



CONTACT

Official Publication of the National Association of Free Will Baptists

November 2002

Tried By Fire

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Right Way to Split a Church
A Pig for a Pig
A Straight Answer, Please!**

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THE SECRETARY SPEAKS



Melvin Worthington

Successor Selected

The biblical accounts relating to Noah, Abraham, Moses, Daniel and Paul reaffirm the truth that God prepares and positions men to serve Him at the appropriate time. The mantle of leadership passes from one generation to the next.

The election of Keith Burden as executive secretary during the July 2002 national convention in Memphis reminded me of this timeless truth. Brother Burden is a unique man. During my tenure as executive secretary, he served 18 years as assistant clerk of the National Association and three years as clerk. He served with distinction, dignity, discernment and devotion.

The Procedure

Delegates at the 2000 national convention in Anaheim, California, adopted a four-step procedure for electing the executive secretary: (1) The Executive Committee shall serve as a search committee to screen potential candidates. (2) The Executive Committee shall recommend one candidate to the General Board. (3) The General Board shall recommend one candidate to the National Association. (4) The executive secretary shall be elected by a majority vote of the National Association.

This procedure worked well while selecting our new executive secretary. The process began with an August 2001 mailing to pastors requesting candidates for the position. By November 10, the candidate profiles were complete. Candidates were interviewed during the December 2001 Executive Committee meeting.

The Executive Committee recommended Keith Burden to the General Board. The General Board recommended him to national convention delegates, and he was elected by a unanimous vote.

The Profile

An Oklahoma native, Keith was born in 1953, converted in 1966, called to preach in 1970 and ordained to the ministry in 1973. He married Debbie Dudley in 1973. They have two children—Jennifer Blair and Katie Burden. The following qualities characterize our new executive secretary:

His availability. During the interview with the Executive Committee, he stated that he had never sought a denominational position but had always been available to serve. He has served on the local, district, state and national levels. This servant will *encourage* others in denominational service.

His adaptability. This quality was demonstrated when he served on various committees during the national conventions and Executive Committee meetings.

His articulation. Keith has the skill to clearly and concisely communicate his views. This will *enhance* his service as executive secretary.

His administrative skills. Keith is blessed with unique administrative gifts. These insights will *enable* him to fulfill those tasks mandated to the executive secretary.

His accountability. Keith is not intimidated by accountability to denominational constituents. He understands and believes in accountability to those he serves.

The Person

Keith is a man of *personal integrity*, an essential quality for the executive secretary. He is a man with *perceptive insight*. This will enable him to serve with dignity and distinction.

The Secretary's Schedule

November 2002

1-2 Mississippi State Association

Keith is a man with *practical interests*. His interests include the vision and dreams of pastors, of department directors and denominational constituents. He wants to serve the entire denomination.

The Preparation

Brother Burden may be the best prepared executive secretary ever elected. Consider the following areas:

His education. He has been prepared theologically and intellectually as a graduate of Hillsdale FWB College (Bachelor of Arts in Theology). He also completed 12 hours at Free Will Baptist Bible College Graduate School. He earned a Master of Arts degree at Moody Bible Institute Graduate School.

His experience. He has pastored and served in district associations 25 years—Executive Board, Mission Board, treasurer, moderator and Credentials Committee. He has also served 25 years in the state associations—Sunday School Board, assistant moderator, moderator, Christian Education Board, clerk and moderator. On the national level, he served as assistant clerk and clerk 21 years. His service provides a broad balance and blended understanding of denominational life.

His expectations. Keith has high expectations for the denomination. He believes the future is bright for the National Association of Free Will Baptists. He understands who Free Will Baptists are, and he expects God to do great things in us, through us and for us. He is content to be a Free Will Baptist and convinced that Free Will Baptists can make a significant contribution to the Lord's work around the world. The leadership mantle has passed to the shoulders of Keith Burden. ■

Sunday morning, December 10, 2000. I awoke thinking what a wonderful day of opportunity it could be. I walked across the driveway from my house to our church and made the usual preparations for Sunday School and worship. As two pots of coffee brewed in the basement fellowship hall, my wife came over to get her classroom ready. It was 9:00 a.m. when I left to bring our second daughter to Sunday School, and things were great!

Church on Fire

On the drive back, I noticed smoke rising near our home and church. We pulled into the driveway as smoke poured from the church roof in thick, dark columns. I jumped from the van, told my daughter to call 911 and ran in to evaluate the situation. The ceiling, attic and roof above the stage were fully involved.

My younger daughter had been in the fellowship hall setting up refreshments when she heard a sound like wires crackling. She came upstairs and found the church on fire. It was 9:30 a.m. and nothing was great.

We removed the sound system and anything else small enough to carry quickly. We made four trips before the sanctuary ceiling collapsed. We evacuated the building and waited for the fire equipment to arrive.

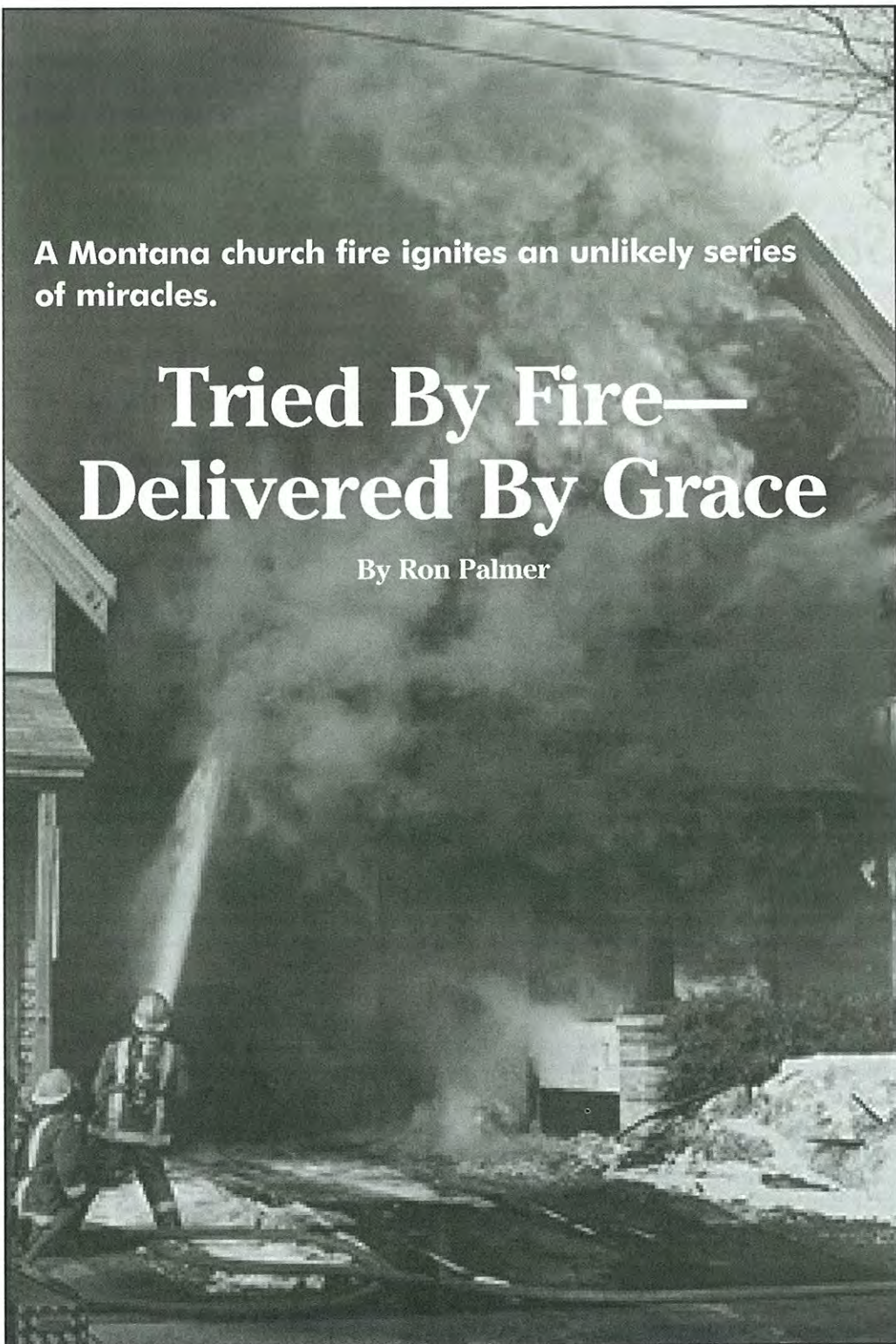
Fifteen minutes later the fire trucks appeared. When I asked what took so long to drive the two miles from the fire station to our church, the captain said they didn't know where we were located and had gone up the street 10 blocks to another church. I was amazed at his response, since the captain has lived across the street from our church for four years.

By then flames covered the top of the building. Firemen cut a large hole in the roof and

A Montana church fire ignites an unlikely series of miracles.

Tried By Fire— Delivered By Grace

By Ron Palmer



ran hoses through the door, the roof and the attic. The fire was out in 45 minutes, the sanctuary gutted.

Several of us gathered in the house to pray and commit the matter to the Lord, including the long response time by the fire department. God works in mysterious ways, however. If the firemen had arrived

earlier, they would have saved our old building except for the roof. We like the way things worked out a lot better.

Television Interview

A reporter from Channel 8 News asked permission to interview me as she stood on

our church lawn with smoke everywhere. During the interview, I told her we were looking forward to a great Christmas season and had just finished decorations at church the previous day. We had planned to meet at the fellowship hall the next Saturday and assemble some "bags of blessings" for the rescue mission to distribute to the homeless.

She asked how I felt about the church burning and us losing so much in the fire. I told her, "I'll tell you the same thing I told our people in prayer meeting this morning as the firemen were putting out the fire. We must be willing to trust God in the hard times or we're kidding ourselves to brag about our faith in the easy times." Then I quoted Romans 8:28.

I went on to tell the reporter, "I don't know how God is going to do this, but I firmly believe He will bless us so that we can rebuild our church better than it was before, for our good and His glory. I am at peace about the matter and am excited to see how He does it."

The reporter looked at me in surprise and said, "Why you actually believe that, don't you?"

I said, "I surely do, or I wouldn't preach it or teach it."

She then said, "When you get back into your building, could I come out for your first service and tape part of it and interview you again to see how this all works out?"

I told her that she'd be welcome to return. The interview went out on a live feed. The station also ran unedited copies of the interview on the 5:30 p.m. and 10:00 p.m. news. The next week I received a note from the pastor of a church 80 miles away in the mountains.

The note said: "Thank you for the wonderful testimony you gave for our Lord Jesus Christ when your church burned. We are in a building program at our small church. Several of our people saw the interview, and we met in a business meeting to be of such help as we could. Enclosed is a \$200 check toward your building campaign."

That was the beginning of God's blessings, and everything was great!

Top Gun Adjusters

The insurance company sent its top gun adjuster from Spokane, Washington, who spent four days going over

everything. He said, "Don't worry, Pastor, we'll make sure you don't suffer any loss because of the fire or anything that results from the fire. I guarantee that."

That made me feel good. However, having some business knowledge, I asked two independent companies to prepare estimates for rebuilding costs. One estimated costs of nearly \$112,000, while the other was just over \$118,000.

We began meeting in the education unit for worship services. We squeezed into a large classroom heated by electric plug-in heaters because the gas was shut off. We lost members from three families because of the conditions. During this time, we received a \$52,300 check from the insurance company for our adjustment. Things were not going so great.

I had a conference call with our adjuster in Spokane. They agreed to readjust the settlement before we turned the matter over to our attorney and took the settlement question to district court in Billings. They settled for \$96,000, nearly \$20,000 below the average of the two independent adjusters.

Leonard Takes Charge

Leonard Cochran, one of the men in our congregation, came to me and said, "Pastor, I'm a general contractor. I had my own business in Phoenix before I moved up here. I just finished a 72-unit motel west of Bozeman, and we are between jobs right now. If you would like, I will take over the rebuilding project, and you can focus on dealing with the insurance and your ministry."

Things were going great!

Then Leonard said, "By the way, if they won't give any better settlement than that, I can still do it and save the church a bunch of money."

Leonard went to the city Planning Commission to get permits for the project. While there he ran into a man he had trained in Arizona eight years earlier. The man (Bryan) was now the chief inspector for Yellowstone County and Billings city Planning



Commission.

When Leonard told him about the church and the rebuilding project, and that he was there to pay the \$1,050 fees, Bryan said, "Hey, I know you, remember? You trained me. Here, sketch a plan of what you want to do on this paper." We paid \$310.

Leonard stands 6'2" and weighs 240 pounds with black hair down over his shoulders and tattoos on his arms. He was a member of a motorcycle gang before he was saved. He had been involved in selling drugs, got arrested and spent 60 days in jail. While in jail, a black man named White led him to Jesus. After getting out of jail, Leonard went back to the old crowd and was miserable. He prayed that God would do something to get him out of the drug environment. God did, and it wasn't what Leonard expected.

Leonard went to a man's house to collect some money he was owed. While he was there, the place was raided. Leonard got three years and nine months in prison. He was pretty upset the first two years, because he had been arrested when he wasn't doing anything.

At the end of his first year in prison, Leonard filed a probation application. It was denied. The same thing happened at the end of the second year. During the third year, he got involved in a prison ministry helping younger guys who were in for the first time. God was using him, and he was happy. It was unusual for a former drug-running motorcycle gang member to be preaching Jesus.

When prison officials sent Leonard the probation application form at the end of his third year, he wrote across the top: "Not interested. I'm satisfied with where God has me."

Two days later a guard told him, "Cochran, get your stuff together. You're out of here." God had taken nine months off his sentence.

Leonard went back to his wife and told her he wanted to move from the Phoenix area to avoid the environment that had sent him to prison. They relocated to Montana where her parents lived in Billings and settled four blocks from our church.

The first Sunday they attended, 18 months before the fire, they walked in and sat quietly. Leonard, Bobbi and their son L. J. came back the next Sunday. He asked to speak with me alone.

"Pastor," the big man said, "if you don't mind, we want to make this our home church. You have gotten my attention in your preaching, but you've really gotten our son's attention. We appreciate that."

I looked up at Leonard standing there in his sleeveless shirt, knee-length walking shorts, long hair, tattoos and said, "We're glad to have you." They had gone to another church in the area and the people would neither speak to them nor shake hands.

Coincidences?

Leonard's best friend is Tom Betnar. He came up from Arizona and told Leonard he wanted to help him work on the church. Leonard agreed with one condition—Tom must come to church with them each Sunday. Tom was not a Christian. He was a Harley-riding, drug-involved buddy from the old days.

Tom is all man at 6'6" and 460 pounds. He wears his ball cap backwards, his brown hair shoulder length and has tattoos. He agreed to attend on Sunday mornings, and did so while they repaired the church. With Tom's help and the assistance of my son and one other man, Leonard rebuilt the church.

Each time we went to Home Depot for supplies, they seemed to have some kind of sale. When we needed 100 pieces of sheet rock, it was on sale a dollar per sheet less than advertised. Paint was \$2.75 per gallon less than we expected to pay. A \$928 door followed us home for \$318. Carpet for the sanctuary cost \$600 less than sale price when the owner heard about the church burning.

The electrician (Leonard's father-in-law) donated \$1,000 worth of work and sent word, "I'm not a church-going man, but tell Pastor Ron I want to do my part on the church." The roofing company gave a \$450 discount; the air conditioning man said to "round off his check" and donated the extra \$70. And there were numerous others.

Do you believe in coincidences? Not me. I believe in faith.

Second Television Interview

When the sanctuary was rebuilt enough to have our first service, I called the television station and invited the Channel 8 News reporter. She

came and taped parts of the first service that last Sunday in June 2001, and she interviewed me again.

She said, "I realize that everything is not done yet, but this is looking beautiful. Can you tell how you feel that God did this for you?"

I reminded her of our conversation the previous December and said that God did more than I had hoped or imagined. Not only did God work this out for our good and His glory, but He fulfilled another promise found in Ephesians 3:20-21, "Now unto him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us, Unto him be glory in the church by Christ Jesus."

I said, "Here is what God has done for us. We rebuilt the church, replacing the old steep roof with a modern one which improved the outer appearance. We repainted the entire building, brought everything up to codes, replaced the interior after re-insulating it, put in new lighting and better sound equipment.

"Besides that, we installed new carpet, a baptistry, central heating and air conditioning. Because of volunteer labor and God sending us building materials at discounts or outright donations, we saved enough money to pay off a \$34,000 mortgage. That December fire left us debt-free in rebuilt, modern facilities."

The reporter nearly dropped her microphone as she said, "Why that is utterly amazing!"

I said, "Yes, it is. But then we serve an amazing God Who is true to the promises He gives us in His Word."

God's Still Working

After the second television interview, we discovered that water damage to our basement fellowship hall and kitchen required another adjustment from the insurance company. As a result, we installed a new ceiling, walls and lights, and painted the fellowship hall. The kitchen has new flooring and counter tops, sink, cupboards and lighting.

Because the gas company turned off the heat in our education building after the fire, the pipes froze and burst. Eight inches of water flooded seven rooms. The insurance company adjusted for that also. We now have remodeled classrooms and hallway in the educational unit.

The blessings don't stop there. I led Tom Betnar to Christ 20 minutes before the evening service on February 23, 2002. He came forward the next Sunday and gave a public testimony. I baptized Tom in the Yellowstone River on July 21 before leaving for the national convention in Memphis.

Blessed by Fire

As I look back at December 10, 2000, it was indeed a day of opportunity. I had no idea how much opportunity it would hold. When the church burned that morning, I was hard pressed to see any benefit in it. At times now, I find myself asking God's forgiveness for having such limits on my faith.

The church has been rebuilt better than before. Our mortgage was paid off, saving us \$14,000 in interest. We are debt-free and reinsured. Best of all, Tom Betnar was saved as well as many others.

One thing we're all convinced of is this: God is not finished with Cross Roads Free Will Baptist Church. We believe He will help us build a congregation to fill and overflow these facilities.

Leonard, Tom and I were talking some weeks ago. I told them I wanted to hurry and get everything completed in the building. When they asked why, I said, "The sooner we get the physical building finished, the quicker we can focus on building the congregation to outgrow it, and then sell it and build or move into bigger ones."

There is a small group of believers here in Billings who know beyond a shadow of doubt that God is bigger than our circumstances. And by the way, things are great! ■



ABOUT THE WRITER: Reverend Ron Palmer pastors Cross Roads Free Will Baptist Church in Billings, Montana.

**It was easy to see that they were not
a good match for each other.**

Debbie's New Boyfriend

By Joe Seay

I remember him when he came in the door of the church. He was different, much different. He had long hair that hung in a ponytail down to his waist and a full beard that looked unkempt. He wore a sleeveless shirt and his badly faded jeans were tucked inside a pair of dusty boots. I overheard someone say he was a hippie hooked on drugs and booze.

Debbie and her family had attended our church since she was a little girl. Now she was in her early 20s. She had dated several young men in the church but just a few weeks ago met this guy. She brought him to church with her.

It was easy to see that they were not a good match for each other. Debbie was a neat, pretty young lady and, this guy . . . Well, he just didn't fit in.

Debbie's mother asked the church to pray for Debbie and her new friend. His name was Richard. We always included them in our prayers. Several people tried to be friendly to this rough-looking young man but he just seemed so . . . well, different. He always looked uncomfortable, especially when the congregation sang the invitational hymn.

Probably guilt, I figured. No telling what he'd been involved in. I just hoped Debbie would come to her senses before it was too late.

When church was over, I headed toward the car. I heard a loud noise and turned just as Debbie and Richard came by, riding on a big, loud motorcycle. Oh well, it's none of my business. I was just glad it wasn't my daughter hanging around with that guy.

They came to church a few times, but they missed about as much as they came, which didn't surprise me. I wondered what this younger generation was coming to anyway.

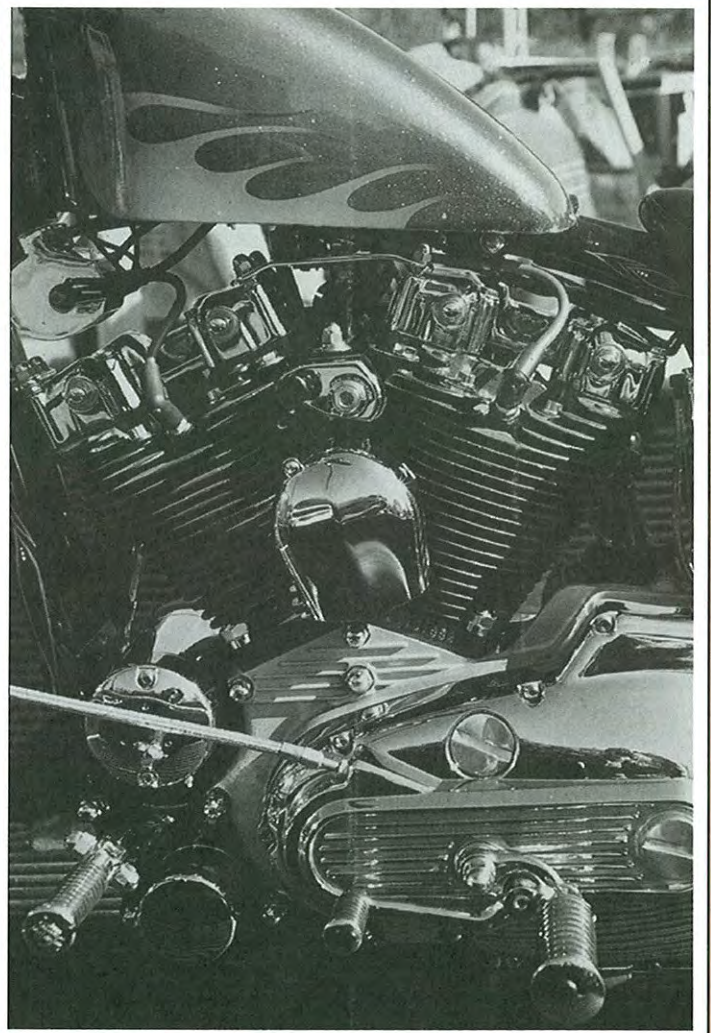
Debbie's mother kept praying and asked the church to remember to pray also.

I heard that our pastor had been visiting with them but I didn't see any change. Richard dressed the same and still rode that loud motorcycle to church. It seemed to me that Debbie would realize this guy wasn't for her. There was too much difference in them.

Debbie's mother and the prayer circles kept praying.

Then came a cloudy Sunday that looked like it might rain anytime. I wasn't feeling too well but went to church anyway. Debbie was there with Richard—long hair, boots, motorcycle and all.

Our pastor preached a great message about how God loves us, even when we're still doing bad things. He loved us so much that He died on the cross for our sins. When

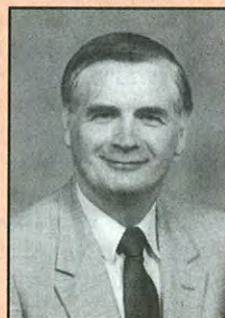


the pastor gave the invitation for people to come forward to accept Christ, I couldn't believe my eyes. Debbie and Richard both went forward.

I was surprised, pleased but surprised. Then a strange feeling came over me. I felt convicted because of my judgmental attitude, and I also went forward and asked for forgiveness.

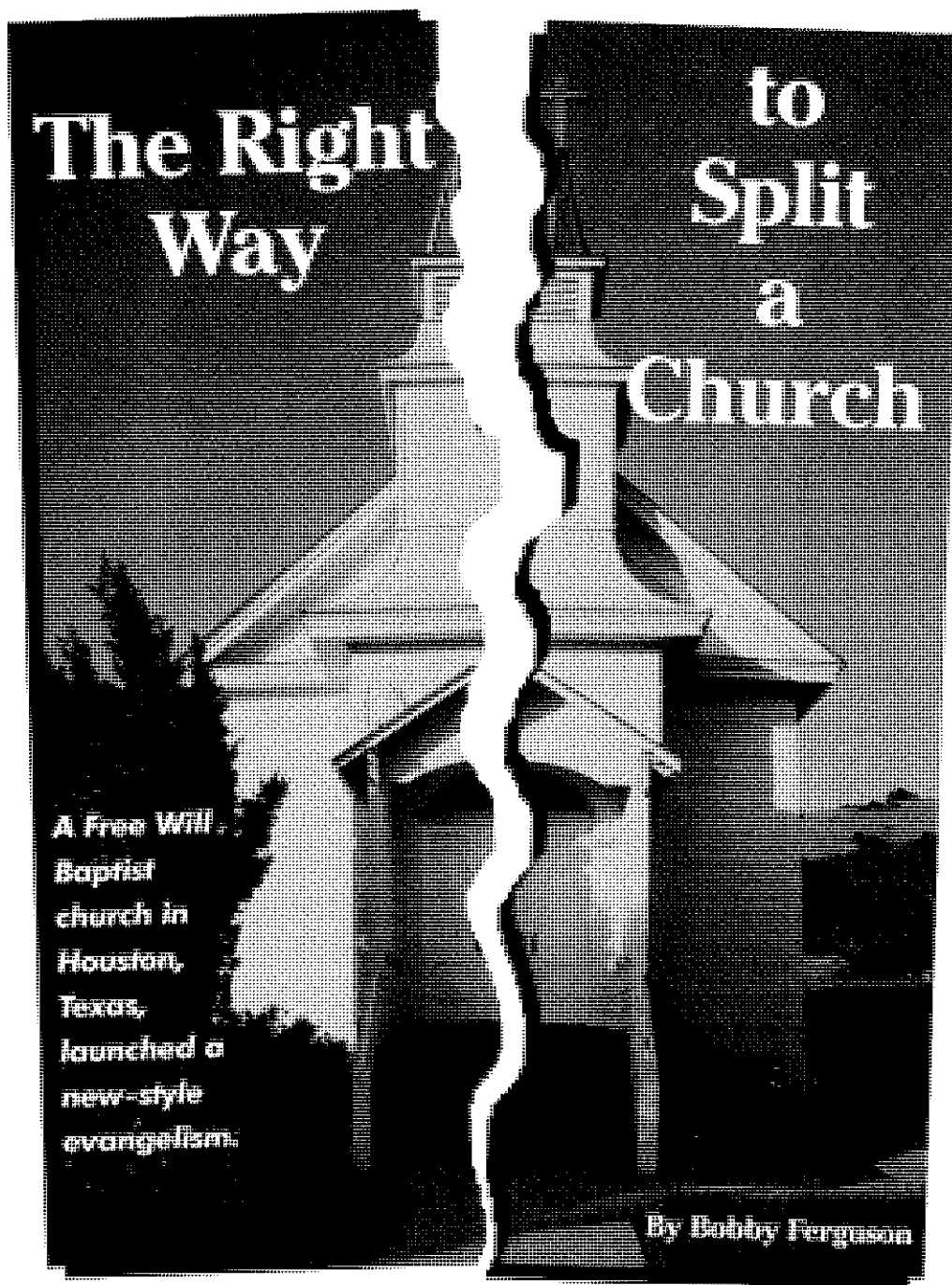
It's been 20 years, and a lot of people have come and gone during that time, but Richard and Debbie are still here. They're a regular part of our Sunday School and church. Just this year Richard was elected to a position of leadership on our church board. They're a happily married couple, with children and grandchildren active in our church and serving the Lord.

I learned my lesson! "Man looks on the outward appearance, but the Lord looks at the heart" (1 Sam. 16:7). God has forgiven me for my judgmental attitude. My wife and I count Debbie and Richard as two of our dearest friends.



Maybe there's someone reading this article who needs to talk to God about a judgmental attitude like I did. Maybe you, like me, need to be reminded that God looks at the heart, not the outward appearance of a person. ■

ABOUT THE WRITER: Joe Seay is a freelance writer who resides in Greenbrier, Arkansas.



Well, it happened again. Saturday February 2, 2002, First FWB Church in Houston, Texas, experienced another split. Or should we say yet another split, because in the past seven years this same church has undergone three splits. In fact, a pattern seems to be emerging. Just about the time this poor church recovers from one split, here comes another. But hold on, this may not be what you think.

This most recent split was presided over by denominational leaders and carried out under the watchful eye and smiling approval of the First FWB Church pastor himself. Local church members and well-wishers from far and near came to witness and celebrate this split.

There was food, fellowship, good singing, thrilling testimonies and powerful preaching. The service ended with the altar full of people praying that this

split would be permanent.

After prayer the pastor asked those leading the split to identify themselves by standing in a line across the front of the sanctuary. One by one, some of the dearest, finest, most faithful members of First FWB Church in Houston came and took their position in that line. Pictures were taken and camcorders were rolling as the congregation arose and came forward to confirm their love, prayers and support for

this courageous group.

As you no doubt realize, this was not a normal church split. It was a split of a different sort. This was a church split born in prayer, planned and promoted.

Three Splits

Three times now, First FWB Church in Houston has done this. In 1995 they sent a group of 20 people to the west side of Houston where they started Westfield Free Will Baptist Mission. That work is now independent of First Church, having achieved self-support status in January 2000. The Westfield Church has now started a mission of their own.

In 1998 First FWB Church in Houston gave up 20 members. This group went 20 miles north to Tomball, Texas. They have beautiful facilities and are now ministering to approximately 50 people.

The third group will attempt to establish a Free Will Baptist church in the Humble/Kingwood area, a bedroom community in the northeast corner of Houston's metroplex. Attendance the first month at this mission averaged 21. Offerings have been excellent. Pastor and mission members are excited and pleased over the manner in which God has chosen to bless.

Two Keys

How can one church start three missions in seven years? Here's how—the charter members all come from the mother church. The pastors were secured and sent by the mother church. The mother church underwrote funds needed for the financial support of these missions. However, many churches and individuals outside the local congregation shared generously in providing needed finances.

First FWB Church in Houston began seeking God about mothering a mission back in the 1980s when growth began to plateau. The ethnic makeup of the community changed dramatically. The church did two things. They began a cross-cultural ministry and they began mothering a mission. Both ministries have been greatly blessed of the Lord.

They got the idea of where to place the missions when they noticed a small concentration of their church families living in outlying areas of the Houston metroplex. In every instance,

those making up the new missions were First Church members already living in the target area. No one was forced to go or stay. Participation was on a volunteer basis. Those living in the areas went; the others stayed.

Taking Risks

Why would a church and pastor give up 20 of their best members and send them out to start a mission? For the same reasons parents have children. For the same reasons investors make long-term investments. For the same reasons companies spend everything they have to guarantee their future share of the market. But most importantly because First FWB Church feels led of God to do it.

Wisdom is justified of her children. Since beginning these missions, combined attendance has increased over 100%. Offerings have increased by 200%. Lay involvement has increased dramatically. Excitement and a sense of purpose and accomplishment energize the whole network of congregations.

What is much more important, souls are being saved on a regular bases. These missions provide a perfectly natural opportunity for the training of the young ministers God has called from our congregation.

Practical Matters

When looking at the advantages of this method of church planting, one wonders why more churches do not try it. Most churches are too shortsighted. They simply do not see the need to attempt something like this. Some pastors and churches are too selfish and self-centered in their vision, while others are afraid of the risks involved. They are too proud to risk failure.

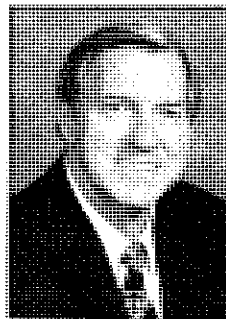
Perhaps the biggest hindrance is lack of understanding of the responsibility the Bible places on every church to do this. Every church must find a way to reproduce itself. Otherwise, Christianity will die. And, of course, there are still other churches, which simply do not have the faith to trust God for the personnel, funds and resources to mother a mission. Woe to those who refuse to leave their comfort zone.

But what does this do to the mother church? What good does it do to destroy one church in order to start another? In most cases, the mother church contin-

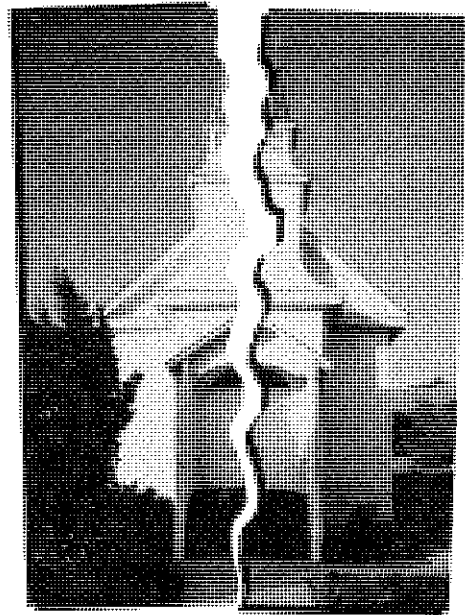
ues to do quite well. It would be difficult to tell from the attendance record just when our missions were started.

God has honored and blessed First Church so much that we stand amazed at what He has done and is continuing to do. It gives us faith to trust Him even more. For example, at the February meeting of First Church Women Active for Christ (50 ladies present), they agreed to trust God for \$25,000 this year to be given to the Humble/Kingwood mission. They are already well on their way to achieving that goal.

It comes down to a matter of faith and commitment. If a church doesn't feel confident enough to go it alone, maybe it could team up with another church, and the two congregations could mother a new mission together. What a wonderful fellowship this would generate. Where there is the will, God will show the way. ■



ABOUT THE WRITER: Reverend Bobby Ferguson pastors First Free Will Baptist Church in Houston, Texas.





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

Honesty: the Only Policy

By Kevin Riggs¹

Habit #9 –
A Successful Person
is Completely Honest.

The one Commandment that's universally broken is probably the Ninth Commandment. I would like to think that the older I get the less lying is a temptation. But whether it is a blatant lie or a white lie, dishonesty and deception are constant temptations.

The Commandments

Commandment Nine sounds negative, "Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbor."² Its implications, however, are positive. At the heart of this prohibition is an exhortation to look out for one another's reputation. It is a reminder that I need to defend people's character, believing the best about them.

Specifically, the Ninth Commandment has to do with the judicial sys-

tem. If I am called to testify about someone, it would be wrong to "bear false witness." To "bear false witness" means to slander or say things that are not fact, making empty accusations. The general application behind this Commandment is to be honest in all situations.

Ways People Lie

I have met a few people who make lying an art form. The thing about lying is that after a while you start to believe your own lie. Basically, I have observed two ways people lie.

Dishonesty

Dishonesty means telling a blatant lie. Dishonesty is spreading, saying or doing something that is entirely false. When I

take credit for something I did not do, that is dishonest. When I call in to work sick so I can go shopping or fishing, I am being dishonest. Dishonesty includes things like cheating on a test and intentionally spreading false information.

Deception

Deception is stretching the truth or telling facts in a misleading way or leaving out parts of a story in order to paint the picture I want to paint. I believe that deception is more harmful than dishonesty. Deception is harder for the innocent to defend. As the old saying goes, "Oh what a tangled web we weave when at first we practice to deceive."

Reasons People Lie

Both dishonesty and deception

convey things not true. I don't like to be lied to or lied about; yet I am tempted to do the same to others. Why I am tempted to lie?

To Cover My Tracks

I am tempted to lie to cover a mistake or to hide something I did wrong. In an effort not to get caught, it is tempting to make up stories, stretching the truth. It is when I don't want people to find out what really happened that I think about covering my tracks.

To Shift the Blame

If taking responsibility for my actions will have negative effects, it is easier to blame it on someone else. "I was just following your orders." "Isn't that what you wanted me to do?" "It's not my fault." "The devil made me do it." All are said in an attempt to shift the blame.

To Inflate My Status

I have to confess, I have lied (or at least stretched the truth) to make myself look better . . . especially at conventions and conferences when I am around my peers. Furthermore, it is tempting to spread gossip about someone else, thinking that by tearing others down I will be lifted up. People lie about how much money they make, what their real jobs are, successes they have had and how smart they are. Even pastors are tempted to be less than honest about church attendance in an effort to inflate status.

To Protect Myself or Others

This may be the biggest area in which people are tempted to lie. I do not like to be hurt, and I do not like to hurt others. At times, I am tempted to stretch the truth to spare their feelings. Instead of lying, I need to learn to speak the truth in love, and tell the truth in a tactful way.

To Manipulate Others

I know there have been times when I have used guilt or shame to get others to do things I think they ought to do. Parents force children into certain activities, telling them how fun it will be, when in reality, they want their children to participate because it will make them look good as parents. If I am not careful, as a

pastor, I can be tempted to manipulate parishioners in order to get my way.

God's Attitude about Lying

Everyone hates lying, but people don't always see the big deal in telling "harmless" lies. In reality, there are no harmless lies, at least God doesn't think so. God takes a strong stand against lying, stronger than most other sins. What does God think of lying?

God Hates Lying

God doesn't hate the liar, but He despises lying. The Bible says, "These six things doth the Lord hate: yea, seven are an abomination unto him: A proud look, *a lying tongue*, and hands that shed innocent blood. An heart that deviseth wicked imaginations, feet that be swift in running to mischief, *A false witness that speaketh lies*, and he that soweth discord among brethren."³ Of the seven things mentioned, four have to do with lying.⁴

God Associates Lying with the Devil

Jesus said, "Ye are of your father the devil, and the lusts of your father ye will do. He was a murderer from the beginning, and abode not in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaketh a lie, he speaketh of his own: for he is a liar, and the father of it."⁵

Satan is the *lying king*. When I lie, I am showing my sinfulness. When I lie, I am speaking the native language of Satan. I can't think of anything worse than that!

God Views All Lies as a Lie to Him

As a child, when I lied to my parents, I was lying to God. When a husband lies to his wife, he is lying to God. When you lie to your boss, you are lying to God. When I lie to myself, I am lying to God. God takes lying seriously.

The Ninth Habit

The Ninth Commandment said, "Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbor."⁶ Thus, the habit from this Commandment is as follows: *A highly successful person is completely honest*. If I want to be successful, I

must be honest with my wife, my children, my church, my God and myself. I must recognize that honesty is not the *best* policy; it is the *only* policy. A successful person can be counted on to be honest at all times, no matter the situation, no matter the consequences.

God considers a half-truth to be a whole lie. He considers a white lie to be a dark sin. The only solution to lying is repentance. Repentance means changing my mind and agreeing with God. That means I will treat lying as seriously as God treats lying.

The prophet Zechariah said, "These are the things that ye shall do; Speak ye every man the truth to his neighbor...."⁷ The Apostle Paul wrote, "Lie not to one another, seeing that ye have put off the old man with his deeds."⁸ A highly successful person is completely honest in all things. ■

Endnotes

1. I would love to hear from you with your questions and comments. Please feel free to email me at kevin@franklincommunitychurch.org.
2. Exodus 20:16.
3. Proverbs 6:16-19.
4. The four that have to do with lying are the italicized phrases.
5. John 8:44.
6. Exodus 20:16.
7. Zechariah 8:16.
8. Colossians 3:9.

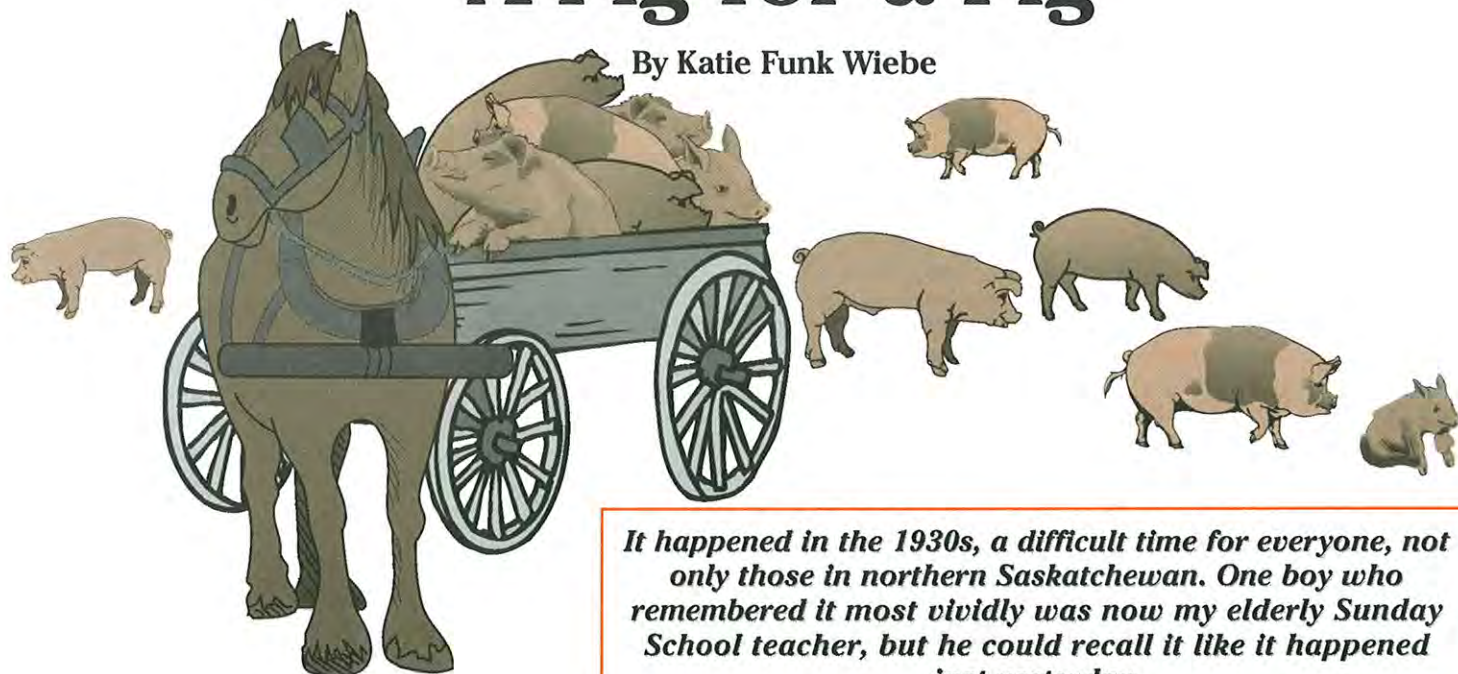


ABOUT THE WRITER: Dr. Kevin Riggs pastors Franklin Free Will Baptist Church in Franklin, Tennessee.

A story from the northern Canadian prairie

A Pig for a Pig

By Katie Funk Wiebe



It happened in the 1930s, a difficult time for everyone, not only those in northern Saskatchewan. One boy who remembered it most vividly was now my elderly Sunday School teacher, but he could recall it like it happened just yesterday.

The notice had come in the mail that the farm we were share-cropping had been sold over our heads. We would have to move off. But to where? There wasn't another farm available for miles.

Old Mr. Heinrichs brought up one possibility. "The farm across from Jud Brewster will likely be empty this spring. No one stays on that farm long—it's run-down and next to impossible to live that close to Jud Brewster—but that's all I can think of."

"He wouldn't drive me off," Dad replied quietly.

"You don't know him . . . an angel couldn't live next to him, he's that mean."

Dad mumbled something and I only caught the last phrase, "... I'll kill that man."

The next week we moved and at the end of moving day, we were all exhausted from the work. It seemed as if I had been asleep only a few minutes when a heavy-handed knock shattered the stillness. Dad was at the door before I could throw off the covers.

In the doorway stood our new neighbor, a big man in an ugly mood. Lying on my mattress in the kitchen looking up at him, I thought of one thing—the picture of the giant Goliath in our Bible storybook.

"Those chickens of yours in the trees next to the road have been bothering me all morning," he snarled. "You'd better make sure they don't bother me again or I'll make sure they don't." He tapped the barrel of his rifle ominously.

With those words he stalked off, giving Dad no opportunity to apologize or explain. The chickens were back in the hen house before we left for school.

For a long time we heard nothing more from our neighbor. Mom even brought a jar of homemade raspberry jelly to Mrs. Brewster and she seemed genuinely grateful. But the next day trouble descended on us like Niagara Falls when our cows got into Brewster's oats.

Dad saw them right away but Mr. Brewster was there before us. He raved at us, waving his pitchfork wildly. Dad shooed us boys away, but I stayed out of sight long enough to see Dad paying Jud some money. The money for my promised bicycle was walking off in his dirty pocket. I hated Jud Brewster.

Not long after, Dad was in the barn sharpening his ax when we all heard Jud bark out, "Janzen, your pigs have been in my garden. I've warned you but you've made too many promises. Your pigs will never get into my garden again."

There, in Jud's wagon, was our herd of young pigs—all dead. He had shot each of them.

Dad's ax slipped from his hand as he said to us, "Come on, boys, let's get rid of the pigs." He never spoke to our neighbor.

A few weeks later, my brother Jimmie came rushing into the house. "Daddy, go get a gun quick. Jud Brewster's pigs are in our garden." The taste of revenge was already sweet in my mouth.

"We won't need a gun. Round up the pigs."

It took a lot of chasing before that miserable herd of pigs climbed up the ramp into the wagon. It would have been easier to load them dead, but Dad explained this was the Bible way. We drove to our neighbor's in silence.

"Good evening, Mr. Brewster, your pigs were in my garden. I've brought them back," my father greeted him at the door.

The color drained from Brewster's face. "My pigs, my

pigs in your garden?"

"Yes, we've brought them back. Where shall we put them?"

Brewster didn't turn to look as his body sagged against the door. "Just dump them over behind the barn."

"OK," Dad said with a slight grin, "except they'll just get out again."

When it had sunk in that Dad hadn't killed the pigs, Brewster clutched Dad's hand like a dying man.

Dad and Jud talked for such a long time afterward that we had to leave to start the chores. When Dad finally arrived home, he brought half of Brewster's pigs with him. Didn't even have to unload them. The next Sunday the Brewsters came to church and stayed for dinner. He wasn't such a bad man after all when he got changed inside.



It wasn't until the following spring when I was pumping up the tire of my new bicycle that I questioned Dad about what he had said to Mr. Heinrichs about killing his neighbor.

"Not with a gun, son. I planned to do it another way—by heaping coals of fire on his head. It took time to get those coals hot enough. That old neighbor is as dead as a doornail—just as I said he'd be. And we're glad to be alive to see it." ■

ABOUT THE WRITER: Katie Funk Wiebe is a freelance writer who lives in Wichita, Kansas.

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BEYOND BELIEF

OK, I INVITED THEM... BUT I NEVER THOUGHT THEY WOULD ACTUALLY COME.



A new Sunday School teacher's first class

The Birthday Cake

By Jeff Goodwyn



Because of the success of our bus ministry, the number of kids at our small church increased to such an extent that we divided the classes. I was given the assignment to teach the new Junior High age group.

The assignment gave me a lot to pray about. My first petition was what to teach to those not-quite teenagers. So I prayed about it. Somewhere in the midst of prayer, the notion of Jesus at age 12 went from a whisper of an idea to the beginning of a lesson plan.

Encouraged and thankful, I prepared a lesson based on Luke 2—the familiar and beautiful story of Jesus' birth until He was 12 in the Temple, including the part about His parents spending a great deal of time looking for Him. I wanted to impress upon my students the importance of being obedient to their parents, even as Jesus was. I also needed some attention-getter to make the lesson more memorable.

Sunday morning I awoke excited to teach my first class and see what God might do with a classroom full of adolescents.

I wasn't about to leave the house without praying one more time. Jesus gave me my attention-getter—a birthday cake. This is, after all, the story of the birth of Jesus. What better way to celebrate a birth than with a birthday cake? On the way to church I made a stop for cake, candles and a gallon of cold milk.

Patsy, our pastor's wife, knew this was my first Sunday teaching the class. I accuse her of keeping her wings hidden, but everyone knows she's an angel. When she asked if I

needed anything, I requested that she put 12 candles on the cake and place it in the classroom. The only items in the classroom at that time were a few tables and chairs and a four-drawer metal file cabinet. Patsy brought the cake in before class started and put it in the top drawer of the file cabinet.

This, I think to myself, is a really good idea because when all the students come in, the last thing I want or need is bunch of kids fixated on cake and not Jesus.

9:30 a.m. Time for class to begin. As I look around the classroom, every seat is empty. Not one single child. Not one.

To say that I was discouraged is an understatement. I do believe my lower lip pushed way out.

I'm sure you know the feelings as well as the doubts and the questions that go through your mind. Not a pretty sight. Not what one would expect from a teacher who just moments before was excited about what God was going to do.

Not long into my pity party, the door slowly opened and one little girl came into the room. That's all. Just one. She sat down in the chair opposite me and her face was a mirror image of mine. I began asking Yvonne how her week had been and made small talk, hoping she would tell me the

cause of her sadness.

"Mr. Jeff?" she finally asked.

"Yes?" I replied.

"Mr. Jeff," she continued, "today is my birthday, I'm 12 years old, and my mom says we don't have enough money for cake or presents."

Only Jesus gave me grace to keep my composure.

"Yvonne," I responded with mock indignation, "That's just terrible, how can anyone celebrate a birthday without cake and candles?"

Before she could reply, I opened the top drawer of the file cabinet and placed a cake with 12 candles in front of her.

My hands trembled with wonder and excitement as I lit the candles. Her face, once long, was now radiant. I softly sang her the Happy Birthday song. We asked the blessing on the cake, but I now know there was already a mighty blessing on that cake.

While she ate cake, I read aloud the wonderful story of the birth of our Savior and of His remarkable time at the age of 12 in the Temple. Jesus probably did not have cake for His 12th birthday, but He saw to it that Yvonne did. ■

ABOUT THE WRITER: Jeff Goodwyn is a member of East Valley Free Will Baptist Church in Mesa, Arizona, where he teaches the Junior High Sunday School Class. Jeff works for the city of Phoenix.



Missouri Youth Teach Canada Vacation Bible School

N.B. CANADA—Twenty members of a Missouri youth group spent a year raising \$20,000 in order to bus to Canada and teach Vacation Bible School at a new Free Will Baptist church in Fredericton. Home missionary Jeff Crabtree said the 28 people (including eight adult sponsors) from First FWB Church in O'Fallon, Missouri, paid their own way and dramatically impacted the Canadian community.

After 33 hours on a chartered bus, the group arrived in Fredericton at 5:00 a.m. on August 8. They lodged in a downtown hostel and hit the ground running with last-minute preparations for the August 12-15 VBS.

Missouri youth minister Ben Crabtree (son of Jeff Crabtree) preached Sunday morning and evening. Then youth arranged the church for the VBS "Jonah and the Whale" theme.

Monday through Thursday, 9:30-11:35 a.m., classes were held for area children. Afternoons were for sight-seeing and relaxation. Though unplanned, the evenings became times for witnessing and interacting with others in the hostel. No air conditioning or televisions brought everyone to the common rooms where area university students and international travelers interacted with the youth group and its leaders concerning their faith. Discussions went late into the night.



O'Fallon youth group in Canada.

A highlight of the trip was the visit to the building site of Serenity FWB Church. The group had raised over \$500 for the new building and learned that their sacrifice and efforts paid for the sheet rock for over half the wall area, plus one special project to be announced later. They gathered where the altar will be in the new sanctuary and prayed for God's blessings on the congregation as it works to reach the community for Christ.

Home missionary Jeff Crabtree said, "Only time will tell what this trip accomplished for the kingdom. For most, it was a trip to a new country, an introduction to a new culture and an opportunity to share the gospel with people not familiar with Bible-belt theology. It was an opportunity for the youth to see their leaders actively sharing their faith while living it in new surroundings, and to share their table with others who sounded and thought differently than they did."

Thursday evening at 9:00 p.m., Alex, an eight-year-old boy from the community, expressed the feelings of his group as he stood by his parents and cried as Steve, his new friend from St. Louis, boarded the bus to go home.

Missouri pastor Rick Dement welcomed the youth group back to the O'Fallon congregation after they completed their long trek.



Serenity FWB Church on the way up.

Lewis, Yandell Join Randall House Staff

NASHVILLE, TN—A Nashville businessman and a California pastor joined the Sunday School and Church Training Department staff this fall, according to Ron Hunter, general director. Clarence Lewis was named assistant director and will handle day-to-day operations at Randall House Publications. Reverend Jonathan Yandell will serve as teen curriculum editor.



Clarence Lewis

Mr. Lewis will focus on maintaining and improving productivity and the work environment. He will work closely with the business, order, customer service, production and shipping departments.

Reverend Yandell will be responsible for seven quarterly products in junior high and high school Sunday School curriculum, as well as regular editions of *Destination Reality*, a topical curriculum series designed for youth meetings.

Clarence Lewis is a 1976 graduate of Free Will Baptist Bible College with a B.A. in Bible and business administration with emphasis in accounting. He previously worked as accounts payable clerk at Randall House in 1977 and was promoted to business manager, a position he filled until 1986. During this time, he also served as NYC Coordinator (1981-84).

In 1981 Clarence's wife started Lewis Letterworks from an office in their home. In 1986 Clarence re-



Jonathan Yandell

signed his position at Randall House to develop their business full-time. The business grew from typing term papers to typesetting, design, printing and mailing services. The Lewises recently sold their interest in the business.

Clarence serves on the Master's Men Board and chairs the Free Will Baptist Family Ministry's board of directors. He is a member, deacon and Sunday School

teacher at Cofer's Chapel FWB Church in Nashville.

Jonathan Yandell is a fourth-generation Free Will Baptist and a third-generation Free Will Baptist pastor. He comes to Randall House after 15 years as pastor of Garden Grove FWB Church in California. He has also served churches in Sacramento and Tulare, and has spoken twice at the National Youth Conference.

Jonathan is an alumnus of Hillsdale FWB College and California Christian College and has taken coursework at Moody Bible Institute. He began writing curriculum in 1986 and has contributed to teen and adult curriculum products including *Bible Teacher*, *Focus*, *Horizon Teacher* and *Destination Reality*. A frequent contributor to *Contact*, Jonathan has also been published in *Youthworker Journal*, *Pulpit Helps* and *Leadership* magazine.

Leadership Conference Set for December

ANTIOCH, TN—The annual Free Will Baptist Leadership Conference will meet December 2-3 at Millennium Maxwell House Hotel, according to executive secretary Keith Burden. Some 150 state leaders are expected to participate in the two-day conference.

Registration begins Monday, December 2, at 3:00 p.m. After an opening dinner at 5:30 p.m., attendees will gather for a two-hour session in the hotel's Grande Ballroom.

The 2002 conference theme is

Laborers Together. Seven sessions will be planned around the theme.

Dr. Patrick McLaughlin, president of The Timothy Group, will speak three times. Other conference speakers include Master's Men director Kenneth Akers, Sunday School and Church Training director Ron Hunter, Free Will Baptist Bible College president Matt Pinson and Keith Burden, executive secretary.

National Association moderator Carl Cheshier, assistant moderator Tim York and executive secre-

tary Keith Burden will preside at the seven plenary sessions.

The five-man Publications Committee will meet Monday afternoon, 1:00-5:30 p.m., with Missouri executive secretary Nathan Ruble as chair. Ruble will also chair the Tuesday Nominating Committee meeting, 1:30-5:30 p.m.

The Leadership Conference will conclude Tuesday evening at 9:00 p.m. National boards will then meet separately to conduct the business of each agency.

**Support Free Will Baptist Home Missions
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Canada Honors Worthington Twins

N.B. CANADA—The 124th annual session of the Atlantic-Canada Association focused on two U.S.A. preachers, according to Moderator Fred Hanson. The association honored the work of Milton and Melvin Worthington who have made numerous trips to Canada over the years.

The Worthingtons preached the annual Bible Conference June 27-30. A special time of fellowship/reception after the Sunday evening service highlighted the pro-

gram.

Melvin Worthington served 23 years as Free Will Baptist executive secretary before announcing his retirement, while Milton Worthington retired in August as a pastor in Michigan.

The Atlantic-Canada Association met June 29 at St. John Valley Bible Camp with four ministers, eight lay delegates and 10 visitors registering. Numerous other visitors attended worship services.

Home missionary Jeff Crabtree announced that construction had begun on the new church in Fredericton. Their goal was to complete one section of the building by October and begin services. Crabtree said one source reported the building is the first new church plant in Fredericton since 1929.

The 2003 association will meet June 28 at St. John Valley Bible Camp.

John Amburgey, Georgia Pastor, Dies

LEARY, GA—Reverend John Amburgey, 62-year-old pastor of Patmos FWB Church in Newton, died at his home on August 14. He was licensed to preach in 1979, ordained in 1980, and had served as pastor at the Patmos Church since 1997.

Rev. Amburgey, a West Virginia native and U.S. Army veteran, was an alumnus of Hillsdale FWB College, Salem Bible College, Brevard Community College (Florida) and Bethany Theological Seminary in Dothan, Alabama.

He had pastored churches in Alabama, Mississippi and Florida before coming to the Patmos Church in Georgia.

In addition to his pastoral ministry, Amburgey served on various district and state association boards and committees. He was elected secretary of the Georgia State Board of Camping (1986-'88; 1998-2002).

John Amburgey was known as a man with a sense of humor who supported and promoted every phase of denominational outreach.

Deacon T. E. Moyer (Patmos FWB Church) observed, "When Brother John said something, you could count on it."

Funeral services were conducted August 17 at Patmos FWB Church. Reverends Jim Foster and David Young officiated.

Reverend Amburgey is survived by his wife of 35 years, Bonnie Amburgey; one daughter, Jana Brooks; and two sons, David Amburgey and Daniel Amburgey.



Arkansas State Association Registers 463

CONWAY, AR—The 105th annual session of the Arkansas State Association met August 6-7 in Conway Public School Auditorium at Conway, according to Executive Director Tim Campbell. Some 463 registered for the session including 113 ministers, 46 delegates, 16 deacons and 284 non-delegates.

Three speakers developed the association theme, "The Door of Opportunity." Newly-appointed home missionary to Wisconsin, John Reed IV, spoke on "The Scope of Opportunity." Hamburg pastor Mark Elliott preached about "The Urgency of the Opportunity," while Tim Campbell described "The Potential of the Opportunity."

Moderator David Bishop gavelled delegates through business sessions and was re-elected to his post.

Delegates adopted three resolutions. One resolution authorized the Executive Board to deal with bookstore matters that arose. A second resolution reaffirmed commitment to the inspiration of scripture. The third resolution authorized election of the Nominating Committee one year in advance.

A high point during the meeting occurred when retiring director David Joslin gave the charge to his successor, Tim Campbell. Some 135 people attended a reception at Howard Johnson Motel Restaurant honoring Campbell as the new executive director.

Delegates learned that Arkansas Free Will Baptists gave \$1.1 million to national outreach this past year. Arkansas Cooperative Plan receipts topped \$511,000 in 2001.

The 2003 state association will meet August 5-6 at Conway Public School Auditorium in Conway.

Hillsdale Enrollment Climbs to 381

MOORE, OK—For the sixth consecutive year, the fall enrollment at Hillsdale FWB College set a record, according to Tim Eaton, vice-president of academic affairs. The college reported 381 students with a 315 full-time equivalency.

Eaton said that 282 students enrolled in campus programs. The student classification included 149 freshmen, 59 sophomores, 55 upper classmen, 9 graduate students, 13 non-degree students and 99 students in the external studies program.

The 81 ministry students include 44 biblical studies students, 17 missions students and 20 students in Christian vocational studies (C. E. music, youth). Sixty-seven students enrolled in the B.S. in business area.

Vice-president Eaton said, "These enrollment figures do not include new students who will begin classes in September through December or the ABLE degree completion groups. If you have 60 credit hours of college and are interested in completing a bachelor's degree in Bible or business, contact the ABLE Program at 405-912-9020. Anyone interested in doing graduate work toward a Master's degree in Bible and Christian ministry can call 405-912-9016."

Southeastern Enrollment Reaches 156

WENDELL, NC—President Billy Bevan reports 156 students as Southeastern FWB College opened for the fall semester. Ronald Davis, a 1992 Southeastern graduate, spoke August 26-29 during the college's "Opening Revival."

The 156 students include 44 new freshmen, 15 returning freshmen, 40 sophomores, 33 juniors and 24 seniors.

The number of students from each state:

| | | | |
|------------|----|----------------|----|
| Alabama | 10 | Mississippi | 8 |
| Arkansas | 2 | North Carolina | 85 |
| Arizona | 4 | Oklahoma | 5 |
| California | 1 | South Carolina | 3 |
| Colorado | 2 | Tennessee | 3 |
| Florida | 2 | Virginia | 3 |
| Indiana | 5 | West Virginia | 1 |
| Maryland | 1 | Wisconsin | 3 |
| Michigan | 2 | | |

Number of students and majors:

| | | | |
|---|----|---------------------------|----|
| Bible/Pastoral Theology & Practical Ministry..... | 36 | Sacred Music..... | 4 |
| Bible/Pastoral Theology/Missions..... | 14 | Elementary Education..... | 36 |
| Bible/Pastoral Theology/Music..... | 5 | Secondary Education..... | 28 |
| 3-year Biblical Studies..... | 4 | Religious Arts..... | 6 |
| Bible/Missions/Education..... | 9 | Business..... | 6 |
| Music Education..... | 8 | | |

Bible College Enrolls 322 for Fall Semester

NASHVILLE, TN—Free Will Baptist Bible College began its 60th year of ministry with an enrollment of 322, some 13% higher than fall 2001, according to the registrar's office. More good news was the 20% increase in dormitory students, who total 230.

Nearly 90% are full-time students, also a 13% increase. Students new to FWBBC total 105. They join 217 returnees. There are 161 men and 161 women in the fall student body.

By classes, students number 100 freshmen, 70 sophomores, 70 juniors, 74 seniors and eight special students.

This semester's students have come to FWBBC from 22 states and seven foreign countries:

| | | | |
|-------------|----|--|-----|
| Alabama | 20 | North Carolina | 15 |
| Arkansas | 20 | Ohio | 5 |
| Florida | 9 | Oklahoma | 2 |
| Georgia | 18 | Pennsylvania | 2 |
| Illinois | 21 | South Carolina | 10 |
| Indiana | 12 | Tennessee | 109 |
| Kansas | 4 | Texas | 5 |
| Kentucky | 5 | Virginia | 11 |
| Louisiana | 1 | Wisconsin | 1 |
| Michigan | 15 | West Virginia | 5 |
| Mississippi | 9 | Foreign | 16 |
| Missouri | 7 | (Albania, Bahamas, Brazil, Canada, Japan, Spain, Zimbabwe) | |

President J. Matthew Pinson says, "We see a world of potential in the students we recently enrolled. We thank God for each of them. We also thank the parents, pastors, youth directors and others who encouraged them to make FWBBC their choice."

"We welcome these students and ask for the prayers of Free Will Baptists everywhere, that God's hand will be on them as they prepare to serve Him."

California Christian College Enrolls 83

FRESNO, CA—California Christian College began its 47th year of operation with 83 students enrolled, according to president Wendell Walley. That number includes 41 freshmen, 17 sophomores, 13 juniors and 12 seniors.

The registrar's office reported 26 first-time students. Men students outnumber women by a two-to-one ratio.

Dr. Steve Sitter came on board as registrar. Other new employees include Loretta Rodgers as head of food services, and Mike and Shanna Ayers who direct student activities and serve as dormitory supervisors.

"Full time students are approaching the numbers of three years ago before the baseball program was discontinued. The most encouraging trend is that a much higher percentage of students are pursuing goals for full-time Christian ministry," Walley said.

North Carolina Minister Celebrates 50 Years

GOLDSBORO, NC—The Reverend George C. Lee celebrated 50 years as an ordained Free Will Baptist minister on October 3. The 71-year-old Mississippi native graduated from Free Will Baptist Bible College in 1954 and began his pastoral career as a home missionary in Nebraska.

He subsequently pastored seven churches in Nebraska, Tennessee, Georgia and North Carolina over the next 40 years. Lee retired in 1994 after 21 years as pastor at Victory FWB Church in Goldsboro, North Carolina, where he now serves as minister of music.

Reverend Lee published a book in 2002, *The Musings of a Man*, which sold out the first printing in 60 days. He began a daily radio program in 1973 that lasted over 20 years and included more than 5,000 broadcasts. He is also a song writer and recording artist.

Lee served five years on the denomination's Historical Commission and 12 years on the Sunday School Board; he was board secretary 1970-'77. He was elected moderator of North Carolina's Palmer Association in 1976. Prior to that, he was assistant moderator of the Georgia State Association.

George and Maurine Lee have been married 51 years and have four children.



J. W. Russell, Arkansas Pastor, Logs 50 Years

WALNUT RIDGE, AR—After entering college in Arkansas to study diesel mechanics, John Wesley (J. W.) Russell answered the call to preach on March 29, 1952. He began attending a local Free Will Baptist church and was ordained to the ministry March 28, 1953.

Reverend Russell pastors Poplar Valley FWB Church in Bono, Arkansas. The church is a member of the Social Band Association.

When he first began pastoral duties, Reverend Russell frequently pastored two churches at the same time, traveling to one congregation on first and third Sundays and to the other on second and fourth Sundays.

J. W. Russell's ministry was marked by working six days a week to support his family, then preparing two sermons every Sunday. Like many older ministers, he was a tent-maker and trail blazer where congregations frequently could not pay for the gas in his car.

When his son Larry was called to preach, Brother Russell sent him to Free Will Baptist Bible College for four years and paid all his tuition and expenses.

Reverend Larry Russell, now serving in Virginia, said, "My pastor when I left home was the only pastor I ever had—my dad. He's my hero. I never heard Dad or Mom complain about their lot in life. Because of them, I know the meaning of loving and giving unconditionally."



Delmar Sparks, Ohio Church Founder, Dies

WESTERVILLE, OH—Reverend Delmar Sparks, founder of Westerville FWB Church in Westerville, died August 17 at age 74. He began the Westerville congregation in November 1959 and pastored it for the next 30 years.

During the three decades that Sparks led the church, the Westerville Church grew to become one of the most influential in Ohio.

Reverend Sparks' ministry touched the entire Free Will Baptist denomination. He served 18 years (1984-2002) on the General Board of the National Association, as well as several terms on the Executive Committee. He preached



at the 1989 national convention in Tampa, Florida.

Sparks' Ohio roles included terms on district ordaining councils, mission boards and service

as moderator. He was also elected moderator of the state association, serving on the state General Board and Executive Board.

Brother Sparks was converted in 1951 and ordained to preach in 1953. His early ministry was among Enterprise Baptist churches before he founded and organized the Westerville FWB Church in 1959.

Funeral services were conducted August 22 at Westerville FWB Church. Reverends Paul Collins, Mike Mounts and Edwin Hayes officiated. Reverend Sparks is survived by his wife Anna Lee Sparks, and a daughter, Pamela Ennamorato.

currently

What a day at **Canaan FWB Church** in **Creston, OH**. Members paid off two 15-year loans totaling \$231,000. The church financed the purchase of five acres and construction of a new facility in 1997 and paid it off in six years. As soon as the mortgage went up in smoke, Pastor **Jim McComas** unveiled preliminary plans for a 12,000-square-foot addition to include a 450-seat sanctuary and more classroom space. Give them two years, and they'll be ready to tackle that big project.

The word from **Beech Grove FWB Church** in **Wilmington, OH**, includes threes—three conversions, three baptisms and three new members. **John Blount** pastors.

Pastor **Richard Burns** said that **Hillsboro FWB Church** in **Hillsboro, OH**, needed a new roof and a new van. That was in May. The roof is now in place and the van is now on the road, both paid for by the generosity of members.

Lewis Center FWB Church in **Lewis Center, OH**, welcomed four members and baptized three converts. The church also purchased a piano and van. Pastor **Tony Walker** says their VBS averaged 60 each night.

Pastor **Wiley Perkins** baptized 11 converts and welcomed six members at **Samantha FWB Church** in **Leesburg, OH**.

Members of **Williams Road FWB Church** in **Columbus, OH**, celebrated 40 years of service this summer. A picture collage helped focus the event. **Larry Sparks** pastors.

Twelve new members at **Dogwood Ridge FWB Church** in **Wheelersburg, OH**, put a smile on Pastor **Delbert Dixon's** face. During VBS activities, 11 children were converted and nine baptized.

Pastor **Oscar Baldwin** reports six baptisms at **Rosedale FWB Church** in **Irwin, OH**.

Home missionary **Ken Doggett** installed new carpet in the church basement at **Heritage FWB Church** in **Spring-**

field, IL. A \$10,000 check arrived for the building fund. Unfortunately, the air conditioning unit crashed on Sunday after the national convention with high temperatures and record attendance.

Pathway FWB Church in **Winter Haven, FL**, purchased a 24-passenger, diesel bus. **Bob Johnson** pastors.

Pastor **Larry Johnson** led members of **Ozias FWB Church** in **Pearson, GA**, in a \$100,000 building program to construct a 4,000-square-foot educational unit. Eight couples joined the church in recent months.

The remodeling effort is complete at **Freedom FWB Church** in **Lancaster, SC**. Pastor **Mitch Ingram** said the church will now seat 400.

Thanks to a two-year fund raising effort, the extensive renovation at **Mt. Carmel FWB Church** in **York, SC**, ended with the church debt-free. Carpeting, painting, drywall, replacing windows and more—all done under the direction of Deacon **Guy Lemmons**. **John Cody** pastors.

The annual VBS at **Gilead FWB Church** in **Scranton, SC**, averaged 166 in attendance. Pastor **Larry McAlister** reports 12 conversions.

Members of **Liberty FWB Church** in **Lancaster, SC**, broke ground for a 500-seat sanctuary, according to Pastor **Tim Larrimore**.

Promotional director **Mike Jones** says the **South Carolina** state office is debt-free. He also purchased a 2000 Dodge van; members of **Tabernacle FWB Church** in **Coward, SC**, promptly purchased new tires for the van. **David Young** pastors.

Blue Point FWB Church in **Cisne, IL**, honored long-time worker **Marvin Gregory** for his service as a deacon, Sunday School teacher, song leader and custodian. **Ernie Lewis** pastors.

Some 177 people were on hand when **Covenant FWB Church** in **Tulsa, OK**, opened for business. Pastor **David Archer** began gathering the congregation in March, and the group opened to

the public in June.

Members at **First FWB Church** in **Oklahoma City, OK**, honored. Pastor **Shelby Greeson** on his 20th anniversary with the congregation. He received a plaque, a poem written in his honor and a catered dinner.

Pastor **Jimmy Layne** and members broke ground for more classrooms and an enlarged fellowship hall at **First FWB Church** in **Wagoner, OK**.

Bethel FWB Church in **Kansas City, KS**, celebrated 40 years of service and honored founding members, **David and Gracie Dugan**. Pastor **Clifford Ball** reports an attendance increase from 25 to 60.

Pastor **Brian Bird** reports two conversions and two new members at **Sunrise FWB Church** in **Emporia, KS**. The church also has a new van.

Remember May 12, 2002. That was the day when eight converts were baptized and 22 new members were received into **First FWB Church** in **Wellington, KS**. Pastor **Zane Brooks** says the group plans to build a new church.

Pastor **Russell McDaris** baptized 10 converts at **Cross Roads FWB Church** in **Richland, MO**.

Pleasant Ridge FWB Church in **Hamilton, AL**, moved into their new 350-seat sanctuary. Pastor **Bobby Dugan** has led the congregation since 1984.

Reverend **Willie Martin (Bill) Eden** died July 4 at age 77. The World War II veteran was ordained to the ministry in 1960. He preached 42 years and pastored nine churches in Missouri and Kansas. Bill and Mary Sue Eden were married 55 years. ■



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Year-End Gifts

By David L. Brown

The Christmas season is a time of giving. We celebrate the greatest gift of all time to mankind, God's Son, Jesus Christ. Typically we are in a charitable mood and give more generously than any other time of the year.

It is also the time of year when many make generous outright gifts to the Lord's work. Certain types of property are good candidates for year-end gifts. Property that has gone up in value such as stocks, bonds, mutual funds and real estate make better year-end gifts than cash. Giving these gifts avoids capital gains taxes, possibly as high as 20% and provides a tax deduction of as much as 100%.

To accomplish this, you give the property itself, not the proceeds from the property. For example, consider stock that has a fair market value of \$10,000, but your cost was \$1,000. One way to give this is to sell the stock yourself and give the proceeds from the sale to your chosen ministry. You generate a \$9,000 capital gain which could result in a tax bill of \$1,800, thus, reducing your net gift to only \$8,200.

A better way is to give the stock directly to the ministry allowing them to sell the stock. The ministry receives the entire \$10,000 and you get a full \$10,000 deduction. When you have an asset that has lost value, the opposite is true. You should sell the asset and give the proceeds so that you can offset capital gains with the loss on your taxes.

Others desire to give a generous gift but may not be comfortable without the income from those assets. In this situation the Free Will Baptist Foundation may be able to help you arrange the gift now but maintain the income for life.

Consider Mr. and Mrs. Green who have owned a rental house for over 30 years. The house is worth \$53,500, but since they have fully depreciated the property, their basis in the house is now zero. Since Mr. Green is now 70 and Mrs. Green is 67, they con-

sidered selling the house to avoid the headaches of being a landlord. However, they need the income the rental produces. They receive \$400 a month or \$4,800 a year, but after real estate taxes, insurance and repairs their net income from the house is \$3,300 a year.

The Greens have always generously supported Free Will Baptist ministries and would like to make a significant gift. They can not afford to give the house outright to a ministry. Their present tenant has indicated he may be interested in buying the house, but the Greens are not sure they want to sell. After deducting the selling costs at \$3,500 and capital gains tax, they will net about \$40,000 from the sale. To generate the \$3,300 income they desire would mean an annual return of 8.25% on the \$40,000. The Greens, astute managers of money, are conservative investors and are not sure they can average this kind of return over their lifetime.

There is a way for the Greens to achieve all their goals—getting out of their rental property, keeping their present income and making a significant gift to Free Will Baptists. By using a Charitable Remainder Unitrust they avoid capital gains, saving approximately \$10,000. They receive a charitable gift tax deduction of \$16,996. This could be used the year of the gift or over the next five years saving possibly as much as over \$5,000 depending on their tax bracket.

The trust will pay the Greens a monthly income to assure their needs without the hassles of real estate management. The trust will replace their income, which may also adjust for inflation through the years. Finally, at death they will give a significant gift to the Free Will Baptist ministry of their choice, which may be much larger than the original value of the trust. This arrangement achieves all of their original goals.

Christmas is a time to be generous. Call the Free Will Baptist Foundation toll-free 877-336-7575 if you would like information on these or similar situations to help you achieve your goals. ■

Free Will Baptist



Foundation

The 'Spirit' of Benjamin Randall

By David Crowe

Every November on the Sunday before Thanksgiving, we ask you to give a special offering to Home Missions in honor of Benjamin Randall. Benjamin Randall was chosen as the namesake for the offering, not because there were no others who played a vital role in Free Will Baptist history, but because we want to promote the "spirit" of Benjamin Randall. That spirit has been found in many Free Will Baptist men and women down through the centuries. It is that spirit that we want to honor and promote.

Benjamin Randall, unlike the founders of most denominations, left no writings other than his *Journal*. He was not classically educated, but he read everything within reach. He knew his Bible thoroughly and had a good knowledge of men. One leading Free Will Baptist educator of the 1800s described Randall:

- 1 His judgment was sound, and his mind well-balanced, never allowing him to run to extremes.
- 2 He was a good organizer and quite a disciplinarian. He rode many a long mile to head off heresies, to settle difficulties in churches, and to promote peace and harmony among brethren.
- 3 His piety was subject to principle, deep and strong, like the current of a river, not spasmodic like a mountain brook, now impetuous, with noise and foam, and now nearly or quite dried up.
- 4 As a preacher he was not a ranter, nor even a sensationalist. He reasoned, though not after the manner of the schools, perhaps, while he often became fervid, and sometimes enthusiastic.
- 5 He was a man of utmost integrity of character. Nobody accepted the challenge he made late in life, "If I have taken aught from any one by fraud, let him approach and I will restore fourfold."

6 He had a high sense of ministerial propriety. On his dying bed, he said, "No man ever saw my horse hitched at a store or hotel longer than was necessary for me to transact the business which called me there."

7 His temperance, principles and habits were remarkable.

Within less than 30 years he had seen a people grow until they numbered 100 churches and over 5,000 members.

It is that spirit of Randall—the pioneer, the church planter, the preacher and organizer—which we promote on Benjamin Randall Sunday. Help support this ministry as we try to continue that same spirit which has driven Free Will Baptists for hundreds of years!

As you know, this offering goes to assist our general fund, which in turn, is used in many ways to benefit our missionaries and their work in spreading the gospel and planting new Free Will Baptist churches throughout the United States and territories. Thank you for your help in continuing the fervent spirit of Benjamin Randall. ■

Please Remember

Benjamin Randall Day Offering
November 24, 2002

We've all watched the stock market take a major nose dive over the past few months. Companies that seemed rock solid turned out to be built on foundations of sand and sleight of hand bookkeeping. Tens of thousands of investors have watched in disbelief as the value of their portfolio plummeted. According to a recent article in *Time*, many workers who anticipated retiring in their early 50's are now awakening to the harsh reality that they will have to work well into their 60's, if not their 70's!

During this crisis we've been reminded time and again that two of the cardinal rules of investing are: (1) Invest for the long haul. All financial planners tell us that the secret to successful investing involves beginning early and making regular contributions. (2) Diversify your investments. Those who fail to heed these commands flirt with financial ruin.

Jesus warned us that material investments are fragile, and can be taken from us in any number of ways. He encouraged us to make our investment in spiritual treasures, because they, and they alone, are safe. Inflation cannot decrease their value. Thieves cannot steal them. The elements are powerless against them.

With that in mind, how are your spiritual investments? Have you been investing regularly? Since I work at Free Will Baptist Bible College, let me give you a short report on some investments made at your Christian college.

Remember that investment counselors tell us it's best to begin early and to invest consistently. If you began investing in the ministry of FWBBC in the 1940's, you invested in people like Carlisle and Marie Hanna, and Dan and Trula Cronk. You probably recognize these names. The Hannas and Cronks were some of our early workers in India. Brother Dan and Mrs. Hanna are with the Lord now, but Brother Carlisle is still faithfully ministering in India, where last year there were over 525 conversions in our Free Will Baptist works. Mrs. Cronk is faithfully serving in a local church in Nashville.

If you began supporting FWBBC in the 1950's you helped to train young people like Robert Picirilli, Bob Shockey, and Gordon Sebastian. Ken Eagleton and Molly Barker were part of that same generation, along with Fred Hersey. You probably know that Gordon Sebastian has faithfully labored in Wilson,

How Are Your Investments?

By David Williford
Director of Institutional Advancement

North Carolina, for many years, building a strong, evangelistic Free Will Baptist church. Bob Shockey not only pastored successfully, but was a successful church planter and later headed our Home Missions Department. Dr. Picirilli has been a leading educator/theologian for over 40 years. Ken served the Lord

and Free Will Baptists faithfully in Brazil. Molly Barker is still active in the work in Uruguay. Fred served in Japan for 40 years, and now continues to serve as pastor to seniors in a local church.

If you began supporting the college in the 1960's you are part of the ministry of men like Wendell Walley, John Gibbs, David Shores and Eddie Payne. All are known for their integrity and faithfulness. They have served as evangelists, pastors, state and national leaders, and missionaries, and have played a major role in extending the Kingdom.

If you began supporting in the 1970's you are part of the ministry of Billy Hanna, Clint Morgan, Vernon Barker, Jerry Gibbs and Richard Atwood.

Space does not permit me to continue with the names of men and women whose lives have been touched by your investment in FWBBC, but rest assured the list of names from the 1980's, 90's and beyond would be just as long. If you have not been investing in this ministry, why not begin? If you are young, begin now and get an early start. If you're getting older, you really need to begin immediately.

How does FWBBC diversify your investment? When you invest in our students, you are helping prepare not only preachers and missionaries, but musicians, teachers, youth workers, and business leaders. When students leave FWBBC they scatter across every segment of society, impacting their world for Christ.

To make it convenient, we are offering a new bank draft system of giving. Just fill out the bank draft information and return it to us. Then you will share each month in the training of the next generation of pastors, teachers, missionaries, youth workers, and business people of our denomination. Don't hesitate. Call us today at 1-800-76-FWBBC (763-9222) and let us show you how you can make an investment in the Lord's work that will pay dividends for eternity. Or, you may email me at dwilliford@fwbbc.edu. ■

Free Will Baptist Bible College

Building on the Past, Looking to the Future

By Ron Hunter

The past, present and future of Randall House Publications are undeniably connected. What we have now is the result of our past and what we will have in the future depends upon our actions today. This is true of any organization.

Randall House, also known as the Sunday School and Church Training Department, has a rich heritage. Any time leadership changes, people wonder if the organization will head in a new direction. What lies ahead for Randall House? After all, Christian Education is a growing need in our churches. Will Randall House continue to help churches shape the faith of people of all ages? The answer is YES!

Currently, the ministries of Randall House include curriculum development, book publishing, college, youth and children's ministries, a thriving bookstore, and most recently, a church training department. Our curriculum is designed to teach children the basics of the faith, to help teens overcome the difficulties of the adolescent years, and to develop faithful, spiritually healthy adults.

But the ministry of Randall House goes far beyond the quarterly that fades in the back window of your car between Sundays. We play a far more important role—that of a bridge. For instance, consider the work of Student and Children's Ministries (SCM). We help children cross into the teen years with confidence and faith. Then, we help teens develop their convictions and prepare them for college and their career of choice.

This goal of providing confident and spiritual transition in every area is one Randall House meets at every age level. While the teen years are referred to

as the most difficult of one's life, carrying your first child home from the hospital without an instruction manual is more traumatic than zits ever thought possible. How about the empty nest syndrome? Or the trauma of losing one's spouse? The uncertainty of life will not cease until we reach Heaven. The bridges needed to carry one safely through troubled times are welcome at all stages of life.

We minister to thousands of people in classrooms around the world every week. We publish books in the fast-growing American market, but English is not the only language in demand. We publish books in five languages. Notice that our new logo contains a globe. It is not there to be trendy. We take seriously the command to go into all the world. We minister to more peoples, countries and languages now than ever before.

We are re-evaluating our Hispanic materials in an effort to reach the Hispanic community more effectively. Additional translations of key doctrinal books into French and Russian will assist our missionaries as they strive to cultivate new converts across the globe.

We will continue to combine vital ministry with sound business principles in order to produce excellence in all we do. The generation who laid the foundation at Randall House deserves our best, and the next generation will demand it. We must follow the command of scripture, "Whatsoever ye do in word or deed, do it all in the name of the Lord" (Col. 3:17). Randall House is building upon the past and looking to the future as we strive to meet the needs of your church! ■





Garnett Reid

Track and Field (II Corinthians 10)

Ever since one of my grad school professors assigned our class to exegete II Corinthians 10, this chapter has challenged, blessed, and intrigued me. For one thing, I'm sure it doesn't get the attention it deserves. For another, its message is critical for our day when the subject of ministry is so distorted and misunderstood.

Second Corinthians 10 qualifies as a neglected chapter for a couple of reasons. First, the entire book tends to get lost in the shuffle between other great doctrinal treatises such as Romans, I Corinthians and the Prison epistles. When this happens, we risk overlooking Paul's noble words about the glory of the ministry (ch. 3), the eternal treasure of the gospel (ch. 4) and Christ's reconciliation that makes us new creatures (ch. 5).

We may also miss intensely personal truths from Paul: his appeal for abundant giving (chs. 8-9), his inventory of hardships (ch. 11) and the Lord's grace sufficient for his thorn in the flesh (ch. 12).

This list points to the other reason II Corinthians 10 fails to get its due. It falls right in the middle of some top-shelf themes, and like that quiet, small kid in the third grade lunch line, tends to pass by unnoticed.

A closer look, however, reminds us what a great chapter this is. Second Corinthians 10 offers Paul's perspective on his ministry philosophy *in practice*. He must maintain his integrity before the watchful eye of the Corinthian church, all the while defending himself against the attacks of outsiders trying to malign him.

In so doing Paul opens his heart to us. We see his motives, fears, hopes and goals expressed through two powerful illustrations. In this pair of metaphors he frequently uses, the apostle likens his work to that of a soldier and an athlete.

On the Battlefield (vv. 1-11)

One of Paul's favorite analogies compares the Christian life to fighting a

battle (see also Gal. 5:16-24; Eph. 6:10-20; I Tim. 1:18; 6:12; II Tim. 2:3-4; 4:7).

The Strategy

Like a master tactician, Paul uses appropriate means to defend his ministry. Toward the Corinthian believers he is "meek and gentle" in a Christ-like spirit when with them (v. 1). His enemies misinterpret his meekness for "weakness," however, accusing Paul of inconsistency (vv. 1, 10). He assures them, though, that should the occasion demand it, he will confront his accusers "boldly" in person (v. 2). Contrary to this charge that he is wishy-washy, Paul promises his readers that he will take the appropriate tack as the need arises.

The Enemy

After all, Paul's battle is not with the believers at Corinth, nor even, ultimately, with his opponents there. The real enemy is not flesh and blood, but a way of thinking that opposes God and His authority (v. 4). Make no mistake. Those enemy "strongholds" of thought that reason against and resist God were not limited to the first-century world. They assault the Lord and His people today. This battle still rages.

The Armament

Since our battle is not against a physical enemy (v. 3), we must take up the only weapons effective against those wicked schemes—weapons that are "mighty through God" (v. 4). Ephesians 6:10-20 reminds us of that arsenal: truth, righteousness, the gospel, faith, salvation, the Spirit, the word of God and prayer. Verse 5 assures us that when we fight with these weapons, we can "cast down imaginations" and every high opinion opposed to the knowledge of God. We must give every effort to "take every thought captive to obey Christ."

Capture every rebel thought as a prisoner of war. None must escape!

In the Arena (vv. 12-18)

Paul's second illustration in II Corinthians 10 views the ministry as a race. He probably alludes to the Isthmian games held at Corinth (for other athletic images, see I Cor. 9:24-27; Phil. 3:12-16; II Tim. 2:5; 4:7-8).

The Lane

The language of verses 12-13 suggests running inside a prescribed lane on a race course. Paul refuses to look over his shoulder to compare his position with that of another runner. Those who make such comparisons in ministry "are not wise," he concludes (v. 12). God had given Paul a lane to run in—a ministry all his own to pursue. This "lane" had brought him to Corinth and, eventually, he hoped, to "regions beyond" Corinth and the province of Achaia (v. 16).

The Race

His "race," therefore, was to follow the unique calling God had given him (v. 13). Comparison with others in the race can inhibit us from being all God wants us to be. We must stay in our lane, run our race and avoid "boasting in another's area of influence" (v. 16). Find your lane, get out of the blocks, and keep going.

The Prize

What makes the effort worthwhile is not *our conquest*, but *His commendation*. "The one whom the Lord commends"—that's the prize we seek. John Calvin reminds us, "God's approval . . . (is) of more value than all the applause of the whole world." ■

THE PASTOR'S WIFE



Judith Puckett

Relationships: Vital Keys for a Pastor's Wife

If September 11 taught us nothing else, we learned a lesson in values. Everything else pales in comparison to the value we place on the people we love. It's our relationships with people that make our lives worthwhile. A job is less fulfilling if it doesn't meet a need or impact someone. A house seems less important if there's no one there to share it.

It has been said that the focus of man's life is his work, but the focus of a woman's life is her relationships. A pastor's wife can be like the hub of a wheel as she reaches out and connects with many people at once. But her relationship with the congregation is only one segment of her busy life. She is also a wife, mother, a neighbor, daughter, sister and friend.

The word "relationship" refers to the way we interact with others, the sum of the events and activities we share. Connecting with people enables us to serve them. Jesus said, *"Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me"* (Matt. 25:40). We serve God by serving people.

Relationship with Your World

You're part of a world that's opposed to the things you stand for, yet still you're connected. You're part of a neighborhood; you're a citizen of a country, and you have a responsibility to be salt and light in the world. A big part of your ministry is living a godly life before an ungodly world. Your relationships with people who are not Christians are important. Don't neglect the opportunity to serve the world and brighten the corner where you are.

Relationship with Your Friends

Everyone needs a friend, and the pastor's wife is no exception. Even Jesus had a desire for an inner circle of friends.

It may be helpful for you to develop at least one Christian friend outside your own church, which gives you an opportunity for a different perspective.

Be careful that friendships don't require too much time and energy, since most people in ministry have a limited amount of time to spend with friends. Combine fun times with chores by taking half a day with a friend. Have lunch and enjoy her company while you run errands.

Relationship with Church Members

There are as many different expectations of the pastor's wife as there are church members. This can place a great deal of pressure on the pastor's wife, for she often tries to live up to an unrealistic image. Most pastors' families and their churches are close, but it may be difficult to keep up with the names of several hundred people. Let your goal be to treat everyone with respect and give attention (handshakes, smiles and greetings) to as many as possible.

Love and appreciate your people and the opportunity you have to serve along with them. Realize you can't be involved in everything. God gave you specific gifts and expects you to develop those gifts to serve Him. Be as involved as your time, family and health permits. Your church members will love and accept you if you accept your limitations, warts and all.

Relationship with Your Children

If you think the church needs you, think how much more your children need you. It's easy to take family members for granted, thinking they should understand and be willing to "sacrifice for the Lord."

Pastoral families may learn too late that the children felt robbed by the time and attention given to the church

instead of to them. God gave your family to you, and you serve the Lord as you nurture and care for them.

Relationship with Your Husband

If marriage is made in Heaven, the maintenance must be done on earth! The marriage relationship is to symbolize that of Christ and His church. God brought you together, with all your differences, to complement the strengths and weaknesses of one another. We see Satan attacking the church through pastoral families.

Guard your relationship, and invest time and energy in your marriage. Your key to a victorious ministry is a good marriage, but if you lose your family, you also lose your ministry and effectiveness. Develop a shared mission and mutual goals that will leave a legacy for all who follow.

Relationship with God

The key to effective ministry is a vital relationship with God. You cannot continually give of yourself without replenishing your own spiritual reserves. Your faith grows as you spend time in prayer and Bible study, developing a closer relationship with Him. Genuine faith is easy to spot. So is a counterfeit.

If God called your husband, he also called you to serve alongside. Your relationship with His people reveals much about your heart for God. "Keep thy heart with all diligence, for out of it are the issues of life" (Prov. 4:23). Heartfelt relationships make our lives worthwhile. ■

ABOUT THE WRITER: Mrs. Judy Puckett is a member of First Free Will Baptist Church in Norman, Oklahoma. She is married to Oklahoma Missions Director, James Puckett, who formerly pastored in Oklahoma, Florida and Georgia. Judy, a freelance writer, serves as an executive secretary at Oklahoma Gas & Electric. She is pursuing her master's degree.

THE PREACHER'S PERSPECTIVE



Randy Sawyer

The Work of Words (Part I)

I am a preacher. I understand, of course, that may be a matter of opinion. As a preacher, words are my stock and trade. Words, an odd assortment of vowels and consonants, are capable of expressing profound grief or extreme joy. With the appropriate verbiage, I can lead hearers to the heights of happiness, stir them to depths of despair, or broaden their perspective on previously paradoxical and puzzling passages.

Words

Words can serve as tools of clarification, approximation, motivation or stimulation. Words also add precision to the communication process. An expression, gesture, mood or movement may speak volumes. But without words, the transfer of information will remain incomplete, the message could be misinterpreted, and the desired effect lacking.

From whence cometh this obvious propensity for speech making? Why do we humans persevere with the practice of correspondence? We do so because we can't help ourselves, and that is the result of design. We are made in the image of the Divine Communicator!

God, the Triune Creator, preceded His creation by eternity past, and from that eternal yesterday existed in ceaseless communion within Himself; God in unbroken communication with God. His, however, was no mere soliloquy spoken on some internal stage. His speaking was one person to another person to another, God the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, understandably corresponding within the Godhead. And the communication was complete, perfection in communication and communication by perfection.

But no one heard that divine message, for God existed in solitude. Then God raised His voice and said, "Let there be," and out of nothing came something, and from that something came

someone with whom the Godhead could share Himself. Thereafter, God walked and talked with Adam as one speaking to a friend. There was God communicating with man, the Creator corresponding with His creation.

Tragically, man's capacity for receiving the divine message was impaired through the invasion of sin. Like a swimmer who hears some indistinguishable noise while beneath the water's surface, willful disobedience left the correspondence muffled. The fault lay not with the communiqué's sender, but with its receiver.

Howbeit, the ever-speaking Deity continued to proclaim Himself to deafened man, speaking through the voices of creation, history and His holy prophets. And man, in hearing heard not, and in seeing saw not, but was adrift on the raging sea of sin, attempting to navigate the treacherous tempest by light of his own reason.

Still God was not silent. Above the noise, confusion and clamor, God's voice resounded. Many heard, few listened, but those who did found a beacon of safety drawing their vessel to harbor and rest.

The Word

Then one day, God set out to enhance His speaking so as to reveal Himself more completely to man. Into time came God's Son, the Second Person of the Trinity, the express image of the Godhead in bodily form. First as a baby, then as a boy and finally as a man.

This God/Man was God speaking in His most distinct voice yet. He was God revealing God, God speaking God into the chaos and confusion of humanity's miserable plight. When He spoke, He was God speaking; when He touched, He was God touching; when He wept, He was God weeping; when He suffered, He was God suffering. With the incarnation God's voice

broke into full song accompanied by all the attributes of divinity.

Still man could not hear, but from his sin-numbed state concluded that the God/Man was a threat to his independence, a challenge to the freedom of charting his own course, of setting his own sail. So man took what he would not hear and could not understand, and silenced it.

Man killed God. There on the cross the voice of God fell silent. The voice that from eternity past had never been hushed was hushed. The voice of wisdom and truth that had always communed within the community of divinity, that had always spoken, spoke no more. The speaking God was silenced.

So are the ways of man and the dictates of the fall. Sin must silence what it cannot comprehend. Was this the end? Was creation forever after destined to hurtle on through time without a voice to hear, save that of its own wretched crying? Was there to be no more word from outside to give clarity and calm, no voice to offer help and hope? Was this the end of the Word from God?

While the Word lay hushed, the noise, clamor and clanging sounds of sin-stained souls grew louder. Some rejoiced, others wept; some felt anger, others knew only pain. But this is the way of the world after all. Death always wins. Life is forever swallowed up in lifelessness. Sin conquers all, doesn't it?

Then, triumphantly, against the backdrop of the muffled moans and crying, the God/Man returned, carrying the scars of His demise within His form. He came again with a Word from God, now more resounding than before. "Death cannot win," He declared.

Death did not win. Light always overcomes the darkness. The Word emerged from that dank cavern of doubt with the message of hope and victory. Chords once silenced vibrated anew. Lips once stilled spoke

afresh the glorious word of triumph.
Sin dethroned, hope enthroned.

The Work of Words

So it was that God continued and continues to speak. The Word is not silent and never indeed will be. But how are His Words to be published abroad today or in any day? The Word is in Heaven, and so are His prophets and apostles through whom He left behind a written form of Himself. How is the divine communiqué to be sounded forth?

The answer is clear. Through preachers and preaching, the speaking God yet speaks. By holy living, through careful teaching and always through the Spirit's empowering, each generation of preachers continues to spread the savor of His knowledge to waiting hearts. Each preacher, locked in some time and space world, incarnates the message to his generation. Such is the genius of God's choice of preaching and preachers.

So as a preacher, words are my stock and trade. With these most basic literary devices, I allow God to continue speaking. Yet it is no more I who speaks than the moon that gives light. I am, each preacher is, but a simple moon reflecting the radiant light of the "Son's" glory. We do not invent the Truth; the Truth invents us. We do not shape the Word; the Word shapes us.

As a preacher I can no more keep silent than the speaking God can. He has set my tongue ablaze with His truth. I must speak. I cannot help myself. I must declare His message to my generation. I dare not cease and desist. So, mine is the work of words, and using words I declare the Word, and in declaring the Word, the speaking God continues to speak. ■

Coming Next Month



Finding Yourself



An Inn for Christmas



Greener Grass



3 Christmas Preachers

THE TOGETHER WAY

August 2002

| Receipts: | | | | | | |
|-----------------------|----------------------|---------------------|----------------------|-------------------------|---------------------|------------------------|
| State | Designated | CO-OP | Total | Year To Date Designated | Year To Date CO-OP | Year To Date Total |
| Alabama | \$ 329.48 | \$ 310.13 | \$ 639.61 | \$ 3,371.90 | \$ 1,715.09 | \$ 5,086.99 |
| Arizona | .00 | 51.70 | 51.70 | .00 | 206.10 | 206.10 |
| Arkansas | 9,282.14 | 9,130.49 | 18,412.63 | 93,225.63 | 135,244.04 | 228,469.67 |
| California | .00 | 1,177.99 | 1,177.99 | .00 | 8,383.60 | 8,383.60 |
| 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 | 32,358.40 | 1,561.57 | 33,919.97 | 258,134.38 | 13,003.30 | 271,137.68 |
| Hawaii | .00 | .00 | .00 | .00 | .00 | .00 |
| Idaho | .00 | .00 | .00 | .00 | .00 | .00 |
| Illinois | .00 | .00 | .00 | 88,824.42 | 14,365.17 | 103,189.59 |
| Indiana | 3,799.22 | 310.78 | 4,110.00 | 17,421.33 | 1,846.63 | 19,267.96 |
| Iowa | .00 | .00 | .00 | .00 | 2,058.78 | 2,058.78 |
| Kansas | .00 | .00 | .00 | 26.55 | 504.53 | 531.08 |
| Kentucky | 160.90 | 1,088.50 | 1,249.40 | 1,404.51 | 8,270.53 | 9,675.04 |
| Louisiana | .00 | .00 | .00 | .00 | .00 | .00 |
| Maryland | .00 | .00 | .00 | .00 | 131.25 | 131.25 |
| Michigan | 16,606.04 | 3,719.61 | 20,325.65 | 148,346.99 | 21,220.26 | 169,567.25 |
| Mississippi | 14,048.75 | 957.00 | 15,005.75 | 86,917.84 | 5,009.28 | 91,927.12 |
| Missouri | 33,084.89 | 14,592.00 | 47,676.89 | 345,114.95 | 127,455.32 | 472,570.27 |
| Montana | .00 | .00 | .00 | .00 | .00 | .00 |
| Nebraska | .00 | .00 | .00 | .00 | .00 | .00 |
| New Jersey | .00 | .00 | .00 | .00 | .00 | .00 |
| New Mexico | 716.79 | 102.91 | 819.70 | 5,186.18 | 366.88 | 5,553.06 |
| North Carolina | 729.53 | 1,793.92 | 2,523.45 | 11,190.87 | 24,777.05 | 35,967.92 |
| Ohio | 100.00 | .00 | 100.00 | 110,700.28 | 21,826.90 | 132,527.18 |
| Oklahoma | 50,578.12 | 13,066.58 | 63,644.70 | 413,991.60 | 94,279.37 | 508,270.97 |
| South Carolina | 42,378.49 | 125.98 | 42,504.47 | 300,158.65 | 423.33 | 300,581.98 |
| South Dakota | .00 | .00 | .00 | .00 | .00 | .00 |
| Tennessee | 33,862.15 | 2,039.24 | 35,901.39 | 119,677.31 | 12,334.15 | 132,011.46 |
| Texas | 9,695.41 | 344.43 | 10,039.84 | 82,496.54 | 3,092.76 | 85,589.30 |
| Virginia | 142.13 | 48.21 | 190.34 | 2,928.82 | 658.15 | 3,586.97 |
| Virgin Islands | .00 | .00 | .00 | .00 | .00 | .00 |
| West Virginia | 504.94 | 103.65 | 608.59 | 12,811.41 | 878.64 | 13,690.05 |
| Wisconsin | .00 | .00 | .00 | .00 | .00 | .00 |
| Canada | 495.37 | 9.47 | 504.84 | 4,985.76 | 92.88 | 5,078.64 |
| Northwest Association | .00 | .00 | .00 | .00 | .00 | .00 |
| Northeast Association | .00 | .00 | .00 | .00 | .00 | .00 |
| Other | .00 | (0.10) | (0.10) | .00 | (0.27) | (0.27) |
| Totals | \$ 248,872.75 | \$ 50,534.06 | \$ 299,406.81 | \$ 2,107,324.48 | \$503,813.72 | \$ 2,611,138.20 |

Disbursements:

| | | | | | | |
|--------------------------|----------------------|---------------------|----------------------|------------------------|---------------------|------------------------|
| Executive Office | \$ 2,145.27 | \$ 22,740.37 | \$ 24,885.64 | \$ 15,445.30 | \$226,716.29 | \$ 242,161.59 |
| Foreign Missions | 146,329.52 | 6,392.56 | 152,722.08 | 1,226,604.70 | 63,732.38 | 1,290,337.08 |
| FWBBC | 23,593.04 | 6,392.56 | 29,985.60 | 203,217.19 | 63,732.38 | 266,949.57 |
| Home Missions | 66,497.08 | 5,002.87 | 71,499.95 | 577,333.05 | 49,877.58 | 627,210.63 |
| Retirement & Insurance | 667.63 | 3,891.11 | 4,558.74 | 3,373.79 | 38,793.71 | 42,167.50 |
| Master's Men | 637.22 | 3,891.11 | 4,528.33 | 3,922.55 | 38,793.71 | 42,716.26 |
| Com. for Theo. Integrity | 137.36 | 138.96 | 276.32 | 663.48 | 1,385.45 | 2,048.93 |
| FWB Foundation | 521.33 | 1,667.64 | 2,188.97 | 2,809.06 | 16,625.87 | 19,434.93 |
| Historical Commission | 98.22 | 138.96 | 237.18 | 486.94 | 1,385.45 | 1,872.39 |
| Music Commission | 49.14 | 138.96 | 188.10 | 240.29 | 1,385.45 | 1,625.74 |
| Media Commission | 88.27 | 138.96 | 227.23 | 876.84 | 1,385.45 | 2,262.29 |
| Hillsdale FWB College | 2,177.33 | .00 | 2,177.33 | 18,122.61 | .00 | 18,122.61 |
| Other | 5,931.34 | .00 | 5,931.34 | 54,228.68 | .00 | 54,228.68 |
| Totals | \$ 248,872.75 | \$ 50,534.06 | \$ 299,406.81 | \$ 2,107,324.48 | \$503,813.72 | \$ 2,611,138.20 |



Thomas Marberry

By the Way . . . The Autobiography of Charles Raymond Riggs

By Charles Raymond Riggs

(Published by the author, 2002, 143 pp., paperback, \$10).

Raymond Riggs is a legend among Free Will Baptists. Few men have contributed more to the work of our denomination. He has served as a pastor and denominational leader for most of his adult life. Foreign missions is the area where he made his greatest contribution; he was the first full-time general director of Free Will Baptist Foreign Missions. Under his leadership the Foreign Missions program grew and developed in the ministry of world evangelization.

Raymond is a native of Arkansas. He was born on October 15, 1915, in a small two-room house on the border between Randolph and Greene counties, near the towns of Pocahontas and Delaplain. He was the eldest son of Ernest and Eva Riggs. Ernest was a well-educated man for his day, but he spent most of his life working as a tenant farmer.

Raymond describes his childhood in these words, "In the first 15 years of my life, we moved from tenant house to tenant house about every two years. I remember about six different houses we lived in while I was still at home."

Although poverty was the rule and luxuries were few, the young man grew up in a home filled with love, a home that gave him opportunity to develop intellectually, physically and spiritually. He was a good student, and his parents insured that he had the best educational opportunities available in the rural area where they lived. His mother and father were committed Christians who shared their faith first with their own children.

Riggs writes, "As I look back over my life now, I thank the Lord for each one of my brothers and sisters. All of us have trusted Christ as Savior. We are involved in the Lord's work, and our faith is in God to take care of us. I give credit, largely, to my mother and dad for the way we were reared in those early days."

Two words characterize the life and ministry of Raymond Riggs. They are *adversity* and *commitment*. In his life

of more than 80 years, Raymond has overcome many adversities through the grace of God. During the depression days of the 1930s, his father fell behind on the mortgage, and the bank foreclosed on virtually everything the family owned. They lost their livestock and their farming equipment.

As she cried, his mother turned to his father and asked, "Ernest, what are we going to do? How can we make a living for the children?" His dad replied, "Honey, the Lord will provide." He did, and somehow the family survived.

Raymond married his sweetheart, Velma Staten, on October 4, 1934. Shortly after they were married, she contracted typhoid fever and died. She was buried on December 4—two months to the day after they were married. Her death was a terrible blow, but it did not destroy him. He continued in a life of Christian service.

The life of Raymond Riggs is a testimony to God's ability to sustain His children through difficult times.

The second word that describes the life of this remarkable man is *commitment* to Christ, to his family, to his denomination. In 1938 he was called to pastor the newly organized First FWB Church of Hazel Park, Michigan. He stayed there 16 years and helped build that congregation into a strong and effective work.

In 1953 he left the church and moved to Nashville, Tennessee, to become the first full-time Foreign Missions director for our denomination. During his years in Nashville, he labored night and day to develop the Foreign Missions Department and advance the cause of world missions within our movement.

After resigning as general director of Foreign Missions, his commitment to Free Will Baptists continued. He pastored in Virginia, Michigan and Tennessee. For 10 years he served Tennessee Free Will Baptists as their promotional director. Raymond is now in

his 80s and retired from the pastorate, but his commitment to our denomination continues.

In this interesting and thought-provoking book, Raymond Riggs has told his story as only he could tell it. He tells of the victories and the defeats, the good times and the bad. If you want to understand more about who Free Will Baptists are and what we are, get a copy of this book and read it. It will do you good.

To order copies of *By The Way*, contact Dr. Ken Riggs at 7233 Birch Bark Drive, Nashville, TN 37221. The \$10 price includes postage. ■

Directory Update

ARIZONA

Eddie Young to First Church, Tucson from Pleasant Hill Church, Dover, TN

GEORGIA

Gene Ross to Cross Roads Church, Cochran from Spring Hill Church, Maok

Allen Carter to Sand Hill Church, Baxley from Alabama Church, Blackshear

Mark Kennedy to Satilla Church, Hazlehurst from First Church, Smithville, TN

Randy Jackson to Midway Church, Moultrie from New Hope Fellowship Church, Cocoa, FL, as youth director

Kent Barwick to Colquitt Church, Colquitt from Loyal Chapel Church, Columbia, TN

Mark Williford to Mt. Gilead Church, Brinson from Macedonia Church, Colquitt

Stewart-Allen Clark to Double Branch Church, Unadilla

SOUTH CAROLINA

Larry Monday to Bay Branch Church, Timmons ville from Mt. Bethel Church, Weaverville, NC

Kenny Baxley to Mt. Ariel Church, Conway from Mt. Carmel Church, Rockingham, NC

Billy Wayne Baker to Calvary Church, Georgetown

■



Jack Williams

A Straight Answer, Please!

She started painting a few years ago and seemed to get good at it overnight. Pictures of lighthouses began cropping up around the house. She moved from drawing lighthouses to drawing little kids standing in flower beds. Then she tried her hand at horses, dogs and birds. She drew stern eagles, birds with a "Don't Tread On Me" attitude. That should've tipped me off that things were changing.

She was up until after 10:00 p.m. one night working on a lighthouse for somebody. The next morning I asked if she had finished the picture. Seemed like a reasonable question. As a man and husband, I expected a simple "yes" or "no" answer.

What she said was, "Oil paintings are different." That was an answer? I tried again.

"I understand that oil paintings are different," I said. "Did you finish the lighthouse before you went to bed last night?" I was quite pleased with the restated question.

"I did all I could," she said between bites of raisin bran.

"But did you finish the picture?" I asked, enunciating each syllable clearly and distinctly in a low male voice.

"I don't like the way the picture looks," she suggested.

Taking my hand off the doorknob, I turned to that beautiful and mysterious woman who has been my wife for 40 years, and said, "You're not going to answer my question, are you?"

She smiled, "Of course not. An artist doesn't have to finish a picture. She just stops."

I drove to work wondering why a simple yes or no question turned into a philosophical discussion. Doesn't anybody give a straight answer these days?

Former Navy chaplain David Burgess is a straight shooter who stays in hot water. Dr. Burgess, now a professional counselor and pastor in Illinois, was but a teenager when a misunderstanding arose as he was blow drying a white horse.

With a parade scheduled in town, young David washed and bleached the animal. While bleaching is not recommended by professional rodeo riders, the horse in question did not object, and he did need tidying up for the big day. The freshly laundered steed was slow drying, so David borrowed his mother's hair dryer and an extension cord.

"I never understood why she got so upset," Dr. Burgess said. "The horse looked good and the dryer wasn't hurt." Any man would understand that sensible explanation.

Too many people give weasel answers to questions. I prefer what's known in cowboy lore as "The Code of the West," a simple approach to life that worked wonders on the American frontier. William Johnstone cited the code in his book, *Blood of Eagles*.

"If it isn't yours, don't take it. If it isn't true, don't say it. If it isn't right, don't do it." There you have it, ladies and gentlemen, a straight answer. Are there any questions?

As far as we know, there were no cowboys at Sinai when Moses walked back down the mountain with the Ten Commandments. But if you think the Code of the West sounds like the short version of the Ten Commandments, you've been paying attention.

That's the backbone of American decency, the basis of our legal system and the sub-plot for every struggle from the Boston Tea Party to the Civil Rights movement. Some things are always right; some things are always wrong. It's

easier to tell the difference than political spin masters would have you believe.

The nation is not perfect, and I'm the first to admit it. But a lot of things are right about America. When people anywhere in the world are persecuted for what they believe, imprisoned for their political persuasions or denied an education because of their gender, the one place they all want to go is a shining kingdom called America.

Yes, some fall through the cracks no matter how hard we try. We can't save every boy and girl. We can't demand that they all graduate from high school or college and get a job. Nor can we make every marriage work, every dream come true or keep disease from every door. The best we can do is give a chance to those who want it. What they do with that chance is their decision.

America is not about security. America is about taking risks. It's a best-selling book for one writer and a rejection slip for another. It's Sam Walton on the one hand and the Enron disaster on the other. It's Audie Murphy astride a burning tank holding back the Nazis and a turncoat CIA agent betraying his country for 30 pieces of silver.

America at its best is a straight answer at a time when deception is coin of the realm. It's a place where millions pause on a Thursday in November to thank God for His bounty. It's the laughter when a boy blow dries his horse and almost gets away with it, as well a soft-shoe act where artists dispense fuzzy explanations over a bowl of raisin bran. If you're looking for a place that repackages the Code of Moses into the Code of the West and applies it to making a better hamburger, welcome to America. Now will somebody please ask my wife if she finished that lighthouse? ■

CONTACT

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Benjamin Randall Day Offering – NOVEMBER 24, 2002