

November 2003

Contact

**A Home Missionary
Kid and Proud of It!**

**Thanksgiving
Revisited**

Why do Americans celebrate a day called Thanksgiving?

**A Free Will Baptist minister
preaches his 10,000th sermon**

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Editor-in-chief
Keith Burden

Editor
Jack Williams

Circulation
Angie Williams

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Randall House Publications

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Keith Burden

The Short Fuse

It was the summer before I entered fourth grade—a typical hot July 5th in Oklahoma—the day after we celebrated Independence Day with a cookout and fireworks. I sat on the front steps bored, looking for something to do.

That's when I spotted it...an unexploded Black Cat firecracker on the ground near the sidewalk. It had a short fuse—very short. I knew it would be risky, but I was determined to set it off.

I walked into the kitchen and nonchalantly took a match from the matchbox.

Mother confronted me, "What are you going to do with that match?" I proudly displayed the firecracker and announced my intention. Mom was unimpressed.

Switching to Plan B

She confiscated the match and sent me outside. I sat dejectedly on the front steps trying to come up with "Plan B." Suddenly, an ingenious idea hit me. I couldn't believe I hadn't thought of it sooner.

I carefully opened the driver's side door of our family car parked in the driveway, slipped into the front seat and quietly pulled the door shut so as not to arouse Mom's attention. I rolled the window down about two inches and pushed the cigarette lighter deep into the socket.

In a matter of seconds the lighter popped out and with a trembling hand I removed it from the dashboard. My plan was simple... touch the fuse to the red hot lighter and then toss the small explosive through the two-inch opening. I took a deep breath and set out to execute my plan.

Major Malfunction

It was at that point that my plan went terribly wrong. Sparks spewed from the end of the miniature bomb. With a quick

motion I attempted to hurl the firecracker through the window. Too slow. The Black Cat exploded inside the car. Excruciating pain shot through my left hand, and powder burns branded my thumb and index finger.

The car acted like a percussion chamber—I experienced a loud ringing in my ears. I opened the door and bolted in panic. My first impulse was to run inside the house and appeal for assistance from Mother, but the fear of being disciplined for my carelessness and disobedience restrained me.

I found an outside hydrant and tried to relieve the burning with cold water, but to no avail. The deafening roar in my ears worsened by the minute. As I sat on the steps holding my hand, tears streamed down my face. I learned a painful lesson; a short fuse is a dangerous thing.

Spiritual Parallel

That was the last time I tried that stunt. But in the more than 40 years since, I have witnessed some equally irresponsible spiritual debacles. On numerous occasions I have stood by helplessly and watched as individuals with short fuses exploded and caused more damage than my infamous little firecracker.

Solomon recognized the dangers of dealing with people who have short fuses. In Proverbs 14:17 he wrote, "He that is soon angry dealeth foolishly." Those who tend to fly off the handle inevitably hurt feelings and damage or destroy relationships. The testimony of many Christians has been irreparably harmed because they failed to control their anger and tongue.

Temperance (or having a long fuse) is one of the characteristics of a mature Christian. The wise man applauds this quality in Proverbs 16:32, "He that is slow

to anger is better than the mighty; and he that ruleth his spirit than he that taketh a city."

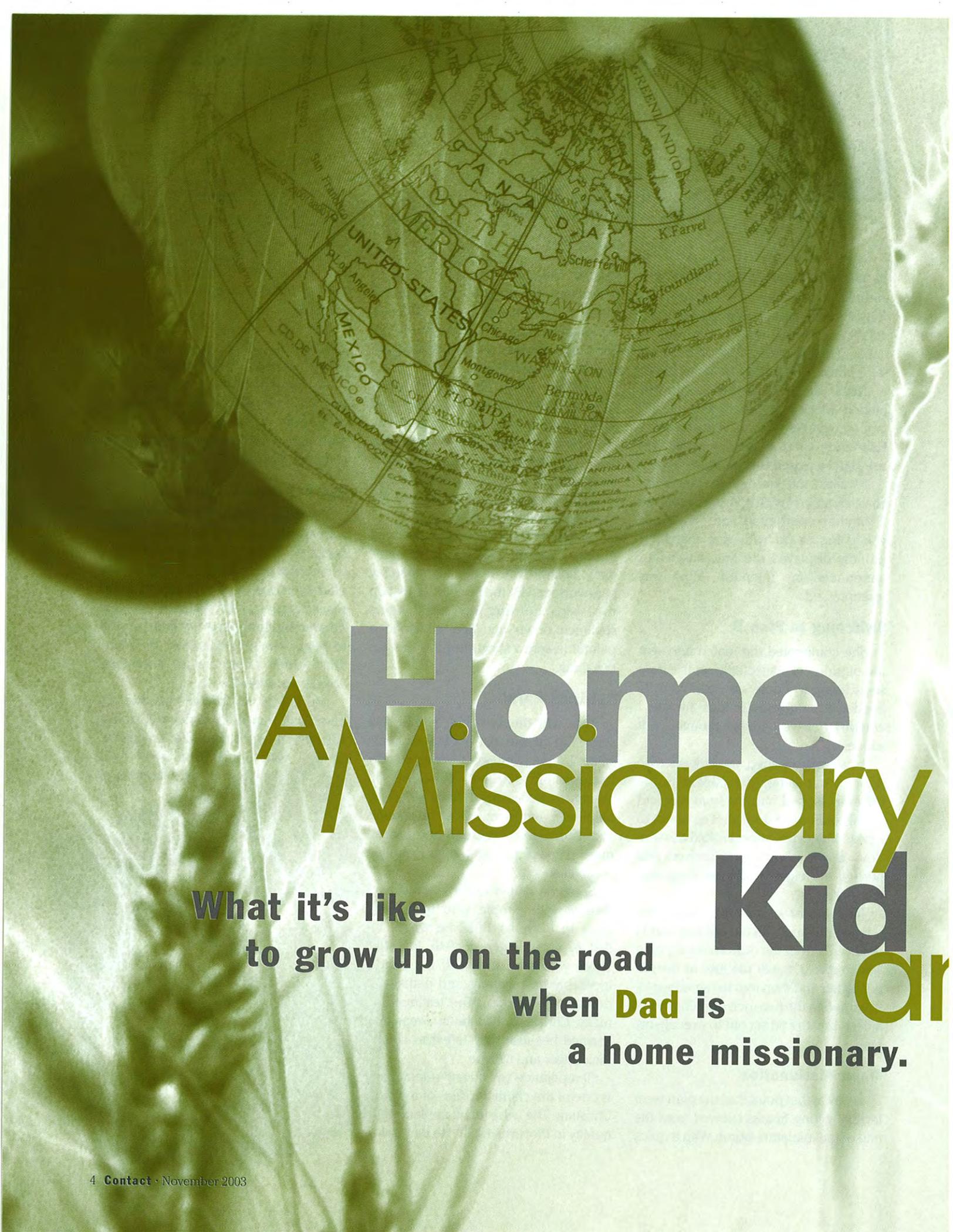
The Bible upholds this standard for all believers, but it is especially applicable to ministers of the gospel. In Titus 1:7–9 Paul outlines the qualifications of a bishop. Interestingly, among the many credentials he lists is the phrase, "not soon angry." Clearly, the ministry is no place for short-fused individuals.

Use Extreme Caution

Fireworks almost always come with warnings. Invariably the labeling on the package will list the hazards of explosive devices. Similarly, scripture verses offer cautions in the matter of short fuses. James 1:19, "Wherefore, my beloved brethren, let every man be swift to hear, slow to speak, slow to wrath." That advice could defuse potentially volatile situations.

My fingers no longer hurt and my ears don't ring. But I've never forgotten the painful lesson from that firecracker. **Control your anger...use good judgment. Don't get burned by a short fuse. ■**





A Home Missionary Kid or

What it's like
to grow up on the road
when Dad is
a home missionary.



Janice with her mother and father at FWBCC.

Janice Donoho (the only girl) with five male relatives.

that missions, *Home Missions*, would be part of my life. It is all I have ever known. I was and still am a home missionary's kid.

The First Call

I have always been a preacher's kid. When I was a baby, my dad (Cliff Donoho) answered the call to preach. We moved every couple of years to a different church before settling at Cisne, a small community in southern Illinois, where dad pastored Blue Point FWB Church. It was there he decided to start a church in Salem, Illinois. I was seven years old and ready to begin the second grade.

Starting a church fascinated me. I loved the beginning stages. When a church starts, it is rare for a missionary to have a church building, so improvising is in order. We started Calvary FWB Church in a small metal building. It was an interesting place to meet.

We had to build classrooms in the already-tiny structure. Neighbors let us conduct children's church in their living room. Later, a Lutheran congregation rented us their old church because they were building a new facility across town. We were finally in a church building.

Have you ever wondered how you got to this point in your life? How did I end up here? I do, although I am not surprised that I now work in the Home Missions Department. I knew

Attendance rose. Things were looking good for us. Of course, that is what I think now. Back then I was young and didn't understand the *missionary* aspect of home missions. I figured I was a regular pastor's kid.

My brother and I attended one of the local schools. Public schools are one of the best places to look to bring people to church. My brother and I brought our friends to church with us, and eventually their families attended our church also.

Some preachers' kids were outcasts at school because of what their fathers did, but not me. Everybody knew I wasn't allowed to do certain things and that was fine with them. I was included in events they knew I could do. Our time in Salem was a normal experience for me.

After meeting a few years in the Lutheran building, we bought land on the edge of town that had been used for a drive-in theater and built a new church. Attendance increased immediately. Life was good during our eight years in Salem.

At that point, my faith was shaken. If Dad didn't know God's will, what were we going to do?

Another Call

I was 13 and about to begin my freshman year in high school when Dad decided to leave Salem and start a church in Davenport, Iowa. This was hard for my brother and me, because we were active in school and had many friends. I fought my parents on this one. I mean, who wants to move to *Iowa*? Nobody but farmers live there. At least that's what I thought.

For a year we left Friday after school, traveled to another state for itinerate services and returned late Sunday night. My brother and I did homework in the car. That was the longest year. Little did I know it would also be our toughest year.

Questioning the Call

The whole process of moving to Iowa was difficult. We could not find a house we liked even though we looked for what seemed like ages. One day I came home from school and found Mother sitting on the couch with a heart monitor strapped to her. I knew she hadn't been feeling well but I didn't know it was that bad. Dad was gone to a three-week missions conference in Alabama.

A few nights later when Mom got worse, my brother, Chad, called Dad and told him to come home. We took her to all the doctors we could, but they could neither help her nor diagnose her. My grandparents and aunt took her up near Chicago to see their doctors.

That was a hard experience. Mom was gone from the house and Dad was gone on itinerate services. School finally ended and we still hadn't found a house. We moved in with my grandparents part of the time and with my aunt and uncle the rest of the time. It was stressful on all of us. Mom was getting worse and Dad was still gone.

One night my brother sat on the couch with Dad asking if this really was God's will for us. Dad honestly didn't know. At that point, my faith was shaken. If Dad didn't know God's will, what were we going to do? I was scared for my mom and for the unknown. Would we ever be a normal family again?

A few nights later I was reading my Bible and came across Isaiah 41:10. "*Fear thou not, for I am with thee...*" I stopped reading. *Fear not. I am with thee.* I sat on the bed and thought about those words. Then I kept reading, "*Be not dismayed, for I am thy God: I will strengthen thee; yea, I will uphold thee; yea, I will help thee; yea, I will uphold thee with the right hand of my righteousness.*" After I read that verse and meditated on it, peace came over me. I knew everything would eventually be all right.

Even though we almost lost her, Mom did get better. We found a house and moved to Iowa. We knew Iowa was God's will. After being there a year, we built a building and it seemed that people poured into it.

While it's true I fought my parents on moving and we went through a huge battle, I was glad we moved and started the church. I helped by being the children's church teacher and by teaching a Sunday School class. It was amazing to see all the lives affected because we moved to Iowa. I was in a great place in my life.

FWBBC

Going to Free Will Baptist Bible College was never a question for me. I knew that was the place I was supposed to be. I had heard about the Bible College all my life and had seen the different college groups that visited our church.

During my freshman and sophomore years, I sang in the College Choir. Through spring break we traveled to different churches. I knew many people because of the itinerate services. I stayed in the same homes I had stayed in before. Everyone seemed to know my parents and kept in touch with how our church was doing.

I wanted to be in full-time Christian service but wasn't sure where, so I decided to major in business. I didn't know if missions was for me. Although I grew up in a home missionary's home, I thought of missions as going overseas. I was not called to do that.

A Third Call

My last year at college was full of decisions and surprises. I didn't know what I would do after graduation. I didn't want to go back to Iowa but I didn't need to stay in Nashville either. One day Mom called and said she and Dad decided to leave Iowa and move to Nashville, Tennessee, to start another church.

Did I hear right? Start another church and in Nashville? Didn't Nashville have enough Free Will Baptist churches? Weren't my parents too old to start another church? I had serious reservations, especially about what other people thought.

Some of those people apparently felt led to tell me we didn't need another church in Nashville. My father had been told that it was impossible to start a church in Nashville. Dad didn't care; he knew the Lord's will for his life. My parents moved to Nashville on December 15, 1999.

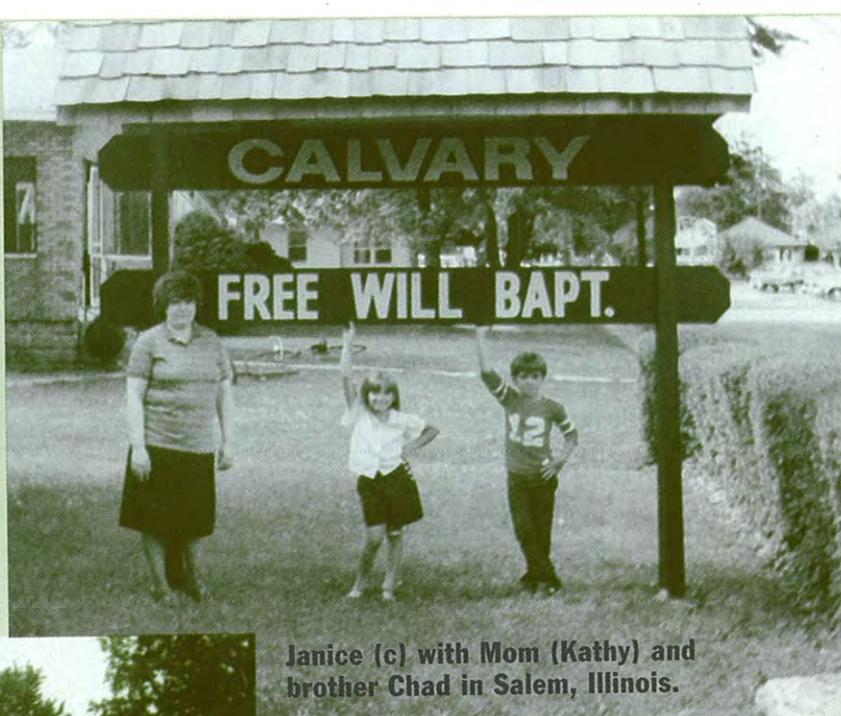
I was excited about this one, excited that I would be with my parents again after five years, excited because so many people were against it. Our church is now three years old. We are growing and seeing souls saved. This has been the hardest of all our churches, but I know God is in it and will do everything in His time and in His way.

Home Missions Department

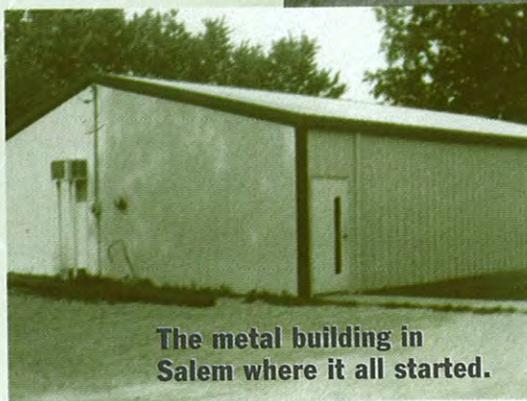
After graduating from college, I wanted to stay in Nashville and help my parents with the church but I didn't have a job. When we started the church, a few of the Home Missions Department staff began attending. One of them told me about a position opening up at the office.

I applied and have now been secretary for the Director of Missionary Assistance three years. I love my job. I love working with missionaries. I love hearing about their joys and disappointments, because I know exactly how they feel. I remember when my family went through the same thing.

The best part of my job is the children. I love the missionaries' children, and I know what they are going through. I moved at the ages of seven and 14, so I know how it feels to move from family and friends to a place



Janice (c) with Mom (Kathy) and brother Chad in Salem, Illinois.



The metal building in Salem where it all started.

I didn't know anyone. It is the scariest feeling in the world.

But when I look back at the faces in our churches... I see lives that will now enter the kingdom of God because we moved to that city and showed them God's love. Yes, it's worth all those feelings.

I now write and publish a six-page monthly paper for missionary children titled *More than Kids*. It's a never-ending struggle with deadlines, but I enjoy placing something in the hands of the kids written especially for them and mailed to them personally. More than 100 copies of the paper are shipped each month.

Do I have any regrets? A few. I wish I hadn't given my parents such a hard time about moving to Iowa! I wish I had been a better witness to my friends like the missionary children out there now are doing. Those children are just as much missionaries as their parents.

I am proud of my parents for starting three successful churches. They taught me that anything is possible if we trust God and live for Him every day. I don't know what the future holds for me, but I know it will be wonderful because of the family and the life God has given me. Yes, I am a home missionary's kid, and, yes, I am proud of it! ■



About the Writer: Janice Donoho is the daughter of home missionaries Cliff and Kathy Donoho. She is a member of Cornerstone Free Will Baptist Church in Nashville, Tennessee. Janice works as secretary to the Director of Missionary Assistance in the Home Missions Department.

Counting o



Members of Faith FWB Church describe him as someone whose words soothe, whose demeanor comforts and whose love for the Lord inspires.

Pastor Pate preaches Sunday morning.

Whether in a local barbershop or in an Inskip community church pulpit, the Rev. Thurman Pate, also known as “Preacher Pate,” is sharing a message.

On Sunday, June 29, he preached his 10,000th sermon.

“I keep a record of all the messages I preach. All the funerals, all weddings and any professions of faith that occur from time to time,” said the pastor of Faith Free Will Baptist Church (Knoxville, Tennessee).

Pate preaches on average three times a week—two Sunday worship services and Wednesday evenings—as well as revivals and other commitments.



To Pate, a longtime volunteer statistician for Bearden High School’s football and basketball programs, keeping count isn’t unusual. He’s the official football statistician for Bearden High School’s football program, a position he’s had for the past 44 years.

On the community level, he is a top fund-raiser and a walker in an annual 10-

n Preacher Pate

By Jeannine F. Hunter

A Tennessee Free Will Baptist minister marks message number 10,000.

mile event to support foreign missions. To date, he's raised about \$70,000 for the Don and Billie Sexton Walk-A-Thon for Free Will Baptist Foreign Missions. And for decades, he has attended every home University of Tennessee football and basketball game when other commitments did not conflict.

Ron Sparks, owner of Ron's Barbershop in Bearden where Pate cuts hair periodically, said the 83-year-old minister is the kind of man who elevates low spirits just by being present.

Members of Faith FWB Church describe him as someone whose words soothe, whose demeanor comforts and whose love for the Lord inspires.

The 1943 graduate of Johnson Bible College says his inspiration for his sermons include his prayer and Bible study time and insight he gains from other religious leaders. But overwhelmingly they come from "this Book," he said holding a Criswell study Bible at the barbershop.

"I do have a lot of books; I do good bit of reading," he said. I look back in the Greek lexicon as I study the English concordance to make sure I have the proper translations and understanding of the scripture."

In and out of the pulpit he speaks in a mellow, inviting tone. He repeats points, inflecting his voice just a bit louder until it crescendos to the main idea.

"There are times that you have to do a good bit of preparing," he said. "When you preach to the same group for 37 years, you don't do reruns. You have to come up with things and put a different slant on it, but you don't try to alter scripture. . . . For some mes-

sages or themes I refer to the same scripture but it's not the identical message."

He preached his first sermon on April 24, 1938, in his church in Unicoi, where he was born and raised. He was licensed in 1938 and ordained a year later. On March 24, 1977, he preached his 5,000th message. He has been pastor of Faith FWB Church since 1966, a year after the church was chartered.

To pay his way through Johnson Bible College, Pate worked on the school's farm. He has worked at barbershops while he served as pastor at Free Will Baptist churches.

He recently performed the wedding ceremony for his granddaughter, Jennifer to Jeremy Bean.

"It was truly special," said the young bride and Sunday School teacher after worship service on Sunday, July 13. "Six days earlier he and my grandmother celebrated their 60th wedding anniversary. It was special knowing that they had devoted their lives to love and to God. . . . It was an inspiration to me to see them and to see him standing before me as I became married."

Kelly Dalton Webster, whose grandparents Jack and Hazel Dutton were among the church's charter members, said when she thinks of "Preacher Pate" she thinks of family.

"His pores ooze Jesus, God, religion," she said "His love for God is so inviting. Here, you'll be loved."

His words comforted a grief-stricken Paulette Williams whose granddaughter was stillborn. Williams said her daughter framed a document containing Pate's memorial service message.

"It was such a sweet message where he described each of her body

parts and how she may not walk on this earth but she would stand beside Jesus," she said, tears filling her eyes. "And how she did not hug us but she rests in the loving arms of our Savior."

Preacher Pate's wife of 60 years, Marion Faustine Pate, said her husband is even keeled even when she's spunky.

"He was persistent when I first met him," she said, demurely about their two years of courting. "We met when I was barely 16. . . . Married 28 days short of my 18th birthday."

The Pates have three children, seven grandchildren and one great grandchild.

His advice to young ministers is to "always stay within the Book."

"You can't go wrong if you're preaching what's in the Bible," he said. "Some people can be led away from different interpretations. . . . Stick with the Bible and any other help you can get, it's beneficial but don't forget the basics, the foundation." ■

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Photo Credit: Photo by Jeff Adkins, *Knoxville News-Sentinel* Staff

There are good reasons to thank those who touch your life.

A Second Thank

You may not have read the Little Golden Book titled, *The Animals of Farmer Jones*, in a while, but you may still remember that all the barnyard animals said, “Thank you, Farmer Jones” when he brought their supper—except for the pigs. When Farmer Jones brought them mush for their supper, the pigs said nothing at all.

You may not have had June Critcher for your Sunday School teacher when you were growing up. She would have told you that saying “thank you” the first time was important, your obligation. But saying “thank you” the second time was a joyful and memorable event for the one being thanked. She challenged us to go the extra mile to say thank you the second time—to phone the next day, to write a note, to remember the second time to demonstrate gratitude.

But surely, even without those wonderful teachers, you remember the impact of Jesus’ own experience, when only one of the 10 lepers returned to say thank you for his miraculous healing. You remember feeling glad for the one and for the times you were like him. You remember feeling embarrassed for the nine others who forgot—and for the times you were like them.

So how do you develop the lifestyle of gratitude? How do you pluck “Thanksgiving” from a holiday in November and incorporate it into everyday life?

The Attitudes

First, get to the heart of the matter. The unfinished thank-you notes are only symptoms, not the disease. Think for a minute about the diseases of materialism and selfishness.

Materialism begets ingratitude. Caring more about things than the ones

who gave them to you is a mark of our age. Even if it is unintentional, failing to say thank you sends the message that the gift and the giver are unappreciated. When we are consumed with consumerism, caught up in the “stuff,” we overlook those who made an effort to please us with a gift or deed of kindness. We sin. We are overcome, “eat up,” with covetousness.

The cure for materialism is praise. Take your eyes off the gift and put them on the Giver! It is from His hand that we have our needs met and our wants fulfilled. When we see the bounty of His loving provision, when we recognize the magnitude of His great gifts, when we acknowledge His supreme worthiness, our heart attitude must turn to praise. A heart full of praise to God sees His gifts and those who reflect His image as givers; it responds in thankfulness.

When Naaman was cleansed in the Jordan River, he returned to Elisha to offer gifts of praise. When Zaccheus came down from the sycamore tree, he offered his belongings and his home out of gratitude for the Lord’s rescue. Peter’s mother-in-law gave her immediate service in return for Christ’s healing. What is your response for all that He has done for you?

Ingratitude is a mark of selfishness. When our focus is on ourselves and not others, we forget to say thank you. We are concerned about our time, our

effort, our comfort, not about recognizing the time, effort and concern of others. We are not willing to be inconvenienced to show gratitude.

The cure for selfishness is humility—seeing our true self as God sees us. We can protect our self-esteem and self-talk our selfish selves till we’re blue in the face, but the truth is we are unworthy beings who do not deserve anything but God’s wrath. If you see life through that perspective, you will cut down on your complaining.

You will measure gifts and acts of kindness on a new scale, with new significance. You will value intentions and motives more than price tags and name brands.

The Practice

So if your heart is full of humility and praise, thankfulness is a natural outcome. But how do we demonstrate that attitude of gratitude?

Practice the habit of gratitude. “Wait!” you say. “How sincere is it to make saying thank you a habit?” Sometimes, habits teach hearts instead of the other way around.

If you wait for your children to mean it when they say thank you, you’ll never hear the words. It’s perfectly okay to require children to say “thank you” before they get their gift! You teach to the test. Say thank you to waitresses and bus drivers and store clerks. Say thank

nk You

By Carol Reid

you when someone holds the door or lets you in traffic. You will set your life patterns in a positive direction when you regularly say thank you.

Articulate gratitude. Say it—out loud. Even if you're in a car in the next lane, say it and wave it. Say it to your spouse and to your mother. Say it to your Sunday School teacher and to your ushers and your pastor. Say it to the secretaries and to the president. You will be appreciated if you demonstrate appreciation to others. Don't wait for special occasions or funerals. Speak words of thanks to others to demonstrate your Christ-like attitude of humility.

Make it easy to say thank you. Gather your tools together. Keep a list of notes you need to write. Have stamps, address books, pens and note cards easily available. Clock how long it takes to write one thank-you note, and then you'll realize what a weak excuse fuels your procrastination.

Phone or e-mail someone you've meant to contact—now! Make rules for yourself and your family that you can't wear/play/use/spend the gift until the giver has been thanked. Use form letters or pre-printed cards if you must, but get the job done.

Begin your prayers with thanksgiving. Recognize children's (yours or someone else's) acts of kindness by telling them thank you. Thank strangers. Recall those who have contributed to your spiritual development and thank the Lord for them—then call or write to let those people hear what you said. Had you rather be known for complaining or for complimenting?

Be consciously aware of the grace of gratitude. You can change the direction of your future, even if you have not done well in the past.

The Results

What will change if you remember the second thank you?

First, you will change. Your heart will demonstrate its sincere thanksgiving and model scripture's instruction to give thanks, always, for all things (Eph. 5:20, 1 Thess. 5:18). You will mature as a believer in your Christian walk and attitude.

Then, the response of others will change. If your approach is one that "accentuates the positive" by giving thanks, others will see you in a new light. They will emulate your behavior and attitudes. They will offer thanksgiving back to you.

Also, our culture will change—at least the piece of it you influence. When the focus is on the goodness of God and the gifts He gives, selfishness and materialism will fade; refinement and courtesy will climb into view.

After all, pigs never say thank you. ■



About the Writer:
Mrs. Carol Reid serves as librarian at Free Will Baptist Bible College.

Ingredients of a Thank-You Note

Every good thank-you note should include:

- a personal address, using the names you usually call the people to whom you are writing (Dear Aunt Mary, Dear Mr. and Mrs. Smith, Dear Joe), and the date.
- the specific gift you were given (the chrome toaster, the \$20, the navy and red sweater).
- the intended use for the gift (we can have a fine breakfast now; I'll plan to spend it on books; I needed a new outfit for school).
- Optional: mention your gratitude for personal influence and thoughtfulness (You and Uncle Jim have always been very special to me; I have appreciated your interest in me at church; you always know just what I would choose).
- Sign your name with whatever closing you choose (Sincerely, Love, Yours, etc.).

How Many Preachers Did Your College Graduate Last Year?

By Jon Weatherly

It comes to every Bible college at least once a year. In a letter, a telephone call, an email or a face-to-face conversation,

professors and administrators are asked the question in the title of this essay.

On the one hand, it is an entirely fair question. Medical schools can say how many doctors they graduated. So, it seems, Bible colleges should be able to say how many preachers they graduated.

In some respects, this question is a simple tool for what educators call "assessment," the task of determining whether a college or other educational institution is meeting its objectives. Since the mission of a Bible college is preparing people for ministry, this question appears to be a legitimate means of assessing whether the Bible college is doing what it is supposed to do.

On the other hand, this question carries a bushel of assumptions that need to be examined. My experiences in Bible college education and ministry suggest that those assumptions are mostly false. Although at one time this question may have been a useful measure of a Bible college's effectiveness, today it fails to account for the reality of the church's ministry.

Becoming a Preacher in the Idealized Past

The how-many-preachers question sounds reasonable to those who assume that a career in ministry takes a particular path. But the path they conceive may have more to do with an idealized past than present reality.

Their concept of the path is thus. A certain Christian young man graduates from high school. With little support from home, he enrolls in Bible college. The faculty of the college stokes the flame of his desire to preach the gospel. After a year of study, he begins to preach for a tiny church in the country, serving just on Sundays. After four years, he graduates on a Friday, marries his college sweetheart on Saturday, is ordained on Sunday, and on Monday begins preaching "full time" at a somewhat less tiny church in the country.

At this church he makes a salary too small to be called modest. But he and his clever, frugal wife are able to set up housekeeping in the church's ramshackle parsonage. They make ends meet by eating vegetables from their garden and chickens donated by church members. He prepares and



delivers inspiring sermons that challenge the faithful and win the lost. Soon attendance is up and the baptistery is busy.

In a few years, with a couple of children in tow, the young preacher and his wife answer a call to another, larger church, located in a county-seat town or a metropolitan suburb. Or, even better, the once moribund country church having grown beyond anyone's expectations, the young preacher who "built" it stays on for his prime years of ministry. Either way, he becomes known as a rising star and a fine example of his alma mater's product.

Becoming a Minister in the Real Present

I am confident that some reading this essay will either say, "I know that preacher," or "I am that preacher." Stereotypes exist because they bear some relationship to reality. Nevertheless, I am confident that whatever reality this stereotype reflects is a past reality. Much has happened in the last two generations that has altered the Bible college graduate's career path to ministry, though nothing has—or can—change the character of real ministry.

One obvious change is the explosive development of professional positions

of ministry in addition to preaching ministry. When only a handful of churches employed more than one minister, having ministry as a vocation meant being a preacher. Now, when the multiple staff is the norm and solo ministers are the exception, most churches need more vocational ministers who are *not* "preachers" than those who are.

Another, more subtle change is the increasing expectation of maturity and professionalism from preaching ministers. Most churches have rightly understood that the preaching of the gospel demands not only a command of the scriptures and preaching technique but also the maturity that comes only with experience. Furthermore, they expect the preaching minister to be a capable leader, administrator and counselor, skills that likewise develop only with age. A growing number of churches also expect graduate education of their preachers.

Though some may decry these high expectations, they flow from the insight that preaching the gospel is a difficult, serious and sophisticated task. Consequently, while even a generation ago only a relatively small church would call a 22-year-old, wet-behind-the-ears Bible college graduate to be its preacher, today perhaps only a small, desperate church willing to accept anyone who

will put up with its problems is likely to take on the new graduate who seeks to preach immediately.

Accompanying this change in the churches' expectation is a change in the focus of young people who pursue vocational ministry. In the past, teenagers were largely challenged to enter ministry by the example of preaching ministers. Many of those preachers were still in their 20s, and they had close contact with teens in settings like Christian service camps. Their example was accessible to young men, and their profession was a realistic step away for someone in his late teens.

Today the same challenge to ministry is still issued and received, but it comes largely from youth ministers, worship ministers and such who work closely with young people and in many cases are still relatively young themselves. For today's Christian teenagers, the example of a 20-something youth minister is both compelling and realistic. For them, preaching lies somewhere off in the middle-aged distance.

Obviously the changing expectations of the churches and the changing focus of young Christians interested in ministry coincide. Churches do not generally seek preachers in their 20s. Christian ministers in their 20s generally do not seek to be preachers. Churches seek a growing number of people with



passion and training for ministry besides preaching. Young Christians seeking to minister have passion and training for ministry other than preaching. So Bible colleges are graduating them in growing numbers, having matched their passion with the needed training.

Following a Fork in the Career Path

So is preaching denigrated, downgraded by such developments? Hardly! I need not belabor the point because readers are likely to agree: preaching has never been more important than it is right now.

But if we still need preachers, and if the Bible colleges are not graduating preachers, where will they come from? Do churches face an imminent shortage of preachers? Should Bible colleges be faulted for not training students who enter preaching ministry as soon as they graduate?

The clear answer is in a realistic appraisal of today's ministerial career path. Bible college graduates of traditional age seldom enter preaching ministry directly these days. At the college where I serve, remarkably many become youth ministers. Others serve in worship ministry, children's ministry and the like.

But as these young servants grow older, many follow a path that leads to preaching ministry. Their years of service have yielded the skills and maturity they need for the contemporary pulpit ministry. Many have supplemented their experience by pursuing a graduate degree part-time. They recognize that they are ready to preach. And so do churches. When the servant is ready, he generally finds a place to serve.

So one answer to the how-many-preachers question is this: we won't know for another 20 years or so. But

another matter shows that the question should not even be asked as it is.

Staying True to What Ministry Is

At the core of the how-many-preachers question lies a dangerous doctrinal fallacy. Framing the question around only "preachers" bespeaks a perspective on ministry at odds with the New Testament.

Few ideas are more obvious in the New Testament than the call to every one of God's people to serve in the name of Christ. From the Great Commission in the Gospels to Paul's stress on the variety of the Spirit's gifts to Peter's declaration that the church is a "royal priesthood," the scriptures repeatedly stress that the work of service—the work of *ministry*—is every Christian's work. In the 16th century the Protestant Reformers fought the clergy-laity distinction by insisting the priesthood of all believers.

Judgments implying that some forms of service are superior to others are at odds with this doctrine. Though preaching is *vital*, it is not *better*. Therefore, though training students for preaching is vital to the mission of a Bible college, ought it be treated as the Bible college's only task?

Most of today's Bible colleges began at a time when few people attended college and few imagined that Christians needed higher education for any form of ministry other than preaching. But from their beginnings, Bible colleges attracted students whose gifts and ambitions pointed towards areas of service other than preaching.

Many imagine a golden age of the Bible college (often suspiciously coincident with their own matriculation) when everyone who graduated (that is, of course, every man) became a preacher. Pictures of Bible college graduating classes from early years, however, show many who farmed, taught school and ran businesses instead of preaching, all the while serving inside and out-

side the church in the name of Christ. Today's Bible college graduating classes are no different.

Walking Together on the Ministry Career Path

Obviously, then, concerned Christians should find another means of assessing a Bible college's effectiveness. But we have more tasks than that if we take these observations seriously.

One is to continue to nurture the desire of Christians, young and not so young, to minister and to train for ministry. Clearly and consistently speaking in such a way that affirms all kinds of ministry, not just the professional-on-the-platform ministries, will encourage holy ambition among more of the Lord's people.

Another is to show respect to every kind of professional service in the church. No youth minister will miss being asked when he will become a "real" minister or being told that he will "make a good preacher someday." Many may be more inclined to develop as preachers in the absence of such remarks than they will when their current ministries are treated as second-rate.

Likewise, we can stop feeling and acting disappointed when a Bible college graduate takes a job outside the professional positions that we define with unbiblical narrowness as "ministry." These have not forsaken a call or chosen what is lesser. In my experience, most have rightly assessed their gifts, and most minister with vitality, though not with a paycheck from the church.

At the Bible college where I serve, assessing our effectiveness is an important but burdensome chore. We would welcome your help. But if you ask us how many preachers we graduated this year, we may tell you that however many eventually become preachers, we expect that all are already ministers. ■

About the Writer: Dr. Jon Weatherly serves as academic dean and professor of New Testament at Cincinnati (Ohio) Bible College and Seminary.

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Thanksgiving

Revisited

Why do Americans celebrate a day called Thanksgiving?

By Larry Montgomery

Of all the American holidays celebrated each year, Thanksgiving has the potential to make the greatest impact upon the Christian. If it is properly celebrated, I believe that Thanksgiving can bring about significant spiritual

enrichment for the believer. To understand that possibility, let's review the history of Thanksgiving in this country.

Most of us think of Thanksgiving as a time to feast and express gratitude for an abundant harvest or material prosperity. However, there are several other aspects to this important day.

One of the earliest Thanksgivings in America was entirely religious and had nothing to do with harvest or feasting. Rather, it was an annual observance by a group of English settlers in what is today Charles City, Virginia. Their Thanksgiving was to commemorate their safe voyage and arrival in this free land.

First Thanksgivings

The first Thanksgiving in New England was celebrated after a dreadful Massachusetts winter in which nearly half the colony members died. More than a harvest celebration, it was thanksgiving for life and the hope for a better tomorrow.

Another early Thanksgiving observance was called by George Washington during the Revolutionary War, and for eight days the colonists gave thanks for victories won and for deliverance from dangers.

From its earliest beginnings, however, most Thanksgiving observances have been a day to express gratitude for abundant harvests. In fact, the American Thanksgiving is probably an outgrowth of the harvest-home celebrations in England.

It is a fairly fundamental concept to agricultural people everywhere that matters of planting and harvest, sowing and reaping are controlled by God. If God sends the sunshine and rain and withholds the storms and blights, a good harvest is assured. Harvest time logically causes one to look to the Lord of the harvest with gratitude.

The earliest Thanksgiving days were religious in nature and directed praise to God, rather than simply expressing a general attitude of gratefulness. When President Lincoln proclaimed the last Thursday in November 1863 as a national holiday, it was to be "a day of thanksgiving and praise to our benevolent Father." Sadly, that spiritual flavor has been lost in many of our observances today.

Today's Thanksgiving

With this rich history, one might well expect Christians today to celebrate Thanksgiving enthusiastically. For many Christian families, it is a special opportunity to express praise and adoration to our gracious Father. All American Christians should be zealous in our thanksgiving, for no nation has been more blessed than we.

I said earlier that Thanksgiving has potential for great impact on a person's life. As we recognize our blessings and give credit to the source of those blessings, we are drawn to a greater commitment to God. Romans 2:4 states that God's goodness toward us leads us to repentance.

Thanksgiving as a national holiday turns the spotlight onto God's goodness. When we recognize His benevolence and our unworthiness we are humbled, and we repent of our sinfulness which has brought reproach to the name of our gracious and loving God.

This Thanksgiving "count your blessings; name them one by one." Realize that they have all come down from "the Father of lights" who provides "every good and perfect gift" (James 1:17). Then, as appropriate, repent of every act and attitude of sinfulness. Let this Thanksgiving become a day of spiritual renewal in your life. ■



About the Writer: Reverend Larry Montgomery pastors Glennville Free Will Baptist Church in Glennville, Georgia.

Leadership Conference Set for December

ANTIOCH, TN—The annual Free Will Baptist Leadership Conference will meet December 8–9 at the Millennium Maxwell House Hotel in Nashville, according to executive secretary Keith Burden. Some 140 leaders are expected to participate in the two-day conference. The \$160 per person conference registration fee includes four meals, breaks and all materials. Hotel room cost (\$85 per night) is not included.

Registration begins Monday, December 8, at 3:00 p.m. After an opening dinner at 5:30 p.m., attendees will gather for the first session in the hotel's Grande Ballroom.

The 2003 conference theme, *Leadership Is Listening*, will feature two interactive 90-minute forums Tuesday morning. Department directors will utilize a roving facilitator (foreign missionary Robert Bryan) to move among conference attendees during the fast-paced forums and identify areas of interest for leadership training. They will listen to responses and use the data to program subsequent conferences.

Dr. Charles W. Shepson, founder of Fairhaven Ministries and author of nine books, will speak during plenary sessions Monday and Tuesday evenings. The evening worship times will also include music with Doug Little (director of stateside development/Foreign Missions Department) and drama presentations by Free Will Baptist Bible College.

National Association moderator Tim York, assistant moderator William Smith and executive secretary Keith Burden will preside during the conference.



Robert Bryan



Dr. Charles W. Shepson

The Publications Committee will meet Monday afternoon, 1:30–4:00 p.m., with Missouri executive secretary Nathan Ruble as chair. The seven-man Nominating Committee, chaired by Oklahoma executive director Ernest Harrison, Jr., will meet Tuesday afternoon, 1:30–4:00 p.m.

Registration deadline for the conference is November 8. The cost is \$160 per person.

The Leadership Conference concludes Tuesday evening at 9:00 p.m. National boards will then meet separately to conduct the business of each agency.

52 Enroll at California Christian College

FRESNO, CA—The fall semester at California Christian College began with 52 students, according to President Wendell Walley. That includes 36 men and 16 women. Ten of the 52 are in the Russian program in Sacramento.

President Walley said, "We continue to see an increase in the number of students preparing for some type of Christian ministry (pastoral, counseling,

missions). Last year just over 50% expressed such interests."

At press time, the college was preparing for an accreditation reaffirmation visit from officials at TRACS. All faculty and staff returned from last year.

While the administration is pleased with the fall enrollment, President Walley observed, "We needed 60 students to meet budget goals and hope to

pick up some of them in January. We were able to close the fiscal year in the black last June 30."

Walley confirmed that the college's growing Russian program collapsed when the director started a rival program through another university and took most of the students. The college (CCC) is currently doing a teach-out for the remaining students.

Tom Willey Retires at World Relief

MIAMI, FL—Tom Willey retired this summer, ending 26 years with World Relief. The 64-year-old North Carolina native began his ministry with World Relief in 1977.

The July/August 2003 issue of *Touching* reported, "Tom Willey's life is a story of service to the poor and needy... more than a quarter of a century helping the hurting in Latin America, the Caribbean, Asia and the U.S."

"Before joining World Relief, Tom was a missionary to Latin America, a pastor and church planter. Since 1977, his duties with World Relief have included

disaster relief consultancy, managing refugee camps in Hong Kong, directing World Relief's ministries in Latin America and the Caribbean, and assisting refugees in southern Florida as director of World Relief's Miami field office.

"Blessed with a heart of compassion for refugees and all who suffer, Tom traveled to Cuba with other church leaders in 1986 to meet with communist leader Fidel Castro and petition for the release of hundreds of political prisoners, including evangelical pastors."

The Miami office has helped resettle more than 15,000 refugees, mostly from



Photo Credit: Jon Warren/World Relief

BEYOND BELIEF



Cuba and Haiti. "Many of these people view World Relief as their second family," Tom says.

As World Relief partners with local churches to help Miami's newcomers adapt to America, reunite with family and navigate complex immigration issues, Tom says the Church is pivotal to World Relief's mission. "This is the Lord's work, and God's agency on earth is the Church," he says.

Tom was ordained as a Free Will Baptist minister in 1955. He is an alumnus of Free Will Baptist Bible College, George Peabody College, the University of Panama and Columbia International University. He was an instructor at the seminary in Pinar del Rio Cuba (1956-58), did promotional work in Cuba (1959-61), and served as a church planter/pioneer missionary in Panama (1962-75).

He is the son of the late pioneer Free Will Baptist missionary to Cuba, Thomas Willey, Sr.

Southeastern College Enrollment Tops 137

WENDELL, NC—President Lorenza Stox reports 137 students as Southeastern FWB College opened the fall semester.

The 137 students include 55 freshmen, 34 sophomores, 26 juniors and 22 seniors. The number of students from each state:

Alabama	12	Florida	1
Arkansas	2	Indiana	4
Arizona	2	Maryland	1
California	3	Mississippi	2
Colorado	3	North Carolina	83
		Oklahoma	5
		South Carolina	2
		Tennessee	3
		Texas	1
		Virginia	6
		West Virginia	4
		Wisconsin	3

Number of students and majors:

Bible/Pastoral Theology and Practical Ministry	35
Bible/Pastoral Theology/Missions	7
Bible/Pastoral Theology/Music	7
3-year Biblical Studies	6
Bible/Missions/Education	4
Music Education	10
Sacred Music	2
Elementary Education	36
Secondary Education	17
Religious Arts	4
Business	9

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Gateway College Opens with 33 Students

VIRGINIA BEACH, VA—Gateway Christian College began its first year of operations this fall with 33 students, according to President Bruce Barnes. That number includes 23 full-time and 10 part-time students.

Dr. Barnes said 13 of the full-time students are studying Bible or missions, while nine are pursuing music or teacher education degrees. Seventeen men and 14 women compose the student body, including 15 dormitory students.

Junior missions major Paige Autry (Lincolnton, NC) said, "The moment I arrived at Gateway Christian College I felt the Lord's presence. I feel privileged to be part of the first year at GCC."

Mandie Rudolph, senior teacher education major (Amory, MS) added, "The spirit in the ladies' dorm is awesome; we are already like a big family."

Gateway Christian College is a ministry of Gateway FWB Church. Pastor Karl Sexton leads the congregation.

Dr. Barnes' inaugural message, "The Glory of a New House," concluded with the student body, faculty, staff and church family at the altar. Pastor Sexton led the prayer of dedication.

Bible College Enrolls 339 for Fall Semester



Upperclassmen Ryan Fowler and Mary Frixen welcome Drew Bigley, a freshman from Ina, Illinois, to FWBBC.

NASHVILLE, TN—Free Will Baptist Bible College enrolled 339 students from 24 states and eight foreign countries for the 2003 fall semester, according to the office of the registrar. This is an increase of five percent over last fall's enrollment.

By classes, they number 64 seniors, 61 juniors, 73 sophomores, 134 freshmen and seven special students. The college's enrollment has grown 21 percent since the fall of 2001.

By states, students number:

Alabama	14
Arizona	1
Arkansas	27
California	2
Florida	10
Georgia	18
Illinois	21
Indiana	9
Kansas	3
Kentucky	7
Louisiana	1
Michigan	12
Missouri	12
Mississippi	8
North Carolina	29
Ohio	9
Oklahoma	1
Pennsylvania	2
South Carolina	5
Tennessee	105
Texas	5
Virginia	18
Wisconsin	1
West Virginia	4
Foreign	15
(Albania, Bahamas, Brazil, Canada, Japan, Russia, Zimbabwe and Spain)	

There are 164 women and 175 men in the student body. Of these, 243 live on campus and 96 are commuter students.

President Matthew Pinson says, "This has been an exciting beginning to a promising new academic year. I am enthusiastic about our students this year. This is the largest freshman class we have had in some years. We are also delighted at the response to our new adult degree program, with nine students involved in the program's first course."

Hillsdale College Reports 348 Students

MOORE, OK—Hillsdale FWB College launched their fall semester with 348 students, according to Tim Eaton, vice-president of academic affairs. Eaton set the full-time student equivalency at 315, the same number reported in 2002.

Two hundred sixty-four students enrolled in campus programs. The student classification includes 143 freshmen, 45 sophomores, 51 upper classmen, 18 graduate students, 7 non-degree students and 84 students in the distance learning program.

The 83 ministry students logged in as 47 biblical studies students, 17 missions students and 22 students in Christian vocational studies (C.E., music, youth ministry). Forty-seven enrolled in the business program.

Vice-president Eaton said, "These enrollment figures do not include new students who will begin classes after September or the ABLE degree completion groups. Last year Hillsdale finished the 2002-2003 college year with 442 unduplicated head count.

"New classes begin almost weekly, so interested persons need not wait to inquire into either bachelor's or master's programs. If you have 60 credit hours of college and are interested in completing a bachelor's degree in Bible or business, contact the ABLE program at 405-912-9020. Anyone interested in doing graduate work toward a Master's degree in Bible and Christian ministry, call 405-912-9016 or visit www.hc.edu for information online." ■

California: At press time they had no pastor, but members of **Farmersville FWB Church** in **Farmersville** are making a difference in their community. Their youth revival with **Allen Pointer** (guest speaker from Arkansas) filled the sanctuary with people and overflowed in other areas. Church reporter **Tammy Godfrey** said a number of youth prayed, gave their lives to the Lord or rededicated themselves. The church's former pastor, **Randy Williams**, now serves as California's director of ministries.

Twenty youth and eight adults worked 72 hours non-stop in July on the **California Christian College** campus in **Fresno** painting the administration building, laying tile, running wire, installing air conditioners in the classroom building, re-creating a cafeteria breezeway. The group traveled 1,500 miles from **Keefeton FWB Church** in **Keefeton, OK**, under the leadership of Pastor **Danny Barks** and youth director **Curt Price**.

Maryland: Pastor **Mike Phillips** reports a 30 percent increase in attendance at **Waldorf FWB Church** in **Waldorf** with 112 in worship services. Six conversions and one rededication in July made their VBS a success.

Missouri: **New Life FWB Church** in **Licking** honored member **Greg Hadley** for 20 years of faithful service as a Sunday School teacher, board chairman, church treasurer and more. State executive secretary **Nathan Ruble** read a biographical summary of Hadley's service and presented him with a plaque. Pastor **Max Courtney** gave the honoree gifts from the church. The day-long occasion was held in conjunction with Old-Fashioned Sunday activities.

Members of **Mt. Pisgah FWB Church** in **Cabool** celebrated 75 years of service this summer, according to Pastor **David Carroll**. The church organized in 1928 with five charter members. They bought the one-acre site where the church is located for \$15 in 1930. The church was heated with wood stoves until 1961. Seventeen pastors have led the congregation. **Lloyd Walls**, church clerk for 57 years, shared the history of the church in an afternoon service. Executive secretary **Nathan Ruble** preached the morning message.

Ohio: Pastor **Robert Prichard** reports six conversions, five baptisms and nine new members at **Cleveland FWB Church** in **Cleveland**.

Turkey Creek FWB Church in **Portsmouth** celebrated 50 years in their current building this summer. Pastor **Dave Sibole** said 130 people attended the services which included a slide presentation and dinner.

Pastor **Wiley Perkins** baptized four converts at **Samantha FWB Church** in **Leesburg**.

Pastor **Aaron Reed** baptized six converts and welcomed 10 new members at **Sciotodale FWB Church** in **Portsmouth**.

Oklahoma: Pastor **Waldo Young** at **Northwest FWB Church** in **Oklahoma City** is making available a book of 52 sermons in a three-ring notebook. The book costs \$25. Order from 4625 N.W. 36th, Oklahoma City, OK 73132. Northwest church member **Joe Coffee** bought new tires for the church van. All four tires were slashed while the van was sitting in the parking lot.

First FWB Church in **Norman** reports five new members. **Joe Grizzle** pastors.

South Carolina: Pastor **Frank Sedgwick** baptized 27 people in two months at **Hickory Hills FWB Church** in **Gresham**. One Sunday he began preaching a sermon as he entered the river to baptize two people; the group to be baptized swelled to 11, one of whom was the pastor's mother.

After 29 years as pastor at **First FWB Church** in **Greenwood**, Pastor **Paul Reid** retired. The church presented Reid with a plaque and a watch. Under Reid's leadership the church moved from services in a mobile home to a renovated home to its current beautiful facilities.

Eastside FWB Church in **Florence** installed a new sign on a highly traveled road. **Eddie Riddick** pastors.

Grace FWB Church in **Loris** dedicated their new building in June. Pastor **Larry Bell** and four families started the church in his home, then located a renovated building downtown. Members of **Rocky Pass FWB Church** donated eight pews. Executive secretary **Mike Jones** preached the dedication message.

Liberty FWB Church in **Lancaster** began with 38 people in 1996. They met in homes, the National Guard Armory, an old store-front building...and finally purchased land on which to build. Pastor **Tim Larrimore** said 366 people attended the May 18 dedication for the church's new sanctuary. The \$700,000 structure includes educational rooms.

Tennessee: Pastor **Ronnie Mitchell** said that 66 people from **Limestone FWB Church** in **Limestone** attended the national convention in Tampa, FL. ■

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Team Players in the Lord's Work

By David Potete
Home Missionary to Chicago, Illinois

They “stayed by the stuff.” It wasn’t glamorous or flashy. Most didn’t even notice, and the few who did notice complained! You know the story of David and his men going to battle in I Samuel 30. Those who were on the cutting edge of battle were critical of those in support roles. The *more visible* were unappreciative of the *less visible*. David saw through their criticism, and he rightly included them in sharing the spoils from victory.

Believers still had this problem in the New Testament. In I Corinthians 12, Paul points out the error of the eye telling the hand, “I don’t need you.” Paul saw through the error of overlooking *less noticeable* members (v. 25) saying that members of the body should have the “same care for one another.” The members that play a support role are to receive honor, just as the more visible members.

Unfortunately, we still have the same problem today. Those who stay by the stuff in support positions that enable the rest of us to get the job done are not appreciated or properly supported. We sometimes still have trouble understanding the team concept.

In Home Missions we have different parts of the “body.” There are the more visible parts... the missionaries, and the less visible parts... the office staff. We have bookkeepers, secretaries, directors, publications editors and missionaries.

Ah yes, the missionaries. We usually get the accolades, the pat on the back, the recognition. The truth is we wouldn’t be able to do our job if it weren’t for the support services provided by our department. That’s not just fundraising hype—it is fact.

Here is a *partial* list of all the department does for us. They edit, print and mail newsletters; publish a magazine; schedule mission services and conferences, interview and hire missionaries, create and maintain mailing lists, arrange for production and distribution of prayer cards and numerous promotional materials, train new missionaries, supply ongoing training for veteran missionaries.

There’s more—they offer encouragement and assistance for those in the field, prepare and distribute a newsletter for missionary children, provide funds for loans, assist in purchase of property,

process the gifts to missionary accounts, write thank-you letters to donors in behalf of the missionaries, prepare tax receipts for donations, handle the management of accounts, and provide church growth and evangelism seminars, conferences, and materials to the entire denomination.

Beyond all that—and this is the most important part—they are there for the missionaries. When we need help, they are there. When we need advice, assistance, money, direction or a multitude of other needs, they are there! A phone call comes in and they respond faster than many 911 call centers!

From my own experience of purchasing property in Chicago, I can assure you that we could not have done it without the assistance of our Home Mission staff. Until you have been a missionary, you will never experience the importance of the men and women in the home office.

The Home Missions support system is designed in a manner that no funds from a missionary’s account are used to cover these support services provided by the department. Based on all the work the office staff does on our behalf, I believe that when we lead someone to Christ on the mission field, God credits our support staff with a “well done” just as He does the missionary who prayed with them.

So, should you give to the Benjamin Randall Offering? I think so. In fact, I know so. Now that it has been explained, you know that our Home Missions staff is faithful at “staying by the stuff.” For too long our department’s general fund has been in the red. It is time we stood by the staff of our Home Mission Department. Give generously this month to the Benjamin Randall Offering. No doubt David and Paul would agree, and I know missionaries all over North America who also agree and appreciate your gifts to enable our staff to “stand by the stuff.” ■



Free Will Baptist Ministry Focus

- Missionaries wouldn't be able to do their jobs if the Home Missions staff didn't do theirs.
- Members of the body of Christ who play a support role are to receive honor, just as the more visible members.



Donna Crabtree

Where Do I Fit in My Husband's Ministry?

Am I a pastor? Biblically, I

would not be given that title officially, but when my husband (Jeff Crabtree) and I married we became one. He is a pastor, so does that make me one? I have thought about this question and wondered what God expects of me as a pastor's wife. Looking back on my life, I saw many times where God used me when Jeff was not able to be there. My personal belief is that women should not preach or pastor churches, but I do believe God has given us a special place in our husbands' ministries.

Counseling

I do not have a degree in counseling, so I am careful in this area, however, there are times in ministry when I need to counsel the older and younger

women of the congregation. This is sometimes a challenge, considering the problems people face today. Spending one-on-one time with women helps us grow spiritually as we watch the young Christians grow in the Lord and those more mature realize that God can be there in their older years.

This ministry can be of vital help to our husbands, particularly if they pastor larger congregations. It takes a lot of time to work one-on-one with new converts. Church families sometimes have marital, spiritual or physical problems, and these usually do not go away overnight. Sometimes the mature women in your congregation need to talk or need you to visit them, especially the widows.

This does not mean that your husband should never counsel or visit the women in your congregation, but there are times you can fill in when his calendar is full or when a visit by him would be inappropriate. What better way to be an encouragement or a witness?

Visiting the Sick

I remember times when my husband was out of town and I was at the hospital all hours of the night with a church member who was sick or had a family member near death. You can be there to pray and give moral support during these difficult times until your husband arrives.

If your congregation is small, you may see yourself doing this quite often, because there may not be deacons available all the time or possibly no deacons in your congregation at all. The scriptures tell us that one of our duties is to visit the sick (Matthew 25: 36-40).

Knowing Your Congregation

It is sad to say, but I know several pastors whose wives are uninvolved in their husbands' ministries. We need to be aware of all aspects of the church. We do not have to fill every job available,

but we should know what ministries our church offers. Teaching may not be your calling, nor working in the nursery, but God has given all of us talents.

Your gift may be playing the piano or singing. You may decorate or maybe you like to administrate. Whatever your gift or talent, you need to be aware of all the ministries your church offers. How can you pray for the teachers, nursery workers, musicians or custodians if you are not aware of what is going on or who has filled these positions? Be available at all times for support or backup. Sometimes just a smile, a handshake or a word of encouragement goes a long way.

I have been in churches where I entered, worshiped and left never knowing who the pastor's wife was or if she was present. I always try to speak to as many people as I can in every service. I want them to know I love them and am glad they are there whether they have attended for years or they are visiting for the first time. What better way to help your husband when he has been cornered by someone after service and cannot get away to greet a visitor?

There will always be other ways to help your husband minister to the people in your congregation. The above three examples are just the beginning. Remember, the two of you are a team. Team members work together to get the job done. In order to accomplish your goals, every member of the team must do his part. Be there for him when he needs you the most. God called your husband into the ministry, but God also knew it was not good for him to be alone. That is where you come into the picture.

So am I a pastor? Not by title, but there are times when I can help hold the shepherd's staff until he arrives. ■

About the Writer: Mrs. Donna Crabtree is a member of Serenity Free Will Baptist Church in Wakefield, New Brunswick (Canada), where her husband Jeff pastors.

Directory Update

Alabama

Dale McCoy to Goodwater Church, Newton from Greater Vision Church, Wichita, KS

Arkansas

Creig Caswell to Center Point, Vilonia

Tim Adair to Vista Church, Van Buren

Missouri

Howard Anderson to Blue Springs Church, Blue Springs from First Church, Cape Girardeau

New Mexico

Jerry McArthur to First United Church, Hobbs from New Salem Church, Colquitt, GA

South Carolina

Marco Cannon to Walker's Chapel Church, Sumter

Rick Brown to Oak Grove Church, Conway from Faith Church, Rockingham, NC as youth pastor

Neil Hinson to Mullins-Marion Church, Mullins ■



Randy Sawyer

Why Free Will Baptists Should Pursue Graduate Education

It is my conviction that the

time has come for Free Will Baptists to pursue graduate level education. The question immediately arises, *who are you and why should your conviction about anything matter to anyone?* I understand that I am simply one voice echoing a call that has been debated among us for three decades. However, while I am just one voice, I am one of us, a Free Will Baptist by heritage and by decision.

Having attended graduate classes in three seminaries as well as an internationally-recognized university, I have climbed high onto the fence that divides our pasture from others and taken a long, hard look at what's on the other side. The fields from that vantage point are attractive and promising. But in the end I choose to remain what I am because of our heritage, my personal history and our theological position.

If this sounds self-serving I offer my apology. However, in choosing to remain with the people of my background, I want to make a difference, to leave us in a better position to impact our culture and our world when my time of ministry is done. One of the ways we can do this is by raising the standard of professional and academic excellence to a higher level.

Cultural Conditions Demand It...

We find ourselves in a cultural morass of chaos and confusion. With the advance of postmodernity, the collapse of moral absolutes, and the influx of eastern mysticism and oriental spiritualism, ministry challenges are becoming increasingly complicated. The preparation necessary to meet these rising challenges must involve an understanding of the biblical context, the

contemporary context and how the one speaks to the other.

More than ever, the next generation of preachers must be theologians and apologists of the faith, ready to minister the Word in a multi-cultural and pluralistic society.

Ministry Excellence Suggests It...

Graduate level education allows a student to deepen the disciplines that lead to higher ministry competence and excellence. Is this true in every case? Not any more so than does a college degree. A person may squander his opportunities at any turn and any level. Are there not many pastors with graduate degrees who are essentially useless in the work of the Kingdom? Certainly! But it does not have to be so. And often isn't.

There is nothing inherent in obtaining a higher degree that necessitates intellectual arrogance or pride or ministerial laziness. Higher education requires careful management of time, balancing of options and deepening of disciplines that can mature a minister for greater productivity and usefulness.

Future Generations Anticipate It...

It is time for Free Will Baptists to compete in the arena of ideas. But to do so we need more than practitioners, we need theorists—men and women who can think and who can help shape the thinking of the next generation. Fads and crazes and lifestyle options are not born into a void, out of nothing. They advance on the heels of philosophies, arguments and ideas.

If we want to help mold the future, we must begin thinking today. We need to honor the thoughtful life and encourage the gifted to such a pursuit.

Theological Debate Urges It...

In order for our theology and ideas to penetrate the cultural scene, we need writers. How many times have we complained that the major publishing houses have not offered an equitable treatment of our theological stance? But we can't expect them to simply move over and make a place for us.

We need writers whose work is so sound, so pervasive and so provoking that it demands a voice in the debate. We have a few who are capable, but just a few. We need more—men and women whose level of scholarship excels even the most prolific Calvinist. It won't be enough for us to equal them; we will have to go beyond if we are to earn a hearing.

Past Neglect Exhorts It...

The problem is simply that we're not training thinkers for this level. And we are not because we have placed a premium on it. We don't have enough men and women with advanced training to staff our colleges with master's degrees and doctorates.

Consequently, we look outside our circles and hire those who do not understand our position, history and heritage. Likewise, we lose some of our best and brightest to other groups because they find in other pastures the opportunities our close-mindedness has denied them.

Foresight Entreats It...

None of this is meant to condemn those who minister faithfully without a degree or formal training. There are deeply spiritual men and women who serve in our churches whose knowledge of the Word has been gleaned

through a lifetime of personal devotion. To them we owe a debt we cannot pay. But we must not allow our love and admiration for them to prejudice our vision of impacting the kingdom in a greater way. If our day is to dawn, we must make it happen by foresight and courage.

Denominational Heroes Deserve It...

Nor is any of this to cast stones at those who have gone before us. It is true that our predecessors bequeathed to us a fine heritage. We truly stand on the shoulders of giants. But in standing on their shoulders we are logically lifted higher, to another level. I believe they themselves would have it so. It is not to denigrate our denominational heroes that I call for graduate education, but to honor them by building on the solid foundation they laid for us.

A number of years ago a major figure in a prominent denomination asked me a question that chilled me. He asked, "Will Free Will Baptists be a key player in reaching the world for Christ in the next hundred years?" Will we? Not if we think we can't. And certainly not if we don't lift the standard. ■

Receipts:			Year To Date	Year To Date	Year To Date	
State	Designated	CO-OP	Total	Designated	CO-OP	Total
Alabama	\$ 308	\$ 0	\$ 308	\$ 3,715	\$ 1,286	\$ 5,002
Arizona	315	60	375	330	236	566
Arkansas	13,326	18,620	31,946	85,179	139,792	224,971
California	0	1,306	1,306	100	9,794	9,894
Colorado	0	0	0	0	0	0
Delaware	0	0	0	114	0	114
Florida	0	4,536	4,536	257	9,072	9,329
Georgia	32,324	1,827	34,151	271,548	14,076	285,624
Hawaii	0	0	0	0	0	0
Idaho	0	0	0	0	0	0
Illinois	8,056	1,776	9,832	98,415	22,182	120,597
Indiana	2,237	149	2,386	16,023	1,531	17,554
Iowa	0	0	0	0	65	65
Kansas	0	0	0	0	540	540
Kentucky	1,286	1,086	2,372	3,186	9,296	12,482
Louisiana	0	0	0	0	0	0
Maryland	0	0	0	0	0	0
Michigan	12,571	3,531	16,102	167,952	19,280	187,232
Mississippi	20,667	1,164	21,831	94,606	5,364	99,969
Missouri	30,763	14,964	45,727	339,007	132,572	471,579
Montana	0	0	0	0	0	0
Nebraska	0	0	0	0	0	0
New Jersey	0	0	0	0	0	0
New Mexico	192	20	213	3,776	232	4,008
North Carolina	2,686	2,498	5,184	11,894	20,155	32,049
Ohio	14,302	4,320	18,622	132,388	31,277	163,665
Oklahoma	48,683	8,396	57,079	475,528	85,887	561,414
South Carolina	31,139	0	31,139	355,491	255	355,746
South Dakota	0	0	0	0	0	0
Tennessee	20,889	1,642	22,532	103,927	12,345	116,272
Texas	21,427	749	22,176	94,648	2,704	97,352
Virginia	104	263	366	943	481	1,424
Virgin Islands	0	0	0	0	0	0
West Virginia	0	0	0	7,984	864	8,847
Wisconsin	0	0	0	0	0	0
Canada	785	16	801	5,501	109	5,610
Northwest Assoc.	0	0	0	0	0	0
Northeast Assoc.	0	0	0	0	0	0
Other	0	0	0	0	0	0
Totals	\$ 262,060	\$ 66,922	\$ 328,982	\$ 2,272,514	\$ 519,394	\$ 2,791,908

Disbursements:

Executive Office	\$ 1,306	\$ 30,115	\$ 31,422	\$ 12,177	\$ 233,727	\$ 245,904
Foreign Missions	151,275	8,466	159,740	1,346,896	65,703	1,412,599
FWBBC	23,854	8,466	32,320	189,464	65,703	255,168
Home Missions	77,952	6,625	84,577	647,242	51,420	698,662
Retirement & Insurance	610	5,153	5,763	3,228	39,993	43,222
Master's Men	185	5,153	5,338	5,333	39,993	45,326
Commission for Theo. Integrity	71	184	255	461	1,428	1,889
FWB Foundation	392	2,208	2,600	1,986	17,140	19,126
Historical Commission	71	184	255	461	1,428	1,889
Music Commission	47	184	231	292	1,428	1,720
Media Commission	147	184	331	847	1,428	2,275
Hillsdale FWB College	1,901	0	1,901	16,950	0	16,950
Other	4,250	0	4,250	47,178	0	47,178
Totals	\$ 262,060	\$ 66,922	\$ 328,982	\$ 2,272,514	\$ 519,394	\$ 2,791,908

BOARDING PASS

A \$1 Lamp, Lost Ticket and J'Crois

By Dean Jones, NYC Director

Originating Flight #	Gate	Destination	Seat #
4570	5	ORD	C14
Connecting Flight #	Gate	Destination	Seat #
204	D5	BNA	A22

A \$1 Lamp

They say one man's trash is another man's treasure, and so it was when I bought a lamp at a Nashville yard sale Saturday before I left for France. The lamp was fashioned like the Eiffel Tower, so I quickly snatched it up, a steal for only one dollar. I'd seen one for sale during a previous visit to Paris and knew they were quite pricey.

In order to involve my daughters (who were staying at home) in our trip to Europe, their assignment was to gather around the lamp each evening before bedtime and pray for our trip to France. The international symbol of France would remind them of their parents' trip, the people of France and the mission for which we would travel—the French Youth Conference.

A Lost Ticket

An unusual phone call came Saturday during the conference from a Frenchman who claimed to have my return trip plane tickets to the States. Who was this man and how could this be true? Sure enough, our tickets were missing and the mysterious man did have them. He found them on a train the day after we rode it and tracked us down after a futile attempt at calling the U.S.

Finally connecting the word *Baptist* and knowing we were in the city of Nantes, the man found a Baptist pastor who knew missionary Steve Riggs whose church sponsored the youth conference. After a five-day journey through an overnight mail system, our tickets arrived 30 minutes before we left for the airport. Now we owe thanks to God and a debt of gratitude and postage fees to a really nice man in the north of France.

J'Crois

J'Crois had the potential to change lives. Translated "I believe," the conference was designed to encourage and equip French high school and college students to better understand and defend their faith in a difficult, non-Christian school environment. Seventy students and workers gathered in the Nantes church for a weekend of praying, singing, praising, learning and fun.

Accompanied by French musicians (along with Donald Myers from Michigan), the students' voices filled the air. The language barrier was not a barrier after all, but

rather a point of connection. We were taught a little French and they were taught a little English.

We attempted, with minor success and much humor, to play "American" games. Eric Thomsen and I pulled some classics from our back pocket and enjoyed watching the universal appeal silly games have in any culture. My wife (Lisa) and Sam and June McVay (missionaries in Spain) learned the fine art of French cooking and helped prepare and serve several meals during the conference.

The weekend included teaching by Allen Pointer, youth pastor from Arkansas. His sessions focused on why we can believe there is a God, why we can believe the Bible is true and why we can believe in the resurrection. The final message Sunday morning focused on John 14:6, the theme verse. The room, filled to capacity with 150 students and Nantes church members, buzzed with excitement as the Lord changed lives.

Yes, J'Crois had the potential to change lives. It's easy to forget that a venture such as this often has a more profound effect on the presenters than on attendees. Our team left France with a greater burden to help these students and others around the world. We realized that God doesn't just speak English or only know the words to *our* songs. He loves all His creation and smiles on all of us when His name is lifted up. Please begin now to pray for the 2004 conference which meets August 20–22.

For a complete report on the J'Crois French National Youth Conference or if you'd like to correspond with a French student, please email me at dean@randallhouse.com.





Jack Williams

“Nothing to Be Thankful For...”

A pastor asked me to preach

for him last Sunday. Said he needed to talk about something important and wanted me to stay after church. I met “Ralph” and the missus in his study. As we shook and howdied, I said, “Thank the Lord for such a beautiful Sunday morning.”

Ralph replied, “Jack, I got nothing to be thankful for. My church is filled with critics and grumps. I feel like a failure. My sermons are bad.” The three of us missed Sunday School. When men like Ralph have nothing for which to be thankful, they need a friend to listen, encouragement and a different point of view.

Critics. Let’s not be too hard on our critics. After all, they remind us that not everybody sees things the same way we do. Some criticize us for our own good. Consider them the loyal opposition; they are constructive critics.

Others expect the worst and are surprised when it doesn’t happen. They don’t like us, don’t trust us and secretly hope we fail. These mean-spirited souls are suspicious of everybody; we call them destructive critics. They’ve given up on people and revel in the mistakes of others.

But I’m thankful for critics. They push us higher. Critics don’t like to be criticized, but that’s a story for another day.

Grumps. Yep, I’m thankful for grumps, even though they’re kissin’ kin to critics. Grumps get irritated if you aren’t miserable too. They resent it when you smile on a rainy day. They grind their teeth if you see rainbows and promises instead of mud and inconvenience. They’re not going anywhere and they paint their windows black to keep out light and laughter.

Grumps could be nice company if they had a sense of humor. Left to their own devices, they veer off into the ditch

of criticism and throw harsh words at passersby who disagree with them. Grumps enjoy rocks in their shoes and a hole in the roof, because it verifies that life is unfair.

Some of my favorite people are moderate grumps. I’ve noticed that the plan of God usually includes one thorough-going grump per church.

Failures. I’m thankful for failures because we’ve all failed at something. Those of us whose best golf move is wrapping a nine iron around a pine sapling provide examples for others who are not golf-challenged.

There’s a humility about failure. Nobody who has failed has any illusions about himself. We understand that sometimes we fail because we didn’t study or overestimated our driving skill or spoke out when we should have listened.

The brotherhood of failure has this in common with the successes in life. Every success was at one time a failure like us . . . a failure who tried again, who rewrote that paper, who changed a habit, who learned to take advice, who came to work earlier, who went back to school, who got up off the ground one more time.

Bad Sermons. Strange as it may seem, I’m thankful for bad sermons. There are two kinds of bad sermons—somebody else’s and yours. I’ve heard some awful sermons and preached worse. Both experiences left me with the certain knowledge that there is a better way.

Bad sermons encouraged me to take notes while listening to them. I discovered that most “bad” sermons weren’t that bad. Their delivery suffered because of nervous speakers or unrealistic expectations from hearers who demanded that every preacher thunder like Billy Sunday. Of course, some sermons are simply awful and only cease

getting worse when the speaker stops. One of mine was so bad I hid behind the church until everybody left.

The solution? I learned to avoid certain subjects because I mangle them. I also learned to preach shorter. I’m amazed at how fewer bad sermons I preach when speaking 20 minutes instead of 40. I shall not mention those 60-minute disasters when grown men waved watches above their heads.

Don’t be alarmed at my “thankful” list. Paul gave the Ephesians an unexpected principle, “Giving thanks always for all things . . .” (Eph. 5:20). There’s usually something in every event for which we can be thankful—patience learned when that tire exploded, faith we were forced to exercise in the hospital waiting room, new skills developed when the company downsized.

Jesus gave thanks the night before His crucifixion (Matt. 26:27–28). His thankfulness was not for the pain He would suffer, but for what His death would mean to lost humanity—the remission of sins. That’s why we thank God for the day the Perfect Man died.

Paul and Silas were beaten and jailed by city leaders in Philippi (Acts 16). When Paul wrote the Philippian epistle, he began with the words, “I thank my God upon every remembrance of you” (Phil. 1:3). That’s because the story at Philippi didn’t end with a beating. Paul was thankful for the miracle that changed everything in the last half of the chapter (Acts 16: 25–40).

For all the Ralphs struggling with harsh words, your story doesn’t end with the critics, the grumps or the failures. The chapter continues; you can expect some doors to open. There is a God who hears in the darkness and who can with one swift move turn bitterness to joy. You *do* have something for which to be thankful. ■

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Ephesians 5:16

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