

July 2003

Contact

How to GROW a Healthy Church

Official Publication of the National Association of Free Will Baptists

Contents

July 2003
Volume 50, No. 7



ARTICLES

4 How to Grow a Healthy Church

There may be good reasons why some churches flourish while others stagnate. An Arkansas pastor explains what works in his community.

6 "Papa" Was a Deacon

Clyde Martin opened his home to two teen grandsons, embarrassed them when he prayed for them...and changed their lives forever.

9 Another Kind of Revival

Something dark happened to America when truth was tossed aside in exchange for barbarian postmodernism. The church slept while the enemy ransacked society.

12 Is Adultery Still Wrong?

The solution to the adultery disaster is found not in harsh legalism but in God's loving limitations.

18 About Scripture Reading

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

20 Media's Mission

The Free Will Baptist Media Commission looks to the future.



Editor-in-chief

Keith Burden

Editor

Jack Williams

Editorial Assistant

Marilyn Pritchard

Circulation

Angie Williams

Layout, Design & Printing by

Randall House Publications

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

Annual subscription rates: Individual—\$15 per year, Church Family Plan—\$15 per year, Church Bundle Plan—\$15 per year. Periodical postage paid at Antioch, Tennessee, and additional offices.

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

USPS 130-660



COLUMNS

3 An Encouraging Word

Our Church Was Perfectly Dry A day of thunderstorms causes flooding in the city, laughter in the classroom and deep reflection in the soul.

22 Free Will Baptist Ministry Focus

26 The Preacher's Perspective Surviving the Pain of Change (Part II)

28 Student and Children Ministries

29 Green Tree Bible Study First Things First (Ephesians 4:1-16)

30 Top Shelf The Story of Christian Theology

31 Briefcase The Islamic Crisis

What happens when cultures clash and the claims of Islam threaten to destroy Christianity?

NEWS

14 Free Will Baptist Newsfront

Nuel Brown Retires | West Virginia Church Dedication | Truth and Peace Reunion | Music Commission Booklet | Steve Greenwood Earns CMP | 2003 Theological Symposium | Mid-Tenn Conference | Norlin Jones Dies | John Edwards Dies

17 Currently





Keith Burden

Our Church Was Perfectly Dry

Reford Wilson was my expository preaching professor in college. He taught me how to dissect a passage of scripture, analyze its meaning in light of historical context and deliver it in a clear, simple, straightforward manner.

During my junior year I served as minister of music and youth at a church in northeastern Oklahoma. One particular springtime weekend, our community was inundated by a series of thunderstorms. A record rainfall pushed streams and rivers from their banks and caused extensive flooding.

The following Monday found me with my expository preaching classmates at 7:45 a.m. We usually spent time sharing requests and praying before the lecture began.

Someone asked if the previous day's flooding had affected our church. After explaining in graphic detail the devastation caused by the water in some residential sections of the city, I matter-of-factly stated, "But our church was perfectly dry!"

Poor Choice of Words

A broad smile swept across Brother Wilson's face as he turned to the chalkboard without saying a word and wrote in large letters, OUR CHURCH WAS PERFECTLY DRY. There was a momentary pause, followed by thunderous laughter.

Obviously, my choice of words was not the best; however, my awkward statement did give my fellow students a chuckle and food for thought. Although my comment was intended to describe the physical condition of a local church building, I had quite innocently made a perceptive observation about the spiritual state of the body of Christ.

Unfortunately, too many of our churches are "perfectly dry!" Let me explain what I mean.

Perfectly Dry Services

Occasionally our church services are perfectly dry. The order of service hasn't changed in 20 years. We've become predictable, devoid of spontaneity and creativity. The music, though rehearsed and expertly performed, lacks a sense of sincerity and genuine passion. Even though the sermon is well-constructed and organized, it has become too academic and irrelevant. No wonder folks have a hard time staying awake.

Perfectly Dry Altars

In some cases our church altars are perfectly dry. Apathy has crept into the hearts of Christians. It's been a long time since we've gathered there in prayer and wept over the needs of others. Many congregations have experienced spiritual drought and seldom see sinners shedding tears of repentance.

Perfectly Dry Baptisteries

The baptisteries in some churches are perfectly dry. A lack of personal evangelism among members or evangelistic emphasis from the pulpit has resulted in few conversions. Dust has collected on the floor of the baptismal pool because it is used so seldom.

Am I suggesting that this is the case for every church? No! Of course not. Many of our churches have vibrant worship services. Others are quite successful in their outreach efforts. Baptisms are a regular occurrence at a number of locations. So what

makes the difference between a "perfectly dry" church and one that is enjoying the blessings of God?

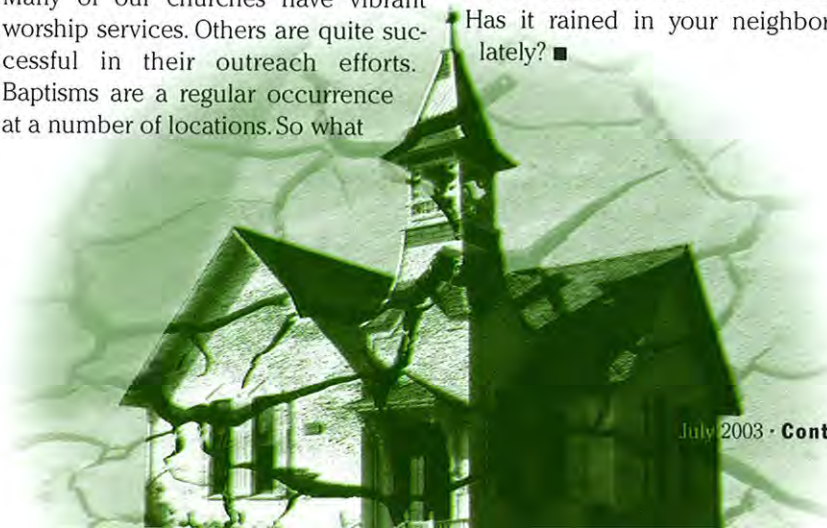
Showers of Blessing

In Ezekiel 34 the prophet delivers a stirring message to the shepherds of Israel. He reminds them of their responsibility to protect, feed, care for and lead the flock of God. For those who accept this challenge and faithfully carry out their duty, the Lord gives a wonderful promise in verse 26.

He says, "And I will make them and the places round about my hill a blessing; and I will cause the shower to come down in his season; *there shall be showers of blessing* [*italics mine*]."

Much of what happens in our churches depends on the leadership and example of the pastor (shepherd). Those who seek to be innovative in worship, committed to excellence in music and skilled expositors of the Word seldom have dry services. Their churches are characterized by compassion for others. Many are coming to faith in Christ and give testimony of their faith through water baptism.

But a pastor and his congregation can do only so much. At some point God must step in and do something supernatural that removes the bareness and spiritual drought. Only God can help a church that is perfectly dry—He alone can send showers of blessing. Has it rained in your neighborhood lately? ■



How to **GROW**

By Will Harmon

A healthy church is a growing church—it's automatic. All living things grow if they are healthy. You do not have to make them grow—they grow because it is natural for living, healthy organisms to grow.

God has blessed my wife and me with three wonderful children. My three kids are growing because they are healthy. Not one time have I stood over their bed at night and commanded them to grow. All I have done is provide an environment conducive to growth and remove obstacles that would inhibit

growth. As a result, they have grown naturally. If my kids don't grow, something is terribly wrong. It indicates an unhealthy situation or possibly a disease.

The church is no different. It is natural for churches to grow. Jesus called the church "My Body." A congregation is a living organism—not an organization. It is a body—not a business. If it is healthy, growth will come naturally.

The key for health and growth is balance. In the physical realm we must have a balance of proper nutrition, exercise and rest to be healthy. At Cavanaugh Free Will Baptist Church, we keep our balance by filtering everything we do through our mission statement, which can be summed up in three words: **Win—Train—Send.**

- **Win** people to Christ. We believe in "every member" evangelism. Spread the gospel at home, work, school and in your neighborhood. Share the ABC's of salvation with them. **A**dmit your sin, **B**elieve in Jesus as your Savior, and **C**onfess Jesus as your Savior and Lord.
- **Train** believers to become disciples. The Cavanaugh Church is dedicated to training people to Christian maturity. This is accomplished through our small groups and Sunday School classes. We were created to become like Christ and this only occurs when we practice discipleship.
- **Send** disciples to impact the world. God has called each of us to be the

"salt of the earth" and the "light of the world." As such, the Cavanaugh Church is dedicated to sending people for their mission "possible" – to go out into the world and fulfill God's plan for their life.

Healthy, lasting church growth is multi-dimensional. In order to fulfill our mission, we keep "balance on the ship." We intentionally structure our church around seven key areas, known as the seven ships of Cavanaugh:

- **Worship**—God-exalting worship is one of the most important aspects of church life. God must be glorified, Christ must be exalted and the Holy Spirit must have freedom to minister.
- **Fellowship**—God formed you for His family. Even though Cavanaugh is a loving church, we must become an "intensive care unit" for people—constantly offering care—"people caring for people."
- **Discipleship**—Bible training that leads to Christian maturity is the goal, to become like Christ in all things.
- **Partnership**—Our goal at Cavanaugh Church is for every member to become a minister. That is, each of us must use the gifts and talents God has blessed us with to minister to others. We can do so much more when we "partner together" in ministry.
- **Friendship**—One of the more effective ways to reach lost people is by befriending them. We must reach people where they are and bring them to

a full relationship with Jesus Christ. Only then can we experience true growth through evangelism of our community.

- **Stewardship**—Recognizing that God owns everything (our time, our talents, our treasures), we must become faithful in all that we manage.
- **Leadership**—To effectively reach people for Christ, we must raise up spiritual leaders who enthusiastically support God's work.

Church growth is the natural result of church health, but church health can only occur when our message is biblical and our mission is balanced. Each of these seven New Testament mandates must be in equilibrium with the others for health to occur.

If growth is not happening in your church, you should ask: "What is keeping our church from growing?" Your job is to discover all the restricting barriers so that natural growth can occur.

Sometimes we look at growing churches with a mixture of confusion, jealousy and even resentment. We wonder why some churches grow and others do not. Instead of rejoicing over the fact God's Kingdom is growing and lives are being changed, we criticize and make inaccurate assumptions about growing churches to justify our own lack of growth.

A common complaint is that to have a growing church you must compromise your convictions, cater to current

a Healthy Church

WIN people to Christ
TRAIN believers to become disciples
SEND disciples to impact the world

Church growth is the natural result of church health, but church health can only occur when our message is biblical and our mission is balanced.

trends and water down the message. The truth is just the opposite. People are hungry to hear the truth that will set them free. They want to be challenged to sacrifice for something bigger than themselves. They are searching for purpose and significance.

It is interesting that Jesus always attracted large crowds. The Bible refers to them as "multitudes." Jesus had a magnetic characteristic to His ministry. I believe that a Christ-like church can still

attract multitudes of people. You do not have to compromise your convictions or weaken the message. All you have to do is minister to people like Jesus did.

Why did large crowds flock to Jesus? Jesus did four things with the multitudes: He loved them, He ministered to their needs, He spoke the truth in love and His teachings had life applications. If you do these things, you will have a healthy church and attendance will be the least of your problems. ■



About the Writer: Reverend Will Harmon pastors Cavanaugh Free Will Baptist Church in Fort Smith, Arkansas. He is a member of the Sunday School and Church Training Board.

Tribute to a grandfather who was a “PAPA” WAS

Do not underestimate the influence of Papa, my paternal grandfather, farmer by trade and deacon at Christian Hill Free Will Baptist Church in Wilcox County, Georgia. If my ministry as a pastor has been successful to any extent, he gets

credit because he maintained my highest admiration throughout his life.

Proverbs 16:31 declares, “The hoary head is a crown of glory, if it be found in the way of righteousness.” This describes Papa. His hair was almost snow white with subtle streaks of blended gray. His complexion was

and led to my salvation a few days later. At almost 20 years old I had no place to go. My older brother and I had been ordered to leave my stepfather’s home in South Carolina because our lifestyle did not agree with either of my parents.

At the time Papa’s house was the last place on earth either of us want-

prayed aloud for his grandchildren, calling each one’s name.

I was grateful that on this particular night we did not have company, because it didn’t matter whether we did it or not, he would gather everybody together and pray, calling out even the names of guests! It was prayer before meals, prayer before

Papa always prayed aloud for his grandchildren, calling each one’s name.

dark red from years of outside activity and inherited Indian ancestry.

Papa was not perfect but I heard few remarks against his reputation. He had a stubborn righteousness. If he believed he was doing right and what pleased the Lord, he was unmoved by your arguments. As far as I know he never intentionally hurt anyone and never defamed another’s character.

His name was Clyde Frederick Martin. He was born November 3, 1905, and died Monday night, May 24, 1993. His death was the most unusual I have ever experienced, and it will be worth the trip through the details to hear about it.

His Home: Environment for Salvation

A family devotion about bedtime April 13, 1972, turned my life around

ed to go. Papa would make us go to church if we lived in his home. He had done this all our lives since we spent considerable time with grandparents growing up. I learned later that before we arrived we had been a great embarrassment to him.

He had gone to his pastor, Gerald Brown, and informed him that we looked “bad!” Papa’s concern was that he did not want us to draw undue attention in church by our hippie-look lifestyle. Brother Brown assured him it would be okay to bring us to church and this was where we needed to be anyway.

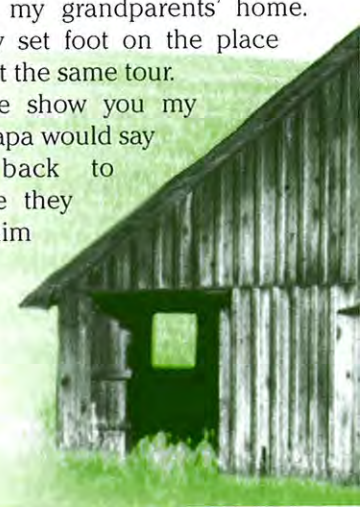
On the first night after our arrival from South Carolina, Papa read from Luke 16 about the rich man in Hell and prayed for us. I was terrified, and adding to my misery, Papa always

bedtime, and he prayed over you if you were leaving his home, especially if it involved travel time.

His Farm: Place of Provision

Papa was an extraordinary man. He farmed all his life and fed an abundance of Free Will Baptist preachers with what he raised. Most visiting ministers who preached at his church stayed in my grandparents’ home. Once they set foot on the place they all got the same tour.

“Let me show you my ‘maters,” Papa would say looking back to make sure they followed him



Free Will Baptist deacon in Georgia.

A DEACON

By Willie C. Martin

while dragging his left foot and leg across the ground toward the tomato patch. Tomatoes were one of the fruits of his labor in which he took the most pride.

Then it was on to the peas, butter beans, okra, squash and whatever else was close by. If supper wasn't ready by then, the hogs and cows were the next attraction. No one escaped his small farm without carrying away a bag of peaches, pecans, grapes or whatever he had available. Papa believed that his blessings should be shared with others.

His Life: One of Service

It seemed as if Papa tended to every material thing around the church and the cemetery. There is usually one in every church, a man who assumes almost full responsibility for maintenance and upkeep. No, Papa didn't do it all, but he certainly did many things no one ever knew needed to be done. He also did whatever the church asked him to do.

Papa was a deacon who took his job seriously. He sat in a spot at the church that was likely considered the

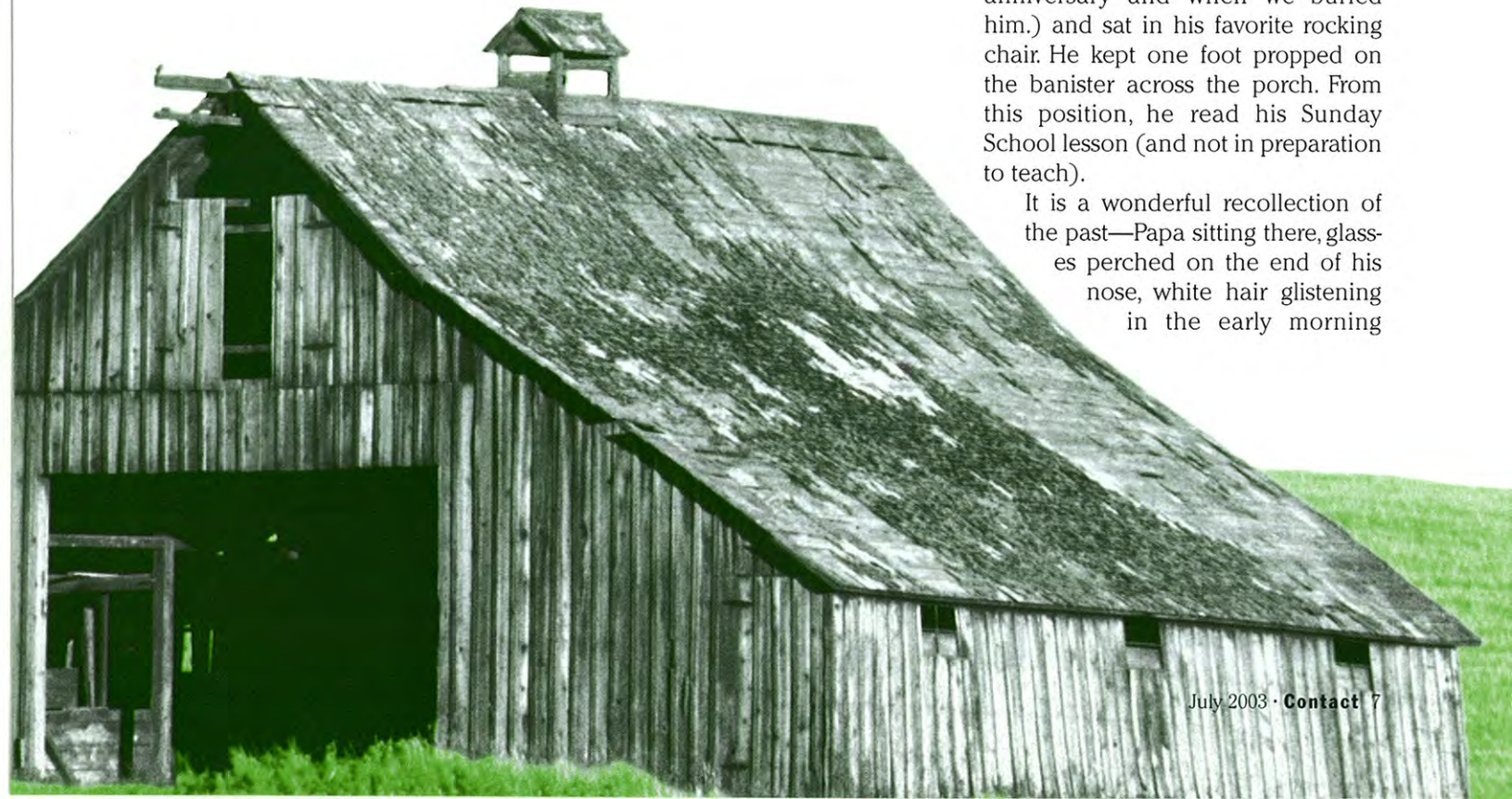
"deacons bench" in days gone by. Grandmother sat across the room near the piano which she has played for years and continues to play now at 93.

His Influence: Permanent

Most Sunday mornings after tending the farm animals, you could find him sitting on the front porch out of uniform. Papa usually wore overalls. He must have liked those with the thin striped pattern.

But come Sunday, he put on his dress clothes (The only time I remember a suit was at his 50th wedding anniversary and when we buried him.) and sat in his favorite rocking chair. He kept one foot propped on the banister across the porch. From this position, he read his Sunday School lesson (and not in preparation to teach).

It is a wonderful recollection of the past—Papa sitting there, glasses perched on the end of his nose, white hair glistening in the early morning



sun, engrossed in biblical study. I have pastored churches over 20 years, and I would be delighted to hear of a man who reads his Sunday School lesson.

I would love to hear my grandfather pray again. Every meal in his home was prefaced with prayer. Not "God is great, God is good . . .," but a

about to say something for the Lord. He loved to respond to the question, "How old are you?" That always opened the door.

He would tell his age, then with a flattened hand extended and raised to about the level of his mouth, he would sort of chop the air for a few

As far as we could tell Papa had not known a thing for several days. We lost all contact with him a few days prior to their visit. You could have fried fish in that room and it would not have done a thing to revive him.

However, while my grandmother and I were visiting with the Browns,

It is a wonderful recollection of the past—Papa sitting there, glasses perched on the end of his nose, white hair glistening in the early morning sun, engrossed in biblical study.

heart-felt symphony of words directed straight to the throne.

It took a number of years before I understood one particular thing Papa said often in prayer: "Lord give those in the *secret* stand the words to say today," or "Lord as your servants take the *secret* stand this morning . . ." or words to that effect.

Secret stand, I thought. *What is a secret stand?* Then it finally occurred to me one day. Papa was saying, or at least meant to say, *sacred stand*, or rather *pulpit*.

I do not remember everything Papa did for his church. I know he was a deacon, served as church treasurer for a while and was a faithful delegate to local association meetings. He attended state associations and a few national associations. Supporting neighborhood revivals and other special events indicated his devotion to the Lord.

Tithing was also high on his list of priorities. My grandparents taught me the importance of tithing. They believed in giving and always gave generously to most any cause brought up in the church. Missionaries, evangelists, Bible college students, children's homes and such were worthwhile works of the Lord to them. I heard Papa remark in a discouraged tone on a few occasions that the preacher forgot to take an offering for a particular cause.

Papa was a witness for the Lord. He always managed, if he had a little time to converse with someone, to give a witness. I could tell when he was

moments declaring that the Lord had been good to him. It was the Lord who had let him live so long.

What worried me about Papa was when he grabbed a person by the arm and held on until he got in the witness. He didn't keep them long, but he wanted them to know that the Lord had provided for him. He wanted to see their response.

His Death: Precious and Memorable

Papa's death was glorious. It was the kind of event you would have been sorry you missed.

Papa needed gall bladder surgery but he had been battling a kidney ailment for months. Doctors said he was too weak for surgery at over 87 years old. All we could do was wait for him to leave us.

Before Papa became unconscious a few days before his death, there were occasions that Grandmother and I would sing to him. He seemed to appreciate it because late one evening while visitors were present he would not allow us to stop. "Sing, Marguerite [my grandmother's name]!" he managed to get out with a little frustrated energy. We had stopped to rest, but that displeased him so we kept it up a while longer.

A couple of days later in the evening, his former pastor and his wife (Gerald and Irene Brown) came to see Papa. The night before their visit Papa's blood pressure dropped extremely low and we were certain he would die. But he stayed with us another day completely unconscious.

Papa suddenly sat up in the bed and opened his eyes wide. He was as alert as I had ever seen him. The look on his face was certainly unexpected.

Instead of a tired and worn look, it was one of extreme joy and intense surprise. There was not a trace of pain on his face, and he stared out somewhere past us for a few moments. His eyes were clear and focused. If I read his expression correctly, it was, "I have never in all my life seen anything like this!"

I knew as he stared at whatever he saw that it wasn't us or anything in the hospital room. I agree with what Brother Brown said as he began to weep with a holy joy and cry out, "He sees the Lord! He sees the Lord!" Brother Brown clasped those great big gospel-preaching hands together in praise allowing tears to splash down his face.

Those of us in the room rejoiced for a few moments as we watched Papa looking in wonder at what must have been a heavenly sight. Then Papa closed his eyes, took his last breath and relaxed for the last time on the bed. ■



About the Writer:
Reverend Willie C. Martin
pastors First Free Will
Baptist Church in Columbus,
Georgia.



A Call for Revival of Concern for Morals, Virtues and Ideals

Another Kind of Revival

By Leroy Forlines

I am deeply concerned about the decline in concern for morals, virtues and ideals both in churches and in the culture. The culture in which I grew up in the 1930s and 1940s did a better job promoting morals and ideals than churches do today. In those days, there was a strong emphasis on right and wrong, honesty, integrity, purity, modesty, responsibility, duty, diligence, faithfulness, loyalty, self-control, respect for age, respect for authority, concern for

others, thoughtfulness, kindness, courtesy, politeness, manners, beauty and excellence.

It is not new for people who are in their 70s to talk about how bad things are getting. However, the blight that has come upon us in recent decades is unique in human history. What has taken place in America since 1960 has gone far beyond value-neutral changes in culture.

Rise and Fall of Modernism

Prior to 1960 the prevailing view in secular thought was Modernism. Modernism was motivated by the idea that Truth did exist. From 1960 to 1990, a period of transition occurred in secular thought. Since 1990 the prevailing view in secular thought is Postmodernism. Postmodernism denies that any Truth exists which would make some things right and some things wrong, or which

moting beauty and excellence, believed it was possible to develop a rational understanding of the whole of reality and life. But it was never quite able to close the deal.

In the 1960s, Modernism came under attack from inside the secular community. A devastating division took place in the secular educational world. Now that we have had more time to reflect, we know that in the 1960s Modernism was being attacked by what we now call Postmodernism.

Climate for Postmodernism

Many in the secular community could no longer accept the optimistic hope of Modernism. When they viewed the devastation of two World Wars, the gassing of six million Jews and other widespread acts of human atrocity that continued after World War II, they no longer believed that man was basically

i. e. "after Modernism." Postmodernism denies the existence of "Truth" that would make Truth-claims either true or false.

Results of Postmodernism

Reason suffered a setback in Postmodernism because it rejected the law of non-contradiction. It was acceptable to believe in things that stood in contradiction to each other. There is no Truth that makes some things morally right and some things morally wrong. The terms *beauty* and *excellence* have been drained of meaning because there is no value-distinction between the high and the low, the noble and the ignoble.

Going with the flow has the same value as striving to attain excellence. Egalitarianism is championed. Worldview thinking has been replaced with anti-worldview thinking. The 1960s have

While great progress had been made in science and technology, human beings had not learned how to live.

would make some things good and some things bad.

Modernism ascended to the throne in secular thought in the late 18th century as a child of the Enlightenment. Modernism began with a high note of optimism. Man was viewed as basically good. Truth resided in Nature. Nature had the answers for human need. There was no need for divine revelation. Reason without the aid of divine revelation would be able to discover Truth. Reason would guide us toward a utopian society.

Modernism did not put itself in direct conflict with Christianity on the morality of the Ten Commandments. There was no mass movement in the United States that challenged the moral ideals of the Ten Commandments prior to 1960. Depravity pulled people down into sin. But sinful behavior was not idealized. Modernism, while strongly pro-

good. Modernism was not delivering on its promises and was pronounced a failure.

Though the challengers to Modernism had no answers to give, they felt that the failure of Modernism was so total and so final that the time had come to wrest control of universities from the advocates of Modernism (secular humanists). A pathway of devastation followed. The student revolution movement in the universities and the Hippies in the broader culture wreaked havoc. The Barbarians were taking over. The human race had to start over again so far as Truth to live by was concerned. While great progress had been made in science and technology, human beings had not learned how to live.

By 1990, it was evident that the 200-year reign of Modernism as king in secular thought had ended. What followed Modernism would be "Postmodernism,"

become the rule of the day. The 1960s was the beginning of what we now know to be Postmodernism. Postmodernism is now the major force shaping our culture.

When cohabitation between couples has the same value as marriage, it is not because two competing systems have arrived at different conclusions. Rather, it is because *those who follow such thinking have decided that there is no such thing as right moral thinking and wrong moral thinking*. Since they reject the idea that there is a standard of Truth that makes some things right and some things wrong, it is concluded that cohabitation should have the same value and rights as marriage.

For the same reason, in Postmodern culture, homosexuality has the same value and rights as heterosexuality. Since it is thought that Truth does not exist, we no longer have controversies

on such issues to decide what is right and what is wrong. We have a power struggle to see which side can subdue the other.

Such thinking, or perhaps we should say "non-thinking," undercuts all moral authority. It undercuts all concern for beauty and excellence. Civility, manners, politeness and dignity are in shambles in our country. Civilization is moving backwards. Sloppiness is considered a goal to be desired.

What I have just described is the result of a paradigm shift in secular culture. A person would search in vain to discover another time in the history of mankind when there was such a massive shift. We are not talking about different ideas about what is True. We are not talking about different ways to discover Truth. This is without parallel in the annals of history.

What about the Church?

The question we need to be concerned about is: How has Christianity fared in all this? Our concern is with what has taken place among those who speak of themselves as Conservatives, Evangelicals or Fundamentalists. If we had bought into the whole package, we would not be Christian. But we have not escaped the devastating influence of Postmodernism. We have become contaminated, weakened, desensitized, perhaps lulled to sleep.

It is not helpful to sit around saying, "We just don't know what is going to happen to our young people." What we need to ask is, "Where did we fail?" The time has come for repentance.

Repentance needs to start on the level of those who are in leadership positions. We owe an apology to our young people for not doing a better job preparing the way for them. When we repent of our failures that have led to such a sad situation, then we can call on our young people to repent.

What we do needs to be carefully and prayerfully thought through. We

must not be like the proverbial bull in the china shop. But we must rise to the need of the hour. We need a revival of concern for moral, ideals and virtues.

Challenge to Women

I am reasonably certain that I have read or heard it said, "Women are the custodians of virtue." I believe that if the sad state of affairs in our nation and in our churches is ever significantly altered, it will be when women decide to make a difference. It is up to pastors and male leadership to cry out for repentance. Fathers have a special responsibility to give moral leadership. But it is the opportunity and responsibility of mothers to be the major source of instilling virtues in children. Women give leadership in promoting etiquette.

During the Great Depression women took the simple things available and added a touch of beauty to their homes. They made decorations from tin cans and put popcorn on a string to decorate a Christmas tree. They would plant a flower garden. When they went to town they tried to look nice. They did the best they could to dress up for church. They tried to make some difference in the way their children looked when they went to church—even if it were simple.

In the 1940s and the 1950s a few people started making enough money that they could go out to a restaurant on Friday nights. I remember noticing that if a woman could get hold of a little money, she knew how to look nice when they went out to eat. Some men put up resistance to looking nice, but I never saw a woman who did.

I wish that were still true. Sloppiness is now in. The situation may be worse with women than men. It is not uncommon to see a boy and girl or a husband and wife out together when the man is dressed better than the woman.

Placing such high value on looking sloppy is a Western phenomenon. When I was in Moscow in March 2001, it was my observation that there is more slop-

iness in churches and on Christian school campuses in the USA than there was on the streets of Moscow.

While the challenge for beauty and excellence is made to both men and women, women play a particularly important role. It has been said, "Women are the bearers of civilization." I want to challenge women. Rise to the occasion! Do not let the barbarians continue to destroy all that is beautiful and noble in our culture. Help us regain a concern for manners, politeness, poise, dignity and charm for ladies.

A few years ago, a popular song in country music said, "Mamas, don't let your babies grow up to be cowboys." I would like to issue the challenge, "Mothers, don't let your babies grow up to be barbarians." ■



About the Writer:
Reverend Leroy Forlines teaches Bible and theology part-time at Free Will Baptist Bible College. He chairs the Commission for Theological Integrity.

Endnote

1. Morals, virtues and ideals overlap in their concern. Morals deal with thoughts and actions that we consider to be right or wrong. The word may be used with reference to moral standards. When it does, it speaks of these standards as being high. When ideals, as a category, is used in distinction from morals, it refers to a concern for beauty, excellence and order.

The thoughts and actions that are considered a positive manifestation of moral concern and those that are considered a positive manifestation of concern for ideals are characterized as possessing virtue. For a thought or action to possess virtue means that it has merit or value. I use all three words in an attempt to be complete.

Is Adultery

By Archie Ratliff

My phone rang at 5:00 a.m. On the other end was a member of my board and a long-standing member of my church, who said, "Pastor, I need you to come to our house right now if you can."

I arrived to find my friend drowsy from trying an overdose of sleeping pills. He began to babble, "Pastor, I found my wife in bed with another man. I took my gun, aimed it at them and at the last moment, I put two gun shots into the wall."

At first I didn't believe him. Surely he was delusional. As I glanced toward his wife, a woman who sang in our choir and sang specials often, I saw on her face a look that affirmed what he said to be true. I watched as one of our prominent church families disintegrated before my eyes. The couple divorced, split their assets and lost their two precious daughters.

One might question the need of this article in a Christian magazine like *Contact*. After all, surely we still believe the Ten Commandments are relevant for today, and God's Word does speak against adultery. Yet week after week the awful sin of adultery invades our church families. It has even been found

in the lives of our pastors and church staff members.

Why the Commandments?

Why did God give us all these commandments anyway? Are these only old, archaic laws which are meant to shackle us in chains and confirm us to a narrow legalistic life? The answer is no, quite the contrary.

Before God gave Moses the Ten Commandments on Mt. Sinai, He had blessed the Israelites with freedom from Egypt. God opened the Red Sea and drowned their oppressors in a wall of rushing water. He led them and fed them. The truth is God had a plan and a purpose for Israel.

God displayed His love and His providential care for Israel over and over again. God saw Canaan for Israel, a land of victorious godly living; it was also a land filled with choices. God knew every choice would bear a consequence. One wrong choice could set Israel off the road from His plan, and

God knew there would be no easy return.

So God in love and with great compassion gave Israel road signs to help on the journey to Canaan. These commandments would involve all the relationships they would have along the way.

Have only one God.

Take care of My Name.

You need the Sabbath to rest.

To establish the family, honor your mother and father.

Life is precious, so don't kill.

Legalism or Love?

Then He said that if you are going to have great families, you must fence your marriage and not take another man's wife.

Does this sound like cold narrow legalistic chains? No, not at all. Instead, these are living barriers which help achieve His plan and purpose in His children's lives. The Ten Commandments were given so we could maintain a warm, intimate fellowship with our God

Still Wrong?

God in love and with great compassion gave Israel road signs to help on the journey to Canaan.

and a pure, honest relationship with our fellow man.

Why would we want to abandon loving limitations and barriers which strengthen our love and our devotion to God and our loved ones?

I don't know about others, but I find the ministry to be challenging. With a large congregation to shepherd, a Christian school, counseling and preaching, my schedule can be full . . . yet none of these are my greatest challenge.

My challenge is keeping the Lord number One in my life. I don't want to neglect my own wife and family. I welcome the loving limitations given by God that will draw me closer to Him and allow Him to achieve His plan for my life and ministry.

The Fence Good?

In his book *The Tender Commandments*, Ton Mel told the story of a cowboy who rode the back of a Brahma bull. The bull swung his massive head and shoulders sending the cowboy into the air and finally to the ground. The only options left for the cowboy was to either run or be trampled. The cowboy ran as fast as he could and scaled a high fence which

separated him from 2,000 pounds of raging bull.

Safe on the other side of the fence, what do you think his attitude would be toward that old fence? Why, of course, he'd love that old fence. He might even kiss that old fence for saving his life.

Why would he love that old fence? The fence wasn't there to restrict or restrain the rider. It was there to restrain the bull. That's what God's commandments do for us. They put a barrier between us and all that wants to ruin us at any cost.

Is adultery still wrong? Yes. As long as God's Word stands, the commandment to marital fidelity remains. This is no time to tear down the barriers. Let's build the fence of loyalty and devotion to our spouses higher and stronger than ever before. ■



About the Writer: Reverend Archie Ratliff pastors Bethel Free Will Baptist Church in Kinston, North Carolina. He is a member of the Free Will Baptist Bible College Board of Trustees.

Directory Update

Arkansas

Jim Baker to Bethel Church, Mabelvale

Doug Jones to First Church, Hot Springs

Illinois

Randy Kash to Oak Grove Church, Scheller

Maryland

Mike Phillips to Waldorf Church, Waldorf from Woodlawn Church, Russellville, AR

Missouri

Cody Freeman to Grant Avenue Church, Springfield from Fellowship Church, Stillwater, OK

Mike Schultz to Cuba Church, Cuba from California Christian College, Fresno, CA

Darin Alvis to Copper Mines Church, Fredericktown from Mt. Pisgah Church, Cabool

South Carolina

Rodney Wilson to New Vision Church, Hemingway from Emmanuel Church, Washington, NC

Chris Fannin to Lebanon Church, Effingham from Puerto Rico as home missionary ■

Nuel Brown, California Director of Ministries, Retires

FRESNO, CA—Reverend Nuel Brown, director of ministries for the California State Association, retired in May after 17 years at the helm. The 70-year-old minister has served in California as a pastor or executive since 1960.

Elected to the director of ministries post in 1986, Brown was responsible for promoting the state work. He also served as treasurer of the cooperative plan and disbursed funds as directed. In addition, he served as managing editor of *The Voice*, the California state paper.

In his final editorial (April 2003), Brown said, "As I leave, I want to be a supporter without being in charge. I want to be a contributor rather than a critic."

Brother Brown preached at the 1986 National Bible Conference in Tulsa, Oklahoma. He was elected to the Sunday School and Church Training Board in 1996 and elected to a second term in 2002. He served two years on the General Board and Executive Committee.

Nuel pastored 26 years in California (1960–1986) before coming to the director of ministries position, spending 19 years as pastor at First FWB Church in Kerman. He was elected moderator of the California State Association (1966–1967) and served 10 years on the state Mission Board.

Brown was saved in a California fruit stand that had been converted into a one-room church, and baptized in a cold stream in the Santa Cruz mountains. He is an alumnus of Fresno City College, California Christian College and the California Graduate School of Theology.

While pastoring in Kerman, he served nine years on the City Planning Commission, four years as president of the Police Athletic League and two years as president of the Kiwanis Club. He now serves on the Fresno City Planning Commission.

In his concluding remarks, Reverend Brown said, "So I bid farewell to the California State Association of Free Will Baptists that has had my loyalty and dedication for over 40 years. California Free Will Baptists is all I know, and I love it as much today as in 1960 when I started."



Pastor Carl Lilly prays at first service in the new building. Pastor Carl Lilly (right) and guest speaker Robert Legg.



Exterior view of new building at Sunshine FWB Church.

West Virginia Church Dedicates Building

HUNTINGTON, WV—For the second time in 14 years, members of Sunshine FWB Church in Huntington met to celebrate the dedication of a new building. The latest expansion includes a 500-seat sanctuary which was dedicated April 5, almost 14 years to the day after the congregation dedicated their old, 275-seat sanctuary.

Pastor Carl B. Lilly led the church family in the historic event. He said, "We are excited to see what the Lord will do with a few dedicated Christians who desire to see the lost saved and Christians brought to maturity."

Dr. Lilly introduced guest speaker Robert Legg who pastors Ward Road FWB Church in Canvas, West Virginia. Reverend Legg preached the dedication message.

The day's activities included a 2:00 p.m.–5:00 p.m. open house preceding evening worship services.

Pastor Lilly said, "Our new building will seat over 500, and we sincerely pray that God will soon fill it as He did our old sanctuary."

Sunshine FWB Church is a member of West Virginia's Brotherhood Conference.

Truth and Peace Celebrates 20 Years

NASHVILLE, TN—Student and Children Ministries and Randall House Publications extend an invitation to all Truth and Peace alumni (1984–2003) to join in a celebration of 20 years of student leadership training. The event is scheduled during the annual National Youth Conference in Tampa, Florida. Planners said the celebration will get underway Monday evening, July 21 at 9:00 p.m. in Room 18 at Tampa Convention Center.

Former staff members and alumni are encouraged to bring mementos, photos and videos representing their participation. A brief program and refreshments will be a part of the celebration. For more information call 1-800-877-7030 or email youth@randallhouse.com.

Music Commission to Release Booklet in Tampa



BROKEN ARROW, OK—The Free Will Baptist Music Commission plans to release a booklet for churches and music personnel at the national convention. Convention music coordinator Scott Bullman said the Commission's 2002 convention cookbook for musicians met with success and expects the 2003 booklet to be well received.

The booklet titled "Putting Out the Welcome Mat: Attracting People to Your Church Through Special Events" will be used in two Music Commission seminars during the July 20–24 national convention in Tampa. The seminars are scheduled 1:30–3:00 p.m. in Room 24 (Tampa Convention Center) on Tuesday and Wednesday afternoons.

Scott Bullman said, "Several of us have used special music events as a means of bringing people in the 'front door' of our churches." He cited the Living Christmas Tree which has performed for six years at Bethany FWB Church in Broken Arrow and attracts 5,000 each year.

Bullman continued, "We wanted to put in print format how we developed the vision for the event, sold that vision to others and pulled it together. We address determining the event that works for you, planning a successful event, printing and advertising tips, follow-up, logistics and more."

The Commission will also have available their 2002 booklet, "The Worship Leader's Cookbook: 40 Recipes for Blended Worship."

Steve Greenwood Wins CMP Designation

NASHVILLE, TN—Mr. Steve Greenwood, program coordinator for Student and Children Ministries (SCM) at Randall House Publications and the National Youth Conference, earned the Certified Meeting Professional (CMP) designation this spring after successfully completing a three-hour exam in Atlanta. This designation signifies proficiency in 17 meeting management areas, meeting administration and supervision.

The CMP program is administered by the Convention Industry Council (McLean, VA) and is available to those individuals involved in event planning with three or more years of planning experience. The nationwide CMP program began in 1985.

Greenwood (32) graduated from Free Will Baptist Bible College in 1993 and joined the Randall House staff in 1998. He is instrumental in coordinating National Youth Convention competition, the National Youth Evangelistic Team, Springboard Junior High Student Leadership Conferences and various SCM events.

The son of a Free Will Baptist deacon and grandson of a Free Will Baptist minister, Steve Greenwood becomes the fifth Free Will Baptist meeting planner to earn the CMP designation. Other CMP holders include Dean Jones (Convention Manager), Melvin Worthington, (Executive Secretary Emeritus), Mary Wisheart (retired WNAC Executive Secretary) and Jack Williams (Conference Coordinator).



Theological Symposium Set

NASHVILLE, TN—The 2003 Theological Symposium will be held October 27–28 on the campus of Hillsdale FWB College, Moore, Oklahoma. Those who wish to submit a paper are encouraged to do so.

Papers should be 10–15 pages in length, double-spaced, and should be related to the Bible, theology, Christian culture or some related topic. You may submit your paper by August 1, 2003, to:

Matt Pinson
3606 West End Avenue
Nashville, TN 37205
president@fwbcc.edu

The symposium is sponsored by the Commission for Theological Integrity of the National Association of Free Will Baptists.

Mid-Tenn Christian Workers' Conference Meets

NASHVILLE, TN—More than 375 people converged on the Free Will Baptist Bible College campus April 12 for the second annual Mid-Tenn Christian Workers' Conference. Participants chose from 45 seminars offered by 35 presenters.

Topics ranged from "Gone Fishing (Wading into the Waters of Teen Evangelism)" taught by Susan Henderson to "Teaching Theology in the Local Church" taught by David Outlaw. Seminars were divided into five tracks—Early Childhood, Elementary, Teen, Adult Administrative/Pastor.

Dr. Thom Rainer, dean of the Billy Graham School of Missions, Evangelism and Church Growth at Southern Baptist

Theological Seminary and popular author, was the keynote speaker. He also led two seminars.

The Mid-Tenn Christian Workers' Conference was launched last year in connection with the "Sunday School Ministry" course taught at Free Will Bible College. Its goal is to help equip church members for the work of the ministry. The conference is now conducted by the **TeamChurch** division of Randall House Publications.

Steve Lindsay, minister of education and youth at New Hope FWB Church in Joelton, Tennessee, chaired the 2003 planning committee.

Registrants came from 51 churches in eight states—Alabama, Arkansas, Georgia,

Illinois, Kentucky, Michigan, Missouri and Tennessee. The largest group (37) came from the New Hope FWB Church in Tennessee, where Barry Simpson pastors.

The 2004 conference is scheduled for Saturday, April 17, at Free Will Baptist Bible College. Dr. Kenneth S. Hemphill, former president of Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary and author of *Revitalizing the Sunday Morning Dinosaur*, will be the featured speaker.

TeamChurch conducts Christian education conferences across the denomination. To schedule one, write Dr. Alton Loveless at Randall House Publications, P.O. Box 17306, Nashville, TN 37217 or call him toll-free at 1-800-877-7030.

Reverend Norlin Jones Dies



BOONEVILLE, MS—Reverend Norlin D. Jones, Sr., died March 16 at age 75. A Free Will Baptist minister for nearly 50 years, Reverend Jones served as a pastor, church planter and home missionary.

His early pastorate at Randall Memorial FWB Church in Memphis, Tennessee (1955–1966), launched him into the denominational work. Jones was a home missionary with

the Tennessee State Association and the national Home Missions Department.

He founded two churches: First FWB Church (Jackson, TN) and Daytona Beach FWB Church (FL). In addition, he pastored several churches in Mississippi.

Brother Jones attended two colleges in Tennessee—Mid-South Bible College (Memphis) and Free Will Baptist Bible College (Nashville). He served in the U.S. Army (1946–1948) and was stationed in Tokyo, Japan.

He worked as a tool and die pattern maker for International Harvester Corporation in Memphis before answering the call to preach.

Funeral services were conducted March 18 with Reverends Terry Booker and Leonard Ball officiating.

Reverend Jones is survived by his wife of 54 years, Trannie Jones; three daughters, Kathy Dye of Booneville, Debra Hanson of Newport, North Carolina, and Linda G. Rhodes of Edwardsville, Illinois; one son, Norlin D. Jones, Jr., of Beech Bluff, Tennessee; one sister, three brothers, eight grandchildren and two great-grandchildren.



Dr. John Edwards, 77, With the Lord

PINCKARD, AL—After a ministry that spanned 50 years with pastorates in three states, Dr. John Edwards died April 17 at age 77. He was best-known for his work in the state of Alabama where he served 45 years.

Reverend Edwards pastored 30 years in Dothan at First FWB Church and Eastside FWB Church. During that time he was elected state moderator 25 times.

Dr. Edwards served in numerous denominational roles as a home missionary, Home Missions Board member, pastor, General Board member (National Association) and church planter. Wherever he went, his peers soon elected him to leadership roles.

Licensed to preach in 1953 and ordained in 1956, Edwards moved to Nashville, Tennessee, in 1956 to attend Free Will Baptist Bible College. He would later pastor in Tennessee, Arizona and Alabama. He celebrated 50 years in the ministry this spring. (See page 20 of April 2003 *Contact* for a fuller account of his ministry.)

Reverend Edwards was diagnosed with lung cancer last summer.

Funeral services were conducted April 19. Reverends Jim McNeil, Glenn Poston, Fred Hersey and Larry Reynolds officiated. Burial followed at Eastside FWB Church Cemetery in Dothan.

Dr. Edwards is survived by his wife, Thelma (T. J.) Kirkland Edwards; one son, Gary Edwards; one grandson, Garrett Edwards; a great-grandson, Gavison Edwards (all of Dothan); one granddaughter, Joy Carpenter of Greenville, Alabama; one sister and one brother.

Alabama: Pastor **Barry Raper** reports four baptisms at **Red Bay FWB Church in Red Bay**.

Arizona: The **Arizona** State Master's Men Retreat kicks off October 2-4 at Sedona. **Larry Diehl** serves as state president.

Florida: Pastor **Roger Duncan** and members of **First FWB Church in Seffner** counted crowds topping 900 at their week-long camp meeting early this year. Ten ministers preached sermons while others taught the Word and missionaries reported.

Georgia: Members of **Ozias FWB Church in Pearson** paid off half the \$100,000 borrowed for construction costs in a planned expansion. The church reached its Sunday School campaign goal of 100. **Larry Johnson** pastors.

Five months after the building was flooded, members of **Donalsonville FWB Church in Donalsonville** conducted open-house and dedication services in their restored facilities. Pastor **Rollin Rathel** leads the congregation.

Bethlehem FWB Church in Cordele is completing a 2,400-square-foot addition—their new sanctuary. The entire church will then be remodeled. **Emory Howell** pastors.

When Pastor **Howard D. Faircloth** retired at **Bay Springs FWB Church in Eastman**, members presented him with a plaque in honor of the occasion. Faircloth pastored seven churches in his 43-year ministry. He pastored Bay Springs Church three times for a total of 25 years.

Illinois: After more than 40 years as pianist at **New Hope FWB Church in Spring Garden**, **Gladys Fowler** decided it was time to retire. The church saluted her years of service... and purchased a new piano. **Spencer Meagher** pastors.

Ten couples from **Victory FWB Church in Mascoutah** participated in a marriage enrichment weekend. **Jon Cannon** pastors.

Pastor **Brad Ryan** reports 12 new members and four baptisms at **Ina FWB Church in Ina**.

Mississippi: **Pine Grove FWB Church in State Line** reports seven new members with 41 people participating in a feet-washing service. **Norman Nowell** pastors.

The **Mississippi All-Boards Conference** featured **David Williford**, director of institutional advancement at Free Will Baptist Bible College. The conference began with a Friday night banquet and proceeded the next day with planning and preparation sessions.

Missouri: Members of **Bethel FWB Church in Marshfield** dedicated their new sanctuary February 23. Pastor **James Crawford** introduced Missouri executive secretary **Nathan Ruble** who preached the dedication message. Pastor Crawford has led three building programs at the church in 12 years.



Rick (left), Mance & Reuben Cason
First Church, Morehead City

North Carolina: A unique service took place April 6 at **First FWB Church in Morehead City**. A father and his two sons (all Free Will Baptist ministers) shared the pulpit and preached one sermon together from James 1:19. **Rick Cason** (pastor at Victory FWB Church in Goldsboro) and **Reuben Cason** (pastor at Unity FWB Church in Smithfield) joined their father **Mance Cason** in his Morehead City pulpit. The special service was a birthday gift to the elder Cason from his two sons.

Pastor **Gordon Sebastian** said that members of **Peace FWB Church in Wilson** shared the gospel with more than 80 prison inmates. Five inmates accepted Christ.

Ohio: *Contact* welcomes *The Cutting Edge*, publication of **Hillview FWB Church in Reynoldsburg**. **Bill Hayes** pastors.

Pastor **Brian Phillips** reports eight new members and three baptisms at **Wyandotte FWB Church in Mansfield**.

Pastor **Mike Blanton** baptized 11 new converts and welcomed eight new members at **Canaan Land FWB Church in Grove City**.

Twelve new members and two baptisms at **Mansfield FWB Church in Mansfield** have Pastor **Fred Crank** smiling.

Thirteen people at **First FWB Church in Springfield** read the Bible through last year. Pastor **Mark Rucker** reports 14 new members.

Evangelist **Clovis Vanover** conducted 13 revivals with 13 conversions.

The happy pastor at **Samantha FWB Church in Leesburg** is **Wiley Perkins**. That's because 13 people were baptized and nine joined the church.

State executive secretary **Edwin Hayes** said the 2003 **Men's Retreat** set a new attendance record when 296 people registered for the event. Five men preached during the sessions. They were Ohio pastors **Jim McComas**, **Freddy Dutton**, **Henry Litteral** and **Bill Hayes**, plus **Paul Park** who directs Korean ministries from his home in California.

Oklahoma: Pastor **Joe Grizzle** reports 10 new members at **First FWB Church in Norman**.

Lakeside FWB Church in Norman discontinued services and voted to donate all property to Oklahoma's Perpetual Land Fund. The church property is valued at \$200,000.

Tennessee: Free Will Baptist Bible College reported 170 visitors from 57 churches in 17 states at the school's spring Welcome Days in Nashville. Enrollment management director **Matt Markins** said 28 registrants came from Tennessee and 24 from Virginia.

Donelson FWB Church in Nashville reports nine new members. **Rob Morgan** pastors.

Utah: Pastor **Tim Lewis** baptized 13 converts at **Summit Chapel FWB Church in Ogden**. ■

Part seven of an 11-part series.

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

About Scripture

I have many memories of my childhood. Most are pleasant, a select few are sad, some are so amazing I question them and one intrigues me until this day. My recollection is that for a significant period of my adolescence our family did not miss a lunch or dinner in which my father

did not somehow work into our table talk the root meaning of a New Testament Greek word.

When I remember those days, I never cease to be amazed at his creativity. I assure you, Mom and the boys were not clamoring for the upcoming morsel of knowledge about the Greek. Yet, that day's study of scripture, in the original language of the New Testament had been so meaningful to Dad that he found a way to relate it to the common conversation of adolescents.

defines our relationship with Him, ourselves, our fellow humans and the rest of creation.

It is not until we saturate our minds with the consistent and systematic reading of scripture that we grasp the practical implications of living in a universe under the sovereign control of God. When our reading immerses us in God's historical relationship with His creation, life becomes worth rising for in the morning, restful sleep is enjoyed at night

makes one of his famous purchases, the item looks as if it needs to be trashed.

But give him a couple of hours in his workshop and you want to pay him twice as much as he paid for the item. Not only does he repair any broken part, he loves to make it shine. He knows that the luster of an object is often what makes the sale.

This illustrates a spiritual truth. In scripture we read, "For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the

When our reading immerses us in God's historical relationship with His creation, life becomes worth rising for in the morning, restful sleep is enjoyed at night and what happens in between is understood to be in God's able hands.

It took me decades to begin realizing the impact of that recurring event. Now as I recall with admiration the lessons my father taught me by example, there is no question his love affair with the scriptures stands foremost. Though I'm young, this I've learned about the scriptures.

Keeps Life God-Centered

Augustine observed we were created for God and our hearts are restless until they rest in Him. Consistent, systematic reading of scripture anchors our soul to the truth. Truth, in turn, clarifies our understanding of God's sovereign rule. It

and what happens in between is understood to be in God's able hands.

Regular scripture reading dissipates the darkness of worry, uncertainty and anxiety. Faith in God is understood not to be a leap, but the only firm foundation on which to build life.

Sin Loses Its Luster

I have a brother-in-law renowned as a "deal finder." He rarely pays more than a third of what something is worth. Having been in the pawn business for 10 years, he knows what *anything* is worth. Often when he

eyes and the pride of life, is not of the Father but is of the world," (I John 2:16).

The book of Romans teaches us about the enslavement of our fallen nature to sin. This helps us understand why we find ourselves wanting to croon to sin the words of the old country song, "If luv'n you is wrong, then I don't wanna be right. . . ." It takes the spiritual maturity of Moses not to indulge in the pleasures of sin for a season. The truth is, it takes an intimate

Porture Reading

By Terry W. Eagleton

relationship with God for sin to lose its luster.

I've learned from experience that after spending intimate time with God through His word, a host of sins don't carry their previous appeal—pornography, jealousy, envy, hatred, dishonesty, laziness, infidelity, anger, slander, boastfulness, apathy, vulgar language. With the luster of sin gone, so goes some of its allure. Constant contact with the holy God of scripture has been the best antidote to the persistent craving for sin demanded by my fallen nature.

Brings Discipline to Life

On a number of occasions I have tried to lose weight. Those periods are like no other in life! Focus, determination, transparency, honesty and a host of other words are summoned for the task. However, the foremost word is *discipline*.

Foremost among the disciplines is precise measurements. Foremost among precise measurements is the daily weigh-

in. I give myself every advantage. Prior to getting on the scales, I follow the injunction of the writer of Hebrews and "set aside *every* weight."

When I am not concentrating on losing weight, I laugh at myself for that kind of "precision" for the morning weigh-in. However, I also realize that the effort necessary to lose weight requires discipline in every aspect of my physical body—dietary intake, physical exercise, work and leisure schedule. When I start concentrating on my physical condition, I realize I have been careless in too many areas.

The same is true spiritually. What starts out as a commitment to a systematic Bible reading schedule evolves into enlightenment on careless disorderliness in a host of spiritual disciplines. It is at this juncture where real spiritual growth can take place. Surrender to God's conviction with a resolution to improve, fol-

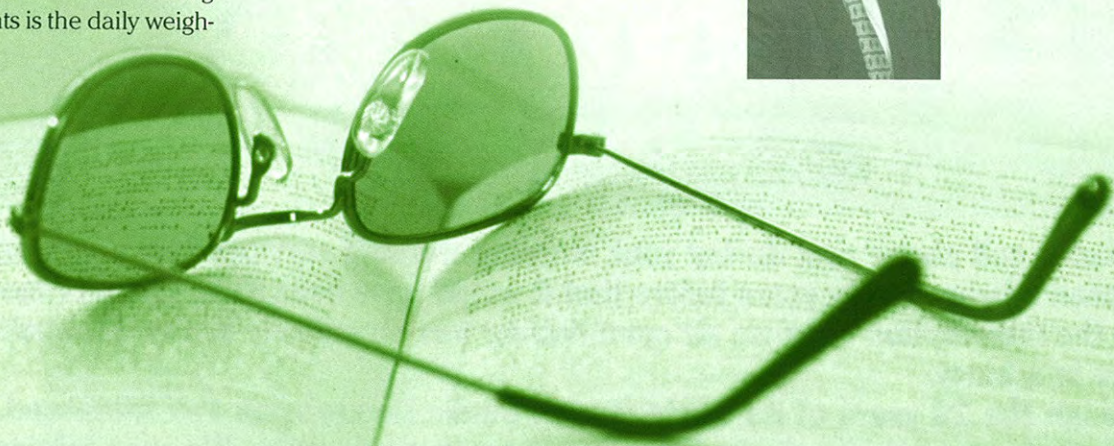
lowed by actions produces the result God looks for in His maturing children.

Consistent and systematic scripture reading often proves to be one of the most difficult spiritual disciplines for believers. However, I also know that when this discipline is practiced it will give us a God-centered worldview that brings peace and pleasure to life, removing the luster of sin and producing a rejuvenating maturity in our walk with God.

The psalmist said, "Blessed are the undefiled in the way, who walk in the law of the Lord. Blessed are they that keep his testimonies..." (Ps. 119:1-2a). ■



About the Writer:
Reverend Terry Eagleton
pastors Horton Heights
Free Will Baptist Church
in Nashville, Tennessee.



The Free Will Baptist Media Commission looks to the future.

Media's Mission

By Mike Jones

Ever had a cell phone ring during your morning worship service? Five years ago that would have been a beeper. Fifty years before that it would have been flies, gnats or mosquitoes providing the interruption because air conditioning was an unlikely luxury. Technology sure does change in a hurry.

Through the 20 years of its existence the Media Commission has witnessed, and tried to help institute, many technological changes in our denomination. We were originally called the Radio-TV Commission, but it soon became obvious that radio and TV were just the tip of the iceberg among the technological challenges facing our churches. If Free Will Baptists were going to reach everyone we could in every place we could using every method God would

It has been obvious for years that we cannot afford to remain Amish in our attitude about the use of modern machinery if we expect to harvest a great crop of souls in these last days.

honor, the Media Commission realized that an increased awareness about the potential and power of well-produced media was vital.

Methods Matter

It has been obvious for years that we cannot afford to remain Amish in our attitude about the use of modern machinery if we expect to harvest a great crop of souls in these last days. I have plowed with a mule and I have plowed with a tractor. If I wanted to play at farming, then I wouldn't mind having a mule so I could brag about how old-fashioned I was. But if I must farm to feed my family, then I would trade that mule for a tractor any day of the week!

The Media Commission has produced a large number of products ranging from newspaper ad slicks to radio and TV commercials to "Home Coming" audio and video tapes of many of our best known Free Will Baptist singers. Producing these products has taught us an important lesson; it is difficult to produce and promote quality products with limited resources and a limited pool of customers. Dreaming about supporting our commission through the sale of these products faded like fog in the harsh sunshine of reality.

In spite of these setbacks the members of the Media Commission remain convinced that using quality media tools will enhance the image of our churches and make their ministries more productive. So what should we do? One of the earliest lessons I learned was, *Stop making excuses and start doing what you can where you are with what you have.* If one door was blocked then we must find other means of fulfilling our mission.

Our Most Pressing Needs

Over the past few years we have noticed that people contact the Media Commission most often when they are looking for information about a media method they want to use or when they are seeking to increase the impact of their image in the community. These areas seem to be where we are most needed, so that is where we decided to focus.

If we can provide easy access to information about new and better media methods, people will be able to use that information in order to find the product and price that best fits their situation. If we can provide guidelines for, and examples of, extremely presentable image-enhancing materials, we will multiply the churches' ability to communicate the gospel effectively to their communities.

The Media Commission enters its 21st year excited about the opportunities available to help our denomination. Some of these ideas will bloom into products that can be produced on a scale and at a cost that will allow them to help our churches without placing the commission in a difficult debt situation. But many opportunities will come from an increased willingness to simply provide information our churches need so they can more effectively use the media already available to them.

Gearing Up for Tomorrow

Need to locate a pastor or put an announcement in your bulletin about a national agency? What if a CD could be produced that included all the logos of National Association agencies as well as a copy of the annual *Yearbook*? Wouldn't that be a helpful item?

Need to know how to start on the web and what to do to be effective? What if the Media Commission website included simple instructions about how every Free Will Baptist church could begin and maintain an effective presence on the worldwide web? When we focus on ways to serve our churches, opportunity doors are everywhere.

The Lord's business is the most important business in all the universe. It deserves our best effort and our most presentable image. Five years from now the cell phone will probably be obsolete and some other device will interrupt your Sunday morning service. The goal of the Media Commission is to find ways to use whatever this new device turns out to be for the work of God. The challenge is great but God is greater and we can hardly wait for our 25th anniversary to report about the victories God has wrought. ■



About the Writer: Reverend Mike Jones is a member of the Media Commission and serves as executive secretary for the South Carolina State Association of Free Will Baptists.

BEYOND BELIEF



Operation Saturation

By Richard Atwood
Director of Missionary Assistance

Once upon a time there was a home missionary who wanted to see people saved and plant a church that would reach out and be a blessing to

others. He called for family and friends to come and help him sow the seed. That's where you can help.

What?

Each year our church planters have a special event called Operation Saturation. The goal is to get the word out about their church to as many people as possible. It's one of many tools for reaching the lost for Christ.

Where?

First, spend time in prayer and seek God's direction in working where lives can be changed, people helped and how He would have you get started.

Please contact the Home Missions Department to see who has requested help or contact an individual missionary. Information is available. Many need your help!

When?

Many of our church planters schedule Operation Saturation the last Saturday of September. This year, Operation Saturation may be any time from June through September. They will always be willing to work with you.

How Can You Help?

Bring a group from your church to help a home missionary sow the seed. Your group of teens, adults, men and women may be able to minister by singing, conducting youth services or children's rallies, Vacation Bible School, cleaning, yard work, building and more.

This Helps the Home Mission Church by:

- Reaching lost people.
- Giving a visible church presence in the community and a positive perception of Christians.
- Providing new prospects for the mission church.
- Encouraging the pastor and members – "Someone else knows we're here and cares."
- Helping get needed ministry work done in the church.
- Showing mission church members they are a part of something bigger and offering fellowship which

can be scarce in a new church.

- Impacting the young people in the mission work.
- Home Mission Work Trips Help Visiting Groups by:*
- Giving your people a heart for the work of God.
 - Educating people about the mission work.
 - Motivating the group to reach out at home.
 - Drawing the group closer together by serving together.

You may have never done this before and you're a little fearful. Most people you visit will be polite. Hanging material on the doorknob is an option for those who don't want to talk. Sometimes a lack of visible results keeps us from trying again. The Bible tells us in Galatians 6:9, "And let us not be weary in well doing; for in due season we shall reap, if we faint not."

You may even reach people other than the ones invited. Almost 20 years ago my wife Sandy and I befriended a crossing guard and invited her to our church. She didn't come, but when a new family moved into the area and asked about a church, the crossing guard recommended our church. That family came and they still are our friends today.

Reflections

From a Teen Volunteer:

After participating in something like this, I found that visiting a mission work moved me out of my comfort zone. It helped me be aware of the needs of other people at the mission church and back home. I got more out of it than I gave. Sometimes you think God is saying to go and help them because they need help, but He knows that you will be helped by helping them.

—Justin Atwood, Nashville, Tennessee

From Illinois:

We had a couple of high school students nominally involved. After seeing a group of young people sold out to Jesus, they are totally different people now . . .

—David Potete, Home Missionary in Chicago, Illinois

Remember Operation Saturation and pray about participating. This experience can change your life! ■



Free Will Baptist Ministry Focus

- Start praying and talking about Operation Saturation to your group
- Go to www.homemissions.net to consider possible locations to visit
- Call the home missionary and see when and how you can help
- Get a free copy of Home Mission's "How to Have a Successful Short-Term Home Missions Trip"

Help for Hurting Churches

By Eric Thomsen,
Marketing Manager

A soft breeze sweeps across the infield as I squint toward the pitcher's mound. For one moment, everything goes still inside as the pitcher's arm sweeps into motion, sending the softball in a high arc toward home

plate. The cool spring night, the lights, the crowd—all are forgotten as I watch the ball descend toward me... wait... wait... wait... Swing! With a crack, the ball leaves my bat headed for deep left field.

As I round first, I see the left fielder juggle the ball. I pause a second, long enough to see his desperate throw sail over the glove of the leaping second baseman. Pounding toward third, I read the lips of the base coach clearly... go... go... go! So I keep running. Then it happens.

My right foot slips on a patch of clay dampened by a recent shower, and as I lurch forward, I hear an awful pop in the back of my right leg. Moments later, I taste wet clay as my face slams into the ground. When I try to stand, my leg will not hold me. In desperation, and sure the ball will arrive in the catcher's mitt at any moment, I hop, trip, sprawl and (very ungracefully) roll across home plate. Safe! Just barely.

A day later, as I write this, my torn hamstring throbs and burns, and I ease myself to a different position in my normally comfortable ergonomic chair. I chuckle as I consider how quickly a person is limited by even a minor injury. As I contemplate words on the page before me, I cannot help but draw a painful comparison between my sports-related injury and the common "injuries" that plague many churches.

Churches are *torn* apart by dissension and *pulled* away from their priorities by the lure of a materialistic, godless society. Values are *twisted*, families *broken*, and countless lives *bruised* by the constant *pounding* of a sin-wrecked world. Wouldn't it be nice if a medical clinic existed for churches—a place the pastor could drive by and

pick up a "quick-fix" prescription to help his struggling congregation? But there are no pharmacies dispensing angelic antibiotics or supplying spiritual steroids to supplement shrinking congregations.

Thank the Lord for Randall House Publications! Now, don't get the wrong idea. Randall House doesn't write pastoral prescriptions, but does help churches prevent spiritual "injuries." How? Sunday after Sunday, Randall House curriculum provides church members with a *check-up* for the soul, measures their spiritual *growth*, and doles out healthy amounts of spiritual *nutrition* by taking churches systematically through the Word of God. Lessons are relevant, trustworthy and they train teachers to communicate the Word more effectively.

Let's not forget the Randall House training team (from SCM to TeamChurch) that helps church members *stretch* beyond their comfort zones by *training* them for vital ministries within the congregation. Pastors look to Randall House for *inspiration* and the latest *resources* to deal with complex spiritual and social issues facing the church, from divorce recovery to drug abuse. Simply put, healthy churches made up of spiritually healthy Christians helping a hurting world are the reason Randall House exists.

I am surprised by the doctor's news that little can be done for a torn hamstring. With the help of a few well-timed muscle relaxers, I guess I'll just have to tough it out. Aren't you glad we don't face the same dilemma in the church? The next time you feel like your church or ministry has sprained an ankle, give Randall House a call. We'll be glad to help. ■



Free Will Baptist Ministry Focus

- Randall House curriculum takes churches systematically through the Bible
- SCM and TeamChurch are all about training church members for vital ministries
- Randall House is one-stop shopping for all of your church's needs

Adult Studies at Free Will Baptist Bible College

By Tina Tolbert

Have you ever given thought to beginning or finishing a college degree? Can you think of a myriad of reasons why you should? So can we! To name only a few, it is accurate to say a bachelor's degree can increase

your income, a bachelor's degree can help advance your career, and a good reason to start today is because education is never going to be less expensive than it is right now!

We can also think of many reasons why you should get your degree at Free Will Baptist Bible College. FWBBC offers an excellent education (meeting accrediting criteria of both SACS and AABC), our faculty are student-oriented people, and the Truth of God's Word is at the center of everything we teach. Our uniqueness sets us apart from other institutions.

These are some of the reasons why this fall Free Will Baptist Bible College will offer an Adult Studies Program. This program will provide a way for you to begin or finish your college degree. The program will be tailored in a way that is conducive to the adult student.

The learning format of this program will be "adult friendly," meaning a couple of things. First, classes will be taught in a cooperative learning environment. Students will gain a better understanding of the course materials by participating in discussions and by learning from one another's work and life experiences. As is our standard, all this will take place under the instruction of qualified teaching faculty who are dedicated to excellence in adult education. Second, each class

offered will meet at a time fitting for the working, busy adult.

We will be offering you the option of two degrees: (1) Business and Leadership and (2) Biblical Studies. Both degree programs will provide courses in Bible that will not only serve to increase your Bible knowledge, but will also serve to strengthen the spiritual foundation of degree-seeking students. They are designed to open avenues of challenge and influence.

If you are interested in making a difference in your workplace and in society, we encourage you to submit an application.

We have designed this program with you in mind, and we are confident that completing your degree will be a life-changing, life-rewarding experience. To take the next step toward reaching your educational goal, please email or call me for more information.



Tina M. Tolbert
Program Director
ttolbert@fwbbc.edu
(615) 844-5265

Free Will Baptist Ministry Focus



Free Will Baptist
Bible College

- Adult-friendly classes feature cooperative learning format
- Each class will meet at a time fitting for the busy, working adult

Two degrees will be offered:

- Business and Leadership
- Biblical Studies

We're
looking
high
&
low
&
in
between
for
Contact
subscribers

Psst!

Here's a clue

After this month, subscription prices
will increase from \$15/yr. to \$18/yr.

This offer ends July 31, 2003

Fill out and mail the form below

or

phone toll-free 1-877-767-7659

or

e-mail angie@nafwb.org

Do you subscribe? Need to renew?

Name _____

Address _____

City/State/Zip _____

one-year subscription (\$15) two-year subscription (\$30) three-year subscription (\$45)

Payment enclosed (\$15 per year): _____

Mail with payment to: Contact • P.O. Box 5002 • Antioch, TN 3711-5002



Randy Sawyer

Surviving the Pain of Change (Part II)

Pastor Joe is excited about

his new assignment. This is it, the opportunity he's been praying for since he left Bible college. The church building is well situated on a prominent thoroughfare. The structure itself is adequate to attract new families. The surrounding neighborhood is bursting with new construction, and the growth potential for the church has never been better. Best of all, the congregation is debt-free, with money on reserve to finance the new pastor's vision. In fact, he was hired to position the church for ministry in the 21st century. Everybody said so.

For the first several months Joe and his new church family enjoy a wonderful working relationship. The "pastoral honeymoon" has added an air of excitement that results in the addition of several new families. Everything progresses smoothly, and everyone seems thrilled with the direction the ministry is taking—new people, new programs, new life.

Well, almost everyone. Gradually, an undercurrent develops among a few core families. Things are changing too quickly and without their permission. The services don't have the feel of a family reunion anymore, too many unidentified individuals sitting in their pew spaces. And the standard way of doing things is no longer the way things are done.

The worship event is barely recognizable. Worship choruses replaced traditional hymns. A multimedia presentation replaced the church hymnal. Expository Bible teaching replaced the red hot preaching they all knew as children. "Liberal, that's what it is," becomes the mantra of the disenfranchised core group. Before long, their discomfort with change swells into outward, vocal opposition.

Accusations and threats result, leaving the unsuspecting minister dazed and disillusioned. He quietly, painfully resigns and moves on to the next "great ministry opportunity," while the former church gets back to business as usual.

Neither the minister nor the congregation is able to survive the *pain of change*. The pastor focuses on tomorrow,

failing to understand today's connection with the past, while the church longs for yesterday, refusing to consider how effective changes in today's ministry set the stage for future opportunities.

Stagnation

The church mentioned above (along with 85% of America's Protestant churches) has plateaued at best and is possibly stagnant. "Stagnation" is not a nice sounding word. It denotes that which is apathetic, infertile, immobile and unhealthy. No one wants to be considered "stagnant," especially a local church. However, statistics show that a significant number are.

The symptoms of ministry stagnation are easily identifiable. They include:

- **Nostalgia**—living on past successes while relying on yesterday's methods.
- **Program Focus**—constantly searching for the program that will revive the work.
- **Personality Dependence**—allowing a dominant few to control the direction and atmosphere of the ministry.
- **Resource Deprivation**—complaining about the lack of financial or human resources.
- **Statistical Decline**—measurable decline in every area of the work.
- **Maintenance Mentality**—patching things together.
- **Excuse Orientation**—explaining every defeat with a well articulated excuse.

Stages

Every living organism tends towards atrophy. The local church, therefore, is not immune to this inevitable deterioration. Most agree that local churches go through life cycles of 15–20 years, with decline beginning somewhere around the 18th year. The stages are as follows:

- Stage # 1 Mission**
The Church-Planting Years
- Stage # 2 Movement**
The Church-Growth Years
- Stage # 3 Maintenance**
The Church-Ministry Years
- Stage # 4 Decline**
The Church-Stagnation Years

In order to avoid stagnation, a church must be renewed in each successive generation (every 20 years) or every time there are significant changes in the community of ministry (demographic shifts). The renewal calls not only for spiritual revival, but also for methodology revision. Almost everyone is prejudiced against change to some degree. So how can a pastor and congregation *survive the pain of change*?

Survival

Surviving the pain of change requires that the changes be made *purposefully*. The objective should not be change for change sake, nor change for numerical increase. Sadly, some church leaders in today's multi-cultural society have sold out the Word of God for statistical growth.

Equally tragic is the number of churches that have given away their distinctives in appealing for larger numbers. The purpose for introducing changes must not be growth, but vitality and health. A healthy church is a vital church, and a vital church will be a growing church.

A stagnant church is diseased, and in need of a biblical fitness plan. This includes *spiritual nourishment* (the Word of God), *spiritual exercise* (the ministry for God), and *spiritual rest* (the worship of God).

Surviving the pain of change requires that changes be made *appropriately*. Changes must always be in keeping with the church's *core values*. The core values of any organization are those beliefs that give it a reason for existence in the first place. In the case of the local church, core values are the theological precepts and traditional practices that have served as foundational.

To yield ground on any of the fundamentals of our faith is to downgrade the church to social club status. To give up certain meaningful traditions is to sever a church from its heritage. In finality, we might end up with a crowd, but not necessarily a church.

Surviving the pain of change requires that the changes be made *accordingly*.

THE TOGETHER WAY

April 2003

Timing is everything, especially when it comes to altering long-held traditions. Too many changes too quickly made always end in mutiny. The wise leader will focus on only one or two significant changes at a time, allowing followers to adjust to the newness while retaining a sense of belonging. In a word, to avoid mutiny, provide continuity.

Surviving the pain of change requires that changes be made *corporately*. Obviously, not everyone will get on board when changes are suggested. Everyone likes what he or she likes. No one really wants a blended anything, because no one likes a little of what they like.

Cloning has actually been around for a long time in the church. However, if a man is where God wants him to be and if a man is what God wants him to be, then God won't leave him without fellow laborers for the work. God doesn't set anyone up for failure. By confiding in key leaders, a pastor can save himself and his family headache and heartache, and keep the ministry on track.

Surviving the pain of change requires that changes be made *prayerfully*. "Praying in the will of God" will keep us from getting ahead of the congregation, or behind the Lord.

A final word: Good people need time to adjust; good people sometimes say things they later regret. Therefore, changes must also be made *compassionately*. Try to see things from the perspective of those who have been there a lot longer than you.

After several years as a member of my flock, and after having survived the numerous changes inflicted upon the congregation thus far, a lady said to me, "Brother Randy, when you first came here I didn't like you. I didn't want any of the changes you proposed. But now I know you were right and I love you for it." I'm pretty sure I haven't always been right, but given time almost anyone can *survive the pain of change*. ■

Receipts:

State	Designated	CO-OP	Total	Year To Date Designated	Year To Date CO-OP	Year To Date Total
Alabama	\$ 700.48	\$ 334.27	\$ 1,034.75	\$ 2,076.40	\$ 844.55	\$ 2,920.95
Arizona	15.00	19.50	34.50	15.00	123.00	138.00
Arkansas	14,412.04	24,179.21	38,591.25	42,984.38	76,275.65	119,260.03
California	100.00	1,331.58	1,431.58	100.00	4,857.79	4,957.79
Colorado	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00
Delaware	114.40	.00	114.40	114.40	.00	114.40
Florida	.00	.00	.00	125.96	4,536.00	4,661.96
Georgia	33,043.54	2,246.25	35,289.79	143,317.55	7,312.25	150,629.80
Hawaii	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00
Idaho	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00
Illinois	13,321.09	2,309.79	15,630.88	52,163.16	8,133.27	60,296.43
Indiana	2,212.11	.00	2,212.11	7,688.60	831.37	8,519.97
Iowa	.00	.00	.00	.00	65.00	65.00
Kansas	.00	64.91	64.91	.00	291.75	291.75
Kentucky	25.00	852.22	877.22	900.00	5,136.61	6,036.61
Louisiana	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00
Maryland	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00
Michigan	18,968.66	1,466.06	20,434.72	89,850.55	9,112.74	98,963.29
Mississippi	14,384.45	669.16	15,053.61	44,141.30	2,468.29	46,609.59
Missouri	36,539.27	18,858.53	55,397.80	183,188.41	69,802.81	252,991.22
Montana	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00
Nebraska	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00
New Jersey	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00
New Mexico	803.37	73.69	877.06	1,717.69	120.85	1,838.54
North Carolina	3,071.60	2,185.21	5,256.81	7,656.71	10,516.36	18,173.07
Ohio	13,644.04	2,193.87	15,837.91	70,285.54	13,805.90	84,091.44
Oklahoma	55,582.03	11,128.80	66,710.83	270,690.60	44,403.27	315,093.87
South Carolina	63,759.10	71.68	63,830.78	167,059.86	171.99	167,231.85
South Dakota	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00
Tennessee	14,797.66	1,775.06	16,572.72	43,458.57	5,243.36	48,701.93
Texas	23,491.72	619.50	24,111.22	48,981.18	1,353.57	50,334.75
Virginia	.00	61.65	61.65	669.58	164.48	834.06
Virgin Islands	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00
West Virginia	600.00	75.91	675.91	5,858.68	564.70	6,423.38
Wisconsin	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00
Canada	713.32	15.60	728.92	2,545.99	51.65	2,597.64
Northwest Association	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00
Northeast Association	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00
Other	.00	(.07)	(.07)	.00	(.04)	(.04)
Totals	\$310,298.88	\$70,532.38	\$380,831.26	\$1,185,590.11	\$266,187.17	\$1,451,777.28

Disbursements:

Executive Office	\$ 1,896.60	\$31,739.61	\$ 33,636.21	\$ 6,942.21	\$119,784.28	\$ 126,726.49
Foreign Missions	185,585.33	8,922.36	194,507.69	682,354.65	33,672.67	716,027.32
FWBBC	29,868.17	8,922.36	38,790.53	101,197.07	33,672.67	134,869.74
Home Missions	84,268.78	6,982.72	91,251.50	353,772.87	26,352.53	380,125.40
Retirement & Insurance	477.48	5,431.01	5,908.49	1,638.34	20,496.44	22,134.78
Master's Men	622.70	5,431.01	6,053.71	3,028.89	20,496.44	23,525.33
Com. for Theo. Integrity	68.38	193.94	262.32	229.48	731.98	961.46
FWB Foundation	321.14	2,327.55	2,648.69	983.66	8,784.22	9,767.88
Historical Commission	68.38	193.94	262.32	229.48	731.98	961.46
Music Commission	36.94	193.94	230.88	121.23	731.98	853.21
Media Commission	111.94	193.94	305.88	391.23	731.98	1,123.21
Hillsdale FWB College	2,417.78	.00	2,417.78	8,978.37	.00	8,978.37
Other	4,555.26	.00	4,555.26	25,722.63	.00	25,722.63
Totals	\$310,298.88	\$70,532.38	\$380,831.26	\$1,185,590.11	\$266,187.17	\$1,451,777.28



“REACH THAT GUY” will again prepare to reach out in the host city to show Christ’s love in action during the National Youth Conference this summer in Tampa, Florida.

Service Projects

Almost 600 students and sponsors donated their time and muscles to eight organizations serving Memphis, Tennessee, in 2002. This year we have an abundance of service opportunities to reach out and help people in need. Whether you work with adults at the MacDonald Training Center or provide much-needed TLC to children through the Child Abuse Council, each person will find a challenging and rewarding experience. Numerous opportunities are available to work with people of all ages, and we invite each person to register for a project between now and the convention.

We are happy to announce that “Reach That Guy” and Women Nationally Active for Christ have joined forces this summer. We invite WNAC attendees to join the students in one of the service opportunities available during convention week. All service projects occur Monday, July 21, through Wednesday, July 23, and will be scheduled in the morning and afternoon each day. Transportation will be provided.

Blood Drive

In addition to service projects which “Reach That Guy” has scheduled, we will also sponsor our annual blood drive

Wednesday, July 23, in the Tampa Convention Center. Check the convention program for exact time and location.

We have established a goal to collect 200 units of blood. Our 2002 collection of 160+ units of blood established the Free Will Baptist Convention as the highest group collection ever recorded in the city of Memphis for a one-day blood drive. Help us break the record this summer in Tampa!

Collection Drive

Last year in Memphis, we collected over 1,000 pieces of clothing for the homeless. This year we will sponsor another collection drive, but this year’s effort is entirely different.

In order to show our love and support for the work our military is providing, “Reach That Guy” will collect pre-paid phone cards that will be sent to U.S. soldiers deployed and away from home.

A collection point staffed by RTG personnel will also compile a list of soldiers from Free Will Baptist churches across the nation.

Tampa, Florida, may never be the same after the Free Will Baptist National Convention this summer. We invite you to join forces with RTG in one of these three attempts to impact the city of Tampa. ■



Garnett Reid

First Things First (Ephesians 4:1–16)

“Gentlemen, this is a football.”

So explained Coach Vince Lombardi, sarcastically, according to legend, as he addressed his error-prone Green Bay Packers early in his first year with the Pack. He had inherited one of the worst teams in the league. Lombardi quickly went about the work of re-establishing priorities for his players, and the rest is Hall of Fame history.

In Ephesians 4:1–16, Paul sets three priorities for the church. This important section serves as the pivot on which the entire letter swings. The apostle now transitions from belief to behavior, from doctrine to practice.

Even as we note this shift, we must remember that these two concerns always go hand-in-hand. How we live flows from what we believe, and faith necessarily produces works. To stress one over the other leads to a wobbly Christian walk.

Priority #1: Unity (vv. 1–6)

Paul uses his status as the Lord’s “prisoner” to urge these believers toward a life (“walk”) of unity among one another. By “walking worthy” of their calling they will not betray their position in the heavenlies with Christ, as noted in the first three chapters.

Maintaining this oneness, though, depends on the commitment of both the individual Christian and the church body as a whole. Unity first issues from the character of each believer. In verses 2 and 3, Paul commends four attitudes essential to concord in the church.

“Lowliness,” or humility, prompts me to recognize that I am dependent on others. It is the servant’s disposition. Humility in practice is “meekness,” submitting to God and subordinating myself to others. “Longsuffering” people patient-

ly endure whatever comes their way. This quality leads them to put up with (“forbear”) difficult people out of a sincere heart of love.

Let’s face it, though; it’s tough to put these qualities into practice. The word translated “endeavoring” (v. 3) suggests effort and hard work. Such a commitment toward unity is essential, however, because of the corporate nature of the church. Ours is one body, one Spirit, one hope, one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all (vv. 4–6). We are already *one positionally in Christ*. The question is whether we will live as *one practically through Christ*.

Priority #2: Ministry (vv. 7–12)

Verse 12 summarizes the church’s task: God has gifted His people “to equip the saints for the work of ministry to build up Christ’s body.” Ministry is service. Serving must be what we’re about as we follow our Lord; after all, He came to serve (Mark 10:45).

As was the case with Paul’s instructions about unity, so, too, his challenge to ministry is not just a concern of the corporate church. Each individual plays a role in ministry. Verses 7–11 stress that “every one of us” receives “grace” in the form of “gifts” from the victorious Christ. Robert Picirilli calls these gifts endowments given by the Spirit for serving the Lord through His church.

According to verse 11, Christ’s gifts include the apostolic office (probably only in the first generation of the New Covenant); the prophetic work of speaking for God; spreading the gospel and planting churches (“evangelists”); and nurturing Christ’s flock through caring instruction (“pastor-teachers”). Paul mentions other gifts in Romans 12 and I Corinthians 12.

Priority #3: Maturity (vv. 13–16)

The great goal for all of us, for the church collectively and believers individually, is that we attain the “fullness of Christ” (v. 13). This end seems so far from our present experience that we often lose sight of it. We are too much like the “children” Paul describes in verse 14 – unstable, blown from this doctrine to that, easy prey for deceivers.

In a day when many churches water down preaching and teaching, forsaking education in the Word for the entertainment of the world, let us commit ourselves and our churches to “speaking the truth in love.” Only such a bold stand for the truth will produce Christians who will “grow up into him in all things” (v. 15).

Paul concludes his call to maturity with an analogy comparing the church to the human body (v. 16). When the organism functions properly, every part contributes to the growth process. Healthy cells, tissues, organs and systems—all play their roles as the body develops.

The focus of attention, however, is not the body itself. As “head” of the body (v. 15), Christ exercises supreme control over its functions and receives ultimate glory from its ministry.

A. W. Tozer reminds us, “The highest expression of the will of God in this age is the church which He purchased with His own blood. . . . According to the scriptures, (T)he church is the habitation of God through the Spirit, and as such is the most important organism beneath the sun.” It merits our top priority. ■



Thomas Marberry

The Story of Christian Theology

By Roger E. Olson (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1999, 652 pp., hardback, \$34.95).

Dr. Roger Olson is a leading expert in the field of historical theology. He serves as professor of theology at Bethel College in St. Paul, Minnesota. He is the author of several other books and currently edits the *Christian Scholars Review*.

Historical theology is the study of how the major beliefs of the Christian church have developed during the centuries. The discipline is normally divided into early church theology, medieval theology, Reformation theology and modern theology. The book is a general survey designed to introduce students to this important but often-neglected branch of theology.

This is a large volume filled with facts and thoughtful analysis of those facts. It is selective (as all introductory volumes must be). Historical theology is such a massive field that no single volume can cover all areas thoroughly. Olson has chosen to emphasize the early church period.

During the first five or six centuries of the Christian era, basic beliefs about Christ, salvation and other subjects were debated and defined. He correctly argues that "Christian theology is not the story of ivory-tower professional thinkers dreaming up obscure and speculative doctrines to confuse simple Christian believers." Most (if not all) basic Christian doctrines were developed to protect the Christian churches from falling into the trap of false teachings.

Olson recognizes that theology is people who present the truth and defend it in various ways. Throughout the book he emphasizes how different individuals have helped define and clarify the basic teachings of the Christian faith. He also recognizes the importance of understanding these

people from the standpoint of the historical and theological context in which they worked.

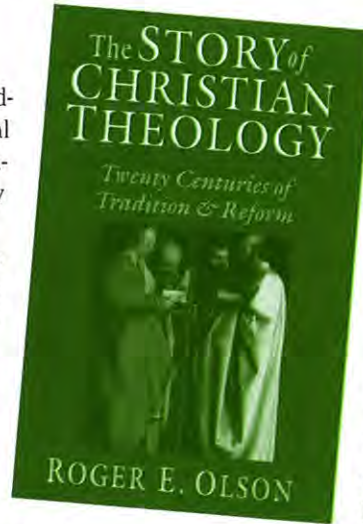
Martin Luther was not a 20th-century American Baptist; he was a 16th-century German Lutheran. His contributions must be understood against the background in which he lived and worked.

This book does what a historical theology textbook must do. It explains how we have come to believe what we believe today. It discusses the contributions of past thinkers like Augustine and Jerome. It analyzes great controversies such as the Arian controversies and explains why these conflicts were so important.

If followers of Arius had won at the Council of Nicaea in 325 and at the Council of Constantinople in 381, the entire course of Christian doctrine would be quite different. The teachings of the Jehovah's Witnesses would today be accepted as true Christian doctrine.

This work gives fair and balanced treatment to theologians of different traditions who made significant contributions. Thomas Aquinas, the great Catholic theologian of the medieval period, is often accused of teaching salvation by works. Olson argues that such an interpretation is not correct. He writes that Aquinas "clearly denied that any human effort or performance can cause grace to come into one's life or keep it there."

Martin Luther is often presented in theological textbooks as someone larger than life, almost another Apostle



Paul. Olson presents a balanced picture of both the strengths of this man and his many contributions to Protestant theology.

Olson recognizes, as many others do not, the important contributions of Ulrich Zwingli who began the reformation in Zurich, Switzerland. He writes, "The true father of Reformed Protestant theology is Ulrich Zwingli.

Unfortunately for him, he has been overshadowed in history by his younger French-Swiss counterpart John Calvin."

James Arminius is another theologian who receives a fair and balanced treatment. According to Olson, "Without doubt or debate, Arminius is one of the most unfairly neglected and grossly misunderstood theologians in the story of Christian theology." Both his followers and his detractors often depend more on hearsay than they do on a careful analysis of what Arminius himself wrote.

The Story of Christian Theology makes a significant contribution to the already-crowded field of books on historical theology. It is a useful and readable survey that focuses on the contributions of people rather than on a dry recitation of facts. While it is designed for use as a college or seminary textbook, it will be helpful in other areas as well. It is an excellent resource for pastors, Sunday School teachers, and those who want to know more about how the most important beliefs of the Christian faith developed. ■



Jack Williams

The Islamic Crisis

When American soldiers go

into combat, they shouldn't have to keep one eye on their comrades in arms and the other eye on the enemy. If that means keeping Muslim extremists out of the armed forces, then let's get it done. God bless the soldiers who step into harm's way for the rest of us, and God help the traitors who betray their loyalty oath to the United States of America and establish a foreign policy all their own.

Our political leaders need enough starch in their pants to admit it was not Baptists or Methodists who crashed planes into the World Trade Center and the Pentagon on 9-1-1 in a suicide pact claiming they were doing the work of God. It was Muslim extremists.

Ask the 101st Airborne who tossed that grenade into a command tent in Kuwait and shot American soldiers in cold blood. They'll tell you without blinking that the killer was a Muslim who accused his sleeping comrades of planning to rape Muslim women. The accusation was untrue, but taps still sounded over the American dead.

And just once, would someone identify the guys calling suicide bombers heroes and screaming for the death of Americans in a jihad. Surprise, it's the so-called Muslim holy men.

If the Southern Baptist Convention issued a decree for death to all non-Christians, they'd be vilified in the press (and rightly so) and hauled into court for inciting hate crimes. Last time I looked, no one was telling Muslim clerics to tone down their rhetoric. Why is there no media outrage at the Islamic community's silence on murder in the name of religion?

You're probably thinking, *Jack must be anti-Islamic.* No, what I am is pro-Christian and pro-American. That makes sense to most Americans who understand that you can be both pro-Christian

and pro-American without being anti-Islamic. Unfortunately, it doesn't make sense to Islamics calling for America's destruction and the eradication of Christianity.

When a man points a gun at your head and tells you to convert or die, it's not evangelism—it's terrorism. And that's precisely what's happening all over the world wherever Islam holds sway.

Yes, I know not every Muslim is a suicide bomber and there are more moderate Muslims than those who want to kill everything American and Christian. The problem is those nice live-and-let-live Muslims disappeared into the local mosque and left the streets to the death-to-America fringe.

Here's the deal with Islam. When reason and logic don't produce converts, Islam always resorts to the sword. That's where we are now, and this is not the first time the world has had to punch Islam in the nose.

"This isn't about religion," honks the media. I disagree. The *only* thing this is about in the final analysis is religion. Islam at its worst (what we're seeing today) is a hard religion that encourages men and women to wrap themselves in explosives and detonate in a crowd of non-Muslims.

Islam makes conversion to Christianity a crime punishable by death, and visits death on anyone who disrespects Mohammed's name. Oh, yes, this is about religion . . . a twisted, ruthless, mean-spirited religion.

What can Christians do about Islam? There are numerous options. Here are three—kill them, convert them, coexist with them.

Kill them is the only response in the heat of battle, the only response to suicide bombers who think they earn paradise for mass murder, the only response to those who gun down unarmed peo-

ple simply because they disagree with Islamic teachings. Militant Islam hates you because you're an infidel (read *not a Muslim*) and because you're an American.

Convert them. The only place where "convert them" is legal is in a non-Islamic country such as the USA. However, even here, the liberal media in a political correctness frenzy brands attempts to convert Muslims as a hate crime. And Muslim clerics jump on the convenient bandwagon. That's dumb, and we all know it.

Is it a hate crime when a Democrat engages a Republican in debate with the intent of changing his mind? No, here in America it's called freedom of speech. Islam so fears Christian truth that it hides behind a "hate crime" screen.

Coexist with them. Works for me. But remember, an Islamic society refuses to coexist. When Islam rules politically, it reverts to "convert or die." Islam only agrees to coexist in a society where it's in the minority, and then plays the race card when the gospel light shines in the mosque.

Islam has a crisis, a crisis called Jesus Christ. Place the gospel of Christ alongside the *Koran* and watch Islam turn into a shabby, man-made, vengeful religious system. There was a time centuries ago when Islam exported science and civilization. The only exports from Islam today are death, misery, overpriced oil and male arrogance.

Like all non-Christian religions, Islam was invented by a man who is now dead and has no power except that of its angry followers. There is a solution to the Islamic crisis. That solution is a resurrected Christ who said, "I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me," (John 14:6).

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

Periodical
Postage
Paid

20 Years
of Commission
Members

Raymond Riggs
1983

Guy Owens
1983-1988

George Lee
1983-1989

Larry Hampton
1983-1990

Sandy Goodfellow
1983-1996

Jim Vallance
1984-1999

Bill Gardner
1987-2001

Terry Boyd
1988-1993

Bob Shockey
1990-1995

Steve Faison
1993-2003

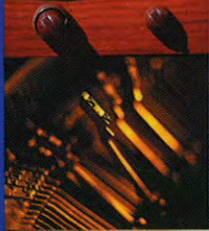
Doug Kite
1995-

Ron Hunter
1996-2002

Mike Jones
1999-

Kevin Norris
2001-

Monte McKenzie
2002-



20 years
communicating
Christ through
technology

Media Commission

@

your service

615-731-6812

 **MEDIA
Commission**
Where outreach becomes professional communication
Part of the National Association of Free Will Baptists