

CONTACT

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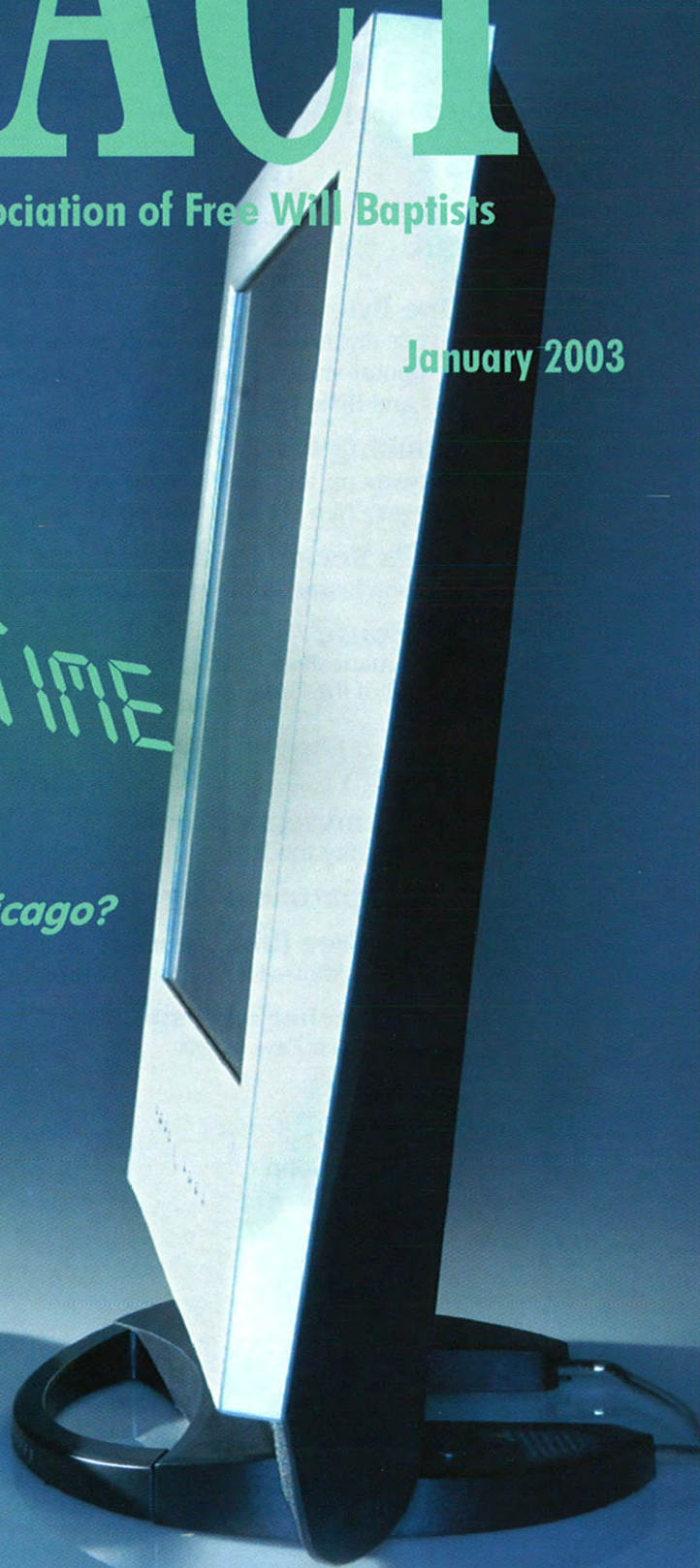
January 2003

ONE BYTE AT A TIME

Left Holding the Bag
Climbing Pike's Peak

Howdy, I'm Gowdy . . . *from Chicago?*

Swallowing a Few Gnats



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JANUARY 2003

VOLUME 50, NO. 1

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Keith Burden

Left Holding the Bag

Friday afternoon, July 1999. Our family flew into Atlanta for the Free Will Baptist national convention. We brought with us the maximum pieces of luggage allowed by the airline—three each. In addition, each of us had carry-on items.

We made our way to the baggage claim area and waited. The carousel started and we retrieved our bags—that is, all but one. I had brought my golf clubs on faith, hoping for a nine-hole window some afternoon. The clubs were considered oversized baggage, so we hurried to a different area to claim them.

After showing our claim checks to the security officer, we exited to the ground transportation area and called for a shuttle. The driver loaded our amazing mountain of luggage and we headed downtown. Two women in town for another convention rode in the van with us.

Did You Forget Something?

We had been on the road about 10 minutes when my wife turned to me and asked a question in a tone that only a wife could ask, “You *did* get the white canvas bag didn’t you?” I admitted that I couldn’t remember.

I apologized my way to the back of the van past the two women who were going to another convention. With my head buried in the luggage pile and my feet sticking up like flags, I rummaged through the suitcases, garment bags and boxes.

My heart sank as I announced, “It’s not here!” In my haste to gather our personal belongings, I had set the canvas bag aside and failed to pick it up when we left.

That white canvas bag was our most precious piece of cargo. It contained our prescription medications. While I might have managed without my medicine, my wife couldn’t afford to miss a single dose. I informed the driver that I *must* return to the airport.

He agreed to do that, but only *after* he delivered the other passengers.

The driver assured me that the bag would be there when we returned. I didn’t believe him for a minute. I had flown into too many airports to be that naïve.

Hurry Up and Wait

A trip that would normally take 20 minutes took 60 in rush hour traffic. As we crawled along the crowded interstate, I thought, “I’ll never find that bag. Someone will pick it up and carry it off. How will we ever find a doctor this late on Friday afternoon who is willing to write multiple prescriptions for two out-of-state people?”

The van finally pulled into the arrival section at the terminal. I asked the driver to wait as I rushed to the baggage claim area. I went immediately to the lost and found counter in the security office. The attendant was dealing with an angry passenger whose luggage failed to arrive when he did.

After standing impatiently in line for what seemed like a young eternity, I turned in frustration and peered out through the window into the baggage claim area. I couldn’t believe my eyes. There on the floor between carousels seven and eight sat our white canvas bag!

I ran out of the security office, grabbed up the bag, examined the contents and confirmed that all the medication was there. After breathing a prayer of thanksgiving, I returned to the van and made the joyful trip back to the hotel. My wife, waiting and praying in the lobby, was delighted that I had not returned empty-handed.

Two Valuable Lessons

First, too often we assume the worst about others. I expected someone in the Atlanta airport to take advantage of my carelessness. They didn’t. Who

would have thought that an unclaimed, unidentified bag could sit unnoticed for two hours in the Atlanta airport? Just goes to show that there *are* still some honest people in the world.

Unfortunately, Christians aren’t exempt from this tendency to assume the worst in others. We’re frequently inclined to believe that bad report about a brother or sister in Christ when, in reality, we ought to give them the benefit of the doubt. Fact is, there *are* still a lot of good people in the church. Perhaps our time would be better spent looking for and praising the good in others instead of being suspicious and critical of them.

Second, we need to guard against taking too much for granted. I assumed my wife had picked up the white canvas bag—she assumed I had taken it. Our assumptions could have been disastrous.

Familiar Adage

“Familiarity breeds contempt!” That old adage is especially applicable to those of us who enjoy a vital, growing relationship with God, the support of a loving family, the fellowship of a local church, the privilege of living in a free country, the security of steady employment and the benefit of good health.

Regrettably, we take these things for granted and do not have a full appreciation for them until they are gone. By the way, when was the last time you paused to thank God for His blessings?

We left Atlanta after the convention and made *sure* we had the white canvas carry-on with us. That was one time I was thankful to be left holding the bag! ■

Rightly Dividing
the Word of Truth—A
review of computer study
programs that help busy
pastors and Bible students . . .



The computer represents the most significant change to our modern society since the Industrial Revolution. It affects the way we do most everything from routine tasks to complicated processes. God provided a tool that puts more information at our fingertips than man

has ever known.

For many of us (those 40 and older, that is), this has been a process of learning new ways to do tasks we have been doing all our ministries. For some, this process has not been easy or welcomed. A fellow preacher said recently that he was entering the

computer age “kicking and screaming.” Sound familiar?

I learned, however, that I can generally accomplish more in less time by using new tools. I believe that this represents good stewardship, and encourage you to do likewise.

Perhaps the most useful software tool

for the preacher is the Bible program. In the last 10 years, Bible programs have become more useful. My first program was on a 5¼" floppy diskette (That is ancient in computer age). It was basically a Bible search program. Today's Bible programs have much more to offer.

While we can not explore all of them, I want to discuss a few and then focus on two which I feel to be the most useful. I may not discuss the one with which you are familiar, but please understand that Bible programs have become too numerous to discuss in a brief review.

Criteria

Here are four criteria to consider when evaluating any Bible program for purchase and use.

Purpose

First, what do you want it to do for you? Some programs are tailored for special areas, and then there are those designed to be the "all-in-one" program.

Cost

Second, how much can you spend? I understand that you want to spend as little as possible, but sometimes that is not the best way to decide. My advice would be to save your money and buy a program that will do what you want it to do.

All too often, we buy something we consider a deal, only to discover that it is much too limited or that it requires several upgrades (at a price, of course). In the long run, you spend far more than expected.

Congenial

Third, how "user-friendly" is it? If you are like me, I want to do as much as possible without a great deal of hassle. Some programs are rather cumbersome. Even if you are a computer genius, the time spent in doing some tasks is counter-productive.

Technical Support

Fourth, can it be supported? If you have trouble with the program, can you get technical support? Will the company stand behind it? Are they easy to contact? Can you get updates without spending as much as you would for a new program?

Programs

Now, let's look at some of the programs out there.

Ages Digital Library

First, let me recommend one that gives you a great deal of material for the least amount of money—the *Ages Digital Library* by Ages Software.

This includes *The Master Christian Library* (over 500 references), *The Spurgeon Collection* (virtually everything Spurgeon wrote or that was written about him), *The Pulpit Commentary*, *The Expositor's Bible*, and a large number of other sets and collections at reasonable prices. It uses the *Acrobat Reader* by Adobe to display and search, which is included on each CD.

For the money, this is probably the best buy, but it does have disadvantages. The *Acrobat Reader* is not as user friendly as some other document readers. Since the material is scanned and then converted to text to be read, the words are not always spelled correctly. The text has been edited and continues to be updated, but sometimes it is necessary to "interpret" what is being said. All in all, however, I recommend this very useful tool. The amount of material available on each CD for a nominal price makes this well worth considering.

QuickVerse

Next, let's look at *QuickVerse* by Parson's Software. This one has been available for a long time and has gone through several transitions. In its present form, it is a collection of Bible search tools, commentaries, study products and resources. It has add-on features and books that can be unlocked. It is user-friendly and, for the average user, quite adequate. However, it does not have the same capabilities as other products.

This program is available in different versions, which allows you to buy part or all of the total program available depending on your needs. The price is competitive and support seems to be good.

The two products where I want to spend the most time are *Logos Bible Software Series X* by Logos Research Systems and *BibleWorks* by Bible Works. I have found these to be the

most useful and complete. Each has advantages and disadvantages.

BibleWorks

BibleWorks is designed to be used as a morphology (the study of the forms and structure of a language) program. It is probably the most powerful and user-friendly program available for original language study. Whether one is preparing sermons or lessons, meticulously exegeting the original text, or doing personal in-depth study, *BibleWorks* is one of the best tools available.

BibleWorks tightly integrates its databases with the most powerful morphology and analysis tools. It includes 90 Bible translations in 28 languages, nine original language texts with seven morphology databases, six Greek lexicons and dictionaries, four Hebrew lexicons and dictionaries; plus 11 practical reference works (including the *International Standard Bible Encyclopedia*).

It comes with three user interfaces. The Beginner Mode is designed to make it easy for novice users to begin using *BibleWorks* right out of the box. The Standard Mode and Power User Mode provide interfaces to allow more advanced users to perform more powerful and streamlined searches. The search engines progress from the simple to the more complex. Searches can be conducted on forms, roots or even vowel points.

The most useful part of this program is that placing the mouse over a word in the Bible text immediately brings up its definition and usage in a lower window. If you place the cursor over a word in the Greek or Hebrew text, the lexicon of your choice shows the definition, usage and syntax. If the cursor is placed in the English text, it shows *Strong's* definitions along with the syntax. If you wish to compare the different lexicons, there is a window designed just for that purpose.

The user is also able to customize the program. In just a few moments, I am able to do what literally used to take hours. I can save a great deal of time while doing the job better.

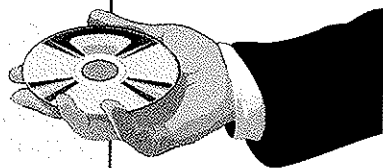
Technical support is readily available, and the cost is reasonable when one considers what is included. The program provides for immediate updates from the website so that the user always has the latest version available.

This is the program I have used for

Websites for information and resources:

ageslibrary.com
onlinebible.com
bibleworks.com
logos.com
biblesoft.com
quickverse.com
servehim.com
scripturetruth.com
amazon.com
christianbooks.com
bible.crosswalk.com
wordsearchbible.com
deaconsil.com
ccel.org
christianet.com
biblebb.com

(The list could go on for many more.)



years through three upgrades. It has helped me through word studies and exegesis to build many sermons. I would not be without it.

Logos Bible Software Series X

Next, the *Logos Bible Software Series X* needs to be considered. This is a masterfully constructed program with a wide range of resources.

This is probably the most complete Bible software program available. It is not as specialized as *BibleWorks* and is not designed to do what *BibleWorks* will. It is designed to provide a much wider resource library with up-to-date reference titles from top publishers.

Limited space does not permit a listing of all the tools available, but they include Bible versions; Greek, Hebrew and Latin texts; lexicons; Bible and language dictionaries; commentaries; Bible outline resources; small group Bible study resources; Home School resources; original language grammars; sermon resources; and the list goes on.

The search engine allows one to search for everything related to a passage, a verse, a topic or a word. Though not as easy to use as *BibleWorks*, the original language study tool in the Scholar's edition is extremely good and useful.

I do not mean to imply that the program is not user-friendly. Overall, it is user-friendly. With its pop up windows and integrated searches, it is well designed. For my use, it's a bit

more cumbersome than *BibleWorks* in studying the original language.

Logos Bible Software Series X comes in several versions with content targeted for various types of users. The Christian Home Library is the basic version for home users. Other versions include the Bible Study Library, the Original Language Library, the Pastor's Library and the Scholar's Library. Each is more complete and includes more resources. The Scholar's Library contains more than \$5,000 worth of books if bought in hard copy in the retail market.

Then there is a myriad of resources linked to the program, including Libronix. Libronix makes many books and collections available for purchase and unlocking. Numerous publishers make their books available in the Libronix Digital Library System format. This makes the purchase of new books convenient.

If you have the problem I do, this helps with shelf space as well. I have filled the shelves in my library. Having new books and sets on CD makes the material available but takes up far less room.

Libronix technical support is outstanding. Live updates and downloads are available at their website.

The cost is reasonable. If you go with the Scholar's Library or the Pastor's Library, it is not cheap, but you certainly get your money's worth. You will spend one-tenth what the books would cost, plus you'll get the convenience of a useful set of research tools.

Since acquiring this program, I have become quite attached to it. It has been a great help and, I believe, will be even more so as the years go by. I highly recommend it.

Both *BibleWorks* and *Logos* have video demonstrations that come with the program. *BibleWorks* has a video for just about every procedure on the Supplemental CD. Libronix also has a CD available with detailed demonstrations. [Note: The Morris Proctor training CD for *Logos* is a separate purchase.]

The best part is that all this information can be stored and viewed on your

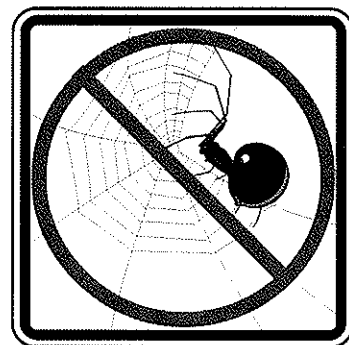
computer. If you have a laptop, you can literally carry hundreds of books with you when you travel. For the busy preacher, this is an invaluable time saver.

The Last Byte

Many other programs are available. Some of them are on the Internet and are free (the preacher's favorite four-letter word). I will list websites for the programs mentioned as well as for several others. I will also include sites that provide links to more study resources than a man can use. If you have a good connection to the Internet, I encourage you to use it for the Lord.

Let me also give you this tip. When purchasing, check with Amazon, Scripture Truth or Christian Book Distributors to make sure you get the best prices. We obviously do not want to spend more than is necessary.

"Kicking and screaming" or not, please jump into the computer age. Consider the tools God has made available to the church in this age of



technology. Honest, the World Wide Web does not have a Black Widow spider lurking in the corner waiting to attack as soon as you log on. The computer will not bite, and you will come to greatly enjoy God's provision. ■



ABOUT THE WRITER: Dr. Dave Nobles pastors Bethel Free Will Baptist Church in Woodbridge, Virginia.

Look around at your fellow travelers; the journey is not as tough as it seems!

Climbing Pike's Peak

By Jim Mertz



One of the great blessings about pastoring Harvest Free Will Baptist Church in Colorado Springs is that the beautiful Rocky Mountains and the magnificent Pike's Peak are right in my back yard!

When Zebulon Pike discovered what became known as Pike's Peak, he was quoted as saying, "There is no way that any man will be able to make it to the top." He was wrong. Man did eventually make it to the top and now travelers and tourists can walk up, climb up, ride a train up or drive their cars up to the 14,110-foot summit.

Dare the Difficult

My first year in Colorado Springs, the temptation was too great to pass up. I had to make an attempt at climbing the 13-mile walking trail to the top of Pike's Peak. It begins at a level of 7,000 feet at the trail head and ascends strenuously to over 14,000 feet.

At a good walking pace, it may take eight hours to make the trip. At the summit, the temperature is about 30° less than the starting point and the oxygen is cut in half, but the panoramic views are breathtaking all along the way. The gain

is definitely worth the pain.

When I turned 50 a couple of years ago, we organized a Pike's Peak climb as a men's outing from our church. I had to prove to myself and others that even at 50, I still had it in me. It was a time of fellowship and blessing that I shall never forget.

Half-way Up

Eight of us attempted the ascent. After about seven miles, we stopped at the small, rustic campground to rest, eat a bite of lunch and enjoy a time of worship. That was the half-way point.

There were six miles to go, but they were six "Pike's Peak" miles. It is three miles to where the tree line disappears. The remainder of the mountain is solid granite, and the only direction is straight up.

After reaching that point with three miles to go, there is a stopping point complete with an A-frame building for anyone who wants to call it quits for the day and plop their sleeping bag inside to sleep. We all sat down there and looked miles away to the city we had left behind hours ago. I was exhausted, gasping for more air, asking myself, *Why would anyone do*

this to themselves? and Will I survive to the summit?

Over the Top

Then I heard two men rumbling and stumbling up the trail near us. When they came closer, I saw two of the oldest and boniest men I had ever seen. It seemed unbelievable that those men, attired in small running outfits, could be just scooting along the trail. They were stepping slowly and methodically, and at that rate they must have started yesterday to get so far.

One of them greeted a vivacious young lady at the rest stop and she replied, "Wow, you're doing great, old man! But you seem too old to be out doing this. Are you walking by yourself?"

I couldn't help but stare and listen as I continued to try to psyche myself up for the remainder of the trip. Then the old man said, "No, I'm not as old as my brother, and we're doing fine. I'm only 75 and he is 77!"

Suddenly, a renewed exuberance hit me, and I felt a surge of tremendous motivation and power. I got to my feet, did a few jumping jacks and stretches, and quickly realized that as difficult as the

(continued on page 11)

God's Recipe For: Revival

By Aaron R. Baldrige

Open: Be open to God's leading.

Break: Have a broken and contrite heart.

Combine: Stand united with brothers and sisters in Christ.

Serves: All who will come.

I have the privilege of working with children and students as a career. In my ministry at Turner's Chapel FWB Church in Georgia, I have seen God do some wonderful things among our students. Sure, youth ministry has its share of games, concerts, trips and more. All that is part of youth ministry, but it isn't the greatest part.

Altars filled with young people getting their hearts right with the Lord—that's the greatest part of student ministry. I've attended numerous camps, rallies and student conferences at local, state and national levels. Each time an opportunity has been offered to respond to the messages that have been preached, the altars flooded with young people.

In personal one-on-one ministry, students have also responded to the gospel. Today's children and teens are open, perhaps more than at any other time in our nation's history, to hear and receive the Good News.

Given Great Opportunity

Our young people have a great hunger for the Lord. If there was ever a time when our nation needs to hear the message of the Good News, it is now. We have been handed a prime opportunity by the Lord, and it is imperative that we take advantage of the new doors that have opened to us.

But, we can't walk through those doors if our own hearts are not right

with the Lord. Do we as adults have that same burning hunger for the Lord? Far too many adults in our churches have grown complacent. Too many of our churches are dying because of this complacency and apathy.

I believe the future is bright for Free Will Baptists. I believe we stand on the threshold of a great moving of God among our people. I want to be part of ushering that in. What about you?

Learning the Lesson

There is a lesson we can learn from our students. Why does it seem that God's Spirit moves more freely among young people? The answer contains three characteristics our young people exemplify that adults need to take note of and put into practice.

Students are open

Students often come with great openness to what God wants for them. He wants a personal relationship with all of us. He wants us to serve Him with the gifts and abilities He has given to us.

Students, in spite of what they project to parents, realize that they don't know everything and they are eager to learn. Adults need to be reminded that in spite of our years, we don't know everything either. We need to plead that hunger for God and to be totally open to His leading and teaching. When God speaks, we need to listen and obey.

Students are broken

In our human capacity, we think brokenness is a bad thing. But God loves broken things. In fact, broken things are what He uses best. David tells us in Psalm 51 that God will not despise a broken spirit and a contrite heart. That has not changed over the past several thousand years.

Our young people are experiencing a great moving of God because they are broken before Him. When the Holy Spirit convicts them of sin or wrongdoing, they confess their sin and get their hearts right with the Lord.

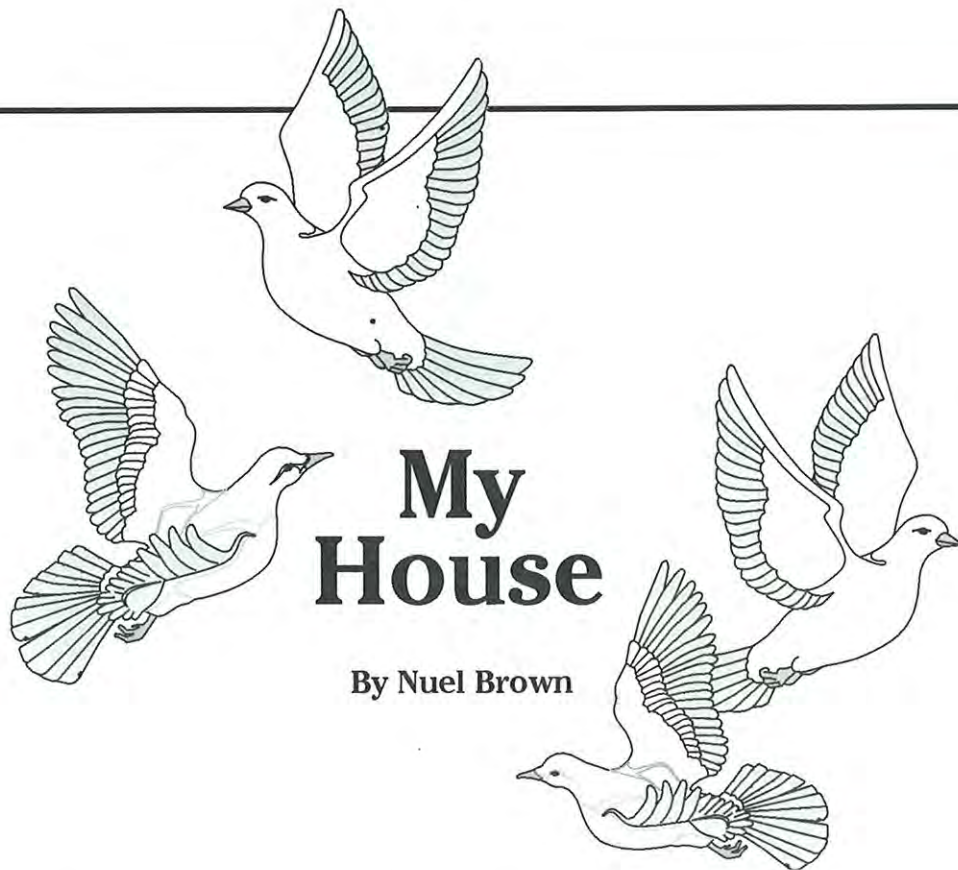
I attended the final youth service at the National Youth Conference in Memphis last July. There was a great moving of God. Before the Word was preached, while we were singing praises to God, young people began to fill the altars. The students were so broken they didn't wait for the invitation to be given; they just responded.

Students are united

Our denomination's young people are greatly united. They come together at various levels to have fun, learn about God and serve others. They understand the importance of, "united we stand, divided we fall." One Spirit, one Lord and one baptism unite us.

These are important lessons. We need to be open and broken before the

(continued on page 11)



My House

By Nuel Brown

Anger tells us a lot about a man and his character. The fact is that if you know what makes a man angry, then it is fairly certain you know the man.

When Jesus drove from the Temple all those who were buying and selling, He was angry. Yet notice the cause. His Father's house was being desecrated.

He did not become angry when He was abused or ridiculed or even crucified. When nails tore into His flesh at Calvary, His response was, *"Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do."*

What angered our Lord was when someone other than himself—a child, an invalid, a sinner—was mistreated.

This was the case in point. Some of the people had come to worship, only to be cheated in the coin exchange.

"My house shall be called the house of prayer," Jesus said to the money changers, *"but ye have made it a den of thieves."* Our Lord called the Temple a "house of prayer." It could not be that and at the same time be

what it had become. The supreme evil was that God's house was no longer a place for meeting with God.

Is it possible that this is where the danger lies in our contemporary church? Things being done in, our churches are not so dangerous in and of themselves; the danger is in the paramount thing that is being omitted. Do we fail to give precedence to the church as a house of prayer over every other function?

"House of prayer"—those were our Lord's words describing the church. Strange, how we define it today. For some, it is a hall of recreation or sometimes a basement for dining. Even a sanctuary for preaching can be a far cry from a house of prayer when the minister is exalted and God is forgotten. An assembly, a fellowship for dialogue, a group for activity—but is it a house of prayer?

Good things are being done, important matters considered, nice conferences held. But what of the higher reason for the existence of the church? Doves are not being sold in our temples, but prayers are not being prayed in our churches and people are not being saved at our altars.

The need in Jesus' day is the need in

our day—a temple that is pure. *"My house shall be called the house of prayer."* Remember we are not told that blessed are the peace-thinkers or the peace-speakers, but the peacemakers.

A good old-fashioned baptism of personal and social purity may not be the popular rite that is wanted, but it may be the saving experience that is needed. ■



ABOUT THE WRITER: Reverend Nuel Brown serves as director of ministries for the California State Association of Free Will Baptists.

Reprinted from the October 2002 issue of *The Voice*.

Part one of an eleven-part series.

I May be Young,
But This



I've
Learned ...

God has a sense of humor! That's not hard for me to believe. All I need to do is consider me. No, I'm not talking about my looks; I'm referring to my insatiable desire for humor. I love good humor, and my recollection is that I have been happy 99.999% of my life.

I attribute this as a part of the total package of being made in God's image. Because God has a sense of humor, He has made me in such a way that I can enjoy humor which often expresses itself in uncontrollable laughter. So, I'm not surprised to find the author of the wisdom book, Proverbs, write, "... he that is of a merry heart hath a continual feast," (15:15).

Sadly, however, I often have occasion to talk to people who are intensely miserable. Then, I'm reminded the proverb begins, "All the days of the afflicted are evil, ..." I feel compassion for such people. I'd like to help them. In my feeble attempts to help those who are hurting, I've learned some truths about happiness. I believe these truths are self-evident.

Happiness comes only as the result of a more noble pursuit, not as the object to be pursued.

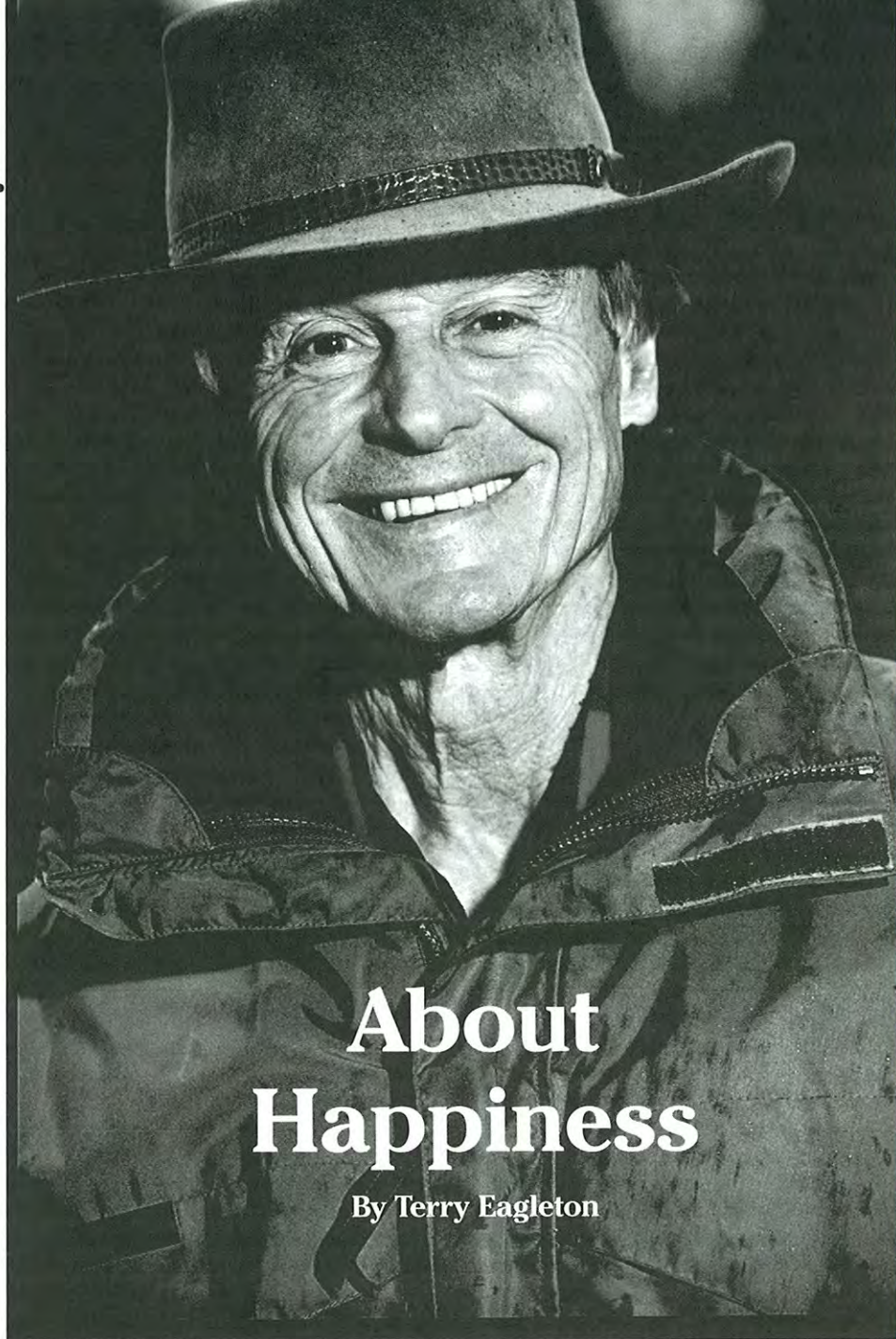
Some of the most miserable people

I know spend most of their time pursuing happiness. They try to be at all the right places, at the right time, wearing the right clothes, driving the right car, listening to the right music, drinking the acceptable beverages and smoking or snorting the substance *du jour*. More times than I care to remember, I've met these folks at the hospital.

On the other hand, those who are satisfied to go through life meeting their day-to-day obligations find themselves happy and content as a by-product of having pursued the nobility of responsibility.

Happiness supercedes circumstances.

When I was dating the girl of my dreams, we would occasionally visit her grandmother. To visit Mrs. Broadwater, you needed to take the back roads south of Atlanta that led to Barnsville, then get off the road and follow the trail to the trailer. When you arrived, though she was ecstatic to see you, she could not meet you under the pine trees out in the yard, because a high blood pressure stroke had left her



About Happiness

By Terry Eagleton

confined to a wheelchair.

During my first visit, I learned that no one called her Mrs. Broadwater; she preferred "Big Momma." (By the way, that is a woman with a healthy dose of humor!) In all my years of acquaintance with that Nazarene, I never saw her have a day she considered "bad."

On the other hand, a few years ago I had the privilege of leading a sexagenarian to Christ. In his six-plus decades of life he had become a self-made man. I never saw him but what he didn't have in his pants pocket a wad of hundred dollar bills that would choke a mule.

After his conversion to Christ, he and I spent a lot of time together. His most frequent testimony was how miserable his wealth had made him and how much happiness he had found in a simple life with Christ.

Happiness is a choice.

I know how utterly foolish that sounds—at first. It is hard for us to imagine that there is anybody, anywhere who does not want to be happy. Amazingly, however, I am certain that some people choose to be un-

happy. My only explanation is, that is how they feel most comfortable.

Have you ever owned an article of clothing or accessory that went out of style but you decided to continue wearing it because you liked it? A member of the church I serve owns a beauty salon. I asked her if elderly ladies ever ask for a radically different hairstyle. Her response was, "Less than once a year."

My observation is that we human beings have an amazing capacity to resist change even in the face of the clearest evidence that change is in our best interest. This apparently applies even to happiness. If a miserable person is ever transformed into a happy person, this transformation will only come at the Herculean effort by that individual to decide to be happy.

That may well mean they will no longer be the center of attention and object of pity by family, friends, co-workers and rank strangers—but they considered the exchange a desirable substitute.

True happiness can come only from a right relationship with God.

I hope this was predictable. I hope

you never hear a preacher speak but what he gets around to this subject. It is, after all, the fountain of life. I do not deny that partial and temporary happiness can be achieved aside from a right relationship with God. My only question is, *Why settle for partial and temporary when complete and eternal are readily available to all that will accept?*

By the way, what do you give a seasick elephant?

Lots of room.

See, I warned you that I have an insatiable desire for humor. ■



ABOUT THE WRITER: Reverend Terry Eagleton pastors Horton Heights Free Will Baptist Church in Nashville, Tennessee.

Pike's Peak . . . (from page 7)

journey had been thus far, all I had to do was look around at my fellow travelers and see that it was not as tough as it seemed.

If those men in their late 70s could take it, I knew that I could make it. I did, too, and seeing them had a way of curing the weariness in my bones and the murmuring in my spirit.

Perhaps you are tired and discouraged in the journey of life. You've come a long way "through many dangers, toils and snares," and wonder if it is worth going on to the summit. Please stop and rest. "Be still and know that I am God," (Ps. 46:10a). Then, take a glance back and see that you have come much farther than you think. It's way too late to turn back.

Then turn and look at your fellow travelers. You'll see that the journey is not as tough as it seems, and the best prospect of all is that our Lord Jesus will be standing at the summit to welcome us at the end of our journey. ■



ABOUT THE WRITER: Reverend Jim Mertz pastors Harvest Free Will Baptist Church in Colorado Springs, Colorado. He hosts a radio program, "Truth for the Rockies." Mertz serves as clerk of the Colorado District Association.

Recipe . . . (from page 8)

Lord. When God convicts us, we need to get it right immediately. We need to stand united. We will never all agree on everything, but we can stand united. Agree to disagree and worship the Lord because He has given us salvation, rich and free.

When we take hold of these three lessons that can be learned from our students, we will see revival. By the way, these are not new lessons. This has been God's recipe all along. "If my people, which are called by my name, shall humble themselves, and pray, and seek my face, and turn from their wicked ways; then I will hear from heaven and will forgive their sins and will heal their land," (II Chr. 7:14). ■



ABOUT THE WRITER: Aaron Baldrige is associate pastor at Turner's Chapel Free Will Baptist Church in Butler, Georgia. He is a graduate of Free Will Baptist Bible College.

How God placed a South Carolina farm boy in a Chicago church.

Howdy, I'm Gowdy, and I'm from . . . *Chicago?*

By Gowdy Cannon



One of the great things about being me is getting to see the look on people's faces when I say, "Howdy, I'm Gowdy, and I'm from Tookeydoo." The responses I get are priceless: "What did you say your name was? Gordy? Tookey-what?"

My favorite response occurred while sitting in a student council meeting at

Free Will Baptist Bible College with newly-elected president Matt Pinson.

"Hold on a second," he replied after I introduced myself this way, "Say that again. I want to write it down and tell my wife."

As I child, I hated my name, but I loved where I lived. My dad farms 2,000 acres in rural South Carolina, and I always told my mom I planned to borrow a few acres and build a house right beside theirs. Everything is perfect in Tookeydoo. I tell people that the reason it is not on the map is because it isn't a place like Myrtle Beach is a place—It's a state of mind, a way of life.

Saying "I'm from Tookeydoo" is like saying "I'm from Utopia." People farm, hunt, go to church, live simple lives and wave to each other when they pass on the street. Everyone knows their neighbors, too, mainly because many share a last name. *There's no way God would call me away from this place*, I thought.

College Encounter

In 1998, however, I made the 500-mile trek to Nashville, a city of a million people. And as a first-generation Bible college student, I was overwhelmed. I went to public school from the time I was seven until I attended the USC (not the other one in California) after high school. It took a long time to get comfortable and I had no idea what I was doing.

If it were not for one of my instructors, James Evans, I probably would have left and gone back to USC. It was only the simple fact I knew God wanted me to do youth ministry that kept me there.

My first encounter with a preacher named David Potete happened at Free Will Baptist Bible College. A gangly in-your-face church planter from Chicago, he was one of the main speakers at the school's bi-annual missions conference in 1999. I did not take him seriously and wrote him off as a doofus.

During one sermon from the entire book of Nehemiah, he had every 10th person in the audience—faculty, visitors and all—come to the front for the entire sermon, demonstrating the concept in Nehemiah of tithing every tenth person to go to the city and work. He accomplished this by having everyone stand up and count off to ten.

In an audience of several hundred, this took a while. Sitting at the back, I had

time to think, "This man is an idiot" several dozen times. My thought was interrupted by the sound of the person beside me saying "Nine!" to which I came to the absolutely dreadful realization that I would have to go to the front.

"Ten," I said, as uninspired as I could. As I stood there with about 40 other 10s, I kept thinking how much trouble this man was going to have getting anyone to go to Chicago with him. I mean, every time the guy spoke (and I mean every time, even twice in one day) he would remind the audience that in 1989 he "blocked Coach Deel's shot." I always laughed, but remained apathetic.

Taste of Chicago

The missions conference ended and I didn't think about Chicago for over two years. Then in the fall of 2001, my senior year, Global Missions Fellowship planned a trip to Reverend Potete's church during the school's first-ever fall break. Not wanting to go home or stay in Nashville alone, I signed up.

After five days of ministry, sightseeing and David telling us how tough life is in the city, I was impressed with his honesty and sincerity, but still uninspired. Why would I move here, where I would have to get a job outside the church when there are so many churches hiring youth ministers who can pay them? It's hard to believe after three years of Bible college that I still thought this way.

It has been exactly one year since then, and does God have a sense of irony! Last December while reading in I Samuel, I came across a classic story of King Saul sparing Agag's life and not destroying all his animals like God told him to, but instead keeping them so he could sacrifice them to God. They were the best sheep and cattle, the kind worth sacrificing, but God wanted Saul to obey Him more than He wanted the sacrifices. He still does.

I could go anywhere in this world and do youth ministry in the name of Christ and still be disobeying. I knew that God wanted me in Chicago, and I came, not so I could make some huge sacrifice for Him, but so I could obey Him.

One of the most sobering phrases in the Bible occurs twice in the story above—God regretted that He made Saul king over Israel. It wasn't enough for Saul to be the man God had chosen as the first king of Israel just as it is not

enough for me to come here. I am capable of making the same mistake and must remind myself every time I make a decision to put obedience ahead of sacrifice, to put who I am before God ahead of what I do for God.

Number 10 Moves North

I work with Pastor Potete now as a subordinate in this ministry. I respect him, laugh at his jokes, and it is now obvious that *I'm* the doofus in the relationship. And I love every second of it. I've only been here a little while, but I have no intention of leaving anytime soon. I am having the time of my life learning how to be a Chicagoan, ketchup-less hot dogs and all.

In the meantime, I'm teaching truth to a handful of teenagers; and I'm teaching them how to think for themselves. I am as content as I've ever been.

I moved up here on Saturday, June 8, 2002, and the next day David introduced me to the church as the new youth pastor—Gowdy Cannon from Tookeydoo, South Carolina. I'm sure people thought, "What was that name, again? Tookey-what?" I'm here because God wants me here and I wouldn't change a thing, not even my name.

If I had known three years ago what I know now, I would have said, "Ten!" with a lot of enthusiasm and then jogged to the front of the chapel.

"Howdy, I'm Gowdy, and I'm from Chicago," isn't quite as funny, but I say it with no reservation. This is my home. ■



ABOUT THE WRITER: Mr. Gowdy Cannon, the Tookeydoo, South Carolina, farmer's son serves as youth pastor at Northwest Free Will Baptist Church in Chicago.

The Greatest Commandment

By Kevin Riggs¹

Greyhound racing attracts crowds who watch incredibly sleek dogs run as fast as they can around a track.² Unlike racehorses, greyhounds run without the assistance of a jockey. The dogs are trained to chase a mechanical rabbit as it zips along the track in front of them. A man in the press box electronically controls the speed of the rabbit, keeping the rabbit just out in front of the dogs. No matter how hard they try, the dogs never catch the rabbit.

At a Florida track some years back, a big race was about to begin. The man in the press box pushed his lever, starting the rabbit down the first stretch, while the cage doors flew open, releasing the

dogs to take off after the little rabbit. As the rabbit made the first turn, however, an electrical short in the system caused the rabbit to come to a complete stop, explode, and go up in flames. All that was left was a bit of black stuff hanging on the end of the wire.

The rabbit gone, the bewildered dogs didn't know how to act. According to news reports, several dogs simply stopped running and laid down on the track, their tongues hanging out. Two dogs, still frenzied with the chase, ran into a wall. Another dog began chasing his tail, while the rest howled at the people in the stands. Not one dog finished the race!³

That story makes me ask the fol-

lowing questions: What *rabbit* am I chasing? What is my goal in life? What is my purpose? What would happen if my *rabbit* were suddenly taken away? How would I respond?

The Big Question

In Matthew 22:23-33, the Sadducees asked Jesus a hypothetical question, hoping for a response that would alienate Jesus from the people. Their question backfired, and Jesus became even more popular with the crowds.

Matthew then records, "But when the Pharisees had heard that he had put the Sadducees to silence, they were gathered together. Then one of

them, which was a lawyer, asked him a question, tempting him, and saying, Master, which is the greatest commandment in the law?"⁴

The Pharisees were not asking Jesus to decide the most important of the Ten Commandments; they believed the Law of Moses contained 613 commands. They wanted Jesus to pick the most important of 613! This question was hotly debated, and they knew no answer would satisfy everyone. This was a question that was asked in an attempt to set Jesus up for failure.

How did Jesus answer? He said, "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. This is the first and greatest commandment. And the second is like unto it, Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself. On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets."⁵ Instead of giving the greatest commandment, Jesus gave the greatest two commandments.

First, and foremost, He said to love God unconditionally. I know God loves me unconditionally, but how do I love Him in that way? I love God unconditionally by giving Him my whole life. This means I repent of my sins and ask Christ into my life.

To love God unconditionally also means I will be faithful to Him until the end of life. Furthermore, I love God unconditionally by being obedient to His Word. I am obedient even during those times that I have doubts, and even in times when there are no answers and explanations.

Jesus said to love God unconditionally means I love Him with all my "heart," "soul" and "mind." To love Him with my heart means I am passionate about my love for Him. To love God with my soul means my relationship with Him is one of intimacy and security. To love God with my mind means I will strive to know Him and understand all I can of Him. My love for God should touch my heart and my mind, changing the very core of who I am.

Second, Jesus said I am to love my neighbor as myself. Who is my neighbor? The story of the Good Samaritan tells me my neighbor is anyone who has a need.⁶ How do I love others as I love myself? By putting their needs first. By accepting them just the way they are. By reaching out to them. By serving them.

Through His answer, Jesus is telling

me the very purpose and meaning of life. Everything else pales in comparison. Nothing else in life will satisfy. The secret to a successful life is loving God, and living out that love by loving others.

Sheldon Jackson

Sheldon Jackson⁷ was born on May 18, 1834. From youth Sheldon's ambition was to be a missionary. After graduating from Princeton Theological Seminary and serving as a Union Army chaplain during the Civil War, he joined thousands of others who made their way West. Most were searching for gold, land and open skies. Sheldon Jackson was searching for souls and planting churches. Once he organized seven churches in 15 days.

Sheldon Jackson made his bed on stagecoach floors, saloon lofts, hollow logs, tepees and canoes. Someone described him as "short, be-whiskered, bespectacled, but a giant." When the United States purchased Alaska for \$7.2 million, he headed North, exploring the dangerous, uncharted, fog-hidden coasts of the Bering Sea and Arctic Ocean.

By 1893, Jackson had started 27 schools in Alaska with a total enrollment of 1,800 students. He also evangelized, established churches and brought Bibles to the Eskimos. Afraid that explorers and exploiters were slaughtering whales and seals, depriving Eskimos of their natural food supplies, he raised \$2,000 and brought reindeer from Siberia. Soon great herds were providing transportation, food, clothing and livelihood for the people.

During 50 years of ministry, Sheldon Jackson traveled a million miles through the West and North and oversaw the establishing of 886 churches. He loved God with all his heart, soul and mind, and he loved his neighbors as himself. Jackson died in 1909, and it was written of him, "He put service ahead of gain, which required great personal sacrifice, but established an even greater legacy." Sheldon Jackson knew the secret of a successful life.

What is the greatest commandment? To love God and love one another. What is the purpose and meaning of life? To love God and love one another. What is true success? Loving God and loving one another! "My little children, let us not love in word, neither

in tongue; but in deed and in truth."⁸ ■

*My gracious heavenly Father,
Forgive me for making life
more complicated than it needs to be.
Forgive me for chasing the rabbit of success
which will never be caught.
Thank You for loving me unconditionally.
Teach me to love You unconditionally,
and help me live out that love for You
by loving others.
In Jesus' name, amen.*

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. I am using greyhound racing to make a point, and should in no way be taken as an endorsement of the sport. For the record, I have never been to a greyhound race.
3. Wayne Rice, *Hot Illustrations for Youth Talks* (Zondervan Publishing House, Grand Rapids, MI, 1994), 106-107.
4. Matthew 22:34-36.
5. Matthew 22:37-40.
6. The story of the Good Samaritan is recorded in Luke 10:30-37.
7. The story of Sheldon Jackson was adapted from the book, *On This Day* (May 18), and from an article in *Christian History* (Issue 66, Vol. XIX, No. 2) titled, "Out Yonder, on the Edge of Things." The quote at the end of the story is from the article in *Christian History*.
8. 1 John 3:18.



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



Free Will Baptist
youth join the
world missions
push.

We Set A Record!

By Allen Pointer

It would have been easy to miss if you didn't read *Heartbeat*, or if you didn't attend the National Youth Conference services in Memphis last July. There has never been another summer for student missions in the history of Free Will Baptists like the summer of 2002.

Start with the local churches. The following is found in the September/October 2002 issue of *Heartbeat*:

First International Experience

- 14 students from Liberty FWB Church in Gainesville, Georgia, go to Nantes, France, under the direction of Matt and Cristina Price.
- 9 students, led by Joe and Carla Picklesimer, represent the Emmanuel FWB Church of Wabash, Indiana, in Bouna, Côte d' Ivoire.
- 5 students from Donelson FWB Church in Nashville, Tennessee, went to Campinas, Brazil, with Michael J. and Deanna Hollifield.

Not mentioned in that issue of *Heartbeat* were first-time international teams from Cross Timbers Free Will Baptist Church in Nashville, Tennessee, led by Steve Phillips, and the Beulah Free Will Baptist Church in Pensacola, Florida, with Gene Wooten. Both went to Madrid.

That, however, tells only part of the story.

E-TEAMs Make History

Now add 18 college students who served as Overseas Apprentices this summer, 16 college students who were part of the World Cup team in Japan, and 63 high school students who were part of E-TEAM (a record number).

In addition, many youth groups around the country took part in international missions trips last summer, including my own group of 11 who went to Madrid in June and who already had experience with international missions.

But even that is only part of the story.

Consider the number of youth groups who made North America the place of their missions' service. College and high school students alike have spread out over the continent sharing with many different mission agencies and churches.

There is no easy way to count the numbers of Free Will Baptist students who left their comfort zone last summer to serve at home or around the world. But it has to be a record.

Never before in the history of the

church has it been so easy to travel. Never before in the history of the church has it been the thing to do in youth ministry. Never before have there been so many full-time youth directors mobilizing teens in our denomination for hands-on cross-cultural involvement. Are there concerns? Maybe a couple.

Just Another Event

One concern is that it will become just another youth group event. *Every summer, we go somewhere. Yawn. That wasn't as exciting as last summer.*

It continues to be of utmost importance that there be some type of standard to be met by those who travel and represent their churches, their denomination and their Lord as a student on a mission trip. It should never be that whoever signs up, gets in the van and pays the money qualifies to go.

There should be a series of prerequisites to meet for anyone going on a mission trip, especially one that goes international. This will help focus the group on the reason to go and serve. It will be far less self-serving and have more potential to impact lives of those

on the field and those going to the field.

It is also significant that just because teens go on a mission trip does not mean that they will return home changed. The change happens in the process of getting ready to go, going and returning with a deeper relationship with Jesus Christ. That will not happen automatically. Sadly, the same things that are true about youth camp and decisions can be the same for mission trips.

If the follow-up and re-entry debriefing into the home culture goes unplanned, decisions made on the trip will be no more than that. There is a fight for those decisions to become realities when students are on their home turf. Still, it is worth it for a student to get out of his comfort zone doing something for Christ.

Those memories do not go away. Just ask our own mission force. Most of them went on short-term trips and never got over it.

Help on the Field

Another concern is that of help on the field itself. It is a balancing act for all involved, especially the missionary. While it is important that the group coming be well cared for, sometimes what the missionaries need is not what we are bringing to them. A field desperately in need of a construction team will not get the best use from a drama team.

Communication from/between the missionaries to whom the team is coming and the team leader will insure that the needs of the field will be met. Then the trip will be more than a sight-seeing adventure for the traveling team.

One factor that assures success is a previous relationship with the missionary. The three international trips that our teens have taken were with missionaries we know, and more importantly, who know us.

There have been barriers to cross getting our ministries together, but they have let us turbo-charge their projects by providing labor that would take them months to achieve on their own. This provides two valuable end results. Specific tasks that directly benefit the mission strategy and a sense of significance for the team knowing they had a hand in something important to the missionaries.

Get on Board

How can you get your students in-

involved? Easy. Pick up the phone and call Dean Jones at Student and Children Ministries at Randall House, or contact Eddie Payne at Foreign Missions for E-TEAM information.

Want to take your youth group on a mission trip? Call one of the churches mentioned earlier, and ask them how they did it. They will be happy to share their stories and the lessons that they learned.

Positive benefits of mobilizing our teens far outweigh the few negatives. Youth ministers and students of this denomination are praying for a wave of students unequalled in the course of church history to flow throughout the world with the gospel of Jesus Christ. ■



ABOUT THE WRITER: Allen Pointer serves as youth pastor at First Free Will Baptist Church in Russellville, Arkansas. He has been interested in missions since missionary doctor LaVerne Miley came to his boyhood church in Southwest Missouri telling what God was doing in Ivory Coast, West Africa. For more information about taking students on a mission trip, contact Allen via email at allen@firstfreewill.org.



Tennessee Adopts Unified Ministry Plan

CHURCH HILL, TN—Delegates to Tennessee's 65th annual state association unanimously adopted the Unified Ministry Plan that provides support for local, district, state and national outreach. Executive Committee members presented the proposal during the November 11-13, 2002, session at First FWB Church in Church Hill. A two-hour discussion Tuesday morning answered many questions regarding implementation. The first budget for the Unified Ministry Plan was \$70,425.

Moderator Terry Eagleton served throughout the session but declined re-election. Pastor Robert Hobbs (Wooddale FWB Church, Knoxville) was elected as moderator to succeed Eagleton. Delegates named Pleasant View pastor Randall Riggs assistant moderator.

Some 142 people registered for the state association including 77 ministers, 10 lay delegates, 4 deacons, 7 missionaries and 44 visitors.

Three Tennessee ministers preached sermons during worship sessions: Pastor Billy Gragg (Midfields FWB Church, Kingsport), Pastor Phil Poston (First FWB Church, Elizabethton) and Pastor Gwyn Pugh (Liberty FWB Church, Millington).

Tennessee promotional director Charles Thigpen, who will coordinate the Unified Ministry Plan,



Tennessee Executive Committee Members: Front Row (l-r)—Ray Lewis, Robert Hobbs, Rodger Castle, Dexter Brummitt; Back Row (l-r)—Eugene Workman, Charles Thigpen, Terry Eagleton, Norman Heath.

presided at the opening service Monday evening. He told attendees that Tennessee Free Will Baptists gave \$1.6 million to national ministries in 2001.

Delegates voted to invite the National Association back to Tennessee. The 2002 national convention met in Memphis and registered nearly 8,000 people.

Three resolutions claimed the attention of delegates. One resolution addressed terrorism; another called for prayer regarding the Ivory Coast conflict; the third thanked the host church.

In other action, delegates vot-

ed to raise local church representation fees to the National Association to \$100. Luke Shipley was given a plaque for work done on the construction of a church in Puerto Rico.

Tennessee Women Active for Christ met November 12 for their day-long, 57th annual session. The theme was, "For Such a Time as This." Keynote speaker for the worship session was Mrs. Wanda Powell, wife of Home Missions Department director Larry Powell.

The 2003 state association will meet November 10-12 at Cookeville FWB Church in Cookeville.

International Fellowship Meets in USA

ANTIOCH, TN—The second triennial meeting of the International Fellowship of Free Will Baptist Churches, Inc. (IFOFWBC), met in Tennessee, according to secretary-treasurer Melvin Worthington. The October 7-11, 2002, session included delegates and observers from 11 countries.

The opening session at Donelson FWB Church in Nashville featured a sermon by Pastor Robert Morgan, a fellowship meal, a worship service in three languages and a processional of delegates and official observers from representative countries. Executive secretary Keith Burden brought greetings to the international guests on behalf of the National Association of Free Will Baptists.

After the opening service, delegates traveled about 50 miles to Camp Garner Creek near Dickson for four days of sessions. Attendees from the following countries participated: Brazil, Canada, Côte d'Ivoire, France, Japan, Mexico, Panama, Russia, Spain, United States and Uruguay.

Fifteen speakers delivered sermons, presented doc-

trinal papers and led discussions at the Camp Garner Creek site.

Delegates elected Daniel Dorati (Panama) as president, Jose Manuel Parron (Spain) as vice-president, and Melvin Worthington (USA) as secretary-treasurer.

During the meeting, delegates approved an IFOFWBC covenant and meeting sites for the next five sessions. Future meetings will gather in Panama (2004), Spain/France (2007), Mexico (2010), Japan (2013) and Canada (2016).

In other action, delegates amended the IFOFWBC charter, adopted a budget for 2002-2004, and received Korea as a member of the organization.

Observers from Russia brought greetings, gave historical and geographical information about the country and discussed the condition of the churches in Russia.

The third triennial session of the IFOFWBC will meet October 4-8, 2004, in Panama. The normal three-year cycle was interrupted in 2001 by the terrorist attacks in New York and Washington, DC.



Opening session at Donelson FWB Church in Nashville.

Executive secretary
Keith Burden
welcomes attendees.



Pastor Kimura of Kita Hiroshima Chapel
in Sapporo, Japan.



Internationals confer in small group settings.



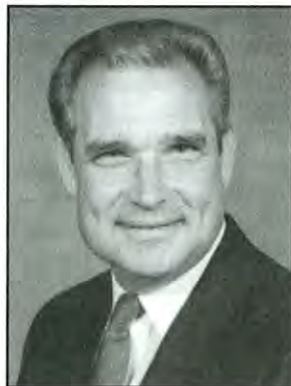
Official observers and delegates.

Milton Worthington Retires from Michigan Church

ROYAL OAK, MI—Reverend Milton Worthington, 65, preached his final two sermons as pastor at Central FWB Church in Royal Oak on September 29, 2002. The North Carolina native had pastored the Michigan congregation for 26 years.

Member Joanne Less said that Worthington's Sunday morning sermon "illustrated his skill as an expositor of God's Word," as he preached from Hebrews 13:1-7. His last sermon Sunday evening was preached from Joshua 1:5.

The congregation prepared a day of surprises for Milton and Dianne Worthington that included a reception in the church's fellowship hall. Rev. Worthington was given a check for \$3,000 as an expression of appreciation. Women Active for Christ presented a \$250 check to The Together Way in honor of Pastor Worthington. The church also voted to name Reverend Worthington, "Pastor Emeritus."



Then the mood changed, according to Joanne Less. "Gary Faust, Dave Touchton and Dave Touchton, Jr., provided moments of levity. Accompanied on the guitar by Phil Hersey, this trio of nondescript citizens from Ayden, North Carolina, sang an original song titled, 'Talkin' Central.' Gales of laughter erupted throughout the auditorium as the trio intoned their lines!"

Reverend Worthington has been active on state and national levels

for more than four decades. He has served as clerk of the Michigan State Association and 12 years on the Sunday School and Church Training Board. He now serves on the Foreign Missions Board.

Worthington pastored five churches in his 45-year ministry. His pastorates include Harmony FWB Church in Lake Butler, FL (1959-60), Parker's Chapel FWB Church in Greenville, NC (1960-65), Tupelo FWB Church in Tupelo, MS (1965-73), Donelson FWB Church in Nashville, TN (1973-75) and Central FWB Church in Michigan (1975-2002).

He attended Asbury College and Columbia Bible College (now Columbia International University) where he earned a bachelor's degree. He completed a master's degree at Luther Rice Seminary and expects to complete a doctorate at Luther Rice.

The Worthingtons retired to their home in Ayden, North Carolina.

Theology Symposium Meets at FWBBC

NASHVILLE, TN—According to spokesman Daryl Ellis, 81 people attended the seventh annual Free Will Baptist Theology Symposium at Free Will Baptist Bible College. The November 4-5 meeting included 10 presentations.

Students, programs, denominational workers and pastors participated in the event sponsored by the Commission for Theological Integrity.

"One of the highlights was the participation of 32 students, two of whom read papers," reports Reverend Ellis.

The 2003 Symposium will meet October 27-28 on the campus of Hillsdale FWB College.

Papers from the 2002 symposium have been bound into one volume. To obtain a copy, send \$20 to the Commission for Theological Integrity, 1405 Butterfield Road, Aurora, IL 60504. Contact Daryl Ellis at 630/851-4211 or pastorde@aol.com.

2003 Yearbooks Coming

NASHVILLE, TN—The 2003 *Free Will Baptist Yearbook* will be off the press in late January. The yearbooks will be mailed to district association clerks for distribution to local pastors.

If you want to purchase a copy for personal use, call Randall House Publications at 800/877-7030.

Preaching Highlights Mississippi Meeting

PEARL, MS—Delegates to the 38th annual Mississippi State Association heard five sermons in two days during their November 2-3, 2002, session at First FWB Church in Pearl. Answering the call to take care of the state's business, 24 ministers, 19 lay delegates and 17 deacons adopted a \$220,000 Together Way Plan budget, according to clerk Dick Williams.

Executive secretary Keith Burden and executive secretary emeritus Melvin Worthington preached on the same program for the first time at the Mississippi gathering. Burden spoke Friday evening and Worthington delivered the association's final sermon on Saturday.

Mississippi executive secretary J. L. Gore, Amory pastor Larry Haggard and retired minister Glen Shelby completed the preaching-rich agenda.

Moderator Charles Walden, elected to a fourth term, led delegates through business sessions that saw three proposed constitutional changes tabled until the 2003 session. One change concerned raising representation fees to \$100 annually per church. Another authorized the executive secretary to sign legal documents, while a third focused on remuneration for the state clerk.

The 2003 state association will meet November 7-8 at Corinth FWB Church in Waynesboro.

Alabama Votes \$585,000 Budget for 2003

DOTHAN, AL—Delegates to the 83rd annual Alabama State Association adopted a \$585,000 ACTS 1:8 budget, plus a \$22,400 Executive Fund budget during their November 6-8, 2002, session. The three-day event met at Eastside FWB Church in Dothan.

The \$585,000 budget includes home and foreign missionaries and programs supported by the state, ACTS 1:8 plan, as well as the state promotional office.

Moderator Danny Thompson was elected to his first two-year term. Thompson pastors Mt. Harmony FWB Church in Vernon. Dothan pastor Glenn Poston (First FWB Church) was elected assistant moderator.

Some 261 people registered for the association—64 ministers, 42 lay delegates, 19 deacons and 136 visitors. Delegates adopted a resolution encouraging the clerk to print and distribute state association minutes by the end of March each year.

The General Board made four recommendations, three of which modified the state constitution regarding representation fees, the Executive Committee and duties of the Nominating Committee. The fourth recommendation established guidelines for support by the state's ACTS 1:8 program.

Executive Secretary Keith Burden addressed the opening joint worship service Wednesday evening. Other speakers included Al Hamm (pastor, Victory FWB Church, Columbus, MS), FWBBC staffer Terry Forrest and North Carolina minister A. B. Brown.

Reverends Brown and Forrest also preached during the Thursday morning Bible Conference, as did Pastor J. D. Wales (Mt. Zion FWB Church, Pell City).

Alabama Women Active for Christ sponsored a banquet Thursday evening with guest speaker Wayne Wilson (Harmony FWB Church, Leighton).

The 2003 state association will meet November 5-7 at First FWB Church in Sylacauga.



Oklahoma Adopts \$5.2 Million Budget

MCALESTER, OK—Delegates to the 94th annual Oklahoma State Association adopted a \$5.2 million budget for 2003, including a \$560,000 Cooperative Funds Budget, according to clerk James Coffelt.

The cooperative funds will be allocated: State Executive Office (22%), State Mission Board (15%), Christian Education Board (6%), Hillsdale FWB College (33%) and national ministries (24%).

Hillsdale College's projected budget for 2003 tops the \$3.5 million mark. The state missions support budget is just under \$936,000.

Some 470 people registered for the October 14-17, 2002, meeting at First FWB Church in McAlester. Conducting the state's business were 131 ministers, 30 lay delegates and 35 deacons.

Delegates elected a new moderator and assistant moderator. Harrah FWB Church pastor Jimmy Holbrook succeeds former moderator Keith Burden who now serves as executive secretary for the National Association of Free Will Baptists. Woodcrest FWB Church (Catoosa) pastor Roger Ballard was elected assistant moderator.

Oklahoma's executive director Ernest Harrison, Jr., was unable to attend the state association. As a member of Oklahoma's Army National Guard, Harrison's unit has been deployed to the Sinai Desert in Egypt. He serves as chaplain for the 180th infantry and ministers to more than 900 troops. The initial deployment ends in June.

Delegates approved a constitutional change authorizing the state association officers to serve as the annual Committee on Committees. Delegates also adopted a resolution commending missionaries Mike and Deleen Cousineau for their exemplary service during the Ivory Coast crisis last fall.

Sermons and worship services kept attendees focused on the association theme, "What's in a Name?" Pastors Jimmy Holbrook, Bob Thornburgh and Steve Robinson, along with Foreign Missions Department director James Forlines preached.

Trinity FWB Church (Oklahoma City) pastor Stan Konopinski addressed the October 14 Master's Men session. Oklahoma Women Active for Christ conducted business and worship sessions on October 15. Missionary to Ivory Coast Darrel Nichols spoke.

The state Christian Education Board presented a plaque to Pastor Roy Dale Smith for 14 years of service. Attendees gave a \$2,470 offering for Hillsdale FWB College.

The 2003 state association will meet October 14-16 at Hillsdale FWB College in Moore.

currently

Members of **New Home FWB Church** in **Tulsa, OK**, voted to buy 20 acres and relocate, according to Pastor **Roy Dale Smith**. A special land offering in November helped raise funds so that less money would need to be borrowed.

Expansion plans at **First FWB Church** in **Fort Collins, CO**, are on hold while city fathers decide what to do about an endangered species of hawk roosting and colonizing in a large cottonwood tree on the church's northeast boundary. Officials claim this is one of only two urban areas in the USA where the hawk roosts. If the quarter-mile no-development buffer zone is enforced, the entire church property would be inside the coded zone. **Roger Raper** pastors.

Pastor **Keith Woody** said that **Lakehills FWB Church** in **Austin, TX**, now occupy their new building. A church family donated a console piano for the fellowship hall.

Mount Pisgah FWB Church in **Booneville, MS**, reports seven baptisms of people ranging in age from nine to 79. **Glen Jones** pastors.

Thompson Creek FWB Church in **Waynesboro, MS**, celebrated their 85th anniversary, according to Pastor **Jerry Freeman**. **Jay Clifton** preached the anniversary sermon.

Every pew was filled for the "God and Country" rally at **Shafter FWB Church** in **Shafter, CA**. Police and Fire Department officials attended, as well as the city mayor. Members gave Pastor **Dean Long** a new car as an expression of their appreciation for him.

Buddy and Ann Johnson are a pastor's dream. She has a 30-year perfect attendance record in Sunday School; he completed 24 years without missing. Pastor **Tommy Tims** leads the **Rose Hill FWB Church** in **Monticello, AR**.

The **Florida State Mission Board** is seeking a missionary pastor for the south Florida area. Anyone interested may contact board chairman Jim Christian at 321/636-3244 or Executive Secretary **Randy Bryant** at 772/567-1956.

New Life FWB Church in **Morrilton,**

AR, broke ground for a new church building last fall. Thirty-one people attended the ground-breaking ceremony. New Life organized with 24 members last April and conducted services in members' homes for nine months. **Jimmy Lee Chronister** pastors.

More than 140 people gathered for **Arkansas'** annual Trailblazers' Retreat at Camp Beaverfork near **Conway**. **Tim Campbell** and **Keith Johnson** preached. The retreat included the dedication of a newly-constructed memorial for **Larry Phillips** who was killed in an accident while working at the camp.

Reverend **Mancy Noles**, the founding pastor of **Walker's Chapel FWB Church** in **Sumter, SC**, died September 6, 2002. He organized the church with 12 charter members in 1974 and pastored it until his death. Brother Noles donated the two lots on which the church was built in 1976. Even though a 1999 stroke confined him to a wheelchair, Noles continued to serve the congregation.

Members of **St. John FWB Church** in **Patrick, SC**, gave Pastor **Todd Black** a \$1,000 gift to show their appreciation for his ministry in the community.

Pastor **Vernon Maggart** celebrated 30 years at **Freeman Chapel FWB Church** in **St. Joseph, MO**. The church filled as people came to thank Brother Maggart for his years of service. Maggart's former classmate (and now chancellor at Free Will Baptist Bible College), **Tom Malone**, was guest speaker. Missouri executive secretary **Nathan Ruble** brought greetings from the state association.

Sunnyview FWB Church in **Lebanon, MO**, conducted its first Vacation Bible School in 30 years. They averaged 50 students and 20 workers every night, with 12 conversions. Church attendance has surged in the last two years from 27 to 85. Pastor **John Uder** has baptized 27 converts.

Members of **Hopewell FWB Church** in **Tunas, MO**, observed 25th anniversary festivities, according to Pastor **Tony Butcher**. Former pastor **Milan Ru-**

ble was guest speaker.

Northwest FWB Church in **Oklahoma City, OK**, celebrated their 45th anniversary with two preaching services. Former pastors **Jack Richey** and **James Murray** shared pulpit duties. **Waldo Young** pastors.

Pastor **Zane Brooks** and his wife **Charlotte** host a Sunday morning gospel music radio show in **Wellington, KS**. Brooks pastors **First FWB Church** in the city. The church's youth directors, **Berry** and **Cindy Matlock**, conducted a lock-in with 75 youth. Fourteen youths were converted.

Sunrise FWB Church in **Emporia, KS**, purchased a van to use in their bus ministry. Church youth raised funds to place lettering on the van. **Brian Bird** pastors.

Congratulations to members of **Second FWB Church** in **Ashland, KY**, for paying off a 15-year \$62,000 loan in less than four years. Pastor **Jeff Davis** says the church is debt-free and on the move. ■

Directory Update

ARKANSAS

Jason Scott to Phillips Chapel Church, Springdale from Rock Chapel, Norwood, MO

FLORIDA

Paul Smith to First Church, Chipley from Trinity Fellowship Church, Hampton, GA

Howard McNeal to First Church, Auburn-dale from Blackwelder Memorial Church, Worthington Springs

Ed Maynard to First Church, Scottsboro

NORTH CAROLINA

Mike Carper to Shelby Church, Shelby

TENNESSEE

Steve Swango to Loyal Chapel Church, Columbia from Grayson Church, Grayson, KY ■

By Faith

A Tribute to Those Who Are Committed to Help

The goal of the Home Missions Department is to plant as many Free Will Baptist churches throughout our nation and territories as possible. It is also our goal to minister to our people in promoting church growth and evangelism. Another area of work focuses on cross-cultural ministry. At present, we have active Free Will Baptist churches for the Korean, Hispanic and Russian populations in various areas of our nation. These are three of many ministry areas that benefit from the generosity and caring of our Faith Partners.

The men of our department travel across the United States week after week, proclaiming the gospel and representing the various ministries of the department. We are fortunate to have those who have agreed to be Faith Partners by stating that they would be faithful in prayerfully and financially contributing to the work of Home Missions by supporting the general fund. Much of the work is assisted by the general fund. Yes, there are individual accounts set aside for the missionaries, and yes, there are other avenues of the Lord's work available under the umbrella of Home Missions. However, much of what goes on in services for our missionaries and their churches, as well as the services provided by the members of the department, has its foundation and is supplemented by the general fund.

In honor of those who stand steadfastly behind our men as they minister across the denomination, we would like to share excerpts from a letter written by one of our staff members.

"In his book, *Celebration Of Discipline*, Richard Foster says, 'The modern hero is the poor boy who purposefully becomes rich, rather than the rich boy who voluntarily becomes poor. It does not seem to be a question of how much character you have—but rather how much cash!'

"Now, I don't mind people acquiring money. I, however, really appreciate those people who are willing to give that money to help others and for the telling of the gospel. I remember reading the biography of C. T. Studd. He was a nationally recognized athlete in his home country of England and came from a wealthy family. He gave away all his money and spent the rest of his life as a missionary in three different countries. He wrote the following:

*Some like to live within the sound
Of church or chapel bell.
I want to run a rescue shop
Within a yard of hell.*

"The Home Missions Department would like to express appreciation to you for giving your finances, being willing to help in various projects all across the states, and consistently remembering us in your prayers. This enables the Home Missions staff to travel this continent spreading the good news about Christ and promoting the cause of planting new Free Will Baptist churches. There are times when our men may be in five, six or seven different states within a three-week period of time sharing the Word of God. One of our staff members tells of one revival in California where an average of 10 people were saved every night. On one night, people from six different cultures were at the altar at the same time.

"Because of your generosity, we also are able to meet often with our missionaries to help them in their endeavors in reaching the lost. It is so important to be able to spend time with the missionaries and work alongside them, answer their questions, pray with them, spend time with their new congregations, and help them in outreach to their individual communities."

***** This letter, in part, was written by Richard Atwood, director of missionary assistance. It echoes the sentiments of our whole department. We truly appreciate the support that you give us through your prayers, your financial gifts and your willingness to be of help to us in so many ways.

"By Faith" is a new support project that has been started to aid the general fund for Home Missions. Many of you are already participating and for that we are truly grateful. By filling out the blue and white card that is now available and honoring the commitment that you make, you will be sharing in the important ministry of reaching the lost through the ministries of the Home Missions Department.

For more information on this new avenue of support, please contact any of our staff at 1-877-767-7674 (toll-free). This will be a tremendous investment in our missionaries, our church planting efforts and, subsequently, the winning of the lost to Christ. ■

Home  Missions

A New Vision

By Eric Thomsen, Marketing Manager

On a cool, autumn day in the backwoods of Kentucky, 14 people met in a cabin tucked against a colorful hillside. The group paid little attention, however, to the beauty of their surroundings. Instead, as leaves drifted slowly from the trees surrounding the cabin, the men and women gave their full attention to the matter at hand—to determine the vision and direction of Randall House products. After hours of prayer, analysis and intense discussion, a vision began to form, a vision that will shape the future of Free Will Baptist Christian education. Let me share with you some elements of that vision.

Bible-based

One thing about Randall House products will never change. Our products always have been and always will be built upon the Word of God. The Bible is our foundation, the very reason for our existence. Randall House will never turn from producing biblically sound, trustworthy curriculum. In a world of compromise and shaky standards, biblical integrity will continue to be our greatest strength.

Relevant

Applying the Bible to everyday life must become the intent of every lesson we produce. As one member of the group put it, "Our products must find the point where God's Word intersects the lives of those who use our curriculum. That intersection should be the focal point of each lesson!" Randall House is dedicated to the task of producing curriculum that clearly demonstrates that God's Word does apply to life in the 21st century. Our goal is for students to leave class thinking, "Today's lesson will change the way I live."

Teacher-friendly

Randall House products will soon place a greater emphasis on teacher training. Even the best curriculum

relies upon the teacher to communicate with students. Far too often, the teacher is overlooked when curriculum is developed. Well-trained teachers are the key to successful learning. Through teacher-friendly curriculum, hands-on training and the new ministry of TEAM Church, Randall House is dedicated to helping our teachers become all they can be.

Meeting Needs

Let's face it. Our society has become compartmentalized, divided into "types" of people, each type with their own label. You've heard the labels: Single parent, college student, retiree . . . the list could go on. Labels like these represent the growing needs of our society. Randall House must be dedicated to finding the spiritual needs of each group and meeting those needs through our curriculum.

No Limits!

We admit it openly. The task of producing Christian education for an entire denomination is daunting. At times, it even seems overwhelming. But the men and women who gathered at the Randall House Vision Retreat in October 2002 made the deliberate decision not to limit God in the process of developing their vision for the future. After all, God has no limits to what He can do. But we cannot do it on our own. We need your prayers. Please, join us in asking God to make Randall House products exactly what He wants them to be. You can be sure that your prayers will make all the difference. We can hardly wait to see what God will do.

(To receive monthly e-mail updates and prayer requests, become a REACH Prayer Partner. Call Randall House at 800/877-7030 and ask to sign up for the REACH update.) ■

Newly inaugurated Bible College President Matthew Pinson said in a recent address that combining ministry education with broad-based learning in the arts and sciences was the calling of Free Will Baptist Bible College. Whether a student is majoring in English or Missions or Pastoral Ministry, they will be equipped to serve Christ and His Church, as stated in the College's mission statement. "No matter what God calls our students to do, we believe they will be engaged in Christian ministry, in the service of Christ's Church," Pinson said.

Tomorrow's Preachers Are At FWBBC Today

*By The Administration
And Pastoral Training Staff*

In May 2002, half of the college's 14 male graduates acknowledged a divine call to a preaching ministry and began pursuing that ministry. Many FWBBC graduates preach part-time at small churches while pursuing a seminary or graduate school degree in theological studies. Others go to full-time pastoral ministries or to serve as youth ministers while they are mentored by experienced pastors.

"It's great to see how our combination of education in the arts and sciences with a strong core of Biblical studies and Christian service

leads people to a variety of ministries, and it's amazing how many of our men go on to preaching ministries," said Academic Dean Milton Fields, who pastored for 29 years, 16 of them bi-vocationally, prior to coming to the College.

Rev. Terry Forrest, coordinator of the Pastoral Ministry program, says, "The students currently en-

Perhaps this is why so many men who graduate from the Bible College are called to preach and go on to preaching ministries. "It's exciting to see men enter the preaching ministry from a variety of fields. Some come here their freshman year and embark on a course of study in Pastoral Ministry. Others come here called to ministry, major in Bible, and plan to complete their studies elsewhere. Then they go on to seminary for two or three years before pastoring full-time," Pinson said.

He added, "Yet it's interesting to see young men from other fields answering the call to preach while they are in college. Recently a senior English major came to my office and told me he has answered the call to preach."

Ralph Hampton, chairman of the Biblical and Ministry Studies Department at the College, reviewed the 232 male graduates from FWBBC for the past 10 years and found that nearly half—over 45%—are preachers (pastors, associate pastors, youth pastors). "Over the years, on average, about a third of our total student population has been preparing for some ministry field—pastoring, missions, youth ministry, and such," he said.

"It's amazing how many of our men go on to preaching ministries."

rolled in the Pastoral program are very impressive. Their combination of intellect, commitment, warmth, and natural ability is very heartening and bodes well for their future ministries. We are praying and searching for more of their kind."

While acknowledging the need for more, Free Will Baptist Bible College's administration, faculty, and staff are pleased to see so many of its young men going out to preach. Help them pray that the Lord of the harvest will call more workers to this vital field. ■

Free Will Baptist



Bible College

Giving—More Ways Than One

By William Evans

Tax codes in the United States are written to encourage charitable giving. As a result, if you itemize your tax return you can deduct charitable gifts valued up to 50% of your annual income. With income tax returns just around the corner, consider the following information.

The tax code provides other ways to use the charitable deduction than the direct contribution. Among them are the possibility of creating charitable remainder trusts and gift annuities. Doing so provides a generous income tax benefit plus produces a lifetime income stream that is often more generous than any available elsewhere.

Consider the following benefits from funding a charitable gift agreement.

Professional money management now and in the future. Periods like the past three years cause many of us to want help managing our financial affairs, or we may simply want to escape the pressure of doing so. Extended travel or illness may make active management difficult for us, but organizational management eliminates the problem of personal responsibility.

These type charitable agreements can also protect our primary assets from attachment or exhaustion prior to our death.

An income stream. Various possibilities for regular, monthly income may be personally tailored for your specific needs. Some may want guaranteed monthly income for the rest of their lives. Others, seeking protection from future inflation, may want flexible payments. Income streams may be arranged to meet your personal situation and needs by the instrument and payout arrangement.

Tax benefits. An income tax charitable deduction is available with any of these agreements. The exact amount of the deduction will be determined by the type agreements used, the age of the donor or donors, the rate of return paid out and the federal rate used for the month of funding.

Capital gains taxes that would be due on the sell of appreciated assets will be totally avoided or reduced depending on the type agreement funded.

With the charitable remainder gift annuity, even a portion of the income payment is tax-free for the life expectancy of the donor or donors.

Avoids probate and transfer delays. Charitable agreements avoid the cost and delay of the probate process. You also get the immediate satisfaction of knowing your gift will be made without the risk of losing the income you need during life.

Consider the following examples. Two of these agreements involved single individuals and one was for a couple. Exact details of the agreements involved are dependent on the number of individuals included, their ages, rates of income involved and the federal rate applicable to the funding of the agreement.

One of our friends who planned to benefit two Free Will Baptist agencies in his will decided to accomplish his goal another way. Instead of waiting until

his death and the probate process was completed, he created a charitable gift annuity and modified his will. He immediately lowered his income tax burden by the charitable deduction allowed for this year. He saved even more income tax now and in the future years since a portion of his income will be tax-free. He accomplished his gift-giving goal but also has the advantage of the tax breaks during his life. The agencies are pleased because they will get their gift as soon as a death certificate is provided, generally within a month or six weeks after death. That's a real win-win situation for all involved.

Another friend, a widow with a rental house, wanted to avoid the management problems, escape the capital gains tax and still have an income. She gave us the house to fund a trust agreement. She was able to avoid all capital gains because the Foundation sold it. She received an income tax deduction based on the full fair market value of the house and the IRS calculations. She receives a monthly income from the Foundation for her life and payments will go to her children for a term of years thereafter. There will be no liquidation expenses for the trust when the contracted term expires, so all remaining assets will transfer to the charities of her choice. Another win-win for all parties.

A couple entered an agreement with us because they were concerned about the stability of the economy. They did not want a high rate of return, just a solid steady one for the rest of their lives. Their income needs were met, plus a significant income tax deduction was created immediately. Again a win-win.

What did these people have in common beside being Free Will Baptist?

1. They wanted to make a final major gift to one or more of our Free Will Baptist agencies.
2. They needed a life-time income from the assets they held.
3. They wanted to minimize the expenses and delays of getting their gift to the ministry.
4. They wanted some tax relief if possible.
5. They desired to get the gift finalized during their life.
6. They achieved their goals.

The Foundation would welcome the opportunity of helping you achieve your goals too. Call us toll-free at 1-877-366-7575. ■

Free Will Baptist



Foundation



Garnett Reid

Paul's "E"-Mail – The Ephesian Letter

Though he was in chains under house arrest in Rome, Paul's spirit still soared. "I am an ambassador in bonds," he declared. "As such I will speak boldly, as I ought to speak" (Eph. 6:20).

This elderly prisoner for the faith now pens one of the most celebrated letters in history. Ephesians was Calvin's favorite epistle. Luther suggested that this book teaches all that we need to know even if we never read anything else.

Over the course of this year we will survey Paul's letter to the Ephesians. As we begin, I encourage you to read the book through at one sitting to get a feel for its broad, sweeping contours as well as for its particular, practical pointers. Then follow up each month by reading again the section of the letter addressed in that column. *Nothing substitutes for reading the biblical text.*

Our look at Ephesians this year should bring several benefits. To begin with, perhaps no other letter paints as clear a picture of redemption's story-line as does this one. It offers an "eye-in-the-sky" view of God's plan to reconcile the world to Himself—a much-needed perspective for Christians caught up in today's fragmented, disjointed, "my group is better than yours" mentality.

What is more, Ephesians depicts the church as it really is: the body of Christ, positioned with Him and for Him in heavenly places, yet with a mission to fulfill on earth. How we need this reminder in a day when our culture often attacks the church or relegates Christianity to the fringes of society.

As we read the letter, we should also consider the constant need to shape up in how we live. Our walk should match our talk, as a friend says. When people around us can't tell that we're Christians because we live like everyone else, something's wrong.

Personally, I like Ephesians because it has something for everyone:

- For the deep theological thinker: "In whom we have obtained an inheritance, being predestinated according to the purpose of him who worketh all things after the counsel of his own will" (1:11).
- For the new Christian, wondering what to do now: "grow up into him in all things, which is the head, even Christ" (4:15).
- For that "good" person trying to get to heaven by keeping all the rules: "by grace are ye saved through faith . . . it is the gift of God, not of works" (2:8-9).
- For the discouraged Christian drowning in disappointment: "that ye may know what is the hope of his calling . . . and the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints" (1:18).
- For the weak believer wrestling with temptation: "that he would grant you . . . to be strengthened with might by his Spirit in the inner man" (3:16).
- For the skeptical church-goer who thinks she's seen it all before: "unto him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think" (3:20).
- For the divided congregation facing splits and hard feelings: "with all lowliness and meekness, with longsuffering, forbearing one another in love; endeavoring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace" (4:2-3).
- For the professing Christian who tries to live on the edge: "Put off . . . the old man, which is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts . . . and put on the new man" (4:22, 24).
- For the reluctant saint lacking self-confidence who always says "No" to the nominating committee: "But unto every one of us is given grace according to the measure of the gift of Christ" (4:7).
- For the angry man whose rage easily boils over: "Let all bitterness, and wrath, and anger . . . be put away from you" (4:31).
- For the careless Christian who wastes time in dead-end pursuits: "See then that ye walk circumspectly . . . redeeming the time" (5:15-16).
- For the grumpy guy you see in the church parking lot who fusses about everything: "singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord; giving thanks always for all things unto God" (5:19-20).
- For the family confused about roles and priorities: "Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands . . . Husbands, love your wives . . . Children, obey your parents" (5:22, 25; 6:1).
- For the employee adept at cutting corners and schmoozing: "as the servants of Christ, doing the will of God from the heart; with good will doing service, as to the Lord" (6:6-7).
- For the one struggling with illicit sexual desires: "sexual immorality and all uncleanness . . . let it not be once named among you" (5:3).
- For that faithful saint whose behind-the-scenes work no one else wants to do: "the whole body, joined and held together by every joint . . . when each part is working properly, makes the body grow" (4:16).
- For those who treat Jesus with contempt or apathy: "He put all things under his (Jesus') feet and gave him as head over all things to the church, which is his body, the fullness of him who fills all in all" (1:22-23).
- For all believers: "to know the love of Christ, which surpasses knowledge, that you may be filled with all the fullness of God" (3:19). ■

[For more introductory and background details on Ephesians, see the work of Robert E. Picirilli in the *Randall House Bible Commentary*.]



Randy Sawyer

Swallowing a Few Gnats

One mark of a truly great leader is the ability to survey the landscape of issues and separate the things that matter from the peripheral. In his outstanding critique of the Reagan presidency (*Ronald Reagan: How an Ordinary Man Became an Extraordinary Leader*), Dinesh D'Souza argues that Reagan's effectiveness as a leader was determined, at least in part, by his ability to see things in their relative importance.

Great Leaders Display it

Jimmy Carter, Reagan's predecessor, "forgot his priorities by immersing himself in a morass of detail." Instead, D'Souza writes, "Reagan kept his sights on the road ahead. He understood the importance of the big picture and would not be distracted by petty detail." An incident at the end of the Carter term serves to illustrate the difference between the two leaders.

Shortly before Carter was to turn the reigns of power over to Reagan, the president-elect went to the White House to pay his respects to the outgoing Commander-in-Chief. At that meeting Carter felt it his responsibility to fill Reagan in on some of the complex issues he would soon face. Carter went down the list, discussing various treaties and secret agreements the United States had with other countries.

According to D'Souza, "Reagan listened politely but did not write anything down or ask any questions. The information was 'quite complex,' Carter writes, 'and I did not see how he could possibly retain all of it merely by listening.' Yet when Carter asked him if he wanted to take notes, Reagan said no. Carter was understandably nervous about turning over the presidential authority to a man like Reagan."

His persistent refusal to immerse himself in the "morass of detail" continued after taking the oath of office. At times,

eyewitnesses report, Reagan would sit through high-level meetings displaying the attitude of a "bored teenager." Some times he would interrupt with a joke or humorous quip, and on other occasions he would simply bring the discussion to an abrupt halt and summarily leave the proceedings without explanation.

He has been labeled naïve, disinterested, and worse, incompetent. Yet when he left office, the man known as "the Great Communicator" had led in the resurgence of America economically and militarily, both at home and abroad.

How could this happen? How could an "ordinary man" become such "a great leader?" The words of arch-liberal Senator Edward Kennedy provide a fitting answer to that question.

While addressing a Yale University audience in March 1989, Kennedy declared, "Whether we agree with him or not, Ronald Reagan was an effective president. He stood for a set of ideas . . . he meant them, and he wrote most of them not only into public law but into the national consciousness." Reagan understood the "ideas" that were important as well as the ones that were not.

Poor Leaders Mistake it

One of Jesus' complaints against the Pharisees was that they had lost sight of what is truly important. Using the smallest and largest of the ceremonially unclean animals as an analogy, Jesus accused them of "*straining a gnat, and swallowing a camel.*"

The Pharisees would drink their wine with clenched teeth in order to prevent contamination by any small insects. While paying such attention to such trivial matters, they were guilty of overlooking the significant, and in the process were guilty of "*swallowing a camel.*"

In a sermon on this subject, Scottish preacher George Morrison said of the Pharisees, "they were very much

in earnest about . . . Jewish law; but for all that they had sadly misinterpreted the law. They laid great stress upon the infinitely little, until the weightier matters of it passed out of sight. They magnified trifles . . ." Because of "mistaken magnitude," they crucified the Savior, rejected grace and lost their place in the kingdom.

Pastoral Ministry Requires it

As a pastor I am constantly called on to judge the relative importance of issues. This is true whether we're talking about time, money or personnel resources. Which meetings are worthy of my time? Which ministries are worthy of our dollars? Which programs are worthy of our people?

Furthermore, problems arise at my church just like they do at yours, each one requiring me to evaluate the importance of things. Parishioners complain about everything from the length of services to the style of music to the scheduling of events.

Aren't you going to do something about these ladies wearing pants to Wednesday evening service, Pastor?

Pastor, these kids are ruining our buildings. Aren't you going to address this problem?

Pastor, what about that boy with an earring? Aren't you going to do something? He might corrupt the rest of our kids!

Pastor, do something!

Am I happy with everything that goes on at my church? No, of course not. Do I wish my congregation displayed more spiritual discernment in regard to dress and entertainment and cultural trends? Yes, of course I do. But unless I am willing to lose the opportunity of ministry altogether because of certain undesirables, I'd better get use to *swallowing a few gnats.*

If it comes to a choice between ladies coming in pants and them not coming at all, I'd just as soon swallow a few gnats. If it comes to a choice between kids tearing up the place and their parents keep-

ing them at home, *I'd just as soon swallow a few gnats*. If it comes to a choice between discipling that earning-wearing teen and that boy hanging out on the street corner with crooks and criminals, *I'd just as soon swallow a few gnats*.

There comes a time in the ministry of each pastor when he must decide which battles are worth fighting and which battlefields are worthy of his blood. Simply put, there are some battles I'm perfectly willing to lose today if doing so will give me a greater chance of winning the war tomorrow. It's all a matter of *the relative value of things*.

I'm not telling you anything new. Even if you refuse to admit it, and even if you determine the value of things differently than I do, you can't escape it. Leadership demands the same from all of us. We all must decide what is important, knowing that mistaken magnitude may paralyze the work.

World Evangelism Demands it

Now, what we know to be true on the local level is also true in a broader context. It is incumbent upon each of us to evaluate our mission as a denomination and get to it. This may mean *swallowing a few gnats* along the way. My context may be different from yours, and the battles I face may not be the same as those you fight. Likewise, because of our varied backgrounds, we have preferential differences. But I still contend that the things that unite us are greater than things that divide us.

We all agree on the centrality of the cross, the sufficiency of the Word and the value of a soul. We all know that the time for ministry is now and that opportunities are quickly passing. Shouldn't we be willing to stomach a *few gnats* for the sake of the kingdom? I'll swallow a few of yours if you'll pay me the same courtesy. I'd rather do that than force down a camel, and in the process lose an opportunity to impact the world for Christ's sake. ■

THE TOGETHER WAY

November 2002

Receipts:	Designated	CO-OP	Total	Year To Date Designated	Year To Date CO-OP	Year To Date Total
State						
Alabama	\$ 641.05	\$ 359.83	\$ 1,000.88	\$ 4,231.58	\$ 2,074.92	\$ 6,306.50
Arizona	100.00	63.50	163.50	100.00	269.60	369.60
Arkansas	14,830.63	19,652.05	34,482.68	116,172.79	173,040.84	289,213.63
California	.00	1,084.74	1,084.74	.00	10,502.69	10,502.69
Colorado	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00
Delaware	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00
Florida	.00	.00	.00	527.36	5,670.00	6,197.36
Georgia	33,128.03	2,094.57	35,222.60	312,631.63	16,343.82	328,975.45
Hawaii	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00
Idaho	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00
Illinois	10,609.00	2,428.10	13,037.10	119,925.19	20,486.13	140,411.32
Indiana	2,291.54	.00	2,291.54	19,862.87	1,846.63	21,709.50
Iowa	.00	.00	.00	.00	2,058.78	2,058.78
Kansas	.00	.00	.00	26.55	504.53	531.08
Kentucky	300.00	441.75	741.75	2,465.36	10,406.23	12,871.59
Louisiana	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00
Maryland	.00	.00	.00	.00	131.25	131.25
Michigan	17,926.77	1,074.02	19,000.79	185,795.87	23,934.23	209,730.10
Mississippi	8,100.28	387.04	8,487.32	103,634.10	5,896.94	109,531.04
Missouri	33,604.03	16,202.94	49,806.97	414,813.08	156,850.51	571,663.59
Montana	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00
Nebraska	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00
New Jersey	77.00	.00	77.00	77.00	.00	77.00
New Mexico	922.05	41.03	963.08	6,781.56	424.58	7,206.14
North Carolina	202.87	1,784.65	1,987.52	13,883.74	30,524.20	44,407.94
Ohio	21,487.57	2,956.36	24,443.93	142,931.19	26,159.27	169,090.46
Oklahoma	46,776.53	10,126.18	56,902.71	521,543.36	117,253.54	638,796.90
South Carolina	45,771.64	50.84	45,822.48	382,614.87	513.37	383,128.24
South Dakota	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00
Tennessee	22,321.27	966.81	23,288.08	144,864.17	13,783.88	158,648.05
Texas	.00	.00	.00	90,780.80	3,403.90	94,184.70
Virginia	387.77	15.55	403.32	3,316.59	690.70	4,007.29
Virgin Islands	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00
West Virginia	9,920.00	307.25	10,227.25	22,731.41	1,185.89	23,917.30
Wisconsin	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00
Canada	674.59	13.18	687.77	6,168.74	118.06	6,286.80
Northwest Association	.00	.00	.00	1,179.42	.00	1,179.42
Northeast Association	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00
Other	.00	(.06)	(.06)	.00	(.26)	(.26)
Totals	\$ 270,072.62	\$ 60,050.33	\$ 330,122.95	\$ 2,617,059.23	\$ 624,074.23	\$ 3,241,133.46
Disbursements:						
Executive Office	\$ 2,121.63	\$ 27,022.67	\$ 29,144.30	\$ 19,044.99	\$280,833.52	\$ 299,878.51
Foreign Missions	160,918.74	7,596.36	168,515.10	1,525,928.83	78,945.32	1,604,874.15
FWBBC	25,152.56	7,596.36	32,748.92	244,335.29	78,945.32	323,280.61
Home Missions	68,985.82	5,944.99	74,930.81	717,287.59	61,783.36	779,070.95
Retirement & Insurance	398.34	4,623.90	5,022.24	3,887.13	48,053.78	51,940.91
Master's Men	578.81	4,623.90	5,202.71	5,186.77	48,053.78	53,240.55
Comm. for Theo. Integrity	61.19	165.12	226.31	1,241.13	1,716.17	2,957.30
FWB Foundation	353.51	1,981.67	2,335.18	3,534.22	20,594.47	24,128.69
Historical Commission	61.19	165.12	226.31	564.59	1,716.17	2,280.76
Music Commission	28.13	165.12	193.25	269.88	1,716.17	1,986.05
Media Commission	338.13	165.12	503.25	1,341.43	1,716.17	3,057.60
Hillsdale FWB College	2,258.70	.00	2,258.70	22,342.70	.00	22,342.70
Other	8,815.87	.00	8,815.87	72,094.68	.00	72,094.68
Totals	\$ 270,072.62	\$ 60,050.33	\$ 330,122.95	\$ 2,617,059.23	\$ 624,074.23	\$ 3,241,133.46



Thomas Marberry

The Essential Guide to the Short-Term Mission Trip

By David C. Forward

(Chicago: Moody Press, 1998, 227 pp., paperback, \$14.99).

The author of this insightful volume serves as president of Children's Aid Foundation, a non-profit organization that helps churches support world missions. Forward begins with the presupposition that missions is the task of the entire church, not just the ministry of a select few. He writes, "No Christian can choose to disregard missions."

He suggests early in the book that short-term mission endeavors are no substitute for career missionaries. There is simply no substitute for the Christian missionary who answers the call of God to live among a people not his own, learn their language and culture as best he can, and share Jesus Christ with them. Short-term missionaries complement the work of career missionaries and national believers.

Forward notes, quite correctly, that a great paradigm shift has taken place in the missionary enterprise during the last 30 years. One aspect of the shift is a greater reliance on national believers and short-term missionaries. Many churches now send groups of volunteers to many mission fields to accomplish specific tasks in a relatively short period of time.

He writes, "Members of Southern Baptist churches alone sent more than 75,000 short-termers and 81,000 volunteers in missions in 1996."

More church members than ever before are becoming personally involved in mission work; they are no longer simply sending others. They are going themselves.

The book is designed to provide a practical guide to churches, those who lead mission teams and those who participate in them. The author asks why mission teams should be sent. The answer is a simple one. They are sent because "there is much work to do." Short-term mission teams can assist local pastors and career missionaries in a

variety of ways.

If short-term mission efforts are to be successful, careful planning is essential. A poorly planned and poorly executed mission trip can do more harm than good. Many important decisions need to be made before sending a group on a mission trip. A church must decide if it is ready to send a missions team. It must determine where the team will go and what it will do.

Leadership is crucial in any short-term mission work. Team leaders must be carefully chosen and properly trained for their ministries. They must be able to deal effectively with difficult team members and unexpected situations.

Team members need to be selected with care. A mission trip is not a vacation; only those who can make a contribution to the ministry and work effectively with other members of the team should go. Those selected need to be prepared for what they will encounter and what they will be expected to do. They need proper guidance and direction during the trip. Follow-up after the trip is also vital.

This volume addresses common issues and answers questions. It explains how to research possible destinations and decide where a group should go. It also deals with deciding what types of ministry the group will be involved in.

The author outlines several ways to pay for a mission trip. Each method has advantages and disadvantages; the church must decide on the method that is best for its situation. He also discusses how to calculate the cost of a mission trip and the problems inherent in dealing with foreign currencies.

The author recommends that a team schedule eight to twelve meetings before departing on its mission trip. He suggests topics to be considered at these meetings. He offers suggestions on things to do and things not to do while on the field.

Free Will Baptists have been involved in short-term missions for a number of years, and we are becoming more involved. In recent years many of our churches have sent groups on mission trips to assist in several foreign countries (especially Mexico) and to minister in home mission churches in the U. S. A few of our churches have established sister church relationships with churches on mission fields.

Our Home Missions and Foreign Missions Departments have been involved in sending groups of young people to learn first-hand about serving Christ on a mission field. Because of these short-term mission activities, many Free Will Baptists, both young people and adults, have a much better understanding of missions today than they have ever had before.

This book can help us do a better job in this important area of our denominational ministry. Those involved in short-term ministries including mission executives, career missionaries, pastors, team leaders and others should read it. ■



Jack Williams

"My Name is John"

The last thing I intended to do was spend time with that red-haired stranger spilling from a chair in our front office. Two staff members had talked with him. Neither felt comfortable making a final decision about the sun-burned man's request for a bus ticket to Johnson City, Tennessee.

They said the man was limping; I checked and he was. They said he wore a bandage on his ankle; he did. They said he carried a plastic bag with a breathing apparatus from Vanderbilt Hospital; I saw it. They said he lost his wallet two days earlier in Louisville while visiting his sister; he confirmed it.

There he sat hunkered down against the world—no money, no identification and the only person he knew in Antioch had moved. His sister's phone had been disconnected, so he couldn't call her. He had all the bases covered. I invited the denim-clad gent with the too-large shirt into the conference room.

That's where I made my first mistake. As he eased his 6-2 frame into a cushy green chair, I stuck a hand across the table and said, "My name's Jack." That wasn't the mistake; the mistake was asking him his.

"My name is John," he said in measured cadence, his diction excellent. Right there, I knew it was over, because he reminded me of an unpaid debt. It's difficult for me not to like a man named John.

First off, I've got a brother named John. As far as I know, he has never said a harsh word about me. That's admirable in a brother. I probably helped his opinion of me by leaving home before he was two years old. The only expense he's been was paying a dollar for each "A" he made in school. I got off easy, but he was a great kid brother.

Although he spelled his name funny, Jon Meek changed my life when

he insisted that I go to college. I was a 17-year-old senior and knew just about everything, so I humored the old gentleman (Jon was in his 30s). He even took me to his college alma mater and showed me around, all to no avail.

One day as we came back from somewhere, Jon stopped his car along a highway near Boeuf River, turned to me and said, "Jack, if you don't go to college, you'll always be a minnow when you might have been a whale."

Two years later when I left a lumber-grading job to attend Bible college, I remembered the courage of that wonderful Southern Baptist minister who risked alienating a young admirer.

He lived in the foothills of the Sierra Nevada range near the rugged town of Sonora. John Oller may have been the smartest man I ever met. Two of his children attended the college where I taught. He was a Spanish language genius and a Spanish consultant for *Encyclopedia Britannica*.

Like many who teach in Christian institutions, my salary left me in financial quicksand. A friend told John about my dilemma. He loaned us money to consolidate our bills and repay him at a low interest rate. But it gets better.

When austerity measures at the college demanded that employees take a 10% pay reduction, John Oller called from his sick bed and told me to skip the payment that month. John died 23 years ago, but he will always live in my heart.

Other men named John touched my life with gentleness. John Gibbs, a handsome St. Louis preacher, rescued me from myself after a toxic pastorate. Johnie Hale, the Button Willow gambler turned preacher, placed his arms around my shoulders during some dark hours and made me want to trust again.

The legendary Oklahoma pastor John West spoke kindly to me at the

peak of his ministerial influence. He added me to his mailing list and showed me the importance of doing small things well. He let me get close at a time when hundreds vied for his attention. When he died, another man named John had left his thumbprint.

You should have been there the day John from Butte, Montana, flagged Wade Jernigan and me off the second floor of an unfinished dormitory. John looked like a hobo with his worn face and backpack. He quoted Acts 4:20, gave his testimony, accepted a glass of cool water and walked out of our lives. He left tracks on my soul.

So when that red-haired man said his name was John, he touched a holy place. I listened as he explained about his monthly disability check, his bipolar struggles, and his mom and dad (both now dead) who were Free Will Baptists in East Tennessee.

After losing his wallet in Louisville, the 36-year-old man prayed that God would send somebody to help him. The last of his money brought him to Antioch. He was hungry, alone, friendless, in need of a bus ticket home . . . and his name was John.

What did I do? I remembered my brother John. I thought about Jon Meek's faithful counsel, John Oller's generosity, John West's openness and Montana John's testimony. Then I dropped John the Red-Haired at the Greyhound bus station with a ticket to Johnson City and money for food.

Think I got snookered? Could be. But that night I slept the sleep of the just. I had answered the prayer of a man named John. ■

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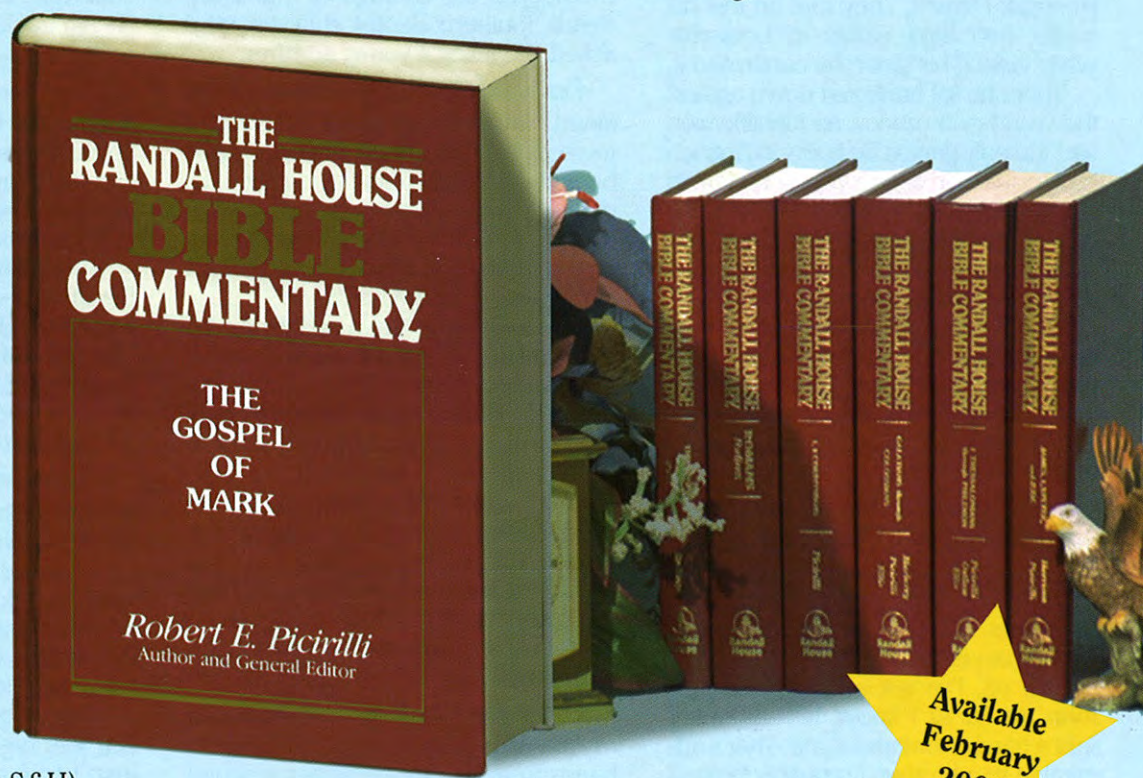
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