges' Fall Enrollments
- Tried by Fire
- ... and more

Directory Update

CALIFORNIA

Charles Harris to Oxnard Church, Oxnard from Harmony Fellowship Church, Eastlake, CO

Mark Harrison to First Church, Bakersfield from First Church, Exeter

Roger Farrell to Eastside Church, Petaluma

James McMurty to First Church, Exeter

FLORIDA

Ed Hutchinson to Pleasant Hill Church, Bonifay from Shelby Church, Shelby, NC

Jack T. Woods to Abigail Church, Vernon from Faith Church, St. Cloud

NORTH CAROLINA

Keith Rhudy to Calvary Church, Fayetteville from Peace Church, Henderson

OKLAHOMA

Doug Carey to Crossroads Church, Jenks from Lowery Church, Twin Oaks

THE TOGETHER WAY

July 2002

Receipts:

State	Designated	CO-OP	Total	Year To Date Designated	Year To Date CO-OP	Year To Date Total
Alabama	\$ 554.18	\$ 204.04	\$ 758.22	\$ 3,042.42	\$ 1,404.96	\$ 4,447.38
Arizona	.00	.00	.00	.00	154.40	154.40
Arkansas	14,525.42	18,361.04	32,886.46	83,943.49	126,113.55	210,057.04
California	.00	952.83	952.83	.00	7,205.61	7,205.61
Colorado	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00
Delaware	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00
Florida	.00	.00	.00	408.56	5,670.00	6,078.56
Georgia	28,843.78	1,680.85	30,524.63	225,775.98	11,441.73	237,217.71
Hawaii	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00
Idaho	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00
Illinois	14,651.57	2,044.51	16,696.08	88,824.42	14,365.17	103,189.59
Indiana	3,931.26	382.81	4,314.07	13,622.11	1,535.85	15,157.96
Iowa	.00	.00	.00	.00	2,058.78	2,058.78
Kansas	.00	.00	.00	26.55	504.53	531.08
Kentucky	114.95	2,013.21	2,128.16	1,243.61	7,182.03	8,425.64
Louisiana	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00
Maryland	.00	.00	.00	.00	131.25	131.25
Michigan	16,282.84	1,767.27	18,050.11	131,740.95	17,500.65	149,241.60
Mississippi	.00	.00	.00	72,869.09	4,052.28	76,921.37
Missouri	35,613.13	16,100.87	51,714.00	312,030.06	112,863.32	424,893.38
Montana	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00
Nebraska	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00
New Jersey	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00
New Mexico	462.25	21.13	483.38	4,469.39	263.97	4,733.36
North Carolina	3,007.79	6,028.82	9,036.61	10,461.34	22,983.13	33,444.47
Ohio	11,768.20	2,828.54	14,596.74	110,600.28	21,826.90	132,427.18
Oklahoma	39,274.03	7,471.71	46,745.74	363,413.48	81,212.79	444,626.27
South Carolina	54,332.15	51.66	54,383.81	257,780.16	297.35	258,077.51
South Dakota	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00
Tennessee	13,533.12	1,117.36	14,650.48	85,815.16	10,294.91	96,110.07
Texas	8,454.00	335.92	8,789.92	72,801.13	2,748.33	75,549.46
Virginia	286.24	131.25	417.49	2,786.69	609.94	3,396.63
Virgin Islands	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00
West Virginia	235.00	57.26	292.26	12,306.47	774.99	13,081.46
Wisconsin	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00
Canada	1,448.20	24.29	1,472.49	4,490.39	83.41	4,573.80
Northwest Association	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00
Northeast Association	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00
Other	.00	.01	.01	.00	(0.17)	(0.17)
Totals	\$ 247,318.11	\$ 61,575.38	\$ 308,893.49	\$ 1,858,451.73	\$453,279.66	\$ 2,311,731.39

Disbursements:

Executive Office	\$ 1,948.52	27,708.90	\$ 29,657.42	\$ 13,300.03	\$203,975.92	\$ 217,275.95
Foreign Missions	148,091.17	7,789.27	155,880.44	1,080,275.18	57,339.82	1,137,615.00
FWBBC	28,346.69	7,789.27	36,135.96	179,624.15	57,339.82	236,963.97
Home Missions	57,126.70	6,095.96	63,222.66	510,835.97	44,874.71	555,710.68
Retirement & Insurance	479.69	4,741.34	5,221.03	2,706.16	34,902.60	37,608.76
Master's Men	982.95	4,741.34	5,724.29	3,285.33	34,902.60	38,187.93
Commisn. for Theo. Integrity	101.15	169.33	270.48	526.12	1,246.49	1,772.61
FWB Foundation	430.70	2,031.98	2,462.68	2,287.73	14,958.23	17,245.96
Historical Commission	91.15	169.33	260.48	388.72	1,246.49	1,635.21
Music Commission	30.71	169.33	200.04	191.15	1,246.49	1,437.64
Media Commission	80.71	169.33	250.04	788.57	1,246.49	2,035.06
Hillsdale FWB College	2,243.34	.00	2,243.34	15,945.28	.00	15,945.28
Other	7,364.63	.00	7,364.63	48,297.34	.00	48,297.34
Totals	\$ 247,318.11	\$ 61,575.38	\$ 308,893.49	\$ 1,858,451.73	\$453,279.66	\$ 2,311,731.39



**OVER 600 VOLUNTEER
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Our Readers Comment

Thanks for Encouragement

Thank you for being such an encouragement to me and many others. Please keep up the good work. God bless you for the inspirational articles and great information.

Wayne Bess, Jr.
Headmaster, Park Avenue Christian School
Nashville, Tennessee

Subscribes for Two

I am a member of Beacon Free Will Baptist Church in Raytown, Missouri. My pastor, Kenny Simpson, gave me an issue of *Contact* and I love it. It is filled with wonderful articles, devotions and information.

I would like to order a subscription for my best friend and myself. Thank you for a wonderful publication!

Rebecca Gjesfeld
Independence, Missouri

Disagrees with "Mother Went to Work"

I am writing in response to an article in the May issue of *Contact*. The article was written by Dr. Deel, "Mother Went to Work." I faithfully read *Contact* and enjoy it. I consider it a reflection of the Free Will Baptists from all walks of life.

When I read the article, I was disappointed in the way stay-at-home mothers were depicted. The article clearly stated that the children of stay-at-home mothers were not treated as affectionately as children whose mothers work. Also, it stated children with stay-at-home moms were more likely to score low on reading, math and science. There were no notes as to where these statements came from.

I am a stay-at-home mom and feel as if this article did not give respect to the decisions I have made. In the life of my children I have been a stay-at-home mom, a working mom, a mom working in the home and a homeschooling mom. I do not go out of my way to make women feel guilty or bad because they have made different choices than me.

How they live their lives is up to them. When I read a magazine that I respect, I do not expect to see what goes against what mainstream Free Will Baptists believe.

There were many good helps in the article, but when I read what Dr. Deel stated were the benefits, it just really made me mad. I am sure there are some advantages to a mother working, but by comparing these children with the children of stay-at-home moms the article seemed to put people on different sides.

I wrote Dr. Deel and she has responded to me with a book with some of the studies she stated.

Mrs. Christine Lewis
Cottondale, Alabama

Questions Spanish Literature "Obsolescence"

This is in response to the article by Dr. Alton Loveless, "Looking Back," on page 22 in the July 2002 issue of *Contact*.

fact. He writes a paragraph about the "continued obsolescence" of our Spanish literature.

Since I have been the manager of the Spanish Department at Randall House Publications for 18 years, I would be amiss if I didn't speak out about the literature program.

Because of reports about continued "obsolescence" each year, many people may believe that the Spanish literature is inferior and has been sitting in the warehouse for 16 years.

The literature is a direct translation from the English curriculum (all done by persons whose first language was Spanish), and it took over 10 years to finish. During this time we have sold thousands of dollars of the materials. To say the material is obsolete is unfair. It has been printed without dates so that it can be ordered and used at any time, thus saving money as it was printed and reprinted.

Starting the Spanish Department was done as a mission outreach for Free Will Baptists and it was done primarily for our Hispanic churches here and on the mission fields. Some of them were begging for literature in Spanish. Of course, there was no doubt that sales would never cover the cost, therefore we reached out to others who wanted good Bible-based curriculum. Over 30 denominations buy our literature.

The literature we have on hand was paid for when it was printed and it is still good. If we want to keep updated, perfectly good literature on hand, what is wrong with that? After all, we are a non-profit organization.

Dr. Lucy Hyman
Albany, Georgia

Don't Degrade My Choice

After reading Dr. Rebecca Deel's recent article ("Mother Went to Work," May 2002) concerning working mothers, I wondered if I should apologize to my children for having stayed at home with them through their growing-up years. She made it sound as if we non-working moms were depriving our children in many areas.

I am glad that she is able to work full-time, have a Father-of-the-Year for a husband, have great children and be honored by being included in the *Who's Who Among America's Teachers*. She seems to have it all.

But in defense of the traditional stay-at-home mom, I believe there is a place for those who sacrifice the prospect of income and honors in order to give our children the physical presence of a parent in the home. Mrs. Deel mentions the apparent better socialization of children who are in day-care, but I am still going to believe that my children benefited from having Mom around more than they would have benefited from being taken care of by someone else.

Surely, Mrs. Deel could have presented a better-rounded article. Even though I stayed at home, I would not expect every other mother to do so—we all make our own choices for various reasons. If her choice is to work, then I am glad that her life

and her family's lives benefit from her working. But if my choice is not to work, please don't degrade my choice.

Cheryl Akers
Jacksonville, Florida

Heartbroken Over Article

Every month I anxiously await the arrival of my *Contact* magazine and always enjoy the articles. However, I am burdened over the article in the May issue titled, "Mother Went to Work," by Dr. Rebecca Deel. I am a stay-at-home mother of two children, Mackenzie (5) and Benjamin (2).

This article seems to promote the "advantages" of a working mother as a preferred lifestyle. I was overwhelmed with the facts that were stated that "working moms are more affectionate with their children" and "children of working mothers score higher on achievement tests."

I was terribly distressed as I read further that working mothers "enjoy high morale in the workplace" and "successes in all three worlds" and that a working mother is "not just John's mommy" or "David's wife."

I love being "Mackenzie and Ben's mommy" and "Barry's wife" and I, too, am a child of God trying to live up to my full potential as the Proverbs 31 woman.

Dr. Deel went on, "Since Mom is short on time and energy, the pastor will be lucky if she doesn't snore . . . during his sermon" and that "working moms must let positions in the church go unfilled because they must prioritize to survive." Is she saying that the almighty dollar comes before the Lord and His work?

I have one last concern about the survival tips. Dr. Deel states, "Staying home full time would let the financial wolves move in" and that working mothers should "take pride in helping to keep wildlife at bay."

If a woman/mother must work outside of the home, provide her with biblical insights that will enable and encourage her to understand her position, responsibilities and burdens she may feel in leaving her home and family. There were no biblical references or insights provided to support that a working mother's lifestyle should consume her with the busyness, financial responsibility and neglect of church activities/responsibility that Dr. Deel's article reflects.

I have many Christian friends who are working mothers, and none of them possess any of the characteristics that this article portrays. All of them are very organized and involved in many activities in the church. Let me be clear—I am not against working mothers, I simply and strongly disagree with the way they are presented in this article.

My heart is broken over the contents of this article. I do not wish to judge or condemn Dr. Deel, but I immediately felt an overwhelming burden as I read her article. If I gained anything from this article, it was the fact that I could never praise God enough for the miracle He worked in my life through my children.

Mrs. Kimberly Darnell
Fountain Inn, South Carolina



Jack Williams

Gone to the Dogs

Too bad that Moses doesn't live in Antioch. When he led Israel out of bondage some time back, not a dog moved his tongue against the people (Exodus 11:7). Now that's a great leash law.

For the past 20 years, in order to survive pre-dawn walks unbitten, I've carried a big stick and scrapped with dogs whose owners ignored the leash law. That worked until I got old and the three-pound riot stick got heavy. Last winter I switched to a 36-inch Sjambok, a lightweight snake-killing instrument from Africa that smites whatever barks or hisses.

Then came April 15. A 35-pound black dog appeared in the neighborhood and claimed squatter's rights to my front yard. Since the claim-jumping cur showed up on April 15, I thought he might be an undercover IRS agent sent to get anything I had left.

At first I shooed him away. That irritated him. He stole toys from the little boy who lives next door and scattered broken pieces under my tree. Bad dog.

He began digging up my wife's flowers and the rubberized border that protects them. She poured hot sauce on the border; the dog apparently prefers his borders with hot sauce. Then things got out of hand.

The mutt snatched my morning paper, chewed it to pieces and left it dead in the street. We had words. I hurled rocks and small tree limbs at him. Still, the early-rising canine always got to the sports pages first.

After chasing him from my yard every day for a month and hauling off trash he left, I called the cavalry—Metro Animal Services, the nice people who capture and deal with unleashed dogs.

A professional-sounding man answered the phone, warned me the call might be recorded, took down the information and promised to

search for the dog.

A week later he was still chewing, gnawing, howling and trashing. I called again. James (the professional-sounding voice) said they were on it. And they were. Within three days, we found a note in the front door saying that Metro Animal Services came by but was unable to locate the dog.

My across-the-street neighbor saw it differently. She said the dog lay beside the house and watched as Metro Animal Services employees scouted the neighborhood. Smart-aleck dog.

On June 16 the black dog challenged my wife in the street in broad daylight. She promptly returned to the house, picked up my snake-killing Sjambok and gave him what-for. Dumb dog.

After I called Metro Animal Services a third time, we discovered a second note in the front door. They spotted the dog, gave chase but couldn't catch him. They were awaiting permission from the director to dart him, which was a more humane option than I had in mind.

Meanwhile, the dog continued his territorial chewing, challenging and trashing. I called Metro Animal Services a fourth time. Professional James said they were on it. He was right.

Two men chased the dog that same day in 90° heat and hounded him from Dan to Beersheba. They cornered him in my back yard next to a six-foot fence and moved to collar him. He jumped the fence and disappeared.

By that time, I was weary of arguing with him before dawn in my pajamas about who got first-rights to the newspaper. In near despair, I wrote a letter to the circulation manager canceling my subscription and explaining why. She called wanting to know if they should deliver two morning papers—one for me and one for the dog. We negotiated.

On July 4 the route person delivered

one morning paper, a steel post and a plastic tube, saying that unless the dog was unusually smart, this should do the trick. I don't know about the dog's IQ, but he's certainly evil and creative. My son-in-law attached the tube to the pole, and that's that.

Which leaves me with a daily-trashed yard and a hostile dog. I dropped by K-Mart and examined a Red Ryder BB Gun. But what if I miss and hit the neighbor's cat? After all, I am a preacher and the entire neighborhood knows it. Even though nobody now claims the black dog, if I shoot him, his owner will turn out to be the mayor's mother.

King David asked the Lord to "Deliver . . . my darling from the power of the dog" (Ps. 22:20). Alas, I'm nobody's darling in this dog dilemma.

Perhaps I'm meddling in things that are best left alone. Maybe I should heed Solomon's warning about the consequences that come to "... one that taketh a dog by the ears" (Prov. 26:17). Believe me, I'd like to take this dog by both ears.

One thing's for sure. The animal in my yard is not to be confused with Isaiah's canines that he called "... dumb dogs; they cannot bark; sleeping, lying down, loving to slumber" (56:10). This one never sleeps and always barks. He wears a collar and calls some place home, but he's certainly not this man's best friend.

It's now mid-August. The hot-sauce licking pooch remains unleashed, uncaught and unrepentant. Unless the professionals at Metro Animal Services return to dart the Mad Dog of Antioch, my only recourse may be to take refuge in the Apostle Paul's advice to the Philippians, "Beware of dogs . . ." ■

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Spouse's Present Age: 35
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Interest Rate Used for Calculation: 9.00%

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2,063.77
1,863.14
1,860.46
1,851.78

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