

October 2004

Contact



The **POWER** of
Small Churches

Rise Up, O Men
of God

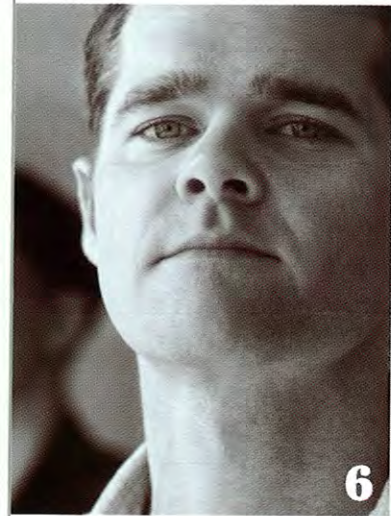
Smarter Sheep

Official Publication of the National Association of Free Will Baptists

Contents

October 2004

Volume 51, No. 10



ARTICLES

- 4 **The Power of Small Churches**
A church does not have to be large to make a big difference.
- 6 **Rise Up, O Men of God!**
Every Free Will Baptist church needs a strong, active men's group.
- 9 **Christian Alternative to Halloween**
Five ways to put a new face on Halloween.
- 12 **A Love for Halloween**
Every church Halloween party ended with a hayride, a devotion and testimonies of faith in God
- 14 **"Thoreauly" Equipped for Every Good Work**
A busy pastor confronts fatigue and the necessity for mid-course ministry adjustments.
- 16 **Smarter Sheep**
Are sheep really that dumb? The answer may be staring at you from your mirror.

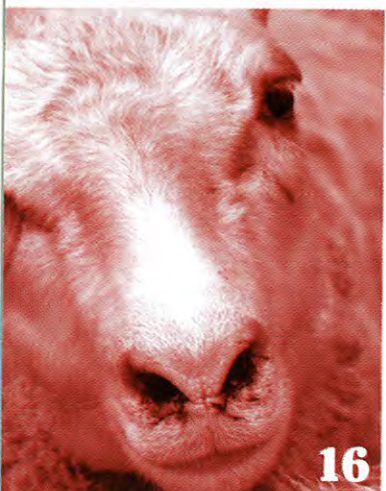


COLUMNS

- 3 **An Encouraging Word**
The Good Arkansian Tribute to Carl Cheshier, retired president of Hillsdale FWB College.
- 23 **Free Will Baptist Ministry Focus**
- 26 **Green Tree Bible Study**
The Real Deal (The Bible's Story-Line, Part IX)
- 27 **The Pastor's Wife**
The Strength of Love The secret to being a successful pastor's wife may be found in one word.
- 28 **The Preacher's Perspective**
Do Something!
- 30 **Student and Children Ministries**
Truth and Peace Conference Impact
- 31 **Briefcase**
Take the Positive Look Just because something is difficult doesn't mean God is looking the other way.

NEWS

- 18 **Free Will Baptist Newsfront**
Foundation Delivers Endowment Gifts | FWBBC Student Receives Congressional Medal | Hillsdale Names Tim Eaton President | Texas State Association | Ohio State Association | Virginia State Association | West Virginia Church Repairs Widow's Home
- 22 **Currently**



Editor-in-chief
Keith Burden

Editor
Jack Williams

Layout & Design
Randall House Design Team
Eric Thomsen, Angelia Duke

Printing
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 P.O. Box 5002, Antioch, TN 37011-5002. Phone: 615/731-6812.

Annual subscription rates: Individual—\$18 per year, Church Family Plan—\$18 per year, Church Bundle Plan—\$18 per year. Periodical postage paid at Antioch, Tennessee, and additional offices.

Copyright privileges, reserved © 2004. Member of the Evangelical Press Association. Postmaster: Send address changes to *Contact*, P.O. Box 5002, Antioch, TN 37011-5002.

USPS 130-660

National Office toll-free numbers

Executive Office	877/767-7659
FWBBC	800/763-9222
FWB Foundation	877/336-7575
Foreign Missions	877/767-7736
Home Missions	877/767-7674
Master's Men	877/767-8039
Randall House	800/877-7030
Retirement & Insurance	877/767-7738
WNAC	877/767-7662



Keith Burden

The Good Arkansian

And it came to pass that a cer-

tain Christian college went about doing good, educating young men and women, preparing them for life and equipping them for ministry. And as she trained Free Will Baptists, she fell among a Chancellor and a Board of Regents who determined to close her doors. They placed upon her excessive requirements and unrealistic expectations, then took steps to strip her academic standing, wound her reputation and leave her half dead.

Now by chance a review committee made a campus visit to examine financial records, evaluate staff qualifications and measure progress toward regional accreditation. Who, when they saw the school's sad plight, shook their heads in regret, leaving no hope for the Board of Trustees.

Not long after, some public officials took steps to aid the struggling institution. They consulted lawmakers, gutted a bill held up in a house committee, plugged in a provision to save the college and render the Chancellor and Board of Regents powerless to cause further harm.

The days that followed found the school in awful straits. Students made plans to attend college elsewhere. Exhausted administrators, staff and faculty struggled with the distressing events and workload. Depleted financial resources left the campus in dire need of repair. Then the president resigned.

Road to Recovery

But a certain Arkansian who, as he served on the Board of Trustees and saw the college's plight, had compassion. He resigned a successful pastorate, sold his home and relocated to the campus where he bound up her wounds, poured himself into the work and raised worker morale. He took the school upon his broad shoulders and started down the road to recovery.

Students returned, record sums of money arrived, and campus facilities were

upgraded. Former critics became allies. A positive attitude swept Free Will Baptists with a sense of hope, optimism and pride. A bold vision pointed to the future.

The Good Arkansian gave seven years of his life to restore the college's credibility. He traveled thousands of miles, worked tirelessly and prayed fervently for her success, jeopardizing his health for a generation of students who won't understand for many years.

Now I ask you—"Who was a true friend and neighbor to this college when she found herself in trouble?" I'll tell you who—the Good Arkansian.

Concern

The central character of this home-spun parable is Carl Cheshier, retired president of Hillsdale FWB College, who took the helm at a pivotal point in its history. What he achieved is nothing short of phenomenal.

As Carl relinquishes leadership at Hillsdale, he is remembered for several qualities, one of which is his *concern*. He demonstrated extraordinary concern for the institution and its students. He kept alive the dream of men who started the school 45 years ago.

Equally impressive is his concern for our denomination. He served at every level from local church pastor to moderator of the National Association. This concern brought him to Hillsdale, because he understood the importance of training future leaders.

Attitude

Another quality is Carl's attitude. I've known few people with a more positive attitude. He has the uncanny ability to look for, find and bring out the best in others. He reminds me of Barnabas—a true Son of Encouragement.

His positive attitude when facing difficulties allows him to see problems as opportunities to be seized rather than obstacles to sidestep. His can-do approach

spurred the college to achieve more than most thought possible.

Reliability

Reliability is another word that characterizes Carl. He brought an extraordinary level of credibility to Hillsdale. Not many men can single-handedly convince another man to give a million dollars toward construction of a new building. Carl Cheshier can and did.

Students knew he would be honest, fair-handed and authentic, rare qualities for our day. They saw genuine Christianity lived out through his life.

Love

Perhaps Carl's most remarkable quality is his ability to love. He has a profound love for Christ. His passion for Jesus is evident as he preaches with tender heart and tear-filled eyes.

He deeply loves his wife. Next to Christ, Barbara is the undisputed love of his life, the vital link in his ministry. Much of his success goes directly to her influence.

Brother Cheshier has an unfailing love for the college. The years he served on the Board of Trustees, the enormous sums of money he raised, and his willingness to leave the pastorate and serve as president all reflect irrefutable proof that he loves Hillsdale College.

So, I ask again—"Who was a true friend and neighbor to this college when she found herself in trouble?" Again, I'll tell you—the Good Arkansian.

In view of this exceptional man and his accomplishments, I leave you with the compelling words Christ—"Go, and do thou likewise!" ■

The POWER of SMALL CHURCHES

By Billy Sharpston

Along the streets in large cities, in small towns, in villages and in rural areas, small churches meet the needs of people from all walks of life. What impact do they have on their communities? We have a great heritage in the churches of our land and their work in proclaiming the gospel.

In his book, *Shepherding the Small Church*, Glenn Daman says, "Seventy-five percent of America's churches have an average weekly attendance of 150 or less, yet they often find themselves in the shadow of a few megachurches with boundless entrepreneur-

ial skills and ministry resources. When the pastors of the typically-sized congregation attend church growth and leadership conferences, they can easily come away discouraged and disillusioned, having found little help to impact their ministries."

Zechariah posed the question, "...who hath despised the day of small things?" We understand that God has a place for the existence of small churches. They, too, play an important part in proclaiming the Word of God.

Daman says, "The vitality of a congregation is not found in its size or its programs or budget. The vitality of a congregation is found in its fulfillment of God's purpose for the church. A church that has 5,000 members may be just as unhealthy

and ineffective as a church that has only 50 members and is declining. Conversely, a church with 50 members who are fulfilling God's mission can be as healthy and dynamic as a church with thousands of members."

Unique Personality

Therefore, these [small] churches do not need to be looked down on as having no importance. There is a need for their existence in our society. Churches do not close because they lack members and financial resources. Churches close when they are no longer effective in fulfilling God's purpose for them.

God has given the small church many gifts. These are to be used for a purpose. These expectant communities of grace march forward under the lordship of Christ. They know God still calls the small churches to fulfill the Great Commission (Matthew 28:19-20).

Small congregations are unique to themselves in that they have their own personality. They are a close-knit people with strong family ties within the church. Many grow up in the church from one generation to the next. They assume leadership roles and develop fundamental biblical beliefs in the scriptures.

A pastor can be effective in leadership

by making sure no one is overlooked. In a small church setting, he is the care-giver and counselor to all in the congregation. Everybody is important, and that's the way it should be.

All we need do is look at the power of joyous optimism in small churches. For instance, the early church knew that in spite of their small numbers, lack of money and personal limitations, they were going to win. They went out in joy even in the midst of persecution. That's

cious. Some would call them tough. They do not give up when faced with problems. Neither do they experience rapid shift of membership. In membership participation, the majority of small churches have not varied 10 percent in any given decade.

Where the large church may be unable to reach, the small church can carry on the gospel in their community, support missions both home and foreign. Small churches are useful. They

In an expensive world, the small church has remained plain.

In a complex world, the small church has remained simple.

In a rational world, the small church has kept feelings.

In a mobile world, the small church has been an anchor.

In an anonymous world, the small church calls us by name—even by nickname!

Is it possible that small churches have no place in this 21st century high-tech, megachurch, user-friendly society?

the spirit in which we must win the victory today if we continue as the church (even though small) triumphant. Jesus said, "Be of good cheer, for I have overcome the world!"

Special Place

Is it possible that small churches have no place in this 21st century high-tech, megachurch, user-friendly society? In my opinion, the small church will be with us until Jesus comes. They are made up of people who have a commitment to the Lord and to His work.

There should be no sense of shame for the existence of small churches in our society. They influence a great number of people in their community. They may not have the staff or program that large churches do, but their programs, though simple in many ways, are effective. Worship, family and fellowship are important to them.

A strong sense of preaching and teaching the Word of God, standards and purpose are vital. A desire to belong to a small group is prevalent in many communities. If a community has a small church with growth potential, that church should make a strong effort to evangelize.

Tenacious Outlook

It is quite interesting that small churches remain, while everything else is changing. Small churches are tena-

will not die. Often without an abundance of funds, many times without a pastor, deprived of denominational contact or intentionally independent from outside connections, the small congregation will persevere.

Many members resist the rational proposals to "save our church" through moving, merging, yoking or teaming. Members have faith that they can hold on somehow. In the words of one frustrated denominational executive, "Small churches are the toughest: they won't grow and they won't go away."

Restored Dimension

So what is the conclusion of the matter regarding small churches and their role in our society? Small churches have restored a basic dimension to the fullness of biblical theology. Small churches have reclaimed the importance of times, events and history. Small churches have memorialized the significance of the people, the land and the particular places. Small churches have retained the "good feelings, rhythms, seasons and experiences worth remembering." Someone spoke of it in the following manner:

In a big world, the small church has remained intimate.

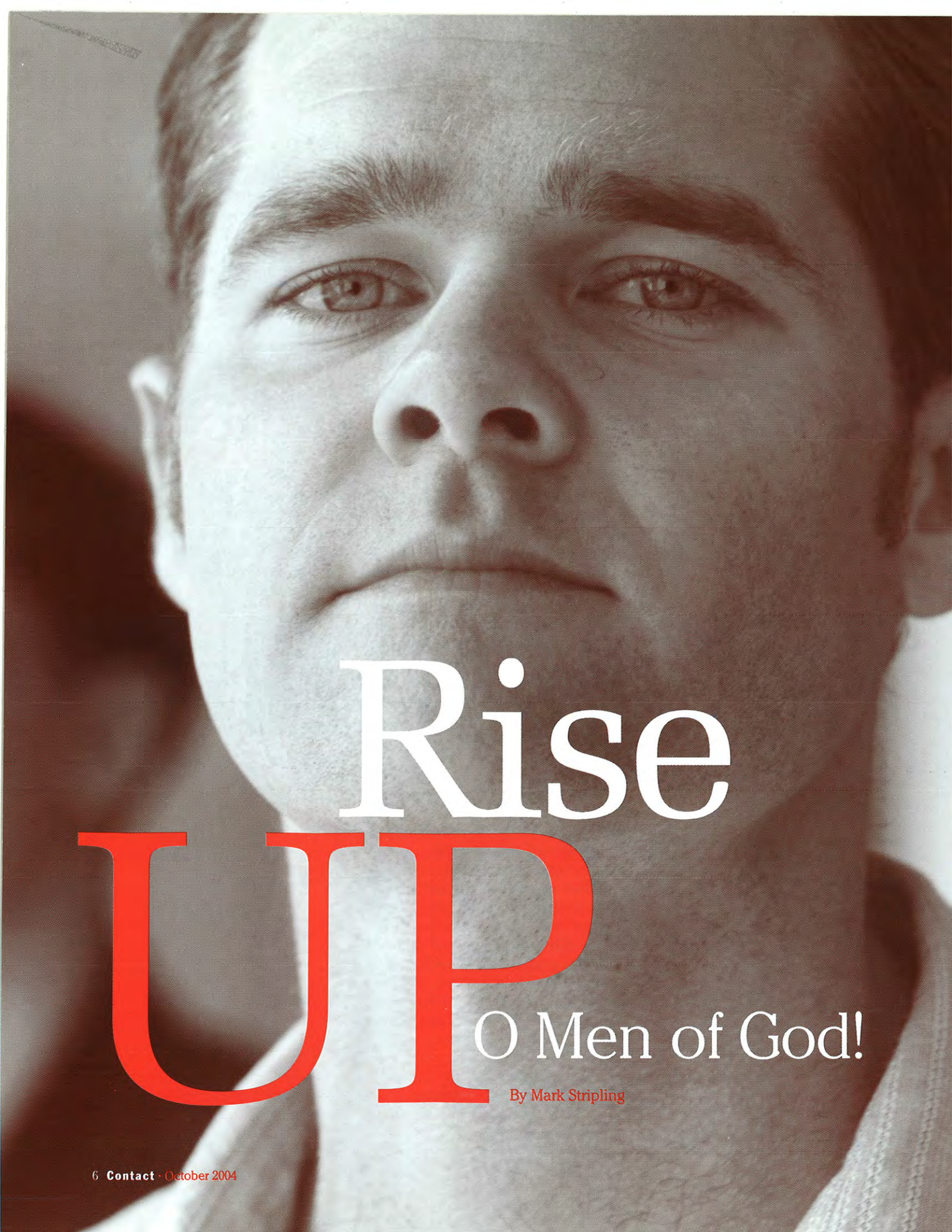
In a fast world, the small church has been steady.

As a result, small churches provide the wonderful love of God in even the most difficult of circumstances. As one said, "There is a place for small churches in a world where people plant their own trees." ■



ABOUT THE WRITER:

Dr. Billy Sharpston pastors Daillyville Free Will Baptist Church in Waverly, Ohio.



Rise UP

O Men of God!

By Mark Stripling

Every church needs a strong, active men's group. Thank God for the Women Nationally Active for Christ. If it were not for them, not much would be happening in many Free Will Baptist churches.

Perhaps as a pastor or leader in your church you tried to organize a church work day or visitation program. The day arrives for the event to happen, and there are more women and children in attendance than men.

Maybe you tried to begin a men's Bible study or have a monthly time when men gather for prayer. The numbers start out pretty good, but in a few months attendance dwindles to one.

Why does this happen and are there any answers to these concerns? Can a men's program work in the local Free Will Baptist church? Yes, a men's work is possible, and here's how to make it happen in your church.

Purpose

The first area to consider is the purpose or goal of the program. There is a biblical basis for a ministry focused on men. From the beginning God identified the man's role in the world, family and church.

Adam was commanded to be the leader and caretaker of what God created. Adam was placed in the leadership role in his relationship with Eve and then with the family. God later set forth the plan that men lead the church when He instituted the office of pastor.

The qualifications of deacons in Acts 6 and I Timothy 3 show clearly that men are needed in the church. The role of men is well defined in Ephesians 5:23-33.

Then what should be the purpose of a men's ministry? Perhaps it should be according to the biblical pattern

and principles God set forth in His Word. How can we make this happen?

The Home

Training begins in the home. Fathers must be role models for their sons and daughters of what a Christian man is. There has been a shift in society in recent years concerning the role of men in the home.

Men are more focused on providing the physical, material and educational needs of their family rather than their spiritual and eternal needs. Men want to make sure their children are well dressed, educated and their personal retirement is secure rather than being spiritually mature and leaders in our churches. While all are valid needs, which are our priorities?

The Church

The next area of training is in the church. We train our children on rigorous schedules to be great athletes and musicians, but we lack that same intensity when it comes to training them in the church and about spiritual growth. Church budgets reflect where our emphasis is. Do we provide opportunities for children, youth and young adult men to gain experience in spiritual leadership?

The Denomination

The next area of training is the denomination. We must provide places for training children, youth and young

adults or there will be no future for Free Will Baptist churches. Do we as men support our Sunday Schools, youth camps and denominational colleges? Free Will Baptist men must get involved. Have you ever wondered why our missions departments have been so successful in spreading the gospel? Perhaps it is because our ladies have committed themselves to the support of these departments financially, prayerfully and with personal involvement. Imagine how much more we could do as a movement with a widespread network of men who are trained, prepared and committed to the Great Commission!

Priorities

Pastor, where does the ministry to men rank on your list of priorities? Does the idea of men organized and focused threaten your authority as a pastor? It should not. Men organized and focused is and can be one of the greatest blessings to your ministry. Leadership. That is what every church needs and desires. This should be one of the priorities of the church. We should be leading men to Christ and equipping them to be the men God wants them to be.

God has given talents and abilities to men that can be used in the local church and denomination, if we would allow them the opportunity. There are great financial, educational and leadership minds within our ranks. Let God use them. Is our priority to build our church or God's church?

Men, make yourself available to God and then to your church and pastor. God wants to use those who are willing to be used. Are you willing to be used?

Preparation

Men must be prepared. Throughout the scriptures, God used those men who were prepared. If you have a men's meeting, be prepared. Have a plan for the meeting. Have a goal for the ministry.

I am blessed to pastor a church with a strong Master's Men program. We are a part of district, state and national Master's Men organizations. The men of our church use this program as a training ground for our young men to develop leadership for our church and denomination for generations to come. We focus on the youth camp of our state and support it financially and spiritually.

Perhaps you have questions about our denomination's program for men. Ask questions and correspond with Ken Akers, our national director at ken@nafwb.org. The program works and that is spoken from experience.

Men, pastors need you. Our denomination needs you. Determine your purpose. Set your priorities. Get and be prepared. God will use you. "Rise up, O men of God!" ■



ABOUT THE WRITER: Reverend Mark Stripling pastors First Free Will Baptist Church in North Little Rock, Arkansas. He is a graduate of Free Will Baptist Bible College.



Five ways to put a new face on Halloween.

Christian Alternative to HALLOWEEN

By Barry Raper

Life is full of agonizing choices. One of the hardest for me happens at the grocery store every time I stand in front of that ocean of cereal boxes trying to make a choice. There are too many options. What should take a few seconds winds up taking minutes. Some choices in life must be made on the spur of the moment as situations arise. However, others can be made ahead of time.

Take Halloween for example. What should we do as Christians during this widely celebrated day? Will your children participate in some of the activities surrounding the day? What stance should your church take on the issue of Halloween?

While we are not able to draw hard and fast rules that can apply to all individuals and all churches, we can draw principles from the Bible that will help us make right decisions about Halloween.

What to Avoid

Romans 12:9 says we are to abhor that which is evil. Our culture is fascinated with movies that focus on evil and darkness. Movies from the past such as *A Nightmare on Elm Street*, *Friday the 13th* and *Halloween* all have a sick, twisted message that cannot be good for Christians. Instead of seeing how close we can walk in step with the world and its

way of thinking, we must come out from among them and be separate.

Remember the old saying, "Play with fire and you're going to get burned." We cannot expect to mingle with this dark side of Halloween and not be affected by it. Christians should avoid anything associated with evil. It is not to be taken lightly. God is opposed to evil.

What to Hold

Romans 12:9 also says we are to "cleave to that which is good." We Christians should be glued to things that are good. We are to live a life full of good works, so that God gets the glory.

Jesus said, "Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven" (Matt. 5:16).

The Apostle Paul makes mention of what should be found in our minds in Philippians 4:8, "Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things."

This is a good filter for our minds. There is a direct link between our beliefs and our behavior. What fills our minds determines the choices we make.

Five Alternatives

In light of the above principles, some creative alternatives are available for Christians to consider this Halloween. You may already have it nailed down that you will not participate in any way, and that is all right. If that's your conviction under God, then it is best to live by it.

Last year we did not take our daughter around to "Trick-or-Treat." However, there are a number of positive alternatives that deserve consideration. Before listing some of the alternatives, look at a helpful explanation provided by Steve Russo concerning alternatives.

In his book, *What's a Christian to Do?*, Russo says, "Remember that participating in an alternative is not the same thing as celebrating the holiday. When we celebrate a holiday like Halloween, we are publicly bringing some sort of honor to the day. When we participate

Instead of seeing how close we can walk in step with the world and its way of thinking, we must come out from among them and be separate.

in an alternative, we are taking part in providing a choice between Halloween and some other event."

With this and our biblical principles in mind, here are five Christian alternatives to Halloween:

Reverse Door-to-Door Evangelism

Instead of going door to door to get candy, present gospel tracts to people who come to your door during Halloween.

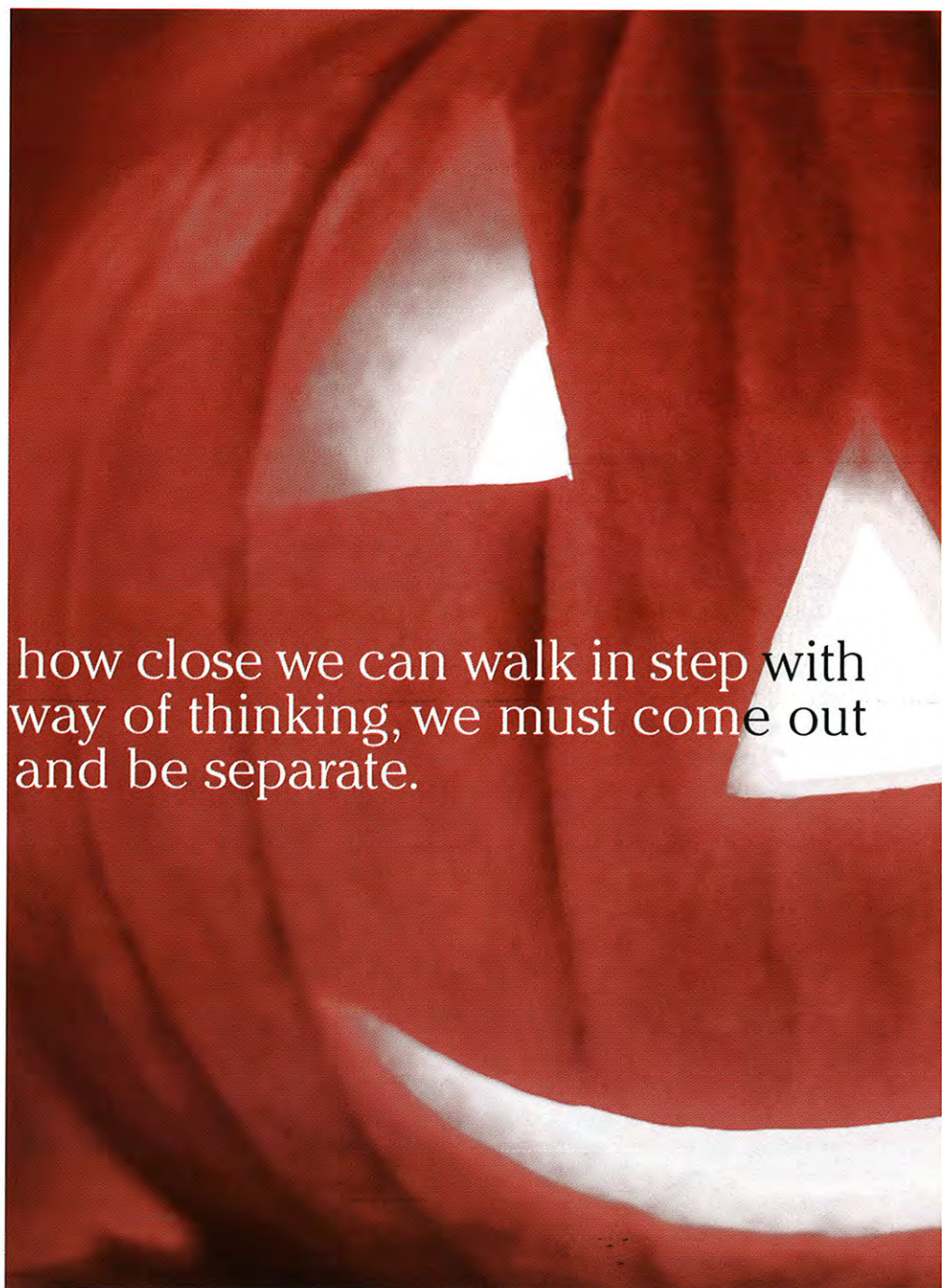
Costume Party at Church

The idea is to allow children to come dressed in costumes with one rule in mind. There can be no costumes associated with evil—no witches, spooks and such. Some have

a costume party based on Bible characters.

Harvest Festival

This would be the Christian alternative to a Halloween carnival. The emphasis is harvest, not Halloween.



Progressive Dinner/Hayride

Our church did this last year. The kids have a hay ride that goes to several houses. At each house a different portion of the "dinner" is served. For example, at the first house, they might receive some chips. The second stop

could be hot dogs. The final stop might be dessert.

Judgment House

This has been used effectively in our area. The idea is to present a real-life drama in which individuals are confronted with the reality of Heaven and

Hell. It must be sound biblically. It also takes a lot of helpers and a lot of work.

Overcome Evil with Good

Good can come out of alternatives offered during this time of year. Last year in our church, a group of young people accompanied by adults attended a "judgment house" at another local church that presented a vivid picture of Hell and Heaven. This type of alternative is used effectively in our area and has had a big impact on the youth.

However, this time it had an impact (eternally) on one of the adults who attended. She received Jesus Christ as her Savior. She had been coming to church for a few months. God had been working on her for quite some time. He used this event to bring her to saving faith in Christ.

That church was able to have a positive impact on the community. They obeyed the admonition of Romans 12:21, "Be not overcome of evil, but overcome evil with good." We have a Savior who has conquered death, Hell and the grave. The resurrected Christ has the power to save no matter what day it might be. Including Halloween. ■



ABOUT THE WRITER:

Reverend Barry Raper pastors Red Bay Free Will Baptist Church in Red Bay, Alabama. He is a graduate of Free Will Baptist Bible College.



A Love for Halloween

By Janice Donoho



I have a confession—I love Halloween.

All right, maybe it's the fall season I actually love, and Halloween happens to land during that time. But whatever the reason, I do love Halloween. I know some are thinking, A Christian should never love Halloween! That's the devil's holiday! While Halloween may have a reputation as Satan's holiday, I was brought up loving it without thinking about satanic matters. We celebrated it to the glory of God.

School Days

I attended a small public school right outside our town. Like all schools, we had parties for every occasion—Christmas, Valentine's Day, St. Patrick's Day and, of course, Halloween. Halloween at school included a costume con-

a witch, that opened a door to share my faith with them. They understood and never made fun of me.

My classmates knew I was a Christian. One friend who heard that I would be participating in Halloween festivities at school asked why I was allowed to attend. She thought all Christians banned Halloween. I told her I wanted to show people that Christians enjoy life better because we are Christians. I went on to talk about God's love and why I became a Christian.

Every church Halloween party ended with a hayride, a devotion and testimonies of faith in God.

test between all the grades. After the contest we returned to our classrooms for a huge party with cookies, cupcakes, candy, punch and games. I was allowed to participate and dress up in a costume, but there was always one unbending rule—never dress in satanic or evil costumes.

I was taught that in every circumstance or situation I could uplift the Lord and glorify Him. My parents taught me that this holiday was a great opportunity to witness to friends. If my friends asked me why I didn't dress up as

She sat next to me and patiently listened to all I had to say. When I finished, she stared at me and said, "Wow! That's cool." I didn't lead her to the Lord that day, but the seed was planted and I got that chance to plant it because I was allowed to participate in Halloween activities at school.

Church Parties

My church did something fun every year at Halloween. We called them Harvest parties instead of Halloween par-

ties, and we always had the best parties. We would dress up and have a contest for best costume and most unique costume, but there was always a rule prohibiting evil or satanic costumes such as witches, ghosts and goblins. We ran relay races, bobbed for apples and had so many games we were afraid we could not play them all.

The best part of the night was watching the adults. Halloween seemed to bring out the kid in them. One year they had a pie-eating contest and couldn't use their hands. It was great to see the adults in that way. They showed me that Halloween could be fun for Christians.

The night always concluded with a hayride through the country and a devotion around the bonfire. After the devotion, we had a time for testimonies. Everyone, it seemed, had something to praise the Lord for—and did. Those times will always be special for me. They taught me that Christians can take a devil's holiday, turn it into the best fun and praise the Lord at the same time.

I loved dressing up for Halloween. That was my favorite part. I like dressing up as something completely different from who I am. Oh, yes, I remember the years when I dressed up as Big Bird and Princess Leia. Today is no different. I lead our Ladies Prayer Group, and last Halloween we decided to have a Halloween costume party. We had characters ranging from Raggedy Ann and Andy to the Cat in the Hat to the Statue of Liberty to a Chicago Cub's fan.

After the contest we had a scavenger hunt outside. I'm sure people passing by thought it was hilarious watching 12 women dressed in costumes running around like proverbial chickens with their heads cut off. The evening ended on a great note with a wonderful devotion. It was the perfect night.

Trunk or Treat

Last year our church did something entirely different. We decided to have a safe alternative for neighborhood kids.

We called it "Trunk or Treat."

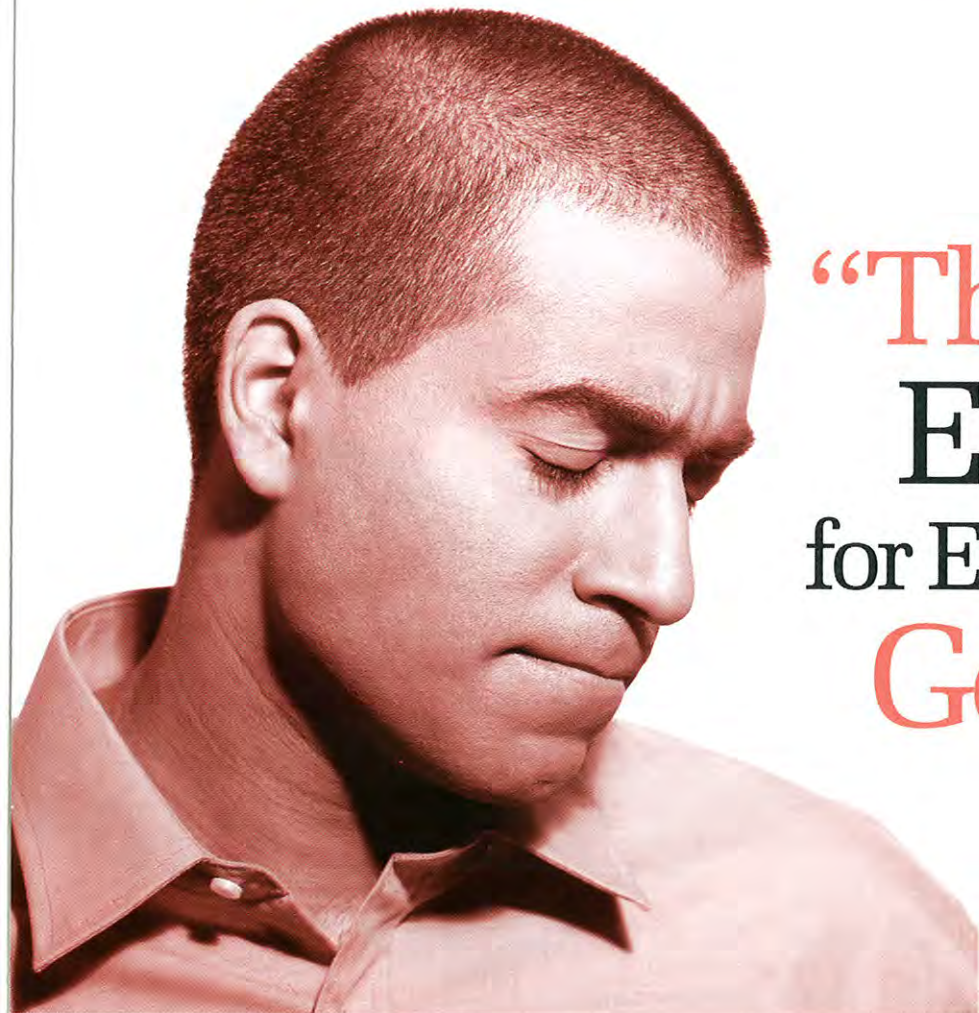
Church members parked their cars in the church parking lot and filled the trunks with candy and toys. They had the choice of whether or not to decorate their cars.

The last car in line gave a church tract to each family that came through the line. It was a great witness to the community, and it also gave the children a safe place to come and still enjoy Halloween. We already have plans to make it bigger and better this year.

Many churches sponsor alternatives to Halloween, and "Trunk or Treat" and church parties are some of those alternatives. Christians can take the so-called devil's holiday and use it to win people to Christ. I appreciate the fact that my parents did not make me sit out this holiday each year. If I had, I would have missed so many opportunities, memories and blessings. ■



ABOUT THE WRITER: Janice Donoho is a graduate of Free Will Baptist Bible College and a member of Cornerstone Free Will Baptist Church in Nashville, Tennessee. She works as secretary to the Director of Missionary Assistance in the Home Missions Department.



“Thoreauly” Equipped for Every Good Work

By Robert J. Morgan

Somewhere, someone is sitting down, glancing at this page and reading these words in a state of utter exhaustion. Perhaps you're a pastor or you work on a church staff. Perhaps a deacon, trustee or children's worker. Perhaps a parent, a caregiver or a community volunteer. To that person, I'd like to share a word of personal testimony.

Five Hard Years

As I write this, I'm recovering from a prolonged period of habitual fatigue that began five years ago when several events converged in my life. My wife's multiple sclerosis worsened, requiring all kinds of adjustments in our schedule and lifestyle. My daughter's waywardness took a sharp left turn, causing us days and nights of anxiety. We opened a new wing of our church, leading to accelerated growth and heavier demands. My writing ministry took off full force, doubling my work load and presenting me with new sets of deadlines every month. During this

time, I passed the half-century mark and tried to ignore the silent grumblings of an aging body.

In the middle of it all, my dear mother passed away. The responsibility for her mountain home and acreage fell on my shoulders, and my sister and I opened it as a bed and breakfast.

Being a workaholic, I pressed right on, working seven days a week and putting in 10 to 15 hour days. It all caught up to me when three book deadlines came due the same day! To make matters worse, we were at that moment launching a major campaign at church while coping with the resignations of two staff members.

Thoreau in France

Realizing I was spent, I took some time off—a week in the mountains followed by time with a friend bumming around France. I took two books with me—the Bible and Henry David Thoreau's *Walden*. Perhaps on another occasion, I'll tell how the Bible spoke

to me. For now, I want to quote Thoreau a little. See if any of this applies to you...

- *Many are concerned about the monuments of the West and the East—to know who built them. For my part, I should like to know who in those days did not build them—who were above such trifling.*
- *Worst of all (is) when you are a slave-driver of yourself.*
- *He has no time to be anything but a machine.*
- *A man is rich in proportion to the number of things which he can afford to let alone.*
- *Our life is frittered away by detail. An honest man has hardly need to count more than his ten fingers, or in extreme cases he may add his ten toes, and lump the rest. Simplicity, simplicity, simplicity! I say, let your affairs be as two or three, and not a hundred.... Keep your accounts on your thumbnail.*
- *Simplify, simplify.*

Realignment Goals

As I read those words, I thought about the way my dad used to clean out the springs behind our house in the hills. Those springs supplied our water. When they were well-tended, our water was pure and plentiful. But after he passed away, the springs were neglected and our water supply gradually became muddy and meager.

The Bible says, "All my springs are in thee" (Psalm 87:7). If we're going to have living water flowing from our inmost being, we've got to tend the springs. So I made some...well, not resolutions as much as realignments. Here's how I recorded it in my journal:

Realignments:

Seeing that: (1) I've faced five years of difficult problems and demanding responsibilities; and (2) that my reserves are drained and my gauges are low; and that (3) I want my remaining years to be more productive for the Lord than all previous ones...

Therefore, I want to make some midlife realignments:

1. To reclaim my mornings for study. It's necessary to recover much more time during my week-day mornings (Monday-Friday) for pure study—to the ministry of the Word and of prayer. This means keeping a "closed door," allowing few distractions (especially phone and e-mail), and being available to just an open Bible and notepad, as it were.
2. To leave my office door open in the afternoons, signaling my availability to the needs of others.
3. To allocate time each day for exercise.
4. To take an extra weeknight (Monday, Tuesday or Thursday) to be at home with my wife, Katrina.
5. To take Saturdays off (more or less).
6. And to reduce all other work as necessary to meet these realignments.

Change Now for Tomorrow

This has meant changes in numerous areas. At church, we've adjusted my role so as to turn over the day-by-day administration to someone else. I now devote my time to teaching and preaching, to vision casting, to mentoring a handful of college guys, and to making critical pastoral and evangelistic prospects. And I do little else. In the writing side of my ministry, I'm determined to be more cautious taking on assignments. In my personal life, I'm doing less—but enjoying it more.

Remember Paul's advice to the church leaders of Ephesus? He said, "Take heed, therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers" (Acts 20:28). We must take care of ourselves or we'll be in no condition to take care of our flocks.

Perhaps you need to make some realignments, too. I'm sure they'll be different from mine, but I wanted to share my testimony to prompt you to consider taking a little time away—maybe in a tent by the lake or at a nearby state park or resort.

If nothing else, go sit Elijah-like under the nearest juniper tree. Take your Bible

and a good book. Rest. Think. Ponder. Pray. Make some realignments if you need to. Cut out some things. Say "No" to something. Too many of us in the ministry are collapsing from exhaustion. We're burning out faster than replacements are arriving. We need the wisdom of God to regulate our lives at a sane and sanctified pace.

We need to tend the springs...
to take heed to ourselves...
and to simplify, simplify! ■



ABOUT THE WRITER:

Reverend Robert J. Morgan has pastored Donelson Free Will Baptist Church in Nashville, Tennessee, more than 20 years. He has written 15 books.

If nothing else,
go sit Elijah-like
under the nearest
juniper tree. Take your
Bible and a good
book. Rest. Think.
Ponder. Pray.

Smarter



Yes, the Bible often compares people to these creatures. Consider Psalm 44:21-22, "Shall not God search this out? For he knoweth the secrets of the heart. Yea, for thy sake are we killed all the day long; we are counted as sheep for the slaughter."

Isaiah 53:6a, "All we like sheep have gone astray." Zechariah 13:7, "Awake, O sword, against my shepherd... smite the shepherd, and the sheep shall be scattered." Matthew 10:16, "Behold, I send you forth as sheep in the midst of wolves: be ye therefore wise as serpents, and harmless as doves."

Sheep are "counted for slaughter" and they go astray. They scatter when harm comes to the shepherd, not even putting up a fight for their leader. When they are sent into dangerous situations, they need special instructions to tell them of the danger—their instincts provide no protection.

Know the Right Voice

Yet, there is some hope for these animals and for the people to whom they compare. John 10 speaks of the shepherd and the sheep. The focus of this chapter is the Good Shepherd who is Jesus Christ, our Lord. But there is also a picture of the sheep—and maybe they are not as dumb and helpless as we first thought.

Sheep know the shepherd and they know his voice. "To him the porter openeth, and sheep hear his voice" (v. 3). "For they know his voice" (v. 4). "For they know not the voice of strangers" (v. 5). "I am the good shepherd, and know my sheep, and am known of mine" (v. 14). Even with

lambs and many mothers in the flock, each lamb knows its own mother by her call and each mother knows its own lamb.

Sheep learn to know the shepherd's call in the same way that they know the calls of the other sheep. A good shepherd spends his time during the lambing with the sheep, gently speaking to the sheep giving birth and then to their lambs, teaching them by his presence and his words to trust him and know his voice. Real sheep know their shepherd's voice and they do his bidding.

Hear the Right Voice

Sheep know their own names and they know that the shepherd knows their names. Verse three states, "...He calleth his own sheep by name, and leadeth them out." They follow the shepherd because he calls them by their names he has lovingly given them.

Sheep know when the shepherd uses their names and when a hireling uses a fake. They can tell the difference and will not react to the stranger. "All that ever came before me are thieves and robbers: but the sheep did not hear them," (v. 8). Real sheep know to listen to their own shepherd.

Trust the Right Shepherd

Sheep trust the shepherd to lead them. He leads them to the best pasture and the best resting places—they know that he knows where the best food and the best water can be found. Verse four says, "...He goeth before them, and the

Sheep

By Joanna Felts

Have you noticed that sheep get a bum rap? Discussions about sheep include comments like these—"Sheep are so dumb! Sheep can't even drink from a running stream or they'll drown." They are defined as timid, defenseless creatures and when compared to people, a "sheep" is someone easily influenced or led (Encyclopedia Britannica 2003). They get lost or misled easily and don't know their way home.

sheep follow him."The good shepherd does not send the sheep out, he goes before them—he carefully leads them.

Psalm 23, that famous psalm of comfort by a shepherd about the Shepherd, says, "The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not want. He maketh me to lie down in green pastures: he leadeth me beside the still waters." The good shepherd looks out for the well-being of his sheep and makes sure that they have rest, food and water. Real sheep follow their shepherd and depend on him for their every need.

Flee from the Right Enemy

Sheep know to flee from the stranger. "And a stranger will they not follow, but will flee from him" (v.5). Fleeing is sometimes perceived as wimpy and cowardly. However, I think sheep have it right—sometimes the bravest thing we can do is flee. Some things are not worth standing around to experience or watch, and the sheep know to flee from the stranger and all he offers.

And what about this stranger—just who is he? The Bible tells us that Satan masquerades as an angel of light, as a wolf in sheep's clothing, and that he comes as a lion seeking whom he can devour. Real sheep know the stranger for who he is and what he is capable of doing.

Responses to the Shepherd

Oh, I agree that sheep cannot do well on their own. They would starve, or drown or be eaten or be led astray to danger. And yet, who has it right—those who don't know how to get along without the Shepherd or those who think they can do it on their own? What problems we find ourselves in when we try to live life on our own terms. I don't know about you, but that is not a picture I would choose to save under the title "Great Memories."

What about the sheep who listen to the One on whom they can rightly depend? We can expect safety and rest and perfect care from the true Shepherd. But what happens to those who refuse to listen to the sound of the Shepherd's voice and refuse to follow Him? Think of those

times in our lives when the Great Shepherd comforted, gave us confidence in a tough decision, or even the times He laughed with us in our joys.



Real Sheep

And so, we ask ourselves, "Who are the real sheep?" They are the ones who know their Shepherd's voice and do His bidding, those who listen to their own Shepherd. They are the sheep who follow their Shepherd and depend on Him for their every need. And they are those that know the stranger for who he is and what he is capable of doing. It seems that real sheep have more going for them than those who pretend-to-be-sheep or those who deliberately refuse to be sheep—I would say that the real sheep are smarter than we think. ■



ABOUT THE WRITER: Mrs. Joanna Felts is a member of First Free Will Baptist Church in Clovis, California, where her husband, Dan, pastors.



OH Ohio Adopts \$546,000 Budget

• Gahanna

GAHANNA, OH—Delegates to the 66th annual Ohio State Association which met June 25-26 at Gahanna FWB Church approved a half-million dollar

budget, according to Clerk Mike Stokes. The funds will be distributed according to the following formula: State Office (47%), National Association (30%), State Missions (15%), Ohio Pastors' Retirement (5%), State Youth (3%).

Moderator Robert Prichard was elected to his 11th term, Clerk Mike Stokes to his 21st term. Four hundred people registered for the session, including 73 ministers and 10 deacons.

The association presented a plaque to Executive Secretary Edwin Hayes in appreciation for his service to Ohio churches.

Reverend Hayes (53) has served 12 years as executive secretary. He moderated the Ohio State Association seven years (1986-1993). He also serves on the national Sunday School and Church Training Board.

Three pastors preached sermons developing the association theme, "Elements of a Victorious Church." Pastor Tom Jones (Three Rivers FWB Church), Tim Stout (Heritage FWB Church) and Mark Rucker (First Springfield FWB Church) addressed the worship sessions.

Association events included a workshop on the CLEAR Learning System to explain the new Sunday School curriculum.

The 2005 state association will meet at Gahanna FWB Church in Gahanna.

Foundation Delivers Endowment Gifts

ANTIOCH, TN—The Free Will Baptist Foundation delivered more than \$66,000 in endowment gifts to various Free Will Baptist ministries for the period ending June 30, 2004. The gifts came from endowment funds managed by the Foundation, according to William Evans, director. For the first six months of 2004, these gifts were delivered to the following ministries:

BEYOND BELIEF



Foreign (International) Missions	\$ 20,976.08
FWB Family Ministries	\$ 15,165.85
State and Local Ministries	\$ 8,363.05
Free Will Baptist Bible College	\$ 5,273.67
Home Missions	\$ 4,153.57
Master's Men	\$ 3,075.00
Board of Retirement	\$ 2,807.06
California Christian College	\$ 1,673.69
The Together Way	\$ 1,507.21
Hillsdale FWB College	\$ 1,274.26
Contact Magazine	\$ 528.56
Seminary of the Cross	\$ 517.98
WNAC	\$ 447.90
International Fellowship of FWB Churches	\$ 277.02
FWB Foundation	\$ 129.17
National Commissions	\$ 41.23
Total	\$ 66,211.30

Endowments are permanent gifts invested so that income is available for ministry. These gifts continue to give year after year. The Foundation manages gifts for every national agency and will accept gifts to these endowments in any amount. For information about endowments, please contact the Foundation at 877-336-7575. In the last nine years, the Foundation has delivered over \$716,000 to denominational ministries.

Texas Registers 197 for 90th Session

HENDERSON, TX—The 90th annual session of the Texas State Association met June 9-11 at First FWB Church in Henderson, with the theme of "Practicing His Precepts." Clerk Marcus Brewer said 197 people registered for the meeting, including 31 ministers and 12 out-of-state visitors. For the first time, preregistration was made available to attendees; 71 preregistered either by mail or by internet.

Youth service projects and competitive activities were scheduled Wednesday and Thursday, and the Texas WAC held a business session with worship services Thursday morning.

Dr. Tim York, National Association moderator, delivered the keynote messages Wednesday and Thursday evenings. A Thursday morning Pastors' Conference included messages by Texas pastors Bill Van Winkle (Bryan) and Russell Johnson (Bellevue), followed by a joint service with Texas WAC led by Mike Cousineau, missionary to Côte d'Ivoire.

Moderator Keith Woody presided over the meeting and was re-elected to another one-year term. Other state officers elected

were Assistant Moderator Clarence Hearron (one-year term) and Assistant Clerk Chuck Vaughan (two-year term). Clerk Marcus Brewer and Hillsdale Trustee Frank Gregory continue to serve out their current two-year terms.

Delegates approved budgets totaling \$83,050: State Office (\$29,650), State Missions Board (\$47,200) and Christian Education Board (\$6,200). An additional \$75,000 budget was approved for distribution of missions giving through the TEAM Plan, with 47% going to Texas State Home Missions, 40% to Foreign Missions and 13% to national Home Missions.

Two constitutional amendments were approved by the voting body; the first clarified the structure and duties of the state's Executive Board; the second changed the amount of state representation fees per church to equal the amount of national representation fees per church.

The 2005 session of the state association will meet June 8-10, at First FWB Church in Duncanville.



Hillsdale Names Tim Eaton President

Lilie Eaton, were active in the inception of the church as a mission. His family has been involved in the Free Will Baptist movement for six generations beginning in the Blue Grass region of Kentucky.

Reverend Eaton was converted in a Tommy Brashear revival meeting at age eight. After dedicating himself to complete obedience in the fall of 1971, he was licensed to preach in 1972 and ordained in December 1973 by the Indian Creek Association in Southwest Missouri. Timothy married Marthajane Evinger of Carthage, Missouri, in 1973. They have three daughters: Tara, Leah and Hope.

Eaton received his Bachelor of Theology degree from Hillsdale FWB College in May 1975. He graduated from Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary (Fort Worth, Texas) with a Master of Divinity degree in July 1979. He holds a Master's in Education degree from the University of Oklahoma where he is a Ph.D. candidate in

Adult Learning and Higher Education Administration.

When asked for a personal comment about the new challenge, Tim said, "I am convinced that the providence of God has been protecting and guiding me throughout my life. I owe a debt of grace and mercy to Jesus Christ who gave Himself as a sacrifice to redeem anyone who will seek forgiveness through Him. As part of my commitment to Christ, I hope to ensure that every Hillsdale student has the same opportunity that I received: that is, to have a good education in a Christian environment."

Brother Eaton began his presidential duties in August.

MOORE, OK—Timothy W. Eaton has been named as eighth president of Hillsdale Free Will Baptist College. He served Hillsdale as vice president for 15 years and was tapped to lead the institution after Carl E. Cheshier announced his retirement this summer after seven years of service.

Eaton was raised in a Christian home in Missouri where he attended First FWB Church of Joplin. His parents, Walter and

FWBBC Student Receives Congressional Medal

NASHVILLE, TN—Joshua Detherage, a sophomore at Free Will Baptist Bible College, received the Congressional Award Gold Medal on June 23 in Washington, D.C. The 18-year-old English/Missions major accepted the award during a presentation ceremony in the Senate Caucus Room of the Russell Senate Building.

The Congressional Award Gold Medal, one of the highest civilian awards given by Congress, is based on volunteer service, physical fitness and personal development. Joshua worked five years to earn the award logging more than 400 hours in volunteer community service, 230 hours of physical fitness and a two-week expedition to Mexico.

His volunteer service included work at a hospital where he gained experience with medical records, admissions, material management and gift shop operation.

He also volunteered more than 150 hours teaching disability awareness through the use of puppets. He presented a puppet show to 18,000 people in a two-year span with the Rappahannock Area Kids on the Block program in Virginia.

Joshua previously earned bronze, silver and gold certificates as well as a bronze medal in the Congressional Awards Program. The homeschooled teen's accomplishments almost did not happen, however. He was in a coma eight days after a driver ran a red light and hit the family car on the way home from church in April 2000. Following four weeks of in-home rehabilitation, Joshua wore an eye

patch six months. The accident left him with permanent damage to his right eye.

Joshua and his parents (Russ and Phyllis Detherage) were members of Heritage FWB Church in Williamsburg, VA, when he completed the Congressional Award Program. They later relocated to Huntsville, AL, where Russ Detherage works for NASA. The Detherages now attend South Park FWB Church in Huntsville.

Joshua said he considers the Congressional Award Program "a door of opportunity." One of his evaluators, Avis M. Petway, said, "Joshua's attention to detail is excellent. He is able to work consistently with many distractions around him."

Susan Bartle, director/coordinator with Rappahannock Area Kids on the Block, commented, "Josh has always put 110% into his volunteer activities and proved to be self-motivated, reliable, always willing to learn and give freely. He's a wonderful young man."

Joshua W. Detherage, Congressional Award Gold Medalist at the Senate Building Rotunda



Virginia Honors Horton, Steele

WOODBIDGE, VA—Two veteran Free Will Baptist ministers received plaques of appreciation, an offering and the thanks of delegates at the 60th annual Virginia State Association which met June 17-18 at Bethel FWB Church in Woodbridge.

Reverends William (Bill) Steele and Lester Horton were cited for decades of faithful service as church planters, pastors, evangelists and community leaders. Steele (79) pastors King of Kings FWB Church (Forest); Horton (74) retired from the pastorate but continues an active preaching ministry.

Moderator Steve Faison was re-elected to a second term, according to state clerk, Vergel Maness. Eighty people registered for the ses-

sion, including 34 ministers, four deacons and 16 lay delegates. Delegates adopted a \$15,400 budget.

The state association theme, "Vision for Victory," was developed by six speakers: Richard Wright (Pastor, Calvary FWB Church), Jack Blanton (Pastor, Stevens Chapel FWB Church), Dave Nobles (Pastor, Bethel FWB Church), Steve Faison (Pastor, Bloss Memorial FWB Church), Richard Barnes (Pastor, Providence FWB Church) and Matt Pinson (President, Free Will Baptist Bible College).

The 2005 state association will meet June 16-17 at Genesis FWB Church in Bristol, Tennessee.

October Designated "Pastor Appreciation Month"

ANTIOCH, TN—The Executive Committee voted to designate October as "Pastor Appreciation Month." This brings the denomination in line with others who also celebrate pastors in the month of October.

West Virginia Church Repairs Widow's Home



HUNTINGTON, WV—More than 20 people from Sunshine FWB Church in Huntington spent July 12-17 repairing the home of a minister's widow, according to Pastor Carl B. Lilly. The Sunshine mission team of adults and teens began

making plans in April after Pastor Lilly learned that Widow Kathleen Canterbury who lives in Williamson (65 miles south of Huntington) needed major repairs to her home.

The mission team was quartered in the Hatfield and McCoy Cabins near Nolan, WV, during the week. Nolan FWB Church fed the team breakfast and dinner each day. The West Williamson FWB Church fed the team lunch daily.

When mission team members arrived at the widow's home, they discovered that the house was located in a cemetery with graves on three sides. Break times found team members sprawled in the cemetery.

Pastor Carl Lilly said the project cost nearly \$4,000 to complete, plus food. The team remodeled two rooms, built steps with a platform at the back of the house, repaired the front porch and covering, built a walkway to the road, carpeted three rooms and furnished a bedroom suite, porch chairs and other household items.

Mrs. Canterbury had no closets in the house. By the time work was completed, she had three new closets. Mrs. Canterbury was hospitalized in Pikeville, KY, with heart problems while repairs were being made. The teens went to the hospital to visit her on Wednesday. She had been praying for someone to help with home repairs.

Pastor Lilly praised the cooperative effort made possible by members of Nolan FWB Church and West Williamson FWB Church. Pastors Earl White and Earsel Ray Taylor worked closely with Lilly in planning and expediting the repairs.

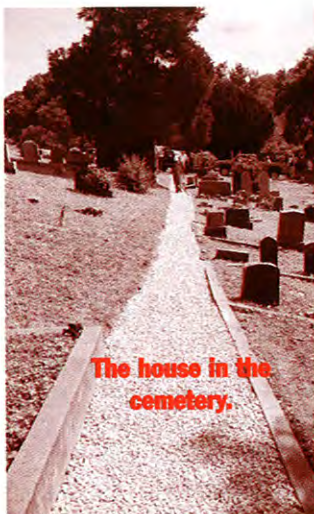
A three-man crew (Danny May, Don Pennington and Paul Thacker) headed up the on-site work teams.

Pastor Lilly said, "Youth from the three churches worked hard, played hard and worshipped together each evening. The Sunshine Church had two teens saved Wednesday night, as did the Nolan Church."

Sunshine FWB Church youth pastor Tom Dyer and teen director Jamie Bailey conferred with Pastor Lilly last spring as the mission project moved from the "good idea" stage to launching the week-long effort. Lilly said, "This was a great blessing to the churches involved and brought tremendous joy to the widow." ■



Mission Team on the widow's front porch.



The house in the cemetery.



Living room repairs get underway.

Dry wall crew in action.



Break time in the cemetery.

Alabama: Between January 2003 and March 2004, attendance at **Sardis FWB Church in Eufaula** surged from 60 to 200. Pastor **Billy Bevan** baptized 25 converts and welcomed 30 new members in the past year. Roll Call Sunday 2004 saw 548 people, almost twice the number the previous year. Pastor Bevan said, "The sky is the limit here, if the devil doesn't stick his nose in ..."

California: Pastor **Dean Long** reports six conversions, three rededications, four new members and nine baptisms at **Shafter FWB Church in Shafter**.

In one 13-day stretch, the new preacher in town to establish a Free Will Baptist church in **Oildale** knocked on 1,490 doors. He came away with 34 good prospects for the mission work. The preacher came out of retirement via the U.S. Marine Corps and 50-year ministry as a FWB pastor to start one more church. If it sounds like an unlikely scenario, remember that this preacher never quits. He's 80-year-old **Edward F. "Butch" Johns**.

Colorado: Pastor **Scott Cheatham** baptized five converts at **Mile High FWB Church in Denver**. Attendance is up from the 20s to the 50s. Members retired long-standing debt on the old building, remodeled the worship center and added new carpet.

Florida: Indiana pastor **Lonnie Skiles'** health forced him to resign and move to Florida. Brother Skiles is battling ALS (Lou Gehrig's Disease). Readers may contact him at 3604 Tindle Road, Plant City, FL 33565. Phone: 813-719-6778.

Illinois: **Crossroads FWB Church in Effingham** celebrated their 23rd anniversary with the Stanley Jones Singers and dinner on the grounds. **John Hollis** pastors.

Heritage FWB Church in Springfield went self-supporting in June, according to Pastor **Ken Doggett**. Some 101 people attended Anniversary Sunday activities. Ninety-one came to Dedication Day to hear Home Missions director **Larry**

Powell speak after architect **Rich Williams** presented the keys for the building to the trustees. The Stanley Jones Singers were on hand to help celebrate.

Mexico: Mexican pastor **Pablo Salazar** died the way every preacher wants to die. He swapped pulpits with a fellow pastor on June 27, preached his sermon and then fell ill with an apparent heart attack in church. Pastor Salazar suffered with renal failure 11 years and had been on dialysis five times a day. The kidney failure came as a result of a chemical spill in a refinery where he worked. He started a mission work between dialysis treatments, walking to nearby housing developments to win people to Christ.

Missouri: Every baptism is important, but Pastor **David McCutcheon** could hardly wait to baptize **Bob Kimmich**. Brother Kimmich was converted during a revival at the church. It isn't often that an 89-year-old man stirs the baptismal waters. This one did. That's the good news from **New Hope FWB Church in Fredericktown**.

North Carolina: **Garner FWB Church** in Garner reports eight conversions and 13 new members. The church honored Pastor **Fred Scott** for 10 years of leadership. The special day was filled with tributes from members, a unique video and numerous gifts.

Ohio: Pastor **Wayne Keith** reports seven conversions at **Pleasant Hill FWB Church in Delaware**.

Eight new members at **Frederick FWB Church in Wheelersburg** have Pastor **Paul Williams** smiling.

Antioch FWB Church in Wheelersburg sends word of 12 conversions and seven baptisms. **Chad Cornell** pastors.

Members of **Oak Hill FWB Church** in **Oak Hill** honored Deacon **Les Miller** for more than 50 years of faithful service. Pastor **Tim Simpson** logged nine years with the congregation. He reports seven conversions and two baptisms.

Oklahoma: **Sunnylane FWB Church** in **Del City** dedicated a 500-seat, \$500,000 sanctuary this spring. **Frank Wiley** pastors.

Pastor **Dan Farmer** received a plaque from state executive director **Ernest Harrison** commemorating more than 50 years in the ministry. Farmer, who has led **First FWB Church in Moore** for 30+ years, is known for his service as a professor at Hillsdale FWB College as well as numerous roles on the state and national levels.

First FWB Church in Duncan presented a plaque to Deacon **Jim Watson** for 45 years of service as music director. **Mike King** pastors.

Members of **Richmond Avenue FWB Church in Allen** moved into their 300-seat sanctuary this spring, according to Pastor **Buddy Drake**. The construction cost \$158,000. More than 240 people were on hand for the dedication service. In the past six years, attendance has risen from 13 to 140.

South Carolina: **Faith FWB Church in Smyrna** purchased two acres on which to relocate. Members renovated an existing structure on the new property in which to worship. **Marshall Nichols** pastors.

Members at **St. John FWB Church in Pamplico** purchased a double-wide mobile home so that newly-ordained pastor **Andrew Gleason** could have a parsonage and live in the church community.

There's a paved parking lot now at **Mt. Carmel FWB Church in York**. Pastor **John Cody** leads the flock.

Riverside FWB Church in Conway dedicated their new sanctuary in June with 135 people and four sermons. Pastor **Mike Gerald** says the congregation did most of the work on the sanctuary.

Tennessee: Pastor **David Weeks** and members of **East Nashville FWB Church** are looking for families moving to or willing to work in **Nashville's** inner city. They want to reach into and make a difference in an area where few churches serve. ■



What Good Thing Can I Do?

By Ken Akers
General Director

Recently, I was reading in Matthew 19:16 About the Rich Young Ruler. I discovered this young man asked several questions of Jesus. At first, I thought his questions were ridiculous. Then I started thinking, there are many people today

asking the same questions.

His first question was, "...what good thing shall I do, that I may have eternal life." How many people today believe that the way to Heaven is by being good enough? I believe people see a great set of scales in Heaven where our good deeds and bad actions are weighed. If the good outweigh the bad, we will get to Heaven. It's amazing how no one ever thinks they won't make it to Heaven.

I may be a little old fashioned, but I believe we should do good just because it's right. I also believe a saved person will want to do right.

I had a discussion the other day with some friends, and they shared how they had been putting people in categories. They had the faithful people of church, the unfaithful people and the borderline group. I thought to myself that I would hate to be classified as borderline as much as I would unfaithful.

The Bible tells us to know to do good and still not do it is a sin. While none of us is perfect, most of us could do better if we tried. Obviously, we all know it is faith in Jesus Christ that gives us eternal life, but doing good along the way may help others reach

that conclusion.

By the way, Jesus answered the rich young ruler's question by telling him he must keep the commandments.

His second question was, "Which?" Do people today select which commandments they want to keep? I believe Jesus knew the young man's heart. He named six. He left off those that deal with honoring God.

Sometimes people are religious without being Christian; there's a big difference. Jesus said, "If you love me you will keep my commandments." I think He meant all of them.

Finally, the young man probably thought he was home free. He said, "I've done all that." Then came his last question, "...what lack I yet?" Jesus told him to sell what he had and follow Him. This was too much. The only way to eternal life and a happy life is to surrender all to Jesus.

Now I have a question. What would Jesus say to you if you asked that last question? While good works won't get us to Heaven, good works will make us want to get closer to Him for whom we are doing it. What would God have you to do? ■



Master's Men
Free Will Baptist
Men's Ministry

Free Will Baptist Ministry Focus



Is There Something Inside Of You?

By Marjorie Workman
Executive Secretary-Treasurer

If you have a burning first-person story, a devotional that you wish everyone could read or perhaps an original piece of art you want to share, you should consider entering the annual Creative Arts Contest sponsored by Women Nationally Active for Christ. Categories include: Photography, art, poetry, devotionals, articles, programs, skits and plays.

Women are encouraged to express themselves through themes in keeping with WNAC's purpose—to know Christ and to make Him known in the family, the church, the community and the world. Entries provide possible material for *CoLaborer* magazine and should be unpublished work. The deadline for submissions is March 1. For more information on

submission requirements and contest rules, go to www.nafwb.org/wnac or call 877-767-7662.

Winners are announced during the annual Women Nationally Active for Christ Convention held in conjunction with the National Association of Free Will Baptists each July. Winners for the 2004 Creative Arts Contest are:

WNAC+
WOMEN
NATIONALLY
ACTIVE FOR
CHRIST

To order
CoLaborer maga-
zine for yourself
or a friend, call
(877) 767-7662

Free Will Baptist Ministry Focus

Articles

"The Widow's Plight"
Betty Griswold Jones
Kirkville, MO

"Poison Ivy and Venemous
Snakes"
Anne Worthington
Ayden, NC

"Homeland Security—Are You
Ready?"
Betty Griswold Jones
Kirkville, MO

Art

"Eternal Love"
Kay Brown
Charleston, AR

"He is Risen"
Kay Brown
Charleston, AR

"In My Father's House"
Janis Williams
Antioch, TN

Skits

"Unwrapping Your Spiritual
Gifts"
Mary Burris
Lowell, AR

"A WAC Autopsy"
Sue Winchester
St. Louis, MO

"Vessels for Service"

Jan Efird
Elm City, NC

Programs

"Set Your Table for a Tea Party"
Ruth Bivens
Monett, MO

"Working Out With Jesus"
Sue Winchester
St. Louis, MO

"Soldiers of the Cross"
Pamela Hackett
Boiling Springs, SC

Devotionals

"When Teardrops Fall"
Waynelle Scott
Marshall, MO

"The Worth of Prayer"
Waynelle Scott
Marshall, MO

"Putting Christmas Away"
Freeda Lucas
Cromona, KY

Plays

"The Living Will"
Wanda Kellett
Lawton, OK

"Fawlen Angel"

Donna Jewell
Perry, GA

"Climb the Mountain of Faith"
Wanda Kellett
Lawton, OK

Photography

"Ancient Words of Old"
Kay Brown
Charleston, AR

"And God Created"
Lisa Ball
Fresno, CA
(previously Millington, TN)

"...So Panteth My Soul After
Thee"
Kay Brown
Charleston, AR

Poetry

"Sand"
Vicki Turner
Carterville, MO

"Tributary"
Vicki Turner
Carterville, MO

"The Down Hill Runner"
Ruth Bivens
Monett, MO

Evans Announces Retirement



Director William Evans announced his retirement effective July 31, 2005, at the April board meeting. Brother Evans served as an assistant to Mr. Herman Hersey from July 1, 1990, to July 31, 1993, before becoming director.

Bill says, "It has been a wonderful experience and has given me a greater appreciation of our denomination than I ever thought possible. We have a great staff and board, and I expect good things to continue happening."

The board is in the process of accepting resumes of those interested in being considered for his replacement. Because time is short, the board announces the following schedule:

1. Resumes will be accepted until October 15, 2004, at the Retirement Office, P. O. Box 5002, Antioch, TN 37011-5002. Please mark them "Resume Confidential."
2. All resumes will be gathered in notebooks as received and delivered to the Search Committee of the board at the same time.
3. The committee will review the resumes and begin the evaluation process. Later in October, the top prospects will be contacted for personal interview with the committee or entire board.
4. Plans now call for an announcement of the new director on or before January 1, 2005.
5. Please pray for the committee during this process.

Alabama

Michael Waddell to First Church, Florence from Cofer's Chapel Church, Nashville, TN

Montana

James Taylor to First Church, Billings from Friendly Church, Norwalk, CA

North Carolina

Scott Coghill to Pleasant Acres, New Bern

Larry Collins to Cedar Hill Church, Asheville

Gene Gilbert to Five Points Church, Washington from Thompson Church, Colquitt, GA

Mickey Green to Lake Road Church, Charlotte

Jerry Nelson to Holly Grove Church, Waynesville

Frank Rice to Emmanuel Church, Jacksonville

Jeff Silver to Springwood Church, Belmont

Phil Smith to Sandy Acres Church, Columbia

Ohio

Bill Walk to Germany Hollow Church, Wheelersburg

Oklahoma

Bill Phillips to Westside Church, Pryor, from Valley Church, West Valley, UT

Tennessee

David Benninghoff to Portland Church, Portland



RETIREMENT
AND
INSURANCE

Free Will Baptist Ministry Focus



Garnett Reid

The Real Deal

The Bible's Story-Line, Part IX

It's all true! We must remind

ourselves that this "story" we've been following through the Bible is true. God's gospel is the real deal, not legend, fantasy or religious ideology. What's more, it changes lives—has for centuries, still does today. So as we walk through this record of sacred story, keep in mind the sin-shattering power of these realities. God means that we *live* them, not just study them.

When His Son Jesus Appears on Earth

In the arrival of Jesus on earth, God becomes human. Jesus' title "Son of God" clearly expresses His deity. He is God. The Hebrew expression "son of _____" indicates that the "son" experiences the very essence of what the preposition's object denotes. As Peter Kreeft puts it, "The son of a dog is a dog. The son of a shark is a shark. And so the son of God is God." The New Testament clearly teaches that Jesus is God (John 1:1; 20:28; Romans 9:5; Colossians 2:9; Titus 2:13; Hebrews 1:3, 5-8).

Jesus' sonship does not mean He is inferior to the Father. He is the "Son" in that He yields to do the Father's will in the work of redemption (Luke 22:41-42; John 6:38-39; Hebrews 5:8). The fact of His birth reminds us that Jesus is also a real human person. In order to have the right to redeem us, He had to become one of us; so He had a real body, felt human need, matured as humans do and really died (Luke 2:52; 24:39; Galatians 4:4; Hebrews 2:14).

Lives a Sinless Life

Despite His humanity, Jesus never participated in one experience shared by all other humans: sin. A sinner cannot redeem sinners! The Old Testament high

priest had to first offer a bull for his own sin before he could intercede for others. Jesus had no such need. As God, His life on earth was absolutely holy (John 8:46; II Corinthians 5:21; Hebrews 7:26).

And what a life it was. Jesus was moved with compassion for those laden with suffering (Matthew 9:36) and "went about doing good" (Acts 10:38) by loving, healing and restoring many of those He met. He was the sinner's greatest friend though He never sinned (Matthew 11:19). Through His perfect life, God's Son met the Father's demand for absolute righteousness in fulfilling the law, thus qualifying Him for what He did next.

Dies in Place of Sinful People

A history of civilization textbook likely won't tell you this, but God's Son dying in space and time human history is one of the two greatest events ever to occur in the universe. The facts are clear. Jesus really died; He didn't pass out or fake His death. He "yielded up his spirit" (Mark 15:37) and then was buried.

Yet Jesus died for us. He died not simply as a martyr or as some noble example, but in our place. The burning anger a holy God rightly directs toward unholy people (John 3:36; Romans 1:18; Ephesians 2:3) fell upon Jesus as He hung on the cross. In that moment He satisfied God's demand that sin must exact a payment. Jesus made the payment for us (Romans 3:25-26; II Corinthians 5:21; I Peter 3:18).

Rises from the Dead

The second "greatest event" this planet has ever seen happened three days after Jesus died. On that Sunday morning He came back to life. Both believing and skeptical researchers have vindicated the evidence for His resurrection

time and again (for a summary, see Gary Habermas, *The Historical Jesus*).

Luke notes that his own research found "many infallible proofs" (Acts 1:3), including eyewitnesses who saw Jesus' same body alive after His burial (Luke 24:39). Some of the eyewitnesses and many who heard them staked their lives on the fact that it had really happened.

Jesus' resurrection proves He is who He claims; it declares Him to be "the son of God with power" (Romans 1:4). That power found in Jesus' new life assures us of justification (Romans 4:25), of victory over sin's rule in this life (Romans 6:4-6), and of the certainty that our bodies will also live again to experience unending life (I Corinthians 15:13-23).

All of this makes a great story. But we can't let it go by like a dated, out-of-print novel. If it is true—and it must be—then we must deal with it and believe it. ■



Diana Harris

The Strength of Love

Where do I learn to be a good

pastor's wife? What if I'm not a natural leader? I don't even play the piano! Some ladies in our church know more about the scriptures than I do. What would I have done if I had not been brought up in a Christian home?

I grew up Free Will Baptist, my father a pastor, so church was always a major part of my life. I wonder, even now, if I know what I am doing. One thing is certain, however, God places His children where He wants them to serve. All He asks in return is that we be willing servants. He provides what is needed for the task.

Respect the Calling

I remember my mother teaching me to reverence my father's calling, explaining that it was a privilege to serve as a pastor's child. With that privilege came responsibility. I can still hear her words, "Never do anything that would bring reproach upon your father's ministry." I don't regret being a pastor's daughter. It was a normal part of my life.

When I went to Free Will Baptist Bible College, I thought all Christians were raised in a Christian environment and that my life was the norm. It did not take long to realize that my parents had given me a rare treasure. They worked hard making God the center of our home.

When I married a preacher and became a pastor's wife, it seemed a natural extension of my life. The churches that Roy and I worked in have all been good experiences, and we developed life-long friends in each pastorate. They were patient as we learned, and they enriched our lives.

Accept the Family

Our current pastorate at Woodbine FWB Church in Nashville began in April 2002. Three weeks later I was diagnosed with Inflammatory Breast Cancer. By the time I began treatment, the cancer was already in stage IV and had metastasized in my left lung. The area of cancer was so massive that chemotherapy was necessary before surgery. Even eradicating the cancer in my breast would do nothing about the cells that had escaped.

Throughout my treatment, which lasted from May through November, our church family held me up in their prayers, supplied meals twice a week, cleaned my house and did laundry. The Sensational Singles Class planted flowers in our flower bed. Some young men mowed the lawn while Roy was busy taking care of me.

The illness that could have been a negative experience became a positive one. Each member became more precious to us. The church was no longer just my church family; they had become family.

One thing God taught me during this time was the strength of love. God taught me to love without expecting anything in return, simply for the joy of loving.

Expect the Adversary

When God's children demonstrate love to one another, Satan becomes irate. There is strength in unity and unity is a by-product of love, making Satan's task more difficult. So how do we fight this spiritual adversary?

Jesus told Peter in Luke 22:31-32, "Simon, Simon, behold, Satan hath desired to have you, that he may sift you

as wheat. But I have prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not: and when thou art converted, strengthen thy brethren." What a weapon!

Share the Journey

How does that translate to us today? Simply this—when you go through a battle, rely on God's strength, and after the battle share your journey with others. Tell them what you learned and what God wants you to do as a result of that lesson.

What does it require to be a successful pastor's wife? Love through the arms of God. Show your husband the respect due his calling. Hold him in high regard and the church will do the same. God created woman for a specific purpose and in fulfilling that purpose she holds the heart strings of the home. When we pastors' wives fulfill our calling and purpose, our husbands are free to shepherd the flock. Under the care of the pastor and his wife, church members become a family. Determine to be the glue that holds the family, your family, together. ■

ABOUT THE WRITER: Mrs. Diana Harris is a member of Woodbine Free Will Baptist Church in Nashville, Tennessee, where her husband (Roy Harris) pastors.



Randy Sawyer

Do Something!

Muffled laughter drifted up

through a hole in the ceiling from which my foot protruded. Mixed emotions surged at the thought of my family's muted ridicule, frustration and anger. The whole thing (maybe "hole" thing) started when they couldn't wait for me to finish a nap.

Choosing Not to Act

My wife and kids were anxious to get Christmas holiday decorations out of storage and into place throughout the house. The Christmas boxes were stacked in one of the dormers of my son's bedroom.

Putting a floor in that dormer was one of those "honey-do" projects I put off. My wife argued that we needed additional storage space, and she urged me to get materials and floor that area. But I'm a busy pastor! Besides, I'm a balancing artist, which comes in handy when maneuvering in tight areas where a misstep might send me plunging through the sheetrock between rafters into the room below.

I guess you can see what's coming next. When putting away Christmas boxes the year before, I used my carefully honed balancing skill and placed each container length-wise across the rafters. I closed the door and congratulated myself on having once again figured out how to utilize needed storage space without investing money and time doing it the right way. I promised my wife before next season I would get the job done.

This brings me back to the moment in question. Before my nap, my wife and kids urged me to get the decorations for them. I don't remember what I said, but I'm sure it had something to do with being tired and needing to be left alone

for a while, and then I added, "And don't touch those boxes; you'll fall though the ceiling and break your neck. I'll get them out when I get up."

My wife was the instigator, but my teen son put the plan into action. He slipped into the dormer, got the boxes, handed them to his sisters who brought them downstairs to their mother, who began the process of unpacking and assembling.

Suddenly, I was startled by a terrible commotion. Wiping sleep from my eyes, I moved into the living room where my three girls stared at a clearly defined ceiling crack. My son had missed one of the rafters and the sheetrock gave way beneath his weight.

"I told you to wait on me!" I thundered. No answer. Not one word. They stood there with guilt etched across their disobedient little faces. I stormed up the stairs and yelled something almost incoherent at my son who sheepishly retreated to join the girls, while I proceeded to retrieve the boxes.

Did you know that anger might cause you to lose your balance? I didn't. But it happened to me that day! While picking up one of the storage containers, my foot slipped off a rafter and plunged through the sheetrock right at the same spot my son's misstep caused the crack. My family knew better than to laugh out loud. Never laugh at an angry man. I retreated to my bedroom, slamming the door behind me as a witness against them.

After calming down, I realized the hilarity of the moment, and we all had a good laugh together. Better still, the incident served as a great sermon illustration a few weeks later, and after hearing the story two men from the church volunteered to repair the broken ceiling,

and two others offered to floor the infamous dormer.

Of all the things I learned from that incident, the one that stands out most is the importance of doing something, now. I should have put flooring into that dormer. I should have responded to my family's request to get Christmas decorations down. I should have...ad nauseam. There are many "should haves" in our lives.

Choosing to Act

Why do we persist in procrastination? Maybe it's because we are boastful of tomorrow which, of course, is evil James tells us (James 4:14-17). Or maybe we put things off because of laziness. Or could it be faithlessness? I don't know why we...I put things off like I do. But I know this—no one ever made a difference in this world or in the lives of others who didn't finally decide to do something.

One of my favorite authors is Andy Andrews. His recent book, *The Lost Choice*, encourages readers to seize the moment and by deliberate acting, make a difference in the world. In one riveting passage, Andrews describes a conversation between German industrialist Oskar Shindler and his Jewish accountant Itzhak Stern. Shindler, though not an especially religious man, is credited with having saved 1,098 Jews from extermination during the Holocaust. He did so at considerable risk to his own life. Stern questions Shindler, "Why do you want to risk your life every moment as you do?" Why would a man risk everything for another man? Eventually Shindler offers this response...

I try to tell myself that what I am doing is perfectly logical. After all, if you see a dog about to be

crushed under a car, wouldn't you help? And yet, I know that this course is fraught with peril and certainly has no support among my peers...But at some point, a man must stand and act. Not hesitate. Not consider the danger...I bought an enamelware factory in order to get rich on the backs of a cheap Jewish labor force. And I did it! I had four million marks in suitcases when we left Krakow. But something happened to me. In any case, I decided to act. And I have two million now (pp.31-32).

At some point, a man must do something. James comments, "For to him that knoweth to do good, and doeth it not, to him it is sin." We can't keep discussing pros and cons of doing FAITH or going back to school or investing our lives and resources in missions or building a graduate school or reconciling with our brothers or winning our neighbors to Christ. It's time to do something. If we fail to act, someone may fall through the ceiling and break their neck, or worse! ■

Receipts:				Year To Date	Year To Date	Year To Date
State	Designated	CO-OP	Total	Designated	CO-OP	Total
Alabama	\$ 444	\$ 127	\$ 571	\$ 3,243	\$ 1,212	\$ 4,455
Arizona	0	0	0	105	240	345
Arkansas	16,763	24,686	41,449	81,508	123,652	205,160
California	71	1,051	1,122	2,513	7,923	10,436
Colorado	0	0	0	0	0	0
Delaware	0	0	0	0	0	0
Florida	0	2,768	2,768	369	8,304	8,673
Georgia	44,684	1,992	46,676	254,499	11,554	266,053
Hawaii	0	0	0	0	0	0
Idaho	0	0	0	0	0	0
Illinois	16,301	2,374	18,675	105,309	15,918	121,227
Indiana	1,777	0	1,777	13,493	1,459	14,952
Iowa	0	0	0	0	0	0
Kansas	295	195	490	295	644	939
Kentucky	0	685	685	1,190	4,613	5,803
Louisiana	0	0	0	0	0	0
Maryland	0	0	0	0	0	0
Michigan	17,816	1,064	18,881	133,532	17,397	150,929
Mississippi	18,727	1,807	20,534	94,938	6,353	101,290
Missouri	49,064	20,908	69,972	346,950	125,265	472,215
Montana	0	0	0	0	0	0
Nebraska	0	0	0	0	0	0
New Jersey	0	0	0	0	0	0
New Mexico	0	0	0	3,246	140	3,386
North Carolina	257	5,322	5,579	7,917	30,050	37,967
Ohio	20,071	1,825	21,896	117,878	22,240	140,118
Oklahoma	44,714	9,578	54,292	399,839	81,512	481,350
South Carolina	43,935	20	43,955	342,965	700	343,665
South Dakota	0	0	0	0	0	0
Tennessee	22,743	3,079	25,822	93,515	12,305	105,820
Texas	31,334	690	32,024	77,865	2,414	80,279
Virginia	10	338	348	488	666	1,154
Virgin Islands	0	0	0	0	0	0
West Virginia	1,059	301	1,360	3,280	744	4,024
Wisconsin	0	0	0	0	0	0
Canada	958	20	978	6,697	121	6,818
Northwest Assoc.	0	0	0	0	0	0
Northeast Assoc.	0	0	0	0	0	0
Other	0	0	0	0	0	0
Totals	\$331,023	\$ 78,830	\$409,853	\$ 2,091,632	\$475,426	\$2,567,059

DISBURSEMENTS:

Executive Office	\$ 1,809	\$ 35,473	\$ 37,283	\$ 11,616	\$213,942	\$ 225,558
Foreign Missions	199,706	9,972	209,678	1,308,981	60,141	1,369,122
FWBBC	31,581	9,972	41,553	183,370	60,141	243,512
Home Missions	81,149	7,804	88,953	520,588	47,067	567,655
Retirement & Insurance	578	6,070	6,648	2,460	36,608	39,068
Master's Men	1,339	6,070	7,409	5,057	36,608	41,665
Commission for						
Theo. Integrity	70	217	287	349	1,307	1,656
FWB Foundation	368	2,601	2,970	1,465	15,689	17,154
Historical Commission	70	217	287	349	1,307	1,656
Music Commission	96	217	313	520	1,307	1,827
Media Commission	131	217	348	765	1,307	2,072
Hillsdale FWB College	2,640	0	2,640	15,892	0	15,892
Other	11,487	0	11,487	40,221	0	40,221
Totals	\$331,023	\$78,830	\$409,853	\$2,091,632	\$475,426	\$2,567,059



Dean Jones
NYC Director

Truth and Peace Conference Impact

What do you get when you add

60 students, 100 degree temperatures, eight semi-crazy adults and 15 seemingly endless days? The 22nd annual Truth and Peace Student Leadership Conference!

Perhaps you've heard of this conference, but what do students and parents have to say?

"...thank you so much for having me this year. It was a great opportunity to express my belief in Christ during my stay...with other students my age."

—participant, Arizona

"When I dropped my daughter off...I knew she would have a great time and benefit from her experience. However, the reality of her experience exceeded my expectations. When we received emails from her during the conference, it was immediately evident in her words that God was at work in her life through the impact of the staff, resource person-



nel and other participants. As we reconnected with her at the National Association in Kansas City, her mother and I were further impressed with how God was working in her life. This was also evidenced by the testimony she gave to our church congregation this past Sunday. She came back spiritually focused, more articulate, more confident and definitely excited about serving the Lord."

—pastor/parent, Tennessee

more confidence in openly sharing their faith, and practical hands-on experience in leadership application among peers and adults during the National Youth Conference?

The deadline is quickly approaching!

Don't delay—request an application kit and make plans for a life-changing summer, emailing truthandpeace@randall-house.com or call 1-800-877-7030. ■



These students represent two of the hundreds that have been impacted by Truth & Peace over the past 22 years. Do you know a student who needs to be a part of this life-changing program? Does your church need to experience the difference that can be made by sending a student to Truth & Peace? How would your students be different if they had some of the best leadership training,





Jack Williams

Take the Positive Look

A minister called and said a church in another state contacted him about being their pastor. They worked out a time for him to candidate and meet the church members. Apparently, the encounter went well.

The minister chuckled, "The church called me as pastor. Seventy-four people voted, and I got 79 votes! That's the first time I ever got 105% of the vote. I'm going."

The preacher relocated and joined the vote-happy congregation. Who could blame him?

Every decision we make comes with its own set of unintended consequences. Bill Bryson relates one such surprise in his December 1989 *Reader's Digest* article, "Life's Little Gamble."

As the story goes, in 1940 an American businessman named Wilson grew tired of the Great Depression, rising taxes and increasing crime. He sold his home and moved to an island in the Pacific where he expected to live out his days in tranquility. Balmy and ringed with beautiful beaches, the island seemed like paradise.

The island's name? Iwo Jima.

Sometimes a small, inconsequential act by one person can change the world for thousands of others. Does the name Leigh Richmond get a twitch from your "important people" radar? It should.

Leigh Richmond dropped a tract on the pavement in London and prayed that a bad man would pick it up. His prayer was answered; a bad man did pick it up.

The bad man carried the tract with him to prison and was converted. He later wrote *Pilgrim's Progress* which turned millions to Christ. For generations, the book was second only to the Bible in sales. The

bad man who found Richmond's tract was John Bunyan.

If you can't do something big, do something small. A tract, a timely phone call or a kind word at the right moment may give the world another John Bunyan. With God, little is much.

Embrace the difficult. A Nashville pastor related a conversation with a bright young layman who served on the church's budget committee.

Said the pastor, "We had just passed a church budget, and I was pleased. Then I got this call from an unhappy layman. He was as disappointed in the church budget as I was pleased."

The layman told his pastor, "It's not a bad budget, but it's a budget that we don't need God to meet it. Our people won't even have to tithe to meet this. I hope that one day we pass a budget God must meet."

Expect God to open unseen doors to witness when a closed culture and problematic circumstances conspire to keep them shut. That's what happened in the late 1980s in Ivory Coast, West Africa.

Former missionary Robert West was approached by a Muslim who offered him 50 cows for his 14-year-old daughter (Marie). Since six cows was the going rate for a wife, Robert knew this was a serious moment. The wrong word could anger and offend the Muslim, even stir bitterness toward the mission station.

He paused and silently asked God for wisdom. Then he told the Muslim suitor, "She's already promised."

"Promised to whom?" the Muslim asked.

Robert carefully answered, "She is promised to whomever God chooses."

The courteous response averted a potential crisis. Fifty-cow-Marie later

enrolled at Free Will Baptist Bible College and married a preacher.

Come what may, there's always something you can do in God's work. I wish every man stayed healthy and strong until his last day on earth. But the fact is some must finish their journey with broken limbs, amputated legs, eyes that refuse to see or bodies restricted by paralysis.

Did you ever sing, "To God Be the Glory" or "Praise Him! Praise Him!" or "Tell Me the Story of Jesus" or "Pass Me Not, O Gentle Savior"? Those songs were written by a blind woman. From her dark station in life, Fanny Crosby gave the church beautiful hymns. She chose to see more in her blindness than many do with two good eyes.

The late Dr. Jonathan Thigpen, president of Evangelical Training Association, found courage to serve while battling ALS (Lou Gehrig's Disease) and completed his doctorate from a wheelchair. In his final sermon to students at FWBBC a few weeks before his death, Jonathan brought students and faculty to their feet with his signature challenge, "Semper Fi" (always faithful).

Thornton Wilder said, "In love's service only the wounded can serve." Everybody is wounded in some way. Some wounds are there for the world to see; others hide behind a smile so bright we miss the tears. So to your duty post, friend. We're counting on you.

I believe the Scandinavian adage: "The north wind made the Vikings." Some serve on the north side of God's work. If that's your place, go there eagerly, for that's where the strongest timber grows. ■

**Periodical
Postage
Paid**

2004

1954



and

Still Pioneering

Benjamin Randall Day Offering

~~Sunday, November 21, 2004~~

