

April 2003

Contact

Cuba Decisions

A mission trip suddenly focuses on romance

Islam Examined

What is truth . . .
what is myth?

The Value of a Word

What do these words have
in common? alone, mother,
revenge, forgotten, faith

Re-live a Page in Missionary History

Hear from a man who helped recover the bodies of 5 slain missionaries.

Official Publication of the National Association of Free Will Baptists

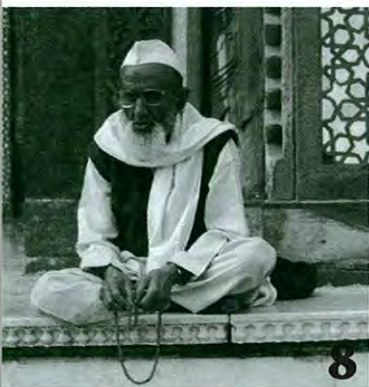
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Keith Burden

Letting the Cat Out of the Bag

Woodworking is one of my favorite hobbies. Through the years I've accumulated a variety of hand and power tools. I grew up in a carpenter's home, so I guess I came by my interest in building things honestly. My biggest challenge today is finding time to invest in this craft.

As Christmas 2002 approached I was trying to decide what gift to give my six-month-old grandson. After some time and consideration, I settled on what I thought would be the perfect present—a hand-made, wooden rocking horse.

I began by sketching some plans and figuring how much material would be needed to create the toy steed. Next, I made a trip to the lumberyard in search of the perfect piece of wood. After a lot of culling I finally located a board that was practically flawless. The piece of fir was straight as an arrow and had a beautiful wood grain.

Mission Accomplished

When I had gathered the necessary items, I turned our garage into a workshop and started on the project. After hours of painstaking sawing, sanding, drilling and routing, I carefully assembled the various parts. A coat of stain was applied, followed by three applications of polyurethane. Once the leather ears, plastic eyes and yarn mane and tail were attached, the horse was finally finished.

I was proud of my little project. I hate to brag on myself, but the wooden horse really turned out great. I could hardly wait to surprise my daughter and grandson on Christmas morning.

Hey Neighbor!

A few days before Christmas I was working in my backyard. Our next-door neighbor called over the fence and asked what I had been building in my garage. I proudly explained the nature of

my project. He was quite complimentary and said my grandson was fortunate to have a crafty grandpa.

The doorbell rang on the afternoon of Christmas Eve. As I opened the door my neighbor and his wife said, "Merry Christmas!" and presented me with a plate of homemade goodies. I thanked them for their thoughtfulness and introduced them to my daughter and grandson who happened to be in the living room at the time.

Straight from the Horse's Mouth

"Oh, is this the little guy you built the rocking horse for?" he asked. As I stood there speechless with a bewildered look on my face, he realized that he had let the cat out of the bag. He was obviously embarrassed and immediately began to apologize for ruining my Christmas surprise.

In an attempt to defuse the awkward situation and make my neighbor feel better, I turned to my infant grandson and jokingly said, "You'd better act surprised tomorrow!"

Needless to say, this slip of the tongue wasn't a catastrophic mistake. It wasn't as though my neighbor had blabbed top-secret, classified military information to the enemy. Still, I *was* disappointed that my surprise wouldn't be a surprise after all.

The Bottom Line

So what's the point of my story? Simply this—we don't necessarily need to tell everything we know. Some things are better left unsaid. James 1:19 reminds us, "Wherefore, my beloved brethren, let every man be swift to hear, *slow to speak*, *slow to wrath*." God created us with two ears and one mouth. We would do well to use them in that proportion.

We need to be especially cautious when it comes to what we say

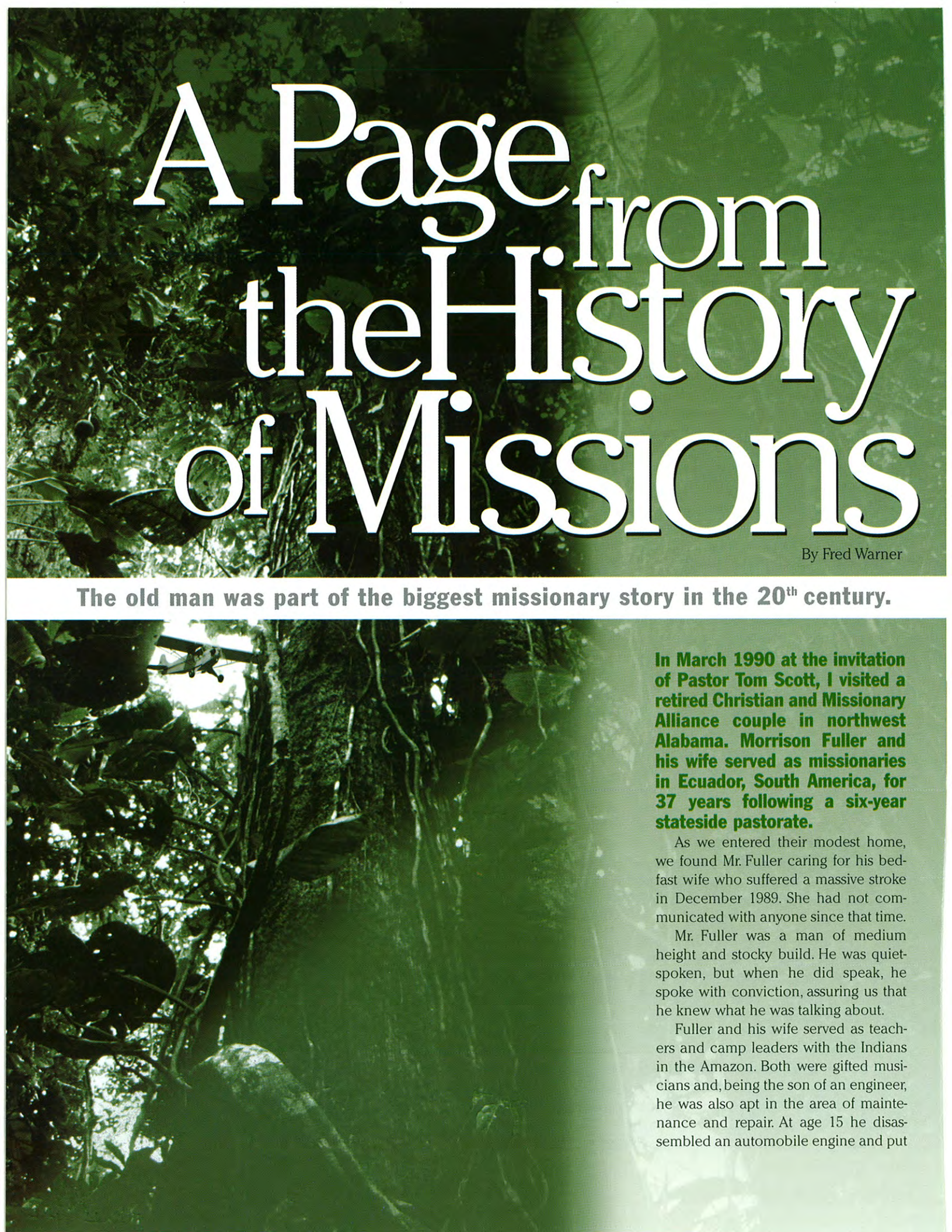
about other people. As Christians and Free Will Baptists, we have a covenant responsibility "to be careful of one another's happiness and reputation." This applies to what we put in print as well as the words we speak.

Jesus' statement in Luke 6:31 serves as a helpful guideline in this regard—"And as ye would that men should do to you, do ye also to them likewise."

Someone with an unbridled tongue will invariably protest, "But what I said was the truth." They fail to remember that *accuracy* is only one criteria for determining what we should say. *Appropriateness* is another issue to be considered. Do I really need to tell this (even if it is accurate)? Does the person to whom I am speaking need to hear this (is it appropriate)?

Take it from someone who learned a tough lesson at Christmas. Before you repeat something you've heard, think twice before you speak. It could save you and others some embarrassment. After all—some cats are better left in the bag! ■





A Page from the History of Missions

By Fred Warner

The old man was part of the biggest missionary story in the 20th century.

In March 1990 at the invitation of Pastor Tom Scott, I visited a retired Christian and Missionary Alliance couple in northwest Alabama. Morrison Fuller and his wife served as missionaries in Ecuador, South America, for 37 years following a six-year stateside pastorate.

As we entered their modest home, we found Mr. Fuller caring for his bed-fast wife who suffered a massive stroke in December 1989. She had not communicated with anyone since that time.

Mr. Fuller was a man of medium height and stocky build. He was quiet-spoken, but when he did speak, he spoke with conviction, assuring us that he knew what he was talking about.

Fuller and his wife served as teachers and camp leaders with the Indians in the Amazon. Both were gifted musicians and, being the son of an engineer, he was also apt in the area of maintenance and repair. At age 15 he disassembled an automobile engine and put

it back together. He was obviously a man of many talents.

But now, at the ages of 79 and 80 respectively, the physical involvement of him and his wife in the Lord's work had been greatly curtailed.

I found Mr. Fuller to be quite discerning about people in the Lord's work, as he told about those on the mission field who were truly servants while others seemed motivated by selfish ambitions. He let us know that, even on the mission field, all kinds of people exist.

Pastor Tom Scott told me earlier that Mr. Fuller had first-hand knowledge regarding the massacre of the five American missionaries by the Aucas in January 1956. It was his personal account of the incident that I wanted to hear. I had read *Through Gates of*

preaching. They were such a complete team that if one lacked ability in a given area, someone else on the team could make up for it. They complemented one another, and that made them a complete team.

Mr. Fuller knew of the many trips the men had made by plane over the Auca territory in an effort to show themselves friendly to the Indians, but he did not realize the attempt to make contact with them was imminent until he noticed a bundle of lumber at the station with every piece numbered.

When he inquired about it, he was gently pulled aside by one of the men and told of their plans to try to make contact with the Aucas on "Palm Beach" on the Curaray River. As you have probably guessed, the lumber was used to

It was only a matter of time until the first body was discovered in the river. When the man in charge of the recovery operation asked for a volunteer to swim the river and retrieve the body, Fuller was the only man who would go. Once in the water, an Indian friend followed him across.

The body was found where a large tree had fallen into the river. It was difficult to free it from the limbs and float it back across the river, but they made it.

Once they reached the other side, plans were made to retrieve a second body which had been spotted further down the river. This meant going by canoe and tying a rope to the body to float it back up the river. Another man who had been designated to go asked Fuller to go with him.

I had read *Through Gates of Splendor* by Elisabeth Elliott several years before, but now I was about to re-live a page of missionary history through the eyes of someone who was there.

Splendor by Elisabeth Elliott several years before, but now I was about to re-live a page of missionary history through the eyes of someone who was there.

For the most part, I felt that Mr. Fuller talked freely—sharing details one would know only from having been there and which one could not necessarily pick up from reading the book.

At the time we talked, it had been over 35 years since the missionary world was shocked by the deaths of Jim Elliot, Nate Saint, Ed McCully, Roger Youderian and Ed Fleming. But their story continues to challenge young men and women to serve the Lord on the mission fields of the world.

To begin with, Mr. Fuller knew all five of the men who were killed, and he knew their wives. He had mingled with them on the mission field. I will never forget what he said about them. He said, "They were all 'top notch' missionaries."

They excelled in the language. They were especially gifted in teaching and

build the tree house shelter in the iron-wood tree as pictured in the book.

Within a matter of days Nate Saint, the pilot, had flown all the men to the beach in an effort to make friendly contact with the Aucas. You probably know the rest of the story. Three Aucas—a man and two women—came out of the jungle and spent some time with the five missionaries. But in the end, for whatever reason, the men were speared to death by the Indians.

This is where Morrison Fuller entered the picture. (And, by the way, he is named in the book.) He was part of the search party that went in on foot and by canoe to find the missing missionaries.

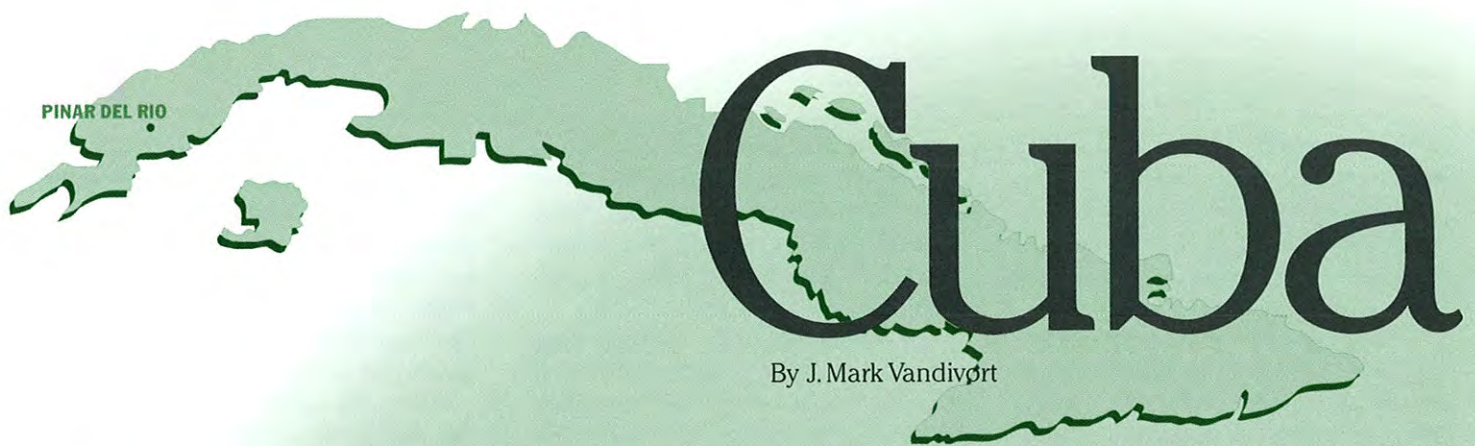
When they reached the area, they found the shelter built by the men, and nothing seemed to be disturbed in it. However, when they fanned out into the jungle, they found extra clothes the men had brought scattered everywhere. With no trace of the men, they gathered the clothes and went back to the beach where they had set up camp.

After reaching the body, the other man broke down and wept and was unable to finish the task. Fuller took a rope and fastened it to the body and began the ordeal of floating the body back up the river. Eventually two other bodies were found further down the river, and all were brought to the same place for identification and burial in a common grave.

The role of Morrison Fuller in the recovery of the bodies of his friends in Christ was unpleasant, to say the least. But one cannot help believing he had the unique privilege of standing on holy ground where men had been martyred for the cause of Christ. ■



About the Writer: Reverend Fred Warner pastors Vista Free Will Baptist Church in Van Buren, Arkansas. He previously served as director of missionary-church relations with the Foreign Missions Department.



PINAR DEL RIO

Cuba

By J. Mark Vandivort

Forty-four years ago at this time, I was in Cuba. I visited Louise before leaving for “Castro” country. How beautiful she was when she met me at the door of Bessie Underwood’s “Catherine Place” home.

She was wearing a pretty red dress with a large white collar that draped down over the front of her dress (very stylish at that time). The white collar accentuated her tanned face and shoulder-length dark brown hair. This lovely image was imprinted in my mind to take to Cuba.

Decisions

We agreed to pray together each morning at 7:00 a.m. Missouri time—9:00 a.m. Cuba time. Only once did I forget our coordinated prayer tryst. That was on a Sunday morning while I was seated in a train with the Rev. Thomas H. Willey, Free Will Baptist missions director of Cuba.

Our destination was a Free Will Baptist church nestled near the railroad tracks many miles out in a rural area. Brother Willey was a popular and respected missionary statesman. He was sharing with me from the depths of his

experience and wisdom. Sometime later that day I felt disappointed with myself when I realized that I had missed my “prayer date” with my beloved Louise.

Visiting the church beside the tracks was a heart-warming experience. Their pastor was a young black family man. People of all skin colors attended the church.

On another occasion I accompanied a group to a clinic in Piñar Del Rio in order to donate blood for one of our

At the time I had known Louise about a month and we had been together on three dates. However, Fidel Castro was considerate to deliver our daily letters—I wonder if he read them?

Sister Willey was interested in introducing me to a young Christian woman. But I reaffirmed that my heart was firmly attached to the lovely “brunette” in Missouri. Mrs. Willey also shared some of her “homemaking” experiences in the jungles of Panama. I have shared those valuable lessons with many people.

Only once did I forget our coordinated prayer tryst. That was on a Sunday morning while I was seated in a train with the Rev. Thomas H. Willey, Free Will Baptist missions director of Cuba.

Cuban pastors who was ill. While lying on the table, I closed my eyes as I remembered our prayer date. One of the Cuban nurses, thinking that I had passed out, had a bucket of water in her hand that was designated for my face. Brother Willey came to my rescue!

I wrote to Louise, asking her if she would consider becoming my “secretary.” Every young pastor needs an efficient secretary. As things turned out, I gained a “co-director”!

One sunny afternoon following our lunch of rice and beans, Mrs. Willey invited me to accompany her out onto the lawn. This provided privacy for conversation, yet still within plain view of other people around the mission compound. She asked me all about Louise—how long had I known her, what kind of work she did, what she looked like and more.

During that time, I was seeking God’s will regarding utilizing my agriculture degree as an agricultural missionary in Cuba (Communism closed that door). The day I arrived at the mission compound, Brother Willey had me on my hands and knees pulling dead, baby pigs out of a sick sow. She lived.

My experiences in Cuba were rich and exciting—including physical labor, evangelism trips, ministry at an army camp and passing out scripture booklets in a large prison. Also, I did some solo travel.

Before I left Cuba, Louise had written that she was interested in becoming my “secretary.” Meanwhile, I lay awake at night, planning my strategy for a proposal of marriage! ■



About the Writer:
Reverend Mark Vandivort is a retired Free Will Baptist home missionary.



Militant Islam persecutes Christians around the world.

Islam Examined

By J. Grant Swank, Jr.

Islam is being pictured today as a “religion of peace.” Granted, religion can be complicated. Therefore, one must be careful when stating that Islam is not a religion of peace. But in fact it is not.

Nevertheless, it is true that some Muslims believe that their religion is one of peace. Confused? You are not alone. So, let’s look at some basics:

- **Secular Muslims accept Islam as a religion of peace because they are not familiar with the Quran nor the historical realities regarding intolerant Islamic adherents.**
- **Moderate Muslims are those who have read some of the Quran and take from it the peace statements attributed to Mohammed.**
- **Zealot Muslims (sometimes referred to as “Fundamentalists”) are those who take most seriously the aggressive Quran statements. They may act them out in persecuting or killing “the enemy.”**

Muslim Outcasts

Mohammed himself was a complicated person. He wrote in the Quran statements that are conciliatory toward Jews and Christians. He also wrote statements that are threatening to Jews and

Christians. Moderates accept the conciliatory statements. Zealots accept the aggressive statements.

The refined, sophisticated, learned Muslims who reach out to other religions in tolerance are those who are the present-day “window display” models of Muslims. Persons of like nature, whatever their religion, are most reassured to come upon such contemporary examples of the Muslim faith.

However, alongside these tolerant moderate Muslims are the zealots. It is the latter which must be understood today if we are going to be true to the study of Islam and protective of our positions as Christians.

“Islam” means “submission.” It means submission totally to Allah, the deity of the Muslim religion.

Zealots who aggressively move against Jews and Christians—the “infidels”—act out this command from Sahih Muslim I, p. 17: “The Messenger of

Allah commanded to fight against all people till they testify to the fact that there is no god but Allah, and believe in me (that) I am the Messenger (from the Lord) and in all that I have brought.”

Further, Surah 8:39 of the Quran states: “And fight them or until there is no more tumult or aggression. And there prevail justice and faith in Allah altogether and everywhere. But if they cease, verily Allah doth see all that they do.”

Islam Persecutes Christians

Other quotations from the Quran could be given regarding the Allah-directed right of a Muslim to do away with a non-Muslim.

Country after country today is under threat by the zealot Muslims. This is fact. Others may pontificate on the “Islam is a religion of peace” theme all they want; but the truth is that there are untold numbers being killed each day by zealot Muslims in the name of Allah and his prophet, Mohammed.

Mohammed himself was a complicated person. He wrote in the Quran statements that are conciliatory toward Jews and Christians. He also wrote statements that are threatening to Jews and Christians. Moderates accept the conciliatory statements. Zealots accept the aggressive statements.

In Algeria, Muslims make up 97% of the people. Zealots are aggressively working for the establishment of Shari'a law. Christians suffer violence. Believers' throats have been slit. The Christian witness is not permitted.

In Bangladesh, Christians are frequently denied access to public water wells. Many have been beaten by zealot mobs.

In Brunei, Muslims account for 65% of the people. Christian leaders have been dismissed from the country. Christian literature is not tolerated. Applications for church registration are ignored. Christians must meet in secret.

In Comoros, Christians cannot testify in public. They have undergone harassment and persecution by zealot Muslims.

In Egypt, Christians are treated as second-class citizens. Zealot Muslims frequently attack Christians. There are reports of Christian females being raped and forced to marry Muslims. The Coptic Church, the largest body of believers in the Middle East, is persecuted continually. Some Copts have been put in prison for "inciting intercommunal strife."

In Indonesia, zealots want to eliminate Christianity completely. Over 600 churches have been leveled. Christians are being forced to convert to Islam. Men, women and children are coerced to be circumcised. Some Christians are killed outright.

In Iran, Christian pastors have been murdered. Believers are not allowed to

pursue education or to hold jobs and they are not permitted to own property.

In Libya, there is a limit of one congregation per denomination in each city. Muslims make up 97% of the population.

In Mauritania, it is against the law for Muslims to enter Christian homes. The government has gone to great lengths to prohibit Christianity from entering the culture.

In Myanmar (Burma), forced conversions are frequent. In 1966, almost all Christian effort was forced to exit.

In Nigeria, believers have been murdered, while Christian buildings have been burnt to the ground.

In Pakistan, much violence against Christians has been daily fare. Numerous Christians have been murdered by mobs. Christians are not permitted in some professions and given lower class tasks.

The Christian Response

In order to love one's enemy, one must know the truth about one's enemy.

Christians are to love their enemies, pray for them and do good toward them. But they are not to be ignorant concerning their beliefs and activities. Jesus said that His own were to be as wise as snakes and harmless as doves.

Just as there are many within Christendom who do not read nor understand the Bible, so there are adherents in every religion. Therefore, there will be those secular and moder-

ate Muslims who are active in "name only." That is, they adhere to certain rituals and basic tenets of Islam, but are not fully knowledgeable concerning Islam nor the zealot acting out of the aggressive commands in the Quran.

Christians must then learn to decipher who it is that the Christian is speaking to when communicating with a Muslim. Is it a secular Muslim? Is it a moderate Muslim? Or is it a zealot Muslim?

But the last thing a Christian can do is to be naive in baptizing the Islam religion as a religion of peace.

Confusing? Yes, it can be. But the bottom line in understanding any of the world religions apart from the revealed truth in scripture is to understand that the devil is the "author of confusion."

Islam then has been written by the devil. He is the Angel of Light. Therefore the devil can produce a religion that has elements of peace in its devilment.

And this in itself is the start of the understanding of any religion of the world other than the Christian truth. ■



About the Writer: Reverend Grant Swank pastors the New Hope Church in Windham, Maine, where he also teaches at-risk youths at an alternative learning school. He has been a free-lance writer for 40 years. He enjoys watercolor painting, travel and conversation with friends. He can be contacted at grantswank@zwi.net.

Part four of an eleven-part series.

*I May Be Young,
But This I've Learned ...*

About God's Judgment

By Terry Eagleton

Late one Friday afternoon, I was helping a brother-in-law finish some manual labor on the exterior of a building located on Music Row. As he gave the last strike to the last spike into the last landscape timber, a young, drunk vagabond offered to help. With a torrent of vulgarities the brash drunk assured us he could do the work.

After he had been guaranteed that we were finished for the day, he startled us by questioning if we were finished with life, would we go to Heaven or Hell? My brother-

in-law turned the query to the inquisitor by responding with the assurance of his own destiny, but questioning the young man about his final fate.

"I see you don't want to judge, but you know where I'm going," he said. "But I love Jesus. Peace."

With those strange words, he parted to rush across the street and grab a young associate by the throat and engage in a heated argument. As I drove home reflecting on the event, I realized I'm young, but this I've learned about God's judgment.

Never Capricious

When we study Greek mythology or many world religions, we are astounded by the whimsical nature of the deities. They are often impulsive and volatile. Worship is offered in the expectation that the god or goddess can be appeased from enraged retribution to an unpredictable offense.

In Africa, I observed blood sacrifices offered daily to unknown gods. In the Russian marketplace, I learned through their art, that the gods must be appeased if man is to co-exist with the idiosyncrasies of celestial creatures.

Sadly, however, it is not just the ignorant pagan on the other side of the globe who believes in a fickle god. Many who have grown up in the Bible belt see no difference in the God of Noah, Lot and Ezekiel. They are mystified by a New Testament Jesus who tells the adulteress, "Neither do I condemn thee: go, and sin no more," (John 8:11), and later curses a barren fig tree though it was out of season (Mark 11:12-14).

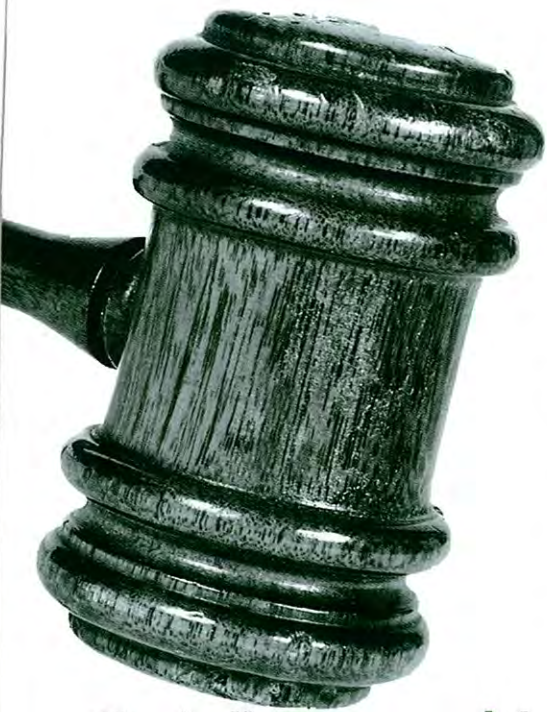
Fortunately, when God revealed Himself to mankind, He revealed Himself to be unchanging. When we come to know Him through His revelation, we learn exactly what will reap His judgment and what blesses His Being. The one true God of Heaven is neither

fickle nor whimsical, but always true to His nature.

It is this immutability of God that so frustrates fallen man. God never makes exceptions. His holiness co-exists with His love, His righteousness exercises itself parallel to His grace, His justice is concomitant with His mercy. While this complexity is perplexing to our limited human mind, it must never be equated with Divine volatility. God is the same yesterday, today and forever (Heb. 13:8).

Always Just

In scripture not only do we learn of God's immutability, but we also learn of His justice. I've learned through the years that perspective is essential to understanding



complex issues. Never is this truer than when we try to understand God's just judgment.

We must come to the point where we recognize that God will always have more perspective on any given situation than any human can ever hope to have, and perspective can make all the difference.

I've had an ongoing conversation the last two years with my son about economics. He is 14 and has wrestled with the whole idea of a monetary system. Unaware of the term, he began this discussion defending a simple bartering system.

His primary argument was that since all people have equal value, it stands to reason their labor should have equal value, thus the one-for-one exchange of

given the alternatives, I am pleased to put my faith in Him.

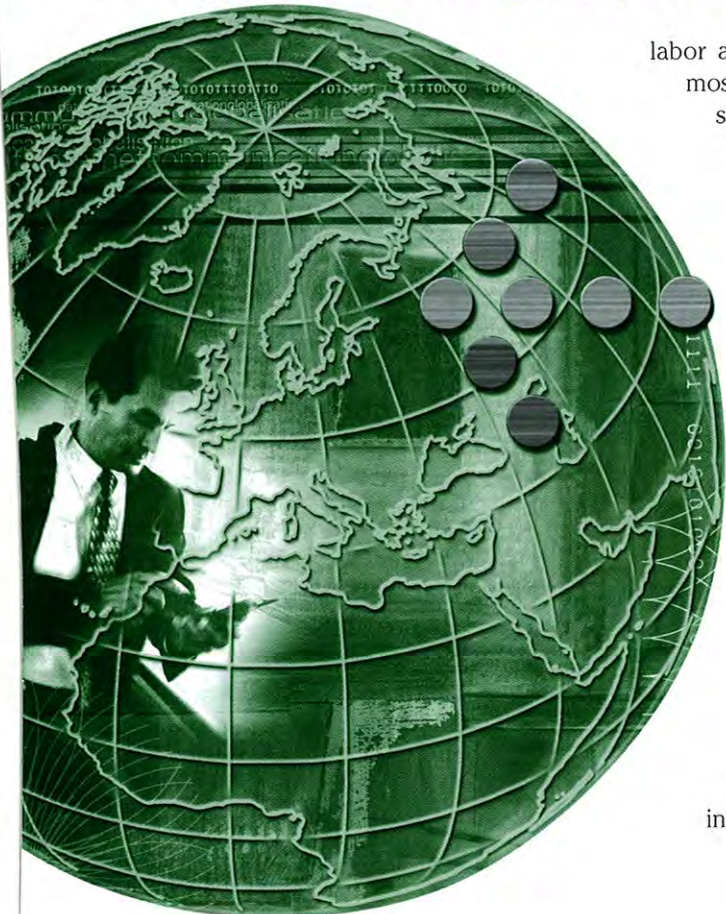
Account Settled

Speaking of perspective, we would do well to remember that great pearl of wisdom offered by the eminent American philosopher Yogi Berra, "It ain't over 'till it's over."

The writer to the Hebrews said that people die once, and after that they are judged (Heb. 9:27). While living on fast food, traveling on supersonic planes and communicating on the information superhighway, we find it challenging to remember that God deals with His creation in light of eternity.

Our presidents lead us to victory in war one year and we vote them out of office the next. God, however, operates

His holiness co-exists with His love, His righteousness exercises itself parallel to His grace, His justice is concomitant with His mercy.



labor and goods would be the most socio-economically just system. No amount of probing his reasoning on this subject caused him to waiver.

Until... he started cutting the lawn and receiving monetary compensation. Then he began to believe that some labor was worth greater compensation than other. The value of perspective is amazing.

I readily admit that it often requires considerable faith in God to believe He is acting in a just manner. However,

an eternal economy founded on unchanging principles of moral absolutes. It is true that sin introduced us to sorrows in this life that are a part of God's judgment, but only final judgment will make clear the appropriate retribution for individual acts of sin as well as the proper punishment for our sin nature.

The Good News is that God sent His Son into the world, not to condemn the world, but to save the world. God loved the world this way: He gave His only Son so that everyone who believes in Him will not die but will have eternal life (John 3:17, 16). ■



About the Writer:
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The Value of a WORD

By Charley Carmack

We hear the phrase, “words have meaning,” echoing throughout society. Words are the avenue of communication for every culture on the face of our planet. It is no wonder that God recognized the importance of a single word. He understood that when He had John pen the following verse:

“In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God,” (John 1:1).

Solomon understood the force and beauty of words which are spoken at the proper times and penned following verse to emphasis their importance:

“A word fitly spoken is like apples of gold in pictures of silver,” (Prov. 25:11).

We have the ability to change the world through the words we choose to

the most sad—forgotten

the most comforting—faith

These words, at their very mention, bring powerful thoughts from our past, flooding our souls. They speak volumes though each is a single word.

Words have a tremendous impact.

The story is told of two young altar boys

Our words do not have value because of their multiplicity but by how they minister to others.

whose lives were changed. One young altar boy dropped the communion cup during service and the bishop told him to leave the altar and never return. The young boy became the cruel communist leader Tito.

Another young boy did the same thing in another church and was told by the bishop that he would make a fine priest. He became Archbishop Fulton Sheen.

Words reveal our hearts. Jesus told us in Matthew 12:34, “. . . out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh.” If we listen to our words, we

have an avenue to look into our own hearts.

Our words will be a part of our future. Christ spoke about this in Matthew 12:36–37, “But I say unto you that every idle word that men shall speak, they shall give account thereof in the day of judgment. For by thy words thou shalt be justified, and by thy words thou shalt be condemned.”

Be Aware of the Style with Which We Speak

Solomon used the words “fitly spoken” to describe our style. In east

Understand the Scope of Their Importance

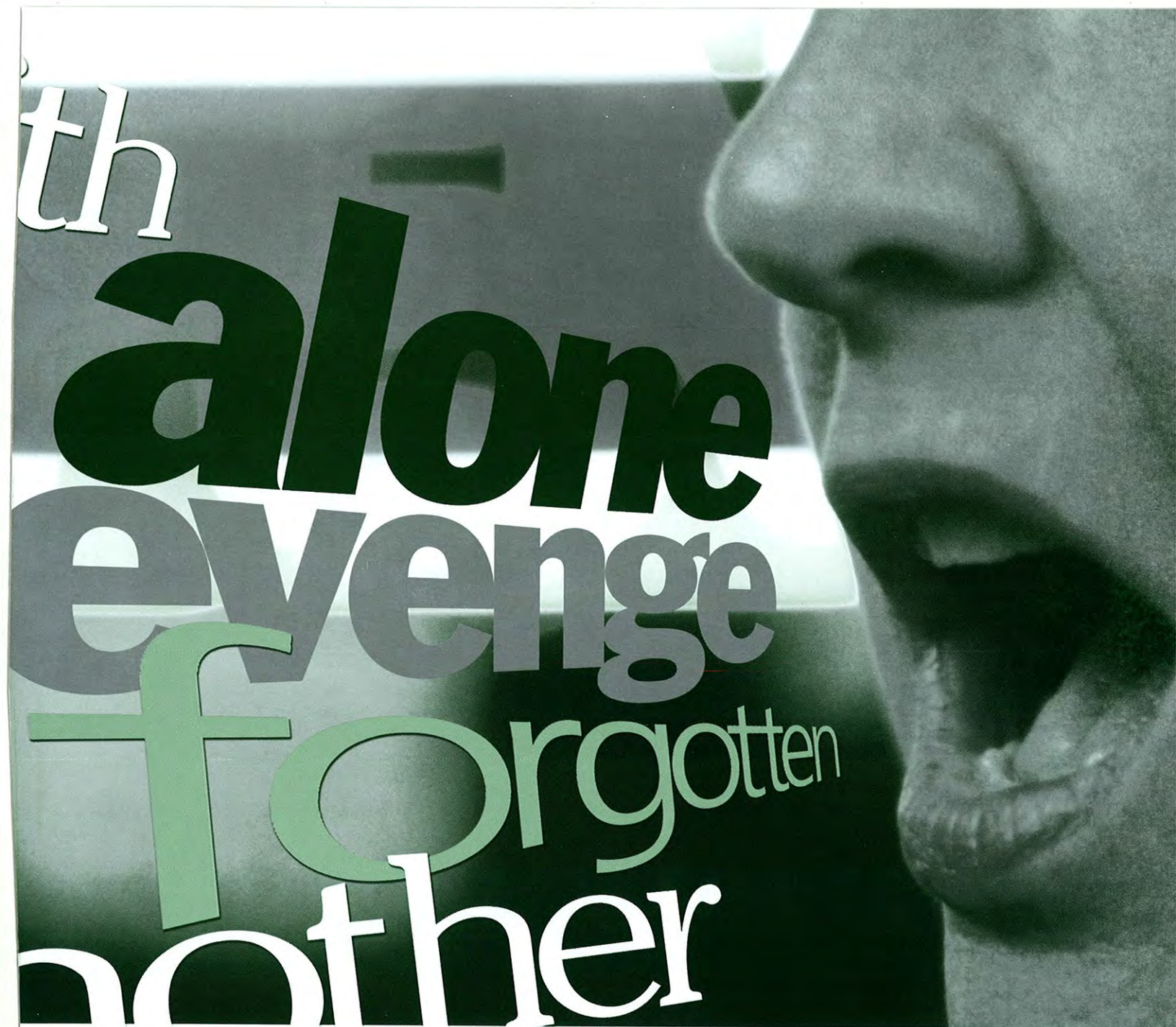
The emphasis is upon one single word, not upon a multitude of words used during the course of our day.

Dr. Wilfred Funk was asked to select the 10 most expressive words in the English language. Dr. Funk chooses the following words as the most expressive:

the most bitter—alone

the most revered—mother

the most cruel—revenge



with alone evenge forgotten no other

Tennessee where I am from, we use the term “conspicuous fit,” to describe the uncontrolled use of words. The term used by Solomon refers to being suitable, to be right for or to furnish what is needed. It is never right to say more than is needed in any situation.

In choosing our words, we need to make sure they are suitable for use as a Christian. We need to speak only the information that is needed to convey our thoughts. Also, we need to make sure that our words do not pour forth in an uncontrolled manner.

Words Should Be Admired Because of Their Value

Solomon said it well in verse 11, “as apples of gold in pictures of silver.” I enjoy looking at fine furniture that is hand produced. One of the characteristics of fine furniture is the simplicity of design and not excessive ornamentation of our day.

Our words do not have value because of their multiplicity but by how they minister to others. Our words have value when they are seasoned by grace,

when they are sound and when they edify others.

When we speak, are our words like “apples of gold in pictures of silver”? Do our words portray beauty and add value to the hearer? If we understand the importance of one word, the style in which we speak and the value that words add to others, our speech will be a beautiful thing to behold. ■

About the Writer: Reverend Charley Carmack pastors Ashland City Free Will Baptist Church in Ashland City, Tennessee.



The Lesson of the Foul Fowl

By Dennis E. Hensley

Recently, a long-time friend of mine experienced a series of tragic events. First, he was dismissed from his job. Next, he lost a great deal of money when the stock market went through a recession. And, finally, he developed a severe eye infection that made it impossible for

him to watch television or to work at his computer. Like Job, he was dumbfounded as to why God would allow so many hardships to befall him at once.

During a lengthy conversation with me, my friend confessed that he had lost his job because he had been accessing

"Sometimes," I continued, "a baby bird doesn't want to leave the nest, no matter how filthy it has become. The baby has gotten used to living in the mess and wants to stay. The mother bird, however, knows that this is unhealthy and can lead to sickness or even death.

email note saying that he had adopted a new life verse from the Bible for himself:

"Therefore, get rid of moral filth and the evil that is so prevalent, and humbly accept the word planted in you, which can save you" (James 1:21).

Sometimes a baby bird doesn't want to leave the nest, no matter how filthy it has become.

pornographic websites while at work. He said he had only done this during his lunch break or after normal business hours, but the company's "no tolerance" policy had cost him his job anyway. He asked me if I thought that was fair.

"Let me share a lesson from nature with you," I responded to him. "When a mother bird has a nest of hatchlings, she spends several weeks fetching food for them during the day and covering them with her wings to keep them dry, warm and protected during the night.

"As the babies grow, the nest gets filled with the broken egg shells, the down they've outgrown for feathers, and their own excrement. That's when the babies realize that it is time to fly away and get out of the mess they're in."

My friend nodded his understanding, but acted as though he didn't grasp the point I was trying to make.

So, in love, she brings discomfort to the baby bird. She quits bringing worms to it. She stops putting her wings over it at night. If that doesn't work, she even starts to use her beak to defoliate and tear apart the nest."

My friend stared at me.

"And you think I'm like that baby bird?" he asked, somewhat amazed.

I shrugged and said, "Well, you can't use a computer anymore, can you?"

He considered that, then slowly nodded his head. "I was comfortable in my filth, not realizing the damage it was doing to me."

"And to your job and to your family," I added. "In love, you got pushed out."

Fortunately, in time, with proper medical treatment, my friend's eyes began to heal. Thereafter, he spent hours looking at his Bible rather than at pornographic websites. However, once he was able to go back to his computer, he sent me an

Interestingly, he signed the email message, "Your friend, the Little Bird." ■



About the Writer: Dr. Dennis E. Hensley is an associate professor of English at Taylor University Fort Wayne, where he directs the professional writing major. His 39 books include *Surprises and Miracles of the Season: Devotions for Christmas and New Year's* (Beacon Hill Press) and *Money Wise: Honoring God with Creative Money Management* (Harvest House).



Arkansas Pastor, Hoover Lewis, Retires



GRUBBS, AR—After 43 years in the pastorate, Arkansas minister Hoover Lewis retired in December 2002. Reverend Lewis, 74, was converted in 1951, surrendered to preach in 1959, licensed in 1959 and ordained to the ministry in 1960.

Except for a 10-year pastorate at South Highland FWB Church in Muscle Shoals, Alabama, where he built a new auditorium, Lewis has given himself to Free Will Baptist outreach in Arkansas.

Wherever he has pastored, Hoover Lewis has been a builder and denominational leader. His first two Arkansas pastorates at Blackland Chapel FWB Church and New Home FWB Church were part-time arrangements (1960-1963). During that time he led the Blackland Chapel Church to build an educational wing.

Lewis' 13-year pastorate at First FWB Church in Batesville began with attendance averaging in the 20s. True to his pattern, Lewis soon had the congregation building an educational

wing and a two-story educational structure while attendance climbed past 170.

After he returned from his one out-of-state pastorate in Alabama, Brother Lewis led the East Batesville FWB Church in two building programs in six years. They built a new sanctuary and a two-story educational wing.

His last 10 years as a pastor came at Ballews Chapel FWB Church in Grubbs.

Beyond his pastoral duties, Hoover served seven years as moderator of the Polk Bayou Association. He was also elected three years as assistant moderator of the Arkansas State Association; he chaired the state Sunday School Board five years and chaired the state Executive Board.

Hoover and Willia Jean Lewis have been married 52 years. They have two children—daughter Ladohnna Freeman is a school teacher and pastor's wife. Son Clarence Lewis is assistant director/director of operations at Randall House Publications.

Bible College Offers Unique Course



NASHVILLE, TN—A special course for 5–12 students featuring backpacking, wilderness skills, and including small group decision-making, scripture study, reflection time, map and compass skills, and leadership training will be offered as part of Free Will Baptist Bible College's summer program.

The two-hour course, A Wilderness Journey, will be led by youth/CE teacher James H. Evans, May 20–27. It features a week of challenging exertion and will explore leadership styles. The cost is \$748 for credit; \$500 for non-credit.

For an informational flier, e-mail Mr. Evans at james@fwbbc.edu or phone him at 1-800-76-FWBBC.

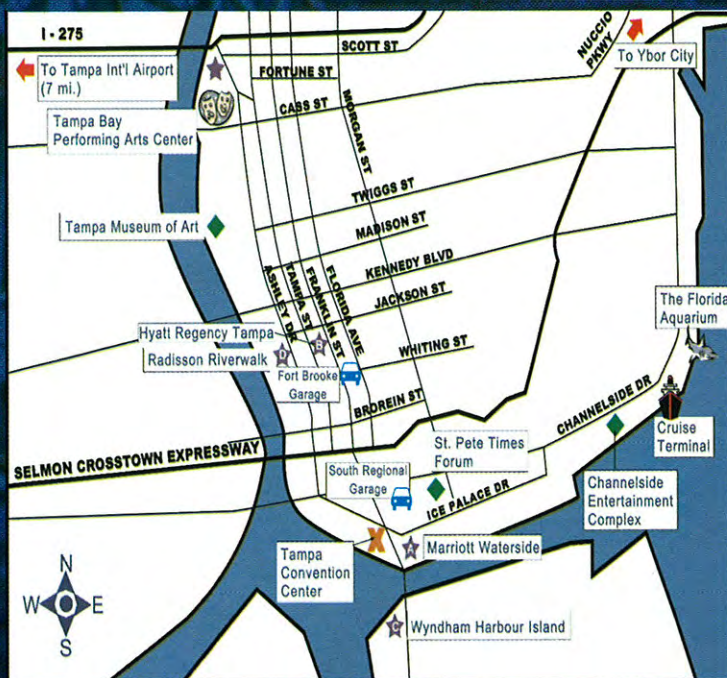
Free Will Baptist National Convention

FOUNDED
ON THE ROCK

FOCUSSED
ON THE FUTURE

Tampa, Florida
July 20-24, 2003

TAMPA INFORMATION



Hotel Information

Hotel	Map Location	Room Rate	Distance From Convention Center	Parking
Tampa Marriott Waterside	A	\$124	1 Block	\$12 Self or Valet
Hyatt Regency Tampa	B	\$118	3 Blocks	\$7-Self \$12-Valet
Wyndham Harbour Island	C	\$126	2 Blocks	\$10 Self or Valet
Radisson Riverwalk	D	\$109	4 Blocks	\$5 Self or Valet



Location

Tampa Bay is located on Florida's West Coast. The convenient location makes it easy to get to all of the attractions in central Florida. Orlando is just 84 miles east of Tampa.

Climate

Through the summer, visitors to Tampa will experience mostly sunny days that are often cooled by quick afternoon showers. Don't forget to pack the sunscreen if you are likely to spend time outdoors.

TAMPA TRAVEL TIPS

HARTline is Tampa's public transportation system, and operates a free uptown/downtown connector trolley service in downtown Tampa. For HARTline route info, call 813-254-4278.

For the latest information about Tampa, please go to www.visittampabay.com.

The main interstates that run throughout Tampa are I-75, I-275 and I-4.

HELPFUL PHONE NUMBERS

Tampa Bay Convention & Visitors Bureau

1-800-44-TAMPA

Travelers Aid

813-273-5936

Tampa General Hospital Emergency Room

813-251-7100

Local Weather

813-645-2323

General Police Information

813-276-3200

Emergency

911



HOUSING FORM

National Association of Free Will Baptists
Women Nationally Active for Christ
National Youth Conference
Tampa, Florida - July 20-24, 2003

INSTRUCTIONS

Personal Information

Complete the **Personal Information** box. The contact name is the person to whom you want the confirmation sent. List each person who will be staying in this room. Don't forget the **Special Requests** box to the right. All special requests will be noted but cannot be guaranteed.



Hotel Information

Mark the box on the grid to the right, indicating the **hotel** in which you would like to reserve a room, and the **room configuration** you want.

Don't forget to include your arrival and departure dates. Please see **page 2** for more information about the hotels.

Payment Options

Complete the **Payment Options** section by indicating how you will be paying for your room. You may pay by credit card or check. If you pay by check, make it payable to the hotel.

Reserving a Room

Reserve your room via phone, mail, fax or internet. If mailing or faxing, please print or type all information requested on this form and **send it directly to the hotel** no later than Friday, June 20, 2003. Reservations received after this date are subject to availability and may be at a higher rate.

Any changes or cancellations should be communicated directly to the hotel. Check with your hotel regarding cancellation policies and check-in times.

**SEND ONLY ONE
FORM PER ROOM
REQUEST.**

PERSONAL INFORMATION

Confirmations will be mailed to this person only.

Contact name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Phone # _____ Fax # _____

Room Occupants
(List each person.)

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

4. _____

5. _____

SPECIAL REQUESTS

- Wheelchair Accessible Room
 Rollaway Bed (see chart below)
 Crib Non-Smoking Room
 Other _____

HOTEL INFORMATION

<i>The rates below do not include the current hotel tax of 12%.</i>	SINGLE 1 BED/ 1 PERSON	DOUBLE 1 BED/ 2 PERSONS	DBL/DBL 2 BEDS/ 2 PERSONS	TRIPLE 2 BEDS/ 3 PERSONS	QUAD 2 BEDS/ 4 PERSONS	ROLL- AWAY BED	PARKING RATES
Tampa Marriott Waterside <i>Headquarters Hotel</i>	<input type="checkbox"/> \$124	<input type="checkbox"/> \$124	<input type="checkbox"/> \$124	<input type="checkbox"/> \$124	<input type="checkbox"/> \$124	\$15/day	\$12-Self \$12-Valet
Hyatt Regency Tampa	<input type="checkbox"/> \$118	<input type="checkbox"/> \$118	<input type="checkbox"/> \$118	<input type="checkbox"/> \$118	<input type="checkbox"/> \$118	Single or Double rooms only	\$7-Self \$12-Valet
Wyndham Harbour Island	<input type="checkbox"/> \$126	<input type="checkbox"/> \$126	<input type="checkbox"/> \$126	<input type="checkbox"/> \$126	<input type="checkbox"/> \$126		\$10-Self \$10-Valet
Radisson Riverwalk	<input type="checkbox"/> \$109	<input type="checkbox"/> \$109	<input type="checkbox"/> \$109	<input type="checkbox"/> \$109	<input type="checkbox"/> \$109	\$15/day All rooms	\$5-Self \$5 Valet In/Out

ARRIVAL DATE ____ / ____ / ____ **DEPARTURE DATE** ____ / ____ / ____

TAMPA MARRIOTT WATERSIDE
700 South Florida Avenue
Tampa, FL 33602
Tel 888-268-1616
Fax 813-204-6349
www.tampawaterside.com
Group Code: FWBFWBA

HYATT REGENCY TAMPA
Two Tampa City Center
Tampa, FL 33602
Tel 800-233-1234
Fax 813-222-4964
www.nafwb.org/convention
click on Hyatt link

WYNDHAM HARBOUR ISLAND
725 S. Harbour Island Blvd.
Tampa, FL 33602
Tel 813-229-5000
Fax 813-229-5322
www.wyndham.com
Group Code: 030718

RADISSON RIVERWALK HOTEL
200 N. Ashley Drive
Tampa, FL 33602
Tel 813-223-2222
Fax 813-273-0839
www.radisson.com
Promotional Code: FREE

PAYMENT OPTIONS

Credit Card # _____ **Exp** _____

Name on Card _____

Check Enclosed. Check # _____
Make check payable to the hotel.

IMPORTANT NOTICE

An advance deposit of \$140 is required. Without complete credit card or check information, your reservation will not be processed.

**DON'T DELAY!
RESERVATIONS MUST BE MADE
BY JUNE 20, 2003.**

Schedule

Saturday, July 19

Registration Opens

3:00 pm-7:00 pm
Tampa Convention Center

Sunday, July 20

Sunday School

10:00 am-10:45 am
Tampa Convention Center

Morning Worship

11:00 am-12:00 Noon
Tampa Convention Center

Evening Worship

7:00 pm-8:30 pm
Tampa Convention Center

NYC Worship Services

7:00 pm-8:30 pm
Tampa Convention Center

Monday, July 21

General Board Meeting

8:00 am-2:30 pm
Tampa Marriott Waterside

NYC Competitive Activities

8:30 am-4:30 pm
Tampa Convention Center

NYC Seminars

1:00 pm-4:00 pm
Tampa Convention Center

WNAC Seminar

1:30 pm-2:30 pm
Tampa Convention Center

WNAC Seminar

3:00 pm- 4:00 pm
Tampa Convention Center

Exhibit Area Open

3:00 pm-10:00 pm
Tampa Convention Center

Monday, July 21

Pastors/Laymen Conference

3:00 pm-5:00 pm
Tampa Convention Center

Children's Banquet

5:00 pm
Wyndham Harbour Island

Tweener Banquet

5:00 pm
Wyndham Harbour Island

Evening Worship

7:00 pm-8:30 pm
Tampa Convention Center

NYC Worship Services

7:00 pm-8:30 pm
Tampa Convention Center

Truth & Peace Alumni Reunion

9:00 pm-11:00 pm
Tampa Convention Center

Youth Worker Reception

9:00 pm-10:30 pm
Tampa Convention Center

Tuesday, July 22

NYC Competitive Activities

8:30 am-4:30 pm
Tampa Convention Center

WNAC Convention

8:30 am-10:50 am
Tampa Convention Center

Exhibit Area Open

10:00 am-10:00 pm
Tampa Convention Center

NYC Seminars

10:00 am-4:00 pm
Tampa Convention Center

Tuesday, July 2

Theological Trends Seminar

11:00 am-12:30 pm
Tampa Convention Center

WNAC Missionary Service

11:00 am
Tampa Convention Center

Hillsdale College Luncheon

12:00 noon
Tampa Marriott Waterside

WNAC Luncheon

12:30 pm-2:30 pm
Wyndham Harbour Island

Evening Worship

7:00 pm-8:30 pm
Tampa Convention Center

NYC Worship

7:00 pm-8:30 pm
Tampa Convention Center

Youth Banquet

9:00 pm-11:00 pm
Wyndham Harbour Island

Wednesday, July

NYC Competitive Finals

8:00 am-11:00 am
Tampa Convention Center

Convention Business Session

9:00 am-4:00 pm
Tampa Convention Center

NYC Seminars

10:00 am-4:00 pm
Tampa Convention Center

Exhibit Area Open

10:00 am-10:00 pm
Tampa Convention Center

of Events

Wednesday, July 23

FWBBC Luncheon

12:00 noon-1:15 pm

Tampa Convention Center

Evening Worship

7:00 pm-8:30 pm

Tampa Convention Center

NYC Awards Ceremony

9:00 pm

Tampa Convention Center

Thursday, July 24

Exhibit Area Open

9:00 am-12:30 pm

Tampa Convention Center

Concluding Business Session

9:00 am-adjournment

Tampa Convention Center

Worship Service Information

Adult worship is scheduled Sunday morning and each evening Sunday through Wednesday.

Student worship (grades 7-12) is scheduled Sunday morning and each evening Sunday through Tuesday.

Tweener worship (grades 4-6) is scheduled Sunday morning and each evening Sunday through Tuesday.

Children's worship (grades 1-3) is scheduled Sunday morning and each evening Sunday through Tuesday.

Preschool worship (ages 3-6) is scheduled Sunday morning and each evening Sunday through Wednesday.

Convention Speakers



Ron Hunter, Director
Randall House
Sunday Morning



Larry Powell, Director
Home Missions
Sunday Evening



Keith Burden,
Executive Secretary
Monday Evening



Matt Pinson, President
Free Will Baptist
Bible College
Tuesday Evening



James Forlines, Director
Foreign Missions
Wednesday Evening



Ted S. Rendall
Pastors/Laymen
Conference



Deleen Cousineau
Cote d'Ivoire
WNAC Convention



John Weaver
Shelter Now
NYC-Sunday



Barry St. Clair
Reach Out Ministries
NYC-Monday/Tuesday

NATIONAL ASSOCIATION
OF FREE WILL BAPTISTS
NAFWB
FREE WILL BAPTIST CONVENTION
WNAC CONVENTION
NATIONAL YOUTH CONFERENCE



PRE-REGISTRATION FORM

National Association of Free Will Baptists
 Women Nationally Active for Christ
 National Youth Conference
 Tampa, Florida July 20-24, 2003

Did you know that you could Pre-Register online?
 Visit www.NAFWB.org today!

One Person Per Form

Name Desired On Badge: First _____ Last _____
 Home Address _____
 City _____ State _____ Zip _____
 Phone (____) _____ Email _____
 Church You Attend _____
 Church Location: City _____ State _____

**Badges Required
 At All
 Convention Events
 Lost Badge Fee
 \$5**

NATIONAL ASSOCIATION

All voting delegates must be members in good standing of a Free Will Baptist church.

Voting Delegates:

- National Board/Commission Member
- State Delegate
- Local Church Delegate * → \$50
- Foreign Missionary
- Home Missionary
- Ordained Deacon
- Ordained Minister

*DOCUMENTATION
 REQUIRED

Non-Voting Attendees:

- Licensed Minister
 - Visitor
- Fee \$ _____

WNAC CONVENTION

Voting Delegates:

- National Officer
- State President
- State Field Worker
- State Delegate
- Local WNAC Delegate* → \$5

*DOCUMENTATION
 REQUIRED

Non-Voting Attendees:

- Missionary
 - Visitor
- Fee \$ _____

NATIONAL YOUTH CONFERENCE

- Grades 1-12*** → \$25
 Required to attend NYC Events or Competition
- Preschool Worship*** → \$25
 For children ages 3-6 who have not started 1st grade
- Visitor-Adult**
- Visitor-Ages 3-6** not attending **Preschool Worship**

*ON-SITE
 REGISTRATION
\$35

Fee \$ _____

EVENT TICKETS

- Children's Banquet** → Qty. _____ x \$10= _____
 Monday, July 21, 5:00 pm
- Tweener Banquet** → Qty. _____ x \$10= _____
 Monday, July 21, 5:00 pm
- Youth Worker Reception** → Qty. _____ x \$20= _____
 Monday, July 21, 9:00 pm
- WNAC Luncheon** → Qty. _____ x \$25= _____
 Tuesday, July 22, 12:30 pm
- Hillsdale Luncheon** → Qty. _____ x \$20= _____
 Tuesday, July 22, 12:00 noon
- Youth Banquet** → Qty. _____ x \$22= _____
 Tuesday, July 22, 9:00 pm
- FWBC Luncheon** → Qty. _____ x \$27= _____
 Wednesday, July 23, 12:00 noon

DEADLINE JUNE 16
NO REFUNDS AFTER
JUNE 16

Ticket(s) \$ _____

Grand Total \$ _____

- Paying by check (Payable to FWB Convention)
- Paying by credit card (Discover, MC, Visa only)

Card # _____ Exp. / _____

Name on card _____

Return Form & Fees to:

Convention Registration
 P.O. Box 5002
 Antioch, TN 37011-5002
 Fax: 615-731-0771
 Questions?
877-767-7659
exoff@nafwb.org

**Beginning April 1:
 Pre-Register Online!**
www.nafwb.org

**For Office
 Use Only**

_____	Date Rcvd
_____	CK/MO#
_____	Amount
_____	From

Confirmation Letters Will Be Mailed.

MUSIC NOTES

The Free Will Baptist Music Commission has released the rehearsal and performance schedule for the Convention Choir and Men's Chorale for this year's National Convention, July 20-24 in Tampa, Florida.

The **Convention Choir** will be singing in the Sunday evening, Monday and Wednesday services. The rehearsal schedule is as follows:

Sunday 4:00 pm & 8:30 pm
Monday 5:30 pm
Tuesday 6:00 pm & 8:30 pm
Wednesday 5:30 pm

The **Men's Chorale** will be featured during the Tuesday evening service. They will rehearse Monday, 8:30 pm and Tuesday, 5:15 pm.

The 2003 National Convention will feature an orchestra comprised of volunteers from across the denomination. For more information, call or write by June 1:

*Bethel Free Will Baptist Church
Attn. Chris Truett
1936 Banks School Rd.
Kinston, NC 28504
(252) 522-2451 ext. 229*

Orchestra Rehearsals At 4:00 PM Daily

SECURITY NOTICE

In light of security concerns, official convention name badges will be required for all convention events.

Please be diligent in this area for yourself and those for whom you are responsible.

National Association of Free Will Baptists, Inc.
P.O. Box 5002
Antioch, TN 37011-5002
877-767-7659
www.nafwb.org
exoff@nafwb.org

All photos courtesy of Tampa Bay CVB.

2003 Local Church Delegate Card

This certifies that _____

(Name)

is a duly authorized delegate to the National Association of Free Will Baptists.

Church Name _____

Church City State _____

Pastor's or Church Clerk's signature _____

Important: This card properly signed and accompanied by a **\$50 registration fee** entitles a local FWB church delegate to register for voting privileges. **Only one delegate** allowed per church.

2003 Local WNAC Delegate Card

This certifies that _____

(Name)

is a duly authorized delegate to the Women Nationally Active for Christ Convention.

Church Name _____

Church City State _____

Local Coordinator's or Local Secretary's signature _____

Important: This card properly signed and accompanied by a **\$5 registration fee** entitles a local delegate to register for voting privileges. **Only one delegate** per church.



NATIONAL ASSOCIATION
OF FREE WILL BAPTISTS
NAFWB
FREE WILL BAPTIST CONVENTION
WNAC CONVENTION
NATIONAL YOUTH CONFERENCE

**Second Annual
FWB Classic**

**The 2003 National
Youth Conference**



**Make an impact
on the city of Tampa!**

**Call 1-800-877-7030
For information or to register**

NATIONAL ASSOCIATION
OF FREE WILL BAPTISTS
NAFWB
FREE WILL BAPTIST CONVENTION
WNAC CONVENTION
NATIONAL YOUTH CONFERENCE

**National Association of Free Will Baptists, Inc.
P.O. Box 5002
Antioch, Tennessee 37011-5002**

Reverend J.D. Tolbert, 68, with the Lord

SOUTH HAVEN, MI—Michigan pastor J. D. Tolbert died November 9, 2002, after 41 years in the ministry. Reverend Tolbert was unique in that his entire pastoral experience took place at the same church in South Haven—First FWB Church, a congregation he started and organized.

Converted at age 23 at a Free Will Baptist church in Ypsilanti, Tolbert surrendered to preach two years later. He decided to leave the Ypsilanti area and begin his ministry where there were few or no preachers.

Brother Tolbert moved his family to Western Michigan in 1961 and began preaching to migrant workers in the blueberry fields. He worked each day in a local factory and preached every night under an oak tree in the migrant camp.

Reverend Tolbert, his wife and their three children (all under the age of six) lived in a migrant worker's cabin. His wife picked blueberries during the day and cared for the children.

One year later (1962), Tolbert organized First FWB Church in South Haven. He did it all with no assistance

from denominational agencies. Daughter Tina Tolbert, now a speech instructor at Free Will Baptist Bible College, said, "His help came from his calling and his belief that he was where the Lord wanted him, knowing his needs would be met."

Twenty years later, Reverend Tolbert established Sunshine Day Care and Preschool. He led the congregation in four building programs—the church, the parsonage, the preschool/daycare and a fellowship hall.

In 1986 Tolbert led in organizing the West Michigan Association and was elected moderator several years. He subsequently suggested that the newly-organized association begin a youth camp. He became the camp's first director.

One of the distinctives that marked Tolbert's years in South Haven was an annual light display in his yard at Christmas. He hand-made the display and took great joy as the community enjoyed the annually expanding display. He also organized a free meal on Christmas day for everyone in the community.



The Tolbert family continued the light display tradition in December 2002, just weeks after J. D.'s death. Five newspapers and a television station were on hand to cover the event.

Reverend Tolbert is survived by his wife, Von Bagwell Tolbert; four sons and three daughters.

COMING NEXT ISSUE

TAMPA

- **Convention Preview**
- **Pre-Registration Form**
- **Housing Form**

OTHER FEATURES

The Saturday Bully
The Last Angry Man
The Incredible Support Staff
About Marriage

Children's Home Fire Contained

GREENEVILLE, TN—A fire in the Fair Haven Cottage (Free Will Baptist Family Ministries) on the night of January 13 sent nine children to the hospital where they were treated for smoke inhalation, according to Roy Roach, church relations coordinator.

The fire was contained when fire fighters quickly responded and smothered it with extinguishers. Officials said the home did not receive any water or smoke damage, but as a precaution, the children were transported to a local hospital where they were treated and released.

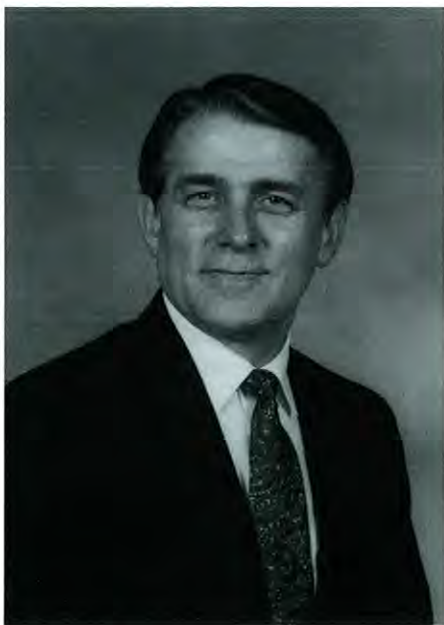
Reverend Roy Roach said, "We are very fortunate that this was only a small incident. We are appreciative of everyone involved who acted so promptly to confine the fire."



Fair Haven Cottage, Free Will Baptist Family Ministries

Roach confirmed that there was minor structural damage to Fair Haven Cottage, a girls' dormitory.

Southeastern College Names Stox President



WENDELL, NC—Dr. Lorenza Stox (60), a North Carolina native and one of the college founders, has been named president of Southeastern FWB College. He succeeds former president Billy Bevan who returned to the pastorate after 13 years at Southeastern. Dr. Stox began his duties as

president January 1. He will continue as pastor at Parker's Chapel FWB Church in Greenville where he has served since 1990.

Dr. Stox brings a wide range of educational experiences, pastoral leadership and denominational service to the presidency. He graduated from Free Will Baptist Bible College in 1965, earned a master's degree at Middle Tennessee State University and served as dean at Southeastern FWB College.

He has been a pastor and educator during most of his 40-year ministry. Ordained to preach in 1963, he began pastoring in Tennessee that same year while a sophomore at FWBCC. He invested 13 years at Faith FWB Church in Goldsboro (NC) with the late Frank Davenport, serving as assistant pastor, youth director, music minister, school administrator and instructor.

In 1980, Stox began a three-year pastorate at Ruth's Chapel FWB Church in New Bern (NC) where he continued the Christian school ministry at the church. He relocated to Virginia Beach (VA) in 1983 to help

establish Southeastern FWB College and served eight years in numerous roles as academic dean, dean of students, instructor and campus director.

While in Tennessee as a student at FWBCC, Dr. Stox worked part-time with the Church Training Service Department and later full-time. He is a writer, musician, conference speaker, Christian school advocate and servant/leader with a proven track record. He serves as moderator of North Carolina's Palmer Association.

Lorenza and Dolly Harris Stox have been married 40 years. They have two children, Stephen (married with one son, Noah) and Tammy (single) who works in a Greenville medical facility.

Commenting on the new president's background, Dann Patrick, chairman of the Southeastern College's Board of Directors, said, "Dr. Stox has literally done it all in Christian ministry. He truly has a servant's heart. Experience is one of the main ingredients he brings to the table."

Nominating Committee Announces Nominees

ANTIOCH, TN—The 2003 Nominating Committee for the national convention has released a preliminary list of nominees for boards, commissions and general officers. Chairman Nathan Ruble said, "The committee will meet in Tampa after the General Board meeting to finalize the report. Other names may be placed in nomination at that time."

Board of Retirement	Replacing William Ferguson (Michigan) Replacing Roger Harwell (Missouri) Replacing James Lowe (Ohio)	William Ferguson Jack Daniels , Deacon First FWB Church, Albany, GA James Lowe
Home Missions Board	Replacing Ron Parker (Louisiana) Replacing Loyd Locklear (Michigan) Replacing James Puckett (Oklahoma)	Ron Parker Loyd Locklear James Puckett
Master's Men Board	Replacing Clifford Donoho (Tennessee) Replacing Clarence Lewis (Tennessee) Replacing Thurman Pate (Tennessee)	Clifford Donoho Clarence Lewis Johnny Fowlkes , Deacon Center Point FWB Church, Vilonia, AR
Commission for Theological Integrity	Replacing Matt Pinson (Tennessee)	Matt Pinson
Media Commission	Replacing Steve Faison (Virginia)	Sandy Goodfellow Director of Plant Operations, FWBBC (TN)
Music Commission	Replacing Jerry Carraway (Tennessee)	Jerry Carraway
General Board	North Carolina Replacing Jim Marcum Northeast Assoc. Replacing Jim Nason Northwest Assoc. Replacing Brent Nix Ohio Replacing Mike Stokes Oklahoma Replacing Ernest Harrison, Jr. South Carolina Replacing Sigbee Dilda Tennessee Replacing Charles Thigpen Texas Replacing Keith Woody Virginia Replacing Glen Johnson West Virginia Replacing Carl Vallance	Jim Marcum Jim Nason Darrell Smith Mike Stokes Ernest Harrison, Jr. Mike Jones Charles Thigpen Keith Woody Glen Johnson Carl Vallance
Moderator	Replacing Carl Cheshier (Oklahoma)	Tim York (Kentucky) Pastor, Heritage FWB Church, Ashland, KY
Assistant Moderator	Replacing Tim York (Kentucky)	William Smith Executive Secretary, Georgia
Clerk	Replacing John Hibbard (California)	John Hibbard
Assistant Clerk	Replacing Randy Bryant (Florida)	Randy Bryant
Nominating Committee:	Chairman Nathan Ruble (MO), Tim Campbell (AR), Billy Hanna (GA), Glen Johnson (VA), Terry Eagleton (TN), Ron Helms (MI), David Sutton (OK)	

Alabama Minister Marks 50 Years

PINCKARD, AL—Dr. John Edwards celebrated 50 years in the ministry this spring. The 77-year-old Alabama native was licensed to preach in 1953 and ordained in 1956.

During his half-century in the pulpit, Dr. Edwards served as a home missionary, pastor, state moderator, Civil Air Patrol chaplain and General Board member with the National Association of Free Will Baptists.

When he moved to Nashville, Tennessee, in 1956 to attend Free Will Baptist Bible College, he began his first pastorate with 19 people at Woodbine FWB Church. He would ultimately pastor in three states—Tennessee, Arizona and Alabama, investing 45 years of his time in Alabama.

Reverend Edwards pastored 30 years in Dothan, Alabama, with the congregations at First FWB Church and Eastside FWB Church. While leading those churches, he also served 25

years as moderator of the Alabama State Association, a remarkable achievement.

The denomination and the community asked Edwards to lend his name and influence on a broader scale. While serving on the General Board, he was elected to the Executive Committee. He preached at the second annual Bible Conference at the national convention in Fort Worth, Texas, in 1982.

Edwards continued to answer the call to leadership, serving as moderator of Alabama's Florida State Line Association and the North Alabama Association. He was elected to the Alabama Home Missions Board under which he later served as a home missionary. He also served on the national Home Missions Board.

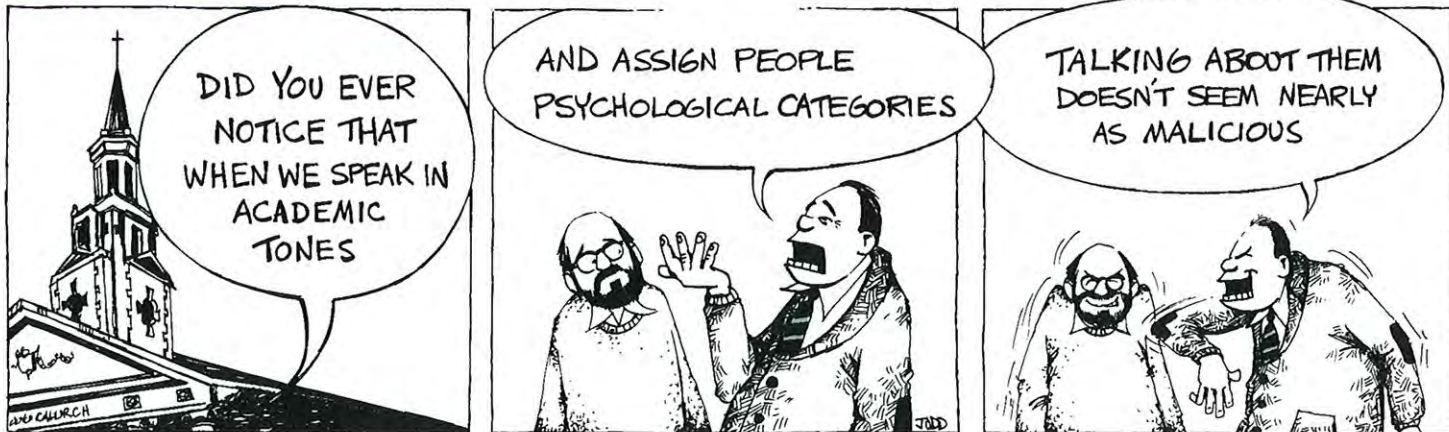
Dr. Edwards' wife, Grace Camp Edwards, died in 1996 after more than 50 years of marriage. He is now married to the former Thelma (T. J.)



Kirkland. Edwards' son Gary lives in Dothan.

Brother Edwards was diagnosed with lung cancer last summer. He can be contacted at 401 Jackson Circle, Midland City, AL 36350. ■

BEYOND BELIEF



Alabama: More than 350 people showed up to help dedicate the new building at **First FWB Church in Sylacauga**. The mayor, town council, contractors, state promotional director **Rick Cash** and others joined Pastor **Wayne McDaniel** and the congregation to dedicate the 11,000-square-foot structure. The 350-seat sanctuary, three offices, 15 classrooms and kitchen occupy a seven-acre site on Highway 280. Dr. McDaniel has led the congregation 29 years.

Pastor **Louie Nix** and members of **Union Ridge FWB Church in Sulligent** burned the mortgage on their two-story addition that includes an auditorium, fellowship hall, two classrooms and kitchen. Volunteer labor helped the church pay off the indebtedness in three years. The new structure measures 36'x60'.

Members of **Mt. Harmony FWB Church in Vernon** dedicated their \$216,000 multi-purpose building, according to Pastor **Danny Thompson**. This marks the church's second building program in five years. The building joins the church sanctuary via a 400-square-foot vestibule. It includes four classrooms, kitchen, storage area and is handicap accessible.

Arkansas: **Woodlawn FWB Church in Russellville** gave a Crisis Intervention Offering for missionaries and families in Côte d'Ivoire. Pastor **Mike Phillips** said the 93 people present collected \$750, a record missions offering... which was in addition to a record-setting regular offering that same morning.

The book is not for sale, however, you need to buy one just the same. Retired Free Will Baptist minister **Ben Scott** has done it again—pulled together a 44-page paperback romp through his long and storied ministry. This one is titled *Threescore & Twelve and Then Some!* The turkey hunting tips alone are worth the \$3 Ben needs to cover printing and postage costs. He wrote it for the grandkids, but every preacher deserves a copy. Drop Ben a note at 1912 Martin Drive, Pochontas, AR 72455. If the mail is too slow for you, call 870-892-0419.

California: **First FWB Church in Olivehurst** reports 26 conversions in the year that **Harvey Helms** has served as pastor. Attendance has surged in the past 12 months.



The fall Celebration Banquet at **California Christian College in Fresno** drew 215 guests from 22 churches who gave a record \$15,000 offering. **Turlock FWB Church** provided both the meat and the chefs to prepare it. Guest speaker **James Forlines**, director of the Foreign Missions Department, underscored the school's importance to state and national outreach. **Wendell Walley** serves as president.

Florida: Executive Secretary **Keith Burden** addressed the annual **Indian River Association** which met at **First FWB Church in Scottsmoor**. Burden also led a seminar on the subject, "How to Call a Pastor."

Pastor **Ed Hutchinson** reports that members have remodeled the interior of **Pleasant Hill FWB Church in Bonifay**. The upgrade includes new pews, carpet, light fixtures, windows and more.

Georgia: **New Enterprise FWB Church in Iron City** honored four long-time members, according to Pastor **Joe Murkerson**. Certificates, recognition and a lunch surprised **Rudolph Shores, Myrtle Miller, Grace Brackin** and **Wyatt Brackin**. Each of the four has been a member of the church 50 years or more.

Sixty-eight people attended Georgia's Senior Retreat, according to **William Smith**, executive secretary. Dr. **Charles Thigpen** and his wife **Laura** addressed attendees during the three-day event. Dr. Thigpen serves as promotional secretary for the Tennessee State Association.

Illinois: Pastor **Jon Cannon** reports remodeling underway at **Victory FWB Church in Mascoutah**. Before it's all finished, members will be seated on newly-padded pews, admiring new dry-wall and parking in an expanded parking lot.

Ina FWB Church in Ina will turn 75 years old this fall. Pastor **Brad Ryan** said more than 200 were on hand to help the congregation celebrate their 74th anniversary. Remodeling is underway as preparations point to the diamond anniversary.

Indiana: Two men, ages 74 and 73, were converted at **Faith FWB Church in Chandler**. Pastor **Robert Helms** reports that 74-year-old **Everett Roettger** died two weeks after his conversion. However, 73-year-old **Jim Hess** enrolled in a discipleship program at the church.

More than 200 salvation decisions followed three nights of the production, "Heaven's Gates and Hell's Flames," at **Emmanuel FWB Church in Wabash** when 2,185 people attended. Pastor **Douglas Phillips** baptized 28 the following Sunday.

Kansas: Pastor **Zane Brooks** and members hoped for an attendance of 300 and 25 conversions on "Friend Day" at **First FWB Church in Wellington**. They report 337 attendees and 31 conversions.

First FWB Church in Topeka added two new Sunday School classes, according to Pastor **John Smith**.

North Carolina: Members of **Victory FWB Church in Goldsboro** honored 40 military families on Veterans Day. Pastor **Rick Cason** said the people are still talking about the occasion, since it was the first of its kind for the church. Pastor Cason also received certification as a police chaplain. He has served as a chaplain with the Goldsboro Police Department since 1996.

Pastor **Tim Rabon** reports 64 conversions and 37 baptisms last year at **First FWB Church in Raleigh**.

A six-month, \$450,000 building and remodeling project at **Emmanuel FWB Church in La Grange** ended in a January 12 dedication service. Pastor **Wayne Brown** said the new building (40'x50') will seat 275 people.

The new auditorium at **First FWB Church in Lenoir** will seat 300, according to Pastor **Jack Moses**. The 100'x50' structure cost \$285,000. The original sanctuary will be used for children's church and two new Sunday School rooms. ■

Your Gift Counts

By Marjorie Workman

Mary walked out of the grocery store, arms loaded with bags. It was late. She was scurrying home to get supper started and then off to a meeting. As the store's automatic door swung open, she heard the familiar sound of a bell ringing. Instantly, she recognized the bell and its meaning. She was right. Standing in front of her was a lady all bundled up in her coat, gloves and layered scarf with toboggan pulled down below her ears. "Merry Christmas," she greeted and continued ringing her bell. Mary hurried to her car, but her mind flooded with childhood memories.

She remembered the Christmas the Salvation Army gave presents to her and her brothers. She remembered her grandmother volunteering as a bell ringer. She especially recalled the time she went with her grandmother to the Salvation Army store to purchase a Christmas present for her mother. The gift cost only pennies.

Placing the groceries in the car, Mary dug deep into her purse for some money. She took her frozen body back through the parking lot and dropped the coins into the big red pot. Another hearty, "Merry Christmas" and "Thank you."

Why did Mary go back with her coins? Because she knew that the little she gave did make a difference. She had experienced it firsthand as a child. She recognized that the team effort of the bell ringer, the donor and the people who put the money into action were making a difference for poor, helpless kids and families with needs.

Mary has not only been the kid, but now she and her husband Curt Holland are on the distribution team as they serve as missionaries in Brazil. (This story is from the Holland's December newsletter and is used by permission.)

Your gift can also make a difference. April is **Foreign Missions Month**. WNAC, Foreign Missions and local church leaders are the bell

ringers. These agencies make the needs known. Through videos, posters, literature and various promotional materials, Free Will Baptists are challenged to pray and support our national Foreign Missions staff and missionaries. Then, it is up to you and me to pray and dig into our pockets or checkbooks to make the **Laura Belle Barnard World Missions Offering** on April 27 a success.

Have you ever wondered if your prayers and gifts made a difference? Perhaps you are overwhelmed by the needs and begin to think you are able to give so little that it probably doesn't matter that you give at all?

Ask Mary if a little counts. She and the missions team in Brazil have used your gifts to help poor kids, families in need and people without Christ. They have distributed literature in neighborhoods, helped provide buildings for needy congregations and education to pastors.

Ask Deleen Cousineau if your prayer support made a difference during the recent hostage crisis in Côte d'Ivoire. She will tell you that not a single student was physically harmed.

Ask Rob Conley, director of financial operations for Foreign Missions, if your gifts, large or small, make a difference. He pays the bills for Free Will Baptist Foreign Missions.

Women Nationally Active for Christ will observe a **Pre-Easter Week of Prayer for Foreign Missions** April 14-18. Prayer Guides are available free from WNAC or Foreign Missions. Also, women will participate in the **World Missions Offering**. Let's help reach the \$200,000 offering goal set by Foreign Missions for 2003. ■



**WOMEN
NATIONALLY
ACTIVE FOR
CHRIST**

Free Will Baptist Ministry Focus

- **WNAC challenges you to pray and support national foreign missions staff and missionaries**
- **Laura Belle Barnard World Missions Offering, April 27**
- **Pre-Easter Week of Prayer for Foreign Missions, April 14-18**



Elder Care—From a Distance

By D. Ray Lewis

Life in America today commonly finds families scattered across the country.

With family members often separated by hundreds or thousands of miles, it may be extremely difficult to manage the care of an older parent or relative living far away. To help facilitate the best care possible for your loved one, and to alleviate the stress long distance caretaking could cause, you may want to take steps *now* to be prepared, should the need arise.

Get Organized

Once you know where to turn for assistance, it will be helpful to gather and organize the following information about your loved one:

- **General Assessment and Support**—Keep notes on the current mental and physical condition of the individual and compare your observations with those of other family members. Identify neighbors or friends who could keep an eye out for your loved one and are willing and able to help in a pinch. List agencies located near your relative that provide specific services and support he or she may need in an emergency.
- **Medical Information**—Identify all pertinent doctors, hospitals and other medical providers. In addition, keep track of all medications and health insurance policy numbers.
- **Financial and Legal Information**—Obtain copies of all financial and legal documents, including wills, advance-directives, insurance policies, bank accounts and other financial statements. Record all relevant account and Social Security numbers.

Take Action Now

A variety of resources are available to assist in the care of older parents and relatives. Begin planning now to make the best use of them. When it comes to preparing advance directives and handling other estate planning matters, it is generally prudent to consult a qualified legal professional. Your efforts *now* can help ease future stress for family caregivers and help provide the most comfortable life for your loved one. ■

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Down to Basics

As a first step, look into what services are available in your family member's local community. Most areas have government or non-profit agencies to provide assistance and referrals.

Once appropriate providers have been identified, consider making use of services that can assist with the desired needs, such as managing finances, drafting or amending a will, or preparing advance directives (e.g., durable power of attorney, health care proxy and living will).

When properly prepared, these legal documents can provide essential protection and, therefore, should be prepared without delay:

- A **will** provides instructions for distributing assets and providing for the need of heirs, while aiming to reduce probate expenses.
- A **durable power of attorney** authorizes a third party to manage the financial and legal affairs of a person who is no longer capable of doing so.
- A **living will** is a set of instructions for health care providers that stipulates the extent to which measures should be taken (consistent with state statutes) to maintain a person's life should he or she be unable to direct care. In some states the patient's condition must be considered "terminal" under state laws before a living will becomes effective.
- A **health care proxy** allows an individual to designate a person to make critical medical decisions in the event the individual is incapable of directing his or her own health care. Unlike a living will, it is not limited to decisions regarding artificial life-support.



RETIREMENT
AND
INSURANCE

- Take steps to prepare for the care of aging relatives
- Look to local community for assistance and referrals
- Legal documents can provide essential protection
- Gather key information

Free Will Baptist Ministry Focus



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FOREIGN
MISSIONS

Free Will Baptist Ministry Focus

Mobilization efforts over the past 3 years have brought about

- a dramatic increase of personal involvement
- a soaring missionary prospect list
- increased enrollment of missions students
- a significant surge in new missionary appointments

No More Missionaries!

By Don Robirds

What picture comes to your mind when you see the words “no more missionaries”?

Do you envision a world already evangelized? I wish I could believe the world is evangelized, but that just isn't true.

Does a bankrupt economy flash through your thoughts? Faulty economy has never excused the mandate of Christ.

Do you sense a spiritual barrenness in the Church that seeks self-gratification while casting aside Jesus' words, “Go ye into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature”? Some years ago a few misled evangelical mission leaders tried to convince others we needed to call a moratorium on sending missionaries abroad because they were disrupting cultures. Even though the Church has failed to demonstrate urgency in reaching the world, I don't see it as spiritually calloused to that degree.

I recall in 1967 our Foreign Missions Department adopted a “hold the line” policy which called a halt to sending new missionaries until donations picked up, overseas costs came down, and deficit accounts were erased. Caught between a command of our Lord and a denomination with limited vision, the board reluctantly took the “hold the line” action and later regretted doing so. They reversed the decision in less than a year.

More recently a diminishing number of missionary candidates caused many across the denomination to believe that we might actually hear the words “no more missionaries.” Our missionary force, which had been 114, dropped to 87 in the year 2000. Had no changes taken place we could have been faced with a vanishing overseas witness. But God had other things in mind.

Eugene Waddell, former general director, initiated a restructuring of the Department of Foreign Missions to shore up weaknesses and develop a 10-year strategy for growth. Following up on Brother Waddell's changes, General Director James Forlines determined to make it possible for every Free Will Baptist to be active in world outreach. A new department of mobilization and recruitment is energetically enlisting young people and adults in missions opportunities around the globe.

God's vision is to gather worshippers from “all nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues. . . .” He has not given the missions mandate only to a select few, but the entire Body of Christ is to be involved in reaching the world with the gospel mes-

sage. Consequently, the Lord has sparked the Department of Foreign Missions with an enthusiasm and challenge to get the entire denomination to “embrace the vision” by becoming personally involved in world outreach.

The month of April is designated **Foreign Missions Month**. Annually a special **World Missions Offering** is received to spread the good news around the world. This year April 27 has been set aside to receive the **Laura Belle Barnard World Missions Offering**. This offering is one of the key components to mobilizing the denomination.

Mobilization efforts over the past three years have already brought about a dramatic increase of personal involvement, a soaring missionary prospect list, increased enrollment of missions students in our Bible colleges and a significant surge in new missionary appointments. Nineteen candidates appeared before the Board of Foreign Missions in the December 2002 meeting. Praise God!

Last year the World Missions Offering totaled approximately \$150,000, a significant increase over previous years. “It was exciting to accompany Pastor Phil Davis and Brian Doyle of Prospect Free Will Baptist Church in Dunn, N.C., on their awareness trip to the work in Panama,” says Judy Lytle. “I saw God open Pastor Phil's eyes to needs around the world and his heart opened to the people he met.” This trip came as a result of the Prospect church's WMO of \$10,000 in 2002.

This year as the month of April approaches make it your aim to embrace God's vision and become involved. Give generously, and challenge those in your church to give toward expanding Christ's Kingdom. Once again we are recognizing churches and individuals who give \$1,000 or more undesignated in the World Missions Offering. Check out the opportunities for recognition gifts (see back cover). Order the new *Embracing the Vision III* video production, “Acts 1:8 in Action.” This 25-minute presentation is available free of charge to our churches. Request it by calling 1-877-767-7736, by e-mail at heartbeat@nafwb.org or from the Web at www.nafwb.org/fm. ■

Pure Man

By Ken Akers, General Director

There are alarming statistics about the use of pornography by American men today. It is estimated that 72 million people will visit internet porn sites this year. There are 1,000 new porn sites created every day. Many people feel this is a problem just in the non-Christian sector. Some 51% of pastors say cyber-porn is a possible temptation, and 37% of those say it is a current struggle.

As Christians we face the same temptations as those who are lost. How we deal with these temptations will make the difference. Proverbs 25:28 tells us, "He that hath no rule over his own spirit is like a city that is broken down, and without walls." We must fight the battles daily with Satan.

At Master's Men we try to provide help for men to overcome temptations through our retreats and Bible studies. Obviously not every man is tempted with pornography, but most are tempted by something.

In addition to keeping ourselves pure, we have a responsibility to set the right example for others. God spoke to my heart about this several years

ago. When my son Brandon was small, I was out mowing the grass one day. I happened to notice out of the corner of my eye that there was someone else in the yard with me.

I noticed that as I mowed the grass and went one way, he followed with his toy mower. Then when I turned around and went the other way, so did he. God made me realize that day that even though we don't know people are watching, they are. We are influencing others no matter what we do or when.

The Bible says in I Thessalonians 5:22, "Abstain from all appearance of evil." For a man to think he could never be tempted by sexual sin, he would need to be godlier than David, stronger than Samson and wiser than Solomon. ■

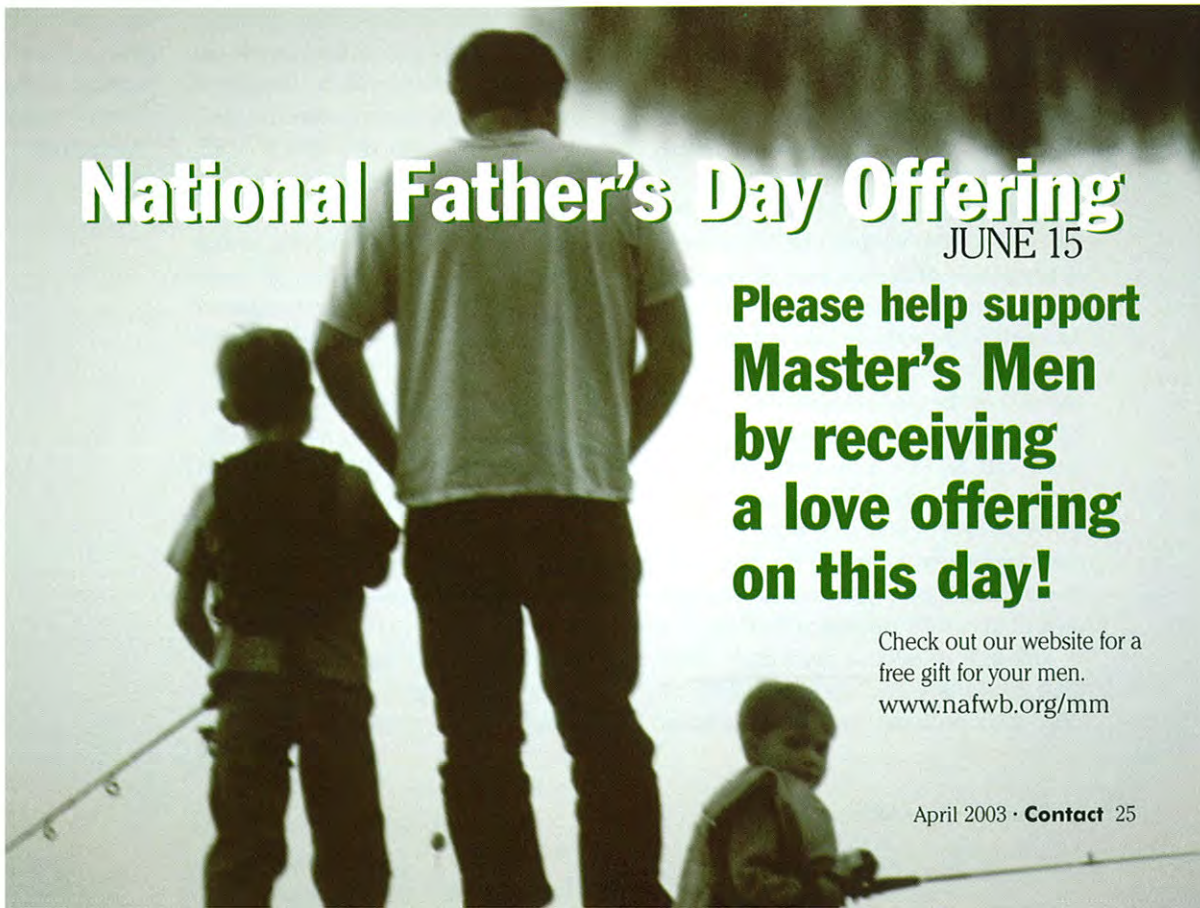


Master's Men

Free Will Baptist
Men's Ministry

Free Will Baptist Ministry Focus

- An estimated 72 million people will visit internet porn sites this year
- 1,000 new porn sites are created every day
- Master's Men provides help for men to overcome temptation through retreats and Bible studies



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Garnett Reid

“From Nothin’ to Everythin’” Ephesians 2:1–10

My wife considers it her favorite building. Opened in 1900, Nashville’s Union Station graces the city skyline with its Gothic towers and crowning statue of Mercury at the pinnacle. I remember saying goodbye to my dad many times as he departed on trains such as the Dixie Flyer, the Southwind and the Georgian for business trips.

Yet I also recall days of decline and disrepair for the closed station in the 1970s. Carol and I would walk through the old depot, seeing the broken panels, windows and moldings, and the floors covered in soot and grime. Union Station revealed little of its former splendor then.

Falling Toward God’s Wrath (Eph. 2:1–3)

Ephesians 2 begins with a similar lament about the human condition estranged from God. In fact, Paul reminds his readers that once they were “dead in trespasses and sins.” They had *no life*. Unable to help themselves, they also had *no future*. Life without God is no life; instead, left to ourselves, we drift along “the course of this world,” headed toward an eternal emptiness.

Along the way, the sinner takes his orders from the wicked one, “the prince of the power of the air,” who does all he can to foster rebellion against God (v. 2). As a result, life without God is a life with *no restraint*. The lifestyle (KJV, “convulsion”) of the lost compels him to “fulfill the desires of the flesh and of the mind.” Life for him is all about self, feeding its desires then following them to gratification. Not that everyone lives out their maximum potential for evil; even so, our nature prompts us to pursue our own course without regard for God.

The end of such a life brings more than just futility and regret. Life without God offers *no hope* since it finally faces

His wrath (v. 3). While our postmodern society may tout “tolerance” as its watchword, God still reveals His wrath against all ungodliness and unrighteousness (Rom. 1:18).

Sadly, this description applies to all without God. There is *no difference*, Paul says; “others” walk this same path and face the same destiny (v. 3). Despite what our culture tells us, anyone who is not in Christ is like this. Our age scoffs at the notion of depravity. Humans are not intrinsically “evil,” but are good, and can overcome misfortune and poor choices by conditioning and education, or such is the claim. Christians must not only reject this thinking with our minds, we must also come to the place where we believe and feel deeply in our hearts that depravity is real, no one excepted.

Lifted by Grace’s Wealth (vv. 4–9)

One word changes everything: our nature, our loves, our destiny: “God” (v. 4). When He intervenes, nothing remains the same. A *new love* enters our lives: “his great love where with he has loved us,” and we love as never before. The reason for His love is His “rich mercy,” God’s great heart of compassion reaching down to those who deserve wrath.

Echoing verse 1, Paul reminds us that though we were dead in sins, we now have *new life* (v. 5). Christ’s resurrection life fills us and lifts us with Him to enjoy a *new position*: seated “together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus,” (v. 6).

Instead of God’s wrath, we look forward to a *new prospect* for our future. “In the ages to come” God will display “the exceeding riches of his grace” through us, as we become eternal examples of the kindness He shows us through Christ (v. 7).

This transformed life does not occur, however, apart from a *new relationship* activated only “by grace through faith.”

No price, no pedigree, no power of our own make it happen. We find new life only as we trust God for it and receive it as His gift (vv. 5, 8).

Moving Toward Good Works (v. 10)

Even though we cannot earn God’s favor by works, His design for us is to demonstrate this new life by our conduct. “Created in Christ Jesus for good works,” people made new in Him will no longer “walk” the path of the world (v. 2), but the way He chooses for them.

I recall hearing of an old farmer who, when asked to testify of His conversion, explained it this way: “The Lord picked me up when I was right in the middle of nothin’ and set me down right in the middle of everythin’.” That pretty much says it for me, too.

By the way, Union Station is now a showplace, a grand hotel, her gilded plasterwork, vaulted Tiffany skylight, and polished balconies showing off the loving care of the restoration artists who gave her new life and serving her many patrons, including Carol and me on a recent anniversary weekend. The changes are spectacular. You should try the place yourself. ■



Toni Elliot

The Silent Ministry

Have you ever wished you could give something special to someone in need, but you did not have the money to purchase it? Yet you desired in your heart to do something to uplift their burden or make them smile. We sometimes think only of big-item purchases for others when in reality it is the small things that mean the most.

From my own experience, when my husband, Mark, was badly burned—during our lengthy stay in the hospital, the days and nights were almost unbearable. During this time we received many cards and letters from friends, family and people we did not even know. These precious cards were like manna from Heaven. They were just what I needed at such a crucial time in my life.

I realized how each special card, verse and scripture touched me personally. I would carry them into Mark's

room during visitation and read them to him, even though he was in a coma. (I kept every letter and card and still have them today.)

I have always been involved in my husband's ministry; however, I found out during this time that I could have my own silent ministry. I started a calendar with birthdays and anniversaries of our congregation members. I try to check these at the first of each week so I can mail the cards and letters on time.

I also write down names of the sick each Sunday from prayer requests made at church. I make a mental note of the shut-ins. They tend to get very lonely. A simple card lets them know they are not alone.

To cut down on expenses, I buy the assorted boxed cards for all occasions. I also print my calendars off the computer. These are convenient to keep on my desk. Several people have told me

that they have been down and out until they went to their mailboxes where they received a card of encouragement. They have asked how I knew they needed uplifting.

I know the answer! God is an all-knowing God. I know in my own experience that if we listen, God's Holy Spirit will direct. He knows what each of us needs even before we ask.

We can all have a silent ministry, no matter how old or how young we are. This ministry is twofold. It not only uplifts others, but we will receive blessings ourselves. It also keeps us in touch with others. I challenge you to try this ministry. You will then realize how special your silent ministry will become. ■

About the Writer: Mrs. Toni Elliott is married to Reverend Mark Elliott who pastors Mt. Pleasant Free Will Baptist Church in Hamburg, Arkansas. Toni teaches at Forest High School in Forest, Louisiana.

Directory Update

Alabama

Barry Raper to Red Bay Church, Red Bay

Florida

John Shamblin to Christian Home Church, McDavid

Georgia

Gene Gilbert to Thompson Church, Colquitt from Travelers Rest Church, Newton

North Carolina

Mike Carper to Shelby Church, Shelby

Ohio

Leon Stevens to Lockbourne Church, Groveport

South Carolina

Daniel Smith to St. John Church, Pamplico

Stevie McCutcheon to Cypress Fork Church, Manning

Richard Moretz to Happy Home Church, Andrews

Gordon Cook to Unity Church, Johnsonville ■

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Randy Sawyer

Transition: Stepping Aside Gracefully

Commenting on the greatness

of America's first chief executive, George Washington, historian Stephen Ambrose wrote, "He resisted efforts to make him into a king and established the precedent that no one should serve more than two terms as President. *He voluntarily yielded power.*" Of all the admirable qualities possessed by the *father of our nation*, perhaps the greatest was his willingness to make himself dispensable.

Ambrose continued, "His enemy, George III, remarked in 1796, as Washington's second term was coming to a close, 'If George Washington goes back to his farm he will be the greatest character of his age.' Napoleon, then in exile, was as stunned as the rest of the world by Washington's departure from office. He complained that his enemies 'wanted me to be another Washington.'"

A Regrettable Situation

In reassessing Washington's greatness, political commentator George Will wrote, "The final component of Washington's indispensability was the imperishable example he gave by proclaiming himself dispensable." In so doing, Washington bequeathed to America the *peaceful transference of power*, which was a standard almost unheard of in the governing of nations.

Sadly, graceful transitioning is seldom achieved in the ministry of the local church. Often pastors, especially those of extended tenure, find it difficult, if not impossible to step aside and relinquish leadership to someone else. The resulting power struggle usually cripples the church's ministry for a time, and clearly dishonors the Lord.

A Remarkable Story

The almost universal difficulty of *stepping aside gracefully* makes this story seem all the more incredible in

comparison. In 1962, First FWB Church in Gastonia, NC, called the Rev. W. H. Calvert as pastor. Having grown up in the church, and being six years old at the time, I remember welcoming the new pastor and his family with feelings of apprehension as well as anticipation. Of course, I didn't give that much thought to the new pastor and his wife at the time, but I did cautiously give attention to his three children. Gradually we all got acquainted and life settled back to normal.

... Of Persistency

Our previous pastor had served in the community three years, which was about the expected tenure in a church like ours. But Pastor Calvert's ministry didn't turn out to be normal at all. For the next 33½ years he labored among the same congregation with faithful pastoral care the trademark of his successful work.

He guided the church through numerous transitions, not the least of which was a relocation to the fastest growing residential section of Gaston County. This move eventually transformed the church from a small *mill village chapel* with limited growth expectation to a *suburban church* with a much broader ministry appeal.

... Of Honesty

The years came and went, and people came and went, but Pastor Calvert remained a steadying influence through it all. Eventually, however, he sensed that the church, had, or was about to, plateau. Consequently, he began to seek God's will concerning the future of First FWB Church. In 1993, he reached a monumental decision. It was time, he concluded, for a younger man to assume the pastorate of the church he had loved and served for more than 30 years.

Confidentially, he contacted me about coming to Gastonia as his successor. He proposed an arrangement whereby I would serve with him as associate for two years, allowing me to acclimate myself to the work and area, then to assume the pastorate the third year. With this proposal unanimously accepted by the congregation, I did something in the summer of 1994 I never expected to do—I moved my wife and three children back to my hometown.

The working relationship that developed between Brother Calvert and myself was without tension, and a great blessing to experience. For two years he shared everything with me—leadership, decision-making, success, failure and even his pulpit. The church was certainly the beneficiary of this effective partnership, with growth occurring in every area of the work.

... Of Humility

The day finally arrived—May 26, 1996—for which everyone involved had been prepared—Pastor Calvert, my family, and most importantly, the church as a whole. It was time to *pass the torch*. A number of local dignitaries and out-of-town guests joined the church family as the sanctuary filled to overflowing for Brother Calvert's final message. At the close of the service, deacons of the past and present, led by Chairman Bill Lingerfelt, filed down the aisle carrying a lighted torch.

Upon reaching the platform, the torch was handed to the outgoing pastor. His remarks then were few, but challenging. His final word to the congregation was, "I am at peace with the decision I made three years ago, and I urge you to follow your new pastor as faithfully and prayerfully as you have followed me these many years." Then, as a symbol of his confidence in God's future

THE TOGETHER WAY

January 2003

for the church, he passed the torch to me, embraced me and asked Chairman Lingerfelt to lead in a final word of prayer.

Following the prayer, I stepped down from the pulpit area, took my wife by the hand and walked down the aisle carrying the lighted torch. It was a very intense, beautiful moment for the church, and one that will live long in the memory of everyone present. Because of Pastor Calvert's willingness to relinquish the leadership of his beloved church, God's blessings have been evident on the congregation.

... Of Dignity

Since 1996, First FWB Church has experienced substantial growth in many areas, but with every success we sense the shadow of one man's faithfulness and sacrifice. Brother Calvert could have clung to the reigns of power, or worse, he could have made it virtually impossible for anyone to assume the leadership role. He could have been hurtful to me personally, and harmful to the cause of Christ at First FWB Church, but he did neither.

Rather than thinking of himself, his primary concern was for the work. Just as he had for years, he made the transition bearable, *stepping aside with abundant grace and much dignity.*

I'm not sure what I'm trying to get you to see by sharing this with you, but it is a story that needed to be told. It is the story of a servant you may never meet, but one who certainly qualifies to take his place among the truly great. For as our Lord once said, *"He who would be the greatest among you must be the servant of all."* ■

RECEIPTS:

STATE	DESIGNATED	CO-OP	TOTAL	YEAR TO DATE DESIGNATED	YEAR TO DATE CO-OP	YEAR TO DATE TOTAL
Alabama	\$ 512.64	\$ 358.42	\$ 871.06	\$ 512.64	\$ 358.42	\$ 871.06
Arizona	.00	103.50	103.50	.00	103.50	103.50
Arkansas	13,589.37	28,972.84	42,562.21	13,589.37	28,972.84	42,562.21
California	.00	1,237.12	1,237.12	.00	1,237.12	1,237.12
Colorado	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00
Delaware	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00
Florida	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00
Georgia	41,383.78	2,195.88	43,579.66	41,383.78	2,195.88	43,579.66
Hawaii	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00
Idaho	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00
Illinois	11,570.86	2,239.04	13,809.90	11,570.86	2,239.04	13,809.90
Indiana	2,310.96	400.02	2,710.98	2,310.96	400.02	2,710.98
Iowa	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00
Kansas	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00
Kentucky	350.00	1,488.40	1,838.40	350.00	1,488.40	1,838.40
Louisiana	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00
Maryland	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00
Michigan	30,077.35	4,196.21	34,273.56	30,077.35	4,196.21	34,273.56
Mississippi	10,529.47	554.12	11,083.59	10,529.47	554.12	11,083.59
Missouri	76,605.37	22,280.66	98,886.03	76,605.37	22,280.66	98,886.03
Montana	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00
Nebraska	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00
New Jersey	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00
New Mexico	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00
North Carolina	4,054.47	3,872.61	7,927.08	4,054.47	3,872.61	7,927.08
Ohio	30,295.50	4,284.44	34,579.94	30,295.50	4,284.44	34,579.94
Oklahoma	130,942.90	13,498.44	144,441.34	130,942.90	13,498.44	144,441.34
South Carolina	45,043.77	45.10	45,088.87	45,043.77	45.10	45,088.87
South Dakota	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00
Tennessee	10,124.32	252.75	10,377.07	10,124.32	252.75	10,377.07
Texas	18,099.98	725.07	18,825.05	18,099.98	725.07	18,825.05
Virginia	352.60	11.20	363.80	352.60	11.20	363.80
Virgin Islands	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00
West Virginia	590.00	77.12	667.12	590.00	77.12	667.12
Wisconsin	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00
Canada	504.98	14.77	519.75	504.98	14.77	519.75
Northwest Association	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00
Northeast Association	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00
Other	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00
TOTALS	\$ 426,938.32	\$ 86,807.71	\$ 513,746.03	\$ 426,938.32	\$ 86,807.71	\$ 513,746.03

DISBURSEMENTS:

Executive Office	\$ 2,223.87	\$ 39,063.48	\$ 41,287.35	\$ 2,223.87	\$ 39,063.48	\$ 41,287.35
Foreign Missions	231,434.41	10,981.17	242,415.58	231,434.41	10,981.17	242,415.58
FWBCC	33,414.80	10,981.17	44,395.97	33,414.80	10,981.17	44,395.97
Home Missions	146,744.86	8,593.96	155,338.82	146,744.86	8,593.96	155,338.82
Retirement & Insurance	411.71	6,684.20	7,095.91	411.71	6,684.20	7,095.91
Master's Men	316.74	6,684.20	7,000.94	316.74	6,684.20	7,000.94
Comm. for Theo. Integrity	66.58	238.71	305.29	66.58	238.71	305.29
FWB Foundation	292.72	2,864.69	3,157.41	292.72	2,864.69	3,157.41
Historical Commission	66.58	238.71	305.29	66.58	238.71	305.29
Music Commission	35.13	238.71	273.84	35.13	238.71	273.84
Media Commission	85.13	238.71	323.84	85.13	238.71	323.84
Hillsdale FWB College	2,916.30	.00	2,916.30	2,916.30	.00	2,916.30
Other	8,929.49	.00	8,929.49	8,929.49	.00	8,929.49
TOTALS	\$ 426,938.32	\$ 86,807.71	\$ 513,746.03	\$ 426,938.32	\$ 86,807.71	\$ 513,746.03



Thomas Marberry

The Message of 2 Peter and Jude

Dick Lucas and Christopher Green (Downers Grove, IL: Inter-Varsity Press, 1995, 270 pp., paperback, \$12.95)

This useful commentary on

two of the most neglected books in the New Testament is part of *The Bible Speaks Today* series. This is a series of commentaries published under the editorship of John R. W. Stott that emphasizes the contemporary meaning and application of the biblical books.

Several of the volumes, including this one, are existing commentaries that are being reissued in a new format for a wider audience. They are generally intermediate level commentaries written from a pastoral perspective.

The authors of this volume are two pastors from England. Christopher Green pastors Emmanuel Church in Surrey; Dick Lucas is rector at St. Helen's Church in London. They bring together years of pastoral experience and solid academic preparation for ministry. Dick Lucas contributed the introductions to these two books; Christopher Green contributed the verse-by-verse exposition and the appendix.

Since the earliest days of the Christian church, several important issues have dominated the study of these two books. One is the issue of authorship; there are six men named Jude or Judas in the New Testament. The traditional view is that the Lord's brother of that name is the author of the book, but many modern scholars reject this position.

There has also been much discussion of the authorship of II Peter. The book specifically claims to be the work of Peter, but many modern scholars reject this claim for various reasons. There are considerable differences in the grammar, writing style, vocabulary and subject matter between I Peter and

II Peter. Lucas and Green consider the arguments carefully and conclude that the traditional authorship view of these books is still the best option available.

Another important issue is the relationship between the two books. There is so much similarity of content that most scholars have concluded that the two books could not have been written independently. Various possibilities are suggested. Peter could have borrowed from Jude; Jude could have borrowed from Peter.

It is also possible that both may have depended on a third source for the material that they have in common. After careful consideration of the evidence, these authors conclude that Jude was written first and that Peter took Jude's writing and adapted it for a wider audience.

Both II Peter and Jude confront the issue of false teachings within the church. Modern Christians are tempted to think that the churches of the first century were near perfect and faced few if any internal conflicts. These books and others affirm that such was not the case. From its earliest days the Christian faith struggled against persecution from without and false teaching from within.

These authors argue that the books have much to say to contemporary churches because we are still struggling today with the problem of false teaching. It is just as important to maintain doctrinal purity today as it was in the first century.

Lucas and Green describe the false teachers in these words, "the false prophets of Peter's day, as in ours, revealed themselves as men of the world in contrast with the proper other-

worldliness of the true Christians." These false teachers advocated a this-world type of Christianity in which Christians could find complete satisfaction of all their hopes and aspirations here in this life.

These false teachers were not always easy to identify. According to the authors, there were in the first century, "muddled individuals who pass on a mixture of easy platitudes, biblical-sounding phrases and a view of life that is twisted out of any recognizable biblical shape. Such Christian con men were the reason Peter wrote this letter."

Jude writes about the need to maintain the true Christian faith in the midst of trial and adversity. Lucas and Green explain, "By *faith* Jude means those things which we believe, rather than the fact that we believe them; it is objective rather than subjective."

There was a temptation in the first century to add additional teachings to the gospel or to remove from it those elements that people did not wish to hear. That same temptation exists today. These authors note that the New Testament calls on all believers to resist such efforts.

This is a most useful commentary on two biblical books that do not receive the attention they deserve. It is not written just for the scholar or the specialist. It can be read and understood by pastors and laymen who want a better understanding of these books and how we can make better use of them in our preaching and teaching. It addresses all the important issues that we face in the study of these books, and it does so in an appealing way. ■



Jack Williams

Paul's Worst Nightmare

What if the resurrection of

Jesus Christ never happened and the Sadducees were right after all? Would it change anything? What if the empty tomb was nothing more than the elaborate hoax reported by Jerusalem officials? What if this one piece of Christian doctrine turned out to be a lie? Would it really matter?

A world without the resurrection is an ugly and dangerous place. The resurrection changes everything; it is the foundation upon which Christianity stands.

No resurrection means that Jesus lied about His own death, the angel lied to Mary Magdalene on Sunday morning, Peter lied on the day of Pentecost, and the New Testament Church spread that lie around the world.

It means that the Apostle Paul's worst nightmare came true: "If in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men most miserable," (1 Cor. 15:19). It means that our faith is a fraud, a vicious trick played out on an incredible scale.

If the resurrection is not true, Christianity is the biggest swindle in the history of mankind. Why live a life of restraint if this is all there is? Why not join the party-mad crowd going for the gusto? Booze it up, boogie the night away, grab all you can and climb over anyone who gets in the way...if there is no tomorrow.

No resurrection? Then cut those seven songs from our hymnbook and burn them. Wait a minute. If the resurrection isn't true, let's burn the entire hymnbook. Who wants to sing "Amazing Grace" if the last verse is a lie?

And keep your money. No need to tithe if the resurrection is a ruse. Tithing only matters if a resurrected Lord receives the tithe in Heaven (Heb. 7:8). If Jesus is dead, we might as well buy lottery tickets or blow it on a big weekend in Vegas.

Without the resurrection, we can stop the presses and close every Bible college and seminary. No need to print Sunday School literature or train Christian workers if the Bible is just another nice book with high-sounding words that lead nowhere.

The resurrection untrue? Remove George Washington from the dollar bill and replace him with Charles Darwin. Erase "In God We Trust" from our monetary system and insert, "If It Feels Good, Do It."

If the resurrection is a lie, let the ACLU officiate at funerals. Why bother to read from John 14 if there is no house of many mansions? Might as well quote the *Humanist Manifesto*.

No resurrection, you say? Then Easter morning is a twisted joke, Calvary's supreme sacrifice is but the meaningless death of a deluded young Jew, and the Christmas story is a sick fairy tale that should be prefaced by, "Once upon a time..."

If the resurrection is not true, let's ban *Fox's Book of Martyrs*, apologize to the world for our gullibility, recall the missionary force, and tell librarians to move all Christian books to the fiction shelf. Spread the word that Joseph Stalin's atheism was right, and Hitler's "final solution" just needed more time. Release every thug, murderer, rapist, child molester and criminal to ply his trade in society... since there are no absolutes.

No resurrection? Then racism is right, and Billy Sunday was a fool. Let's build ovens and pay homage to Dachau, Belsen and Auschwitz, to the killing fields of Cambodia, to the gulags, to the bitter abortionists who maim and destroy.

If the resurrection is a lie, mankind staggers without light in the long darkness. The world's great books are filled with dusty principles that no longer mat-

ter. The resurrection wrong? Then might makes right, and adultery is better than fidelity. Choose murder over kindness, exploit little kids, and proclaim Charles Manson tomorrow's messiah.

But wait. What's that sound? A faltering voice from the shadows chants, "Hold to God's Unchanging Hand." A child recites the simple words, "Jesus loves me this I know, for the Bible tells me so." An old man whispers, "... yet when I face the chilling hand of death, where could I go but to the Lord?"

In a small chapel off skid row, a preacher with an open Bible studies his congregation of former drug addicts, prostitutes, street thugs and thieves and begins to read, "... I know that ye seek Jesus, which was crucified. He is not here: for he is risen..." (Matt. 28:5-6). Across town a 100-voice robed choir thunders a rousing crescendo, "... He arose! He arose! Hallelujah! Christ arose!"

Somebody tell Paul that his nightmare is over. He can put chapter 15 back in I Corinthians, because the story the angel told on Easter morning is true. Wipe the dust off the Bible, my brother. Restart the presses. Open up that hymnbook and sing. Keep those Sunday School doors open. Send the missionaries back to their fields. Write that tithe check and drop it in the offering plate.

It's official. The tomb is empty, and He's alive! Let's get on with the business of the Great Commission. We've got sermons to preach, souls to win, books to write, neighbors to tell, churches to build, a world to reach.

A letter arrived from Jesus this morning. Here's what He said: "I am he that liveth, and was dead; and, behold, I am alive for evermore..." (Rev. 1:18). ■

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Pop and Mom
Willey

**Just give to the
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Churches giving (undesignated) . . .

\$10,000 or more—The pastor and his wife receive an all-expense-paid trip to the flourishing work in Cuba started by "Pop" and "Mom" Willey. The church receives a beautiful framed picture.

\$5,000 or more—The church receives a beautiful framed gemstone wall map and the pastor receives a nice framed picture.

\$1,000 or more—The church receives a nice framed picture of pioneer missionaries.

Goal: \$200,000

NOTE: Individuals may receive recognition gifts and the dinner on the same basis as churches but the offering must be counted apart from the church offering.

Photo of Free Will Baptist Cedars of Lebanon Seminary near Pinar del Rio, Cuba

Laura Belle Barnard

World Missions Offering

April 27, 2003

Pastors of churches giving \$1,000 or more and individuals giving \$1,000 or more will be recognized during a special dinner at the 2003 National Association in Tampa, Fla.

Offerings must be received by Foreign Missions, P.O. Box 5002, Antioch, TN 37011-9998 before June 30 to ensure a reservation for the recognition dinner on Wednesday evening.