

December 2004

50 Years of **Contact**

Just Let Me Enjoy Christmas

No more Christmas grinchers and holiday spiritual humbugs.

Official Publication of the National Association of Free Will Baptists

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Keith Burden

Staying in Contact

Contact magazine was one month old when I was born. This issue (December 2004) marks 51 years and two months of ministry by the publication. You are holding the final edition in your hands.

Much about the magazine has *changed* through the years. Examples of the transition *Contact* has experienced include:

- **Size**—The first issue was only 16 pages in length. In 1964 it expanded to 28 pages, then in 1977 grew to 32 pages, its current size.
- **Look**—The magazine has undergone various redesigns through the years. In 1998 new four-color covers were unveiled. Randall House Publications has been responsible for its layout and design since April 2003.
- **Content**—While *Contact* has always been full of denominational news, that information became better organized in 1972 when the first index of articles was published. Church news was incorporated into the monthly column "Currently" in 1976. The inaugural edition of the "Pastor Appreciation" issue came on the scene in 1981.
- **Editors**—Over the life of the magazine, six men have capably supervised its publication:

W.S. Mooneyham (1953–1959)

Billy Melvin (1959–1967)

Rufus Coffey (1967–1969)

Jim Owen Jones (1969–1970)

Eugene Workman (1971–1977)

Jack Williams (1977–2004)

While each editor has brought a unique perspective to the magazine, high standards of journalism have been maintained and

distinctives that set Free Will Baptists apart from other groups faithfully preserved.

However, it is important to point out that in the midst of significant change, some things have remarkably remained the *same*. For instance:

- **Vision**—The lead article in the November 1953 issue of *Contact* discussed the denomination coming together to purchase a headquarters building in West Nashville for \$19,000. A bold step of faith at that time. Free Will Baptists continue to have their eyes on the future. At this year's national convention in Kansas City, attendees were introduced to CLEAR curriculum, a new learning system developed by Randall House. Delegates also authorized the creation of a new magazine to replace existing departmental publications.
- **Mission**—Two news items appeared in the first issue of *Contact* that revealed Free Will Baptists' heart for global evangelism. One announced Raymond Riggs' appointment as the first full-time Foreign Missions director. Another spotlighted a "Cotton Picking for Missions" sponsored by Bellview FWB Church in Colquitt, Georgia. Reaching the world for Christ continues to be the central focus of our movement. During the 2004 national convention, our denomination voted to change the name of Foreign Missions to International Missions and gave final approval for the formation of an NGO—a non-governmental organization to take the gospel into restricted-access countries.

- **Desire to serve**—The first issue of *Contact* magazine was sent free to 10,000 people. Subsequent copies were offered at a subscription rate of \$2 per year. We anticipate mailing the new, bimonthly denominational publication complimentary to 60,000 families beginning sometime in 2005. This gives national agencies an unparalleled opportunity to take their message directly to our people, providing news and information about what God is doing among Free Will Baptists.

Thus ends another chapter in Free Will Baptist history. We place the last issue of *Contact* magazine on the shelf with mixed emotions...sad to see the end of an era...excited over the prospects of what lies ahead. We extend special thanks to those who have been a part of this journey during the past 51 years. May God bless the new publication as we seek to *stay in Contact* with Free Will Baptists. ■

BEYOND BELIEF



One minister has had it up-to-here with Christmas grinchers and holiday spiritual humbugs.

Just Let Me Enjoy Christmas

By Gary Fry



"Well, it's Christmas . . . again!"

Those are the words the disc jockey used to explain why his station was already playing all Christmas music. It was only November 1 and his station, in an effort to be the first to do so, had started playing all Christmas music at midnight on Halloween. "Gotta beat that Christmas rush," he said. Wal-Mart and others had their Christmas decorations and merchandise right next to the Thanksgiving stuff which was right next to the Halloween stuff, and all of it out by Labor Day.

There are even after-Christmas sales going already, and Christmas isn't even here yet. Time was when you could fight the crowd on the day after Christmas and get ornaments, wrapping paper and bows for next year at half-price. Now they are discounted days before along with the merchandise you have wrapped and under the tree, and for which you paid full price just a few days ago. All because you so wisely did your shopping early.

Grinches and Humbugs

Christmas again, I thought. Now we are going to hear a barrage of the same stuff we have heard for years. The secularists are going to decry the mixing of church and state, because we have the gall to ask little children in school to sing Christmas carols and be Mary and Joseph in the school pageant.

They will be livid that we actually would think to display nativity scenes in such secular places as public parks and buildings. They are so sensitive that their feelings will be horribly damaged by having to see the Babe in a manger.

Then there will be those on the other end—the religious zealots who decry the celebration of Christmas, because it is a pagan holiday and tell us that all "real" Christians stay away from trees and tinsel and lights and gift giving. It seems they think it all dishonors God. After all, we don't really know what day Christ was born anyway, so why celebrate?

One radio evangelist said we should not use angels as decorations because too many people were worshiping angels instead of God. The atheists even get in on this one. Last year they erected a sign in Madison, Wisconsin, saying that Christians are guilty of stealing Christmas from the pagans. Seems they want it back.

Christmas Overkill

Thank God for the church where we have it all in focus. We have only been practicing the Christmas cantata since August, and by now the altos hate the tenors because we have to keep going over the same parts. We will be in great Christmas spirit by the time we perform this holiday wonder three times in a row on Saturday evening and both services on Christmas Sunday.

Not to mention all the Christmas class parties and caroling and cookie baking for goody baskets for the shut-ins. Whatever happened to simple and meaningful? By the time it is all done, we will be glad it is over. Wow, what a great Christmas celebration! Don't you just get tired of it all after a while?

What's It All About?

I really don't care that we do not know exactly what day Jesus was born or even what season of the year. It is enough to know for sure that He was born. That God said He was going to send His Son and He really did!

I really don't care that many of the trappings of the season had pagan origins. They are not pagan now. We baptized them and made them Christian. All the lights and tinsel and decorations and carols create a special, ethereal atmosphere that is perfect for celebrating the greatest event that had happened in the history of the world up to that time.

I know there is an unhealthy emphasis on angels in our culture, but there is no denying that angels announced the great news to the shepherds in the fields that evening.

And every time I look at the small angel on top of our tree, I can almost hear that glorious announcement that a child was born. God had become flesh and would dwell among us.

Music, Lights, Truth

When I hear the soft strains and beautiful simple harmony of "Silent Night, Holy Night," I close my eyes and see that quiet Bethlehem night with Christ in the manger. I can hear the hush in the stable as if all creation was holding its breath in awe.

My heart rejoices and leaps at "Hark the Herald Angels Sing!" and "Joy to the World." I want to shout "He did it! He really sent His only begotten Son!"

When I see all the lights and decorations on the houses in our small town, I know that many of the folks there are simply trying to out-do their neighbors to the delight of the local power company. But I don't care. They are testifying to the coming of the Light of the World whether they want to or not. God be praised, we no longer dwell in darkness, the light of the world is Jesus.

It really doesn't bother me what folks on either extreme end of the issue of Christmas think. We folks here in the middle are celebrating. We know that Christmas, like a lot of other things, is what you make of it.

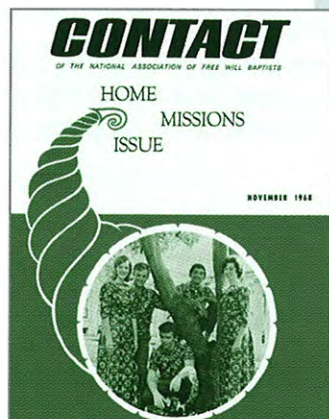
My family and I chose to make it a wonderful time of rejoicing in the pleasures of the season and the staggering mercy and grace of God. A God who loved us enough to lay aside His robes of splendor and step into the darkness dressed in swaddling clothes.

So if all that "stuff" matters to you, that's fine. Just let me enjoy Christmas for what it is, a celebration of God and all His goodness to us. ■



About the Writer: Reverend Gary Fry serves as executive secretary for the Missouri State Association of Free Will Baptists. He also chairs the Free Will Baptist Bible College Board of Trustees.

50 years of Contact

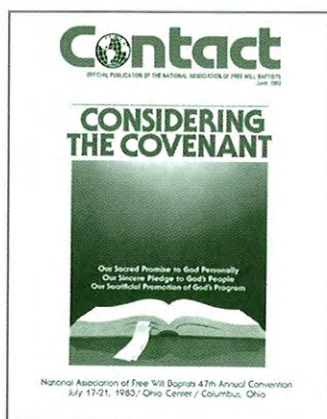


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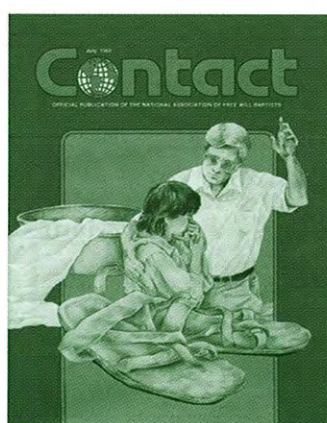


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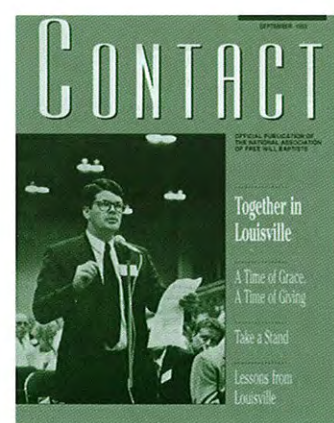
Wraparound convention cover took top honors
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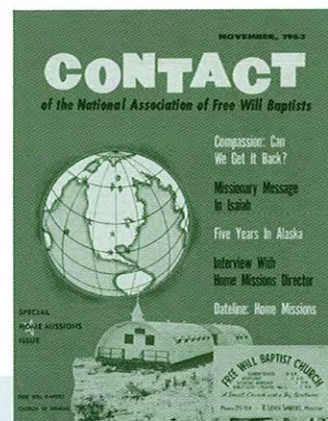
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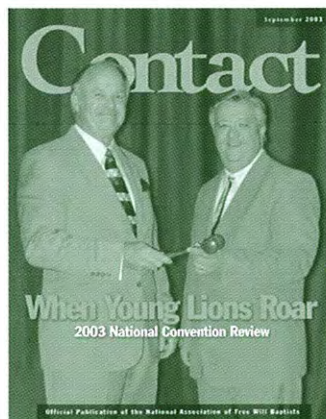
November 1973



June 1978



January 1998



September 2003



June 2004



**She
expected
to die on
I-40.
She almost
did.
Then
a stranger
prayed.**

I'm Still Standing

By Charollette Tallent

When I was 10 years old, my pastor preached a message about Jesus returning for His own. That night in my dreams I floated upward toward Heaven until a loud voice interrupted, "Go back! This was only a test to see if you were ready."

A real-life test happened this summer on a stretch of I-40 near Lonoke, Arkansas. Looking back on July 20, 2004, I realize that God's hands steered my life into His well-designed plan.

I was traveling I-40 West to visit my mother in Dardanelle. I crossed the Mississippi River at noon. By my calculations, if I didn't get bogged down in road construction, I would pull into Mom's drive around 4:00 p.m.

Cell Phone Distraction

Forty miles east of Little Rock, I picked up my cell phone to make a call. While I am a firm advocate of hands-free usage, traffic was so sparse that I didn't clip my earpiece into the phone. Unable to reach my party, I laid the phone on my lap where it kept sliding around. I glanced down for a second, grabbed the phone in my right hand and flipped it to the passenger seat.

When I looked back, I had turned the steering wheel toward the right-hand shoulder. I made matters worse by overcompensating and steering too far to the left. In the blink of an eye, my vehicle careened from the shoulder across two lanes of interstate and headed across the median where eastbound traffic was at a standstill in a construction zone.

Nose to Nose with Death

My thoughts raced: "I've got to get this car under control before others are injured." My memory jumped to 1984 when John and Kay (Dudley) Metcalf, new missionaries to Brazil, were killed on I-40 when a semi lurched across the interstate into their path. I believed my fate was to be like theirs, except that I was the one rushing headlong into another vehicle.

My peripheral vision caught a blue streak flying past, another vehicle, and I thought I was safe from involving anyone else. I fought the steering wheel with every ounce of strength, but my red Cavalier started a 360-degree spin. Spinning from my westbound position and now facing east, I saw a shiny grill bearing down on me. The biggest truck I had ever seen was 200 feet away closing fast.

My fear transferred from others to the reality of my own fate. Neither a prayer nor a cry for God to rescue me escaped my lips. One thought pierced my heart—"Today is the day I am dying."

Adrenaline kicked in as I tried to control my spinning car. During a second whirling spin, tires screeched and I heard metal-to-metal contact. Glancing over my right shoulder at the 18-wheeler, I expected to be swept under the wheels.

But when my world slowed down, I wasn't under the semi. I was on the right shoulder facing eastbound with the big rig stopped 30 feet away straddling two lanes. I realized that contact had occurred near my gas tank, so I bolted from the car fearing it would explode.

Echo Young's Prayer

I heard a woman's voice as she ran along the shoulder to my side. A stranger hugged me tightly and asked if I was injured.

When I responded that I was only shaken, she said she saw the whole thing and knew she and her daughters were about to witness a serious accident. She then did the only thing natural to her. My newfound friend, Echo Young, said she prayed out loud asking God to protect whoever was in the car from serious injury or death.

Putting my hand on her arm, I asked if she were a Christian. Her affirmative reply brought another hug as I told her she was here for such a time as this, because a prayer couldn't be found on my lips.

Echo's servant heart went into action as she brought me something to drink and then reached out to the stunned young truck driver. This mother with two young daughters (Christy and Angel) traveling from Ohio to Texas gave no thought to her delay. She offered words of comfort at the accident scene and then drove me to a nearby truck stop where we waited for my brother's arrival.

Only a Car

There are days I find myself back on I-40 West reliving July 20. I see myself alongside the road looking at my irreparable car shaking my head in amazement.

My comments to Kevin Fini (the truck driver) as he apologized because he couldn't avoid hitting me are fresh in my mind: "It's only a car. We can be thankful you and I are standing here on the shoulder talking, because God was here today. He gave you the strength to guide your truck so that the only casualty was an automobile."

Lessons from I-40

So, I ask, why am I still standing? It's not a pouting, *Lord, why did you let this happen to me?* I'm trying to capture the kingdom purposes of life. Nothing happens by chance because *all things* are filtered through the fingers of our loving Father. July 20 holds spiritual implications for my life, Echo and her daughters, Kevin the truck driver, the troopers, those who witnessed the harrowing scene and those who hear our story.

God on Center Stage

God, our protective Father, was center stage. More dramatically than at any other time in my life, I witnessed the reality of His presence. How many times have I drifted along as if it all depended on me and thought God was not concerned.

He is the omnipresent One. Though a myriad of events unfold simultaneously across the globe, God is actively present. Whatever comes our way, He isn't caught off guard or ruffled.

Power of Prayer

There is something to be said for the unharnessed power of prayer. Echo was my Aaron and Hur in a moment of crisis when I was unable to lift a prayer. She stood in my stead. Echo taught me that we are called upon daily to stand in the gap for one another.

What a powerful witness to her daughters of her dependence upon God through prayer. As she called out to Him, she declared that the Lord is in control of all life's situations.

Plans for Tomorrow

I remain in awe that my life was spared and the only evident consequences were four insignificant bruises and stiff muscles. I am living proof that "My times are in thy hand" (Psalm 31:15a). This real-life episode wasn't a dream or a test to see if I was ready for Heaven. It was God's hand staying death, declaring, "I've got other things for you to do."

His promise is true for all of us, "For I know the thoughts that I think toward you . . . thoughts of peace, and not of evil,

**One thought
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my heart—
"Today is the day
I am dying."
Adrenaline kicked
in as I tried to
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my spinning car.
During a second
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contact.**

2 Letters Regarding CLEAR curriculum

FIRST FREE WILL BAPTIST CHURCH

910 Temple Avenue • Fayette, Alabama 35555

Mark C. McCraney, Pastor • Office (205) 932-7354

October 7th, 2004

Rev. Ron Hunter
114 Bush Road
Nashville, TN 37217

Bro. Ron,

Proverbs 27:17 says, "Iron sharpeneth iron; so a man sharpeneth the countenance of his friend." Thank you for taking a bold new direction in sharpening the countenance of our denomination through the CLEAR Sunday School Curriculum. As a pastor and teacher of the Young Adult Sunday School Class, I greatly appreciate the time and effort that has been invested in giving us the necessary tools for a more effective Sunday School ministry. Like you, I have been concerned with the proliferation of Calvinist tendencies brought about by use of other curriculums, and also the lack of practical application in the lives of our people. You have tackled these and other problems head on, and have provided us with a terrific product that I believe is making a difference in our church members.

In our church, the children's teachers are united in their unreserved support of CLEAR. They greatly appreciate the change in format, and many teaching aids included in their Teacher Packs. There has been nothing but abundant praise. Our teen class has in the last few years used ProTeen, and Destination Reality, but is hooked on CLEAR now. Our Young Adult class enjoys the daily study blocks and practical application.

In anticipating the introduction of CLEAR, my only concern was for our Senior Adult and Senior Ladies classes, knowing the reluctance of many seniors to accept drastic changes. In fact, speaking with the teachers before hand, I asked that they just try CLEAR for at least two quarters, and then switch back to the Bible Scholar if CLEAR did not meet their needs. I am thrilled to say that in this first quarter of CLEAR, the Senior Adult class is increasingly more enthusiastic in their weekly class participation. Lively, eager discussions now ring where once only crickets chirped. Even our Senior Ladies class, skeptical at first, is growing in their appreciation and acceptance of CLEAR.

All in all, we are a church that is grateful God gave you the foresight and fortitude to lead our denominational curriculum in a new direction. I applaud you for doing what certainly must have been difficult, but will ultimately prove worthwhile.

Please keep CLEAR coming, and keep up the good work. If I can ever be of service to you in any way, please let me know.

Serving Him

Bro Mark
Mark McCraney



Sent via email: October 19, 2004

To Whom It May Concern:

I am the Junior Girls Sunday School teacher at the Fayette First Free Will Baptist Church in Fayette, Alabama. I would like to tell you how pleased I am with the new CLEAR curriculum. It has been an encouragement to me to change my teaching style and to add more excitement into the lessons each Sunday. I am very happy with the materials that you have added to enhance the lessons. These things really help my girls take hold of the lessons and I believe will leave a lasting impression on their lives. Several other teachers in our church have also expressed how satisfied they are with the new curriculum.

I would like to share with you how God has used the lessons in our class this quarter. First, I have a young girl that has never attended Sunday school faithful. She might come one to two Sundays a month. So far she has not missed a single class and has even brought a friend with her. I believe that the new lessons have caused her to enjoy the class time. So that encourages her parents and grandparents to attend more faithfully also. But the most important way I have seen God's presence during this quarter was the lesson on October 10. This lesson was learning about the gift of salvation. What a wonderful lesson with a very powerful story at the end! My assistant teacher had prepared the lesson and presented the lesson in detail. God used this lesson to touch a young girl's heart. She knew that she wanted this gift of salvation and I had the wonderful privilege to share with her the way to receive this gift. She accepted God's gift. How good God is!

Thank you for seeing the need to change and make improvement on the curriculum. May God's hand be upon everyone at Randall House and I pray that His glory will shine through the materials that you publish.

Sincerely,

Sheila Bynum

Fayette First Free Will Baptist Church

to give you an expected end" (Jeremiah 29:11). Our job is to be available for His opportunities.

God has more for me to do. Thirty-two years ago as a freshman at Hillsdale FWB College, clinging to the seat in front of me, I made a commitment to the Lord: "All to Jesus I surrender; all to Him I freely give. All to Thee my blessed Savior, I surrender all." Here's my life—take it, shape it and use it. Lord, I'm Yours, for I'm still standing! ■



About the Writer: Charolette Tallent, a 1976 graduate of Free Will Baptist Bible College, earned a master's degree at Columbia International University. She served 19 years as a missionary to France. Charolette is a member of Donelson Free Will Baptist Church in Nashville, Tennessee, where she leads The Marketplace Bible Study.

*He's done,
he's finished,
it's over.*

I Quit!

By Kevin Riggs

"Quitters never win, winners never quit."

That's a motto worthy of our best effort. But guess what? I quit!

That's right, you heard me, I give up. I throw in the towel. The fat lady has sung. I've had enough. After 23 years in ministry—15 of them as pastor—I quit!

Quit Trying

I quit trying to do a great work for God. Ministry is too demanding, too draining. The harder I try the more I feel like a failure. I answered the call to preach because I wanted to do something great for the kingdom. But you know what? I quit.

Kingdom building is not about me doing something great for God; it's about God doing something great in me. As long as I am trying to do something great for Him, I am standing in the way of Him doing something great in me. So I quit.

Quit "Cute"

I have also decided to quit trying to be "cute" in ministry. One book tells me I need to be "seeker sensitive" and my sermons need to be collections of biblically-based, self-help mumbo-jumbo. Another tells me in order for my worship service to be effective I need to have drama and comedy and famous people and videos and give-a-ways and lights and camera and action. In order to be culturally relevant, I am told, I must also be media savvy.

But you know what? I quit. The gospel message is simple enough for a child to understand. Jesus loves me, He died for my sins, He rose from the dead, and one day soon He is returning. Straight-forward stuff. No bells and whistles. Not very pretty. Pretty foolish, if you ask me. But this simple message is the power of God. So I quit.

Quit Pretending

I have figured out that I will never figure everything out, so I have decided to quit trying to figure it all out. I don't know every-

thing and I don't want to know everything. Besides, ministry is not about "figuring," it's about faith. It's walking boldly into the unknown in spite of my fear. It's about acting in spite of my doubts. It's about obedience in spite of my confusion. So I quit.

Furthermore, I have decided to quit trying to change people's hearts and quit worrying about my inability to do so. It's not my job to change people. My job is to let the Heart Surgeon transplant His heart into mine, and then tell others He can do the same for them. Ministry is not about me. Ministry is about God. So I quit.

I have decided to quit trying to do ministry on my own, in my own strength, under my own power. To use an old cliché, I have decided to let go and let God. I quit so God's work can continue.

Someone else, a fellow quitter, said, "He must increase, but I must decrease" (John 3:30). Jesus said, "So the last shall be first, and the first last" (Matthew 20:16). In Jesus Christ, quitters always win and winners always quit. So I quit! ■



About the Writer: Dr. Kevin Riggs pastors First Free Will Baptist Church in Russellville, Arkansas.

If you are a quitter, like me, let me know. Email me at kevin@firstfreewill.org.



Sometimes we make enemies. While it may not be intentional, it still happens. I have driven across town and apparently done something that made someone angry. I could tell by the “sign language” they were using to communicate with me.

Honestly, I couldn't think of a thing I might have done. It is quite possible that they were having a difficult day. Maybe they were in a hurry, and I was driving too slowly. (*Oh, come on now, it could happen.*) There are times that, even without trying, we rub people the wrong way.

I am concerned about my witness. I am eager to live in a way that attracts people rather than repels them. You may have heard it said, “You're the only Jesus some will ever see.” *If that is true, then I should be concerned. I need to learn how to eliminate my enemies.* How do I turn that bad experience around?

Counter with Kindness

People build up hatred toward others. They get all worked up, but our response can turn the tables. Instead of reciprocating with arms waving and angry expressions, make up your mind to counter with

kindness. Make it a point to refuse to be offended. Selfishness and ego are often the driving forces behind escalating emotional exchanges.

While researching for another topic, I ran across this great true-to-life parable: Former Boston Red Sox third baseman Wade Boggs used to hate going to Yankee Stadium. Not because of the Yankees—they never gave him that much trouble—but because of a fan. That's right: one fan. The guy had a box seat close to the field, and when the Red Sox were in town he would torment Boggs by shouting obscenities and insults. It's hard to imagine one fan getting under a player's skin, but apparently this guy had the recipe.


One day before the game, as Boggs was warming up, the “fan” began his typical routine, yelling “Boggs, you stink” and variations on that theme. Boggs decided he'd

had enough. He walked directly over to the man, who was sitting in the stands with his friends, and said, “Hey fella, are you the guy who's always yelling at me?”

The man said, “Yeah, it's me. What are you going to do about it?” Wade took a new baseball out of his pocket, autographed it, tossed it to the man and went back to the field to continue his pre-game routine.

The man never yelled at Boggs again; in fact, he became one of Wade's biggest fans at Yankee Stadium. Other players have been known to deal with antagonistic fans by returning obscenities or spitting on them or even punching them in the nose. Boggs dealt with his tormentor by befriending him.

You may find yourself in Wade's shoes someday. For no discernable reason, someone may decide not to like you. Maybe it's something you did, maybe it's something you didn't do, maybe it's something you



Three principles for avoiding needless controversy in life.

ELIMINATING YOUR ENEMIES

By Clifford D. Donoho

can't help—but suddenly you find yourself in hostile territory. Our natural inclination is to fight back, but there is a better way to eliminate enemies once and for all.

The Better Way

Abraham Lincoln made this observation: *"I destroy my enemy when I make him my friend."* How incredibly different our lives would be if we made it a practice to convert an adversary into our partner. At first it may sound impossible, however, it is anything but impossible.

"Live in harmony with each other. Don't try to act important, but enjoy the company of ordinary people. *And don't think you know it all!* Never pay back evil for evil to anyone. Do things in such a way that everyone can see you are honorable. Do your part to live in peace with everyone, as much as possible. Never avenge yourselves. Leave that to God."

For it is written, *"Be of the same mind one toward another. Mind not high things, but condescend to men of low estate. Be*

not wise in your own conceits. Recompense to no man evil for evil. Provide things honest in the sight of all men. If it be possible, as much as lieth in you, live peaceably with all men. Dearly beloved, avenge not yourselves, but rather give place unto wrath: for it is written, Vengeance is mine; I will repay, saith the Lord. Therefore if thine enemy hunger, feed him; if he thirst, give him drink: for in so doing thou shalt heap coals of fire on his head. Be not overcome of evil, but overcome evil with good" (Romans 12:16–21).

Time to Grow Up

Stop right now and read that passage again, only this time read it slower. Did anything impact you differently the second time through? It is amazing how much insight God's Word will bring into daily life if we slow down and read it as it applies to us rather than thinking that our neighbor sure needs to read this.

God wants to speak practical, life-transforming lessons into our heart. As if writing directly to Wade Boggs, the Apostle Peter

said *"For so is the will of God, that with well doing ye may put to silence the ignorance of foolish men"* (1 Peter 2:15).

Tossing an autographed baseball to the loud mouths you deal with may not repair the rift, but it will accomplish two things: one, it will knock holes in the case they have built against you; two, you will have done your part toward establishing the terms of peace.

Our competitive nature may cry out for war. Our emotions may crave vindication. But before we blow up, let's take a moment and grow up. Jesus said, *"Blessed are the peacemakers: for they shall be called the children of God"* (Matthew 5:9). ■



About the Writer:

Reverend Clifford D. Donoho
pastors Cornerstone Free
Will Baptist Church in Nashville,
Tennessee.

International Fellowship Meets in Panama



PANAMA CITY, PANAMA—The General Assembly of the International Fellowship of Free Will Baptist Churches, Inc., met October 4–8 at Riande Aeropuerto Hotel and Resort in Panama City, according to Melvin Worthington, secretary/treasurer. The Panama Association of Free Will Baptists hosted the meeting.

Delegates and observers from Japan, Uruguay, Brazil, Mexico, USA, Panama, France, Canada, Cuba, Côte d'Ivoire and Spain attended the meeting. A Russian representative visited the meeting. Delegates and observers visited Free Will Baptist

churches on Sunday prior to the opening General Assembly session Monday evening.

The General Assembly meeting theme was *Effective Leadership* (1 Timothy 4:16). The topics addressed included "Leadership Defined" (Melvin Worthington, USA), "Leadership Demonstrated" (Gerardo Acevedo, Uruguay), "Leadership's Dangers" (José Manuel Parron, Spain) and "Leadership's Duty" (Thomas Marberry, Mexico).

Other speakers included Fred Hanson (Canada), Steve Riggs (France), Keith Burden (USA), Stan Bunch (Panama), Rolando Delgado (Cuba), Yoshikazu Ishii

(Japan), John Poole (Brazil), Luis Felipe Tijerina (Mexico) and Daniel Dorati (Panama). Reports and prayer requests were given by representatives from each country. Nikolay Maslyakov, representative from the Union of Evangelical Christians-Baptists of Russia, brought greetings.

Six sites were selected for future meetings: Spain/France (2007), USA (2010), Mexico (2013), Japan (2016), Canada (2019) and France/Spain (2022). The General Assembly meets every three years.

The Executive Committee members elected for three-year terms included: José Manuel Parron (Spain) president, Gerardo Acevedo (Uruguay) vice-president, and Steve Lytle (USA) secretary/treasurer. Melvin Worthington (USA) retired as secretary/treasurer, a position he held with the organization since 1995.

For additional information, contact the secretary/treasurer, Steve Lytle by email (stephen@nafwb.org), by phone 615/731/6812 or mail at the International Fellowship of Free Will Baptist Churches, Inc., P.O. Box 5002, Antioch, TN 37011-5002.

French Town Honors Arkansas Minister



SEARCY, AR—Reverend Lawnie Coffman, 82, traveled to France in September where he was honored as the liberator of Fossieux, a town in the Lorraine region. The September 17 ceremony celebrated Coffman's efforts in World War II to end Nazi control of the city.

Coffman received a Bronze Star for his action on October 8, 1944, to liberate Fossieux. He served with the 35th Infantry Division. When his platoon was stopped by enemy fire, Coffman volunteered to flank the enemy position. He and another enlisted man fired a rocket into the enemy stronghold allowing his unit to move forward.

Lawnie Coffman saw a great deal of combat during his 1943–1945 army service. He was decorated many times, receiving two Purple Hearts, two Bronze Stars and a Silver Star.

Reverend Coffman and five members of his family flew to France where they were escorted to Fossieux by the French ambassador to America. He prepared an account of his memories from the battle in Fossieux and sent them to city officials.

Coffman had been hesitant to return to Fossieux because, "I didn't want to go back and go through all of that again, to see the places where I killed men and my friends died."

Brother Coffman was converted in 1946 and ordained to preach in 1951. He has served in Arkansas more than 50 years as a pastor, Home Mission Board chairman, state Executive Board member, CTS Board member and more. He wrote two books about his life, *The Promise* (1969) and *My Leg of the Race* (1997).

Florida Establishes Hurricane Relief Fund

ANTIOCH, TN—After a series of hurricanes hammered the state in September, Florida executive secretary Randy Bryant said a hurricane relief fund has been established to assist Free Will Baptist churches and families that experienced substantial loss. Contributions may be sent to:

Relief Fund

Florida State Office
2156 54th Avenue
Vero Beach, FL 32966

A September 16 e-message from Randy Bryant indicated that several Pensacola area churches reported damage from Hurricane Ivan. Most of the damage resulted from falling tree limbs and subsequent water damage.

Early reports said trees fell on First FWB Church in Pensacola and the roof was down to the sheeting. Beulah FWB Church in Pensacola reported extensive water and tree damage to the church and fellowship hall. Soul's Harbor FWB Church in Pensacola reported three tree limbs through the parsonage roof and limbs through the fellowship hall roof. Shiloh FWB Church in Bratt reported the fellowship hall flooded, the vestibule ceiling collapsed and the parsonage roof damaged.

Pastor Danny Conn (Soul's Harbor FWB Church) said a work crew from Cornerstone FWB Church in Crab Orchard, WV, arrived in Pensacola September 17 with 400 gallons of water, a trailer and a truck load of cleaning supplies. "They helped everyone in our church and many people in the community," Conn said. The West Virginia crew was led by Daniel Kincaid.

A work crew from Lake Area FWB Church in Cleveland, Oklahoma, arrived September 18 with water, a generator, gas and chain saws. South Florida Free Will Baptists (Steve Berry and Randy Bryant) who were still recovering from Hurricanes Charley and Frances brought generators, food, gas and other supplies to Pensacola. A second Oklahoma work crew from Clarks-ville FWB Church in Porter arrived September 21. Eight men came with Brent



Oklahoma team working at a Florida home.

Meadows who organized the efforts along with Pastor Curtis Cherry.

Pastor Danny Conn said, "In addition to mountains of debris to haul away and trees to cut, the biggest concern for many of our people is not being able to return to their jobs. Some businesses will be closed a month." After Hurricane Ivan, Pastor Conn moved into Soul's Harbor FWB Church awaiting an insurance company decision to either repair or replace the seriously damaged parsonage.

Beulah FWB Church pastor David Baker said that in addition to water and tree damage to the church, two members' homes flooded. Several families stayed in the church while Hurricane Ivan lashed Pensacola.

Pastor Randy Bryant (also Florida's executive secretary) said two members at Ryanwood Fellowship FWB Church in Vero Beach lost their homes when

Hurricane Frances hit the area September 4-5. A tree limb crashed through the roof of Bryant's home. The church will require a new roof.

Another hurricane, Hurricane Jeanne, hit the east coast of Florida late Saturday night, September 25. Pastor Bryant said the hurricane left extensive water damage in Ryanwood Fellowship FWB Church's sanctuary. A member's home was damaged when ceilings collapsed.

"Hurricane Jeanne sounded like a freight train in our living room," Bryant said, after he and his wife Diana decided to ride out the 120-mph winds of the Category 3 hurricane.

Bryant said he expected more damage reports from pastors and churches as telephone service and electricity were restored.

For additional information, e-mail Randy Bryant at drbryant@cs.com.

Lightning Kills Mexican Lay Preacher

EL CANELITO, N.L., MEXICO—Reverend Santos de la Rosa Salazar, who served many years as lay preacher at Templo El Buen Pastor in El Canelito, Nuevo Leon, Mexico, died June 19 at age 78 after being struck by lightning.

Santos was born in El Canelito, a small village in the western deserts of the state of Nuevo Leon. He was converted in the early 1960s, then went to Monterrey to study in the Bible Institute. In 1963 he returned to El Canelito and helped organize the Free Will Baptist church there. He continued to serve this church faithfully until his death.

On the morning before his death, he spoke about the future with a nephew. Santos said he was ready for the Lord to call him home. His health was failing, and he didn't want to be a burden on his family. The Lord answered his prayer that afternoon. A sudden thunderstorm struck the area between 5:00 and 6:00 p.m. Santos was in the pasture caring for six orphan lambs. A bolt of lightning struck, and he was killed instantly along with the six lambs. Dr. Thomas Marberry said, "Santos was a faithful servant of God and of the Free Will Baptist denomination."

Brother De la Rosa never married. He is survived by several brothers and sisters and a number of other relatives.

International Missions Guide Available

ANTIOCH, TN—A 16-page "International Missions Emphasis Month Tool Kit" will be mailed to every Free Will Baptist church by the first week in January 2005. Doug Little, director of stateside development for the International Missions Board, said, "More than two dozen Free Will Baptist pastors made recommendations that were incorporated into this tool kit."

The missions guide (tool kit) focuses on the continued thrust to send Free Will Baptist missionaries and mobilize churches for personal involvement in world evangelism. The guide provides tips and suggestions that churches can use to boost the annual missions emphasis in April. The 2005 theme is "Into the Harvest."

Components of the 16-page booklet include:

- articles about Free Will Baptist overseas church planting
- a checklist and timeline for planning an effective emphasis month
- a sermon starter on John 4:35, written by IM Director James Forlines
- a children's sermon about planting churches
- a mini-catalogue of materials and resources available from FWB International Missions
- a copy of a new congregational hymn written by Doug Little
- quick facts about Free Will Baptist missionaries and their work overseas
- an explanation of the purpose

and need of the World Missions Offering

- practical ideas for making International Missions Emphasis Month a means of mobilizing church members for evangelism and missions
- suggestions for continuing the "Into the Harvest" theme of evangelism all year long

Doug Little said, "Although April is the denomination's traditional month for International Missions emphasis, this planning guide will be useful at any time during the year."

Copies of the free International Missions Emphasis Month Tool Kit may also be ordered on the web www.fwbgo.com or by calling toll-free at 877-767-7736 for shipment by December 15.

Bible College Freshmen Elect Officers



(L-R) Chris Card, Rachel Dennis, Lynsey Stripling, John Locklear and Ben Trimble.

NASHVILLE, TN—Members of the 2004 freshman class at Free Will Baptist Bible College elected **Chris Card**, from **Woodstock, Georgia**, as president.

Serving with him are:

Vice-President—Rachel Dennis, N. Little Rock, Arkansas

Secretary/Treasurer—Lynsey Stripling, N. Little Rock, Arkansas

Chaplain—John Locklear, Woodhaven, Michigan

Worship Leader—Ben Trimble, Taylor, Michigan

Please pray for these new student leaders.

California: Pastor **Doice McAlister** completed his third building program at **Turlock FWB Church** in **Turlock**. This one ended August 7 when more than 300 people helped dedicate the new sanctuary. Mayor **Curt Andre** brought stirring words of encouragement. Pastor McAlister preached the dedicatory message which resulted in several conversions and rededications. McAlister has led the congregation 30-plus years.

Canada: A family of five from Afghanistan showed up with an interpreter from Iran at **Serenity FWB Church** in **Fredericton, NB**, according to Pastor **Jeff Crabtree**. They had escaped from the Taliban and were looking for Christian friends. The church took action to assist the mother and her four teens (father killed before leaving Afghanistan) with food and household items.

Colorado: Pastor **Roger Raper** at **First FWB Church** in **Fort Collins** led a man to the Lord who had been an atheist 31 years. As members knocked on 1,300 doors in the area, six people were converted.

Georgia: Biker Day at **First FWB Church** in **Dublin** resulted in 73 people attending and four conversions. Pastor **Chuck Lysaker** said they raised over \$600 for missions. The day went so well the church scheduled a second Biker Day with 86 attending, two conversions and more than \$1,500 raised for missions in the Virgin Islands.

Pastor **Rick Wilson** and members of **Lyons FWB Church** in **Lyons** are sold on FAITH evangelism. Since the first group completed the course, the church witnessed eight conversions, added six new members and saw 21 people begin attending services.

Illinois: **Crossroads FWB Church** in **Effingham** reports four conversions and six rededications. **John Hollis** pastors.

Oak Valley FWB Church in **Geff** celebrated 150 years of service on September 26. Pastor **David Shores** said the church organized in 1854. Highlights for the day included a history of the church, testimonies, a video presentation and a sermon by former pastor **Byford Campbell**.

Pastor **Larry Cook** reports three baptisms at **Bear Point FWB Church** in **Sesser**. Youth pastor **Bryant Harris** took several youth and parent chaperones on a mission trip to Albuquerque, NM.

Three conversions and three baptisms at **Johnston City FWB Church** in **Johnston City** have Pastor **Matt Crain** smiling.

Kentucky: What started out as an exciting VBS at **First FWB Church** in **Glasgow** soon became a revival. Pastor **Joel Franks** reports 23 conversions, 21 baptisms and seven new members in a six-week period this summer. "We've started a new prayer ministry as well as a stronger outreach in the community," Pastor Franks said.

North Carolina: They're still talking about the great 74th Homecoming Sunday (August 29) at **Canton FWB Church** in **Canton**. Pastor **Brian Bird** reports 215 in attendance with four baptisms and nine members added. The church also honored four deacons for their years of service—**J.B. Wilson** (52 years), **L.A. "Curly" Robinson** (45 years), **Jerry Messer** (45 years), **Morgan Davis** (6 years). Each deacon received a plaque, a book (*Handbook for Deacons*) and a Free Will Baptist lapel pin.

Ohio: **Good Shepherd FWB Church** in **Hamilton** added a new Sunday School class, witnessed 16 conversions and baptized four converts. Pastor **Randy Hall** said the church completed their fellowship hall and added a new steeple.

Pastor **Don Hix** of **Woodstock FWB Church** in **Woodstock** enjoyed his retirement dinner the church planned for him a few months ago. No, he did not retire from

the church, but from his job at Honda. The church celebrated 50 years of service this summer. The Jubilee sermons were preached by **David Mingus** and **Mike Mounts**.

Pastor **Wiley Perkins** baptized seven converts and welcomed eight new members at **Samantha FWB Church** in **Leesburg**.

Busy. That's the word at **Mt. Calvary FWB Church** in **Pedro**. Pastor **George Cade** reports a new church sign, regular nursing home services, a new picnic shelter, six converts and six baptisms.

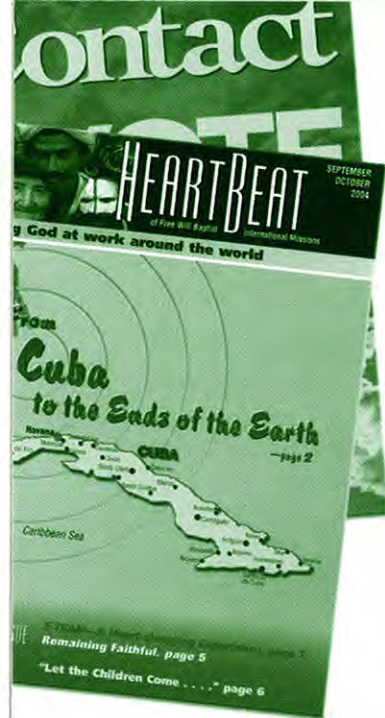
Oklahoma: **CrossPointe FWB Church** in **Norman** reports 16 new members and six baptisms. **Joe Grizzle** pastors.

South Carolina: Lightning struck the steeple at **Salem FWB Church** in **Coward**. The resulting fire did extensive damage (smoke, water, fire) forcing members to meet in the fellowship building while repairs got underway. **Larry Hughes** pastors.

Tennessee: They're out of room at **Cornerstone FWB Church** in **Nashville**. Pastor **Cliff Donoho** welcomed the 10 conversions, eight baptisms and 12 rededications. The challenge now is whether to conduct two Sunday morning services or relocate and build something larger.

Pastor **Rob Morgan** reports 30 new members and 18 baptisms at **Donelson FWB Church** in **Nashville**.

Pastor **Vern Gunnels** says **Solitude FWB Church** in **Adamsville** enjoys an attendance increase thanks to the work of **Gary** and **Amanda Gober**, and **Don** and **Sharon Parks**. The four workers bring 30 young people to church Sunday morning and night, and 50 on Wednesday evening. Pastor Gunnels reports five conversions and five baptisms. ■



A Fading Duo

By Don Robirds
Former Editor of *Heartbeat*

An era is drawing to a close. The voice of the two oldest Free Will Baptist periodicals will soon be muted. *Contact* magazine, begun in 1953 by Executive Secretary W. Stanley Mooneyham, and *Heartbeat* magazine, launched for Foreign Missions in 1961 by Jerry Ballard, will soon cease to be published.

For some of us an identity will fade. A thread to the past will be severed. A familiarity will be lost. And we will probably be somewhat nostalgic due to our years of close relationship to the two publications.

I was the third editor of *Heartbeat* and carried that title for 32 years before I retired at the end of last year. I worked closely with *Contact* editors Eugene Workman and Jack Williams throughout those years.

Contact has served to help the denomination develop a "family" feeling. It has provided a news front for Free Will Baptist ministries and activities across the constituency. It has spotlighted missions and missionaries, educational and music programs and doctrinal issues to the advancement of the denomination.

Heartbeat has identified and illustrated world evangelism efforts enabling Free Will Baptists to relate to missionaries and pray effectively for their ministries. It has also laid the groundwork for missionary recruiting and expansion to new areas of the world. It has brought missionaries and their fields closer to their donors.

The two publications have complemented each other and have done together what neither could adequately do by itself. For many years *Heartbeat*

was published monthly, enabling it to annually highlight the upcoming national convention on its back cover. At the same time *Contact* has traditionally given special Foreign Missions coverage during April, Foreign Missions month, and has highlighted other significant ministries abroad.

But times change. Leadership changes. Circumstances change. And even names and identities modify as perceptions evolve. New realities force us to alter the way we refer to things. So, "Foreign Missions" is no longer appropriate. Now, with the update to "International Missions," it seems appropriate to forge ahead with a new approach to achieve a greater sense of denominational unity and purpose.

For the sake of the denomination and International Missions, people must move on to greater effectiveness for Christ. The challenge ahead is enormous. Be thankful for the years of communication ministry of the various denominational publications—particularly that of *Contact* and *Heartbeat* magazines. But look forward to greater days as changes occur and pray earnestly that the modifications are positive for the Kingdom of God and Free Will Baptists in particular. ■



INTERNATIONAL
MISSIONS

Free Will Baptist Ministry Focus

Heartbeat

- identified and illustrated world evangelism efforts enabling Free Will Baptists to relate to missionaries and pray effectively for their ministries
- laid the groundwork for missionary recruiting and expansion to new areas of the world
- brought missionaries and their fields closer to their donors



Looking Back, to Look Ahead!

By Kenneth Akers
General Director, Master's Men Department

We have been busy at Master's Men. During 2004 we sponsored two national Master's Men rallies. We held our annual national retreat. We had two golf tournaments—the Deep South in February, the national in August. We held our National Softball Tournament. We did a mission trip to Hawaii.

There's more! We held two Operation Saturation events—one in Fredericksburg, Virginia, and the other in Northglenn, Colorado. We introduced two new Direction Bible Study Series studies. I personally spoke at several churches, men's retreats and local and state association meetings.

So what else can we do? A lot!

Coming up in 2005, we plan on having all this and more. In addition to these events, we are working on a fishing tournament and a volleyball tournament. We are looking into possibly doing two mission trips rather than one. We will again join with Home Missions to sponsor and highlight two Home Mission works for Operation Saturation. We will continue working with the other national departments on the new publication. We will introduce more Direction Bible Studies.

But the bad part is few men take advantage of the opportunities we make available. As hard as we work to provide opportunities for our men, there are still those pastors and laymen who feel there isn't need for a men's ministry in their church. Nothing can be

further from the truth. Why do we work so hard to train our children, and then stop when they become adults?

I don't know about you but, I still need to grow. I need to see other men serving God faithfully. I need to be encouraged and lifted up from time to time. That's what you get when you have an organized men's ministry. Softball and Saturday breakfasts are not enough. There's nothing wrong with these, of course, but if you want men to be stronger workers, better Christians and better servants, there needs to be some form of organization.

I was once asked, "Don't we have to do everything by the Master's Men book?" My answer was, "Of course not!" Master's Men is here to help, not dictate. We want to help with discipling, equipping and encouraging, not trying to tell you what to do.

Check out what Master's Men has to offer. If you see where we can help, use us. If not, find something that will. We need men stepping up and being what God wants us to be! ■



Master's Men
Free Will Baptist
Men's Ministry

Free Will Baptist Ministry Focus

**When you think
of Master's Men,
what comes to
mind?**

- Bible studies
- Operation Saturation
- Missions trips
- Rallies
- Retreats
- Golf
- Softball
- Fishing
- Volleyball

Diaries, Journals and Blogs

By Marjorie Workman
WNAC Executive Secretary-Treasurer

"Kathryn Koob, one of the Americans held hostage for over a year during the Carter administration's crisis with Iran, kept a journal. Writing on the backs of envelopes, she jotted down a record of her day in captivity. She said, 'My journal helped me remember

my reactions and some things I had read. It also reminded me of things I wanted to think about more deeply and helped me crystallize my thinking.'"

Much of what we know about missionaries, historical people and events such as the Civil War comes from memoirs, diaries and journals. Diaries give us glimpses into the innermost thoughts and feelings of people from the past. They can also provide an unbiased recollection of events occurring at the time they were written. They aid historians in collaborating events and society.

Contact magazine is to Free Will Baptists what diaries and journals are to historians. For 50 years, *Contact* has provided insights to the climate of Free Will Baptist thinking. Editors and writers have given us a living history of the movement, chronicling progress, changes and accomplishments. A pictorial gallery showcasing hundreds of faithful men and women ministering in various positions or churches. An eyewitness account covering conventions, state associations, conferences, retreats and other activities.

From the beginning, *Contact* was an all-inclusive magazine providing a voice for WNAC (one full page of the 16-page publication), Home and Foreign Missions, Free Will Baptist Bible College, League, Sunday School, churches and pastors. Even revivals found coverage. The impulse of the denomination could be felt from those 16 pages.

The 16 pages grew to 24, then 32. Other publications emerged—*Aim*, *Heartbeat*, *OutReach*, *FWB Bible College Bulletin* and *Master's Men Newsletter*—to write the growing pains of a relatively new denomination.

Free Will Baptist women were experiencing their own growing pains. Even before the formal organization of a national convention, they were using literature to inform, unite, teach and bring solidarity

to scattered groups. From this constant flow of literature, *CoLaborer* was born in 1961.

CoLaborer began as a quarterly magazine, 16 years after the women voted for a monthly magazine. It replaced WNAC's *Newsletter* and *Yearbook* (a book of programs and helps for women since 1931). Currently, *CoLaborer* is bimonthly, 32-pages, four-color and the only Free Will Baptist magazine for women. Even before its inception, the women determined that whatever profit came from literature sales would go back into the organization's work. The \$12 subscription price is well below most magazines' and provides a significant portion of WNAC's budget.

WNAC faced a dilemma with the Publications Committee's recommendation that all publications cease and combine into a single publication. Each department is asked to shift funds currently used to publish their literature to the new publication. *CoLaborer* is a revenue-producing publication for WNAC. To cease publishing *CoLaborer* would mean the end of subscriptions; thus there would be no funds to shift. And a slice of operational funds would also be lost.

More important than the financial loss would be the loss of service and material *CoLaborer* provides—programs, publicity, reporting, projects, promotion and missions and prayer emphasis. It would be like closing the diary on a large segment of Free Will Baptist ministry.

We have come full circle—one to many, now back to one. What does the future hold? Perhaps from one we will go to blogs. Blog is short for weblog—a relatively new phenomena for recording one's thoughts on a particular subject or event on the internet. Good bye *Contact*. Thanks for a shelf full of rich Free Will Baptist history. ■

***Nelson's Complete Book of Stories, Illustrations, & Quotes**
by Robert J. Morgan.

WNAC
WOMEN
NATIONALLY
ACTIVE FOR
CHRIST

CoLaborer
provides
valuable
services

- programs
- publicity
- reporting
- projects
- promotion
- missions and prayer emphasis

Free Will Baptist Ministry Focus



Garnett Reid

The Praise of His Glory

This concludes my tenure as

caretaker of the *Green Tree*. Writing these studies has been a labor of love and a high privilege. All 72 columns have been fresh; not one reflected a recycled sermon or lesson.

I approached them as a chance for me to grow in the Word, to search for new scripture treasures. I benefited more than anyone else. No one who comes to the Bible with a prayerful heart, determined mind and willing spirit leaves unchanged.

Thank You

I'm grateful for the interaction with some of you. Your encouragement and suggestions helped me. To have shared these pages with Tom Marberry and Randy Sawyer, two of God's *gibborim* and men I greatly admire, is an opportunity I will always treasure.

Words fall short in expressing my gratitude and love for Jack Williams. If you know him, you're like me: he's your biggest (pun intended) supporter. Gracious, encouraging and wise—this little big man from the bayou with his briefcase has given our denomination a literary face and voice. His is "the pen of a ready writer." His acumen is such that what a student said of Sir James Murray, first editor of the *Oxford English Dictionary*, may be said of Dr. Jack:

Then the tricks he could play with words! Such was his skill and knowledge that many of us firmly believed that by Grimm's law he could prove that *black* really was the same word as *white*...

And Finally

Loving, studying and preaching the Bible has taken up a good portion of my life. If one accuses me of worshiping a book, I plead guilty since this Book is

the breath of the only Source of life; of all the world's volumes, it alone lets me see His smile. I conclude with a few pertinent observations.

- Free Will Baptists don't read enough, including the Bible. When we learn what it means to love God with all our minds, we'll love Him more with our hearts, too. We'll reach more people (and more of the kind of people we've seldom reached) when we can articulate the gospel with an awareness that most people value the thoughtful message of a well-informed messenger.
- Some of the best Christians I know don't read their Bibles every day. They should. I should.
- The less we know of the Word, the less we know Jesus; and the less we know of Him, the more we think and live like the world.
- One of the Bible's greatest and most needed resolutions is Paul's: "I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ."
- I go down kicking and screaming over not capitalizing "biblical." Next thing you know we won't capitalize "Bible," either.
- I think most modern translations do a good job presenting the biblical (ouch!) text faithfully and legibly. I especially like the *English Standard Version*. My biggest concern over the plethora of new versions is that we've lost a standard for memorizing scripture.
- Modern commentaries spend too much time carrying on in-house conversations between scholars who seem to be playing a game of "I can cite more views and sources than you can." Just tell me what you think the passage means and why.
- I have taught the Bible to every group at every level from young children to teens, adults, in VBS, camps, retreats, seminars, Bible conferences, revivals, small groups, with translators, at the college undergraduate and graduate levels. The best time I ever had was with Junior Boys in Sunday School. They were the most honest, receptive and eager to learn. We had a blast!
- Too much preaching that passes as "expository" has little directed application flowing from the biblical (ouch again!) text.
- I'm still amazed that Free Will Baptists, for the most part, do not see formal biblical and theological studies for the ministry as a necessary stewardship of our gifts and calling. My mentor Michael Barrett rightly contends, "Ministers cannot afford to do shoddy work, and time in the ministry is too precious to waste. Training time is not wasted time, and learning to use the tools of the trade is not wasted effort."
- When we take that stewardship seriously, two results will follow. First, we will be more certain of what we believe and why, so as not to feel the need to bicker and fuss over petty issues. Second, instead of disagreeing with each other so much, we will stand more squarely for our convictions and disagree with the Devil instead. In the difficult days to come, we'll have to.
- When God allows you a "second chance" at living the way He wants, you understand that the only thing that matters is His glory. We should excel at everything He gives us to do on earth *for His sake*. He is worthy of nothing else, nothing less. With the rest of my life, I want to "strive to excel in building up the church" (1 Cor. 14:12), because it is in the church that we glorify Christ "throughout all generations, forever and ever" (Eph. 3:21). ■



Randy Sawyer

Believing Is Seeing

We've all heard the adage,

"Seeing is believing," and recognize behind it the philosophy that says, "I'll not believe until I see it with my own eyes." This was the attitude of Thomas regarding the Lord's resurrection: "Unless I see the print of nails in His hands, I will not believe."

For the Christian, however, the opposite can be true. It isn't seeing that produces believing, but believing that produces seeing. Hebrews 11:1 declares, "Faith is the evidence of things not seen." Through eyes of faith an invisible dimension comes to life.

The Prophet Elisha resided in Dothan (II Kings 6:13-23). Because of its location, a well-positioned army could easily over-

whelm the small community. Shortly after sunrise as Elisha's servant did morning chores, he saw the sun reflecting off the burnished armor of a thousand shields and chariots. Terrified, he ran to Elisha for help.

With quiet confidence, Elisha replied, "Fear not: for they that be with us are more than they that be with them." I doubt this simple comment resolved the young man's fears. He was living by sight, and his physical eyes could only see the enemy.

Elisha interceded, praying, "Lord, . . . open his eyes that he may see." And we read, "And the Lord opened the eyes of the young man; and he saw." What did he see? "Behold, the mountain was full of horses and chariots of fire."

Before Elisha's prayer, the young man didn't see everything there was to see. He saw the sun as it rose, the birds winging their way heavenward and the horses, chariots and thousands of Syrians. Yet he missed the most important sight—God's presence. Faith and confidence allowed Elisha to view what the servant could not, and it will do the same for us.

Believing is seeing that God is present in every situation.

"The horses and chariots of fire" represent God's presence. The young man did see the enemy, and that is commendable. Many don't even see that much. Alexander McClaren wrote, "Worse foes ring round us than those whose armor glittered in the morning sunshine of Dothan."

Although we need to see the adversary, it is imperative to look beyond, understanding that God is present also. Scottish preacher George Morrison commented, "In the world around us there is the presence of the living God and until we see that presence we are blind." Through faith we can see not only the danger but the deliverer, not only the enemy but also the ally, not only the problem but also the possibilities.

Nothing affects us like the presence of a special individual. There are times when

a special person keeps us from falling, shields us from discouragement or infuses us with strength.

As a seventh grader, I was quite small. It seems that every small boy must contend with the local bully. My personal nemesis was Ervin. He was one grade in school behind me, but having failed twice was a year older. He was huge, uncouth and mean.

At the same time I had a special friend named Gary. Gary was in my class, but he'd failed three grades. So in the seventh grade he was 15 years old. He stood about 6'2", weighed 200-plus pounds and was tough as nails. One day Gary asked me, "How long are you going to let Ervin get the best of you?" I pretended not to hear the question. Then he added, "If you'll fight him, I'll go with you."

Gary didn't promise to end my troubles for me, but in my heart I knew he wouldn't let Ervin murder me. The next afternoon I faced the adversary and won the day.

Believing is seeing that divine protection is available in every situation.

Keil and Delitzsch's commentary on the Old Testament says, "The fiery horses and chariots were symbols of the protecting powers of Heaven." When Elisha prayed on behalf of the young man, he didn't ask that the heavenly guard would come, but that the servant might see them. The miracle involved the momentary unveiling of what always was.

When Martin Luther was in the throes of the Reformation and the Pope was trying to bring him back to the Catholic Church, he sent a cardinal to deal with Luther and buy him with gold. The cardinal wrote to the Pope, "The fool does not love gold."

Later, after failing to convince Luther to recant, the cardinal said to him, "What do you think the Pope cares for the opinion of a German boor? The Pope's little finger is stronger than all Germany. Do you expect your princes to take up arms to defend you—you, a wretched worm like

Directory Update

Georgia

Paul Creech to White Oaks Church, Macon

Kentucky

Roger Baird to Community Church, Silver Grove

Missouri

Russell Johnson to First Church, Waynesville

Brian Hurst to First Church, Mountain Grove from Eastside Church, Houston, TX

Walter Simpson to Garfield Church, Couch

Ohio

Les McMahan to Faith Church, Cleveland

Keith Mullins to Wellston Church, Wellston

South Carolina

Ronald Hewitt to Mt. Ariel Church, Conway

Billy Baker to Free Welcome Church, Conway

Tommy Bryson to Oak Grove Church, Conway, as interim pastor

Other Personnel

Shiloh Hackett to Fairview Church, Spartanburg, SC, as youth pastor from FWB Children's Home, Turbeville, SC, as promotional director

Joe Tolbert to Emmanuel Church, Wabash, IN, as associate pastor



September 2004

you? I tell you No. And where will you be then?" Luther's reply was simple: "Where I am now. In the hands of Almighty God."

While a lack of faith may leave us feeling vulnerable, believing is seeing!

Believing is seeing that God is at work in every situation.

Elisha was surrounded. Humanly speaking, the situation appeared desperate. But God was at work and had already delivered the enemy into Elisha's hand. Keil and Delizsch commented that God's overriding purpose was to reveal His glory and rid Israel of the menacing Syrians.

God is at work in every situation, and eyes of faith can see it. Not that faith will reveal each detail or answer every question, but faith will grant the assurance that God is in control.

He was only five when doctors discovered he was dying of cancer. Broken-hearted, his dad didn't work for nearly six weeks. He gave his full attention to his sick little boy. A few weeks later the boy was admitted to the hospital, far too sick to remain at home. Later that day, the five-year old rested in the arms of Jesus. The year was 1958. The boy, Roger Keith Sawyer, was my brother. My dad, relating the story years afterward, said, "Randy, it still hurts, but I know now that God makes no mistakes."

Even in that dark hour, God was doing something special. No matter the circumstances, God is at work molding and shaping us in His image and gaining glory for His name. Faith will enable us to view an unseen world where God is always at work.

Believing will enable us to see the presence of God, His divine protection and His activity in every situation. Perhaps you cry with the father spoken of in Mark 9:24. "Lord, I believe; help thou mine unbelief." You ask, how can I lay hold of this principle? Paul gave the answer in Romans 10, "So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God." Believing is seeing!

Receipts:	Designated	CO-OP	Total	Year To Date Designated	Year To Date CO-OP	Year To Date Total
Alabama	\$ 530	\$ 331	\$ 861	\$ 4,130	\$ 1,543	\$ 5,673
Arizona	0	60	60	105	300	405
Arkansas	11,132	16,735	27,867	104,131	156,521	260,652
California	0	1,223	1,223	2,552	10,130	12,682
Colorado	0	0	0	0	0	0
Delaware	0	0	0	0	0	0
Florida	120	0	120	489	11,072	11,561
Georgia	36,354	1,706	38,061	324,351	14,386	338,737
Hawaii	0	0	0	0	0	0
Idaho	0	0	0	0	0	0
Illinois	14,651	2,128	16,779	133,670	20,110	153,780
Indiana	5,011	331	5,342	20,575	1,790	22,365
Iowa	0	0	0	0	0	0
Kansas	105	63	168	400	708	1,108
Kentucky	975	837	1,812	2,240	6,290	8,530
Louisiana	0	0	0	0	0	0
Maryland	0	0	0	0	0	0
Michigan	33,929	4,582	38,510	181,522	23,755	205,277
Mississippi	5,682	318	6,000	100,620	6,670	107,290
Missouri	32,255	17,990	50,245	434,616	157,820	592,435
Montana	0	0	0	0	0	0
Nebraska	0	0	0	0	0	0
New Jersey	0	0	0	0	0	0
New Mexico	689	24	713	4,503	201	4,704
North Carolina	1,473	2,735	4,208	12,510	36,650	49,160
Ohio	18,593	2,984	21,577	148,851	28,859	177,710
Oklahoma	47,680	10,380	58,061	493,421	100,656	594,078
South Carolina	52,770	20	52,790	441,584	758	442,342
South Dakota	0	0	0	0	0	0
Tennessee	13,485	1,627	15,112	118,355	15,126	133,481
Texas	15,548	651	16,199	93,413	3,064	96,478
Virginia	296	0	296	878	666	1,544
Virgin Islands	100	0	100	100	0	100
West Virginia	415	79	494	4,040	1,017	5,057
Wisconsin	0	0	0	0	0	0
Canada	1,435	40	1,476	9,221	186	9,407
Northwest Assoc.	1,051	0	1,051	1,051	0	1,051
Northeast Assoc.	0	0	0	0	0	0
Other	0	0	0	0	0	0
Totals	\$ 294,280	\$ 64,845	\$ 359,125	\$ 2,637,329	\$ 598,277	\$ 3,235,606

Disbursements:

Executive Office	\$ 1,392	\$ 29,180	\$ 30,572	\$ 14,233	\$ 269,225	\$ 283,458
Foreign Missions	176,722	8,203	184,925	1,640,277	75,682	1,715,959
FWBBC	23,430	8,203	31,633	224,472	75,682	300,154
Home Missions	77,834	6,420	84,254	669,144	59,229	728,373
Retirement & Insurance	406	4,993	5,399	3,166	46,067	49,233
Master's Men	616	4,993	5,609	5,868	46,067	51,935
Commission for Theo. Integrity	100	178	279	500	1,645	2,145
FWB Foundation	258	2,140	2,398	1,917	19,743	21,660
Historical Commission	100	178	279	500	1,645	2,145
Music Commission	74	178	252	666	1,645	2,311
Media Commission	324	178	502	1,196	1,645	2,841
Hillsdale FWB College	2,283	0	2,283	20,032	0	20,032
Other	10,739	0	10,739	55,359	0	55,359
Totals	\$ 294,280	\$ 64,845	\$ 359,125	\$ 2,637,329	\$ 598,277	\$ 3,235,606



Thomas Marberry

Walking in the "Reign," A Study of the Kingdom of God

By Edwin L. Wade, (Enumclaw, WA: Pleasant Word, 2004, 142 pp., paperback, \$13).

Reverend Edwin Wade pastored

Free Will Baptist churches in Washington and California. Since 1975 he has served Hillsdale FWB College as professor, academic dean and president.

This book is a practical analysis of the kingdom of God. Wade examines key Old and New Testament passages, outlines what those passages teach about the kingdom, then applies the teachings to Christian living. He recognizes that Christians are subjects of God's kingdom while they are here on earth. As kingdom subjects, believers have certain rights, privileges and obligations they must fulfill. The kingdom of God is more than a subject for academic debate and discussion; it affects every aspect of life and thought.

The author defines the kingdom as "God's rule over all things." Wade explains, "He rules ultimately over the wicked as well as the good. But only those surrendered to His rule are participants in the kingdom." The church is a part of the kingdom but is not identical to it. The church includes only the redeemed while the kingdom includes all over whom God's rule extends.

According to Wade, the kingdom is first introduced in the Old Testament, but not fully developed in the Old Testament documents. Jesus continued to develop the theme of the kingdom in His teaching. He used parables "to reveal the mysteries of the kingdom to show who had spiritual understanding and to conceal them from those who did not have the spiritual capacity to understand them."

The New Testament writers used several terms and concepts to describe the kingdom, but three terms stand out—kingdom of Heaven, kingdom of God, and kingdom of Christ. Wade argues that these terms are "synonymous in meaning."

The first chapter briefly examines several interpretations of the kingdom found in works of leading authors: George Ladd, C. H. Dodd, Albert Schweitzer, Adolph von Harnack, etc. After a brief analysis of their views, Wade presents his own conclusion.

He writes, "We may conclude that the kingdom is present and at work today. It is future as Christ continues to reign and work through His people until He returns. The kingdom will then extend into the 'Age to Come' for His eternal reign."

This work devotes considerable attention to the practical implications of God's reign. Wade writes, "The reign of God begins in the heart of man. It controls the way he thinks and therefore controls his deeds." He argues that the kingdom is present within the believer and exists in the present. It is also future in the sense that there are many promises the believer will enjoy only in the future.

The kingdom of God involves conflict. The Old Testament demonstrated conflict between the kingdom of the one true God and the kingdoms of pagan deities. During His earthly ministry, Jesus often had conflicts with Satan and his forces.



Chapter 8 is devoted to the mystery of the kingdom. Wade begins the chapter, "A cloud of mystery hovers over an understanding of the kingdom. The religious leaders of the gospels were oblivious to a proper understanding of it." Both the leaders of Israel and the disciples of Jesus lacked

a clear and comprehensive understanding of the kingdom of God and all that it implies. The kingdom today often works in a quiet, hidden and secret way.

This volume is a solid introductory treatment of this important biblical theme. It summarizes what the Old and New Testaments teach about the kingdom as well as the practical implications of the kingdom. In order to be part of God's kingdom, we must surrender voluntarily to God and seek to do His will.

The book should be of great value to pastors, Sunday School teachers and those in leadership positions. It is an outgrowth of a series of lectures the author delivered.

Those who want a more in-depth study of the kingdom that follows the same basic approach may consult such books as *The Bible and the Future* by Anthony A. Hoekema or Volume VII in *Curso de Formación Teológica Evangélica* by José Grau.



Looking Back on 2004

By Dean Jones, NYC Director

What do you get when you combine 50 junior-high students, eight 10-foot pressure-treated landscape timbers, four four-wheeled scooters, scripture songs, raw energy and a youth camp facility? Or try 60 high school students, five 15-passenger vans, the hot steady winds of

Oklahoma, problem-solving skills, the reflection pool at the Oklahoma City Bombing Memorial, water balloon volleyball, an incredible college campus and youth workers who love kids?

Or how about 2,000 energetic young people singing praises to their Savior, 900+ talented competitive entries, over 100 pieces of creative art, more than 3,000 student-hours of hard labor designed to improve the lives of Kansas City residents and share the gospel of Christ with them, and lasting friendships. Or try 12 talented students traveling hundreds of miles to share the gospel of Christ and encourage young people and adults by stopping in local churches during the sultry days of June.

Maybe it sounds like a recipe for disaster or a strange mix of ingredients, but to Student and Children Ministries it's a year full of life-changing events. As the year winds down and the last page of the calendar nears the trash can, it's time to reflect, remember and reevaluate our ministry year.

Why do you do what you do? It's a question we often think about, but one we rarely verbalize or dare ask out loud for others to hear. What have been the ingredients of your year? Have you had a strange mix of ingredients—students, events, activities, Bible studies, excitement and disappointments?

How much success does it take to be considered successful? How do you measure that success? Jim Burns, in *The Youth Builder*, reminds us that the paycheck for youth ministry does not come biweekly or even as an annual bonus. Burns recounts that the paycheck for successful youth ministry comes typically 10 or 15 years down the road. It's at this point we can see the determination and dedication of those students who grasped our teachings, implemented our strategies, and walked the straight and narrow path.

Our summer activities were blessed by former students who have become part of our training and presentation team. Steven and Craig, both Truth and Peace alumni, spoke during the National Youth Conference. Our judges' tables were lined with former participants; leadership training sessions were conducted by those who have walked the straight and narrow, and many of you have helped to sign our paycheck 10 years down the road.

Thanks for all you do to support youth ministry in our denomination. We appreciate your support for Student and Children Ministries, and encourage you to direct your students to participate and be involved in those life-changing events. Watch the horizon for more exciting opportunities for your students. For more information, email youth@randallhouse.com.



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- In part one, articles are listed in order of title, author, issue and number of the page on which they appear. The authors' division is alphabetized according to last name.
- Columns are listed in chronological order.
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United States Periodicals Center									
Statement of Ownership, Management, and Circulation									
1 Publication Title		2 Publication Number					3 Filing Date		
Contact		0 5 7 3 - 7 7 9 1					6 10-08-04		
4 Issue Frequency		5 Number of Issues Published Annually					6 Annual Subscription Price		
Monthly		12					\$18		
7 Complete Mailing Address of Known Office of Publication (Not printer) (Street, city, county, state, and ZIP+4)									
5233 Mt. View Road, Antioch, Davidson County, TX 37013-0045									
8 Complete Mailing Address of Headquarters or General Business Office of Publisher (Not printer)									
National Association of Free Will Baptists, Inc. P.O. Box 5002 Antioch, TN 37013-5002									
9 Full Names and Complete Mailing Addresses of Publisher, Editor, and Managing Editor (Do not leave blank)									
Publisher (Name and complete mailing address) National Association of Free Will Baptists, Inc. Antioch, TN 37013-5002									
Editor (Name and complete mailing address) Jack Williams P.O. Box 5002 Antioch, TN 37013-5002									
Managing Editor (Name and complete mailing address) Keith Borden P.O. Box 5002 Antioch, TN 37013-5002									
10 Owner (Do not leave blank. If the publication is owned by a corporation, give the name and address of the corporation immediately followed by the names and addresses of all stockholders owning or holding 1 percent or more of the total amount of stock. If not owned by a corporation, give the names and addresses of the individual owners. If owned by a partnership or other unincorporated firm, give its name and address, as well as those of each individual owner. If the publication is published by a corporation or partnership, give its name and address.)									
Full Name Complete Mailing Address National Association of Free Will Baptists, P.O. Box 5002, Antioch, TN 37013-5002 Inc.									
11 Known Bondholders, Mortgagees, and Other Security Holders Owning or Holding 1 Percent or More of Total Amount of Bonds, Mortgages, or Other Securities. If none, check box									
None									
12 Tax Status (For completion by nonprofit organizations authorized to mail at nonprofit rates) (Check one)									
a. For-profit, federal, and nonprofit status of this organization and the exempt status for federal income tax purposes									
b. Has Not Changed During Preceding 12 Months									
c. Has Changed During Preceding 12 Months (Publisher must submit a explanation with this statement)									
PS Form 3526, October 1999 (Use instructions on Reverse)									
13 Publication Title		14 Year Date for Circulation Data Below							
Contact		September - 2003							
15 Extent and Nature of Circulation		Average No. Copies Each Issue During Preceding 12 Months		No. Copies of Single Issue Published Nearest to Filing Date					
a. Total Number of Copies (Net print run)		6,363		6,300					
b. Paid and/or Requested Circulation		12		4,117					
(1) Paid (Include circulation paid for and exchange copies)		25		68					
(2) Sales Through Dealers and Carriers, Street Vendors, Counter Sales, and Other Non-USPS Paid Distribution		62		36					
(3) Other Classes Mailed Through the USPS		8		9					
c. Total Paid and/or Requested Circulation (Sum of 15b(1), 15b(2), and 15b(3))		135		5,130					
d. Free Distribution by Mail (15c(1), 15c(2), and 15c(3))		35		0					
(1) Outside-County by Standard on Form 3541		35		0					
(2) In-County by Standard on Form 3541		0		0					
(3) Other Classes Mailed Through USPS		0		0					
e. Free Distribution Outside the Mail (Carriers or other means)		553		615					
f. Total Free Distribution (Sum of 15d and 15e)		588		615					
g. Total Distribution (Sum of 15c and 15f)		1,943		5,745					
h. Copies not Distributed		1,579		1,555					
i. Total (Sum of 15g and 15h)		6,363		6,300					
16 Percent Paid and/or Requested Circulation (15c divided by 15g times 100)		88.1		81.9					
17 Publication of Statement of Ownership		18 Date of Publication							
a. Publication required. Will be printed in the		December 2004							
b. Signature and Title of Editor, Publisher, Business Manager, or Owner		Date							
Jack Williams, Editor		10-08-04							
I certify that all information furnished on this form is true and complete. I understand that anyone who furnishes false or misleading information on this form or who omits material or information requested on the form may be subject to criminal sanctions (including fines and imprisonment) and/or civil sanctions (including civil penalties).									
Instructions to Publishers									
1. Complete and file one copy of this form with your postmaster annually on or before October 1. Keep a copy of the completed form for your records.									
2. In cases where the publisher or security holder is a business, include in items 10 and 11 the name of the person or corporation for whom the business is used. Also include the name and address of individuals who are stockholders who own or hold 1 percent or more of the total amount of bonds, mortgages, or other securities of the publishing corporation. In item 11, if none, check the box. Use block letters if more space is required.									
3. Be sure to furnish all circulation information called for in item 15. Free circulation must be shown in items 15d, e, and f.									
4. Item 15c, Copies not Distributed, must include (1) reprinted copies originally stated on Form 3541, and returned to the publisher; (2) estimated returns from news agents; and (3) copies for office use, leftovers, spoiled, and all other copies not distributed.									
5. If the publication had Periodicals authorization as a general or regular publication, this Statement of Ownership, Management, and Circulation must be published. It must be printed in any issue in October or, if the publication is not published during October, the first issue printed after October.									
6. In item 16, indicate the date of the issue in which this Statement of Ownership will be published.									
7. Item 17 must be signed.									
Failure to file or publish a statement of ownership may lead to suspension of Periodicals authorization.									
PS Form 3526, October 1999 (revise)									

MINISTERS

Blair, James November, 18
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Turnbough, Elmer August, 19

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 34 Enroll at California . . .November, 20
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Jack Williams

Closing the Briefcase

The last deadline. After 27 years, seven months and 15 days, my suitcase is full of old *Briefcases*. Three hundred thirty editorials later, I still remember struggling with the first one published July 1977 titled "Removing the Pig from the Poke." My good friend and predecessor, Gene Workman, gave it that zippy title.

Contact was a robust 24 years old and poised for growth when Gene Workman handed me the office keys and told me to take care of the readers. I promptly lost 4,000 subscribers. Sorry about that, Gene. You tried.

What I enjoyed most as editor was encouraging new writers. We published a March 1978 article titled "Contentment Is a Woolly Face" written by a 26-year-old East Tennessee pastor. That was the first time his name appeared in print, but it would not be the last.

We thought the young fellow showed promise and encouraged him to attend a writer's conference. He did. His writing career caught fire. Robert J. Morgan now pastors Donelson FWB Church in Nashville and has written 15 books and hundreds of articles.

What I dreaded most was writing obituaries: 197 of them, mostly of ministers. Don't misunderstand. I dreaded what the obits meant—losing all those friends as well as years of ministry experience and knowledge. It fell my lot to write final words about some good men, a task I felt unworthy to do. I always touched obituaries with reverence, with respect, with a sense of awe. I hope it showed.

Through the years, I wrote obits I never wanted to write, including the president of Free Will Baptist Bible College (L.C.

Johnson), the genius boy preacher from Ohio (Floyd Wolfenbarger), the first editor of *Contact* (W.S. Mooneyham), the evangelist who pointed me to Jesus (J.E. White), the Arkansas farmer whose call to preach makes the hair rise on my neck (Herman Greenwood), the West Virginia dynamo who quoted the Bible from his open palms (Billy Samms) . . . and too many more.

What I feared most was that I would be unfair in print. That's why we hustled to make sure the entire denominational story found a place in the magazine. That policy, of course, kept me in hot water with some and in tall cotton with others.

Frankly, it's easy to bully people in print, and some do. We chose the high road at *Contact*. Those who wield the journalistic sword must be careful where they lay the edge of the blade lest they harm the innocent while probing for truth. If you think I mistreated you in print, I apologize. I tried to be fair.

What I remembered most was that I was number six. That is, I was *Contact's* sixth editor. Anything the magazine accomplished during my tenure built on the work of five editors who preceded me—W.S. Mooneyham, Billy Melvin, Rufus Coffey, Jim Owen Jones and Gene Workman.

Each former editor left an example of journalistic excellence. I considered it an honor to be friends with all five men. They birthed *Contact* and matured it until 1977. They won numerous journalism awards, none more impressive than the wraparound convention cover on the August 1971 issue that took top honors at the 1972 Evangelical Press Association.

What I appreciated most was professional, behind-the-scenes work from eight editorial assistants who got the mag-

azine to press on time each month. What a special group:

Susan Burgess (now Learning and Education Consultant with PricewaterhouseCoopers), *Pat Moore Herren* (now an Illinois public school official), *Mary Mutchler Walkley* (now an IRS employee in West Tennessee), *Yvonne Thigpen* (now president of Evangelical Training Association), *Melody Hood* (now Executive Office bookkeeper), *Kristi Bryan* (now part-owner of a Nashville printing firm), *Marilyn Pritchard* (who stayed 19 years and took the magazine from typewriters to desk-top publishing) and *Debbie Burden* (who worked her first six months without pay).

Each one brought a distinctive flavor to the magazine. They were wise and gifted; they sparkled with creativity. They did the hard grunt work as well as the skilled labor, and I got the credit. But they knew, and I knew, and now you know.

And that's that. With this final issue, *Contact* steps aside for something bigger, better and brighter. Sometime in 2005 an exciting new 60,000-circulation bimonthly publication will arrive at Free Will Baptist homes around the world—a dream come true.

The four-color magazine will be mailed free to every Free Will Baptist who wants it. That's an amazing accomplishment considering that *Contact* began with less than 500 subscribers in November 1953. Tomorrow, the journey continues and the story goes on as Free Will Baptists come together for the greatest publishing adventure in our history.

Join us! Sign up today. Don't miss an issue. And don't worry about the noisy buzz in the background. That's just editor number six cheering for the new guys. ■

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