

November 2004

Contact

VOTE

YOU'RE AN AMERICAN!

Every citizen has a responsibility for the nation's well-being, especially the Christian citizen.



A visit to Kingfisher Creek may put you face-to-face with a neighborhood crime fighter, an unintentional hero and a Bible-toting grandmother.

9 Reasons Why Free Will Baptists Should Build New Churches

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Keith Burden

Katie's Tear

It was the trip of a lifetime. My wife and I and our youngest daughter, Katie, were going to Cuba. The weeks prior to departure were busy as we applied for passports, raised money and made travel plans. Conversations around the dinner table each evening centered on our anticipated visit to the historic island.

Although we were excited about the prospects, we tried to be honest and realistic about what we expected to encounter. We knew there would be hardships and challenges. We agreed in advance that we *would not* complain, no matter how bad the conditions.

The trip was difficult. Mechanical problems with the Mexican airliner delayed our arrival into Havana. Clearing immigration and customs proved to be frustrating and time-consuming. A poor exhaust system and no air conditioning exacerbated the four-hour bus ride to our destination.

Upon arrival, our host showed us to our sleeping quarters. They were, by Cuban standards, above average. We wearily carried our luggage into a small bedroom that was uncomfortably warm and cramped. Sunday morning church service would begin in less than five hours.

Uninvited Guests

Before retiring for the night, our family prayed together. We thanked the Lord for safe travel and the opportunity to learn and grow through this experience. As we said "Amen," I noticed Katie's eyes fixed on something directly over her bed.

Glancing up I saw a lizard clinging to the stucco wall. Three or four of his friends were stationed strategically around the room. As I turned to reassure my child the creatures were harmless, I saw a single

tear streaming down the side of her face. Yet, in spite of unsettling circumstances, she *never* complained.

Love at First Sight

The next seven days were interesting. We fell in love with the Cuban Christians. Although they lived in a country severely depressed economically and controlled by a Communist regime, they were some of the most joyful people we had ever met. They had every reason to be bitter and complain—but they didn't.

Church services seldom started on time, and they lasted two or three hours. We ate enough black beans and rice to last a lifetime. Gasoline supplies were limited, transportation hard to come by. Yet, in spite of the less-than-ideal conditions, it was one of the most memorable weeks of our lives.

How did they do it? How did those Cuban believers keep a positive attitude in such trying circumstances? I've identified three things that I believe kept them from complaining.

Cures for Complaining

First, they maintained a *sense of humor*. They did not take themselves or life too seriously. I was amazed at their ability to laugh. One young pastor had the uncanny ability to tell jokes and impersonate others.

He kept us in stitches the whole time we were there.

Second, they knew the true *source of happiness*. Unlike many Americans, the Cubans (for the most part) are not materialistic. Their sense of worth and self-esteem are not wrapped up in the clothes they wear, the houses they own or the cars they drive. They find their significance in their relationship to Christ and with their family. They understand that the most important things in life are not things.

Third, they kept their *sights on Heaven*. I don't know how to explain it, but there was a certain look on their faces when they sang, prayed and worshipped. They consider themselves strangers and pilgrims on the earth and are looking for a city which has foundations, whose builder and maker is God.

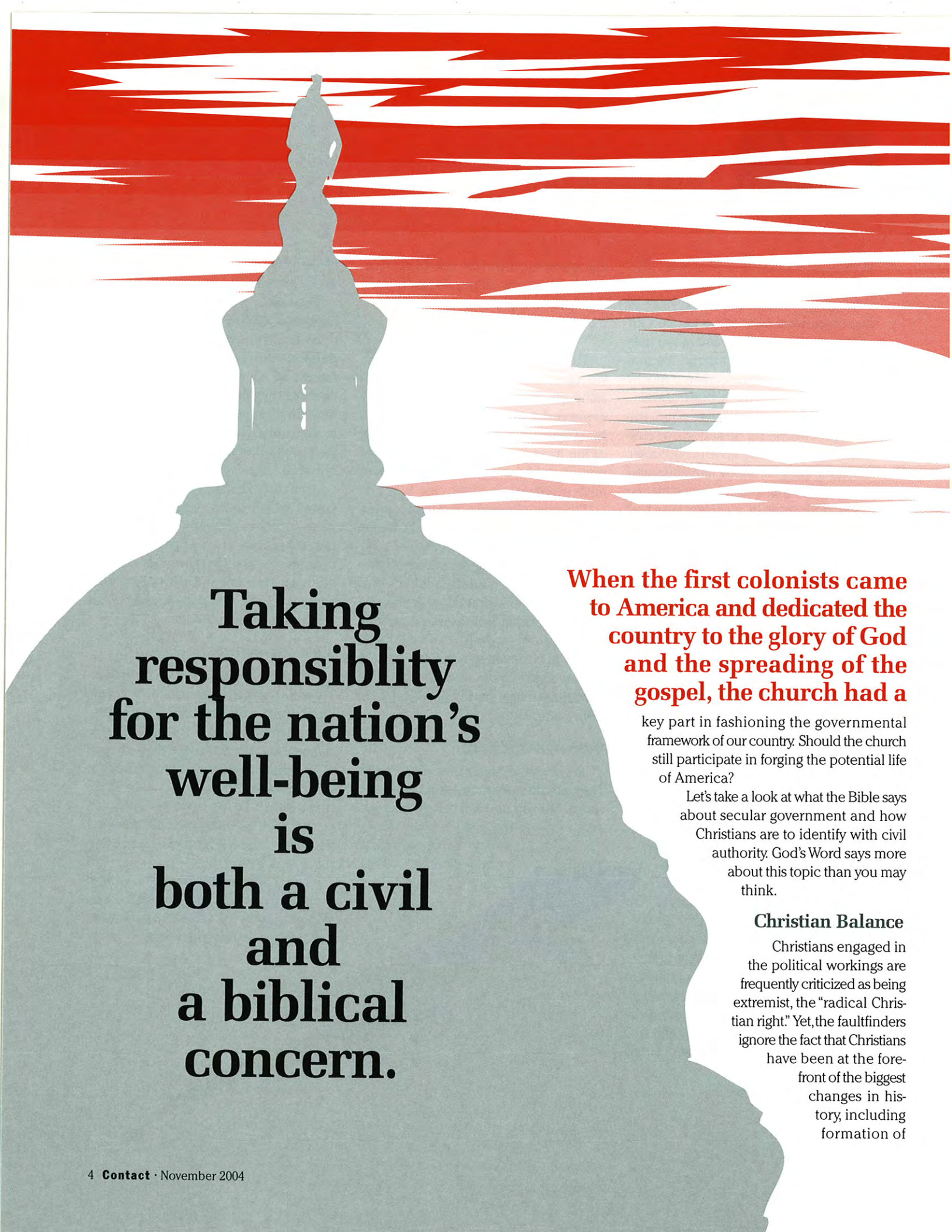
A New Perspective

We returned home more thankful. Thankful for things we had taken for granted. Things like seats on toilets, warm water in the shower, the right to criticize our government and access to good medical care.

This Thanksgiving most of us will pause and reflect on the blessings we enjoy. We may resolve to be more grateful. That would certainly be an ambitious objective. But perhaps a nobler goal would be to determine to *complain less*.

Sound impossible? Our family proved it could be done . . . at least for a week. Why not give it a try? Who knows—it might just bring a tear to your eye. ■





**Taking
responsibility
for the nation's
well-being
is
both a civil
and
a biblical
concern.**

When the first colonists came to America and dedicated the country to the glory of God and the spreading of the gospel, the church had a

key part in fashioning the governmental framework of our country. Should the church still participate in forging the potential life of America?

Let's take a look at what the Bible says about secular government and how Christians are to identify with civil authority. God's Word says more about this topic than you may think.

Christian Balance

Christians engaged in the political workings are frequently criticized as being extremist, the "radical Christian right." Yet, the faultfinders ignore the fact that Christians have been at the forefront of the biggest changes in history, including formation of



VOTE YOU'RE AN AMERICAN!

By David L. Burgess

countless hospitals and charities, and establishment of several outstanding colleges and universities. From the eradication of slavery to civil rights improvements, Christians have led in achieving a better world.

Believers and unbelievers both speak about the separation of church and state. It is true that the Word of God gives instructions concerning spiritual government (church) and secular government (state) as two distinct establishments.

Nevertheless, we live in a sinful world. God has ordained secular government to safeguard the innocent and preserve decent order. The Christian life demands that we shine as lights into dark places. Jesus said His people are to be salt and light in a dying world. We can be salt and light by voting.

Christians are to be peaceful, law-abiding citizens. We are to pray for and honor our government leaders (1 Timothy 2:1-2). We are to faithfully pay our taxes (Romans 13:6-7).

We are to work for the highest good of all people. This includes working to promote godly principles in politics and government.

Biblical Precedent

Romans 13:1-7 is a primary passage in grasping what the Bible says about the connection of secular and spiritual authority. In this text, we discover that secular government is established by God to discipline evil and maintain peace in the world. It calls government servants "ministers of God." (They don't always serve in that capacity, but that is God's standard, nevertheless.)

Taking this into consideration, scripture requires us to obey all governmental laws, unless these laws are outright infractions

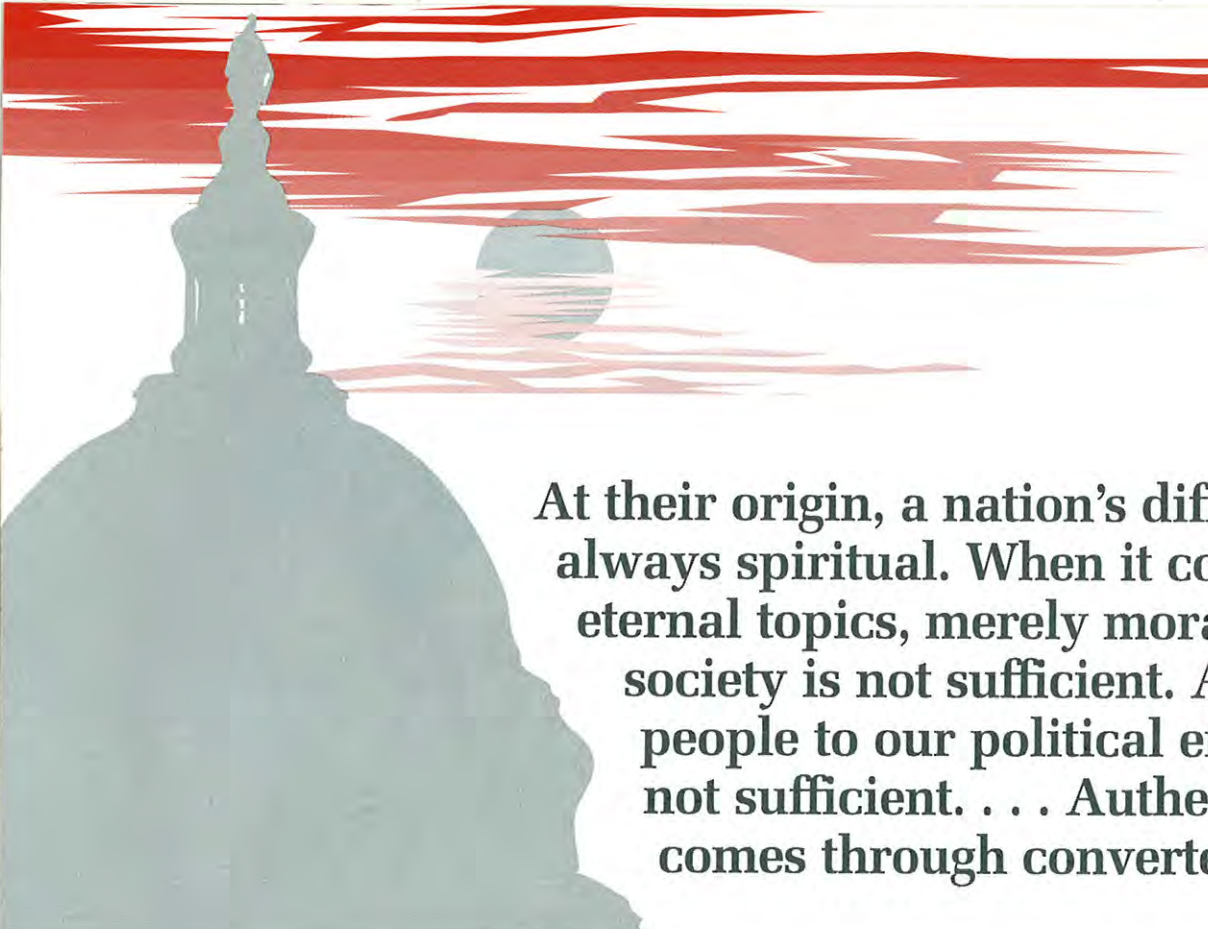
of God's commandments (See Acts 4:19).

Several individuals in the scriptures were summoned by the Lord to labor for reform in the bureaucratic realm. This constitutes men and women like Joseph (Genesis 41:39-41), Deborah (Judges 5:1-7), Gideon (Judges 6:11-14), Samuel (1 Samuel 3:1-19), David (1 Samuel 16:1-13), Nehemiah (Nehemiah 1:1-11) and Daniel (Daniel 1:4-6, 18-21).

In our era, there are many means through which we can work to bring about reform in government. One significant means that we should take advantage of is election day. We should never be apathetic to the blessing of voting.

Higher Allegiance

Remember that following Jesus exceeds allegiance to political parties. To a certain extent, there is allowance among Christians for some earnest variance of ideas concerning politics. Still, there are scriptural precepts to which God demands we all adhere whenever it comes to the opinions we hold.



At their origin, a nation's difficulties are always spiritual. When it comes to eternal topics, merely moralizing our society is not sufficient. Attracting people to our political endeavors is not sufficient. . . . Authentic change comes through converted hearts.

These scripturally directed topics encompass the following:

Defending innocent life (Proverbs 31:8), including the unborn (Psalm 139:13–16; Isaiah 44:2, 24; 49:1–5; Jeremiah 1:5)

Challenging sin and immorality (Proverbs 14:34; Isaiah 5:20; Jonah 1:2)

Championing the destitute and downtrodden (Psalm 10:2; Isaiah 10:1–2; Amos 2:6–7).

Character Counts

Character is important when selecting leaders. Exodus 18:21–22 presents an excellent example to follow. These verses indicate that secular leaders are to be “. . . able men who fear God . . . men of truth, hating covetousness” (greed). If our nation had always adhered to these criteria when voting, we would be a much sounder country today.

The scriptures characterize leadership as being a sacred trust, and putting an individual in such a job is an especially sobering thing. For instance, in I Timothy 5:22, Paul teaches Timothy to “Lay hands suddenly on no man (to ordain him into the ministry) neither be partaker of other men’s sins.”

If we hurriedly place an individual into leadership who is not deserving of it, we take a chance of having the liability of that individual’s sin.

What does this have to do with voting? Remember that the scriptures describe political leaders as being ministers of God. In this instance, we “ordain” our leaders by our votes, backing and influence.

If we back politicians who advocate ungodly causes or advocate debased conduct, God holds us accountable for it. To wish

a person well in their sin is to become a participant in that sin (II John 11), a very solemn thought.

Authentic Change

Finally, we must never be entrapped by exchanging political commitment for the gospel. We must realize that politics can never be an agency of salvation. While we can and should labor for beneficial changes, this is, at best temporary.

At their origin, a nation’s difficulties are always spiritual. When it comes to eternal topics, merely moralizing our society is not sufficient. Attracting people to our political endeavors is not sufficient.

People can adopt all of the Christianized societal influences, but without a personal relationship with Jesus, they are still lost. Authentic change comes through converted hearts which only happens as individuals accept Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior.

Authentic change has to begin with us as individuals. God gives us the marvelous promise that “If my people, which are called by my name, shall humble themselves, and pray, and seek my face, and turn from their wicked ways; then will I hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin, and will heal their land” (II Chronicles 7:14).

We can all begin where we are. “Blessed is the nation whose God is the Lord; and the people whom he hath chosen for his own inheritance” (Psalm 33:12). ■



About the Writer: Dr. David Burgess pastors Pleasant View Free Will Baptist Church in Walnut Hill, Illinois. He is a former chaplain with the United States Navy.

A Better America

By Mike Wade

Every true patriot of the USA would surely love to see a better America. The problems of our nation are not derived from poor government or a fluctuating economy. Our greater problem is a spiritual one. Our nation will only be better when we as individual Americans are better people. We will only be better people when we align our lives with the teachings of God's Holy Word.

America Will Be Good...

- ... when we thirst for righteousness rather than feast on immorality.
- ... when we like Zachaeus restore to anyone that which was gained by fraud, dishonesty or theft.
- ... when we cease to demand better service and become better servants.
- ... when we cease to kill our unborn for no better reason than that we might fornicate without consequence.
- ... when we cease to demand our rights and start doing what is right.

America Will Be Better...

- ... when we treat our neighbors as we wish to be treated.
- ... when we give an unneeded coat to one who has no coat.
- ... when we do good to those who would do us harm.
- ... when we bind up the wounds of our neighbor rather than inflict them.
- ... when we pursue peace rather than demand our own way.
- ... when we love our wives and leave our neighbors' wives alone.
- ... when we take responsibility for our children and train them up in the ways of our Lord.
- ... when we cease to be controlled by the chemical effect of alcohol, marijuana and other drugs and are controlled by the Holy Spirit of the Living God.

America Will Be Best...

- ... when we see a brother in trouble and help him rather than turning away.
- ... when we possess our possessions rather than our possessions possessing us.



The Bible

- ... when we cease to come out of our closets and clean them up instead.
- ... when we make someone's day brighter by an act of kindness.
- ... when we offer forgiveness rather than seeking revenge.
- ... when we calm storms rather than creating them.
- ... when we are more concerned about our character than our comfort.
- ... when we are less concerned about what makes us feel good and more concerned about what is right and good.
- ... when we live as people who know we are dying, will stand in judgment and give an account of our deeds.

Let this radical transformation of society begin with you and me! ■

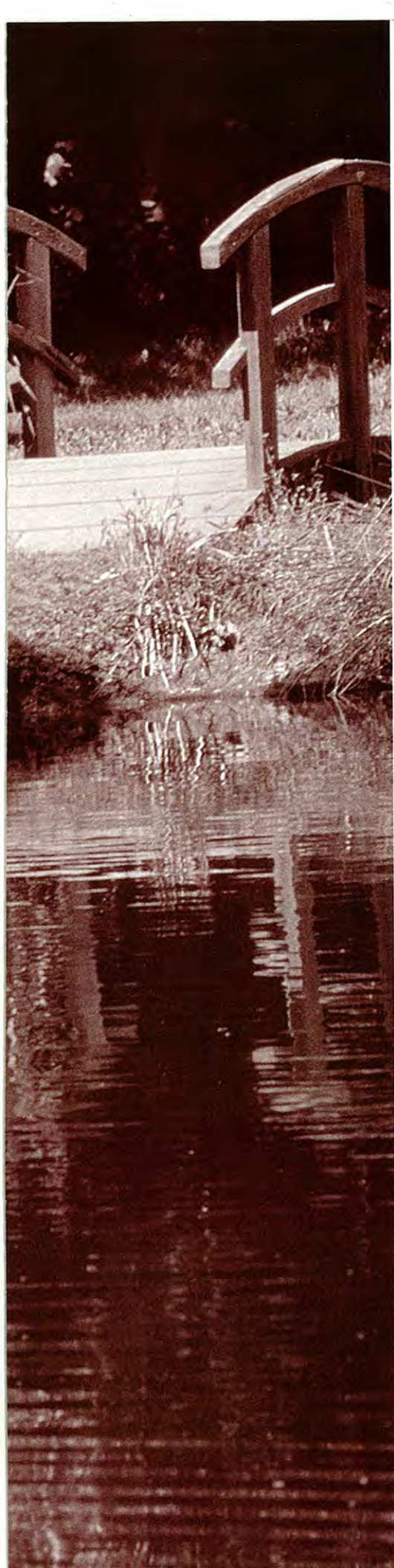
About the Writer: Reverend Mike Wade pastors Calvary Free Will Baptist Church in Norman, Oklahoma.



With God on Kingfisher Creek

By Fay Forlines

She just
wanted to keep
a promise
and
make
a difference.
She did both. . .
with *flair*.



When I was 13, I promised Jesus I would serve Him to the end. I thought I might live to be 70, might even live to see the year 2000. That was 61 years ago. On August 30, family and friends joined me

in celebrating my 74th birthday. If I live to be 100, this still means I am almost at my final destination after this life.

My husband's latest note said, "No matter what, no matter where, you can count on me and I'll be there, to understand, to show I care. You will always have my love. You're at the heart of everything that truly matters to me." But even the love of my life cannot go with me all the way. Jesus said He will be with me to the end.

A voice whispers in my ear to remind me of my covenant with the Lord. "O Jesus, I have promised to serve Thee to the end," John E. Bode's 19th-century song begins. I live in a hostile world and find myself in battle after battle not of my choosing.

Rebuilding the Neighborhood

I look back with a degree of pride that I helped stamp out the "oldest profession" in a corner of our neighborhood. I also saved a girl from date rape.

I helped our neighborhood develop a sense of *place*. Although it took a long time after our move to the west end of Nashville, the neighborhood did organize. Our local creek did not have a name until Mason Sinclair decided it should be called Kingfisher Creek because he saw a Kingfisher bird standing beside the creek looking for a fish.

Broken Trees

Our neighborhood has not always been as peaceful as it is now. When we moved here, it was somewhat blighted. People planted flower gardens in their backyards. Our neighbors went together and bought dogwood trees for \$35 each to line the street. The next New Year's Eve a teenager from a few streets over broke them all and pulled them up.

Somebody Else's Trash

Ours was a place to leave things. Our street has houses only on one side, Kingfisher Creek on the other. People from adjoining counties with no garbage collection would sneak in before dawn and leave brown paper bags of garbage in the road or on the narrow shoulders. Infamous plastic debris and beer cans were strewn indiscriminately.

One day our two sons ran home from the creek bringing a skeleton of a real handgun. We thought it was the remains of a gun thrown away by a criminal.

Prostitution

Rental duplexes lined the streets for two blocks of our scant four-block street. As the duplexes declined in value, someone brazenly painted "Naked Girls/Sex" with an arrow pointing to a certain duplex. I purchased a can of black paint and emptied it all on that lettering. No one had the nerve to further advertise.

Date Rape

One summer night as I worked in the yard a car with the windows rolled down pulled off the road about 25 feet from me. The car contained what appeared to be a dating couple. They did not see me. I heard a female voice cry out, "No! No! No!" Then I saw and heard struggling.

I picked up a galvanized pipe, went to the driver's side and asked the girl if she wanted to get out. She said she thought everything would be all right. I asked him if everything would be all right. He said, "Yes'm."

Waving the pipe in his face, I said, "You'd better leave that girl alone, and don't ever come parking in our neighborhood again." If he did, he did not let me see him.

After
claiming
a hill
and
planting
a flag
on it
for Christ
and
after every
victory,
the evil one
sees to it
that we
are made
uncomfortable.

Making a Difference

I want to be known as a follower of Christ and His teachings. I think of myself as a Christian who is a wife, a Christian who is a mother, a Christian who is a friend, a Christian who is a neighbor, a Christian who is an educator.

Our family took it as a project to keep our street debris-free. My husband cut the grass on the shoulder from our house to the end of the street. Our efforts paid off as beer cans, trashed birth control devices, guns and garbage disappeared. People now plant flowers in their front yards. A neighborhood church took on the rowdy tree snatcher and turned his life around.

The run-down rental duplexes built earlier to house professional upwardly-mobile people gave way to an upscale, gated, cluster-home complex and a pricey condominium development. Flowering trees line the streets, and we have a picturesque footbridge across Kingfisher Creek. A wisteria vine with foot-long purple clusters of grape-like flowers climbs to the top of a tall Nashville Electric Service pole.

Rescue at Kingfisher Creek

Last spring the Lord had me in the right place at the right time. I was the only one around at 6:30 Sunday morning when a late-model Dodge Intrepid came slowly down the rain-soaked street. Fifty yards from me, the car suddenly veered onto the grassy shoulder and began sliding downward toward Kingfisher Creek. Then with an earsplitting boom it hit the concrete bottom of the creek and came to rest at a 45-degree angle.

Without thinking of my recent back surgery, I bounded across the road, climbed on the passenger side of the car, and began knocking on the door and yelling, "Is anybody hurt? How many people are in the car?"

Finger Trapped

The driver and passenger on their way to an early tennis lesson were all right, because they had fastened their seat belts. The driver, in a state of shock, *assured* me twice that she had turned off the ignition. After freeing the two female, high school

juniors, I caught the pinkie on my left hand in the door when it closed. (The Intrepid's doors automatically lock and will not open once the door is closed with the motor running.)

The parents of the driver and passenger arrived and took them to nearby St. Thomas Hospital for a check-up. The driver had a hurt ankle.

The road filled with neighbors who heard the crash. Meanwhile, I was on a rock beside the creek with my finger caught in the car door. Anne, a neighbor, was concerned that I not further injure my back. A man came with his dog and said, "I will get a crowbar to open the door."

Fifteen painful minutes later, a 30-something man slid an instrument underneath

the casing on the door and said, "Now try it." My finger was freed at last, but it was battered and bent. I did not hold out much hope for the little finger.

Leroy (my husband) was home in bed recovering from a "drive-by" hernia operation. He did not know about the incident until I went uphill to the house. A doctor in the complex beside us insisted that I go to the emergency room at Baptist Hospital.

The policeman who interviewed me at the emergency room said there was no way I could have gotten the car door open to release the girls—that only an act of God could have allowed me to do that. Even the men who came with the wrecker could not open the door.

Me, a Hero?

Neighbors made me into something of a folk hero. One said at our yearly neighborhood picnic that afternoon, "So you are the woman who rescued the two girls from drowning in Kingfisher Creek?"

Well, it had rained all day and night and the creek was high Saturday night, but I did not notice it being that deep Sunday morning. They needed a hero, so I acquiesced.

The two juniors from Harpeth Hall exclusive girls' school say they want to keep in touch with me "forever" (We know how long forever is for 16-year-olds.). Their parents came to thank me in person. The girls brought me expensive Christie cookies (one of each flavor). At my age, 15 minutes basking in the spotlight is not bad . . . so long as we give God the glory.

Touching the Broader World

O Jesus, I have promised to serve Thee to the end, be it ever so long. I admit there have been cowardly times in the past 61 years when I crawled off the altar, only to realize that the altar of sacrifice is the safest place for a Christian.

I was willing to go to anywhere God called me. Following His map daily (getting temporarily turned around and off the road sometimes), I eventually found myself as a wife, mother, Sunday School curricu-

lum writer, realtor, Bible College teacher for five years and an educator with a Ph.D.

Thugs at School

Once a rumble took place in the hallway of Hillwood High School where I taught. Thinking the bear-like men were students, I intervened. They turned out to be drug lords fighting over territory. (They never touched me. But I physically separated the strong musclemen, causing painful pulled muscles in my hands, arms and shoulders.) I turned them over to be arrested, convicted and sent "up the river" (prison). Drugs in that school slowed down for a short time.

Russian Beachhead

After retirement from teaching, I agreed to go with Leroy on a fact-finding trip in 1996 to scout Russia for Free Will Baptists and the International (Foreign) Missions Board. We called it the *Forlines Russian Beachhead for Free Will Baptists*. Three hundred prayer and pocketbook supporters held the ropes while we spent a semester spying out the land and reporting what we saw and heard.

We preached and taught across Ukraine and Russia from Europe to the Sea of Japan. An avenue of service for Free Will Baptists was opened in Russia. Then in late 1999 we went on a short-term mission trip to India.

Tough Times

After claiming a hill and planting a flag on it for Christ and after every victory, the evil one sees to it that we are made uncomfortable. Mine took the form of attacks on my health.

One year it was e.coli, another year pneumonia. The next year a wonderful, heavy snow came in early winter. Like a kid, I grabbed the snow shovel and began shoveling as an excuse to be out in it. The next three months I endured all the necessary steps before back surgery. After surgery, I spent a year attempting to recover.

O Jesus, I have promised. I refused to let the devil use back surgery to sideline me. I listen to FoxNews conservative TV news to stay informed about issues facing the nation. The station gives out e-mails

in order that listeners can write in their opinions. I e-mail programs giving my position (Christian worldview) on issues. Some have been read aloud on TV with my name called and written on the screen of worldwide TV. More importantly, all made an impact on public opinion polls.

As Leroy and I returned from an extensive preaching/teaching trip to Saint John River Valley FWB Bible Camp in Canada the last week of June, we stopped in Maine to gas the car. The friendly woman who took our money said, "Long hard winters like this past winter when it got down to minus 40 just make us Mainiacs (people from the state of Maine) tough."

The Maine cashier meant by "tough" that challenges now make later obstacles easier to face. She started me thinking that each job God gives us prepares us and toughens us for the next step.

O Jesus, I have promised to serve Thee to the end. You give me jobs to toughen

me and prepare me for the next step and then the last step before crossing the river into the Promised Land. ■



About the Writer: Dr.

Fay Forlines is a member of Cross Timbers Free Will Baptist Church in Nashville, Tennessee. She is a writer, speaker, community activist, world traveler, occasional hero and retired teacher. Her husband

(Leroy) chairs the Commission for Theological Integrity. Her two sons who found a pistol in Kingfisher Creek have found better things. One son (James) found Anita, Daniel, Rachel and Rebekah, and serves as general director of the International (Foreign) Missions Department. The other (Jonathan) found Susan, Joel, Jared and Anna, and is dean of students at Free Will Baptist Bible College.



Why We Need Home Missions Churches

By Richard Atwood

“The only continent in the world where the church is not growing is the North American continent.”
—George Gallup

A woman started attending a church and rededicated her life to the Lord. She came to the pastor and asked for marital counseling. Her husband agreed to come to counseling, but said he had been forced to attend the Roman Catholic Church growing up and had no more need for church.

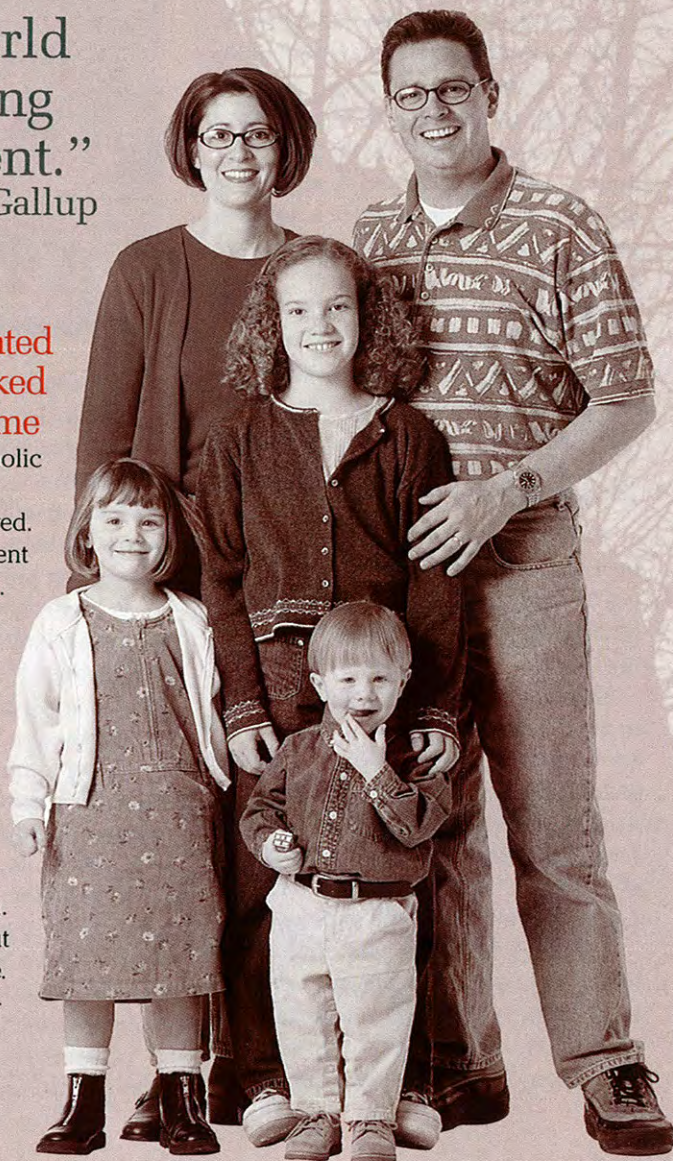
During counseling, the husband heard the gospel message and was saved. A few months ago, he and his four children were baptized. This family went from the verge of a breakup to a godly home that is bringing others to Christ.

Victory Stories

Another town in another state and another husband, wife and four children. The family visited the church on Easter because of a mailing. The husband was a Christian but not the wife.

When the pastor and his wife talked to her, she said, “I don’t know what is wrong with me, but I know something is wrong. I feel like one of those chocolate Easter bunnies . . . okay on the outside, but all hollow on the inside. I don’t know what I need to do.” She was saved in the pastor’s living room and that family of six is a key part of the church.

Another church, another town. A couple had been raised in church but never became Christians. Their daughter was a career missionary in Europe. After visiting a church, the pastor visited their home. They both accepted Christ, were baptized and are faithful workers in the church.



Another church in yet another town. The pastor meets a man at an AA meeting who is an intellectual skeptic. He tells the pastor that he is deeply bothered by the Christian claim that Jesus is the only way.

After many discussions and reading a book the pastor loaned him, he says, "Halfway through that book I realized I had always been an arrogant, intellectual jerk. I got up from my bed where I lay reading, fell on my face and asked Christ to save me."

The one element linking these people together is that they are all stories from Free Will Baptist home missions churches. I believe strongly that we need many more home missions churches.

Nine Reasons Why

- **The United States is the largest open harvest field in the world.** If 30 percent of Americans are evangelical believers (World Prayer Map), that still leaves a harvest field of 200 million. The door is still wide open to reach them.
 - **Our country is growing.** The United States population grew by 13 percent during the 1990s. Even if we had enough churches in 1990, we would still need 13 percent more churches to keep up.
 - **Our population is moving.** Every five years, 46 percent of Americans move. This statistic has been stable since the early 1970s. Some people move across the county and some move across the country. Many Christians leave their home church and don't get back in church in their new community. I met a Christian couple last week who had moved. When I asked about church, they said they still hadn't found a good church to attend. We need good churches in the many new communities being started.
 - **Many churches aren't preaching the truth.**
 - **We need to strengthen the areas where we are.** Many churches that have been preaching the truth are dying. Our two largest states in population—California and Texas—both have fewer Free Will Baptist churches now than they did 20 years ago.
- Even in our strongest states, many churches are struggling. We need new churches just to replace the ones we are losing. (And we need to help struggling churches to turn around.)
- **We need to reach areas where there aren't many Bible-preaching churches.** Ninety-eight percent of Free Will Baptists are located in 19 states. We need to develop a strategy to reach the other 31 states—especially the ones

with fewer gospel preaching churches of any kind. Maybe strong states could adopt a state or area near them.

For example, one in four Americans live in the area from Washington, DC, to Maine. This area has relatively few Bible-preaching churches of any denomination. Could North Carolina, Virginia and West Virginia "adopt" this area and plant churches there?

- **We need to reach the immigrants.** My son played on the tennis team at the local public high school. After the season ended, we invited the tennis team over for a celebration dinner. My son was the only team member born in America.

Over 25 different languages are spoken by students in that high school, and that is here in Nashville—the buckle of the Bible belt. One out of 10 people in America was born in another country.

Many of these countries are closed to us or would cost a lot of money to send missionaries. Could we reach people here in America who could carry the truth back to their family and friends in their own country? What an open door of opportunity!

- **New churches usually grow more and reach more people.** The Free Will Baptist church where I was saved was less than 10 years old at the time. My wife was saved in a new Free Will Baptist church. And there are many more stories like the ones at the beginning of this article. We can reach more people for Christ if we start more churches.

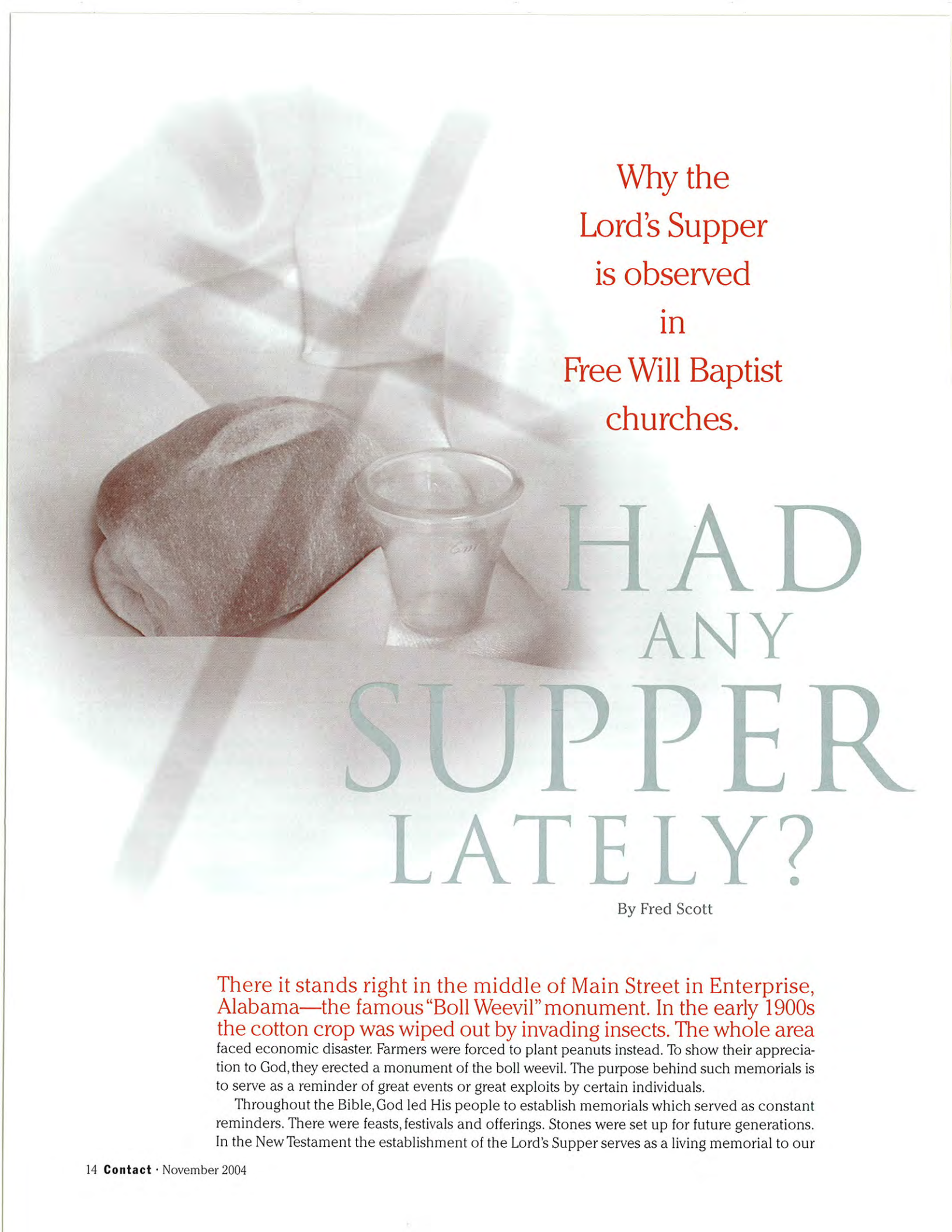
- **We want to obey the Great Commission.** We can't leave out North America without disobeying the Lord's command. And when we plant more churches here, we will be stronger to plant more churches throughout the world.

Both Free Will Baptist churches in Delaware were home mission churches. This year those two churches gave several thousand dollars to both home and foreign missions, and it is likely they will continue to do so.

At a recent service in a home missions church, everybody was encouraged to give a testimony about being thankful. One man's testimony is what many people all over would like to say: "I'm thankful for the people supporting this work. I don't know who they are, don't know them personally, but I wish I could give them a big hug for the difference Free Will Baptists have made in my life." ■



About the Writer: Reverend Richard Atwood serves as director of missionary assistance with the Home Missions Department.



Why the
Lord's Supper
is observed
in
Free Will Baptist
churches.

HAD ANY SUPPER LATELY?

By Fred Scott

There it stands right in the middle of Main Street in Enterprise, Alabama—the famous “Boll Weevil” monument. In the early 1900s the cotton crop was wiped out by invading insects. The whole area faced economic disaster. Farmers were forced to plant peanuts instead. To show their appreciation to God, they erected a monument of the boll weevil. The purpose behind such memorials is to serve as a reminder of great events or great exploits by certain individuals.

Throughout the Bible, God led His people to establish memorials which served as constant reminders. There were feasts, festivals and offerings. Stones were set up for future generations. In the New Testament the establishment of the Lord's Supper serves as a living memorial to our

Lord's atoning death at Calvary for the sins of the world.

Widely Observed

Most every denomination or Christian group observes the Lord's Supper. Concerning the Lord's Supper, our Free Will Baptist *Treatise* states, "This is a commemoration of the death of Christ for our sins in the use of *bread* which He made the emblem of His broken body, and the *cup*, the emblem of His shed blood, and by it the believer expresses his love for Christ, his faith and hope in Him, and pledges to Him His perpetual fidelity."

One question frequently asked concerning the Lord's Supper is *How often should we observe?* Some observe every year, some every quarter, some every month and some every week. While the Bible does not tell us how often we should observe the Lord's Supper, the service should be observed often enough for God's people to enjoy the blessings the service brings. However, it should not be observed so often that it becomes routine and loses its wonder.

Three Attitudes

As you prepare to observe the Lord's Supper, there are three important attitudes which we must have.

Reverence

We must have an attitude of reverence as we approach the Lord's Table. It is to be a time of worship for God's people. A time in which we focus upon the person of Jesus Christ. It is a sacred service to be held in high regard by those who participate.

The Lord's Supper was instituted by Jesus on the night of His betrayal. Jesus intends for His people to follow His example. It is not merely a suggestion or a good idea, but rather a command to be obeyed.

Remembrance

We must also approach the Lord's Supper with an attitude of remembrance. Jesus said, "This do in remembrance of me" (Luke 22:19; I Corinthians 11:24). The Lord's Supper is an object lesson to constantly remind us of what Jesus did for us. By taking part in the Lord's Supper, we keep fresh in our hearts and minds the sufferings and death of our Lord.

The bread represents His broken body. It reminds us that He did not die for Himself, but for the sins of the world. The broken body calls to mind the terrible price He paid for our redemption on the cross of Calvary. There Jesus endured all the shame, humiliation and degradation the human race could dish out.

The Bible says He was beaten (Luke 22:63-64), scourged (Matthew 27:26), spit upon (Matthew 27:30), mocked (Matthew 27:31), stripped of His clothing (Matthew 27:35). Then He was nailed to a cross and

IN THE NEW TESTAMENT THE ESTABLISHMENT OF THE LORD'S SUPPER SERVES AS A LIVING MEMORIAL TO OUR LORD'S ATONING DEATH AT CALVARY FOR THE SINS OF THE WORLD.

crucified (Matthew 27:35-38). He who "knew no sin, became sin for us."

The cup speaks of the blood of the New Covenant which Jesus shed for the remission of sins. In the Old Testament, the sinner approached God through the blood of a slain animal. Under the New Covenant, men must come to God through the blood of Jesus Christ (Hebrews 9:11-15).

All this was done for one reason, to save sinners from their sins. We were guilty before God and could not redeem ourselves. As Romans 5:8 says, "But God commendeth His love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us."

While I was in college, we used to sing in our society prayer meetings, "I owed a debt I could not pay, He paid a debt He did not owe." Remember next time you observe the Lord's Supper that Jesus Christ became your substitute bearing the punishment of God for your sins. Thank God that the sin debt has been paid in full.

Responsibility

We must approach the Lord's Supper with an attitude of personal responsibility. There are strong words of warning given in connection with the Lord's Supper. Some in the church at Corinth were guilty of eating and drinking "unworthily" or in an unworthy manner.

In order to keep such a thing from happening, Paul says we should examine ourselves before we partake in the Lord's Supper. To partake in an unworthy manner is to bring dishonor upon the suffering and sacrifice of Christ.

Before taking part we must examine our hearts, recognize our sins and confess them before the Lord. We are to look closely at every facet of our lives. We must examine our relationship with the Lord, and our relationship with people both within and outside the church. As you examine your life, look in your heart for pride, hatred, jealousy, fleshly lusts, unholy feelings toward God or man. If any of these things are present, seek out a place of repentance and make them right.

In *Willmington's Bible Handbook*, Dr. Harold Willmington says, "The Lord's Supper gives the believer a look backward to the cross, a look inward at the conscience, and a look forward to the crown." Next time you participate in the Lord's Supper, may your heart be turned toward Calvary where the greatest demonstration of God's love for fallen man was shown. That's what the Lord's Supper is all about. ■



About the Writer:
Reverend Fred Scott pastors Garner Free Will Baptist Church in Garner, North Carolina. He is a graduate of Free Will Baptist Bible College.

The Fall

An accident at home forces a woman to re-examine her trust in God.

By Mary R. Wisheart



The deadline was December 15. The doctor had been treating me for a head and chest infection. Still, I was working hard on a manuscript due the fifteenth. If I didn't get it in on time,

my pay would be cut. But I finished, and my friend Yvonne intended to pick it up and take it to the editor that afternoon.

Here it was the middle of December and I had made no plans for Christmas. What was the first thing I should do about it? I decided the first thing meant addressing and mailing Christmas cards. As usual I bought cards on sale after Christmas. I stored them in my trunk in the room over Peggy Jo's garage—a room we call the attic, just four steps up from the kitchen.

I was standing in the middle of the room contemplating taking a right turn toward my trunk.

This Will Be Bad

Perhaps my toe caught on a box. I can't explain what happened next, but something suddenly picked me up and flung me across the room. As I flew toward the stairwell, I remember thinking *This is going to be bad, and I am going to be a burden to someone.*

My left shoulder slammed into the post at the top of the stairwell. I felt pain such as I had never experienced before.

Earlier I fell in the street in front of a neighbor's house, had an abrasion on my face and broke the little finger on my left hand. A thief threw me down in the street in Montevideo, Uruguay, broke my left wrist and cracked a bone in the pelvic area. None of the pain from those falls compares to what I felt now.

I had heard of people breaking out in a cold sweat, but had never experienced it. I don't know if it was cold or hot, just immediately my forehead was covered with beads of perspiration. Although I'm not a fainter, I thought I was going to faint. I managed to crawl to the top step of the stairway, sit down and lower my head to my knees.

Only four steps down from the attic room to the kitchen. I crept carefully down and sat in the recliner in the den. I knew Yvonne would arrive in a few minutes.

I kept feeling my arm just above the elbow where it seemed to hurt. *My arm is not broken*, I thought. *If it were, I could feel the break.* I could move my fingers and my wrist. The pain continued.

They Look Awful!

When Yvonne came, we decided I should go to St. Thomas Hospital emergency. They took one look at me and ordered a wheelchair. In the examining room a nurse pointed to the heavy, long-sleeved sweatshirt I was wearing and asked, "Can we take this off?" "No," I said, "Not without screaming." Off it came.

After x-rays and a pain shot, the doctor touched my right shoulder and said, "It is broken here. (Maybe he didn't dare touch the left one.) You must see an orthopedic doctor, and we have made an appointment for you with Dr. Stahlman in the Lipscomb group."

It was Friday. I couldn't see the doctor until Monday. They strapped on an immobilizer, gave me pain pills and sent me home. They did not tell me how badly it was broken.

Dr. Gray C. Stahlman was brutally honest. "I've looked at your x-rays," he said. "They look awful! It is next to the worst break you could have. Only breaking the ball would be worse." Then he explained that the bone just below the ball was broken in five or six pieces.

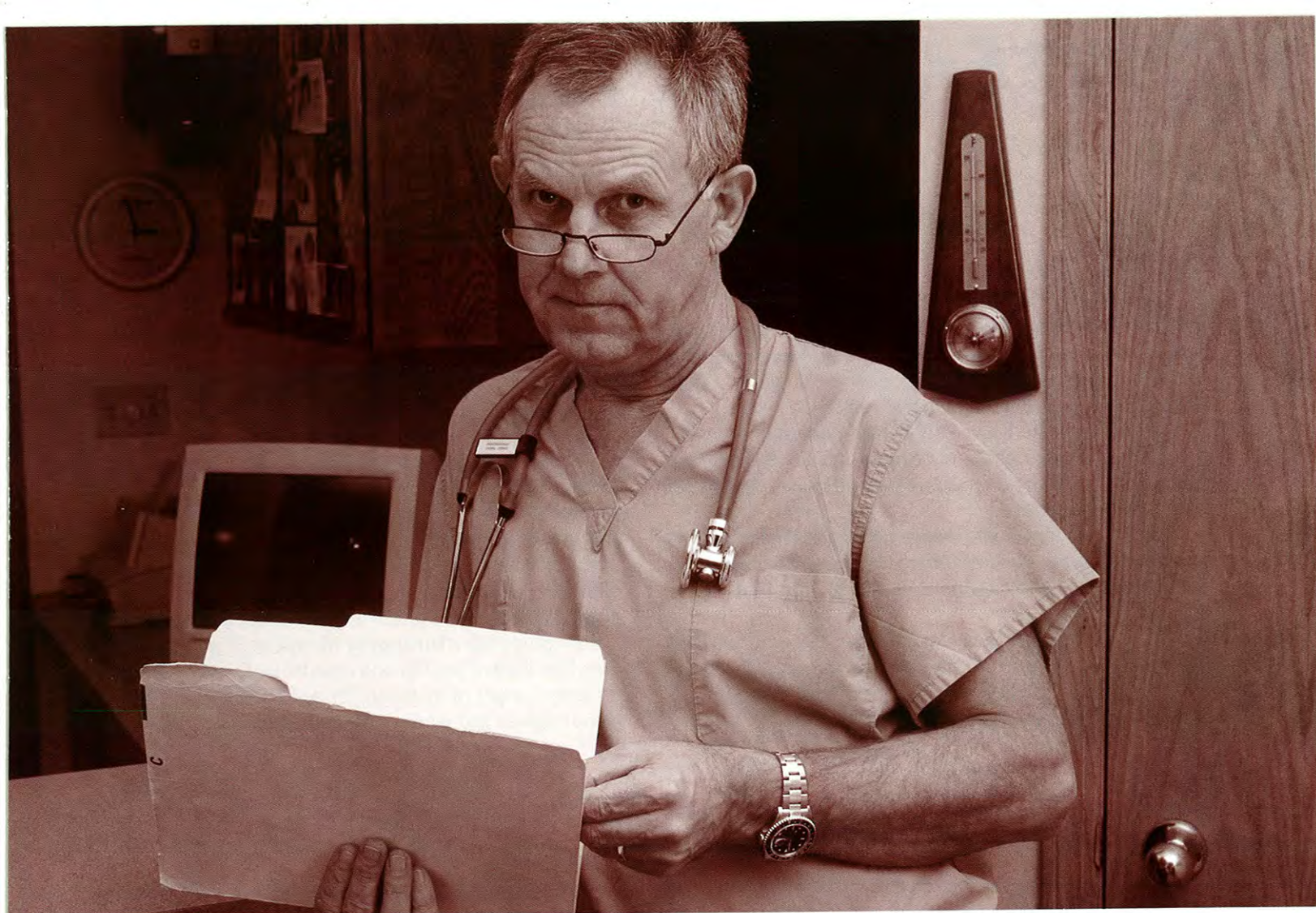
"Your arm will never be normal again." I remembered Dr. Benjamin Byrd's question, "What is normal?"

I asked, "What does that mean?"

"You will never be able to put your hand on the back of your head again," he told me. Then he wrote a prescription for physical therapy.

Does God Care?

The manuscript I had just completed was a series of devotionals on the Psalms. As I wrote, the thoughts about the scriptures,



such as "The Lord is my shepherd;" "He will give his angels charge over thee;" "The angel of the Lord encampeth round about them that fear him" kept echoing in my head.

A little voice there taunted, "Now, you've written these things for other people. Do you really believe them for yourself?"

I answered, "Of course I do." Hadn't I trusted God all my life? It seemed to me that little voice came from Satan himself.

Now he was saying, "Let's see how much you really believe that God is good and He cares for you." Had God given His permission for me to be hurt and handicapped? Was it a test of my beliefs?

Yvonne suggested that we think of the good things, and together we thought of four. I had finished my manuscript, and Yvonne had come to help me. It was my left shoulder, and I am right-handed. If the post had not been there, I could have fallen down the stairs to the concrete floor below. Then what could have been broken? Perhaps my neck.

Lesson Beyond Surgery

I was in therapy from December 2000 until May 2001. At my appointment with Dr. Stahlman on May 4, he told me the shoulder had not healed as he hoped. The only hope for less pain and greater range of motion was shoulder replacement. He recommended that I see Dr. Philip A. G. Karpos for the surgery.

Dr. Karpos explained that he would not suggest the surgery if he didn't think he could help the pain and increase the range of motion. We agreed to have it done and set the surgery for May 21.

I was surprised at the relief from pain after the surgery; I didn't realize how much it hurt until it eased. Dr. Karpos, however, kept saying, "Now you and I both know, don't we, that this arm will never be normal again." I could only think, *One of us is not sure.*

On June 16, 2001, I was reading my usual daily chapter from Proverbs. That year I read in The Amplified Bible. The last verse of chapter 16 reads, "The lot is cast into the lap, but the decision is wholly of the Lord." The Amplified adds in brackets, "[even the events that seem accidental are ordered by Him]."

I'm sure I had read that verse before, even in this version. But that day the phrase in brackets leaped out at me. I burst into tears. I had not accepted this handicap as from Him. I had to say, "Okay, Lord, this pain, this handicap You ordered. I accept it. Teach me what You want me to learn." ■



About the Writer: Dr. Mary R. Wisehart, former Women Nationally Active for Christ executive secretary, retired in 1998. She is a member of Cofer's Chapel Free Will Baptist Church in Nashville, Tennessee.

Veteran Minister, James Blair, Dies



COOKEVILLE, TN—Long-time Ohio pastor, the Reverend James A. Blair, died June 25 in Tennessee at Cookeville General Hospital of heart disease. Reverend Blair, 75, pastored 30 years in Ohio before health concerns forced him to retire.

Born in Paintsville, KY, in 1928, he was converted at age 26, licensed to preach in 1962 and ordained in 1963. Brother Blair was best known for his 23-year pastorate at Williams Road FWB Church in Columbus, OH.

Under his leadership, the congregation grew and became a community leader. Blair served on the Franklin Conference's Executive Board and as a member of the Ohio State Home Missions Board.

Earlier in his ministry, he helped establish New Carlisle FWB Church in New Carlisle, OH, and then pastored the congregation four years. He founded and pastored Troy FWB Church in Troy, OH, serving the congregation seven years.

His other duties included chairing the Executive Board in the Little Miami River Conference and serving as a member of the Ordaining Council.

The respected and well-liked minister attended a number of Bible institutes and took home study courses to prepare himself for the pulpit. He was active in district, state and national levels, welcomed by fellow pastors and committed to defending Free Will Baptist doctrine.

A Korean War veteran, Blair relocated to Tennessee during his retirement where he attended Crossville FWB Church until his death. He took Romans 8:28 as his life's motto.

Reverend Blair is survived by his wife of 54 years, Jean Blair; sons, Don Blair of Troy, OH, and Lynn Blair of Marion, OH; daughter Terry Looper of Rickman, TN; one brother, two sisters, six grandchildren and nine great-grandchildren.

Kentucky Steering Committee Meets

LOUISVILLE, KY—The Kentucky Steering Committee met Friday, September 10, in Louisville for a five-hour orientation to expedite plans for hosting the 69th annual national convention, July 17–20, 2005. Convention Manager Dean Jones led the session.

Jones blocked more than 1,000 rooms in downtown hotels to house delegates next summer. The convention brochure which includes housing and preregistra-

tion forms will be available in the spring. The forms will also be made available to state papers and will be posted on the National Association of Free Will Baptists' website.

The Kentucky contingency includes the Steering Committee, state moderator, state WAC president and a youth advisor:

Chairman:	James Patton
State Moderator:	Tim Hall
Hospitality Committee:	Justin Meek

Prayer Committee:	Joel Franks
Usher Committee:	Rick Stone
KY WAC President:	Jonda Patton
KY Youth Director:	Robert Younce

The Steering Committee met 8:00 a.m.–1:00 p.m. at the Hyatt Regency Hotel to review committee assignments, discuss convention facilities and gather information. Committee members will meet twice in 2005 (January and May) to assess and finalize convention plans.



Association of Mexico Reports Growth

MONTERREY, MX—The Association of Free Will Baptists of Mexico met for its third annual session July 30–August 1 in Monterrey, NL, under the leadership of Moderator Luis Felipe Tijerina. This is a new association formed in 2001 with 13 churches. It now has 22 organized churches and six missions. Two hundred delegates, pastors and visitors gathered at the campground for three days of worship, meetings, fellowship and business.

"The preaching was very good this year," according to Dr. Thomas Marberry, president of the seminary. Rev. Guadalupe Macias Andrade of Ciudad Victoria, Tamps., preached the opening sermon. He was followed by Rev. Luis Felipe Tijerina of Reynosa, Tamps., and

Rev. Keith Burden, executive secretary of the National Association of Free Will Baptists. The convention included meetings and special activities for women, children, pastors and young people.

Several important decisions were made during the business session. The association voted to accept into membership a new association of churches in the state of Oaxaca. A committee of pastors was appointed to assist the new association as it grows and develops.

Delegates also approved a national program of evangelism and a national day of prayer for the association. May 1 will be a special day of prayer each year throughout churches in Mexico.

Leadership Conference Set for December

NASHVILLE, TN—The annual Free Will Baptist Leadership Conference will meet December 6–7 at Millennium Maxwell House Hotel in Nashville, according to Executive Secretary Keith Burden. Some 140 leaders are expected to participate in the two-day conference. The \$160 per person registration fee includes four meals, breaks and all materials. Hotel room cost (\$85 per night) is not included.

Registration begins Monday, December 6, at 3:00 p.m. After an opening dinner at 5:30 p.m., attendees will gather in the hotel's Grande Ballroom to hear general session speaker, Dr. John Powell, a psychologist and professor emeritus at Michigan State University.

Dr. Powell has provided consultation for church and mission groups through the years. He is co-founder of the annual Conference on Mental Health and Missions, and serves as co-editor of *Enhancing Missionary Vitality*.

The 2004 conference's primary theme is conflict resolution. Dr. Powell will address

that issue Monday and Tuesday evenings.

Daytime sessions will feature three secondary themes (time management, leadership and financial) and a general track. The 12 breakout sessions are geared so that attendees can choose three workshops from one or more tracks.

Tennessee certified public accountant Terry Hill will conduct three financial sessions. Oklahoma businesswoman and consultant Lois Westbrook will speak twice on time management and once on grief counseling. Nashville pastor Rob Morgan speaks twice—once on time management and once on leadership.

Other workshop leaders include Arkansas pastor Will Harmon, children's home director James Kilgore, FWBBC president Matt Pinson and Randall House director Ron Hunter.

National Association moderator Tim York, Assistant Moderator William Smith and Executive Secretary Keith Burden will preside during the conference.



Dr. John Powell

The seven-man Nominating Committee, chaired by Arkansas executive director Tim Campbell, will meet during the conference as well.

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

Arkansas Adopts \$1.7 Million Budget



CONWAY, AR—Delegates to the 107th annual Arkansas State Association adopted a \$1.789 million budget for 2005, according to Executive Director Tim Campbell. That includes \$561,000 Cooperative Plan projections as well as \$1.2 million in ACTS 1:8 and Christian Supply Store budgets.

The August 3–4 session met at the Conway High School Auditorium. Moderator David Bishop led business sessions and was re-elected to his post. Wendell Leckbee was elected clerk.

Three men received plaques for their service to the state association: retiring state clerk Randy Ledbetter and two members retiring from the youth board—Leo Martin and Mark Stripling.

Some 279 people registered for the association which featured "The Church in Crisis" as a theme. Three ministers preached

sermons developing the theme—North Carolina pastor Danny Dwyer and Arkansas ministers Fred Warner and Dwayne Roper.

Attendees at the Bible Conference heard sermons by Dr. Danny Dwyer and Randall House director Ron Hunter.

Two receptions highlighted the association week. One reception honored Keith Johnson who retired after 23 years with the Christian Supply Store. A second reception welcomed Don Matchett as the new state missions director. Other activities included the 50th anniversary session of the Arkansas Women Active for Christ and the 29th annual session of the Arkansas Master's Men.

Delegates adopted a resolution affirming that marriage is a union between one man and one woman.

The 2005 state association will meet August 9–10 at Conway High School Auditorium.

34 Enroll at California Christian College

FRESNO, CA—The fall semester at California Christian College began with 34 students, 20 of whom are first-time enrollees, according to President Wendell Walley. Four other students audit a Tuesday night Bible class.

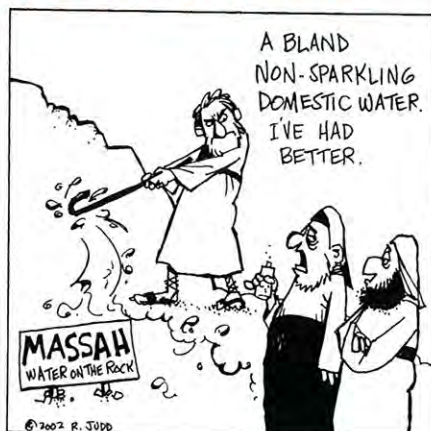
President Walley said, "Recruitment efforts were stepped up in April with the hiring of Phyllis Loforti as a full-time admissions representative. The move is paying off as indicated by 20 new students. However, closure of the Russian Program last year combined with the largest graduating class in CCC history left overall enrollment down compared to the previous year."

New students come from a variety of church backgrounds, but at least two of the new Free Will Baptist students are preparing for the pastorate. They join other Free Will Baptist ministers on campus preparing for ministry and three alumni who are entering seminary this fall.

At press time, more than \$80,000 had been raised this year through CCC's Legacy Fund.

President Walley said, "We seem to have the best crop of new students in five years. Most of our students plan to enter some type of Christian ministry."

BEYOND BELIEF



Feet Washing Pamphlet Ready

ANTIOCH, TN—The Free Will Baptist Historical Commission introduced the first in a series of historical pamphlets this summer. The 4,000-word document titled "The Washing of the Saints' Feet" was written by William F. Davidson and Robert Picirilli.

Historical Commission chairman Darrell Holley said the occasional pamphlet series is titled *The Free Will Baptist Heritage Series: Foundations of Faith and Practice*.

The feet washing pamphlet gives readers a deeper understanding of the historical practice, including the biblical basis,

historical grounding, objections to feet washing and feet washing in the 21st century.

Dr. Holley said, "Every Christian denomination has distinctive beliefs and practices that give it identity and define its heritage. For Free Will Baptists, this heritage includes washing the saints' feet."

Copies of the feet washing pamphlet may be purchased through Randall House Publications. The pamphlets sell for 25 cents each in packages of 100. Call Randall House at 800-877-7030 or e-mail at randallhouse.com.

Southeastern College Enrolls 150

WENDELL, NC—President Lorenza Stox reports 150 students as Southeastern FWB College opened the fall semester.

The 150 students include 65 freshmen, 26 sophomores, 35 juniors and 24 seniors.

The number of students from each state:

Alabama	13
Arizona	4
California	4
Colorado	4
Florida	1
Georgia	1
Indiana	2
Maryland	1

Michigan	4
Mississippi	2
North Carolina	92
Ohio	3
Oklahoma	2
South Carolina	2
Tennessee	2
Virginia	8
West Virginia	2
Wisconsin	3

Number of students and majors:

Bible/Pastoral Theology & Practical Ministry	27
Bible/Pastoral Theology/Missions	5

Bible/Pastoral Theology/Music	3
Bible/Youth & Music	5
3-year Biblical Studies	5
Bible/Missions/Education	3
Bible/Practical Ministry	12
Music Education	12
Sacred Music	1
Elementary Education	36
Secondary Education	17
Religious Arts	8
Business	12
No Degree	5

Free Will Baptist Bible College Enrollment Sets 18-Year Record

NASHVILLE, TN—Free Will Baptist Bible College enrolled 358 students for the fall semester, the highest number of enrollees at the college since 1985, according to the Office of Registration and Records. The college enrolled 248 dormitory students and 110 off-campus students. Officials set the full-time student equivalency at 333.

One staff member observed, "Our freshmen were either not yet born or were infants when the college last had this many in its student body."

The student body represents 23 states and five foreign countries (Albania, Bahamas, Canada, Russia and Spain). There are 174 men and 184 women currently enrolled.

President Matthew Pinson says, "We are elated to have set an 18-year enrollment record this year. FWBBC is an exciting place to be these days. What's greater than the quantity of students, however, is their quality. We thank God for spiritually-minded, service-oriented students who are eager to embark on another year of adventure in Christ-centered learning."



Reverend Terry Forrest advises a freshman on his courses at enrollment.

Gateway College Enrolls 41 Students

VIRGINIA BEACH, VA—Gateway Christian College began its second year with 41 students, according to President Bruce Barnes. Within all of the GCC programs, the 41 students include 19 freshmen, three sophomores, three juniors, 10 seniors and six in various part-time studies.

Eighteen students are studying Bible or missions, while 12 are pursuing teacher education. Eleven students are continuing studies in either music education, general education or part-time studies.

GCC's distance-learning program is gaining interest. Virtual Campus Online includes students from Texas, Maryland, West

Virginia, Wisconsin and North Carolina. Students can go online to receive instruction while at the same time interact audibly and visually with the professor and fellow classmates through their personal computers.

Associate through bachelor's degrees are available; a master's degree will begin in August 2005 through Virtual Campus Online. Students interested in various levels of interactive distance education can learn more by going to the college website www.college.gatewayfwb.org.

Pastors have the opportunity to work on degrees at no tuition cost. All the necessary information is on the website.

Hillsdale College Reports 439 Students

MOORE, OK—Hillsdale FWB College launched their fall semester with 439 students, according to President Tim Eaton. He set the full-time student equivalency at 306, nine less than reported in 2003.

Two hundred forty-five students enrolled in campus programs. The student classification includes 131 freshmen, 43 sophomores, 53 upper classmen, 16 graduate students, two non-degree students and 61 students in the external studies program.

The 81 ministry students logged in as 47 biblical studies students, 15 missions students and 19 students in Christian vocational studies (C.E., music, youth ministry).

President Eaton said, "These enrollment figures do not include new students who will begin classes September through December or the ABLE degree completion groups. If you have 60 credit hours of college and are interested in completing a

bachelor's degree in Bible or business, contact the ABLE Program at 405-912-9020."

Hillsdale's Master of Arts program begins its third year of operation. With a combination of intensive (one week) courses and the newly-designed Tuesday evening format, the program enrolled 16 with two others engaged in master's thesis research. For information about the graduate program, contact Amanda Thompson at 405-912-9022 or athompson@hc.edu. ■

Alabama: Director **Ashley Culp** reports 1,865 attendees at **Trinity Camp** in **Guin**. Evangelistic efforts resulted in 89 conversions, 186 rededications, 12 calls to preach and four calls to missions.

Twenty-seven people from **Red Bay FWB Church** in **Red Bay** participated in a first-ever missions trip to Mexico, according to Pastor **Barry Raper**. The group worked at the seminary in Reynosa, did painting and roof work on an apartment complex and worshipped in both Texas and Mexico churches.

Fifteen teens and five adults traveled to St. Croix, Virgin Islands, from **First FWB Church** in **Northport**. Pastor **Tim Baumgarten** said a three-day children's crusade resulted in seven conversions.

California: Members of **First FWB Church** in **Clovis** celebrated Pastor **Dan Felts'** 10-year anniversary by presenting the pastor's family with a trip to Australia. One of the pastor's dreams has been to visit Australia's Great Barrier Reef. **Joanna** (Mrs. Dan) **Felts** completed a master's degree in May from the Mennonite Brethren Seminary in Fresno.

Georgia: **Cornerstone FWB Church** in **Perry** welcomed 121 people to homecoming activities, according to Pastor **Grover Jewell**. The church made several improvements to the property—paved parking lot, new sign and steeple, adding trees and shrubbery, fresh paint everywhere.

Baxley FWB Church in **Baxley** celebrated 50 years in August. Pastor **James Lightsey** said Evangelist **Bobby Jackson** was guest speaker and The Gospeliers Quartet sang.

Illinois: Pastor **Mike Gillock** baptized five and reports six VBS conversions at **Mt. Vernon FWB Church** in **Mt. Vernon**. Owensboro, KY, pastor **Tim Hall** was guest speaker for the

church's 74th homecoming this summer. Afternoon activities included dinner on the grounds.

Kansas: Longtime Kansas pastor **Rhan Bowen** died July 10 at age 78. Reverend Bowen started **Parsons FWB Church** in **Parsons** in 1980, became senior pastor in 1986 and continued to lead the congregation until his death. Bowen and his wife sang in nursing homes twice monthly and played their music. Earlier he worked as an auto mechanic, then as a diesel mechanic with the railroad.

Kentucky: **First FWB Church** in **Glasgow** reports 14 conversions during VBS, according to Pastor **Joel Franks**. The congregations at **Brotherhood FWB Church** (Glasgow) and **First FWB Church** came together the first week in August for a four-day revival with a different speaker for each service—Pastor Franks, Pastor **Andy Patterson**, Youth Pastors **Heath Webb** and **Grant Pickerel**. One conversion and numerous rededications resulted.

Michigan: **Southgate FWB Church** in **Southgate** marked 41 years of service, according to Pastor **Ron Helms**. The congregation celebrated by burning the mortgage on the activities building.

Mississippi: **Beech Springs FWB Church** in **Tupelo** installed a new sign, thanks to an anonymous gift. **Dennis Kizzire** pastors.

Pastor **Jay Clifton** and members at **First FWB Church** in **Richton** completed a new fellowship hall in time to dedicate it during June homecoming activities.

Missouri: **Indian Creek Association** hosted its first youth workers conference at **First FWB Church** in **Carthage**. **Joe Turner**, the association's CTS director, led the conference.

Pastor **Garland Davidson** baptized seven and welcomed four new members at **Salem FWB Church** in **Salem**. The church added two Sunday School classes.

North Carolina: Attendance at **Emmanuel FWB Church** in **Washington** surged from 40 to 100 in 18 months, according to Pastor **Brian Phillips**. During that time, the 26-year-old minister baptized eight, welcomed 54 new members and started the New Members Class. The church youth group grew from no teens to 15. Pastor Phillips and the congregation are considering adding an early service Sunday morning. They have their eye on a 21-acre tract just down the road which may help with expansion needs for their Christian school.

Pastor **Gene Gilbert** at **Five Points FWB Church** in **Washington** reports a high attendance of 160 this summer. **Paula** (Mrs. Gene) **Gilbert** leads Sunday and Wednesday night Bible studies with 16 young people. Reverend Gilbert has pastored 25 years in Florida, Georgia, Alabama and Mississippi.

Members of **First FWB Church** in **Jacksonville** moved into a 25,000-square-foot building May 30, according to Pastor **Earl Hanna**. The Gum Branch Road structure is three times the size of their former church home on College Street. Church leaders broke ground for the new building in 1999.

South Carolina: During his 30 years as pastor at **First FWB Church** in **Clover**, **Marvin Carson** has seen 36 men called to preach. Twenty-seven of those ministers organized a dinner to honor Pastor Carson for his three decades of leadership. They presented him with a plaque and a love offering.

Pastor **Jimmy Brown** died August 6 of a massive heart attack while studying in his church office. Reverend Brown was pastor of **First FWB Church** in **Myrtle Beach**. ■



Year-End Gifts

By David Brown
Associate Director

Christmas season is a time of giving. We celebrate the greatest gift of all time to mankind, God's Son, Jesus Christ. Typically, people are in a charitable mood during Christmas and give more generously than any other time of the year. It is also the time of year when many make gifts to the Lord's work.

Certain types of property are good candidates for year-end gifts. Property that has gone up in value such as stocks, bonds, mutual funds and real estate make better year-end gifts than cash. Giving these gifts avoids capital gains taxes (possibly as high as 20%) and provides a tax deduction of as much as 100%.

To accomplish this you give the property itself, not the proceeds from the property. For example, consider stock with a fair market value of \$10,000 but your cost was \$1,000. One way to give it is to sell the stock and give the proceeds from the sale to your chosen ministry. This would generate a \$9,000 capital gain which could result in a tax bill of \$1,800, reducing your net gift to only \$8,200. A better way is to give the stock directly to the ministry allowing them to sell the stock. The ministry receives the entire \$10,000, and you get a full \$10,000 deduction.

When you have an asset that has lost value, the opposite is true. You should sell the asset and give the proceeds so that you can offset capital gains with the loss on your taxes.

Others desire to give a gift but may not be comfortable without the income from those assets. In this situation the Free Will Baptist Foundation can help you arrange a year-end gift that will generate a tax deduction now but maintain the income for life.

Consider Mr. and Mrs. Green who have owned a rental house for 30 years. The house is worth \$53,500, but since they fully depreciated the property their basis in the house is now \$0. Since Mr. Green is 70 and Mrs. Green 67, they considered selling the house to avoid the headaches of being a landlord. However, they need the rental income. They receive \$400 a month or \$4,800 a year. After real estate taxes, insur-

ance and repairs, their net income from the house is \$3,300 a year.

The Greens have always supported Free Will Baptist ministries and want to make a significant gift, but they can not afford to give the house outright to a ministry. Their present tenant indicated an interest in buying the house, but the Greens are not sure they want to sell. After deducting selling costs at \$3,500 and capital gains tax, they will net about \$40,000 from the sale. To generate the \$3,300 income they desire would mean an annual return of 8.25% on the \$40,000. The Greens, astute managers of money, are conservative investors and are not sure they can average this kind of return over their lifetime.

There is a way for the Greens to achieve their goals—getting out of their rental property, keeping their present income, making a significant gift to Free Will Baptists. By using a Charitable Remainder Unitrust, they avoid capital gains, saving approximately \$10,000. They receive a charitable gift tax deduction of \$15,096. This could be used the year of the gift or over the next five years saving possibly as much as \$5,000 depending on their tax bracket.

The trust will pay the Greens a monthly income to assure their needs without the hassles of real estate management. The trust will replace their income which may also adjust for inflation through the years. Finally, at death they will give a significant gift to the Free Will Baptist ministry of their choice, a gift which may be much larger than the original value of the trust.

Call the Free Will Baptist Foundation toll-free at 877-336-7575 or go online at www.fwbgifts.org if you would like information on these or similar situations to help you achieve your goals. ■



THE
FREE WILL
BAPTIST
FOUNDATION

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- Giving a property rather than proceeds from the sell of a property can save up to 20% on capital gains taxes.
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Free Will Baptist Ministry Focus



Why Support the Benjamin Randall Day Offering?

By Joel Nason
Home Missionary to New Hampshire

Less than two miles from my church here in central New Hampshire stands United Baptist Church, an area landmark known for its beautiful architecture and tall clock tower. The interior of the sanctuary is rich and meticulous, typical of the day in

which it was built. Erected in 1891, everyone in the area is familiar with the sight of the stately tower as it rises above the waters of Lake Winnepesaukee.

However, what is unfamiliar is that this was once a Free Will Baptist church. Park Street Free Will Baptist Church was instrumental in propagating the gospel all over the lakes region of New Hampshire. From its pulpit the Word of God was unapologetically proclaimed and souls were brought to Christ. This church became United Baptist Church in the 1911 merger with the Northern Baptist Convention and changed its name to reflect the change in direction.

Today, the church is pastored by a woman and warmly accepts homosexual members. United Baptist has a reputation for supporting every popular liberal, anti-scriptural cause. What happened? Among other things, having drunk deep from the cup of theological liberalism in seminary, their preachers lost their grip on foundational principles that undergird our very existence as Bible-believing Free Will Baptists today.

This historical perspective highlights the necessity of emphasizing what *Benjamin Randall Sunday* reaffirms in our denomination. During November, we set aside a day to raise awareness and support for our greatest endeavor together. What is the purpose of a special day honoring the founder of our northeast movement? Funding the Home Missions work is vital to its existence, and remembering our heritage is important. *The Benjamin Randall Day emphasis is a prime chance to declare what Free Will Baptists value and stand for without apology.*

When we give to Home Missions we reaffirm our conviction that the *proclamation of God's Word is still the only method for transforming lives*. If God's Word is not inerrant and authoritative, then my reason for winning the lost ceases to exist. All around me here in New England stand buildings that are

empty husks with no life inside because they relinquished their conviction on the Word of God. During November we declare our conviction that God's Word is the only remedy for what ails mankind, and the need to plant churches is as strong as ever.

When we support this special effort, we reaffirm that the *passionate pursuit of the lost* tops our list of priorities. One man said, "The church that ceases to be evangelistic will soon cease to exist." This has become reality in my field of service. Societal changes have dramatically impacted the minds of Americans by bringing in an increasingly secularized, postmodern and pluralistic attitude that has resulted in an intense and intentional effort to remove God from public life.

The window of opportunity has never been better in our world. Yet our church planters often struggle for great lengths of time to achieve the funding level they need to get to the field.

When we give our effort to this emphasis, we reaffirm our understanding that *church planting is God's choice means for fulfilling the Great Commission*. Why plant more churches? A few answers would include: There is no better means for spreading the gospel and establishing a community-based discipling agency. It expands the personnel and financial base for foreign missions as well as North America. Church planting is needed during this time of doctrinal defection, ecclesiastical compromise, sinking standards and spiritual lethargy. It is God's will for some men. Fresh, eager ministries are the lifeblood of active evangelism. We need to evangelize while the freedom is still in place.

November is a time to recommit ourselves to church planting and development. Pray for God to raise up a new generation of dedicated servants and leaders for the task ahead. Please support the Benjamin Randall Day Offering. ■



When we give to Home Missions we reaffirm our conviction that...

- The proclamation of God's Word is still the only method for transforming lives.
- The passionate pursuit of the lost tops our list of priorities.
- Church planting is God's choice means for fulfilling the Great Commission.

Free Will Baptist Ministry Focus

The Lady from Greentop

By Bert Tippet
Director of Public Relations

One of Free Will Baptist Bible College's most faithful—and most experienced—workers retired at the end of the 2004 school year in June. Peggy Jo McElhinney, born in Greentop, Missouri, has impacted the Free Will Baptist denomination, especially the

college, far in excess of what one would think when beholding her petite frame.

She was saved as a teenager while traveling home from the state meeting she and her family had attended in St. Louis. They stopped that night for a service at the church where Rev. Harvey Hill was pastoring. Both Peggy Jo and her two sisters, Neta (Maggart) and Carol (Pinkerton) were saved that night. "The

Her ministry has extended far beyond ivy-covered college walls. At her church, East Nashville Free Will Baptist, she served for many years as Sunday school secretary. She also served for a time as treasurer of the Nashville chapter of Christian Business Women.

Few people in the college's Memorial Auditorium last May realized they were witnessing the retirement of one of the school's most outstanding servants.

"Peggy Jo has been a bedrock component in the business office for over 70% of the college's existence. Spanning six decades, her knowledge of FWBBC's operation is understandably immeasurable.

"Peggy Jo is truly an icon. At the same time, a servant spirit is always present with a willingness to offer a helping hand in whatever task comes her way. Accuracy, to a fault, and excellence always accompany her work, along with integrity and reliability.

"Why do I speak of a retiree in the present tense? True to form, Miss McElhinney is currently volunteering in the business office two days a week to help the college through this time of transition. We pray for a long and restful retirement for one of the Lord's choicest servants, who devoted her life to the ministry of the college."

—Tom Sass, current FWBBC treasurer

"Peggy Jo McElhinney has been an exemplary servant at Free Will Baptist Bible College. She combined a strong work ethic with an attitude of service and teamwork—a rare combination to find in any organization. It will be hard to do without her on our campus."

—Matt Pinson, FWBBC president

act of accepting Christ as Savior was a complete, all out decision. My life was changed completely," she recalls.

In 1959, still in her teens, she applied for a position in the business office at the Bible College in Nashville. E.B. McDonald was treasurer of the college. He didn't want to spend a lot of time training a worker who might soon be gone, so he asked Peggy Jo if she would commit to staying for at least two years; she agreed. Those two years have stretched into 45. The time spent in her training may be one of the best investments the college has ever made.

She was hired as a bookkeeper. Ten years later she was made bursar of the college and, eventually, became office manager. In 1986, she was promoted to assistant treasurer.

Even now, she continues to do volunteer service in the office two days each week.

Peggy Jo says her work has given her the privilege of rubbing shoulders with some fine people. "When I reflect upon my years at the college and the many, many people I have met, it seems unreal that a timid farm girl from Missouri would accumulate such a list of famous and outstanding friends—pioneers of the denomination and, especially, of the Bible College."

(Not widely known is a long-buried desire Peggy Jo has harbored. "I think it would be 'fun,'" she says, "to have the nerve to drive a high powered car through tests—to be an expert in the field, like Chuck Yeager!")

We salute Peggy Jo for her tireless, sacrificial service to the college, to the denomination, and to the work of God. ■

Free Will Baptist Ministry Focus



Free Will Baptist
Bible College

"She was a very faithful worker who did her work well and promptly. I commend her for her years of faithful service."
—E.B. McDonald,
retired FWBBC
treasurer



Garnett Reid

What in the World?

The Bible's Story-Line, Part X

Recently I heard a prominent

sociologist suggest that Christianity was on the way out as a major world religion. Its "intolerance" and resistance to pluralism, he felt, made the Christian faith increasingly less viable in the marketplace of religious options.

What planet is this guy from, I wondered to myself. The real story is that the gospel of Christ continues to make inroads all over the world, especially in areas previously untouched by the church's outreach. God is building His kingdom. The blood of Christ's new covenant maintains its power to change lives in spite of the squeals of skeptics who discount its relevance.

Though the revealed message of the Bible's story-line ended with John's final "Amen" in Revelation, the story continues today in the work of the risen Lord Jesus through His body, the church.

"God graciously calls all people by the Holy Spirit to a saving relationship with Himself"

No one comes to Jesus of his own initiative. Paul reminds us that we do not look for Him; instead, He comes to us. Redemption's work in our lives is one of grace from start to finish. Yet its offer reaches out to everyone: "For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved" (Romans 10:13). Since the disease infects all people, all have access to the cure. If one died for all, concludes Paul, then all were dead (II Corinthians 5:14).

This cure involves a "saving" relationship with the Lord. We must not shy away from referring to our experience as one

of "being saved." That's exactly what happened! We were headed for God's wrath when Jesus rescued us and saved us from never-ending punishment. No condemnation awaits anyone whose trust is in Him.

"Through their faith in Him"

God's new covenant provides this salvation to those who put their total trust in Christ. We should revisit this truth often since our selfish tendencies and go-it-alone culture try to convince us that we can somehow earn our way to Heaven. "By grace through faith"—nothing else opens the door of grace.

"Unites them to His body, the church"

When we trust Christ, God places us into a living union with Him and with all those who believe. The new covenant likens this organism to a body. Christ functions as the head and His people make up the other parts (see I Corinthians 12:12–27; Ephesians 2:11–18; and 4:7–16). The body functions with the express purpose of bringing honor and glory to the head (Colossians 1:18).

"Sends those who believe into the world"

Jesus made sure that none of His followers could misunderstand His final instructions. "Go into all the world and make disciples," He commanded. Every believer is His ambassador, sent by Christ to reconcile people to God (II Corinthians 5:19–20). The urgency of our times demands that we witness with boldness, courage, compassion and sincerity.

"To tell and to model this good news before all people"

Yes, we must speak about Jesus to people; but we must also live for Jesus among them. It makes little difference what we say if what we do is out of sync with our words. Covenant loyalty is not just about faith. It involves obedience to God's covenant demands. We show our faith by our works, James reminds us. Paul urges Timothy to be an example of the believers in I Timothy 4:12.

"And sits in exalted glory preparing to return to establish his kingdom on earth"

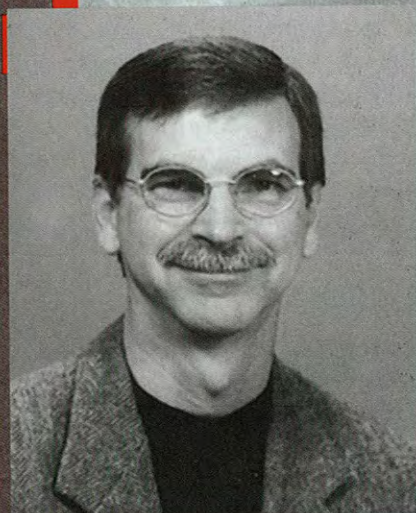
Vance Havner once called the second coming of Christ "the unwanted stepchild in the family of church doctrine." Apart from the popular *Left Behind* novels, it seems we have shoved our interest in Christ's return to the back of the closet with all the other out-of-the-way items we'd just as soon no one else see. No matter—Jesus' promise is still true: "I will come again and receive you unto myself."

The final act of God's great story, the ultimate goal of life and history for all time, is the coming of Christ's kingdom in absolute supremacy over everything that exists (Revelation 11:18). Christian, we live for this to happen. Yet we also live in the reality of its truth now. Christ is Lord today. He will reign as king over all, but He reigns as my king now.

"Unto him be glory in the church by Christ Jesus throughout all ages, world without end. Amen" (Ephesians 3:21). ■

National Student and

Children's World Conference



February 4–6, 2005

**Stonecroft Conference Center
Branson, Missouri**

**February 18–20, 2005
Lake Barkley State Resort Park
Cadiz, Kentucky**





Randy Sawyer

A Pastor's Thoughts on His Wife

To be blunt, writing is an exercise

in self-indulgence. A writer selects a topic that interests him, expresses his views, then re-works each sentence until the manuscript says what he wants it to say the way he wants it said. Every writer coaxes his readers to see things the way he does. With that admission, here are a few thoughts on my favorite subject.

A Little Nudge

Twenty-eight years ago my wife and I married. Our courtship lasted two years, and though I was away at college most of the time, our relationship was filled with deepening respect and indescribable romance. At least that's my side of the story.

I was so shy and fearful of rejection that the thought of speaking directly to her (Terri) nearly made me nauseous at first. My timidity forced me to attempt the initial contact through a mutual friend. Even after we began to "socialize," my definition of romance was somewhat distorted and my understanding of attending to another person's needs was noticeably misinformed, to everyone except me. I had a lot to learn about relationships and females.

With my feelings severely bruised by Terri's refusal to begin a relationship through someone else's advances, I was left wondering if she was too lofty a goal. Knowing of my interest, however, she decided to give me a little nudge. One evening while both of us participated in indoor games in the church fellowship building, she asked if I would be her partner in a ping-pong tournament. My heart almost pounded out of my chest when she approached me with that question. But I was forced to decline. Not because I didn't want to be

with her. I turned down the request because of a potentially embarrassing development.

Earlier that night, while playing a pick-up basketball game in my sock feet, I had torn a hole in one of my socks and by then the big toe on my right foot protruded through the sock. She didn't know about it until later. At the time I guess she simply concluded I wasn't worth the effort.

Gradually, I did muster enough nerve to approach her. In a matter of weeks I was completely and entirely smitten. Just being in her presence was, as Ronald Reagan once commented about his wife Nancy, like coming out of the cold "into a warm room." Eighteen months later she consented to be my wife, and 12 months after that we began our lives as husband and wife.

A Lot to Learn

Through these many years, I've learned a number of important truths that enabled our marriage to flourish. One is that when God created woman He was having a very good day, and another is that He was never more on top of His game than the day He crafted my wife. She has been and remains the perfect compliment to my flawed personality.

I can be vain, cranky, impetuous, self-absorbed and fiercely stubborn. I am almost never satisfied and can lose my temper over the slightest miscue by others or myself. My wife discovered these cracks in my character before I did. Her unconditional acceptance continues to be a marvel of human compassion.

Another thing I've noticed through the past 28 years is that being a pastor's wife is more difficult than being a pastor. A number of years ago an older, experienced

minister made a revealing remark to my wife. He had just heard me preach. He commented to my wife, "I'm going to be praying for you, my dear, for you are going to have a difficult life!" He was right. It's been tough, and I'm not talking about dealing with church folks.

Encouraging Her to Be Herself

However, I've learned some things that made it a little easier for her. For example, I've learned to let her be herself, to find her own niche in ministry. Coming from a dysfunctional home, my wife was frightened of church work and church people. No amount of prodding could get her in front of a group of women to speak. She didn't want to be the leader, of anything.

More than once she told me in tears, "You married the wrong girl. I can't be what you need me to be; I don't have any gifts to contribute." My impatience added to her frustration. But she was more than just a diamond in the rough; she turned out to be the whole diamond mine.

Though quiet, almost to a fault, hundreds of women now look to her as a prime example of Christian womanhood. Her Sunday School class has been divided each of the last three years to start new units, and she capably directs our women's ministry team. She just needed time to discover her place in the business of the Kingdom.

Allowing Her to Fulfill Her Highest Calling

I have also learned to let her be a mother. After the birth of our second child, we did whatever we had to do for Terri to stay home with our children. At times she declined ministry positions and oppor-



tunities because the kids came first. We do a great disservice to young families when we teach young women to be “keepers at home,” then do everything we can to keep them involved in church work seven days a week.

Routine is vital in the development of children, and daily routine is impossible if everyone is expected to be part of everything scheduled at church. I watched my wife thrive and my children as well, because she was free to fulfill her first and highest calling.

Sheltering Her from the Negatives

Finally, I learned to shelter my wife from some of the ministry's negative moments. Let's face it, pastoring isn't always fun. And if we're not careful, we bring the bad stuff home and dump it all over our family. I do that sometimes. After one such unloading session, my wife replied, "If it's so bad, why don't you leave? Just do something else."

That comment was a serious wake-up call. It really wasn't that bad. I didn't want to leave. I just wanted the people to obey me, and they wouldn't. They still don't, by the way. But my wife doesn't know it, so please don't tell her. She thinks our folks are the greatest in the world. Her outlook has changed, because I have learned when to bring home the garbage.

Twenty-eight years? I can hardly believe it. My prayer remains that what we've learned in the past will enable us to grow in the future, until our marriage is as a picture of how much Christ loves His church. ■

Receipts:				Year To Date	Year To Date	Year To Date
State	Designated	CO-OP	Total	Designated	CO-OP	Total
Alabama	\$ 357	\$ 0	\$ 357	\$ 3,600	\$ 1,212	\$ 4,812
Arizona	0	0	0	105	240	345
Arkansas	11,491	16,134	27,625	92,998	139,786	232,785
California	39	984	1,023	2,552	8,907	11,459
Colorado	0	0	0	0	0	0
Delaware	0	0	0	0	0	0
Florida	0	2,768	2,768	369	11,072	11,441
Georgia	33,497	1,126	34,623	287,997	12,680	300,676
Hawaii	0	0	0	0	0	0
Idaho	0	0	0	0	0	0
Illinois	13,711	2,063	15,774	119,019	17,982	137,001
Indiana	2,070	0	2,070	15,564	1,459	17,023
Iowa	0	0	0	0	0	0
Kansas	0	0	0	295	644	939
Kentucky	75	839	914	1,265	5,452	6,717
Louisiana	0	0	0	0	0	0
Maryland	0	0	0	0	0	0
Michigan	14,061	1,777	15,838	147,593	19,173	166,766
Mississippi	0	0	0	94,938	6,353	101,290
Missouri	55,411	14,564	69,975	402,361	139,830	542,190
Montana	0	0	0	0	0	0
Nebraska	0	0	0	0	0	0
New Jersey	0	0	0	0	0	0
New Mexico	569	37	606	3,814	177	3,991
North Carolina	3,120	3,865	6,985	11,037	33,915	44,952
Ohio	12,381	3,635	16,016	130,259	25,875	156,134
Oklahoma	45,902	8,764	54,667	445,741	90,276	536,017
South Carolina	45,850	38	45,888	388,815	738	389,553
South Dakota	0	0	0	0	0	0
Tennessee	11,355	1,194	12,549	104,870	13,499	118,369
Texas	0	0	0	77,865	2,414	80,279
Virginia	94	0	94	582	666	1,248
Virgin Islands	0	0	0	0	0	0
West Virginia	345	193	538	3,625	937	4,563
Wisconsin	0	0	0	0	0	0
Canada	1,088	25	1,113	7,785	146	7,931
Northwest Assoc.	0	0	0	0	0	0
Northeast Assoc.	0	0	0	0	0	0
Other	0	0	0	0	0	0
Totals	\$ 251,417	\$ 58,006	\$ 309,423	\$ 2,343,049	\$ 533,432	\$ 2,876,482

Disbursements:

Executive Office	\$ 1,225	\$ 26,103	\$ 27,328	\$ 12,841	\$ 240,044	\$ 252,886
Foreign Missions	154,574	7,338	161,912	1,463,555	67,479	1,531,034
FWBBC	17,671	7,338	25,009	201,041	67,479	268,520
Home Missions	70,722	5,743	76,464	591,310	52,810	644,119
Retirement & Insurance	300	4,466	4,767	2,760	41,074	43,834
Master's Men	195	4,466	4,661	5,251	41,074	46,326
Commission for Theo. Integrity	51	160	210	400	1,467	1,867
FWB Foundation	193	1,914	2,108	1,659	17,603	19,262
Historical Commission	51	160	210	400	1,467	1,867
Music Commission	72	160	232	592	1,467	2,059
Media Commission	107	160	267	872	1,467	2,339
Hillsdale FWB College	1,857	0	1,857	17,749	0	17,749
Other	4,399	0	4,399	44,620	0	44,620
Totals	\$ 251,417	\$ 58,006	\$ 309,423	\$ 2,343,049	\$ 533,432	\$ 2,876,482



Thomas Marberry

Augustine and His World

By Andrew Knowles and Pachomios Penkett (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2004, 191 pp., paperback, \$14.00).

This book is the latest in the IVP Histories series designed for the general reader rather than specialists. Andrew Knowles is the author of several previous books on biblical studies and church history. Pachomios Penkett directs the National Ikon Collection in the United Kingdom, lectures internationally and has published several works on church history.

Augustine was clearly the most important theologian of the early church period. He was a prolific author writing 100 books, many of which survive in whole or in part. His most influential books, *Confessions* and *The City of God*, have been translated into many languages and read by readers around the world.

The authors begin with a description of the world into which Augustine was born. By the time of Augustine's birth on November 13, 354, the Roman Empire was at the height of its power. Maintaining control of such a vast empire was a difficult and expensive task. As the authors

note, "Security was costly in money and recruits, so that treaties, alliances and compromises had to be made with real or potential enemies."

By the time of Augustine's birth, Christianity had been part of life in the Roman Empire for three centuries. Paganism was still a major force, but the days of official persecution were over. There were simply too many Christians for any campaign of persecution against them to be successful. Emperor Constantine had inaugurated a policy of toleration in 313.

Augustine was born in the town of Thagaste in the Roman province of North Africa. He lived most of his life in North Africa and served many years as Bishop of the city of Hippo. His father, Patricius, was not a Christian. His mother, Monica, a believer, recognized the ability of her younger son and spent her life helping him grow and develop. His later conversion to Christ owes much to her influence and prayers.

Patricius and Monica wanted their son to receive the best classical education available, but they did not have sufficient funds. A local relative, Romanianus, owned a large estate. His generosity made it possible for Augustine to receive the education that opened doors of opportunity for him.

He received his early education in his home village. When he was 15, his parents decided to send him to the university in Carthage, the finest educational institution in North Africa. It took a year to raise the necessary funds. During that year, the young Augustine began to live a wild life. He became involved with a group of teens known for drinking, stealing and sex. This was the beginning of a long struggle with sin in his life.

The years at the university in Carthage were important. There he met the woman (whom he never identified by name) with whom he would live for 15 years and

with whom he would have a son named Adeodatus. We are not sure why they never married.

Augustine's religious pilgrimage began in Carthage. He tried several religions. He read the Bible but was disillusioned by its style and content. He joined a sect called Manichaeism which was a mixture of Christianity and Zoroastrianism. He left the group after nine years and sought a religion that could meet his needs. While in Carthage, Augustine became a popular and influential teacher of rhetoric.

After some time in Carthage, he traveled to Rome and Milan. In Milan his popularity as a teacher of rhetoric continued as did his religious pilgrimage. He came to faith in Christ as a result of an African Christian named Ponticianus. He was baptized in the spring of 387. In 391 he visited the city of Hippo Regius in North Africa where the local church called him as priest. He was ordained to the priesthood and spent the next 40 years in Hippo. He died on August 28, 430, while the city he loved was under siege by the Vandals.

The last chapter of the book is an analysis of Augustine's contributions. He developed the doctrine of original sin as no theologian before him had done. He argued that salvation centers entirely on Christ. As the authors note, "There is no other Saviour or way of salvation, but Christ alone who reconciles the whole world back to God."

Augustine had great respect for the scriptures. Although he knew no Greek, he worked to establish the most accurate Latin translation available. Augustine contributed significantly to the then-developing doctrine of the trinity and to the Roman Catholic concept of the church.

There is no shortage of books on Augustine. Not many books, however, present a good overview of his life and thought designed for the general reader. This book does. ■

Directory Update

Arkansas

John High to New Bethel Church, Sage, from Weaver's Chapel Church, Batesville

Missouri

Russell Johnson to First Church, Waynesville, from Pleasant Mound Church, Bellevue, TX

South Carolina

Richard Huggins to Rains Church, Rains

Allen Goodman to Damascus Church, Conway

Tony Lynch to High Hill Church, Lake City

James Wilhide to High Point Church, Lancaster, from SCFWB Home for Children, Turbeville

Other Personnel

Tony Cooper to Tupelo Church, Tupelo, MS, as minister of music from Spencer Road Church, Spencer, OK



Jack Williams

Don't Forget to Say Thanks

Tom lives in Texas but gets

around the country a lot, even for a Texan. He called me one day from North Carolina to tell me about a hitchhiker who robbed him in Oklahoma. When he reported the robbery to Muskogee police, they scolded him for picking up hitchhikers at a time when they were looking for two criminals who had killed two people in the area.

Tom said he didn't know whether to laugh or cry. He felt dumb for getting himself in a position to be robbed in the first place. He lost his money, came close to losing his life while staring down the barrel of a pistol, lost a lot of confidence in his fellow man whom he had befriended in a rain storm, and then got a lecture from the people he thought could help him.

Tom hauls a full load of bricks, but sometimes the load shifts on him and he careens down life's highway banging his head on the guardrail. Like what happened to him one Friday in Dallas.

A no-nonsense police officer pulled him over for speeding, marched up to his window and asked why he passed a policeman while traveling 57 mph in a 35 mph zone. Tom couldn't think of any reason to justify his speeding and said so.

The officer reminded Tom that he had been going so fast in the slow zone he didn't see the police car. He said that even an emergency would not have justified Tom's risky, careless driving.

The officer agreed that Tom had no excuse and then asked why he did not have a \$15 county sticker on his car's windshield. Tom explained that someone threw a rock through his windshield and when the glass company replaced the windshield they forgot to transfer the sticker.

The long-suffering officer nodded and wondered if the windshield incident happened yesterday. When Tom said it occurred three months earlier, the officer asked to see his driver's license.

The officer told Tom to wait right there while he returned to his patrol car and radioed the dispatcher. He returned a couple of minutes later and said, "Sir, did you know that your driver's license expired six months ago?"

At that point, Tom threw himself on what little mercy the irritated officer had left. The officer finally said, "Sir, I've never seen so much wrong with one guy. Will you please take your driver's license back and try your best to get all this stuff fixed?"

No ticket. Tom drove away leaving the officer standing in the street shaking his head. Ever have one of those days, one of those weeks? Did you remember to say thanks that you got a pass when, truth be told, you should have gotten the mother of all visits to an unsympathetic judge?

Tom was thankful to be alive after his close call with the Oklahoma hitchhiker and surprised to not be paying a heavy fine after the wave of traffic violations in Dallas.

Sometimes life is like what Jerry Fulk described at a high-school baseball game in Indiana where he coached. During the last inning with a one-run lead in a fiercely-contested game against a local rival, the other team loaded the bases with two out.

Fulk said, "Our pitcher had a full count on the hitter and fired the ball to home plate. The batter took the pitch. Everyone in both dugouts peered intently at the umpire, awaiting the crucial decision."

The umpire looked at Fulk, then at the opposing coach and made his ruling, "Too close to call. Throw it again!"

Everybody got a second chance. The

batter, the pitcher, both teams . . . and the umpire.

Not long after Dallas Theological Seminary opened in 1924, it almost closed. Creditors were on the way to foreclose at noon on a certain day when President Lewis Chafer met with the faculty in the office praying for God to provide.

Dr. Harry Ironsides, present that day, prayed in his characteristic style, "Lord, we know that the cattle on a thousand hills are Thine. Please sell some of them and send us the money."

Meanwhile, a tall Texas businessman stepped into the seminary's business office, saying, "I have two carloads of cattle in Fort Worth, but could not make a deal go through. I feel compelled to give the money to the seminary. I don't care if you need the money or not, but here's the check."

When the secretary knocked on Dr. Chafer's door and he looked at the check, it was for the exact amount of the debt.

Turning to Dr. Ironsides, Chafer said: "Harry, God sold the cattle!"

This is the time of year when we all look back on prayers answered, second chances and a long list of unexpected leniencies. Let's call it grace and say thanks. Let's also give the next fellow another swing when the pitch is just too close to call.

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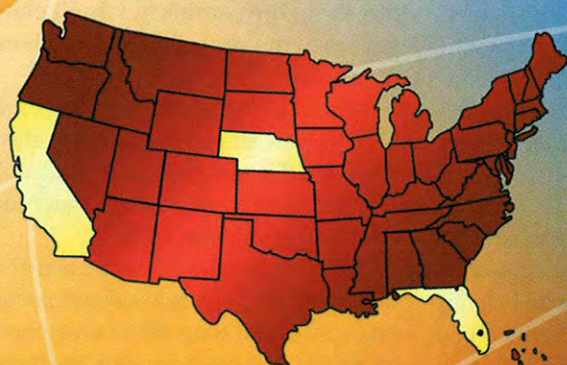
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