



CONTACT

Official Publication of the National Association of Free Will Baptists

March 2003

DAD AND ME

**A Two-Minute Sermon
The View from the Pew
Something Bigger than I
Murder in the Sanctuary**

inside

MARCH 2003

VOLUME 50, NO. 3

ARTICLES

4 Dad and Me

An unusual son looks back at his unique father.

7 The View from the Pew

A layman calls for a return to biblical preaching in Free Will Baptist churches.

10 Something Bigger Than I

She asked the Lord for a job in the local church ... and found the answer to her prayers on the next pew.

12 Another View of the Convention

The new executive secretary takes a pastor's look at the biggest Free Will Baptist gathering each summer.

14 About the Church

Part three of an 11-part series titled, "I'm Young, But This I've learned."

16 Word and Deed Go Hand in Hand

A fresh and in-depth analysis of the third commandment.

COLUMNS

3 An Encouraging Word

A Two-Minute Sermon

22 The Department Pages

26 Green Tree Bible Study

Pointers from a Prayer Warrior

27 The Pastor's Wife

We're in this Together

28 The Preacher's Perspective

Feasting on Man-Flesh

30 Top Shelf

31 Briefcase

Murder in the Sanctuary

NEWS

18 Free Will Baptist Newsfront

Yvonne Thigpen Leads ETA
National Convention Intern Program
Tennessee Sets Conference
Build the Fire Conference
West Virginia "Bethlehem Marketplace"
Couple Gives \$50,000 to Church
FWBBC Relocation Update
New Degree Program at FWBBC
Worthington Moves to North Carolina

21 Currently

Editor-in-chief: Keith Burden
Editor: Jack Williams
Editorial Assistant: Marilyn Pritchard
Circulation: Angie Williams
Printed by: Randall House Publications

Contact (ISSN 0573-7796), published monthly by the National Association of Free Will Baptists, 5233 Mt. View Road, Antioch, TN 37013-2306. Address all correspondence and subscriptions to Post Office Box 5002, Antioch, TN 37011-5002. Phone 615/731-6812.

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

at Antioch, Tennessee, and additional offices.

Copyright privileges, reserved © 2003. Member of the Evangelical Press Association. Postmaster: Send address changes to *Contact*, P. O. Box 5002, Antioch, TN 37011-5002.

USPS 130-660



Keith Burden

A Two-Minute Sermon

It was late in the afternoon, just before dark. I needed to pick up a few items and decided to stop by the local convenience store rather than making the 10-minute drive to the supermarket. As I stepped from my car to enter the store, something flickered in the corner of my eye and caught my attention.

Not more than 50 feet away, flames leaped from the gas tank of a station wagon. A man fueling his car was in a hurry and had left the motor running. Watching the register on the pump, he was oblivious to the explosive situation developing behind him.

One Scary Moment

Instinctively, I cupped my hands and yelled, "Fire! Fire!" A look of horror swept over the gentleman's face as he turned and saw an inferno spewing from the fuel tank. Paralyzed with fear, he stood motionless as flames billowed from the side of his car.

Rushing into the convenience store, I interrupted the attendant who was visiting with a customer and explained that there was an emergency outside. He was clearly irritated by my intrusion and his facial expression betrayed his sense of skepticism. As he casually turned and glanced outside toward the gas pump, his irritation suddenly turned into a look of desperation.

Two Simple Questions

The clerk had absolutely no idea what to do. As calmly as possible, I asked him two simple questions—"Where is the shut-off switch for the gas pump?" and "Do you have a fire extinguisher?" Without saying a word, he darted from behind the counter to the stockroom at the back of the store. I followed him.

As the employee frantically searched

for the shut-off switch, I snatched the fire extinguisher from a wall mount just inside the door and bounded from the room like Red Adair on his way to fight an oil well blaze. Dodging bewildered customers, I sprinted through the store and into the parking lot. I watched in disbelief as the station wagon's owner pulled out into the street and nonchalantly drove away.

Three Important Lessons

It has been said, "A sermon does not need to be eternal to be immortal." My experience proved to be a classic illustration of that principle. I learned more from that two-minute incident than from some hour-long messages I've heard . . . (sigh) and preached.

For instance, I discovered that it always pays to heed the warning signs. Have you ever noticed how many of them are posted around a gas pump? (i.e. flammable liquid, no smoking, use approved containers only, stop engine before pumping fuel.) The owner of that car disregarded the warning sign.

Christians are not exempt from this danger. A persistent headache or burning sensation between your shoulder blades could be a sign of stress. The lack of meaningful conversation between you and your spouse or children could be pointing to neglected relationships. That "empty" feeling might well be symptomatic of an anemic devotional life. It can be dangerous to disregard these warning signs.

I was reminded that we need to think about others rather than just about ourselves. That careless man not only jeopardized his own life and family (who were sitting in the car), he also put at risk the safety of those nearby who were fueling their cars.

It's easy to get trapped in a "me first" mentality. People who think only about themselves often miss opportunities to minister to others. Al-

ways looking out for number one spawns a critical spirit, robs us of the blessing of genuine spiritual worship and causes us to become tight-fisted with our resources. You can safeguard against this selfish tendency if you live by the golden rule and obey the second greatest commandment.

I also learned that a sense of urgency will cause us to do things we would not otherwise normally do. I did not give a second thought to yelling at a total stranger in the parking lot. I wasn't a bit reluctant to interrupt a conversation between two people or run wildly through a crowded business.

Too often we allow our inhibitions to keep us from doing our duty. Fear of rejection or what others may say or think keeps us silent when we should be sharing our faith. Negative peer pressure prevents us from standing up for what is right or speaking out against evil.

Some people miss opportunities for service because they're intimidated by the talent or giftedness of others. We need a renewed sense of urgency that pushes us outside our comfort zone and forces us to do what we would not otherwise normally do.

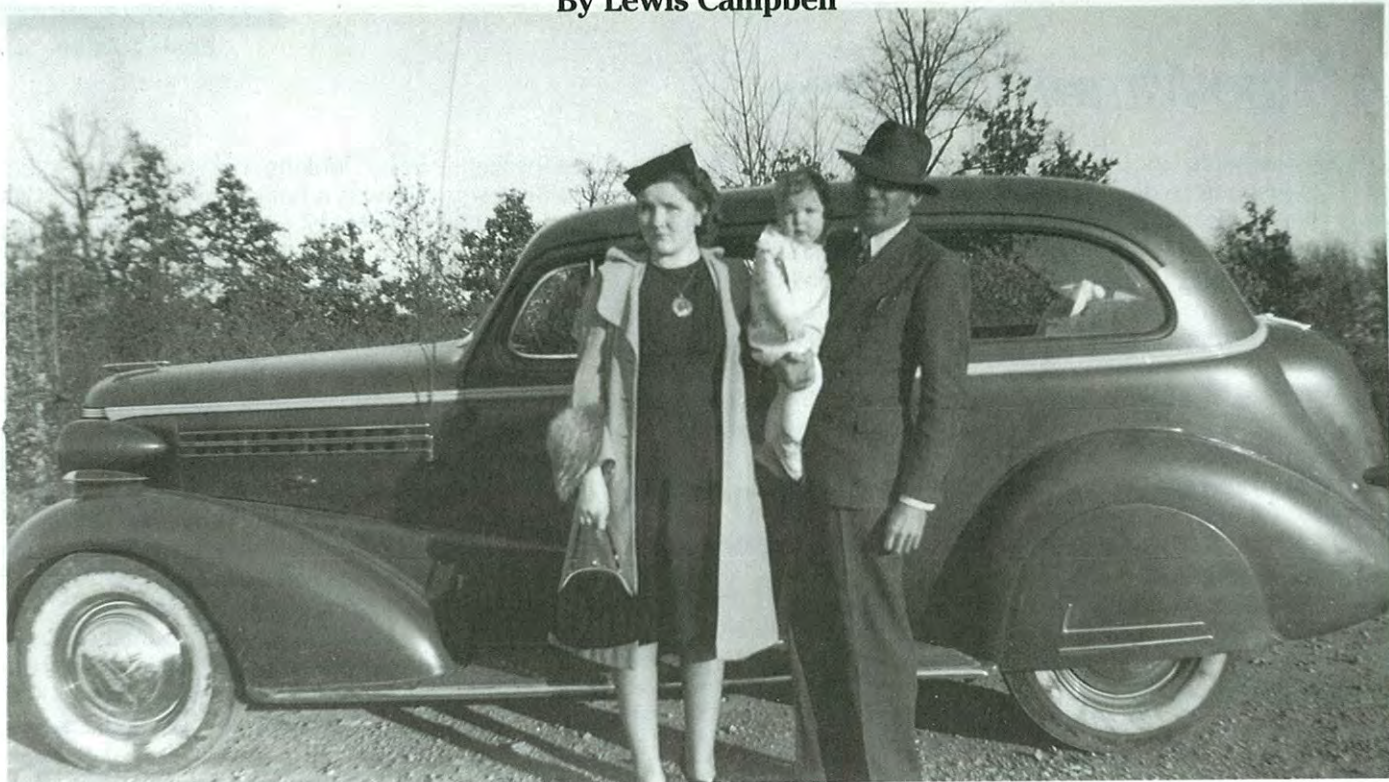
Did the driver of that station wagon learn anything from his experience? I'm not sure. But I am quite certain of one thing—he did not soon forget the two-minute incident, for as he pulled away I saw an ominous black burn mark on the left rear quarter panel of his car.

I never stop to buy gas without remembering what happened that day. The next time you stop to gas up your automobile, remember the lessons from my two-minute sermon. Unless, of course, you prefer some fellow with a fire extinguisher running across the parking lot toward you yelling, "Fire! Fire!" ■

An unusual son looks back at his unique father.

Dad and Me

By Lewis Campbell



The Campbell parsonage family (1939).

The two of us were motoring up I-40 somewhere in Western Tennessee one hot July day when the driver observed that people often love sincerely but the love can not get through the barrier of their own pain. Two silent miles later the depth of his statement got through to me.

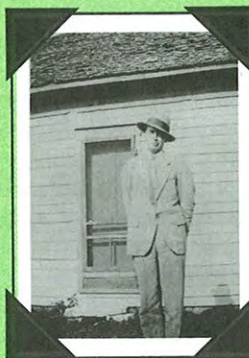
The speaker was a 75-year-old country preacher from the Ozark foothills of Southwest Missouri. The statement is an example of the off-the-wall insight characteristic of the Reverend Cecil Herbert Campbell for nearly nine decades.

The Beginning

He was born in 1910 to an adventuresome couple with deep Appalachian roots. They had come by train to Southwest Missouri with everything they owned in suitcases, looking for a better life. The Campbells purchased a farm from R. L. Lewis, the grandfather of their future daughter-in-law. Mr. Lewis in turn had gotten the farm as part of a land grant.

The love of the soil was born and bred into young Cecil. He had a life-long fascination with Hereford cows, collie dogs and any kind of horses. At age 15, given the choice of going to high school or hoeing strawberries, he chose the latter and dropped out of school.

About this same time, he found Christ as his Savior. Little



New preacher (1930s).

did he dream that Saturday night that he was meeting the primary Influencer of his life. In the next three years while he was deciding that there was more future in getting an education than hoeing strawberries, God was also bringing Cecil to the point of answering the call to the ministry.

He went back to school, graduating from high school in the spring of 1931, and was licensed to preach that fall

by Missouri's Indian Creek Association of Free Will Baptists.

Life Changes and Challenges

Seven years later, after marrying Jewell Lewis who was raised on an adjoining farm, Cecil had a life-changing experience. I entered his life.

Suppose you are a country



*Wedding Day
Cecil and Jewell Campbell.*

preacher in the middle of the Great Depression with a passion for God's Word, have almost no income, with a young bride. Imagine that three years after you married this lady, a son is born. Shortly thereafter you learn that your child, the baby for which you prayed, has a birth defect called cerebral palsy.

In the late 1930s neonatal diagnostics was in its own infancy. Early intervention was unheard of and thoughts of coping with a disabled child must have been the furthest thing from the young pastor's mind.

I must admit to being somewhat uncomfortable writing about this portion of the story for two reasons: First, this will be read by folks whose hearts have been broken by problems far greater than the crisis faced by CHC (the way Dad referred to himself) and his wife.

The second reason this is somewhat uncomfortable was CHC's own attitude toward his son. In a day when people went to great lengths to hide members of the family who weren't "perfect," CHC made it a point to introduce his son with pride to everyone he met. During those days Bible institutes, the forerunners of Free Will Baptist Bible College, were being held over the mid-section of our country. CHC attended most of these.

Before I could talk plainly, I was introduced to the likes of L. C. Johnson, Robert Crawford, Thomas Willey and Laura Belle Barnard with the same matter-of-fact explanation. "This is my son, Lewis; he had a little rough start but he's doing okay now." Dad apparently made a commitment early in my life that whatever my potential was it was his job to help me reach it.

I asked Mother once if she experienced the period of anger or depression so common in parents of handicapped children. She said emphatically, "No, you were God's gift for me, and He will give me grace to raise you to be what He wanted you to be."

This attitude seemed to be common for CHC and his wife. Dad's faith probably seemed simplistic or even naïve to some people. As I got older, I realized that its simplicity spoke of great profundness.

It never occurred to Dad that I would be anything but a success. Looking back, it's evident that he knew my limitations better than he let on. However, he hid this knowledge in his expectation that I produce to 100% of my abilities.

When I was learning to walk all the way from 18 months to well past four years, I fell many times. Dad would never pick me up nor would he let others. He always would say, "Jump up, Son; us men can take it." I have learned since that this came close to causing problems between CHC and his very compassionate wife. Only in the latter years of his life did Dad admit how hard that was for him to do. He did it not because "it was his way," but because he knew he had to do it.

A Man for All Seasons

Dad was always a handyman. He made sure that his son and later his grandson and son-in-law had tools and knew how to use them. At times this got rather sticky because I could not hold a nail in one hand and hammer with the other. Dad would hold the nail against the block and tell me to hit it with the hammer. When I finally hit it

Cecil Campbell (R) celebrates 50 years in ministry with life-long friend, Elwin Smith in Stella, Missouri.



Cecil Campbell's Ministry

Reverend Cecil H. Campbell was a Free Will Baptist minister for 68 years. He died July 18, 1999, at the age of 88. He pastored 58 years in 14 churches, 12 of them in Missouri where he invested 47 years of his life. He pastored 11 years in North Carolina.

Cecil began his pastoral duties at age 21 in Carterville, Missouri. His final pastorate was at Oskaloosa FWB Church in Liberal (1977-1990) where he drove the 170-mile round trip for 14 years until deteriorating health forced him to retire at age 80.

During his retirement years, Brother Campbell gave much time and energy to the Missouri FWB Historical Commission which he chaired.

In addition to pastoral duties, he stayed active in denominational outreach, moderating several district associations as well as the Missouri State Association. While pastoring in North Carolina, he served five years as chaplain for the New Bern Police Department.

Except for a four-month recovery period after a heart attack in 1988, Campbell remained active in revivals and pastoral duties for almost 70 years. He was a champion of the bivocational pastor, working at 13 different vocations supporting his family while also working in the ministry.

Rev. Campbell was a skilled electrician, plumber and carpenter, and built his own farm home. He bred and trained border collies. During World War II, he was a Red Cross volunteer. He worked 20 years as a rural mail carrier.

Born September 28, 1910, in Stella, Missouri, he graduated from Wheaton High School in 1930. He married Jewell Marie Lewis on June 22, 1938.

Cecil Campbell was known as a man of prayer. His son, Lewis, said, "When Daddy prayed, it was like he was talking to a neighbor."

straight, he would tell me to hit it harder, while still holding the nail in place. I do not know whether that was love, determination or just plain nerve.

Dad always had time for his children. One of the many jobs Dad had to support his preaching was as an electrician. For several years he would follow the REA installers through the countryside preparing houses to receive electricity as the power lines moved through the Ozarks. My first job was 50¢ a day carrying tools for him.

Dad's love of children was not limited to his own children. He was always a young people's pastor, advocating for them and taking time to listen to them.

His grandchildren were the cream of the crop. He was proud of his three granddaughters. They were his princess-



Cecil Campbell and Raymond Riggs (R).

Campbell family on vacation in Cumberland Gap, Kentucky (1954).



es. His one grandson became a friend and confidant during his retirement years.

That does not mean that CHC was a push-over. While it was funny when his grandson Stephen cross-wired the Ford tractor, there was no laughter when Stephen (my son) got the pickup started and backed it into an oak tree. That was the one time Dad used corporal punishment for any of his grandchildren. (Author's note: Several years earlier, Stephen's father got a whipping in almost the same situation.)

A New Call

One winter Sunday afternoon in 1954, Dad got a phone call that reshaped the family's life. I had been out with some friends and returned just in time to get a sandwich and leave for Free Will Baptist League. While I wolfed down supper, Dad asked me what I thought about moving to North Carolina.

He had received a phone call to try out for a church in an unheard of place called New Bern, North Carolina. Being a teenager, involved with friends in Missouri, I did not like the idea. Dad tried out for the church, was called, and by the first of June we were carted off to parts unknown.

Overnight this country preacher with one gray pin-stripped preaching suit (and a waterman pen stuck in the lapel pocket) was turned into the pastor of a large, highly visible church in a strange state. The man who could only play the piano if he could see shaped notes was pastoring a church with a robed choir and organ, where the Doxology was an essential part of each Sunday service.

The way Dad navigated the change was a testimony to his character. Suddenly he was a leading pastor of the town. To a naïve teenage son who thought himself sophisticated, CHC was no different in New Bern than when he would pack his family into the car and to go to a country church in Stone County, Missouri.

But he was different. Things were different. He fellowshiped with bank presidents, media people, local politicians and financiers. Some became members of the church with the unlikely name of Saint Mary's Free Will Baptist Church or the church that he later started, Sherwood Forest Free Will Baptist Church.

During this time he was cited by both *Christian Life* magazine and *Moody Monthly* for his contributions to a thriving city-wide lay movement in New Bern.

Also during this time an event took place about which CHC said little. His children, however, were somewhat

awed by it. While waiting for a flight out of St. Louis, Missouri, he saw actors Lorne Greene, Dan Blocker and Michael Landon. Unembarrassed, he walked up to them and introduced himself and congratulated them on their great family-style entertainment. In the process, he learned that he and Michael Landon had mutual friends. Thirty minutes later when he excused himself, Mr. Landon thanked him for dropping by.

The Ozarks Beckon

In 1965 CHC again "heard the call." With aging parents and in-laws, the lure of the Ozark countryside and a burden for the small country churches, CHC was drawn back to Southwest Missouri. After 34 years of faithful ministry as pastor, evangelist, mentor and world traveler, he could never have dreamed on that damp dark October morning when the trucks left New Bern what lay ahead for the Reverend and Mrs. Campbell.

He pastored three churches for a total of 25 more years before retiring from the pastorate. He then evangelized and supplied pulpits for six more years. During this time he had a foretaste of Heaven, building his dream house on the farm where his sweetheart of 64 years grew up. He was content raising white-faced cattle and collie pups or just sitting in the yard watching his grandchildren (and later his great-grandchildren) frolic on his beloved hillside.

Was CHC a saint? Absolutely not. No one was more aware of his faults and failures than Dad was. Could he have been a better father? Logic and reality demands a positive answer. Would he do things differently had he the luxury of repeating his life? No doubt.

Having said that, I must say the flock at First General Baptist Church in North Little Rock, Arkansas, will never forget the time CHC stood up just before the benediction (probably his last worship service) and asked to speak. When permission was granted, he exhorted the people to faithfulness for about 10 minutes in a spirit reminiscent of the aged Apostle at Ephesus.

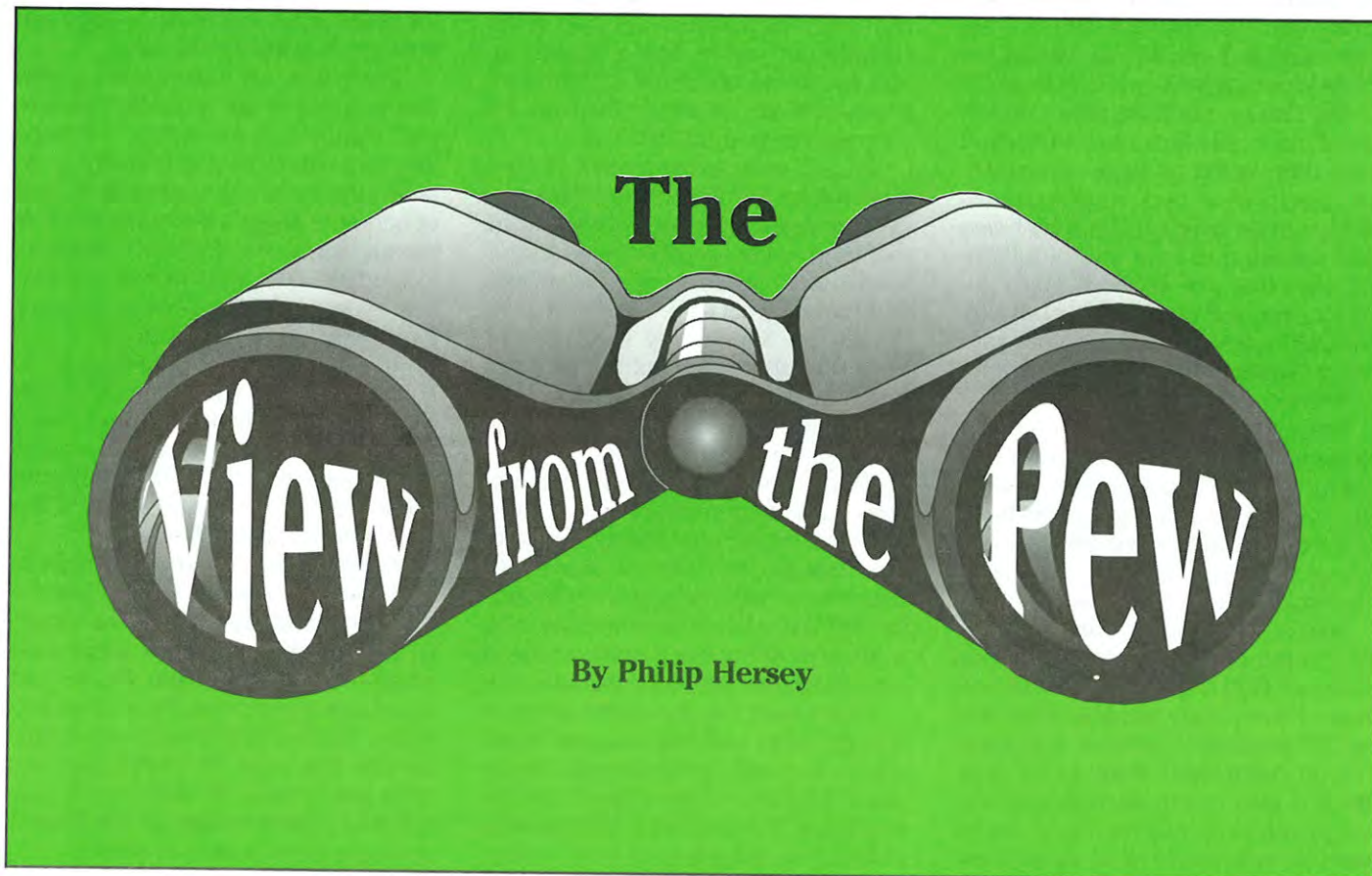
Shortly after that, CHC's granddaughter and grandson-in-law, Amy and Mike Floyd, stopped to see him on their way to seminary. Later that day when I met them for lunch, they related that Dad had prayed a blessing on them. Mike summed it up perfectly when he stated, "Grandpa may forget where he is, but when he starts to the throne he knows how to get there."

Sometimes I wonder where I would be now had there not been a country preacher who had the wisdom to see his child fall and say, "Jump up, boy; us men can take it." ■



ABOUT THE WRITER: Lewis Campbell is a psychological examiner and Christian counselor in North Little Rock, Arkansas. He is president of Training Resources, Inc., a consulting firm which serves as a backup resource to family service and juvenile agencies in Arkansas. He is an alumnus of Free Will Baptist Bible College and the University of Central Arkansas. He leads Sundry School leadership and pastoral counseling seminars for churches and church organizations.

A layman calls for a return to biblical preaching.



When the pastor stands before the congregation on Sunday morning and prepares to give the sermon, what do you expect? This is a crucial question and may well determine what kind of pastor you have or the type of church you attend. There are different aspects of corporate worship—singing hymns, prayers, giving gifts, words of individual testimony—all centered around giving glory and honor to God.

The primary focus should be when God speaks and we as believers listen, which is supposed to happen when the pastor gives the sermon.¹ For me, as a layperson who sits in the pew on Sunday morning, this is vitally important. Why? The more effectively and clearly the preacher is able to proclaim God's truth, the more my spiri-

tual needs, as well as those in the congregation around me, will be met.

I need expository preaching and I would passionately argue that you need it too. Anything else falls far short.

Why it Matters

These are perhaps strong words, but as Christians living in a country where a glut of churches offer all manner of fare and label it worship, we need to start by asking ourselves *why* we do what we do on Sunday. If we truly believe the Bible is God's communication to man, faithfully recorded, remarkably preserved and the basis of truth upon which we as Christians are to live our lives, then we are making a very bold claim.

We are saying that truth *does* exist and that God *has* spoken. If God is speaking, this is serious business and

our worship should indicate it. Otherwise we may be fooling ourselves in calling what we do worship, when in reality it is nothing more than dry, mechanical ritual, something we do because we're supposed to and there's no intrinsic joy in it, like going to the dentist or stopping at traffic lights.

The other extreme is to put on an entertainment extravaganza—something between a full-fledged opera production and a cheesy infomercial—call it worship, and hope no one notices attending church has as much significance in our lives as eating at a gourmet restaurant, attending the symphony or just going fishing with the guys.

Burning Bush Principle

How did Moses react when God spoke to him? Moses was out taking care

of animals in the field when he saw a burning bush that wasn't burning up, and it understandably caught his attention. He was going to get a closer look at this phenomena when suddenly God spoke and commanded him to stop right there and take his sandals off because he was standing on holy ground.²

The Exodus narrative rather understates the whole incident and doesn't even directly tell us Moses obeyed—it's almost as if the writer assumes anyone in their right mind, who hears God speaking to them out of a flaming bush that doesn't burn up, is going to listen and obey. I know I would. I would be terrified. All scripture says is that Moses hid his face because he was afraid to look at God.³

From subsequent events we know Moses *did* take this encounter with God seriously, and it would set the pattern that was to follow throughout the book of Exodus as Moses led the Israelites out of slavery to the promised land. God would speak. Moses would obey.

So when we as Christians gather at the church on Sunday, this is serious business. God is speaking. This is a serious matter for the preacher who, like the Old Testament prophet, is to carefully proclaim God's Word to the people. It is also a serious matter for the congregation of believers, who are to humble themselves and open their hearts to what God has to say.

Would it make a difference in our church if before the sermon the Bible on the podium burst into flame and the voice of God quietly said, "Hear the words written in My Book?"

Would the preacher regret he had not spent more time in study preparation, or be apprehensive that the sermon he had ready was more his message than God's? Would the congregation be looking at their watches thinking, "Only 27 minutes 'till 12 o'clock, home to lunch, ball game at 1:00?" At the very least, the preacher wouldn't have to resort to corny jokes to get everyone's attention.

Encounter with God

So even if the Bible on the podium doesn't burst into flame, how should I as a believer sitting in the pew come to worship on Sunday? The plaintive, fervent cry of the psalmist is a good place to start, "As the hart panteth after the water brooks, so panteth my soul

after thee, O God."⁴

Jacob, the inveterate trickster and swindler, shows us what this means on a more physical level when he literally wrestled with God throughout the night.⁵ His leg had been crippled in the struggle and dawn was approaching. Still, he would not relent until he had received God's blessing: "I will not let thee go, except thou bless me."⁶

Jacob's unrelenting pursuit of God changed his life. God blessed him and even changed his name to Israel. From that moment on, Jacob was no longer known as a backstabbing schemer, but as a man of great faith. So when I go to church on Sunday my heart should have both the longing of the psalmist and the fierce tenacity of Jacob—I want to draw near to God and there is nothing else that will satisfy.

What I don't want when I sit in my pew on Sunday morning is to be entertained, either by a scintillating musical production or by a sermon laced with slapstick comedy and gratuitous humor. Neither do I wish to be browbeaten by a preacher attempting to conform me to his image rather than the image of Christ.

I don't want my worship to become a perfunctory and burdensome ritual, where I merely plod through some dead "traditions of the elders" and return home thinking I have in some way fulfilled my obligation to God. I don't want to hear a sermon that has little or no relation to the scripture texts used, no matter how heartwarming, inspirational or motivational the message.

I long to hear the very words of God Himself, spoken from the flaming Book that doesn't burn up and know that I have been on holy ground. I want to drink of that water Jesus offered the despised Samaritan woman and have within me a "a well of water springing up into everlasting life."⁷ I need to hear God speak. *I need expository preaching.*

Preacher's Responsibility

So if it is the responsibility of the believer to come to worship with an insatiable hunger and thirst to draw near to God, what is the responsibility of the preacher? The preacher has a much greater obligation and burden. He is to speak, as it were, the very words of God Himself.

This is a solemn matter. It is what the apostle Paul meant when he carefully

instructed the young pastor Timothy to patiently "preach the word."⁸ Unfortunately, in the day in which we live, the word "preach" is loosely used to describe anything a man standing behind the pulpit on Sunday morning says, and the word has lost its meaning.

This is why we must come up with new terminology like "expository preaching." Randy Sawyer writes, "Perhaps the most simplistic way of defining expository preaching is to say that 'the text of scripture shapes the sermon.' This means that the text shapes the sermon's structure, development and presentation, allowing God to say what He wants to say from a given passage."⁹

All other forms of "preaching," to some extent, put what man has to say as more important than what God has to say. This is tragic because the Bible has become merely a tool for what the preacher wants to say, instead of the preacher becoming the tool.

The preacher, or "expository preacher" if we must use this term, is like the Old Testament prophet who accurately and faithfully transmits what God wants to say to the people. Not a word more, not a word less. He is careful to follow Paul's admonition to accurately handle the word of truth¹⁰ and not twist the words of scripture to say what he wants to say, or use it as a springboard to personal opinion.

He doesn't preach only on the elementary principles of the faith, such as the necessity of repentance from sin and a personal salvation experience, but utilizes the whole counsel of scripture, the complete panorama of spiritual truth unfolded from Genesis to Revelation. As I sit in my pew, I need for my soul to be fed. I don't need pablum. I need meat. *I need expository preaching.*

Peril of Pablum

For example, consider the book of Romans. We are all familiar with the verses in what has been called the "Romans road" to salvation.¹¹ If these few verses are *all* a pastor preaches on, neglecting the rest of the great themes in that book, this is pablum.

The writer of Hebrews talks about pablum. The reproof is directed at immature Jewish believers who had a difficult time understanding how Christ, especially in His priestly capacity, had fulfilled the requirements of the Old

Testament law and was in every way far superior to the old way of doing things.

“For when for the time ye ought to be teachers, ye have need that one teach you again which be the first principles of the oracles of God; and are become such as have need of milk, and not of strong meat.”¹²

Though this rebuke is directed at the laity, it is a far more serious matter when preachers neglect meat and only give pabulum.¹³ If the preacher only preaches about a few verses from Romans, and in a lifetime of preaching ignore the rest of that book, the Bible will never become a burning bush that doesn't burn up. It will never catch fire and neither will the congregation.

That is why pastors and teachers have a higher standard of accountability and why the apostle James warned they will incur a stricter judgment.¹⁴

When the expository preacher opens the book of Romans, he will, at one time or another, preach on *all* the great themes of that book. His preaching will be meaty spiritual food because he is being faithful to proclaim the complete counsel of scripture and not just bits and pieces. Though it is not always necessary, most of the great expository preachers simply preach through complete books, or sections, of scripture.

Dr. Martyn Lloyd-Jones, one of the greatest expository preachers of this

age, preached at Westminster Chapel in London. His sermons through the book of Romans—section by section, theme by theme, verse by verse—have been published and amount to some 10 volumes. This is meat, not pabulum. When he preached on the three chapters that comprise the Sermon on the Mount (Matt. 5-7), it took him 60 sermons, preached consecutively on Sunday mornings during 1959-1960.

So after all is said and done, when we come to church on Sunday morning, why do we do what we do? What do we expect? I know that when I sit in my pew and the Bible is opened and the preacher proclaims God's truth, that I long to hear the voice of God speaking directly to my heart from the burning bush that doesn't burn up. And like Moses, I too will take off my shoes, because I'm on holy ground. ■

Endnotes

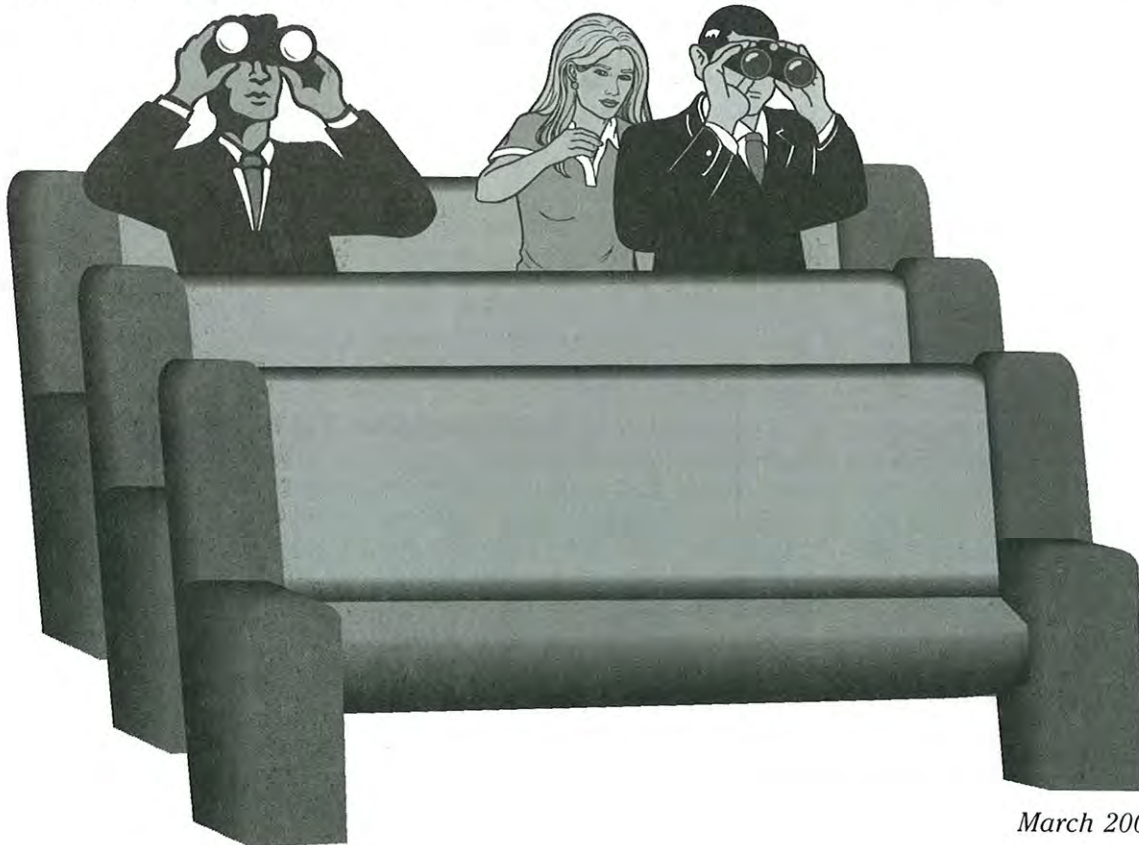
1. Why the sermon is the most important aspect of corporate worship is beyond the scope of this article. I believe there is much in scripture to support this, but in brief, see I Corinthians 14 for Paul's arguments on the supremacy of prophecy (e.g. preaching) and teaching in the church.
2. Exodus 3:5.
3. Exodus 3:6b.
4. Psalm 42:1.
5. Genesis 32:22 ff.

6. Genesis 32:26b.
7. John 4:14.
8. II Timothy 4:2a.
9. Randy Sawyer in private email correspondence.
10. II Timothy 2:15.
11. Romans 3:10, 3:23, 5:12, 6:23, 5:8, 10:9-10, 10:13.
12. Hebrews 5:12.
13. One of the qualifications for a pastor is the “ability to teach,” (I Tim. 3:2b). This implies the ability and obligation to teach the whole counsel of scripture in a manner that exhorts and convicts, (see also Titus 1:9). Pabulum preachers do not meet these requirements.
14. James 3:1.



ABOUT THE WRITER: Philip Hersey went to Japan when he was nine months old. He is the eldest son of Fred and Evelyn Hersey, who first went to that country in 1956 as Free Will Baptist missionaries. Philip and his family now live in the metropolitan Detroit area where they have been members of Central Free Will Baptist Church in Royal Oak since 1987.

email: philip@wideopenwest.com



She asked God for a job in her local church and found the answer on the next pew.

Something Bigger Than I

By Suzan Hutchinson



Miram and Dorothy Stewart

Everyone needs something to call their own. I am no exception. Our family recently moved to Marianna, Florida, where my husband pastors Marvin Chapel Free Will Baptist Church. Quite active in the church we left, I suddenly found myself with nothing to do. Oh, I was busy unpacking, setting up the home and getting schedules up and running. But I needed something in which I could invest my time and talents. Something bigger than I am.

I needed to find my own place of service. Not an easy task when you consider that there is always a position of service for the pastor, but not necessarily one for his wife. I could offer to teach a class, but the church doesn't need another teacher. Offers to sing specials didn't quite match up with my talents. Though I appreciated the offers, I knew I was doing the church a favor by remaining quiet and seated.

It seemed prudent to talk with the Lord about my desire to serve and trust Him to lay something on my heart. And that's exactly what I did. I prayed. I waited. And I was ready.

In place

At church, I sit on the third pew from the front, left side, on the end near the wall. Miram and Dorothy Stewart sit on the pew in front of me, at the end near the center aisle. They are such a devoted, sweet couple. I enjoy watching them.

The first time I saw Mrs. Dorothy was at a get acquainted meal before the church called Tim, as pastor. Quiet, shy, very reserved, she immediately caught my attention because she rarely spoke. She silently went about her work that night. Smiling when someone spoke to her or when she caught my eye.

I call her Mrs. Dorothy because she's old enough to be my mother. She's a tiny, petite woman, but wiry. I've seen her put her finger under my 19-year-old son's nose and wag her finger in his face while she fusses at him good-naturedly. When he hugs her, he is careful that he doesn't crush her. She looks so delicate. But, believe me, looks are deceiving!

Up every morning at 5:30, she walks two miles before cooking

breakfast. When I asked her why, she replied, "Because it's good for me."

Not long after we moved into the parsonage, Mrs. Dorothy dropped by the house with four jars of homemade fig preserves and asked, "Are you homesick?" When I pointed to the ground and told her that this is home, she flashed a smile that reached from ear to ear. I offered to take her home after her visit. She wagged her finger under my nose and said, "No! I'll walk!"

In Service

Dorothy is a faithful church member. Her dedication goes above and beyond that of many. And, always, her husband is by her side.

She sits up front for a reason. She wants to be close to what's happening. She needs that. Once the service begins, everything else ceases for Mrs. Dorothy. Anything that happens on the platform receives her undivided attention. When the song leader rises to lead the congregation in worship, she participates, sharing the hymnal with her husband. When the pastor begins his sermon, she turns to the scripture

reading and follows along with him.

One morning during the sermon, Mrs. Dorothy lowered her head and placed her hand on her forehead. Concerned that she might be ill, I continued to watch. Her husband noticed as well. He touched her arm and when she turned to face him, he whispered quietly, "What's wrong?" She shrugged her shoulders, pointed to the pastor, and shrugged again, shaking her head.

In Trouble

Mrs. Dorothy is deaf and has been since she was a small child. Her deafness has not been a problem for her . . . an inconvenience, but not a problem. She attended public school and graduated. She worked for well over 30 years before retiring. If asked, she will quickly tell you that life was hard . . . but she is happy . . . that God is good and has blessed her.

That Sunday morning, her problem wasn't that she was deaf. She reads lips quite well, and loves to communicate. Her problem was that she couldn't understand what the preacher was saying. The abundance of words and the speed at which they were coming frustrated her.

That's why she sits up front. She watches the song leader as he announces the songs, and the pastor in hopes of gaining something from the sermon.

She was hungry for the Word. Hungry for a word from God. Hungry to grow and to learn. Mrs. Dorothy was starving for a piece of the Bread of Life. Sure, she could read her Bible and her Sunday School book. But there is just something about hearing the Word preached that stirs the soul.

God's Solution

As I watched Mrs. Dorothy that Sunday morning, my heart broke for her. I felt her need and God spoke to my heart.

That night, before the evening service began, I handed her three typed pages.

She looked down at the pages, then back at me. "What's this? Is this Tim's sermon for tonight?"

Before I could reply, she quizzed, "Is this for me?"

I nodded my head and smiled. She clutched it to her chest. "Tell Tim thank you!" she whispered and immediately

sat down and began to read the sermon.

She was still reading when the song leader rose to announce the first song. Her husband had not yet joined her in the pew. My son, Timothy, patted her shoulder and pointed out the hymn number. She opened her hymnal and stood. Her husband joined her seconds later and she pointed to the hymn. He began fingering the words for her as we sang. She followed along and sang quietly in her heart.

Between songs, her focus was on those typed pages—reading the sermon, turning to the passage, preparing her heart for worship.

Tim walked to the pulpit after the final song. Mrs. Dorothy picked up her Bible and handed it to her husband. There was no delay. No rushed search as the scripture was announced. Mrs. Dorothy was ready to worship, her Bible open to the text, her heart prepared. She leaned close as Mr. Miram pointed to each word as the pastor read from the Word.

During the sermon, she continued to read. When she reached the end, Tim was only about a third of the way through his sermon. She looked to her husband. "Where is he?" she whispered. He took the pages and pointed to the section. She then took her Bible and turned to the book of Deuteronomy. She kept her sermon papers open to the section dealing with the verses in Deuteronomy and she watched Tim's mouth.

When he said the word "Deuteronomy," she caught it and flipped open the Bible to the marked passage. She placed her finger on it and looked at her husband, then watched as he pointed to the words so she could read along. She followed on her paper as Tim finished the rest of the sermon, looking up occasionally to read his lips, then back down to the sermon.

At the final amen, Mrs. Dorothy turned to me and said, "That was wonderful."

And, it was—truly wonderful.

Place of Service

I can't sing, but I can type fast. I don't have a class to teach, but I do have access to the pastor's sermons. The Lord placed something bigger than I am on the pew in front of me. Would I take up the challenge? Yes! I had found my place of service.

Romans 10:13-15, 17 says, "For whosoever shall call upon the name of the

Lord shall be saved. How then shall they call on him in whom they have not believed? and how shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard? and how shall they hear without a preacher? and how shall they preach except they be sent? As it is written, How beautiful are the feet of them that preach the gospel of peace, and bring glad tidings of good things. So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God."

Mrs. Dorothy Stewart faithfully attends every service at Marvin Chapel FWB Church. Has for many years. The Bible says that "faith cometh by hearing and hearing by the Word of God." Can you see how her inability to "hear" the Word frustrated her and threatened to stymie her growth?

"How shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard?" Are you doing your part to get the Word out?

In your church, there is a Dorothy. Look around you. God is willing to take the talents you have and use them for His glory. All you have to do is be willing and offer yourself. Open your eyes to the needs of those around you. Become a servant. Find your "Dorothy" and ask the Lord how you can fill your place of service. If you don't, who will? I'll tell you who, NO ONE.

This past Sunday evening, when I handed Mrs. Dorothy the sermon for that service, she said, "God bless you."

He already has, Mrs. Dorothy—exceeding abundantly above anything I could ask or think, (Eph. 3:20). ■



ABOUT THE WRITER: Mrs. Suzan Hutchinson is Timothy and Amy's mom and a member of Marvin Chapel Free Will Baptist Church in Marianna, Florida, where her husband serves as pastor. You can reach her via email at timsgirl@vol.com

The new executive secretary takes a pastor's look at the biggest Free Will Baptist gathering each summer.

Another View of the Convention

By Keith Burden

For the past 27 years, I served as a Free Will Baptist pastor. During that time I missed one national convention (1979—Charlotte, NC). Attending the “national” has always been an enjoyable, much anticipated, annual appointment on my calendar.

Through the years my pilgrimage as a conventioner has been extraordinary. I moved from being a youth sponsor staying in outlying motels in the early 1970s to clerk of the National Association staying in the headquarters hotel in 2002. Believe me, I now have a different perspective about this annual gathering of Free Will Baptists.

Why Have a Convention?

Some question the necessity of this yearly denominational function. Which brings up the question—what useful purpose does it serve anyway? There are several good reasons for us to meet. I'll mention three.

First, it allows us to conduct the business of Free Will Baptists, and that's important. Ours is a democratic form of church government that extends outward from the local church to denominational agencies, boards and commissions. Annual accountability on the national level maintains credibility and confidence at the local level.

Second, the national convention provides education, inspiration and motivation. Workshops, seminars and worship



services are planned to reinforce doctrinal distinctives, cast vision for the future and champion a call to revival.

Third, fellowship is an important dimension of this annual conclave. It's an opportunity for members of the Free Will Baptist family to visit with and encourage one another, plus, it brings us closer together as a movement and strengthens the ties that bind us.

Why Does It Cost So Much?

Conventions *are* expensive. They always have been. It is pointless to deny that fact. The following chart illustrates the escalating cost of our convention over the past 30 years.

| Convention | Costs | Percentage Increase |
|------------|-----------|---------------------|
| 1972 | \$9,117 | — |
| 1982 | \$37,748 | + 314 % |
| 1992 | \$76,598 | + 103 % |
| 2002 | \$251,048 | + 228 % |

As you can see, expenses have risen steadily. Numerous factors contribute to the higher price tag. In order to help understand the increase, consider three significant factors.

First, the cost of meeting in convention centers has increased. For example, the convention center we rented in Fort Worth, Texas, cost us \$2,301. In contrast, the convention center we rented in Memphis, Tennessee, in 2002 cost \$32,160. That, my friends, is a 1,298% increase! And that's one convention cost over which we have little or no control.

Second, our convention has become larger and more complex over the years. The number of scheduled activities multiplied until we now include some 150 events in five days, which is why we brought a convention manager on board in 2001. We must also factor in the cost of printing, pre-registration, sound, image magnification, the rental of an 18-wheel truck to transport materials and other items.



Convention registration for the national totaled 781 in 1972 (does not include NYC and WNAC stats). By contrast, the 2002 figure was 3,593. We now operate three concurrent conventions—the National Convention, the Women Nationally Active for Christ and the National Youth Conference. In 2002 the combined registration for our three conventions totaled 7,959.

Third, the work of essential committees and a task force mandated by delegates is funded through the convention budget. The Educational Task Force and the Mexican Arbitration Committee cost \$15,495 in 2001. Expenses for the Educational Task Force and Publications Committee in 2002 totaled \$20,126. The committees and the task force do necessary work authorized by delegates, but also increases convention costs.

How Is the Convention Funded?

There are various sources of revenue. The host state normally contributes a specific amount agreed on ahead of time that is applied to the rental cost of the meeting facility. National agencies as well as other ministries rent booth space in the exhibit hall to showcase their services and programs. Additionally, there are proceeds from church and state representation fees and, of course, offerings received during the convention that help defray expenses.

Unfortunately, income has not kept pace with expenses in recent years. Most notably in 1999 (Atlanta, GA) and 2001 (Detroit, MI), expenses exceeded income by \$122,287, the majority of which was the additional cost of union labor. Since 1997 the Executive Office has subsidized the convention a total of \$127,595. We now face the possibility of borrowing money to help pay for the 2003 convention, a matter that was discussed by delegates at the 2002 convention in Memphis, and approved if necessary. We don't want to borrow money and will not if it can be avoided.

What Are Our Options?

Basically, we have three options when addressing convention funding. The first option may be as simple as not returning to highly unionized cities in the future. That would have saved more than \$100,000 in 1999 and 2001.

The second option involves cutting and controlling costs. Some suggest that one way to cut costs is to meet biennially or triennially. Generally speaking, however, past experience indicates that delegates prefer meeting annually rather than every second or third year.

Others suggest that we scale back the convention and eliminate certain items (i.e. discontinue the use of outside sound/AV equipment, etc.). While this would reduce the cost, it would also diminish the quality of the meeting—a change that would, quite frankly, be unacceptable to many. It is possible, however, that some facets of the convention could be streamlined, resulting in modest savings. We are evaluating alternatives and taking steps to reduce costs where feasible.

The third option involves generating additional income. It is unrealistic to expect convention offerings to increase appreciably. Delegates and attendees already struggle to absorb rising hotel, food and transportation costs. Increasing exhibit space rental, raising delegate fees or charging a registration fee are possibilities that have been discussed, but no consensus has been reached.

In recent years delegates opted to raise the state representation fee—that's the amount each state sends per local church to help fund the convention. Until 1995 the state representation fee was \$10 per church. It increased to \$25 in 1995, then to \$50 in 1999. At the 2002



Oklahoma Ministers' Quartet.

convention, delegates raised the representation fee to \$100 effective 2004.

Some may insist that \$100 per church per year is too much (this amount equals about \$8.35 per month). However, another question begs to be answered: "Is the problem that the convention is too expensive, or that it has been under-funded?"

We registered 3,593 people in 2002 at Memphis for the main convention. The Memphis convention cost \$251,048, which is \$69.87 per registrant. According to data from another Baptist denomination, their 2002 convention cost \$87.25 per registrant. From that standpoint, comparatively speaking, the Free Will Baptist national convention is both a bargain and good stewardship.

What's the Bottom Line?

The bottom line is this—we will do whatever the denomination instructs about funding or cutting convention costs. In the meantime, we provide the highest quality meeting for the lowest possible cost. We welcome your suggestions or constructive criticism in this matter, and hope to see you in Tampa, Florida, July 20-24 for the 2003 convention.

I encourage you to respond to this article by e-mailing me at

keith@nafwb.org.

If you prefer writing, send your letter to

Keith Burden
P. O. Box 5002
Antioch, TN 37011-5002.

I look forward to hearing from you. ■

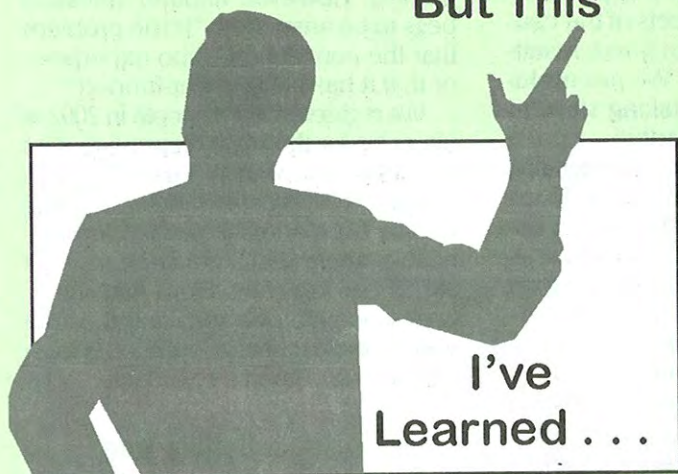
.....

ABOUT THE WRITER: Reverend Keith Burden was elected executive secretary of the National Association of Free Will Baptists eight months ago at the 2002 national convention. He relocated to Tennessee from his Oklahoma pastorate in September 2002.

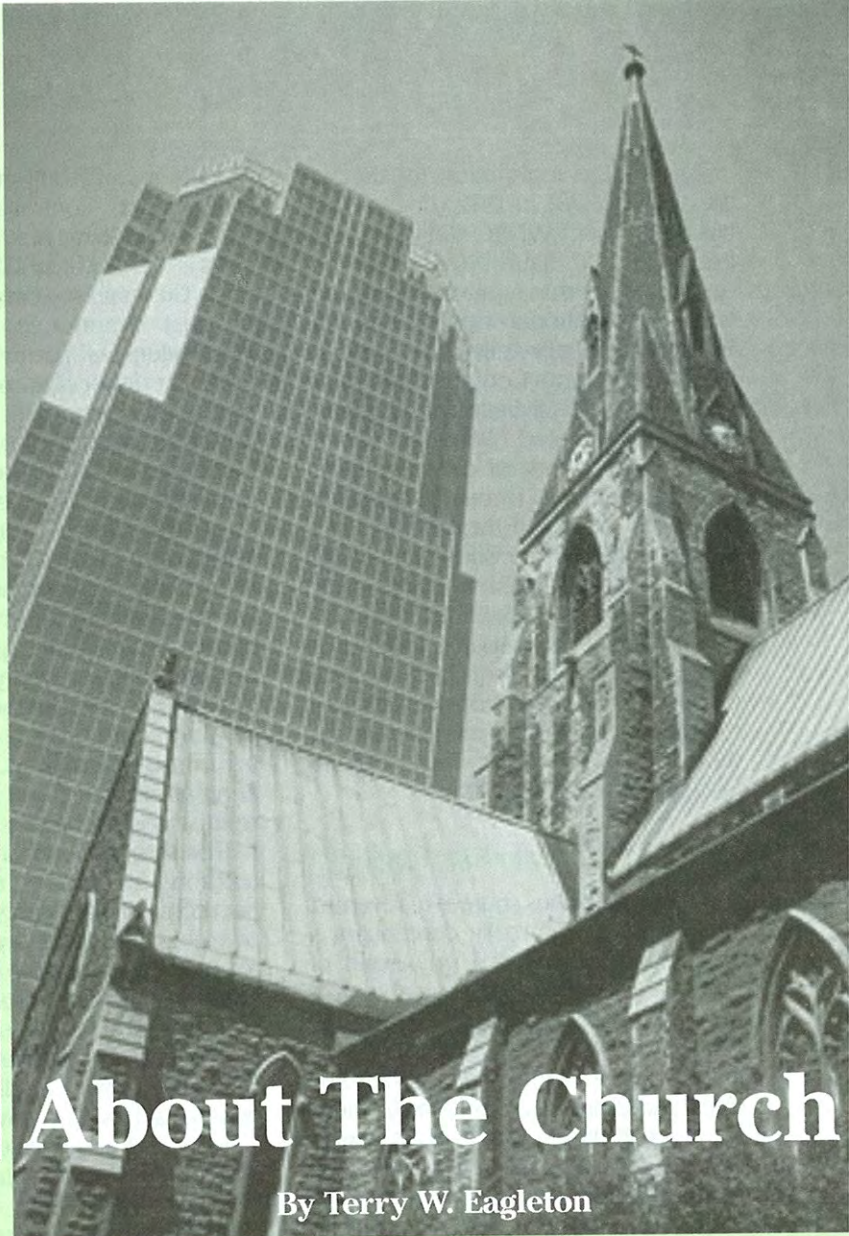


Part three of an 11-part series.

I May be Young,
But This



I've
Learned...



About The Church

By Terry W. Eagleton

Everyone has an opinion. This is one characteristic of current popular culture that makes America a great country. From the proliferation of talk shows on television and radio to chat rooms on the internet, many Americans believe they are informed experts. While it can be entertaining to hear someone who knows nothing about world economics critique chairman Greenspan, it is dangerous for Christians to saunter through life without a clear understanding of God's purpose for the Church. Ask your average teen or twenty-something anything about pop culture and you will ignite an animated conversation.

Ask your average teen or twenty-something (or Sunday School teacher or deacon or board member) about the purpose of the church, and you may get a puzzled look before a vague and stuttering answer. I'm young, but this I've learned about the church:

Strategic Lighthouse

I remember reading about an encounter in the high seas. In the darkness of a stormy night a navy watchman reported to the helmsman about receiving a coded message instructing the ship to change course. The captain was notified. He ordered his crew to command the approaching vessel to veer. A second signal came instructing the battleship to immediately alter its course 25 degrees starboard.

Angrily, a US Navy Admiral identified himself with the battleship and demanded the oncoming vessel give way. The third message settled the dispute, "This is the lighthouse. Your course will run you aground."

God has strategically placed the church as a lighthouse to signal those who need the clear light of instruction as they sail the storms on the sea of life. John wrote, "But if we walk in the

light as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin," (1 John 1:7).

Educational Institution

Once a person is guided by the light of the Word to the soul's safe harbor, the church is privileged to be the educational institution for the maturing believer. After all the recent talk about strategy in the church, we re-visit the Gospels and see that the Cornerstone of the church built its foundation on discipleship. That is, the teaching of those who were committed to follow.

We should not accept the current atmosphere of spectator attendance in the average congregation while the North American church displays such startling ignorance of and compliance toward the spiritual disciplines. One of the great joys of belonging to the family

of God is learning and living His way.

God's Visible Hand of Mercy

It is always amazing to read the first-hand accounts of the daily ministry of Jesus and His disciples. It is refreshing to read of Jesus' acts of compassion. The poor and downtrodden, the rich and influential—all were objects of His affection, touched in moments of profound need.

Sadly, we move on to the book of Acts, and having been told by theologians this book is one of transition, our attitudes shift and too many contemporary disciples never grasp the Master's words, "... As my Father hath sent me, even so send I you," (John 20:2). His church is charged with a mission of demonstrable, life-changing compassion. The full richness of belonging to the church is never experienced until you have ministered mercy in the name of Jesus.

God's Family in this Era

I've never been to an event that was called a "family reunion." I know what they are. I know some folks who attend them annually. I've even participated in large gatherings of my family, but I have never attended a family reunion.

As the years pass, I wonder what that would be like. I'm not implying that

I'm somehow dramatically disadvantaged, but somehow I have the feeling I would be richer if reunions had been one of our family traditions. Further, it appears that God thinks so also.

I'm convinced that God is in favor of family reunions, because He instructed His family to gather on the first day of the week to receive all the benefits of reunion. He dotes on His children and they confess their love to Him.

The kinfolk catch up with one another on life, share their joys, sorrows and hopes. They are instructed and reminded of the family values as they hear the family stories of years gone by and the challenges of the day. The meals are always delicious and bountiful. The regularity of the gatherings seems to insure just the right amount of nourishment for the soul, while allowing ample time and opportunity to exercise a difference in the marketplace.

Come to think of it, I guess I do belong to a family with a long tradition of reunions.

Worshipping Redeemed

Contrary to the erroneous impression of some, worship is not a contemporary church phenomenon. If anything, in the past the church was clearer on this subject.

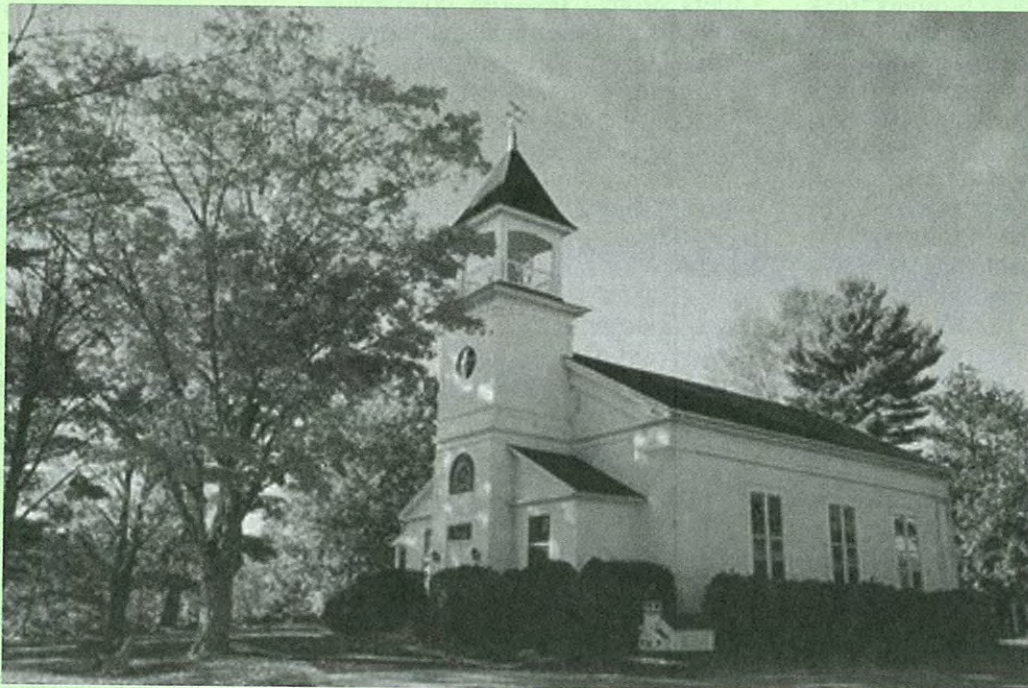
Almost 100 years ago William Temple wrote,

"... worship is the submission of all nature to God. It is the quickening of the conscience by His holiness; the nourishment of mind with truth; the purifying of the imagination by His beauty; the opening of the heart to His love; the surrender of the will to His purpose—and all of this gathered up in adoration, the most selfless emotion of which our nature is capable and therefore the chief remedy for that self-centeredness which is our original sin and the source of all actual sin," (*Readings in St. John's Gospel*).

In short, the church need not question what is its purpose or mission. The Gospels and remainder of the New Covenant make it clear the church has five essential functions: evangelism, discipleship, ministry, fellowship and worship. ■



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



A closer look at the Third Commandment.

Word and Deed

Go

Hand in Hand



By Matthew McAfee

Thou shalt not take the name of the LORD thy God in vain; for the LORD will not hold him guiltless that taketh his name in vain, (Exod. 20:7; Deut. 5:11).

Introducing the Commandment

What does it mean to take the Lord's name in vain? Is this commandment addressed to the millions of people in the modern world who utter the names God, Lord or Jesus Christ in the context of profanity? Perhaps this commandment speaks more directly to the church of the modern world.

What did the third commandment address in the life of wandering Israel when it was delivered at Sinai? The plain meaning of this commandment seems to be a prohibition against swearing false oaths.¹ In the ancient world it was common to make sacred promises to ensure one's word. Oaths were solemnly declared to invoke God as a guarantor to ensure that what was promised would indeed come to pass.²

The strength of the oath depended greatly upon the nature of the one invoked as guarantor of its fulfillment. For an Israelite to swear a promise by the divine name, yet fail to keep his word, shamefully shaded the name of Lord with reproach. Punishment for violating this commandment is severe—"the Lord will not hold him guiltless that taketh his name in vain."

The core of this commandment, specifically as it relates to swearing oaths, forms a launching pad for im-

mense implications for the follower of God. Some key observations concerning the third commandment itself may serve as a guide for discovering anew its application for today.

Explanation of the Commandment

What does it mean to *take* the name of the Lord? The verb used here basically means "to lift, carry or take."³ Some scholars suggest that the combination of this verb with "name" implies the idea of making an utterance. This means the commandment primarily addresses the issue of speech. Others strongly disagree, contending that this verb never indicates the idea of making an utterance, suggesting the issue at hand concerns action.⁴

It seems best to say that the action of taking up a name implies it is at some point uttered. Nonetheless, the action of taking up also implies some level of bearing or carrying the name. In other words, both word and action play a significant role in the third commandment.

How should we understand the Lord's name? In our modern understanding, names simply serve as titles we ascribe to individuals for the purpose of identification. This is not so in the Hebrew use of names. Personal names in the Old Testament say something about the existence, character and reputation of the one to whom they are ascribed.⁵ In other words, the name of the Lord is not a title but is a representation of God's

being. The name "LORD" functions as the whole self-disclosure of God in His holiness and truth.⁶

Such an understanding sheds a great deal of light on what it means "to take up the name of the LORD your God." It seems that much more than the mere utterance of the divine name is in view in the third commandment. Perhaps to take up the Lord's nature in the way we live better expresses the intentions of this commandment.

Clarity is needed concerning the Hebrew concept of vanity. The basic meaning of "in vain" suggests nothingness, an insubstantial thing, or even a lie.⁷ Inherent in this word is everything that is contrary to the nature of God Himself, for He is the source of all meaning, the source of all things, and the source of all truth.

When the word "vain" describes any context intimately identified with God's name (i.e., His nature), it suggests indescribable blasphemy. For a person to take up the name of the LORD in any way that presents Him as nothing, insubstantial or false is a breach of the third commandment. God's name is not simply a title that can be used manipulatively for personal gain; the Lord's name discloses His own person and power.

Implications of the Commandment

What is to be said of this commandment as it presents itself in the context of the 21st century? For the Christian who seriously desires to bring proper

glory to the God he represents, the implications are immense. We need to let this commandment penetrate the processes of our thought as it did ancient Israel at Sinai.

Inherent in the third commandment is a two-fold implication as it relates to both word and deed. The focus of this implication sharpens in light of false oaths. Yes, it is a matter of speech for an individual to commit solemnly to something in the holy name of the Lord. Nonetheless, it is a matter of action to violate one's word by failing to carry out that promised action and thus damage the reputation of the Lord by whom he swore in the sight of men. In this sense, word and deed go hand in hand, for they must be in agreement with each other.

With this said, it is important for us to realize that the underlying issue of this commandment involves the heart. The heart will always reveal its true identity through the channels of word and action. The third commandment deals with the heart.

Those of us who take up the name of the Lord have made an oath before God and all of creation. We have chosen to live our lives in agreement with the person and power of Almighty God. Paul tells the believers at Ephesus, "Be ye therefore followers of God, as dear children" (Eph. 5:1). This is the essence of what it means to be a child of God—to imitate God's nature by following His teaching.

Jesus said, "Let your communication be, Yea, yea; Nay nay; for whatsoever is more than these cometh of evil" (Matt. 5:37). Here Jesus exhorts us to let our communication be of a nature that

coincides with our actions. When you say, "Yes, I will do that!" you mean you will do it. When you say, "No, I will not do that!" you mean you will not do it. Anything beyond this is evil.

This idea functions as the underlying principle at work in the third commandment. When we declare to the world, "I am a Christian!" our actions should line up with God's teaching. To claim the title "Christian" and be involved in things contrary to scripture is to take the Lord's name in vain.

The third commandment has often been misunderstood and strictly labeled as a word against the profanity of the vile heathen. No doubt such profanity finds a prohibition in the commandment, but the implications do not end here. The third commandment impresses itself upon all who claim to be Christian. It is a warning of certain punishment for those who proclaim the Lord's name in word yet fail to represent His nature in deed. At this point, the Christian must evaluate his entire life to see if it coincides with the character of God. Do our words and our actions go hand in hand? ■

Endnotes

1. Moshe Weinfeld, *The Anchor Bible: Deuteronomy 1-11* (New York: Doubleday, 1991), p. 300.
2. *Eerdmans Dictionary of the Bible*, ed. David Noel Freedman, s.v. "Oath," by Alan C. Mitchell.
3. *Brown-Driver-Briggs Hebrew and English Lexicon*, p. 669.
4. C. F. Keil and F. Delitzsch, *Commentary on the Old Testament*, vol. 1 (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1981), 118.
5. R. Laird Harris, Gleason L. Archer and Bruce K. Waltke, *Theological Wordbook of the Old Testa-*

ment (Chicago: Moody Press, 1980), p. 934.

6. *Ibid.*, p. 934.

7. John Durham, *Word Biblical Commentary: Exodus* (Waco, TX: Word Books Publisher, 1987), p. 286.

.....
ABOUT THE WRITER: Reverend Matthew McAfee is a Free Will Baptist minister from Canada. He graduated from Free Will Baptist Bible College and is now completing a master's degree at Southern Seminary in Louisville, Kentucky.

Directory Update

ALABAMA

Billy Bevan to Sardis Church, Eufaula, from Southeastern College as president

NORTH CAROLINA

Danny Barrow to Faith Church, Washington, from Fellowship Church, Dunn

Terry McDaniel to Fairview Church, Marion, from Harriett Memorial Church, Forest City

James Spencer to Mt. Olive Church, Mt. Olive, from Sandy Acres, Columbia

Billy Jones to Rocky Pass Church, Marion, from Evergreen Church, Conway, SC

Ed Cook to Trinity Church, Greenville, from Oak Park Church, Pine Bluff, AR

Gary Lancaster to Victory Church, Leland, from Griffon Church, Griffon

Brent Patrick to Shady Grove Church, Durham, from Southeastern FWB College

TENNESSEE

Bob Shockey to Portland Church, Portland

Vern Gunnels to Solitude Church, Adamsville, from Fawn Grove Church, Mantachie, MS

Jamie Allen to Oak Grove Church, Charlotte, from Grace Church, Nashville

BEYOND BELIEF



ETA Names Yvonne Thigpen President

WHEATON, IL—The board of Evangelical Training Association (ETA) announced that Yvonne E. Thigpen has been named the ninth president of the Wheaton-based ministry. Mrs. Thigpen joined ETA in 1990 as director of educational ministries with the 72-year-old organization.

ETA's mission is to develop excellent teachers and leaders through curriculum that advances high standards of Christian educational ministries, enhancing the effectiveness of the evangelical church worldwide.

Mrs. Thigpen is a 1980 graduate of Free Will Baptist Bible College. She also studied at Trevecca Nazarene University in Nashville and earned a master of arts degree in educational ministries at Wheaton Graduate School, Wheaton, Illinois. She succeeds her late husband, Dr. Jonathan Thigpen who served 10



years as ETA president. Mrs. Thigpen had served as interim president until this recent announcement.

Evangelical Training Association has a far-reaching teaching ministry:

1. To approximately 200 Bible institutes, Bible colleges and graduate schools or seminaries (that maintain Christian education disciplines) for a vari-

ety of academic services.

2. To approximately 80 denominations for networking of "The Certificate Program" (an adult incentive process). Marketing efforts target bookstores.
3. To hundreds of local churches who require counseling in lay training needs. Workshops and seminars are held at regional conventions.
4. To special projects: (a) mission agencies needing translation assistance and/or coordination with training materials; (b) new curriculum development; (c) editorial and writing for curriculum, newsletter and journal needs.

While she lived in Tennessee, Mrs. Thigpen served with the Church Training Service Department and with the Executive Office as editorial assistant for *Contact* magazine.

Convention Sponsors College Intern Program

ANTIOCH, TN—The Free Will Baptist National Convention will sponsor a learning opportunity this summer for Free Will Baptist college students, according to Dean Jones, convention manager. The unique intern program will offer a behind-the-scenes look at convention operations, logistics and organization.

The program will allow up to eight students to work on staff during the 2003 convention which meets in Tampa, Florida. Participants will have opportunity to work in one or more of eight areas: registration, audio/video production, technical set-up, stage management, exhibition, ushering, publications and safety/security operations.

Selected participants will receive pre-convention training and on-the-job experience, as well as room and board during their stay in Tampa covering July 17-24.

College students may request more information by contacting Dean Jones, convention manager, via e-mail at dean@nafwb.org or calling 615-361-1221, ext. 344.

Couple Gives Church \$50,000 Gift

SOPHIA, WV—The Sophia FWB Church in Sophia, WV, received two \$25,000 checks from a couple on December 8, 2002. The couple, James and Linda Kneece, sold some property and wanted to tithe a portion of the proceeds to the West Virginia congregation.

Pastor James Cox said, "One check was to benefit the Sophia Christian Academy and Daycare; the other was for the church. Linda especially wanted to help the children."

The Kneeces live in South Carolina but have a home in Sophia that they visit once a month. During their time in West Virginia, they attend Sophia FWB Church.

Dr. James Cox said, "We learned that Linda attended Free Will Baptist Bible College some years ago. She had been a widow 25 years, then recently met and married James Kneece who was widowed."

Pastor Cox said that this is the only time in his 44-year ministry that a gift of this magnitude has been given to a church he served.

FWBBC Updates Relocation Process

NASHVILLE, TN—Enrollment at Free Will Baptist Bible College is up 13% compared to a year ago. Along with the increase in students, the school reports an increase in general fund gifts. Both factors relate to the eventual relocation.

The Board of Trustees voted to put relocation plans on hold because of declining enrollment in previous years and the withdrawal last year of Watkins Institute's offer to buy the campus.

President Matt Pinson reported to delegates at the 2002 national convention:

Money given for relocation has been well invested. The progress and work that has occurred up to this point will enable us, when the time is right, to proceed with relocation. Funds received for relocation will continue to be wisely invested. We are poised for growth, and relocation is still a part of our long-range plan.

So, what is being done at the college in the meantime? Buildings have been and are being renovated. Extensive paving has been done. The grounds are the best they have been in years. But none of this is being done at the expense of

relocation. Relocation gifts will continue to be held until conditions are right for the move.

Is renovation a good investment? A recent appraisal of one newly-renovated building shows that its value has increased \$2 for every \$1 invested in renovation!

When will the college move? We will keep tracking enrollment, since that is the most powerful force driving relocation. The need for more space will tell us it is time to move. The marketing of the present campus will also play an important role, since funds from its sale will be needed to pay for construction. In addition, general fund and relocation giving will have to be adequate for the transition to a new campus. Those three factors—enrollment, the campus sale and financial support—will tell us when it is time to move.

As of the end of 2002, the college has received \$1.2 million in relocation gifts. Nearly all of this went into architectural drawings and engineering fees, which are currently assets of the college. The expenses of the campaign were also paid from relocation gifts.

Tennessee Sets Workers Conference

NASHVILLE, TN—The second annual Mid-Tenn Christian Workers' Conference (MTCWC) meets Saturday, April 12, at Free Will Baptist Bible College, according to Dr. Charles Thigpen, Tennessee promotional director. The one-day event will feature more than 40 seminars in a five-track format: Early Childhood, Elementary, Teen, Adult, Administrative/Pastor.

The 2002 conference attracted

432 registrants. Organizers expect heavy attendance this year also as Dr. Thom Rainer keynotes the activities. Dr. Rainer serves as dean of the Billy Graham School of Missions at Southern Seminary in Louisville, Kentucky.

Rainer is also professor of evangelism and church growth at the seminary. He has written numerous books including *Surpris-*

ing Insights from the Unchurched and High Expectation Churches.

Dr. Charles Thigpen said, "Superintendents, pastors, Sunday School teachers and other church leaders should attend this conference. In fact, every teacher in your church should plan to attend."

For more information, e-mail MTCWC@randallhouse.com or call 615-361-1221.

FWBBC to Begin New Degree Programs

NASHVILLE, TN—Free Will Baptist Bible College's board of trustees approved a new degree completion program to be offered by the college. The program will target adults with at least two years of college training who want to complete requirements for graduation. It will be offered in 5-week, 4-hour evening modules that will enable students to earn a bachelor's de-

gree in 19-24 months. The college expects to have the program in place by the fall of 2003.

The board additionally approved two new programs in teacher education. The two-year associates degree in early childhood includes a para-professional certification program in early childhood for individuals interested in becoming professional

childcare providers. The four-year bachelor of science program in early childhood includes a Pre-K-4 licensure for students desiring to teach younger children in grades preschool through fourth and qualifies graduates to direct preschool childcare programs.

The colleges trustees met on campus December 4-5, 2002.

West Virginia Church Builds "Bethlehem Marketplace"

SOPHIA, WV—Members of Sophia FWB Church in Sophia, WV, invited the community to accompany them on a trip to Bethlehem at Christmas 2002, according to Pastor James Cox. The best part was that nobody had to leave West Virginia and fly to Palestine; they just walked across the street.

The "Bethlehem Marketplace" included more than 50 characters in costume, live animals and specially-constructed shops in the church gymnasium. Chief carpenter Tom McKinney built the sets while Phyllis Smith and Cathy Bar directed the program.

Pastor Cox said, "The gymnasium had no resemblance to a gymnasium. A covering of black plastic had been spread across the entire inside of the building blocking all light from the windows. Below the dark overhead, streets had been constructed by lining them with shops. Actually, more than a dozen shops featured the blacksmith, bakery, cheese shop, jewelry shop, basket shop and many more. Stalls held several animals including miniature goats, geese, a mule, horses, llama and chickens. Approximately four inches of sawdust covered the floors. The animals fascinated the children but it was the Bethlehem Inn and the grotto with the live nativity scene that held the rapt attention of the adults."

Guests started from the fellowship hall of the Sophia FWB Church where they had cookies and hot chocolate. After a group of about 20 visitors gathered, a costumed guide informed them that they were traveling back almost 2,000 years to the first Christmas in

an obscure little town in Judea. Across the parking lot into Bethlehem they proceeded and began by participating in the census and paying taxes to the tax collector while Roman soldiers stood guard. A scream sounded and one of the locals was arrested for tax evasion, and dragged off to the prison.

The tour guide explained the significance of the shops, the animals and the culture of the first century. He explained the dietary practices and occupations of the day. The group then moved to the inn, only to find that there was no room to rest. The innkeeper gruffly told them they may find some shelter with the young couple in the stable out back. Excited shepherd boys met them and escorted them to see baby Jesus in the manger.

Before guests left Bethlehem, the costumed characters sang, "Silent Night," and the pastor rehearsed the Christmas story beginning, "It may well have been an evening similar to this when the angels first appeared to the shepherds. They came to find Joseph, Mary and the Babe lying in a manger." Some visitors left weeping, touched by the special presentation. The real meaning of Christmas had been vividly imprinted upon their hearts.

When it was over after two days of presentation, the membership of the church was tired but grateful to have been part of the program. As they enjoyed a time of food and fellowship after the final group left, Pastor Cox was pleased to hear them already making plans for next year.

Group Announces Preaching Conference

PIGEON FORGE, TN—Organizers for the Help Build the Fire Conference plan a three-day preaching conference in eastern Tennessee June 9-11. Steering Committee chairman Roy Helms said the conference will conduct its eighth annual session at Smokey Mountain Convention Center in Pigeon Forge.

Reverend Helms said, "Over 70 Free Will Baptist preachers have preached at this meeting. We have 11 more lined up this June. The meeting will begin Monday at 4:30 p.m. and end with the Wednesday night service."

At press time 10 speakers had been confirmed: John Hollis (IL), Mark Shores (NM), Rex Evans (MI), Dann Patrick (NC), Gene Williams (VA), Richard Conyers (SC), Karl Sexton (VA), Hemant Patel (India), Danny Moore (IL), Eugene Hales (NC), Larry Haggard (MS).

Exhibits will be part of the conference agenda.

For additional information, contact Pastor Roy Helms at 205-387-9182.

Worthington Relocates to North Carolina

AYDEN, NC—After more than 23 years as executive secretary of the National Association of Free Will Baptists, Dr. Melvin Worthington has relocated to his home in Ayden. Friends and colleagues who wish to contact him directly may do so:

Dr. Melvin Worthington
Executive Secretary Emeritus
4878 Ayden Golf Club Road
Ayden, NC 28513

Phone: 252-746-3716
E-mail: mlw@coastalnet.com

Dr. Worthington was named executive secretary emeritus during the July 2002 national convention in Memphis, the only person to ever hold that title. He will continue to serve the denomination as executive secretary emeritus, as well as through his local church, district and state association.

Worthington completed his official denominational duties December 31, 2002.

currently

Members of **Corcoran FWB Church** in **Corcoran, CA**, celebrated 50 years of service, according to Pastor **Ron Young**. Former pastor **Edward (Butch) Johns** preached the morning message. Following lunch at the church and a time of music, testimonies and memories, **Nuel Brown**, California's director of ministries, preached the afternoon sermon.

The **Chowchilla FWB Church** in **Chowchilla, CA**, organized 53 years ago after 11 nights of revival with **Orbin Doss** as evangelist. Pastor **Bob Pierce** and the central California congregation celebrated the 53 years with two worship services and dinner on the grounds. Guest speakers were California Christian College president **Wendell Walley** and state director of ministries **Nuel Brown**.

Charter members gathered at **Countryside FWB Church** in **Visalia, CA**, to mark 20 years of outreach. Pastor **John Foster** and guests heard testimonies of dedication and sacrifice from those who gave themselves to make the church possible.

Pastor **Doice McAlister** nearly had to post "No Room" signs in the parking lot at **Turlock FWB Church** in **Turlock, CA**. The congregation launched building programs to create more room for classes and worship, and to expand the crowded parking lot. Brother **McAlister** has led the church for 34 years.

Pastor **Eddie Donelson** reports three baptisms and four new members at **Pittsburg FWB Church** in **Pittsburg, IL**.

Samantha FWB Church in **Leesburg, OH**, checks in with six baptisms and one new member. **Wiley Perkins** pastors.

Yes, Pastor **William Hayes** is smiling, and with good reason. He reports 10 rededications, four baptisms and two conversions at **Hillview FWB Church** in **Reynoldsburg, OH**.

Thanks to hard work by the trustees, there's a new sign in **Wilmington, OH**, identifying **Beech Grove FWB Church**. Pastor **John Blount** said the congregation also began a junior church to accommo-

date the growing number of youth.

Lighthouse FWB Church in **Elsmere, KY**, began construction on a new building project after starting over with another architect, according to Pastor **Bobby Courtney**. Church youth went to work, made some money and gave \$1,000 to help the building fund.

Pastor **William Chadwick** baptized five converts at **North FWB Church** in **Columbus, OH**. One of the converts baptized was Pastor **Chadwick's** sister who had been converted during the morning service and returned that night to be immersed.

Gahanna FWB Church in **Gahanna, OH**, reports 10 baptisms, three conversions and eight new members. **Curtis Booth** is the busy pastor.

Five conversions and six baptisms are reported at **Fellowship FWB Church** in **Jackson, OH**. **Larry D. Reece** pastors.

Marysville FWB Church in **Marysville, OH**, is on the grow again. Pastor **Jon Mountjoy** reports 28 new members, 13 conversions, six baptisms and two rededications.

Pastor **Ron Parker** and the **Swauger Valley FWB Church** in **Portsmouth, OH**, have witnessed numerous conversions this year. Pastor **Parker** has baptized on several occasions, once with as many as 13 converts.

Changes at **First FWB Church** in **Austintown, OH**, included organizing a Women Active for Christ group, twice-weekly Bible studies for ladies, a Wednesday night Bible study for children and more. **Tom Dooley** pastors.

Pastor **Mike Mounts** reports nine new members and three baptisms at **Westerville FWB Church** in **Westerville, OH**. The church also gave \$10,544 to home missionary **Tim Byers**.

First FWB Church in **Thomaston, GA**, celebrated 50 years of service in a day-long schedule that included 33 charter members present. Pastor **Henry Shellman, Sr.**, brought the morning message. The church organized in 1952 after a three-week tent revival. Three

ministers preached during that revival. One of those evangelists, **L. S. Anthony**, was called as the church's first pastor.

After 47 years, and with special thanks to Deacon **E. A. Welch, Jr.**, **Trinity FWB Church** in **Mauk, GA**, has a baptistry. The completed building program also includes five Sunday School rooms, pastor's study, new carpet in the sanctuary and a 1,500-square-foot modular home for Pastor **Terry Tribble**.

First FWB Church in **Walnut Ridge, AR**, celebrated 50 years, according to Pastor **Steve Trail**. Guest speakers included **Tim Campbell**, son of founding pastor **Glynn Campbell** and the state executive director, and executive secretary **Keith Burden**. Former pastor **Terry Forrest**, director of pastoral training at FWBCC, preached the morning message. A special moment occurred when Mrs. **Dorothy Boyd** was recognized as the only surviving charter member. Former pastors **Keith Johnson** (1961-'67), **O. D. Winfrey** (1969-'74) and **Roger Harwell** (1992-'93) also brought greetings.

Pastor **Fred Hanson** reports a New Year's Eve candlelight gospel concert at **Plaster Rock FWB Church** in **New Brunswick, Canada**. The 90-minute concert was presented by **Sarah Parish**, a student at FWBCC. A full house greeted Sara as she performed in her home church. ■

Purpose

By Eric Thomsen, Marketing Manager



She walks in the back door of our church. Scared. Pregnant. Bruised. Alone. Not sure what to do with her, an usher brings her to me. I take her arm and we walk through the laughing, happy crowd and find a quiet place to talk. Her face says it all. Her story is nothing new. I've heard it all before. But once again, I am brought to my knees by the broken heart of a wayward teen.

My wife joins me. For the next hour, we cry, we counsel, and we pray. We pray for Mandy,* for her baby, for the one who left the bruises on her face and for their eternal destiny. We promise to find counseling, to walk beside her through these dark moments of her life.

The ride home is quiet. No urgency, no last-second rush. The busy morning seems far away and quite unimportant. The happy faces at church are forgotten, lost in the dull ray of hope in the eyes of one who had no hope. Even my three-year-old is quiet, sensing the serious mood of her mommy and daddy.

*Not her real name.

I breathe a sigh of relief and plop down in my overstuffed recliner. What a morning! As I ease the chair slowly back, I mentally review the events of the day starting with the typical Sunday morning rush—you know the one . . .

"Honey, have you seen my keys?"

"No, dear! I've been in the bathroom! My hair won't do anything! Did you get Victoria ready?"

"Who?"

"Victoria . . . you know . . . our daughter!"

"Oh, right."

We hit the door running. T-minus eight minutes and counting. Pass a few cars (hopefully nobody from church), and wheel into the church parking lot with two minutes to spare. Wow! Our arrival time is almost respectable.

Off to Sunday School where I field theological questions from 25 ambitious college students. Funny, I was never that smart in college. The questions get more difficult every week. From Sunday School to choir loft, from choir loft to seventh pew right side—I take great notes on an outstanding sermon and then . . . well, then the day takes an unexpected turn.



Now I sit in my recliner with my arms behind my head. I don't turn on the TV to check the latest football scores; I don't take my usual Sunday afternoon catnap. No, I sit and think. I remember. I remember that life is more than last minute deadlines, more than bad hair days and remembering to feed the dog. It's not always happy faces and great church services.

Life is about people, hurting people who need the love of the Savior who gave His life for them. I remember why I do what I do. And I thank God that I have the opportunity to work for a company whose entire purpose is changing the lives of people. I thank God for Randall House Publications! ■



What about Campus Relocation?

By FWBBC Staff

Have you heard? Enrollment is up at Free Will Baptist Bible College! The college registered a 13% increase in student enrollment this year as grateful that God is sending students to our school, and we are grateful for a corresponding increase in general fund gifts. Both are factors that relate to the eventual relocation of the college.

Some are wondering where we are in the relocation process. Because of a declining enrollment in several previous years and the withdrawal last year of Watkins Institute's offer to buy the campus, the Board of Trustees of the college voted to put relocation plans on hold. President Matt Pinson reported to the National Association of Free Will Baptists (July 2002):

Money given for relocation has been well invested. The progress and work that has occurred up to this point will enable us, when the time is right, to proceed with relocation. Funds received for relocation will continue to be wisely invested. We are poised for growth, and relocation is still a part of our long-range plan.

So, what is being done at the college in the meantime? If you were to step on campus today, you would see significant changes from a few years ago. Buildings have been and are being renovated. Extensive paving has been done. The grounds are the best they have been in years. But none of this is being done at the expense of relocation. Relocation gifts will continue to be held until conditions are right for the move. Renovation funds have come from alumni and friends of the college and from money borrowed for this purpose. Is renovation a good investment? A recent appraisal of one newly renovated building shows that its value has increased \$2 for every \$1 invested in renovation!

When will the college move? We will keep tracking enrollment, since that is the most powerful force driving relocation. The need for more space will tell us it is time to move. The marketing of the present campus will also play an important role, since funds from its sale will be needed to pay for construction. In addition, general fund and relocation giv-

ing will have to be adequate for the transition to a new campus. Those three factors—enrollment, the campus sale, and financial support—will tell us when it is time to move.

As of the end of 2002, the college has received \$1.2 million in relocation gifts. This was invested in architectural drawings, engineering fees, and an access road, which are currently assets of the college. The expenses of the campaign were also paid from relocation gifts. By the way, thanks to Missionary TECH Team, architectural plans were drawn at about half the cost of most projects of this magnitude.

We are grateful for the support of our Free Will Baptist people. Pray for us as we determine God's timetable for resuming the campus relocation.

.....

A recent gift of \$52,000 was made to Relocation by Mrs. Allene Ellis of Ashland City, Tennessee. She and her late husband, Marvis, have been members of the Mt. Zion Free Will Baptist Church for many years. Mrs. Ellis, in making her gift, said that she wanted to insure the college's ministry for generations to come.



Allene and Marvis Ellis

"I have three grandchildren and three great grandchildren, and I want my great-grandchildren to have an opportunity to go to the Bible College someday," she said. ■

Foundation Announces

4.5% rate on **4.5%**

Money Management Trusts

By David L. Brown

The Foundation will be paying a rate of 4.5% on money management trusts for the period January 1 - June 30, 2003. These funds are invested in federal government-backed investments, either certificates of deposits covered by FDIC or government backed bonds. Since the Foundation is not a bank, we cannot offer FDIC insurance directly to trust holders, but the investments of the money management trust are secure.

Additional deposits may be made to a trust at any time, and withdrawals may be made without penalty. These trusts are available to Free Will Baptist churches or organizations as well as individuals.

Individuals must select a Free Will Baptist ministry they wish to benefit with 20% of the trust if they die without revoking the trust. Minimum deposit to open a trust is \$1,000.

We are managing over \$8,000,000 in money management type trusts. Why not let the Free Will Baptist Foundation help you or your church manage your excess, emergency or future project funds? Call 877-336-7575 for more information. ■

4.5%



4.5%

Free Will Baptist  **Foundation**

Roll Call Revival

By David Crowe
 Director of Church Growth and Evangelism

Is Roll Call Revival worth all the promotion and publicity that we give it? Let me give you some facts about Roll Call Revival and you decide.

1. Attendance for the last 19 years:

| | | |
|------|---|----------|
| 1984 | - | 198,239 |
| 1985 | - | 212,401 |
| 1986 | - | 220,799 |
| 1987 | - | 224,902 |
| 1988 | - | 226,231 |
| 1989 | - | 269,425 |
| 1990 | - | 220,267 |
| 1991 | - | 273,718 |
| 1992 | - | 231,117 |
| 1993 | - | 224,547 |
| 1994 | - | 223,858 |
| 1995 | - | 213,656 |
| 1996 | - | 211,283 |
| 1997 | - | 271,457 |
| 1998 | - | 216,236 |
| 1999 | - | 219,728 |
| 2000 | - | 224,731 |
| 2001 | - | 209,923 |
| 2002 | - | 266,926* |

*2002 results with 2,200 of 2,600 churches reporting.

I personally called 235 of the 400 churches that did not report and found that they were averaging just over 100 people per church for Roll Call. That means that there were actually around 306,000 people in Free Will Baptist churches during Roll Call Revival 2002! Is it worth it?

2. First-time salvation decisions: 18,899 (19 years) This is an average of just under 1,000 salvation decisions per year for Roll Call. Is it worth it?

3. First-time visitors: It's too early yet to see a pattern here because this number has only been reported for the last few years. For 2002, there were 14,752 first-time visitors in Free Will Baptist churches on Roll Call Sunday. Is it worth it?

4. Average attendance per church for 2002: 121. Is it worth it?

5. Souls have been saved, churches have grown, and thousands of people have been introduced to Free Will Baptist churches and their great pastors and congregations. Is it worth it?

Is it worth the money that is spent? Is it worth all the time and effort that is put into it? Is it worth all the articles that are written and the publicity and promotion that's done by the Home Missions Department and the different state associations? You decide!

When you have decided, join with us to make Roll Call Revival 2003 the greatest event in the history of Roll Call. Roll Call Revival will be April 20. This is Easter Sunday and it is later than usual this year. Wouldn't it be great to have over 300,000 people in Free Will Baptist churches, to see us have over 20,000 first-time visitors and to have over 2,000 first-time professions of salvation? The only thing that will keep us from reaching these goals is if we just do not believe that it's worth it! ■





Garnett Reid

Pointers from a Prayer Warrior

She's a real prayer warrior"—occasionally I'll hear such a comment about a fellow believer. I must confess that I'm not sure what to make of that description, however. Shouldn't the label "prayer warrior" fit *every* Christian? Prayer is such a vital part of living for God that *all* of us trusting Him ought to be known as people of prayer.

Another reason I'm puzzled about such a title is that I suspect the ones who labor in prayer do so in secret (see Matt. 6:6). They don't parade it or wear it as a badge, so how should I know who is or isn't a "prayer warrior?"

I do feel certain, though, that if there ever has been a prayer warrior, Paul was one. Just study his prayers and I think you'll agree. Ephesians 1:15-23 offers an example of one of the great Pauline prayers.

Note that this remarkable petition grows out of the blessings celebrated in 1:3-14. "Wherefore" or "for this reason" (v. 15) shows that the following prayer builds upon the truths of the previous section. Repeated terms such as "riches" (vv. 7, 18), "wisdom" (vv. 8, 17), "inheritance" (vv. 11, 14, 18), and "hope" (vv. 12, 18) link the two sections together. A consciousness of blessing always fosters prayer.

Two features emerge from Paul's prayer in 1:15-23 to give us instruction as we pray.

Why Paul Prays

Consider first the motivation for Paul's entreaty. Surprisingly, he does not say that he prays because of a *need*. Though there are some things Paul wants for these believers, as his prayer will indicate, need is not the explicit reason he prays. How contrary to my prayers! It seems most of what I pray about are needs and wants.

Yet the motive for this prayer is just

the opposite. Paul prays because these believers *already have something*: faith in Christ and love for the saints (v. 15). Their mutual trust in Christ prompts Paul to pray for the Ephesians on a regular basis, according to verse 16.

These verses point up two specific implications regarding motives to pray. First, thanksgiving is at the heart of intercession (v. 16). Prayer is empty if it is not filled with gratitude. A second implication reminds us that at its heart, prayer is relational. We should not view it as mere duty or obligation, as if we "check off" another requirement when we finish praying.

No, prayer thrives where there is faith in Christ. Its embrace then reaches others who are in Him, joining God, the intercessor, and the needy one in a matrix of shared love unique to the Christian family (see John 17:21).

We should not simply say that it is our duty to pray for each other, but that it is our privilege to know Him and in this bond to love each other.

What Paul Prays For

Paul's concern for these Christians is three-fold. First, he prays that the "Father of glory" would give them "the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of him" (v. 17). We need to admit we're not as smart as we think we are. Intellect, reason and sensory data cannot disclose all truth. Instead, the "eyes of our hearts" need spiritual enlightenment to see beyond the physical and the temporal.

In essence, Paul prays that they will understand correctly the immense worth of the blessings described in verses 3-14.

His second petition flows out of the first. As God reveals truth to them, these believers need to "know the hope of his calling" (v.18). "Hope" is a confident word in the New Testa-

ment. Here it gives assurance that all God has promised in our "inheritance" He will provide.

In our generation, people need to hear that God offers hope. For those facing incurable disease, wrestling with depression, trapped by destructive behavior or caught in abusive relationships, Christians need to offer the hope that comes only through Christ's gospel.

Finally, Paul longs for them to know "the exceeding greatness of his power" (v. 19). He makes its application personal in the memorable King James phrase, "to us-ward who believe." The very power evident in Christ's resurrection is effected in our lives through faith.

This astounding truth leads the apostle to conclude his prayer with a crowning exaltation of Christ (vv. 20-23). We affirm His matchless power in His resurrection (v. 20), His exaltation (v. 21), His dominion (vv. 21-22), and His headship over His body, the church (v. 23).

In his book *Whole Prayer*, Walter Wangerin, Jr., rightly concludes, "At the core of our praying is the cross, Christ and his holy sacrifice. He is the door through which we meet the Father." Would that all of us minister as "prayer warriors," and that our prayer lives glorify Christ alone, who "fills all in all." ■



Jennie Blair

We're in this Together

Click . . . Click . . . Click . . . The sound of clicking keys on a computer keyboard has put me to sleep for the past three years. In a strange way that sound arouses a diverse string of emotions and memories for me. It takes me back to nights spent in prayer for my tired and overloaded husband as he worked to get through seminary.

The Bible says, "Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth," (II Tim. 2:15). In order to be faithful to this command, a minister should seek every outlet available to help further his knowledge of the Bible.

Many colleges now have programs available to ministers through modular courses, internet courses and night classes that allow them to complete their education while still pastoring a church full-time and raising a family. Ministers may opt to attend school on a part-time or a full-time basis, or may decide to further their education through self-studies.

No matter how one does it, the fact is that getting an education is hard work, and wives play a vital role in the education process. The Bible says that we were created to be a helpmate to our husbands. This extends to every aspect of our relationship, even to continuing education.

When my husband Jeff felt the Lord leading him to further his education by attending seminary, I wasn't quite sure what my role would be. I prayed that the Lord would help me to help him through this exciting, yet overwhelming, endeavor. In July 1999 we packed our belongings, said goodbye to family, friends and a wonderful church, and set out to do what we believed was the Lord's will.

We had no idea what lay ahead or how all the details would work out.

However, we read the verse, "But my God shall supply all your need according to his riches in glory by Christ Jesus," (Phil. 4:19), and trusted Him to take care of us. He provided every need at just the right moment—jobs, housing and the means to pay tuition. God always makes a way when He calls you to a task.

There are many ways to help your husband while he works to further his education.

Prayer

The best way you can help your husband is by praying for him. This will strengthen your relationship and keep you focused spiritually. It will also help you to keep a positive attitude.

"Pray without ceasing," (I Thes. 5:17).

Encouragement

An encouraging word from you may be just what your husband needs to get through a tough assignment. You are your husband's best friend and his main source of support. Affirm him through your words and actions.

"Wherefore comfort yourselves together, and edify one another, even as also ye do," (I Thes. 5:11).

Financial Support

It may be necessary for you to take on a portion or all the financial responsibility for your family while your husband works on his education. Rather than viewing this as a burden, look at it as an opportunity for you to contribute. If you are unable to work outside the home, you may want to research ways to make extra money from home. Either way, keep a positive attitude and stay focused on the big picture. Make your role model the virtuous woman from Proverbs.

"She girdeth her loins with strength, and strengtheneth her arms. She perceiveth that her merchandise is good: her candle goeth not out by night," (Prov. 31:17-18).

Self Sacrifice

As you quickly discovered after you got married and had children, your needs will not come first most of the time. You may be required to take on extra household duties in order to free up time for your husband to study. You may need to put some of your own dreams on hold—home ownership, continuing your education, starting a family, going on vacations. When you feel like you are losing perspective, remember the following verse.

"Look not every man on his own things, but every man also on the things of others," (Phil. 2:4).

Co-Laborer

Every minister needs help. Paul had Timothy, Moses had Aaron, and Aquila had Priscilla. There will be times when your husband needs you to take on extra responsibilities in order to help him cope. You may be called on to teach a class, make a visit or type a paper. You cannot replace your husband, but there are ways you can share in the work.

The most important thing to remember is that if you keep a positive attitude, everything else will fall into place. This is not to say there won't be moments when you get down and feel like throwing in the towel. We all have difficult days. Bear in mind that the stress of the moment will not last forever. Your husband's education will be a tool he uses for the rest of his life in the work of the Lord. You'll be glad you did what you could when it mattered most.

"For we are labourers together with God . . .," (I Cor. 3:9a). ■

ABOUT THE WRITER: Mrs. Jennie Blair is a member of First Free Will Baptist Church in Locust Grove, Oklahoma, where her husband, Jeff, pastors. Jennie is an alumna of Hillsdale Free Will Baptist College. She graduated from East Central University in Ada, Oklahoma, with a bachelor's degree in social work.



Randy Sawyer

Feasting on Man-Flesh

In J. R. R. Tolkien's fantasy classic, *The Lord of the Rings*, strange creatures known as Orcs are always in search of man-flesh. We are not fully informed as to who and what these beings really are. All we know for certain is that they have fallen under the dominion of the wickedness of Lord Sauron, the ancient enemy of all that is good and right.

The Orcs have the uncanny ability of smelling man-flesh, and when they do, they go absolutely mad with desire to taste the sweet delicacy. The sum total of their sad existence lies in forced obedience to the evil Sauron, and in feasting on man-flesh.

An Unflattering Comparison

Though the comparison may seem somewhat unflattering, I'm afraid we human beings have also developed quite a taste for man-flesh, and it appears that even Christians spend a lot of time on the lookout for fellow believers to consume. Early in life we come to the conclusion that the only way to combat criticism is to become critical.

Thus, when spears are hurled in our direction we quickly pick them up and send them right back. The skill isn't hard to learn; criticism rises from deep within us, an overflow of the corruption of a depraved nature. We can smell an enemy from almost any distance and are ready in an instant to bite, molest, injure, vex and consume.

I didn't pick those last few words out of thin air. Paul warns the Galatian Christians, "But if ye bite and devour one another, take heed that ye be not consumed one of another (Gal. 5:15)." In this solemn passage, Paul employs the word *daknete*, meaning to bite or molest or injure, as well as the word *katesthiete*, which means to devour, to eat up, to squander, to make a prey of, to vex. With these powerful images, the Apostle compares believers to

wild animals who always seem ready to rip one another apart.

A Universal Condition

The practice of feasting on man-flesh is an almost universal activity, which even the best of us seem to enjoy. Some years ago my wife and I pulled into a parking space at a local church and were quickly accosted by the pastor. With almost breathless anticipation he said he had news we needed to hear. He proceeded to inform us that a certain preacher, a mutual friend, had recently admitted to an affair. The tragic results of that adulterous indiscretion, of course, were a damaged family and a crippled ministry.

However, while our hearts were broken at that sad announcement, our pastor friend appeared to relish sharing the story. Later, my wife noted the seeming joy with which the news had been related to us.

Let me be quick to add that I don't know what was in my brother's heart as he gave us the details of that tragedy. All I can do is evaluate the impression his demeanor and words left on me. Additionally, I acknowledge that I know I don't have a right to judge anybody, because there have been many times in my life that I have made a meal on man-flesh.

But that's what I'm getting at. We all do it. We can't seem to help ourselves. It's a sport to us, sort of like shooting a deer. And like cultivating a taste for venison, we've all learned to love feasting on man-flesh.

The Unwholesome Consequences

Though feasting on man-flesh may be tasty at the time, it will eventually and inevitably leave us with a bitter taste in our mouths and with grave damage done to the body of Christ. Notice once again

Paul's warning, "But if ye bite and devour one another, take heed that ye be not consumed one of another."

The fact is, as we bite at one another, we are making a prey of the body of Christ, of which we ourselves are a part. It should be clear by now that members of the body have done more harm to the body than anyone else. These self-inflicted wounds are the most crippling of all. We make a habit of shooting our wounded and then gorging ourselves on their flesh.

Furthermore, as we are feasting on man-flesh we are doing the work of the enemy. Christ longs for our unity and protection. His prayer to the Father was that we "may be one."

Satan, on the other hand, desires our disharmony and destruction, and is evermore "walking about seeking whom he may devour." When we molest fellow believers we do the Devil's work, and with him are tearing down rather than building up the body of Christ.

Also, in devouring one another we lose our focus on the real danger. The most serious problem within the Galatian churches was doctrinal heresy. The primary reason Paul wrote the letter was to combat the Judaizers and their legalism. Some commentators believe that the heresy was God's judgment on their ambition, pride and critical spirit, while others assert that the dissension among them was a result of the theological problems.

The question is, "Which comes first, doctrinal error or ethical error?" Though we can't be definitive with regard to the Galatian situation, it seems self-evident that while they were attacking each other they could not possibly be paying enough attention to the real enemy. Consequently, theological flaws crept into their fellowship as a result of their mistreatment of each other.

A Unifying Commandment

How, then, do we bring a critical spirit under control? How do we develop the taste for that which is constructive to the body of Christ rather than that which is destructive? This takes us once more to Paul's discussion in the Galatian Epistle. In 5:3-14 he writes, "For, brethren, ye have been called unto liberty; only use not liberty for an occasion to the flesh, but by love serve one another. For all the law is fulfilled in one word, even in this: Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself."

The key to overcoming the overwhelming desire for man-flesh is to "love thy neighbor as thyself." The basis of Paul's argument is as follows: though salvation is by grace alone, through faith alone, in Christ alone, and though grace liberates us from sin's guilt and dominion, the believer's liberty is not the freedom to exploit our neighbor. It is the liberty to serve our neighbor through love. And if we love each other we will not destroy each other through malicious talk or slanderous actions.

Martin Luther summarized the Apostle's admonition in this way, "A Christian is a free lord over all things and subject to no one. A Christian is a subservient slave of all things and subject to everyone."

In Christ we are no longer subjected to an involuntary enslavement, but now we surrender to a voluntary enslavement. Liberty's controlling power is love, and love accomplishes what law cannot. Therefore, since we have been set free, let us live free, free from feasting on man-flesh, and free to love our neighbor as ourselves. ■

THE TOGETHER WAY

December 2002

| Receipts: State | Designated | CO-OP | Total | Year To Date Designated | Year To Date CO-OP | Year To Date Total |
|-----------------------|----------------------|---------------------|----------------------|----------------------------|-----------------------|------------------------|
| Alabama | \$ 871.04 | \$ 318.28 | \$ 1,189.32 | \$ 4,377.59 | \$ 1,779.58 | \$ 6,157.17 |
| Arizona | .00 | .00 | .00 | 30.00 | 329.00 | 359.00 |
| Arkansas | 27,363.88 | 16,398.02 | 43,761.90 | 207,949.05 | 172,860.78 | 380,809.83 |
| California | .00 | 1,084.70 | 1,084.70 | 883.54 | 11,406.89 | 12,290.43 |
| Colorado | 56.25 | .00 | 56.25 | 56.25 | .00 | 56.25 |
| Delaware | .00 | .00 | .00 | .00 | .00 | .00 |
| Florida | 25.00 | .00 | 25.00 | 399.54 | 9,999.00 | 10,398.54 |
| Georgia | 33,381.84 | 1,698.32 | 35,080.16 | 321,630.97 | 16,482.07 | 338,113.04 |
| Hawaii | .00 | .00 | .00 | .00 | .00 | .00 |
| Idaho | .00 | .00 | .00 | .00 | .00 | .00 |
| Illinois | 9,203.03 | 1,734.55 | 10,937.58 | 88,377.51 | 20,555.04 | 108,932.55 |
| Indiana | 150.00 | .00 | 150.00 | 18,047.04 | 2,066.88 | 20,113.92 |
| Iowa | .00 | .00 | .00 | .00 | 2,188.63 | 2,188.63 |
| Kansas | .00 | .00 | .00 | .00 | 318.71 | 318.71 |
| Kentucky | 1,661.00 | 1,200.82 | 2,861.82 | 5,024.29 | 10,411.21 | 15,435.50 |
| Louisiana | .00 | .00 | .00 | 60.00 | 20.00 | 80.00 |
| Maryland | .00 | .00 | .00 | .00 | .00 | .00 |
| Michigan | 24,188.36 | 4,784.90 | 28,973.26 | 209,515.33 | 25,648.85 | 235,164.18 |
| Mississippi | .00 | .00 | .00 | 78,762.01 | 6,193.27 | 84,955.28 |
| Missouri | 45,691.95 | 17,435.79 | 63,127.74 | 409,988.31 | 146,096.44 | 556,084.75 |
| Montana | .00 | .00 | .00 | .00 | .00 | .00 |
| Nebraska | .00 | .00 | .00 | .00 | .00 | .00 |
| New Jersey | 90.00 | .00 | 90.00 | 90.00 | .00 | 90.00 |
| New Mexico | 1,052.67 | 76.33 | 1,129.00 | 4,814.39 | 512.21 | 5,326.60 |
| North Carolina | 2,022.82 | 2,026.40 | 4,049.22 | 14,708.67 | 29,674.15 | 44,382.82 |
| Ohio | .00 | .00 | .00 | 121,405.66 | 26,830.86 | 148,236.52 |
| Oklahoma | 4,420.38 | 13,341.17 | 17,761.55 | 480,982.56 | 112,761.38 | 593,743.94 |
| South Carolina | 60,249.55 | 89.44 | 60,338.99 | 475,386.35 | 1,188.20 | 476,574.55 |
| South Dakota | .00 | .00 | .00 | .00 | .00 | .00 |
| Tennessee | 1,984.72 | 1,293.97 | 3,278.69 | 120,303.23 | 21,007.41 | 141,310.64 |
| Texas | 8,643.04 | 325.00 | 8,968.04 | 80,258.98 | 3,002.95 | 83,261.93 |
| Virginia | 311.43 | 131.25 | 442.68 | 3,814.18 | 1,316.36 | 5,130.54 |
| Virgin Islands | .00 | .00 | .00 | .00 | .00 | .00 |
| West Virginia | 127.42 | .00 | 127.42 | 18,124.70 | 1,144.38 | 19,269.08 |
| Wisconsin | .00 | .00 | .00 | .00 | .00 | .00 |
| Canada | .00 | .00 | .00 | 5,620.32 | 100.74 | 5,721.06 |
| Northwest Association | .00 | .00 | .00 | 1,035.26 | .00 | 1,035.26 |
| Northeast Association | .00 | .00 | .00 | .00 | .00 | .00 |
| Other | .00 | .01 | .01 | .00 | (0.20) | (0.20) |
| Totals | \$ 221,494.38 | \$ 61,938.95 | \$ 283,433.33 | \$ 2,671,645.73 | \$ 623,894.79 | \$ 3,295,540.52 |

Disbursements:

| | | | | | | |
|--------------------------|----------------------|---------------------|----------------------|------------------------|----------------------|------------------------|
| Executive Office | \$ 1,636.55 | \$ 27,872.55 | \$ 29,509.10 | \$ 18,783.47 | \$ 280,752.81 | \$ 299,536.28 |
| Foreign Missions | 134,263.55 | 7,835.27 | 142,098.82 | 1,544,371.67 | 78,922.67 | 1,623,294.34 |
| FWBCC | 19,151.36 | 7,835.27 | 26,986.63 | 234,042.82 | 78,922.67 | 312,965.49 |
| Home Missions | 51,811.20 | 6,131.93 | 57,943.13 | 730,604.60 | 61,765.58 | 792,370.18 |
| Retirement & Insurance | 242.65 | 4,769.32 | 5,011.97 | 4,635.64 | 48,039.97 | 52,675.61 |
| Master's Men | 531.51 | 4,769.32 | 5,300.83 | 4,318.59 | 48,039.97 | 52,358.56 |
| Com. for Theo. Integrity | 42.59 | 170.33 | 212.92 | 968.90 | 1,715.65 | 2,684.55 |
| FWB Foundation | 141.46 | 2,043.97 | 2,185.43 | 3,198.99 | 20,588.52 | 23,787.51 |
| Historical Commission | 23.02 | 170.33 | 193.35 | 308.27 | 1,715.65 | 2,023.92 |
| Music Commission | 8.02 | 170.33 | 178.35 | 102.31 | 1,715.65 | 1,817.96 |
| Media Commission | 192.58 | 170.33 | 362.91 | 1,437.91 | 1,715.65 | 3,153.56 |
| Hillsdale FWB College | 2,239.49 | .00 | 2,239.49 | 19,060.76 | .00 | 19,060.76 |
| Other | 11,210.40 | .00 | 11,210.40 | 109,811.80 | .00 | 109,811.80 |
| Totals | \$ 221,494.38 | \$ 61,938.95 | \$ 283,433.33 | \$ 2,671,645.73 | \$ 623,894.79 | \$ 3,295,540.52 |



Thomas Marberry

Basic Christian Leadership

By John Stott

(Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2002, 127 pp., hardback, \$13.95).

John Stott is an Englishman who served for many years as rector of All Souls Church in London; today he is regarded as one of the leading evangelicals in the English-speaking world. He is widely known as a preacher, author, evangelist and conference speaker.

This work examines important principles of Christian leadership as Paul develops them in the first four chapters of I Corinthians. Stott begins with a simple definition of what it means to be a leader. He writes, "A leader, according to the simplest definition, is someone who commands a following. To lead is to go ahead, to show the way and to inspire other people to follow."

Leaders are necessary in every aspect of society, both sacred and secular. The Christian concept of leadership is, however, quite different from common secular models. Jesus himself presented the servant-leader approach to leadership in Mark 10:42-44. According to Stott, the outstanding Christian leader of the first century was the apostle Paul. His epistles reflect something of his understanding of Christian leadership and how he implemented that understanding as he guided the infant churches.

In the first section of the book Stott notes that every Christian leader must learn to deal with ambiguity in the church. He is not perfect himself, and he is ministering to people who are not perfect either. The author advises Christian leaders to avoid the extremes of perfectionism or defeatism. The wise Christian leader will seek perfection, but he knows that he will never attain it. A mature Christian leader will not allow the imperfections in the church to destroy him or it.

The Christian leader should also avoid the pitfall of defeatism. He should not throw up his hands in despair and quit striving for perfection. Christians are often too willing to tolerate imperfec-

tions. Stott notes, "There is a place for discipline in the church, and even for excommunication." The Christian leader works in the often-painful tension between the already and the not yet.

In the second section of this work, the author calls attention to the corrupting influence of power in the modern church. He writes, "Power! It is more intoxicating than alcohol, more addictive than drugs." He shares his personal opinion in these words, "I confess to being frightened by the contemporary evangelical hunger for power, even the quest for the power of the Holy Spirit."

In sharp contrast to this emphasis on power, Paul notes the weakness of the gospel, the weakness of the Corinthian converts and his own weakness as an apostle. According to I Corinthians, the Jews seek after miraculous signs and the Greeks seek after wisdom. Paul offers them a crucified Savior. How successful can that kind of gospel be? Neither Jews nor Greeks could identify with a Messiah who had been crucified, but it is this crucified and rejected Messiah who gives incredible power to the Christian faith.

Not only is the gospel weak, the Corinthian believers are weak as well. Not many of them are wise, powerful or influential. It is through their weakness that the power of the gospel is demonstrated.

Paul even calls attention to his own weakness. In a world that values beautiful rhetoric, Paul offers neither words of human wisdom nor great eloquence. Once again, the strength of the Christian faith is found in its weaknesses. It is God who has the power, not his followers or his apostles.

The third part of this work examines the relationship between Holy Scripture and the Holy Spirit. The Christian leader must understand that the Holy Spirit works through the Holy Scripture and not apart from it. Stott outlines five

basic conditions that Christians need to accept.

We must accept the supreme authority of scripture. We must remember that the chief purpose of Scripture is to bear witness to Jesus Christ as the Savior of sinners. We must develop sound principles of biblical interpretation. We must study scripture together. We must come to the biblical text with humble, open, receptive spirits.

In the final sections, the author addresses two important areas in the life of the church. First, he confronts the problem of divisions in the church. If we are to confront this issue effectively, we must abandon all secular views of the church and develop a godly view of the church.

Second, he addresses the important issue of pastoral leadership. He concludes this discussion by saying that modern concepts of leadership are more often influenced by contemporary culture than they are by the teachings and example of Christ. Churches and church leaders need to develop more of the servant style of leadership as taught by Christ himself.

This is a good introductory treatment of several important aspects of Christian leadership. It is not the last word; it is brief and limited to one passage of scripture. Its value lies in its careful analysis of the kind of leadership that the apostle Paul offered to the Corinthian church in the midst of great trial and controversy.

Stott correctly notes that modern pastors are not apostles and cannot exercise the same kind of apostolic authority that Paul did. The basic principles of Christian leadership do not change; they are clearly outlined in scripture. With God's help, we can offer the right kind of leadership to our congregations today. ■



Jack Williams

Murder in the Sanctuary

He died six feet from the altar, killed by the Sunday School secretary. A dozen witnesses saw it happen, including the church pianist. The murder weapon a 720-page, hard-cover hymn book. The killer struck without remorse and without hesitation from behind the pastor's wife during the morning song service. It left the congregation stunned.

No tears for the victim, however, a known terrorist who attacked without warning. The children cried out first when "Red" swept down the aisle interrupting the offering. They knew instantly he intended to hurt them. They were right.

Perhaps that's why the 62-year-old grandmother ignored her own fear and bludgeoned the intruder to death with a rose-colored hymn book—to protect her grandchildren. The children had nowhere to run. Red was faster. Red was a professional. He fed off their fear, their pitiful attempts to escape, their emotional frenzy that irritated him.

Security had never been a high priority until that November morning when Red died unceremoniously in the sanctuary. The pastor said later that future building renovations already planned would include measures to prevent others like Red from entering the church. Maybe.

Adults sat paralyzed as Red danced across the pews that crisp Sabbath morning, the sun bright, the singing hearty. The pastor, blissfully unaware, reviewed his sermon notes, while the song leader busied himself with music matters. That's when Red made a fatal mistake on his way to the altar.

He paused behind the pastor's wife, his back to the harmless gray-haired grandmother with the large hymn book. She was no killer. She was best known for baking jelly cookies. Perhaps Red knew that about her,

sensed her domestic charm. His eyes locked on the two men up front, one waving his arms in a threatening manner, the other brooding and distracted.

Red was wrong. His greatest threat was not the bigger, stronger men. Death waited three feet away off to his left wearing a blue dress with a small American flag on the front. She weighed 110 pounds and required bifocals to see. More important, she would fight for her grandchildren.

Thugs like Red think their reputations intimidate the unprepared and elderly. They count on the fact that people don't believe it can ever happen to them. Bad guys assume they will be feared if they show up in a nasty, belligerent huff during a moment of vulnerability. Their appearance usually triggers the "flee" mechanism in others and cows them.

Not today. Red miscalculated that his threats would prevent retaliation. He never expected to die in church, nor that his killer be a soft-voiced grandmother.

No one saw Red enter the building. He had been there before and knew his way around. He knew where the adults would be, the adults with the money, the perfumed women with their Sunday clothes. He came with the offering. Red prided himself on exquisite timing.

He never smiled nor spoke a word. No need—his deadly presence said enough. An angry predator driven by an unreasoning urge to hurt others, Red hovered in the shadows near the back of the sanctuary through one verse, then made his move.

He wore his one-piece assault suit to church that day, a skin-tight garment that discouraged strangers from making a grab at him. Red's "strike first" mentality gave no one a second chance. He understood the principles of personal encounter. Keep them at arm's length. Keep them in sight. Keep

them off balance. Protect your turf. Live to fight another day.

But it was Sunday and Red felt untouchable. He got cocky and ignored a threat from an unlikely source. Who knew that a grandmother would be so dangerous?

The story began early that Sunday morning when the church's heating system adjusted to ward off the chill. After a week of storms and wind in Music City, the Nashville community awoke to cold, bright sunlight. The day stirred Red also. He needed to make a hit. No better place than Fellowship Free Will Baptist Church in South Nashville. No better time than the week before Thanksgiving.

The members would be sluggish, occupied with thoughts of dinner and family. They would gather in one convenient place like cattle. Red understood them. He hated them. He trusted none of them.

He was already inside the church waiting when the people arrived for Sunday School. He knew where to go to stay out of sight until the offering. The temperature rose, the noise level peaked, and the pianist began the offertory.

Red moved silently from his hiding place behind the sound booth at the back of the sanctuary. Nobody noticed. He knew they hadn't seen him, because they always reacted the same way when they did. He pushed toward the middle of the sanctuary before they began whispering. Red didn't care.

They pointed at him. Some flinched when he passed. Red was on a mission. He paused for one brief and fatal moment behind the pastor's wife. He felt a pressure wave coming from his left and started to turn. Too late. Bam!

Red didn't make it to the altar. They found his remains crushed beneath the second verse of "Nothing Between." A stinging end for the bitter little insect. Murder in the sanctuary—a hymn book, a grandmother and a red wasp. ■

CONTACT

P. O. Box 5002
Antioch, TN 37011-5002

Periodical
Postage
Paid

WELCOME

Spring



DAYS

MARCH 27-29 2003



Free Will Baptist Bible College

For High School Students,
Grades 10-12, Youth Pastors/Leaders,
Parents, and Sponsors

WRITE
OR CALL
FOR BROCHURE

Welcome Days is an opportunity for High School students to check out Free Will Baptist Bible College as a college choice. Come and be a part of what God is doing at FWBBC.