

CONTACT



Official Publication of the National Association of Free Will Baptists

December 2002

**An Inn for Christmas
Three Christmas Celebrations
The Three Christmas Preachers**

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VOLUME 49, NO. 12

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Editor-in-chief: Dr. Melvin Worthington
Editor: Jack Williams
Editorial Assistant: Marilyn Pritchard
Circulation: Angie Williams
Printed by: Randall House Publications

Contact (ISSN 0573-7796), published monthly by the National Association of

Free Will Baptists, 5233 Mt. View Road, Antioch, TN 37013-2306. Address all correspondence and subscriptions to Post Office Box 5002, Antioch, TN 37011-5002. Phone 615/731-6812.

Annual subscription rates: Individual—\$15 per year, Church Family Plan—\$15 per year, Church Bundle Plan—\$15

per year. Periodical postage paid at Antioch, Tennessee, and additional offices.

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USPS 130-660

THE SECRETARY SPEAKS



Melvin Worthington

Ayden to Antioch to Ayden

With this editorial, I conclude 23 years of my monthly column, *The Secretary Speaks*. I penned the first editorial in January 1980. The title was *The Right to Exist*.

Mixed emotions grip me as I begin this final effort. December 31 brings to a close my tenure as executive secretary. I have come full circle. Reflecting on more than 40 years in the ministry brings three elements into focus.

An Elder/Shepherd

I was born along with my twin brother in 1937. Both of us were converted in 1954, called to preach in 1955 and ordained in 1957. My pastoral ministry began in 1959, and I pastored churches in North Carolina, South Carolina, Florida, Mississippi and Georgia until 1979.

My preparation. I am grateful to my parents, pastors, parishioners and professors for their contribution to my life. Each made a significant impact in preparing me for ministry. I am keenly aware of God's divine provision in the early years. Asbury College, Columbia International University, Georgia State University, Luther Rice Seminary and Vanderbilt University all left their mark on me.

My pastorates. Each pastorate had a significant impact on my development. Each provided unique opportunities for God to mold, make and melt me into a servant who could please Him. I am thankful for each church where I served. God used those pastoral years to prepare me for the work as executive secretary.

My perspective. For 20 years, I had no idea that I would serve in any role other than as pastor. I was content do-

ing that. When the possibility of serving as executive secretary surfaced, no one was more surprised than I was.

An Executive/Secretary

I was elected executive secretary in 1979 in Charlotte, North Carolina, for a two-year term. In 1980 the term for the executive secretary was changed from two years to indefinite. I was re-elected for an indefinite period of time in 1980.

Consider the *job*. According to the *Treatise*, the executive secretary plans the national convention, promotes denominational stewardship, administers the affairs of the denomination, manages the national office complex and publishes *Contact*. It's a big job that requires discipline, dedication, determination and discernment. I leave with a sense of *contentment* and *confidence* regarding the future of the denomination.

Consider the *journey*. The journey has left me with marvelous memories. The state associations, local church services, Leadership Conferences, Executive Committee meetings and national conventions have been enriching. The journey has passed far too quickly. I conclude the journey with a sense that it is time to place the mantle on a new man.

The Secretary's Schedule

December 2002

- 2-3 Leadership Conference
- 4-5 Executive Committee Meeting
- 8 Donelson FWB Church
Nashville, TN

Consider the *joy*. When asked to consider the job of executive secretary, I had strong reservations. How would it affect my family and friends? How would it affect my ministry—preaching and teaching? My tenure has been filled with joy. I am certain that it was the will of God for me during the last 20-plus years. There is a sense of joy that floods one's soul when he finds, follows and finishes the will of God.

Encourager/Statesman/Supporter

For over 40 years I have served as a pastor and executive secretary. I want to spend the remainder of my life in the ministry of encouragement. Change is taking place everywhere—new leadership, new programs, new technology and new challenges. As young men assume the mantle of servant-leadership, someone needs to encourage them.

I want to be a *supporter*. Without being in charge, I want to be supportive of those who lead and direct the denomination at every level.

I want to be a *statesman*. I want to rise above the pettiness that distrusts, distorts, disrupts and divides the denomination. I want to be a contributor rather than a critic.

I want to be a *sample*. My prayer is that the Lord will enable me to grow old gracefully. I do not want to be remembered as a cantankerous critic of those who serve in the denominational structure. I want to be remembered as a gentleman. So I bid farewell to denominational constituents and a dedicated staff. I welcome our new executive secretary and pledge my unre-served cooperation as he assumes the mantle of executive secretary. ■



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

The Greener the Grass

By Kevin Riggs¹

Habit #10 –
A Successful Person
has learned to be content.

The parable is told about a young man named Pakham who inherited his father's farm. While the farm was large, Pakham wanted all the surrounding land. His dream was to have the largest farm around. He would not be satisfied until he owned more than anyone else.

One night, through a dream, an angel told Pakham he could have all the land surrounding his farm that he could walk off in one day. The only provisions were his journey had to end at sundown, and he had to start and end at the grave of his father. Excited about the opportunity, Pakham awoke the next day at the crack of dawn.

He started from his father's grave in a slow, steady stride, trying to pace himself. Hour after hour he hurried through the fields adding acre after acre to his spread. At noon, urged on by the time, he skipped lunch and quickened his pace. By three o'clock he was running for all he was worth, sweating and panting profusely. As the sun started setting he ran faster in an effort to complete the deal.

Just as the sun dropped behind the

last hill, Pakham sprinted as fast as he could over the last hundred yards up to his father's grave. Pakham had made it! He owned land as far as the eye could see. His farm was now the biggest. He had all the land he needed. Now he could live his life in happiness. So he laid his head on his father's tombstone . . . and died of exhaustion. While he now owned thousands of acres, all he would use was a plot six feet long, two feet wide and six feet deep.

Do you see yourself in that parable? Always striving for more than you now have? Working hard to obtain for the sake of obtaining? Running yourself ragged while never enjoying life? Never satisfied? Never content? That parable convicts me of my own discontentment.

The Tenth Commandment

Commandment Ten states, "Thou shalt not covet thy neighbour's house, thou shalt not covet thy neighbour's wife, nor his manservant, nor his maid-servant, nor his ox, nor his ass, nor any thing that is thy neighbour's."² Cov-

etousness is at the heart of most sins.

In Moses' day wealth and success were measured by the size of a person's family, and the number of his servants and livestock. At the heart of Commandment Ten is looking at what someone else has, becoming jealous of that person for what he has, and desiring what that person has to the point you cannot be satisfied until you have it yourself.

Unquenchable Appetite

I struggle with covetousness. Every few years I start to yearn for a new automobile. I always want to update my laptop, and I continually wish my church were more like the one down the road. Why can't I be happy with what I have? Why do I strive so hard for things that will never satisfy?

One reason is because of my hunger for significance. I have a desire to be important. I want to know people appreciate me. When I start to wish for more and more, I have to ask myself, "Kevin, are you wanting more

so you can say to people, 'Hey, look at how important I am?'" If that is my reason for wanting more, I have violated Commandment Ten.

I also have a hunger for security. I want job security, financial security, medical security and retirement security—all of which makes me strive for more and more. Don't misunderstand; there is nothing wrong with these hungers, but there are wrong ways to satisfy them.

Contemplating these two hungers have brought me to two truths. First, the things of this world will not satisfy because God did not create me to be satisfied by them. Second, only a personal relationship with God will satisfy my hunger for significance and security.

Habit Ten

The Tenth Commandment reads, "Thou shalt not covet . . ."3 From this Commandment comes the Tenth Habit: *A highly successful person has learned to be content.* To be content means I am satisfied with where I am in life, with what I have, as well as with what I do not have. As long as I strive for more, I will never be happy. If I want to be successful, I must learn to utter the words, "Enough is enough!"

Easier said than done. It is so tempting to want a better job making more money. Our materialistic culture makes it natural to want bigger houses and nicer cars. It is easy for a wife to wish her husband were more like someone else, or for parents to wish their children were more like someone else's. Still yet, how many times have you (or I) wished our churches and pastors (or parishioners) were more like someone else's church and pastor (or parishioners)?

To be content doesn't mean I don't try to better myself or improve my situation, but it does mean I am satisfied with what I now have. It does mean I live within my means. It does mean I don't over-extend myself. If a highly successful person has *learned* to be content, that means contentment can be *learned*. How? The Apostle Paul gives insight into contentment in Colossians 3:1-11.

Rearrange priorities

Paul writes, "Set your affections on things above, not on things on the earth."⁴ The Ten Commandments tell

me what my priorities should be: (1) God first (Commandments 1-4); (2) Family second (Commandment 5); (3) Others third (Commandments 6-10). I find it interesting that nowhere in God's priorities are "things" or "stuff." If I am ever going to learn to be content, I must make my priorities God's priorities.

Remember who I am in Christ

Paul continued, "For ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God. When Christ, who is our life, shall appear, then shall ye also appear with him in glory."⁵ My life is not some cosmic accident. My life "is hid with Christ," no place is more secure, and no relationship is more significant. No achievement will make me more important than I already am in Christ, and no failure can change how God feels about me. The more I remind myself of this, the more content I will be.

Redirect behavior

In Colossians 3:5-11 Paul discussed how the believers in the church used to act. In the middle of these verses, he states, "put off all these . . ."⁶ Instead of being envious, I need to rejoice in the blessings of others. Instead of being selfish, I need to share what I have. Instead of wanting more, I need to be content.

One day a man went into his backyard and laid a small circle of poison around a hill of stinging ants. Thinking the tiny granules of poison were food, the ants began to pick them up and carry them throughout the colony. Later in the day, the man went to see how well the poison was working. Hundreds of stinging ants were carrying the poison down into their hill.

Then the man noticed a hole in the circle of the poison. Some of the poison was moving in the opposite direction—away from the hill. Some smaller, non-stinging ants had found this "food" and were stealing it from their neighbors. Thinking they were getting the other ants' treasure, they were unwittingly poisoning themselves.

When you see someone with more than you have and are tempted to covet, beware: What you think is a treasure, may turn out to be the very thing that poisons your life. A highly successful person has learned to be content. ■

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 20:17
3. Exodus 20:17
4. Colossians 3:2
5. Colossians 3:3-4
6. Colossians 3:8



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

Coming Next Month

- An Encouraging Word
- Climb Pike's Peak
- Computer Programs for Pastors
- "I'm Young, But . . ."
- The Greatest Commandment
- Recipe for Revival

One woman's 25-year search for her place in life.



Finding Yourself

By Martha Stone

The year was 1973. I stepped from high school into a world I knew little about. Fear and uncertainty filled the heart of every senior that year. The Vietnam War still raged and even though patriotism was at an all-time low, I wanted to serve. Only once I dared to mention my desires to my parents. They wouldn't hear of it.

So off to college I went. I spent the next two years trying to "find myself." I *didn't* "find" myself, and little did I know that a quarter-century would pass before I would.

I attended an all-female college, but there was no lack of available young men. In 1975 I graduated with an associate's degree and married the following week. My next few years were spent in the role of wife and mother.

The glory of two-hour feedings, diaper changes and potty training quickly passed to kindergarten, middle school and high school . . . and then an "empty nest." Little league, football, band concerts and school plays were over all too soon. The search to find myself could resume. I had no idea what adventures God had in store for me.

As I began to search again, I worked in my church's youth group, played the piano for the quartet and worked full time. I still didn't feel complete. I knew God had something special for me to do, but what? College? Career? Ministry? That nagging desire was driving me crazy!

I tried the career route; however the 1990s saw many corporations become lean and mean. I found myself in an unemployment line, restless and

unhappy. The longing in my heart to do something special grew stronger. Yet, I didn't have a clue what it was.

Eventually, I was called back to my old company to be warehouse manager. I knew nothing about inventory, ordering or supervising, but I learned quickly. This process of learning new skills prepared me for the greatest challenge of my life.

At church each Sunday, our youth director and Sunday School teacher encouraged us to pray for a children's home ministry to be established in Virginia. As God worked and planted seeds for the opening of Harvest Children's Home, He planted seeds in my heart too. My long search for fulfillment culminated in a feeling deep inside that I was supposed to be a part of this new ministry.

One cold January morning in 1994, everything at my job went wrong. Complaints, phones, computers, the boss! It was the worst day of my life; yet it became the best day as God revealed what I was to do. That morning God spoke to my heart and told me I was to be at the children's home. I immediately called Newl Dotson at Harvest and asked to meet with him.

Brother Newl said the children's home could benefit from someone to do fund raising and promotional work. He asked if I could do that. Without hesitation, I said "yes." Then he said, "I want you to come but I can't guarantee that you will get paid at first."

Again, I said, "that's fine." Was I crazy? Only after the meeting did I think about what I had just agreed to do. I knew nothing about fund rais-

ing. Yet I felt a peace like a river flowing through my soul.

Finally, I knew I had found the special purpose for which God had prepared me. After 25 years I had found myself.

Since I began ministering to children eight years ago, I have never looked back. Each year God blesses my feeble efforts. Each year the advancement department grows. This year alone, we will raise \$600,000 in funds to provide for the children.

Why am I telling you this? Because you should never give up on your dreams to serve God. No matter how young or old, you can do something special for Him. You have talents unique to your personality, and there is a place in ministry for you. The only requirement is willingness.

It has been a long search since 1973 but as the old song says, "sweeter gets the journey every day."

Oh, by the way, I haven't missed a paycheck yet! ■



ABOUT THE WRITER: Martha Stone serves as advancement director at Harvest Child Care Ministry in Duffield, Virginia.

Three Celebrations of Christmas

By Tim McDonald



Everyone has heard the song, "The Twelve Days of Christmas." Let's consider "Three Celebrations of Christmas." It's a special time of year.

Silver bells, lights, decorations, songs, colors and foods all proclaim, "The Holidays!" Once again we have the wonderful opportunity to celebrate Christmas.

Christmas is celebrated in diverse ways worldwide, each national and culture lending their own particular flavor to the holiday celebrations. Our country also flavors the Christmas season in her own unique fashion. As is usual for America, one is good, two is better and "threepeat" is most desired. With Christmas as with championships, this remains true. America celebrates Christmas three ways each holiday season.

Here, we don't have just December 25 and "Old Christmas" (Jan. 6); we have Cash-Register Christmas, Traditional Christmas and Spiritual Christmas. Cash-Register Christmas is the celebration of Madison Avenue, retail sales departments and Better Business Bureaus. It is the cash-cow of charge accounts, credit cards, Christmas Club savings accounts and the holy grail of toy companies.

Seventy percent of all toy sales occur between Thanksgiving and Christmas. Ever wonder why Santa is always located in the toy department? This celebration rings cash register bells with hard-earned dollars and harder-paid credit-dollars.

Fortunately, America also celebrates Traditional Christmas. That time when man forgets his pre-eminent selfishness and allows compassion to show. The resultant acts of kindness, care and generosity give us the feeling

that there is yet hope for man.

This is the Christmas of Dickens' *A Christmas Carol* and Moore's *A Visit from Saint Nicholas*. It is a time of people doing for others before themselves, sharing and relishing the important things in life. It is a celebration of thinking of others first and offering the greatest gift of all, a gift that costs nothing but cannot be purchased with all Midas' gold—the gift of our love.

Least popular, but more important, is the Spiritual Christmas celebration. It doesn't have the glitz of the cash register or the diversity of the traditional, but it is the *real* Christmas! Without the truth of the scriptural record of Christ's birth, there would be no Christmas and no celebration.

Christmas celebrates God's coming to live with man at the birth of the Christ-Child. Spiritual Christmas celebrates God's love for lost man and, consequently, hope for mankind. God sent His only begotten Son wrapped in miraculously conceived, undefiled robes of human flesh to live a perfect life so that He—Christ—could offer Himself on Calvary's cross as a substitutional offering for man's sin, so that all men might by faith be saved.

Spiritual Christmas celebrates family—that's how Christ was cared for. It celebrates angels—they announced His birth. It celebrates equality—poor shepherds and wealthy magi all worshiped Him. It celebrates nature—both heavenly bodies and earthly animals were moved to announce and accommodate Him. It celebrates rewarded faith—Anna and Simeon saw the Christ-Child in the Temple. It celebrates the truth of God's Word—all necessary impossibili-

ties were accomplished to prove God's Word true and that man might be saved.

Spiritual Christmas celebrates insight—after Christ, we can understand God far better. He is omniscient—only God could know how to create the Savior-Christ, the God-Man and second Adam. God is omnipotent—only all-powerful God could wrap His Son in robes of infant human flesh and yet keep Him sinless, eternal God. Since that first Christmas celebration, God has been on earth constantly excepting only the brief ascension-to-Pentecost period, thus demonstrating His omnipresence.

This year as you celebrate the frustrations of Cash-Register Christmas and hopefully the joys of Traditional Christmas, don't forget Spiritual Christmas. Celebrate the proven fact that God loves man, sent His Son and now through Christ, man has hope. Read Luke 2:1-40 and Matthew 1:18-2:15.

May this be your merriest Christmas of all—Spiritual Christmas! ■







ABOUT THE WRITER: Reverend Tim McDonald pastors Pearce Chapel Free Will Baptist Church in Smithville, Mississippi.



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Gift #3

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 Address _____
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Gift #2

Name _____
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Gift #4

Name _____
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FWBBC Inaugurates Fifth College President

NASHVILLE, TN—On a rainy September morning (September 26, 2002), some 700 students, faculty, staff and visitors gathered in the Picirilli Activities Center at Free Will Baptist Bible College to witness and participate in the inauguration of J. Matthew Pinson as FWBBC's fifth president.

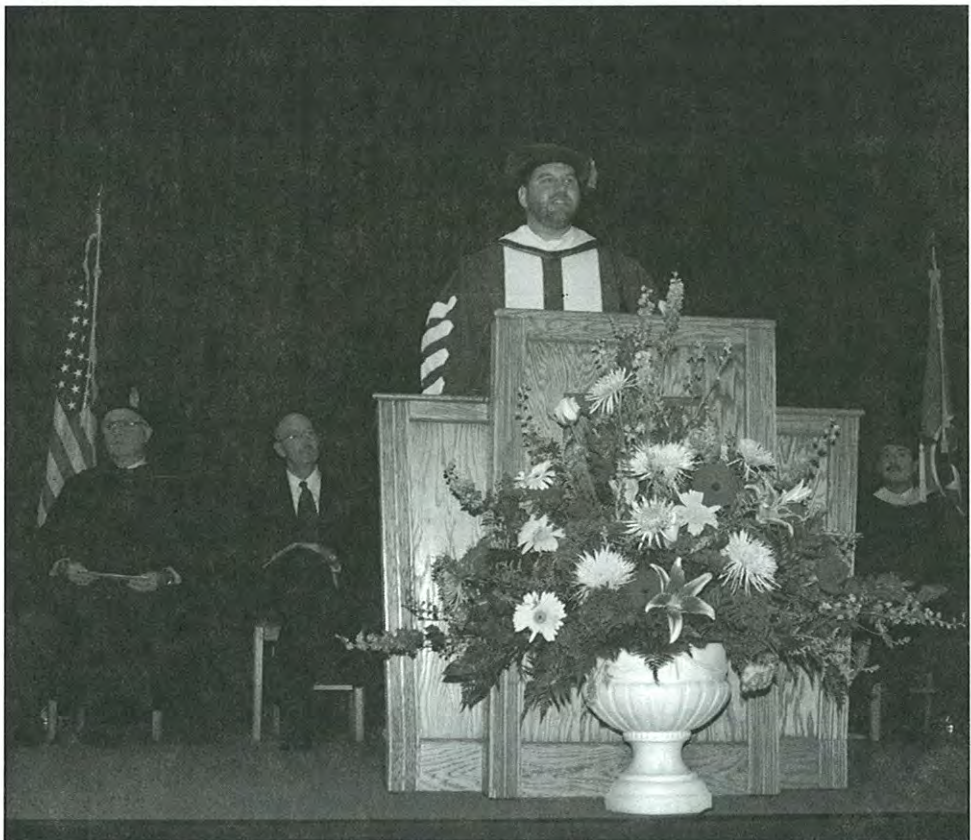
In addition to a host of alumni, pastors and friends of the college, a delegation of well-wishers from colleges and universities were in attendance. These included representatives from such institutions as Hillsdale FWB College, Trevecca Nazarene University, Belmont University, Vanderbilt University, Mount Olive College, Carolina Bible Institute, The University of The South, Bob Jones University and Columbia International University.

Among those bringing greetings were Nashville Mayor Bill Purcell; Rev. Keith Burden, newly elected executive secretary of the National Association of Free Will Baptists.

Board Chairman Gary Fry recited the Investiture of office conferring the presidential duties on Mr. Pinson.

FWBBC history professor John Carter presented Rev. Pinson with a 65-pound replica of the original 1611 edition of the King James Bible, reminding him of the college's commitment to the Word of God.

President Pinson's Inaugural Address made frequent mention of the late Dr. L. C. Johnson, the College's first



(L) Chancellor Tom Malone, Board Chairman Gary Fry, President J. Matthew Pinson, Music Chairman Thurman Lucas.

president. Mr. Pinson recommitted the College to prepare students to serve Christ in whatever vocation to which God calls them. He reiterated FWBBC's commitment to provide Free Will Baptists with pastors, missionaries and other full-time church workers.

The Inauguration was followed by a luncheon at which personal tributes to Rev. Pinson were shared by family and friends. The day closed with an Inaugural Gala, featuring music and drama by members of the faculty, past and present and a reception for President Pinson.

North Carolina Church Sets "Heroes Day"



Pastor Jim Summerson (behind pulpit) with 12 members of area police departments, fire departments and emergency medical services and military personnel.

RALEIGH, NC—Members of Haven FWB Church in Raleigh honored area firefighters, law enforcement officers and emergency medical personnel (technicians) during their September "Honor Our Heroes Sunday."

Pastor Jim Summerson said the idea grew out of the 2001 terrorist attack on America. With the assistance of two firemen and one EMT who are members of the church, Pastor Summerson contacted area departments inviting them to the special event.

Twelve individuals participated, representing two fire departments, two emergency medical services, the Wake County Sheriff's Department and the Cary Police Department. The Highway Patrol and other fire departments sent letters. Two fire departments brought their trucks for the people to view.

Reverend Summerson said the church was decorated in a patriotic theme, the driveway lined with American flags. The auditorium was filled for the service. Each department and individual was recog-

nized. Two fire department captains brought greetings. Each representative received a certificate of appreciation for their service to the community. The congregation gave the heroes a standing ovation.

Pastor Summerson preached the morning sermon titled, "One Life Under God."

When the service concluded, the guests of honor and all in attendance enjoyed a chicken dinner with all the trimmings, thanks to a gift of 48 chickens by the local Food Lion store.

Missouri Church Celebrates 75 Years

MOUNTAIN GROVE, MO—Five hundred gathered in Mountain Grove on July 14 to help First FWB Church celebrate 75 years of service, according to Pastor Gary Fry who has led the congregation since 1981. A large striped tent in the parking lot marked the location where activities centered and began.

Pastor Fry said that the anniversary theme was, "It's All About Him." Music from a handbell choir, children's choir and sanctuary choir focused on Je-

sus and His power.

Former pastor Lynn Wood delivered the morning message. Missouri executive secretary Nathan Ruble brought greetings from the state association. Missouri Congressman Van Kelly presented the church a flag which had flown over the state capitol.

Members prepared a time capsule to be stored away for the future. Guests toured the church and school facilities during the afternoon.

Fourteen men have pastored the church: John Koch, George W. Scott, Sr., Chester Dauber, George W. Scott, Jr., Homer Smith, Eli Burney, Ocie Allen, Willard Day, Fred Kirby, O. T. Dixon, Gene Rogers, Luther Gibson, Lynn Wood and Gary Fry.

First FWB Church grew out of a 1927 meeting when 15 people sat on nail kegs in a store owned by John Henry Plunk and planned the organization of a new church in Mountain Grove.

Reverend Sigbee Dilda, 66, Dies



HOOKERTON, NC—The Reverend Sigbee Bryant Dilda, Sr., died September 11 in Pitt County Memorial Hospital. He was 66 years old and had pastored 37 years.

At the time of his death, Rev. Dilda was South Carolina's General Board member and had recently resigned as pastor of Pamplico FWB Church

because of ill health. He was a graduate of Free Will Baptist Bible College.

Brother Dilda pastored six churches in four states during his nearly four-decade pastoral ministry:

- Glenwood FWB Church Glenwood, AR 1965-1967
- Pamplico FWB Church Pamplico, SC 1967-1970

- Ruth's Chapel FWB Church New Bern, NC 1970-1980
- Great Bridge FWB Church Chesapeake, VA 1980-1983
- Tabernacle FWB Church Kinston, NC 1983-1989
- Lebanon FWB Church Effingham, SC 1989-1990
- Pamplico FWB Church Pamplico, SC 1990-2002

South Carolina executive secretary Mike Jones said about Pastor Dilda: "He believed what he believed and was willing to stand for that belief. He knew how to have fun, but he also knew when to stand firm. He was a faithful soul winner and soldier for the Lord."

Funeral services were conducted September 14 at Mt. Calvary FWB Church in Hookerton, NC. Reverends Fred Carraway, Dennis Wiggs and Guy Owens officiated.

Reverend Dilda is survived by his wife, Mary Oakley Dilda; one daughter, Mrs. Susanna Bazen; one son, Bryant Dilda; one sister and one brother.

Arizona Pastor, Tim Thompson, Dies

GILBERT, AZ—The Reverend Paul Timothy Thompson, 51, died October 1 after preaching the sermon of his life the preceding Sunday. Tim Thompson was pastor of Heritage FWB Church in Gilbert; his father, Reverend Paul Thompson, serves as senior pastor at the church.

Tim grew up in Columbus, Ohio, where he worked six years as an associate at Heritage Temple FWB Church in Columbus. He relocated to the Phoenix area in 1983 to help his father plant a Free Will Baptist church. After working 15 years as a human resource professional in the computer and semiconductor industry, Tim joined the staff of Heritage Church on a full-time basis in 1988.

In recent months, Tim and his father had been team-preaching a sermon series at the church. Paul Thompson said of his son, "Tim



was at his zenith in preaching when he died. He preached his best sermon two days before his death."

Reverend Thompson died of a heart attack while playing racquetball with a fellow Free Will Baptist pastor, Howard Gwartney. The two played racquetball twice a week for 12 years. The night before he died, Tim played in a bas-

ketball game and led all scorers.

Tim taught the adult Sunday School class at the 1999 Free Will Baptist national convention in Atlanta, Georgia.

Funeral services were conducted October 5 at Heritage FWB Church. Reverend Paul Thompson officiated. Thompson said, "God came down and took hold of the service. The church and gymnasium were both full with standing room only. During the invitation after the message, hundreds raised their hands indicating their decisions to follow Jesus."

Reverend Tim Thompson is survived by his wife Cinda; two daughters, Charissa and Erin; parents, Reverend Paul and Marilyn Thompson; one sister (Barbara) and one brother (Phil), all of whom now live in Arizona.

Bible College Hires New Recruitment Director

NASHVILLE, TN—Free Will Baptist Bible College employed an alumnus to serve as director of enrollment management.

Matthew Markins, a 2000 FWBBC graduate and a native of Sharpville, Indiana, joined the staff in October to direct the college's recruitment activities. He

majoried in Christian Education and Missions and went on to serve as coordinator of the E-Team and overseas apprentice programs for the Foreign Missions Department.

Graduate studies are part of his plans for the future. He and his wife, Katie, have a son, Matthew Warren.



Matthew Markins

Arkansas Church Erects \$1 Million Building

JONESBORO, AR—Members of First FWB Church in Jonesboro completed a 15,000-square-foot building this summer and conducted services in the \$1 million structure on Labor Day weekend, according to Pastor Tim Morgan. The new facility is a full-size gymnasium which has been divided into a sanctuary and fellowship hall.

Located on 12 acres at 5407 South Stadium Boulevard, the building is phase one of a four-step project which will eventually include a permanent 1,200-seat sanctuary in the center of the property, plus two educational buildings. The just-completed structure will be turned into a combination gymnasium/family life center.

First FWB Church started in 1953 and met in a log service station. They relocated to West Washington Boulevard in 1955. The church outgrew its facilities and came up with a master plan to relocate and build in several phases.

During construction on the new building, First FWB Church



New building at First FWB Church in Jonesboro, AR.

sold their old property to a church just starting, and shared worship space with them for a while.

Pastor Tim Morgan said that sharing worship space was a unique experience and a time of learning to cooperate.

The church held an open house on September 22, inviting the community at large to see the new facilities.

First FWB Church is a member of Arkansas' Social Band Association.

Bible College Freshmen Elect Officers

NASHVILLE, TN—Members of the Free Will Baptist Bible College 2002 freshman class elected officers in early September and chose Heath Hubbard, a missions major from Bryan, Texas, as president. Heath is the son of Rev. and Mrs. Levan Hubbard. Heath's father is pastor of Fellowship FWB Church in Bryan.

Other officers chosen are:

Vice President: Alan Skiles, a business major from Guin, Alabama

Secretary-Treasurer: Bethany Parks, a teacher education student from Pleasant View, Tennessee

Chaplain: Ben Polston, a Bible major from Mt. Juliet, Tennessee

Worship Leader: Nolan Ritchie, a pastoral student from New Castle, Indiana.

Please pray for these outstanding young people and others at FWBCC who are preparing to serve Jesus Christ.



(L-R) Heath Hubbard, Alan Skiles, Bethany Parks, Ben Polston, Nolan Ritchie.

Hollifield Completes 54 Years in Ministry

NEBO, NC—After more than a half-century as pastor, evangelist and church planter, Reverend Milton A. Hollifield, Sr., announced his resignation at Rocky Pass FWB Church in Nebo, where he has pastored since 1979. The 76-year-old North Carolina native completed 54 years of ministry, all in the state of North Carolina except for a two-year Michigan pastorate.

Converted at age 14, Hollifield preached his first sermon December 7, 1947, in a one-room church without windows. He was licensed to preach in 1948, ordained in 1949 and called to pastor Old Fort FWB Church. He began pastoring Canton FWB Church in 1951 and stayed seven years.

His one pastorate outside North Carolina led him to West Wayne FWB Church (Michigan) from 1958 to 1959. He then served two years as an evangelist before accepting pastoral duties at Swan-



nanoa FWB Church where he labored 19 years. Hollifield's last 23 years were spent as pastor of Rocky Pass FWB Church in Nebo.

He led building programs at the Canton, Swannanoa and Rocky Pass churches. Always active in district and state gatherings, Hollifield was one of those who helped organize the North Carolina Association of Free Will Baptists. He later served as moderator of the association.

In other roles, Brother Hollifield served 12 years on the National Association's Board of Retirement and Insurance, and 12 years on the North Carolina Board of Care. As chairman of the Board of Care, he helped build a rest home in Candler. His community outreach included serving on the Board of Directors for the Swannanoa Community Council where he championed construction of the Swannanoa Valley Medical Center.

As a busy pastor, Hollifield attended summer school at Free Will Baptist Bible College. He also attended Columbia Bible College's extension program. He is well-known as a radio pastor, hospital chaplain, counselor and tireless nursing home advocate.

Reverend Milton and Elizabeth Hollifield plan to live in Swannanoa where he will continue his ministry with the Blue Ridge Association as association representative.

Church Honors Pastor of 20 Years



TUPELO, MS—Members of Egville FWB Church in Tupelo gathered on September 15 to honor Pastor Gerald Gann for 20 years of ministry with the congregation. Some 187 people were on hand for the occasion.

In a show of appreciation, members presented Gerald and Brenda Gann an all-expense-paid trip to Hawaii. The trip included a \$1,000 gift and two tickets to see

his favorite football team play—the Alabama Crimson Tide.

The Ganns and their two children began their Egville ministry on September 15, 1982, with 38 people. Brother Gann had just completed his studies at Free Will Baptist Bible College and Wesley Biblical Seminary (Jackson, MS).

During the past 20 years as Pastor Gann preached more than 2,000 sermons, the church won 203 converts and added 360 new members. The congregation built a new sanctuary to seat 400 people, added 11 classrooms and a fellowship hall, plus a pastor's study and library.

Several outreach ministries grew out of Gann's preaching and teaching: choir, booster band, children's church, bus ministry, puppet ministry, visitation, a food bank and more.

**Please Pray
for the
Free Will
Baptist
Leadership
Conference**

**Dec. 2-3
Nashville, TN**

currently

President **Thomas Marberry** reports 17 students enrolled at **Seminary of the Cross** in **Reynosa, Mexico**. Local churches who send students to the seminary are required to contribute a minimum of 200 pesos per month to support the school.

Sloan Canyon FWB Church in **Castaic, CA**, opened Sloan Canyon Christian Academy this fall with eight students. Thirty-eight students enrolled in the preschool. **Keith Bartlett** pastors.

Even though huge amounts of his energy and time go toward completing the building at **Landmark FWB Church** in **Monroe, LA**, home missionary **Rue Dell Smith** reports four conversions and 11 new members. The congregation began the fall with 52 in attendance.

Pastor **Tim Lewis** and members at **Summit Chapel FWB Church** in **Ogden, UT**, spent the summer remodeling, thanks to volunteers from Russellville and Little Rock, AR. Six people were converted during the summer months.

Reverend **Jose Santamaria** died June 1, 2002, after an eight-month battle with cancer. He was 24 years old and pastor of **First FWB Church** in **San Luis, Sonora, Mexico**. Jose was converted at age 19, called to preach at 20. He and his wife Amanda had been married 18 months. Missionary **Jerry Barron** said, "Jose was an outstanding preacher and a wonderful, loving pastor. His ministry was short, but it was full of love, compassion, concern and faithfulness."

Harmony FWB Church in **West Frankfort, IL**, logged a 137 high in VBS, according to Pastor **Kenneth Edwards**. Fourteen conversions and a \$600 offering for missionary **Mark King** marked the event.

Freedom FWB Church in **Marion, IL**, honored long-time members **Earl** and **Lucille Kelly**. Earl, who has been a member 74 years, served as a trustee. At age 94, he still drives his 92-year-old wife to church on Sunday. **Gilbert Craig** pastors.

Pastor **Rick Cason** (**Victory FWB Church** in **Goldsboro, NC**), received

certification as a police chaplain with the Goldsboro Police Department where he has served since 1996.

Pastor **David Burgess** baptized eight at **Oak Valley FWB Church** in **Geff, IL**. In addition to his pastoral duties, Burgess also serves the community as a professional counselor.

In the past four years, 90 people have been baptized at **Mt. Zion FWB Church** in **Ashland City, TN**. Pastor **Gene Parton** came to the church in August 1998. The 90 conversions happened at church services (22), in the pastor's office (16), in homes (14), in children's church (7) and other places. Attendance in the four years increased from 50 to 170.

When Tropical storm Hanna swept through Southwest **Georgia** in September, **First FWB Church** in **Donalsonville** sustained heavy flood damage. Pastor **Rollin Rathel** said that all the flooring and four feet of dry wall must be replaced. Since the church was not located on a flood plain, they did not have flood insurance.

First FWB Church in **Crossett, AR**, reports 19 new members in two months. **Gene Cullum** pastors.

Woodlawn FWB Church in **Russellville, AR**, could not seem to break the 100 barrier in attendance, according to Pastor **Mike Phillips**. Thanks to a four-day revival with Evangelist **John Gibbs** that stretched to five days, they pushed over the 100 mark . . . by one person.

Pastor **Rob Morgan** reports 11 new members at **Donelson FWB Church** in **Nashville, TN**.

Mary's Chapel FWB Church in **Coeburn, VA**, celebrated 88 years of services, according to Pastor **Marty Puckett**. Founded in 1914, the church has enjoyed the work of 20 pastors in its eight-decades-plus existence. At least 41 ministers now deceased, at one time called **Mary's Chapel** their home church. Dr. **Homer Willis** preached the 2002 homecoming sermon on September 15. The church got its name from **Mary Collins**, a courageous lady who walked through-

out the community in 1912 to raise funds for a church building.

Pastor **Danny Short** and members of **Mid Way FWB Church** in **New Site, MS**, completed a new fellowship hall. The church started in the 1970s when a house was purchased in which to begin. They built a sanctuary in the early 1990s.

Pastor **William Smith** reports six new members at **Buckatunna, MS**. Homecoming services attracted 101 people for morning worship.

Pastor **Walter Statzer** celebrated 30 years at **Shiloh FWB Church** in **Bristol, VA**. He had been preaching 16 years when he came as pastor. Brother Statzer is well-known and respected by the staffs at area hospitals where he often visits. He conducts a daily radio broadcast Monday through Friday. Each Monday morning, he also conducts "The Sunshine Club." Tuesday evenings he teaches a Sunday School class at Leisure Park Towers.

Kingsway FWB Church in **Springfield, MO**, began with 22 charter members in 1972. The church met in rented facilities until 1973 when they erected a building. Pastor **Bill Ragsdale** is the fifth minister to lead the congregation. Missouri executive secretary **Nathan Ruble** preached the 30th anniversary message. Founding pastor **Gene Terry** baptized two converts that afternoon.

Members of **Macedonia FWB Church** in **Purdy, MO**, dedicated their new addition, according to Pastor **Lee Neil**. Recent improvements include remodeling and expanding the auditorium to seat 250, a larger pulpit and choir area, a new baptistry, three classrooms, sound system and a baby grand piano. The church has 8,000 square feet under roof.

She's perfect! **Roberta Berry** received a plaque for 32 years of perfect Sunday School attendance at **First FWB Church** in **De Soto, MO**. She taught a Sunday School class for many years. A brief hospital stay ended her 32-year attendance record. **Bob Thebeau** pastors. ■

It was one of those rare moments in missionary life. A time when the "spiritual fruit" seemed quite ripe and ready to pick. It appeared we needed only to reach out and harvest it.

The sun was beating down on the North African desert sand and the temperature was surely well over 100 degrees. My colleague, Sean, and I had found refuge in the shade of a house. This was the place we had designated to meet with Ibrahim, a Muslim friend of ours.

Sean and I had spent months building a relationship with Ibrahim. Now was the moment to speak openly and clearly of his need for salvation. As we talked it was obvious that the Holy Spirit was truly speaking through us. Each and every word was measured and sure. The young man listened with an intensity that could only come with the convicting power of God's Spirit. Ibrahim nodded and his eyes welled up with tears as we spoke of the supreme sacrifice Christ had made for the sins of the whole world. We assured him that this included him. We were certain *this* was the day of salvation for Ibrahim.

The moment looked right for us to appeal to our friend to embrace Christ as his Savior. Ibrahim stared intensely at us and shook his head indicating that he could not do this. Then he turned and walked abruptly away from us. Just 50 feet away Ibrahim paused and whispered a few words to three Muslim men leaning against a house. In a flash they drew long knives from under their robes and quickly turned to face us. Without a second's reflection we knew those gleaming blades were meant to do us harm. The adrenaline rush kicked in and the "fight or flight" choice rang in our heads. As they charged toward us, we did the most natural thing one can do. Sean and I ran.

Our flight took us beyond the limits of the small town and in the direction of the only wooded area we could see. To our left was a thick overgrowth and to our right a fence covered with the black cloth the Muslim women use to veil their faces. We were giving it our absolute best and were beginning to leave the others behind. For a moment



A Hand for the Lord

By Clint Morgan

who preach in our country?" Then he ordered me to lay my right hand on a tree stump. With one whistling swat of his razor-sharp sword he severed my right hand. It fell like a stone to the dusty ground.

Sean looked at me and with a peaceful countenance asked, "Did it hurt?" I replied, "No, Sean, it did not hurt." Then, without an order from the avenger, he laid his right hand down on the stump.

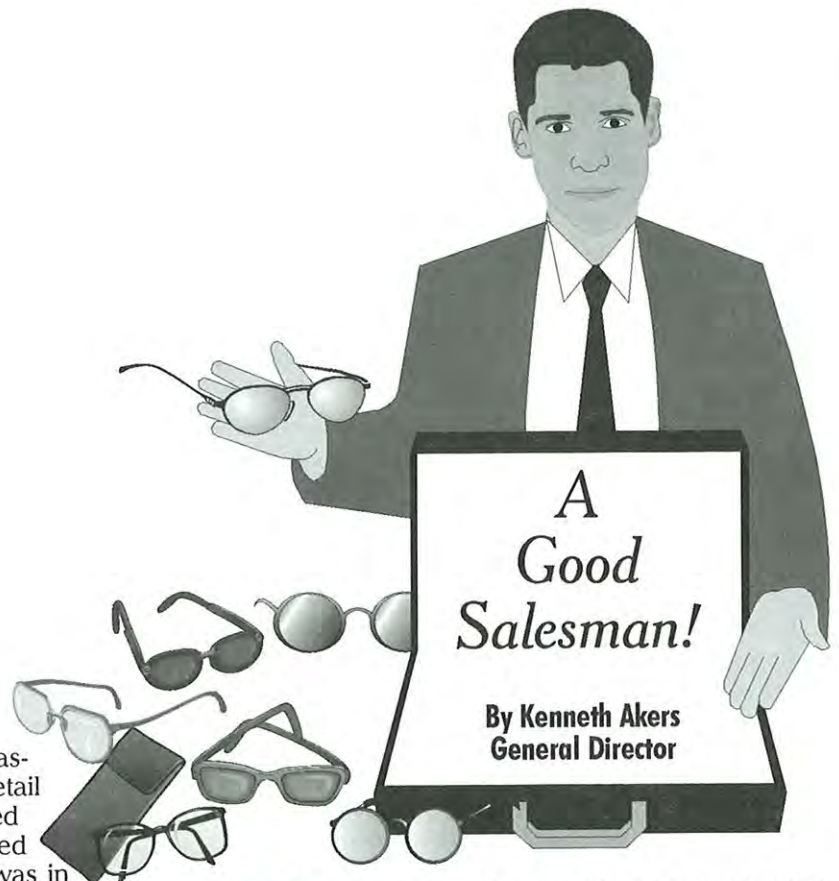
SUDDENLY, I AWOKE FROM THIS SOUL-SHAKING DREAM. Yes, it was just a dream, and I am not big on interpreting dreams. Still, I did sense that this particular dream had a real lesson for me and perhaps for others as well.

Over five billion souls without Christ inhabit this earth. Many of them live in countries where it is absolutely forbidden to share the gospel and to plant churches. Millions, perhaps billions, have never even heard the name of Christ.

This is the lesson I learned from my dream: God wants men and women who are willing to give not just a hand but their whole lives to take the Good News to the last frontier of missions, restricted access countries. Opportunities are available for those who will submit themselves to spend and be spent for the Master in order to reach those with little or no opportunity to hear the message of Christ. ■

Clint Morgan and his wife, Lynette, have served 24 years in Ivory Coast as missionaries. Clint is currently on special assignment to develop ministry to restricted access countries.





Before I began working for the Master's Men Department, I was in retail sales. To be more specific, I owned my own optical business. I discovered several things during the 25 years I was in that work. I sold what I liked.

When salesmen would come in to my office, I would look at all the different frames they had and try to get the newest styles for my customers. To be honest, some of them were not what I would let my dog wear, but this was the new style. So I would buy a few.

Then I would notice that when time came around for inventory, there were those ugly new things. At first I thought I should be a fashion consultant or something. They should ask me what sells. Because I was right! I knew what people would buy. Just look what was left. Then I started thinking. I was selling what I liked. When a customer would come in, I would show them the frames I liked. If they put on one of those other frames, I'd say something like, "You're the one that has to wear it, not me!" Well, I usually had more tact than that, but they knew what I meant.

I've come to the conclusion this is what we do in and about church also. If there is something going on at church that we really like, we support it. If it doesn't interest us, we say, "I don't think that will work, or if that's what you want to do."

But I've discovered some other things also. When I would let my employees be more involved in the buying process, they liked things I didn't. And they sold what they liked. Therefore, I had more business because I offered a bigger choice.

Maybe it's just me, but that same concept might work in our churches. Just because you don't support some of our denominational programs doesn't mean someone else in your church may not be looking for just that.

The Free Will Baptist National Offices offer opportunities for everyone to become involved and find something they like. We have Master's Men for men. We have WNAC for women. Randall House offers programs for youth. We have both Home and Foreign Missions Departments where opportunities abound for service. Our Board of Retirement and the Free Will Baptist Foundation can even help with your financial planning and retirement.

The key to becoming involved is believing in the product. I support and believe in what Free Will Baptists are doing. I believe in my local church and am proud of where I attend. And, most of all, I believe in a risen Savior. I want to sell what I believe in. Do you? ■



Seven Tips for Successful Meetings

By Marjorie Workman

As the year draws to a close, this may be a good time for some hard work in planning and goal setting to improve the ministry of your Women Active for Christ group in 2003. Consider these seven tips for successful meetings.

1. Know your purpose. Take time to ponder and pray over your purpose for existing. WNAC's Purpose Statement is: "To provide opportunities for women to understand and fulfill the Great Commission through their responsibilities in the family, in the church, in the community and around the world" (*Manual for Free Will Baptist Women's Organizations*, p. 12). Make sure your group understands its purpose.

All around us are neighbors, family and co-workers who are passing through life without any connection to their Creator God. Reaching lost people is God's idea. He sent His Son Jesus who came "to seek and to save that which was lost" (Luke 18:10).

Then He sent us, in His authority and with His Spirit, to go and make disciples. Effective evangelism begins in our hearts, but it can't stop there. The passion for lost people must be instilled in every member's heart. We must inspire and equip others to partner together in reaching the world.

2. Focus. Contemplate your group's strengths and weaknesses. Do you know what they are? Find out by talking to your officers, members and non-members. Build on your strengths and look for ways to eliminate your weaknesses.

3. Renew and refresh. Get out of ruts that hold you back. Try something new. Take risks. So what if you fail? No one bats a thousand. Change is not a bad word. Consider that just a few years ago you probably didn't know the difference between a web site and a cobweb, e-mail from snail mail, or a hymn from a chorus. Be flexible.

4. Plan. By its very nature, planning is often a thankless job. Planners work tirelessly for the success of a meeting and the satisfaction of the attendees. The

hallmark of effective leadership is the ability to get people to do things. And the only way to get anyone to do anything is by motivating them to want to do it.

5. Set goals. Goals do not have to be big. Set specific, achievable goals. Goals should be measurable. Start small but seek to increase your goals each year. If you plan to give to a particular project such as the Missionary Provision Closet, set a goal for what you hope to achieve. Meeting goals is encouraging. If your goals are too high, adjust them. Review often.

6. Make use of resources. As a service organization, WNAC provides the following resources to make your meetings smooth and enjoyable:

- *WNAC Program and Plan Book 2003.* This book is filled with innovative and exciting solutions to program presentations. It provides insightful, fun, imaginative ways to boost morale and encourage attendance. Included are strategies for getting others involved in discussions and interaction. It will guide you in creating a dynamic, energy-charged meeting. Use the skits and add to the enjoyment of your meetings.
- *CoLaborer* magazine. This is a magazine written by Free Will Baptist women for Free Will Baptist women. It is rich and full of encouragement. Biblically based. Always has a missions emphasis. Provides material to make your meetings interesting and relevant. Good for personal enrichment.
- *Manual for Free Will Baptist Women's Organizations.* This resource is a must for new or young groups. It contains a suggested Constitution and By-laws, plus duties and requirements for officers.
- "The a-b-c's of Parliamentary Procedure." Have you ever planned a meeting that turned into total chaos? Instead of being short and painless, it was long and confrontational? Consider using this booklet based on *Robert's Rules of Order*. Parliamentary procedure is all the laws and rules of an organization that govern the transaction of business—or, stated another way, it is the means by which an organization makes its decisions. Part of any meeting should be a systematic plan for the orderly conduct of business.

7. Think young. Having gray hair doesn't matter. Groups need high-energy thinkers to be successful. Age has nothing to do with it. Be women with a "can do" attitude. ■

Investing for Retirement . . . In Times Like These

By William Evans

What is a person to do in times like these? Investing for retirement is discouraging, even frightening, when values drop faster than our new contributions can keep up. Unfortunately there is not one answer that resolves all the problems for each of us.

Let me suggest some possibilities based on participant age that offer some hope.

Those age 62 and up may want to consider making a settlement based on your present account value. This would in effect lock in your present value and stop any further loss. Although we always hope for a quick return to growth, we cannot guarantee it.

Consider that our six annuity settlements credit future earnings at 5%. In addition, during better investing periods where earnings exceed the assumed rate, actual payments will be increased. So, to a small degree these settlements offer the best of both worlds.

For those in this age group who continue to work after settlement of their account, we recommend opening a new account. To counter tax liability of the annuity income (it cannot be designated housing until separation from service by IRS regulations), a participant could increase his present Salary Reduction amount dollar for dollar up to a total contribution level of \$11,000 (those under 50) or \$12,000 (those 50 and up). This would limit the market risk to the deposits and would provide for some share in a rising market.

Those who have chosen annuity settlements in the past have seen their payments increase each of the past 11 years for a total of 38%. That has been more than enough to offset the cost of living increases during the same period. However, it is important to remember that past performance is not a guarantee of future experience.

For those age 55-62: Management is much more difficult. Some participants will be much more comfortable to reduce the level of their deposits. However, it is generally not wise to diminish retirement funding during these years.

Possibilities for continued savings include opening an IRA (which can be rolled over to our 403(b) later) to preserve principal and earn one to three percent. This approach has two drawbacks: After the IRA is rolled into our program, it cannot be paid out as housing, and original contributions to the IRA are not exempted from self-employment taxes.

I recommend continuing the same level of contributions in the plan trusting for a turnaround in the market during the years before actual retirement.

It is possible for a participant to pay any income and self-employment tax due and save through another vehicle—a revocable trust through the Foundation, or the CELF program in Home Missions or a credit union, savings and loan or bank.

It is very important to continue savings and avoid the risk of becoming accustomed to spending more.

For those younger than 55: Because you have seven years or more to retirement, it is wise to remain in the regular pool of investments. I suggest this even though stock could still go down from its present levels. History has proven that over the long haul stocks earn more than other types of investments.

Fixed-rate type investments on the other hand have little room for further interest rate declines. Therefore, they are likely to actually lose value. Remember that when interest rates go up, bond values go down.

Our investments are well diversified and balanced in exposure to stocks and bonds. This has produced a good track record. Even with the recent loss our historic average return is still 8.2%. History reveals that funds similar to ours have done well over the years.

The present declining market will be replaced by future up markets. Buying stock today gives us much more room for growth than it did at market highs. This is when the principal of dollar-cost averaging really works.

Although there can be no promises about the economic future, both history and our faith teach us that a continued gathering during the summer is necessary. ■

Retirement  & Insurance



Garnett Reid

God Contracted to a Span

Of all the miracles accompanying the gospel of salvation, perhaps none is more special than the incarnation. As the Athanasian Creed puts it, Jesus Christ is “perfect God and perfect man.” That God became human is a revealed truth. After reading the Old Testament, we might not be surprised *that* it happened; but let someone try explaining *how* it happened.

In researching the Old Testament tabernacle recently, I was reminded of this recurring theme in redemption’s story: God longs to live with His people. We see it in Eden, the tabernacle and the temple, individual New Testament believers and the church, and Heaven.

Yet the epitome of this truth is Immanuel Himself—God with us. When we focus on Jesus’ advent this Christmas, we should remind ourselves that we contemplate, as Charles Wesley did,

Our God contracted to a span;
Incomprehensibly made man.

Hebrews 2 explains Jesus’ humanity in much detail. We might tend to overlook this chapter because of the incisive defense of Christ’s deity in chapter one. Then there’s chapter three, highlighted by the writer’s appeal to “harden not your hearts” and to avoid “departing from the living God” (vv. 8, 12).

The Christmas season provides the perfect setting to ponder the impact of incarnation in Hebrews 2. Here we have a nine-part profile of the God-man. Each depiction of Christ in the chapter reveals a new angle, a different perspective on why the Word became flesh.

The Preacher (vv. 1-4)

We must not neglect the “great salvation” first declared by the Lord. Others joined in the preaching, but Jesus “began to preach, and to say, Repent: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand” (Matt. 4:17). At the outset of

the kingdom’s arrival, the King Himself proclaimed the good news!

The Ruler (vv. 5-9)

In these verses the writer uses language from Psalm 8 reminding us of the first Adam: made a little lower than the angels, crowned with glory and honor, ruling over creation (see Gen. 1:26-28). He then applies these words to the second Adam, Jesus, who is also human but who comes to remedy the problem created by the first Adam. Jesus is exalted—“crowned with glory and honor”—for His great work of redemption.

The Sufferer (vv. 9-10)

Before Christ reigns, He must suffer (see Matt. 16:21; Phil. 2:7-11). He came as a man to “taste death for every man.” Since human sin brought death to the race, only human suffering can pay a fitting penalty. The good news of the gospel is that we do not have to pay. Christ has suffered death in our place “by the grace of God” (v. 9).

The Founder (v. 10)

How appropriate, then, (“it became him” means “it was fitting for him”) that Jesus is the “captain” of our salvation. The word translated “captain” has the idea of founder or author (as it is rendered in 12:2). He leads us from suffering to salvation, from trial to triumph.

The Brother (vv. 11-13)

Quoting Psalm 22 and Isaiah 8, the author reminds us that Christ identifies with us in our humanity. We are members of His body, joint-heirs with Him in our standing as the people of God and in our offering of praise to God (see also John 1:12; Rom. 8:17, 29).

The Conqueror (v. 14)

We usually don’t think of Christ’s coming in order to destroy. Yet verse 14 assures us that Christ became human (“flesh and blood”) to do just that: to conquer the devil and to disarm his arsenal of death.

The Deliverer (vv. 15-16)

I remember watching my mother breathe her last breath, slipping away to Heaven with no fear, no dread or terror. For her death had lost its power to frighten; its taunts were empty threats. Jesus had delivered her from that cruel bondage.

The Mediator (v. 17)

Just as the high priest identified with his people, Jesus was “made like unto his brethren” to serve as our mediator. In reconciling us to God, He shows us “mercy” in His atoning death yet remains “faithful” to God in His sinless life.

The Helper (v. 18)

Jesus’ incarnation is a constant reminder that God is approachable. Philip Yancey tells of the marine aquarium he once tended in his home. He took great care to filter the water, provide vitamins for the fish and monitor nitrate levels in the water for them. Yet they never responded with gratitude. Instead, the only emotion they showed him was fear. Each time he opened the lid to care for them, the fish fled from his presence. He could not convince them of his concern for them.

The incarnation is proof for us. We can come to Him because He came to us. ■

THE PASTOR'S WIFE



Dale E. Young

Keyword: Balance

Are you a juggler? Are you trying to meet the expectations of your congregation and husband? You cannot be all things to all people, but that is no excuse to do nothing. No lady has abilities in every area and the pastor's wife is no exception. Your task is to decide what you are to do.

"... Let me be who God has gifted me to be, I will... contribute... that includes letting me exercise gifts that don't fit the role...," Jill Briscoe as quoted in *Married to a Pastor*, (H. B. London and N. B. Wiseman, editors).

Every Christian lady must identify and use God-given gifts. Strike a balance between doing only what you enjoy and what needs to be done. When you first go to a church, it is wise to observe how you fit into the ministry before plunging into a role. If you don't find your rightful place, anger builds up. God called your husband to this work; you are there because you love him, but usually you sense the call.

I knew what my gifts were before I married a pastor at the age of 50. A young pastor's wife may not have that advantage and her perspective is different. Planning the Easter breakfast is not for me and I won't be "roped" into it. God gave me the gift of teaching. This lady is an organizer. So guess who directs VBS? She enjoys writing but hates secretarial work. So why do the bulletin? At our church, I need to. This is where the balance between gifts and what you can do comes into play.

Positive thinking helps maintain balance. A negative thinker is unbalanced, and accomplishing God's plan is thwarted. Daddy instilled in me, "There are no can'ts in the book." That allows me to see the BIG picture and plan ways to make it happen. Planning doesn't mean you control the church or your husband though.

Do you need to work on this? Hum-

bling yourself before God in prayer is essential. Knowing and obeying the Word should guide our thinking, and that leaves no room for negativism or conniving for control.

Remember, Christlikeness is top priority; cultivate it in every area of your life to maintain balance. (1 Tim. 2:9; 4:12). Your husband and church should want ministry to be a joy to you. It won't be unless you do what God wants you to do. Don't let the church squeeze you into a mold, remembering you are a servant who decides in what roles God wants you to serve.

It's hard to persuade me to fit a mold but if someone did, my husband and I would be miserable and God's work hindered because I'm not exercising God-given gifts. Be your best self and be certain you are the person God desires—that makes you like Christ.

No group in the church should be too dependent on the pastor's wife. Allow others to do things after you train them to live balanced lives. After two years as auxiliary president, it was time for someone else who needed the experience to serve. If others make mistakes, they will learn and improve.

Seek out people who can be change agents. What a legacy for you to leave ladies in a church who have desires to serve using God-given abilities. You don't have all the answers, but listen and try to see things as others do. Depend upon God to help you be honest in your expectations of others.

Continuous spiritual growth is necessary to a balanced life. It makes you an asset to your husband and your church. You need spiritual food just like the pastor does. Go to a conference for pastors' wives. But remember, conferences and church aren't a substitute! Don't neglect personal Bible study/prayer time. Trying to help others without depth in the Word is like trying to get water from an empty well. Seek

God's approval, not man's (Gal. 1:10).

Be sure to pursue interests outside the church. In doing so, you can share your faith and work on your balancing act. ■

ABOUT THE WRITER: Dale E. Young, Ed.D. is a former Christian school administrator, president of a local historical society, author and wife of Reverend Eddie Young, pastor of First Free Will Baptist Church in Tucson, Arizona.

Directory Update

CALIFORNIA

John Howell to Rejoice Church, Garden Grove from Princeton Church, Ontario

MISSOURI

Kenny Pandukur to Trinity Church, Bridgeton from First Church, McAlester, OK, as assistant pastor

NORTH CAROLINA

Terry Mosley to Temple Church, Greenville from First Church, Oak Ridge, TN

OKLAHOMA

Jeff Blair to First Church, Locust Grove

SOUTH CAROLINA

Bruce Jones to High Hill Church, Lake City
Carl Ward, Jr., to Sweet Home Church, Socastee
Bobby Page to Walker's Chapel Church, Sumter

OTHER PERSONNEL

Dick Terry to Skyridge Church, Noble, OK, as music minister from Oak Park Church, Pine Bluff, AR, as minister of music and youth

Donnie Burke to First Church, Albany, GA, as minister of music from Pleasant Acres Church, New Bern, NC

Dean Stone to First Church, Norman, OK, as children's minister

Stevie McCutcheon to Tabernacle Church, Coward, SC, as assistant pastor

Rickey Evans to South Carolina State Office as assistant director from St. John Church, Pamplico, as pastor



Randy Sawyer

The Work of Words (Part II)

Have you ever had a conversation where you couldn't find the right words to make your point? After stammering and stuttering, the only thing you could think to say was, "Uh-m-m, you know what I mean." To which the other individual might have added, "Yeah, I think I know what you're trying to say." In such situations the communication process is jeopardized because of your inability to precisely verbalize your thoughts.

When it comes to the moment of truth—the preaching event—the preacher cannot afford to be at a loss for appropriate words. I readily admit that the most capable pulpit master can go blank from time to time, leaving his listeners uncomfortable and himself embarrassed. As a general rule, however, the preacher cannot present his message with an, "Oh, you know what I'm trying to say," attitude.

There is little chance those who listen will understand the truth we seek to present unless that truth is put into words. The verbalizing itself gives shape to the thought and distinguishes it from other ideas. *Word crafting* then is the preacher's art, our trade and occupation. We must speak so as to be understood, and not misunderstood.

By Thought and Intention

Word crafting requires thought and intentionality. If we are to select appropriate words for the moment, we cannot simply wing it. I talked to a preacher sometime ago about his first pulpit experience. With his magnificent outline in hand, he felt ready to storm the bastions of hell, lead captive prisoners free and give gifts unto men.

No one had informed him that even the best crafted sermon outline isn't a complete sermon. The points must be defined, developed, argued, illustrated and applied. "That outline

will preach," we often quip. Not unless you can do something with it. Try reading a bare outline to your congregation next Sunday and see how their faces light up with understanding.

Back to my friend. After about two or three tense minutes for himself and everyone, he left the pulpit almost traumatized by the experience. "Open your mouth and God will fill it," right? Effective preaching doesn't work that way. The ideas to be communicated must be purposefully worked through prior to taking the pulpit, and the appropriate words selected well in advance.

From Inspiration and Practice

Word crafting demands inspiration and practice. Three exercises are invaluable to develop yourself into an effective crafter of words—listening, reading and writing.

Listening

Nothing has been more helpful to me as a preacher than listening to great communicators. For art and word selection, I have listened often to R. G. Lee's masterpiece, *Christ Above All*. For rhythm and poetic symmetry, I love to hear S. M. Lockridge in *Amen*, or his sermonic classic *The Lordship of Christ*. For prophetic power and in-your-face daring, you can't do any better than *Vance Havner's* calls to revival and repentance.

I listen for wording and phrasing, for inflection and expression, for speed and flow, for rhythm and transition. There are, of course, many contemporary communicators I love to hear. I send for their tapes and listen to them as I travel.

Reading

Reading is a given for effective preachers, and there is no better way to become a word crafter than by living with the classics of sermonic lit-

erature. As a young pastor, frightened and alone, I began the habit of reading daily from Spurgeon's *Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit*. From there I moved to Morgan's *Westminster* collection, then to Maclaren's *Expository* masterpieces and so on.

I learned not only the importance of *rightly dividing the Word*, but the necessity of word selection. Their word crafting, though written and spoken to another time, remains matchless in beauty and memorable in power unlike so much crude and almost vulgar sermonizing done these days.

The studious preacher will also want to read Lewis and Tozer, Oswald Sanders and F. B. Myer. He will want to read poetry, novels, short stories, biography, history and theology. And He will want to fill his heart and head with the great and classic hymns of the past and present. Oswald Sanders noted the devotional value in the study of hymns, not to mention the wealth of worship inspiration they offer. Hymns will enrich your sermons with theological insight and illustration, and provide instruction in the art of word crafting.

Writing

The most important exercise for the development of effective word selection is writing. Early in my ministry, I took the time and energy to write out every sermon. This discipline offers many advantages. It helps in developing ideas through to conclusion, allowing the preacher to work out every facet of the sermon well in advance.

Writing also encourages word economy and verbal precision. I have found that I can say more in less time if I force myself to choose my words while still in the process of study. In addition, writing allows me to transition more effectively, as well as bring everything to a more appropriate conclusion. While I don't write out

every word of every sermon these days, the mental discipline gained from writing years ago continues to be a great benefit.

Word Crafting: Our Calling

One of the great communicators of the 20th century was statesman, author and wartime leader, Winston Churchill. Noted for his eloquence, Churchill never seemed to be at a loss for words. Whether he was speaking to Parliament from a prepared text or addressing the troops extemporaneously, he seemed in command of every situation and master of every word.

After one especially rousing speech, someone asked the great communicator how he could be so effective when speaking without preparation. To that he responded, "Practice." Churchill had honed his craft in private, and his unmatched eloquence inspired a nation and saved the world.

Is the preacher's task any less important than Churchill's? Is the salvation of the lost and the maturation of the saints less demanding? Dare we wing it? Let's get to work crafting our words, saying what we mean and meaning what we say. ■

Top Shelf (continued from page 25)

much more related to experiences that are profound and prolonged."

This book is not easy reading, but it makes a significant contribution to the current theological debate about perseverance and eternal security. Some of the articles are more valuable than others.

Ashby presents a capable defense of the views of James Arminius. He points out that many writers today often ignore or misrepresent his views. The time has come to seriously consider the teachings of this important Reformed theologian. Ashby has carefully examined the important issue of apostasy, and his conclusions are valid. His discussion would have been even more helpful if he had included a discussion of sins other than apostasy in the lives of believers and how those sins may affect a believer's relationship with God.

This book makes a significant contribution to an issue important to Free Will Baptists. It is not the final word, but it is worthy of serious analysis and consideration. ■

THE TOGETHER WAY

September 2002

Receipts:			Year To Date	Year To Date	Year To Date	
State	Designated	CO-OP	Total	Designated	CO-OP	Total
Alabama	\$ 218.63	\$.00	\$ 218.63	\$ 3,590.53	\$ 1,715.09	\$ 5,305.62
Arizona	.00	.00	.00	.00	206.10	206.10
Arkansas	8,116.53	18,144.75	26,261.28	101,342.16	153,388.79	254,730.95
California	.00	1,034.35	1,034.35	.00	9,417.95	9,417.95
Colorado	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00
Delaware	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00
Florida	118.80	.00	118.80	527.36	5,670.00	6,197.36
Georgia	21,369.22	1,245.95	22,615.17	279,503.60	14,249.25	293,752.85
Hawaii	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00
Idaho	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00
Illinois	20,491.77	3,692.86	24,184.63	109,316.19	18,058.03	127,374.22
Indiana	150.00	.00	150.00	17,571.33	1,846.63	19,417.96
Iowa	.00	.00	.00	.00	2,058.78	2,058.78
Kansas	.00	.00	.00	26.55	504.53	531.08
Kentucky	760.85	1,693.95	2,454.80	2,165.36	9,964.48	12,129.84
Louisiana	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00
Maryland	.00	.00	.00	.00	131.25	131.25
Michigan	19,522.11	1,639.95	21,162.06	167,869.10	22,860.21	190,729.31
Mississippi	8,615.98	500.62	9,116.60	95,533.82	5,509.90	101,043.72
Missouri	36,094.10	13,192.25	49,286.35	381,209.05	140,647.57	521,856.62
Montana	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00
Nebraska	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00
New Jersey	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00
New Mexico	673.33	16.67	690.00	5,859.51	383.55	6,243.06
North Carolina	2,490.00	3,962.50	6,452.50	13,680.87	28,739.55	42,420.42
Ohio	10,743.34	1,376.01	12,119.35	121,443.62	23,202.91	144,646.53
Oklahoma	60,775.23	12,847.99	73,623.22	474,766.83	107,127.36	581,894.19
South Carolina	36,684.58	39.20	36,723.78	336,843.23	462.53	337,305.76
South Dakota	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00
Tennessee	2,865.59	482.92	3,348.51	122,542.90	12,817.07	135,359.97
Texas	8,284.26	311.14	8,595.40	90,780.80	3,403.90	94,184.70
Virginia	.00	17.00	17.00	2,928.82	675.15	3,603.97
Virgin Islands	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00
West Virginia	.00	.00	.00	12,811.41	878.64	13,690.05
Wisconsin	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00
Canada	508.39	12.00	520.39	5,494.15	104.88	5,599.03
Northwest Association	1,179.42	.00	1,179.42	1,179.42	.00	1,179.42
Northeast Association	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00
Other	.00	.07	.07	.00	(.20)	(.20)
Totals	\$ 239,662.13	\$ 60,210.18	\$ 299,872.31	\$ 2,346,986.61	\$564,023.90	\$ 2,911,010.51

Disbursements:

Executive Office	\$ 1,478.06	\$ 27,094.56	\$ 28,572.62	\$ 16,923.36	\$253,810.85	\$ 270,734.21
Foreign Missions	138,405.39	7,616.58	146,021.97	1,365,010.09	71,348.96	1,436,359.05
FWBBC	15,965.54	7,616.58	23,582.12	219,182.73	71,348.96	290,531.69
Home Missions	70,968.72	5,960.79	76,929.51	648,301.77	55,838.37	704,140.14
Retirement & Insurance	115.00	4,636.17	4,751.17	3,488.79	43,429.88	46,918.67
Master's Men	685.41	4,636.17	5,321.58	4,607.96	43,429.88	48,037.84
Com. for Theo. Integrity	516.46	165.60	682.06	1,179.94	1,551.05	2,730.99
FWB Foundation	371.65	1,986.93	2,358.58	3,180.71	18,612.80	21,793.51
Historical Commission	16.46	165.60	182.06	503.40	1,551.05	2,054.45
Music Commission	1.46	165.60	167.06	241.75	1,551.05	1,792.80
Media Commission	126.46	165.60	292.06	1,003.30	1,551.05	2,554.35
Hillsdale FWB College	1,961.39	.00	1,961.39	20,084.00	.00	20,084.00
Other	9,050.13	.00	9,050.13	63,278.81	.00	63,278.81
Totals	\$ 239,662.13	\$ 60,210.18	\$ 299,872.31	\$ 2,346,986.61	\$564,023.90	\$ 2,911,010.51



Thomas Marberry

Four Views on Eternal Security

J. Matthew Pinson, ed.

(Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2002, 302 pp., paperback, \$14.99).

This volume is a theological debate in written form on the issue of perseverance. It presents four views on the issue of eternal security. They are: Classical Calvinism, Moderate Calvinism, Reformed Arminianism and Wesleyan Arminianism. These are not the only four possible positions on this issue, but they are the four most widely held views. J. Matthew Pinson, president of Free Will Baptist College, serves as editor of the volume.

Michael S. Horton of Westminster Theological Seminary presents the classical Calvinistic position on the security of the believer. He begins by summarizing and rejecting the moderate Calvinist and Arminian positions on the issue of perseverance. He then develops the Calvinist position using the paradigm of the covenant.

He argues that the Bible teaches that there are three covenants—the covenant of redemption, the covenant of works and the covenant of grace. In his view, the passages normally used to defend the doctrine of eternal security belong to the covenant of redemption. They emphasize that God has chosen from all eternity those who are to be redeemed, and they can never lose their salvation.

People are generally divided into two categories, the saved and the lost. According to Horton, there is a third category, those people who are in the covenant but who are not personally united with Jesus Christ through living faith. It is to those people, and not to true believers, that the warning passages in the New Testament are directed.

Norman L. Geisler of Southern Evangelical Seminary presents the moderate Calvinist position. He distinguishes his view from those held by the strong Calvinists and the Arminians. He argues that the fall did not erase the image of God in man; it only

effaced it. Therefore, man has the ability to accept or reject the message of salvation. In his view, Christ died for all men, but the application of His atonement is limited to those who believe.

He defends his position on eternal security by citing 27 biblical passages that teach, according to his interpretation, that salvation can never be lost. Near the close of his article he responds briefly to passages such as the warning passages in Hebrews that warn the believers not to abandon their faith. He asserts that some New Testament passages teach that believers can lose their rewards but not their salvation.

Stephen Ashby, who recently accepted a teaching position at Hillsdale FWB College, presents the case for Reformed Arminianism. As Ashby correctly notes, there are various forms of Arminianism. The most common form today is Wesleyanism which is based more on the teachings of John Wesley than on the teachings of Arminius. Ashby argues for a return to the original teachings of Arminius. He posits that Arminius himself offers a more satisfactory solution to the problem of perseverance than do either Calvinism or the Wesleyan form of Arminianism.

Ashby points out that Arminius agreed with Calvin and other protestant reformers on several points. Arminius accepted total depravity and the penal satisfaction theory of the atonement. Ashby soon comes to the key difference between Arminius and Calvin, the issue of salvation.

In Calvin's view, the Bible teaches unconditional election. This means that God has, by His free and sovereign choice, determined from all eternity who will be saved and who will be lost. Arminius asserted that salvation is by faith and open to all. Ashby presents a series of scripture passages teaching that Christ died for all, and that all can be saved.

Ashby also presents the Arminian

position on perseverance. He points out that salvation is conditional both before one becomes a Christian and after one becomes a Christian. Believing is a continuing process, not a momentary act as Calvinists often assert. According to Ashby, "those who continue believing cannot be plucked from God's hand," but one can return to a spiritually dead state through apostasy.

The final contributor to this theological debate is J. Steven Harper from Asbury Theological Seminary. Harper is a leading expert in the study of John Wesley, and he examines in a thoughtful manner Wesley's contribution to this discussion. He begins by presenting an overview of Wesley's theological method. He argues, quite correctly, that Wesley's doctrine of perseverance should not be studied in isolation from his other doctrinal positions.

Wesley gave great emphasis to the grace of God in salvation. The fall greatly affected mankind, but God "intervened and prevented a Fall so complete and tragic that people totally lost the natural and political dimensions of the image." Man retains enough of the image of God to genuinely respond to God's grace and to be held accountable for his actions.

According to this author, "Wesley held that Christ died for sin in our place. Christ died in part as a means of satisfying God's demand for justice (that sin be atoned for) and also to accomplish what we could never do by ourselves." God's grace is resistible, and the fact that God's grace can be resisted does not undermine God's sovereignty (as Calvinists often argue).

Wesley dealt extensively with the question of sin committed after conversion. Unconfessed sin can lead to the loss of one's salvation. This usually does not happen quickly. As Horton notes, "The loss of salvation is

(continued on page 24)

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- Columns are listed in chronological order.
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 Holidays**



**from our
 place to yours.**

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Working Together, Kenneth W. Akers	August, 24
A Good Salesman!, Kenneth Akers	December, 18

Randall House

Why Do We Need a Teaching Organization?, Alton Loveless	January, 24
Sunday School Promotion and Publicity, Alton Loveless	March, 23
Get This Book!, Larry Hampton	May, 22
Looking Back, Alton Loveless	July, 22
The Family-Friendly Sunday School, Keith Fletcher	September, 25
Building on the Past, Looking to the Future, Ron Hunter	November, 25

Retirement

Volunteering in Retirement, D. Ray Lewis	February, 22
Tax News You Can Use . . . Well, Maybe, William Evans	April, 24
Planning for Your Retirement, D. Ray Lewis	June, 23
\$101,986.21 in Unclaimed Funds, D. Ray Lewis	August, 22
What Happens at the End?, William Evans	October, 21
Investing for Retirement . . . In Times Like These, William Evans	December, 20

WNAC

"You Can Join Right Now," Debe Taylor	February, 25
Partnering Together, Marjorie Workman	April, 23
2003 WNAC Creative Arts Contest	June, 22
WNAC 12th National Retreat Ridgecrest	August, 21
If You Are Willing . . . You Can, Marjorie Workman	October, 23
Seven Tips for Successful Meetings, Marjorie Workman	December, 19

Newsfront

National Ministries

Akers to Lead Master's Men	February, 17	Free Will Baptist Bible College Graduates 33	August, 19
Bible College Accreditation Reaffirmed	September, 20	FWBBC Inaugurates Fifth College President	December, 11
Bible College Enrolls 322 for Fall Semester	November, 18	FWBBC Receives \$100,000 Bequest	June, 18
Bible College Freshmen Elect Officers	December, 14	FWBBC Registers 242 at Welcome Days	February, 17
Bible College Hires Advancement Director	August, 19	FWBBC Seeks Stewardship Director	June, 18
Bible College Hires New Recruitment Director	December, 13	FWBBC Students Approved for Summer Service	March, 17
Bible College Names Outstanding Students	January, 19	FWBBC Students Elect New Officers	June, 19
Bible College Welcomes 260 for Welcome Days	June, 17	Leadership Conference Meets in Nashville	February, 18
Bible Conference Service to Honor Dr. Tom Malone	March, 16	Leadership Conference Set for December	November, 16
Board Names Ron Hunter General Director	February, 16	Lewis, Yandell Join Randall House Staff	November, 16
Choir Schedule and Worship Book Announced	April, 20; May, 19	National Convention Announces College Intern Program	February, 15
Convention Orchestra Seeks Instrumentalists	April, 20; May, 19; June, 18	Nominating Committee Announces Nominees	April, 18
Dan Merkh, Missionary Church Planter, Dies	June, 16	Nominating Committee Requests Nominees	October, 19
Dr. L. C. Johnson, First Bible College President, Dies	September, 17	Tom Dooley Resigns, Returns to Pastorate	February, 17
Eric Thomsen Named Randall House Marketing Manager	September, 18	2002 Yearbooks Available	May, 17
Executive Committee Recommends Keith Burden	February, 15	Worthington Book of Letters Planned	April, 19; May, 18
Florida Steering Committee Meets	October, 19		

Ministers

Amburgey, John	November, 17	Gann, Gerald	December, 15	Pickle, Darrell	October, 19
Beasley, Wilburn	June, 16	Grizzle, Joe	June, 19	Russell, John Wesley	November, 19
Bennett, Roger	March, 18	Hames, Claudie	March, 18	Sparks, Delmar	November, 19
Campbell, Glynn	February, 16	Hollifield, Milton A.	December, 15	Thompson, Tim	December, 13
Coffman, Lawnie	March, 16	Lee, George C.	November, 19	Young, Carl	March, 19
Creech, Mike	May, 17	Merkh, Dan	June, 16		
Dilda, Sigbee	December, 13	Newman, Clarence	August, 18		

Laity

Harrell, Sadie	April, 19
Powelka, Ashlee	May, 17
Tabb, Billy	June, 17

Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men.



Churches

California		
Liberty FWB Church, Cottonwood, CA	July, 19	
Arkansas		
First FWB Church, Jonesboro, AR	Dec., 14	
Mississippi		
Eggville FWB Church, Tupelo, MS	Dec., 15	
Farm Grove FWB Church, Mantachie, MS	Oct., 18	
Missouri		
First FWB Church, Mountain Grove, MO	Dec., 12	
First FWB Church, O'Fallon, MO	Nov. 15	
North Carolina		
Haven FWB Church, Raleigh, NC	Dec., 12	
Oklahoma		
Blue Bell FWB Church, Sapulpa, OK	July, 19	
First FWB Church, Norman, OK	June, 19	
Virginia		
First FWB Church, Bristol, VA	Oct., 19	
First FWB Church, Richmond, VA	July, 20	

States

Arkansas	April, 19; November, 17	Michigan	September, 20	Oklahoma	January, 18
Arizona	July, 20	Missouri	September, 18	South Carolina	May, 19
Florida	August, 18; September, 19	Mississippi	January, 19	Tennessee	January, 18
Georgia	June, 17	New Mexico	July, 20	Texas	September, 19
Illinois	June, 18	North Carolina	September, 18	West Virginia	September, 20
Kentucky	October, 19	Ohio	September, 19		

Other

California Christian College Enrolls 83	November, 18
Canada Honors Worthington Twins	November, 17
CCC Spring Enrollment Up	April, 20
Harvest Ministries Opens Emergency Shelter	May, 18
Hillsdale Breaks Ground	February, 16
Hillsdale Enrollment Climbs to 381	November, 18
Papers Solicited for Theological Symposium	July, 20
Southeastern College Sets Special Events	April, 20
Southeastern Enrollment Reaches 156	November, 18
Theology Symposium Meets at Hillsdale College	January, 19
Theology Symposium to Meet	October, 18
2002 State Association Meetings	February, 20



Behold, I bring you tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people.

For unto you is born this day in the city of David

a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord.



Merry Christmas

from all of us in the
Executive Office

<i>Keith Burden</i>	Executive Secretary
<i>Melvin Worthington</i> ..	Executive Secretary Emeritus
<i>Jack Williams</i>	Editor
<i>Melody Hood</i>	Bookkeeper
<i>Dari Goodfellow</i>	Yearbook Coordinator, Convention Registration Coordinator
<i>Angie Williams</i>	Circulation Manager, Receptionist
<i>Marilyn Pritchard</i>	Editorial Assistant
<i>Altha Keifer</i>	Office Assistant



Jack Williams

The Three Christmas Preachers

Henry, Charlie and Fred were three Free Will Baptist preachers loose in the city of Nashville, Tennessee, on Christmas Eve. I would like to say that they were three wise men from the East following a star. Unfortunately, only two were from back East—one from North Carolina, the other from Norfolk. They saw no stars that night.

The three preachers were poor, however. How poor, you ask? Poor enough that they all lived in a Nashville public housing complex. They were also students at Free Will Baptist Bible College, which helps explain why they were poor. All three were married, further amplifying their poorness.

Snow covered the streets of Nashville. The three had places to go but no money to get there, so they were stranded on a cold, snowy Christmas Eve. The other students had gone home, leaving Henry, Charlie and Fred to sing the blues.

Did I mention that the three preachers were poor? So poor, in fact, that neither one had a Christmas tree in his apartment. A tree cost too much with tuition due two weeks later.

Since Henry had the most reliable bad car among the three, he invited Charlie and Fred to ride in the snow after 8:00 p.m. and look for a cheap Christmas tree. That sounded better than explaining again to their wives why they were poor and a long ways from home and friends.

Traffic was light and the three preachers browsed windy downtown lots where surly men in overcoats guarded unsold Christmas trees. Charlie and Fred were flat broke. Henry, somewhat wiser than his two friends, had squirreled away a few bucks, and was the man in charge of the great tree hunt.

By 9:30 p.m., the ministerial trio had

been shown the street by several of Nashville's finest tree merchants. Undaunted by such rejection at the hand of the Egyptians and still giddy from a night out on the town without having to parse Greek verbs for class the next day, the threesome paused at a ragged, last chance lot on lower Broadway.

They agreed that the time was right to strike a bargain for a tree. In a few hours, it would be Christmas morning, and all those unsold trees would be tossed in a dumpster.

Henry stopped the car and the three stepped forth, eager to demonstrate the art of Christmas tree negotiations. The cold attendant did his best to act unimpressed. Maybe it was the lateness of the hour or their shabby dress. Or maybe they wore invisible signs that told tree sellers, "We're preachers in Bible college and we're poor."

Henry opened the negotiations after checking the local trees. They had been picked over, left behind and looked exactly like what they were—scraggly trees that nobody wanted. Henry said some of that to the tree seller who ignored him. He somehow knew that Henry needed a tree and better not go home empty-handed.

The seller agreed to cut a deal and let Henry have his choice of any tree on the lot for a dollar a foot. Henry balked, then explained why selling a tree at 50¢ per foot was better than tossing it in the dumpster Christmas morning and getting nothing. Charlie and Fred sagely nodded their agreement.

The lower Broadway tree man stood his ground at a dollar a foot. Perhaps his wife had burned the Christmas turkey. Henry waxed eloquent pleading his case for a 50-cent per foot tree, mentioning the late hour and the paucity of other paying customers in the immediate area. The tree man was quite possi-

bly a distant relative of King Herod, for he tried to hornswaggle the three poor students. Henry did not leave his gifts. He did return home by another route and thus was somewhat biblical.

No sale. The three poor preachers drove away in the snow, back to their treeless public housing. They did return with Christmas cheer and a car full of laughter. They had shopped in the snow for three hours, negotiated with Philistines and Hittites, spent not one dollar and considered it a rollicking success.

They learned that there's more to Christmas than a tree. The fearless hunt and the good intentions can be just as rewarding and far more economical. While their wives were bored with their tale of King Herod's relatives on lower Broadway and the joy of sliding Henry's car sideways down West End Avenue, the three poor preachers considered themselves rich beyond measure.

What happened to the three preachers? They all graduated from FWBBC. Henry the tough negotiator is now Pastor Henry Hughes at Sheraton Park FWB Church in Greensboro, North Carolina. Charlie Potter, the Charlie in the threesome, dropped off the radar a few years back and was at last count somewhere in California . . . probably sharpening his tree-purchasing skills.

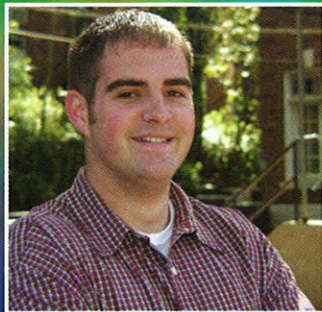
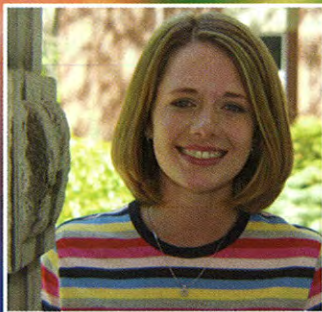
And Fred? I misspoke about Fred. That was me in the car with Henry and Charlie. I was trying to be modest and didn't want to mention my name until now. If you're angry about being deceived, blame Henry Hughes. It was his idea to go out in the snow on Christmas Eve. Did I mention that we were really poor and there was no room at the inn? ■

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■ Become a regular monthly supporter of FWBBC by the bank draft system or some other method. ■ Put the college in your church's budget. ■ Have a special College Day to emphasize the ministry of FWBBC and receive a special offering for the school.



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