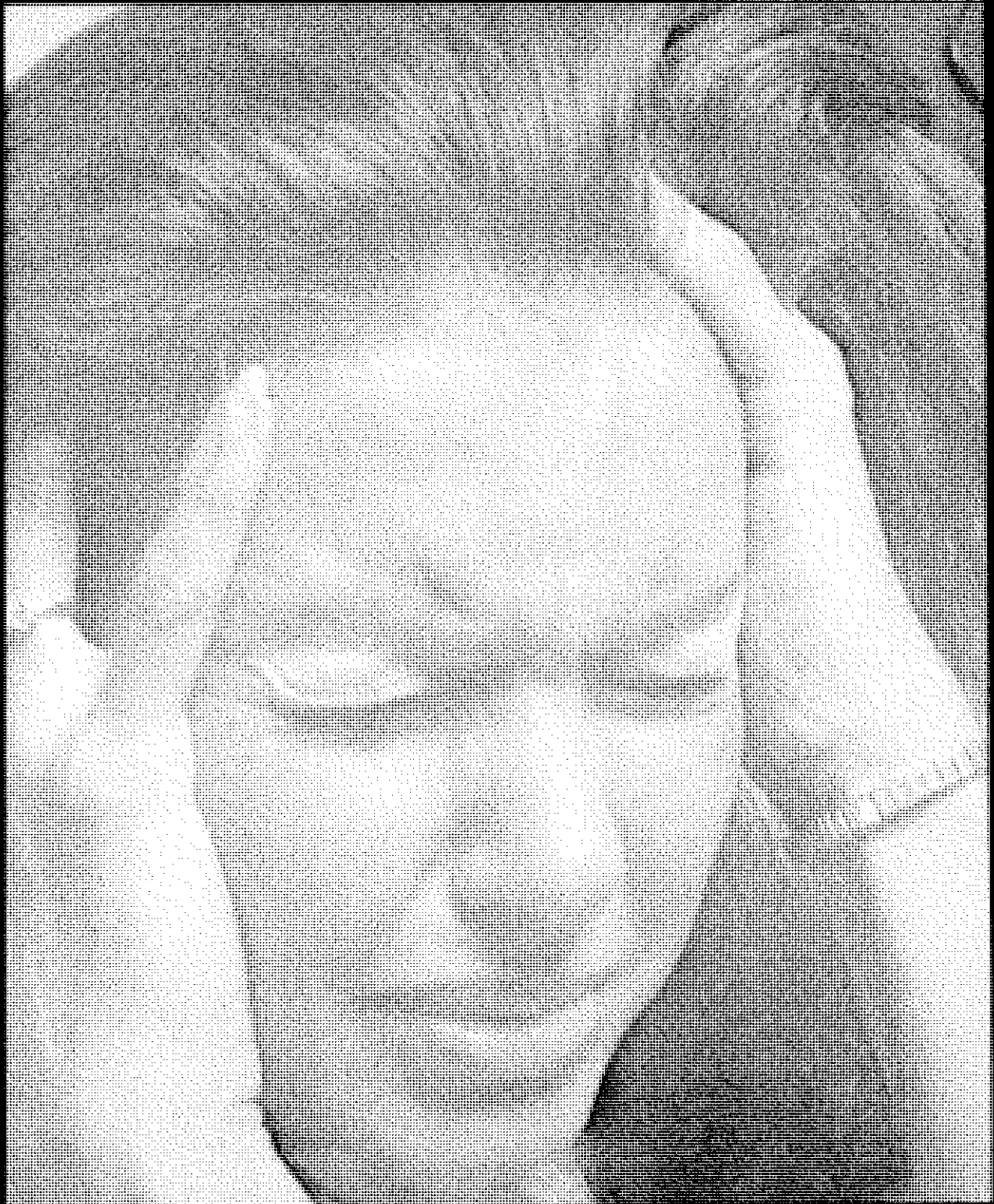


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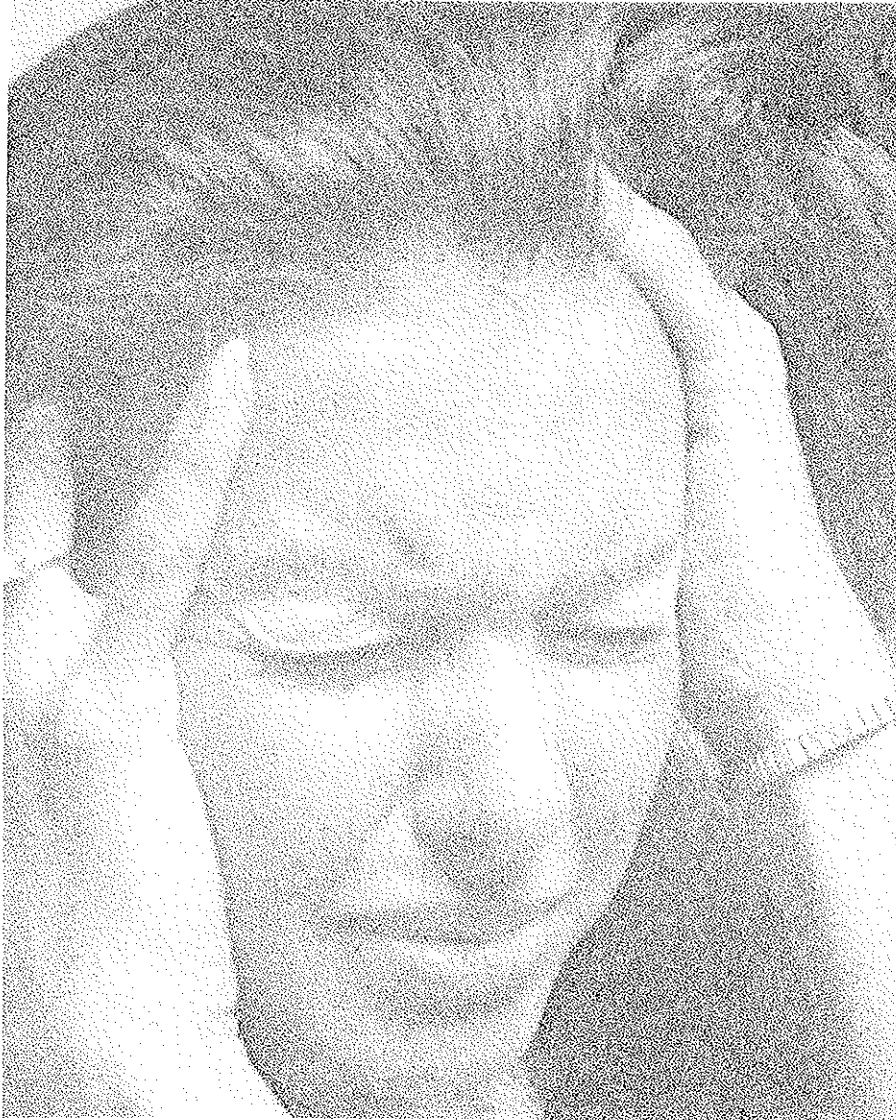
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OF THE NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF FREE WILL BAPTISTS



IN THIS ISSUE: The Family Under Fire

Also Inside: Results of Readership Survey



By Jack L. Williams

There is a surplus of institutions today. But only 2 were divinely established: the home and the Church. What's more, in a physical and literal sense the home was on the earth before the Church! We'll leave it to the philosophers to wonder what "might have been" if that first home had not been a failure.

Man was not intended to be a playboy, but the companion of one woman. Woman was never intended to be a plaything among men, but the queen in one man's life. This gives rise to 3 serious questions: Does God have a plan for the family and marriage? Is God's plan fair and reasonable? Is it ever permissible to change God's plan?

Mysteriously, God preserves the number of males and females almost equal. Since man is made in God's image, the family unit is to typify the divine relationship. The intimacies and mutual trusts of the family can provide for a bit of heaven on earth though many have turned it into a living hell.

THE ORIGINAL PLAN AND ITS PROBLEMS

The divine ideal is one wife, one husband, one parenthood. Marriage is more than mere ceremony; it is a lifetime project. Marriage was instituted for all, sort of a "whosoever will" concept. Marriage is like the church; no one can demand that another participate. But all who do enter either or both must do so with respect and honor.

The plan is further revealed as "leaving, cleaving and becoming." Candidates for marriage are to leave their own families and cleave to each other thereby becoming one flesh. It is a great plan really!

Problems in Paradise

So what happened to the one man, one wife ideal? At first nothing happened. Adam had one wife as did Cain and Noah. But then men began to change God's plan. Lamech took 2 wives. (Maybe that's what drove him to murder [Genesis 4:23]?) There is the account of Abraham and Sarah and Hagar (Genesis 16:1-4). God never commended Abraham for having 2 wives. The sorrow and disappointment

THE FAMILY UNDER FIRE

caused in that home are on record for all to read and take fair warning. Though Abraham's intentions seemed to be honorable, his momentary lack of faith led to a lifetime of family feuding and set the stage for generations of ill will between Ishmael's followers and Isaac's followers.

Jacob had 2 wives, Rachel and Leah. That he was deceived into marrying the wrong girl didn't lessen the heartache and mutual distrust between the 2 sisters. Jacob's family is the story of 2 conniving women vying for the favor of one man. Each sister gave Jacob a handmaid as wife and further muddied the already troubled waters. It was a home torn apart by strife and disobedience.

This flagrant violation of God's original family plan continued unchecked till Moses' time. Of course, not every man had 2 or more wives; but of those who did, the "second wife" generally was treated as an inferior person. The rich who could afford the "luxury" of multiple wives also bought the bad manners which accompany polygamy.

Without exception those who skirted God's original family plan paid dearly. The price was jealousy and hatred and unceasing conflict. Some of the Old Testament's saddest moments revolve around plural marriages. The sin, the sorrow, the downfall of both men and nations wash ashore on this wild sea.

Moses inherited an awful state of affairs. The home lives of Israel had been patterned after the paganistic Egyptians for 400 years! Moses made a concerted effort to regulate a very bad situation. The Mosaic Law forbade polygamy and restricted divorce (Deuteronomy 17:17; 24:1-4). Purity was required in marriage and the death penalty demanded for adultery (Leviticus 20:10-13). This did not eradicate the problem.

The New Testament families which Jesus found were a far cry from even the Mosaic recommendations. When Jesus talked of divorce in the home, He did not bring up irreconcilable differences. Instead, He spoke of hardheartedness (Matthew 19:8). He explained Moses' position like no one else had ever considered.

The Straight Truth

Why is God so rigid in His family life plan? It is because left to himself,

mankind is just like water: He seeks the lowest possible level! It is because to rightly influence the family is to stabilize the complete life. There is a real beauty in seeing 2 people grow old together in Jesus, sharing the joy and the suffering of life. God is rigid in family structure because it can become the haven of rest for troubled family members and for the children's sake! Here they are groping in the darkness of a broken home; their 2 dearest friends divorced and not speaking to each other. The children seem to be tolerated but not loved. Security is gone, and love is chilled. You can be well told that God is not pleased when children have to live such lives.

Why has marriage in general come to its present state? First, the Devil is out to get the home. He ruined the first home in the garden of Eden. He has ruined most of the homes since that time, and he means to gun your home down also. Secondly, the laws of men tampering with the ways of God have but complicated the matter. Christless couples attempting to build Christian homes and the present fad of trial marriages are but 2 examples of this tampering.

In addition, the current philosophy of "get what you can, do as you please and forget others" has decimated the home fires. The whims of selfish men and women who abandon peace and happiness for one quick plunge into life's forbidden nectar has resulted in near total rebellion against the restraints and restrictions of a prescribed way of life.

Is there an answer?

GOD'S GUIDEPOSTS FOR THE HOME

Life's greatest victory is in building a happy home. The worst defeat is to be defeated in building a home. A happy home does not come with the wedding certificate. It is the result of a lifetime of labor.

Genuine love does not assure happy homes. High tempers and nagging tongues often override love. Domineering personalities impose their wills and ways on others regardless of the cost. A man on the run from God may love his wife, but he's hard to live with until he and his Lord bury the hatchet.

Financial security is not enough collateral on which to build a happy

home. Some of the world's wealthiest are also on the marriage-go-round. Alas, financial insecurity is just as bad. Money: how to get it, where to spend it! Jesus talked more about money matters than He did about heaven. Dissatisfaction in this area always ends in bickering and quarreling and accusing. Secret unhappiness and cold wars tramp the home where the purse strings are not well regulated.

Beauty is Skin Deep

Physical beauty is not a safe foundation. America's loveliest ladies and most handsome men are living in the Los Angeles area making movies and TV specials; they are also living in the most unhappy homes. Their multiple divorces speak loudly!

A happy home is no respecter of education or lack of education. An uncultured bumpkin may cultivate a beautiful home life while his Ph.D. neighbor shrieks at his spouse in 3 languages. High school dropouts can be just as miserable in an unhappy home environment as the postgraduate student.

Prewedding arrangements do not make happy homes. Such agreements are worth no more than the character of those who agree. People anxious to marry will agree to anything. After the honeymoon both parties tend to forget all they agreed to regarding how to treat the in-laws, how often and to whose church they would go, etc.

Only God has reliable instructions for a home.

Proven Suggestions

These ideas have been proven true over the years but not forced upon anyone who would rather go his own way.

Make the right choice (II Corinthians 6:14-17). Though Paul is not specifically dealing with marriage in these verses, he is speaking on the great principles of life. The most unequal of all unequal yokes is that unequal yoke which aligns a Christian with a sinner in the intimacies of matrimony. Couples may not live and marry by the principle, but one thing is for sure; it is taught in Scripture. A good home is difficult with 2 people pulling in the same direction and well-nigh impossible with one pulling toward heaven and the other pulling toward hell!



THE FAMILY UNDER FIRE (Cont. from page 3)

Break with the old family and tie with the new (Matthew 19:5). Concerning parents, the only attitude for newlyweds is "love them but leave them." Parents should allow this, and children should insist on it.

Together the husband and wife team is to avoid forbidden fruit. They must decide what is right and wrong in advance. After eating the forbidden fruit, Adam and Eve had an unhappy home.

Begin training your children early (Proverbs 22:6). Training is the top floor in a child's learning experience. To tell is to help a child to know. To teach is to help a child to know and grow. But to train is to help the child to know and grow and do! Training is the reflex action to adjust instantaneously. No parent can train a child until the parent practices Matthew 6:33, putting first things first.

"Turn the other cheek" will work in the home. Reach for Matthew 5:38-39 whenever you feel a hot flush coming on. A steady diet of this not just an occasional dose will do wonders for a ragged ego.

Start a "Second Milers Club" at your place (Matthew 5:41). Be a charter member, and keep your dues paid! Going that second mile every time you get the chance will keep you spiritually trim.

Matthew 5:43-44 is a "cure-all." Returning good for evil is usually reserved for our enemies. Treat your family at least as well as you do the enemies. This is a shock treatment. Returning good for evil should heap coals of fire on the enemy's head, but it may well make your spouse think you've been born again!

There are occasions when only James 1:2-4 is applicable to your home. Be patient, friend. Some things aren't going to change; you must. James was right. When your faith is tried, it really works your patience!

The family with problems has one true friend, the church. When home fires wane, that's the time to be sure and not forsake "the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is . . ." (Hebrews 10:25). Keep the

troubled family in church. Take it all to the Lord, and leave it there with Him. The first thing most troubled families do is the one thing they should not do: leave church. Move over and let God take over. That's the time to back up, shut up and look up. Face up to the family facts. You'll find them easier to admit and to solve when you and your spouse are both on speaking terms with the Almighty.

THE GAP THEORY OR CHILDREN IN THE LURCH

Let's zero in on the parent-child maze.

If our generation survives long enough to get into the history books, we will probably be remembered as the "Gap Generation." We have a theoretical gap for every crisis. Some years back we drummed up an "H-Bomb Gap"; then there was the "Bomber Gap" and the "Missile Gap" and the "Communication Gap." All this cost the taxpayers hard cash and much of it.

But the most popular gap of all is the now infamous "Generation Gap." Some pseudo-intellectual thinks he has solved the problem of the ages by gravely nodding his mane and parroting the twentieth century formula: "Ah, yes, that's the generation gap."

Honestly now, parents have *never* fully understood kids. This is not just a 1976 problem. If Cain and Abel had accused Adam of not understanding them, they would have been right. After all, Adam didn't grow up facing the physical and psychological changes of a maturing teen.

My Dad and I always had a generation gap when he said, "Slop the hogs, Jack," and I wanted to do something else. We could have developed some deep psychological warps, except that our communication gap ceased when he reached for his belt! There was no real gap in generation or communication. I heard him the first time and understood him clearly. My problem was that I didn't want to do it.

What Caused the Problem?

Remember hearing the war cry of the Yippies back in the '60's? "Never trust anyone over 30!" Some of that idea is to be expected in growing up. You know how it works. Fifth graders don't trust fourth graders. Seventeen year olds don't trust 14 year olds. Kindergartners don't trust anybody.

At any rate, this concept has taken

its toll. It's tough being dubbed obsolete and assigned to humanity's scrap heap. That makes the "over 30" crowd squirm. Influences outside the home have intensified these feelings. But squirming and shouting or ignoring it won't dissipate the problem. It has gotten too much attention. Oh, by the way, we're hearing less of this "never trust anybody over 30" nowadays. Basically it is because those who were saying it the loudest are nearing the dreaded figure themselves.

But why do the young feel they can't really trust the "over 30" group? It could be that most parents would rather furnish a teenager with 10 bucks and a car than an hour's honest discussion on why not.

The greater part of my time the past 7 years has been spent with the young adults, the college age, the high schooler. They say they are tired of 3 things: talk, talk, talk! They have seen too many adults sacrifice a right cause instead of risking social or economic status. They say we talk bravely, and then excuse ourselves quietly.

This idea comes through with bell-ringing clarity: The young feel that the older are phony. That hurts. Don't bristle at this. Try to see why. We say we want peace; then we prepare for war. Most past, present and probably future tax dollars go for war. We say we want lower taxes; but let a federally funded project affecting us be cut back, and letters bombard the senators. We say, "Live by faith," and push ourselves to a heart attack at 43 in a rush to get more money.

What Keeps the Problem Brewing?

These young Americans are the victims of a well-organized plan to make dope addicts and drunken derelicts out of them all. Madison Avenue propaganda pounds the "get it while you can, you're only going around once" philosophy into them 24 hours a day.

As Bedsole has written, the world has marked them "expendable," and they know it. Millions of youth can cry, "No man careth for my soul"; and it is the truth. We have left them stranded in the wilds of Freudian slips and psychedelic music, reaching out searching for a disappearing faith.

Children do not ask to be born; but once they are, their responsibility is ours. Do not sell your children for 30

pieces of common stock. Every child has the right to a Christian, God-honoring home. To betray that trust is to betray the most noble hope of the human race. There is no failure greater than this failure.

Bridging the Gap

Proverbs 30:11-14 reads like a morning newspaper column. The waters are troubled, and the gap is wide; but there is a Bridge.

We must *mobilize* the youth and their resources for today's urgent tasks. The youth are not the fabled "Church of tomorrow"; they are a part of the Church today. They are not the whole Church, and we make a serious mistake in thinking so or in gearing the total outreach in that direction. But remember: If we refuse to use the youth in today's Church, they won't be the Church of tomorrow for they will be somewhere else.

Let the family *recognize* where the "rub" is and put some lubricating Christian understanding on it. If we *acknowledge* what we have in common, we can major on these. Strangely enough, the young and the old have the same basic needs, wants, drives, fears and goals.

Admit in the family and the Church that we need one another. No generation is an island to itself. Let each generation listen to the other generation until it understands what they're saying. The young can be as rigidly dogmatic as the old and just as hard to get along with.

Then let's *get back to* "Christ in the home and the home in the church." Either ground us and our children on Christian standards, or the home is lost. As goes the home, so goes the Church; for the Church family is made up of our families! When the home anchor slips, the children begin looking to the pills, the highways, the communes. They say they're looking for life and its meaning. Jesus said He was both! We had better explain it to them.

What profit is it if we gain the whole world and lose our own children?

ABOUT THE WRITER: Mr. Williams is dean of California Christian College in Fresno. The Louisiana native serves as assistant moderator for California Free Will Baptists and is a member of the Educational Study Committee functioning under the auspices of the National Association. △



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Survey of Subscribers Reveals Reader's Opinions

By Staff Writers

In an effort to better serve the readers of *CONTACT* Magazine, the staff conducted a survey of readers' attitudes. In October, 1975, questionnaires were mailed to 2,601 subscribers. Participants were selected by computer using every third subscriber from September's paid circulation list of 7,899, starting anew with each state to obtain the number needed to do a fair analysis.

Completed questionnaires were returned by 354 subscribers — about 4% of the total paid list — for a response rate of nearly 14%. (The average rate of return is said to be 10% by some marketing consultants.) In asking the subscribers to respond to the survey, the instructions stated that it was not necessary to sign the questionnaire. However, a small minority of responses were signed. Tabulation of data was accomplished through mid-December, 1975.

OBJECTIVES OF THE SURVEY

1. To assess the relative importance of *CONTACT* to the subscribers as indicated by the following:

- * Readership of particular *CONTACT* features;
- * Importance of certain aspects which comprise *CONTACT*, including the content and graphics;
- * Length of time subscribed;
- * Number of people who read subscriber's copies;
- * Reader evaluation of which regular columns if any should be discontinued and which subjects should be more adequately covered;
- * Whether the magazine is being mentioned in local churches and by whom;
- * Whether or not subscribers use *CONTACT* for reference purposes;
- * Subscription plan by which the magazine is received;
- * Readership response to carrying religious advertising.

2. To establish the demographic identity of subscribers in terms of the following:

- * Age, sex, education;
- * Occupation of subscriber;
- * Family income.

3. To determine the nature of church participation as relating to the following:

- * Number of years a Christian;
- * Size of subscriber's congregation;
- * Church positions presently held.

ANALYSIS OF SURVEY

What did the results of this survey say to those of us on the staff of the denominational magazine? In examining the first section of the survey where readers were asked to rate the various aspects which comprise the issues of the denominational magazine as either very important, important or unimportant, we came to some valid generalizations.

First, 61% of those responding rated

- * *Readers place a high premium on articles written by Free Will Baptists.*
- * *Readers want more religious news from the denomination and the Christian world.*
- * *Readers do not object to religious advertising.*
- * *The largest percentage of readers is in the 30-39 age bracket.*

articles written by Free Will Baptists as the most important single aspect comprising the magazine. The length of these articles is not of prime importance, but the content of articles, particularly those covering contemporary social and ethical issues, is important (42.3%). Combining the total percentages of readers who rated the topics of the articles as important or very important, over 86% want information on contemporary issues, presumably so that they might better make their own evaluations. It was interesting to note that readers do not prefer sermons or articles of a devotional nature. Reprints of feature articles from other Christian magazines appear to be unimportant to most readers, which probably accounts also for the fact that articles by famous Christians did not receive a high rating of importance.

Unimportant Items

Even though sermons are seemingly unimportant (19.5%), the inclusion of Bible studies in the magazine received a good percentage of the subscribers' approval in both the very important and important categories (44.1%). This indicates that readers desire more direct studies from the Scriptures. Such decisions are being weighed.

Graphics of the magazine apparently are of relative unimportance to most readers. Attractiveness of the cover, artwork, color and use of photos all received low percentages of importance. Perhaps this is indicative that readers are more interested in content than looks. However, it is assumed that the magazine needs to present an appearance which will lend itself to easy reading and acceptance by those who are not affiliated with a local church. Each issue is a positive reflection on the denomination which it serves.

A Magazine Must

The area which is seemingly of utmost importance to readers is news of the denomination and the Christian world as a whole. Combining the percentages of those who rated denominational news as important and very important, the total exceeds 80%. The same is true of those who want more religious news. These areas will be expanded in the magazine. At the

present time space dictates that the "Free Will Baptist Newsfront" be limited to those items which have the greatest appeal to the denomination as a whole or a specific segment of the denomination. With few exceptions all news items received are used in some manner. However, state and district associational leaders as well as pastors and lay people are noticeably slack in sharing information with the staff of the denominational magazine.

To offer our people a wider range of news items about local churches, a column containing very brief news notes concerning local churches and associations is being planned. These items will be gleaned from church bulletins, midweek reminders and other publications as they come to the desks of staff members. Pastors are asked to send copies of their church publications on a regular basis to Administrative Editor Eugene Workman who will be compiling the information for this upcoming column.

Advertising Okayed

Last year staff members decided that in 1976 the monthly issues would not develop a central theme as had been the practice for the past couple of years. Readers corroborated this decision by rating this feature of the magazine as relatively unimportant. At the same time they also rated the inclusion of advertising in the magazine as unimportant to them. Yet when asked specifically if they would object to *CONTACT* carrying religious advertising, 85% said "no" while only 11% said "yes."

The January issue of the denominational magazine carries a paid advertisement placed by a group outside the framework of the National Association. Generally the magazine has limited advertisements to departments affiliated with the National Association. Only a limited amount of advertising is planned in future issues, but all will be carefully screened prior to acceptance.

Frequency of Reading

In rating how often monthly columns in *CONTACT* were read, readers as a whole followed the same preferences they did in rating the importance of various aspects which

comprise the magazine. The "Free Will Baptist Newsfront" is the most widely read monthly feature with 53.1%. This is closely followed by "What's Your Problem?" with 52.9% of the readership. Other regular features of the magazine were rated in the following order as being read every issue: "Christian Doctrine" (42.1%), "History Corner" (41.5%), "Viewpoint" (41.5%), "Currently" (38.4%), "Words for Women" (37.9%), and "Gems from the Greek New Testament" (37.6%).

The frequency with which each monthly column is read did not correlate with readers' opinions as to which columns should be discontinued. "What's Your Problem?" which received a high rating as to frequency read is also the first column which should be discontinued according to approximately 3% of the readers. The only other 2 columns to receive above 1% of the readers opinions for discontinuance were "Gems from the Greek New Testament," which 2% of the readers felt should be eliminated, and "Viewpoint," which should "go" according to 1.1%. However, 32% of the readers asked that no column be discontinued, and some even suggested that additional columns be added.

In an effort to arouse greater readership participation, "Sounding Board" replaced "What's Your Problem?" commencing with the November issue. The decision to make this change was made in late summer prior to the mailing of the surveys. However, the results stated in the above paragraph positively confirm that decision. But readers are not responding any more readily to "Sounding Board" than they did to "What's Your Problem?"

Other Reader Ratings

The top rated subjects which readers felt are not being adequately covered at this time are local church news and youth and their activities. They also desired to see more articles about current issues and churches doing a good job in their communities.

Over 51% of the readers stated that within the last 3 months *CONTACT* Magazine had been mentioned in their



* *Over 25% of the readers are housewives.*

* *Over 28% of the readers are college graduates.*

churches. Surprisingly, the majority of these references were not made by Sunday school teachers, pastors or CTS leaders, but by others within the church according to 30% of the readers.

It appears that the majority of the readers do not clip or reproduce portions of *CONTACT* for reference purposes. At least that is what 41% so stated. However, approximately 27.9% said they had clipped or reproduced portions of *CONTACT* in the past 6 months. Apparently the question was misinterpreted by 6% of the readers who said they saved all copies of the magazine.

Slightly over 7% of those polled had been subscribers to the denominational magazine for 1 year or less. A 26.2% had been subscribers from 2 to 5 years while 20% have been subscribers from 6 to 10 years. Of the 21.5% of those who have been subscribers for 11 years or more, there were 9.6% of the responses from individuals who had subscribed 20 years or more. Nearly 51% of the subscribers paid for their own subscriptions, while approximately 41% received the magazine through the Church Family Plan or the Bundle Plan, both of which are paid by the local churches. The remaining subscribers received their magazines through other means.

Reader response shows that in 30.2% of the households surveyed no one but the subscriber reads the magazine. However, 33.3% said that their spouses read the magazine; 14.4% said their children also read it; and 3.1% said their parents read it. The size of the families subscribing to *CONTACT* varied from 9% with 1 additional member to 7.6% with 2 members, 6% with 3 members, 7.6% with 4 members, 1.4% with 5 members, 2.3% with 6 members, and less than 1% with more than 7.

SUBSCRIBER IDENTITY

AGE?

| | |
|----------------|-----------------|
| Under 19 — .3% | 40-49 — 25.1% |
| 20-29 — 15.8% | 50-59 — 14.1% |
| 30-39 — 28% | Over 60 — 15.8% |

SEX?

| | |
|--------------|--------------|
| Male — 50.9% | Female — 48% |
|--------------|--------------|

EDUCATION?

| |
|-----------------------------|
| Grade school — 6% |
| High school studies — 11.6% |
| High school diploma — 29.1% |
| College studies — 20% |
| College degree — 20.3% |
| Graduate studies — 8.3% |

TYPE COLLEGE OR UNIVERSITY ATTENDED?

| |
|-----------------------------------|
| Bible College — 28.5% |
| Seminary — 3.1% |
| Christian Liberal Arts — 6.5% |
| State College or University — 26% |

OCCUPATION?

| | |
|---------------------|-------------------|
| Minister — 19.5% | Housewife — 25.7% |
| Professional — 6.2% | Retired — 6.8% |
| Clerical — 4.8% | |

INCOME?

| |
|--------------------------|
| Under \$5,000 — 15.5% |
| \$5 to \$7,000 — 14.4% |
| \$7 to \$10,000 — 21.8% |
| \$10 to \$15,000 — 23.5% |
| \$15 to \$20,000 — 11% |
| Over \$20,000 — 4.5% |

NUMBER OF YEARS A CHRISTIAN?

| | |
|--------------------|------------------|
| 1-5 years — 8.3% | 30 years — 15.5% |
| 6-10 years — 19.2% | 40 years — 5.9% |
| 15 years — 13.3% | 50 years — 6.2% |
| 20 years — 13% | 60 years — 2.0% |
| 25 years — 11.9% | 70 years — .6% |

SIZE OF CHURCH ATTENDED?

| |
|-----------------|
| Under 50 — 8.5% |
| 50-100 — 23.4% |
| 101-250 — 32.5% |
| 251-500 — 11.6% |
| Over 500 — 4.5% |

CHURCH POSITIONS HELD?

| | |
|-----------------------------------|--------------------|
| Pastor — 14.7% | CTS Leader — 13.8% |
| Deacon — 6.2% | Other — 26.8% |
| Sunday school teacher — 43% | |
| Woman's Auxiliary officer — 20.3% | |
| Master's Men officer — 4.8% | |
| None — 10.7% | |

MISSOURI CHURCH REACHES CENTENNIAL MARK

Weathers

Fire and Depression

By Mrs. Ted Mathews

Not many Free Will Baptist churches can boast of 100 years of continuous outreach in their communities. But such is the record established by the Mine La Motte Free Will Baptist Church located in Southeast Missouri's Lead Belt area. The milestone was reached in July, 1975.

In her memoirs the late Mrs. Eliza Meyers, the daughter of one of the church's first deacons, states that the church was organized after a "protracted meeting" at the Findley School on the Mine La Motte Domain, land owned by the mining company.

This is confirmed by an entry in the files of the Madison County Historical Society on the history of Mine La Motte. It states, "The establishing of a Baptist Church in the summer of 1875 made a total of three churches in the settlement." The Presbyterian Church was destroyed by fire a few years later, and the Christian church was a victim of the depression years; but God has given the Mine La Motte Church a continuous ministry since organization.

No record of the organizational meeting or list of charter members is available. Family records indicate that Mrs. Meyers' father, Mr. Henderson, and a William Holly were deacons at the time of organization.

Preaching services were held monthly by ministers traveling on foot or horseback to "fill their appointment." They received a free will offering and overnight lodging for their services.

The congregation worshiped in the school for 20 years. The building was lighted at night by oil lanterns which the members carried as they walked to and from church.

In 1895 a church building was erected about one mile from the school on mining company land. In 1963

ABOUT THE WRITER: For 45 years Mrs. Matthews has been a member of the Mine La Motte congregation. She has been teaching Sunday school classes for 35 years with a perfect attendance record for the past 28 years. She also serves her church as clerk-treasurer, a position she has held for 22 years.

As the United States enters its Bicentennial Year, it is only fitting that attention be focused on a Free Will Baptist church that has recorded 100 years of services.

when the company disposed of its holdings here, the land became the property of the church.

Mrs. Allene Gholson, granddaughter of Deacon Henderson, went to her reward just one week before the centennial celebration. She related that as a 9-year-old child she "handed nails to pa and the other men as they worked and was the first person to enter the completed building." A local man remembers his father (not a member) saying that he gave the Baptists \$5.00 on their church. In 1895 this was a substantial contribution.

Dedicated in 1895, the building with some remodeling and additions is still serving the congregation today. Often we hear someone say, "I wish we could know how many people have been saved in this old church." But the value of keeping adequate church records is often overlooked until the opportunity to do so has passed.

The church saw a number of years of growth in the early part of the century. The miners brought new families into the community, and as they came and went many of them worshiped here,

according to old church records. Only God can know the outreach as people moved to other areas.

Dedicated men of God served as pastors. Rev. Fred Brotherton holds the record for years of service. He preached here for 20 years (1905-1925) often walking long distances to do so.

The first Madison County Quarterly Meeting, which is a part of the Southeast Missouri Association, consisted of Mine La Motte and 2 other churches. Neither of the other churches exists today, but the quarterly meeting now includes 9 area churches.

After World War I the mines closed in this area, and operations were expanded in the "Lead Belt." Members from the Mine La Motte Church moving to the area strengthened the church at Flat River which had been organized originally in 1880. Today there are at least 7 active Free Will Baptist churches in that area, including one in Viburnam, a new mining town built in recent years.

In the late 1920's several men from the Flat River Free Will Baptist Church



Left: present building; above: original 1895 structure

MISSOURI CHURCH REACHES
CENTENNIAL MARK
(Cont. from page 9)

became ministers. Many of them did much of their early preaching in the old church at Mine La Motte. Thus the church had full-time preaching services at a time when most country churches had monthly or biweekly services.

The old church has been a stepping-stone for men who later gained national honor in Free Will Baptist circles. The late Rev. James F. Miller, a former moderator of the National Association, held a successful revival meeting at Mine La Motte early in his ministry, probably during 1917.

In 1930 at the age of 16, the late Rev. Mark Lewis conducted a revival meeting that ran for 8 weeks with more than 100 conversions. Pastor S. A. Hand, who is now retired, and the deacons broke ice on the old mine reservoir 7 Sunday afternoons to baptize the converts. As a result the church went through the depression years with capacity crowds while other area churches gave up.

One summer day in 1928 the hand of God led workmen to pass by the church shortly after playing children had accidentally set fire to the building. With no telephone available, the men rang the church bell to summon help. The damage was confined to the pulpit furniture and records and several square feet of floor. Repairs were quickly made, and no services were missed.

When the Findley School was torn down in 1938, the members with the leadership of Pastor Damon C. Dodd secured the stones from the foundations and made a foundation under the present church, which originally had been set on pillars. In doing so a part of the first meeting place was preserved.

In January, 1949, the Mine La Motte School burned. Portable screens soon divided the church into classrooms, and once more the children of the community worshiped and attended classes in the same building until the end of the school term.

Present day Free Will Baptist pastors who grew up in the old church include Woodrow Matthews, Truman Huffman, O. D. Matthews and Glen Rehkop. There may be others unknown to this writer.



*Thank You for
Your Gifts to the . . .*

**COOPERATIVE PLAN OF SUPPORT
December 1975**

RECEIPTS:

| State | Dec. '75 | | Dec. '74 | Year to Date |
|------------------|--------------------|------------|--------------------|---------------------|
| | Co-op | Design. | | |
| Alabama | \$. . . | \$. . . | \$. . . | \$ 2,285.92 |
| Arizona | 102.00 | . . . | 589.64 | 902.07 |
| Arkansas | 776.22 | . . . | 926.58 | 18,363.26 |
| California | 667.27 | . . . | 593.88 | 7,511.99 |
| Florida | 1,626.14 | . . . | 1,245.62 | 12,312.93 |
| Georgia | 222.75 | . . . | 58.63 | 1,763.03 |
| Idaho | . . . | . . . | 65.68 | 530.58 |
| Illinois | 2,606.37 | . . . | 1,915.43 | 16,143.29 |
| Indiana | . . . | . . . | . . . | 677.05 |
| Iowa | 212.84 | . . . | . . . | 899.05 |
| Kansas | 851.40 | . . . | 445.33 | 3,057.56 |
| Kentucky | . . . | . . . | 33.40 | 88.80 |
| Maryland | 30.00 | . . . | 90.13 | 957.16 |
| Michigan | . . . | . . . | . . . | 243.90 |
| Minnesota | . . . | . . . | 23.19 | . . . |
| Mississippi | 54.00 | . . . | 51.88 | 1,014.91 |
| Missouri | 6,706.01 | (6,706.01) | 2,635.93 | 41,591.01 |
| New Mexico | . . . | . . . | . . . | 162.68 |
| North Carolina | 200.00 | (50.00) | 122.36 | 1,462.57 |
| Northwest Assoc. | 121.46 | . . . | 73.52 | 752.38 |
| Ohio | 523.00 | . . . | 563.38 | 8,339.30 |
| Oklahoma | 6,029.97 | (5,818.76) | 3,405.85 | 54,178.98 |
| Tennessee | 853.08 | . . . | 349.03 | 6,725.07 |
| Texas | 25.00 | . . . | 25.00 | 2,177.34 |
| Virginia | 26.89 | . . . | . . . | 356.64 |
| Wyoming | . . . | . . . | . . . | . . . |
| Totals | \$21,634.40 | | \$13,214.46 | \$182,497.47 |

DISBURSEMENTS:

| | | | | |
|---|--------------------|------------|--------------------|---------------------|
| Executive Office | 2,157.70 | (1,728.05) | 1,944.94 | 62,828.15 |
| Foreign Missions | 6,216.51 | (4,017.60) | 3,527.05 | 39,801.21 |
| Bible College | 4,579.01 | (2,331.77) | 2,683.68 | 26,483.35 |
| Home Missions | 3,689.57 | (2,094.77) | 2,179.00 | 22,821.60 |
| Church Training Ser. | 2,077.10 | (955.20) | 1,363.89 | 12,704.64 |
| Retirement & Ins. | 2,036.13 | (914.23) | 954.01 | 11,253.90 |
| Layman's Board | 688.02 | (385.95) | 406.57 | 4,230.18 |
| Commission on Theo- logical Liberalism | 151.36 | (108.20) | 105.32 | 1,014.13 |
| Miscellaneous | 39.00 | (39.00) | 50.00 | 1,360.31 |
| Totals | \$21,634.40 | | \$13,214.46 | \$182,497.47 |

Mine La Motte is still a country church. The 54 members worship God in much the same manner as our forefathers. Pastor David Gibbons preaches each Sunday morning and Sunday night. Weekly services also include Sunday school, C.T.S., prayer

meeting and an active ladies group, meeting for devotions and work.

The members gratefully acknowledge that some have planted; others have watered; but God giveth the increase. To Him be the glory and honor forever. Amen. △

CO-OP GIFTS INCREASE 20% DURING 1975

NASHVILLE, TENN. — The Cooperative Plan took a giant step forward during 1975 by reaching a total of \$182,497.47. This is not only a 20% increase over the previous year, but it exceeds twice the usual increase.

During the past 10 years cooperative giving has been averaging 9½% increase annually. But a marked increase has become more evident in recent years. Executive Secretary Rufus Coffey states that there are several reasons for the significant gains:

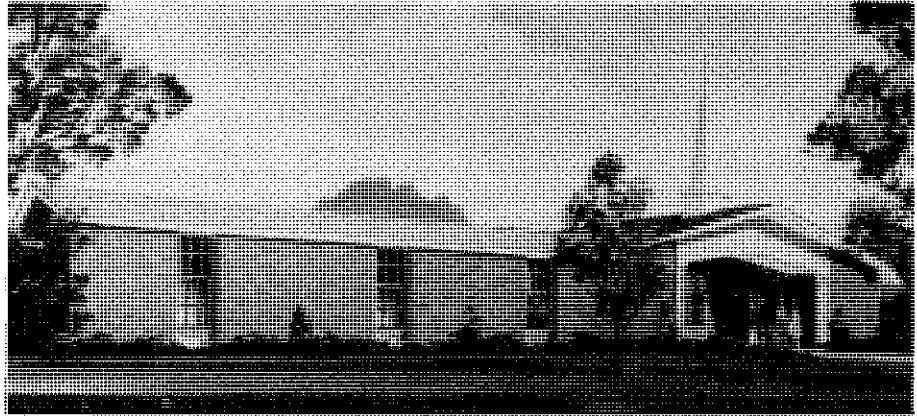
1. The effectiveness of this unified method to provide basic support for our total denominational ministries;
2. More widespread promotion of this plan on the state and national level;
3. Confidence in the denomination as a whole. Fears that the Cooperative Plan would become an uncontrollable monster have been proven to be a myth. It is simply a tool or a channel to express our collective concern for sharing in our outreach to the world!

Giving to the Cooperative Plan through the National Executive Office does not fully reflect the total amount of giving. Most states keep approximately 60% of the funds within the state before sending the other portion to the national ministries. Nevertheless, this workable plan is growing, and it is a cause for praising the Lord, Mr. Coffey stated.



FREE WILL BAPTIST

newsfront



NORTH CAROLINA CHURCH MOVES TO NEW FACILITIES

CHARLOTTE, N.C. — The congregation of the Laurel Free Will Baptist Church held the first official worship service in their new facilities Sunday, November 30. The new building is located at 6201 Elgywood Lane in North Carolina's largest city. The church was begun as a

mission approximately 6½ years ago.

Although the church sanctuary will not be completely finished until spring, a temporary chapel is being utilized in the educational wing. The church is operating a van, which brings an average of 18 children to the services. Pastor James Stancill anticipates this will be the beginning of an active bus ministry.

The new building is located in a residential area of nearly 3,000 homes and 10 apartment complexes. The church group has been well received in the community since active visitation was begun in the area several months ago. Construction on the new facilities was begun 1½ years ago with the approximately 24 adult members donating much of the labor. With an enrollment of nearly 60 in Sunday school, the rented quarters had become too small.

The new brick structure affords ample classrooms, nursery, pastor's study, rest rooms and a baptistry. Upon completion the auditorium will seat approximately 200 persons. All facilities will be completely air-conditioned and carpeted. The appraised value of the new building, furnishings and land exceeds \$75,000. The building program was funded through a bond issue.

BIBLE CONFERENCE SPEAKERS ANNOUNCED

NASHVILLE, TENN. — Speakers for the annual Bible Conference to be hosted on campus by Free Will Baptist Bible College March 14-18, 1976, will be Dr. Wade Jernigan, Rev. Randy Cox, Dr. L. C. Johnson and Dr. Charles Thigpen. The speakers were chosen because of their wide fields of experience and their excellent abilities as preachers of the Word, according to Bert Tippet, director of publications for FWBBC.

Dr. Wade Jernigan has been an evangelistic pastor, home missionary, member of the Commission on Theological Liberalism of the National Association, and is now president of California Christian College located in Fresno, California. Rev. Randy Cox served for many years on the Bible College Board of Trustees. He has

pastored several Free Will Baptist churches including his present pastorate at the First Free Will Baptist Church of Raleigh, North Carolina.

Dr. L. C. Johnson has been president of FWBBC since 1942 except for 3 years when he returned to the pastorate. He is probably best noted for his practical applications of the Word of God. Also serving with the Bible College is Dr. Charles Thigpen who is academic dean. Currently he serves as the interim pastor for Woodbine Free Will Baptist Church in Nashville, Tennessee.

In recent years the attendance at the conference has exceeded 1,500. Special music will be provided by various groups in the school's Music Department.



FWBBC'S ACADEMIC DEAN RECEIVES DOCTORAL DEGREE IN MTSU CEREMONIES

NASHVILLE, TENN. — Reverend Charles A. Thigpen, academic dean at Free Will Baptist Bible College, received his doctor of arts degree in graduation ceremonies December 19, 1975, at Middle Tennessee State University. The award culminated 5 years of study beyond the master's level, with Dr. Thigpen continuing his responsibilities at the Bible College while earning this degree.

His major area of study was English, and he double minored in psychology and higher education. His dissertation covered an examination of the English programs in the 22 church-related liberal arts colleges in Tennessee. He also completed a two-semester teaching assignment for the University.

Dr. Thigpen, a native of Olanta, South Carolina, earned his bachelor of arts degree at Bob Jones College in 1947. In 1949 he was ordained to the Free Will Baptist ministry. He completed his master's degree at Winona Lake School of Theology in 1953 and in 1970 received his master of education degree at Middle Tennessee State.

Thigpen joined the faculty at Free Will Baptist Bible College in 1948 and served for a time as Dean of Men. In 1953 he reentered the pastorate, accepting the call of the Highland Park Free Will Baptist Church in Detroit. He returned to the Bible College in 1957 and has continued to teach in the fields of English, Bible, and theology.

He served with distinction as moderator of the National Association of Free Will Baptists for 6 years from 1954 to 1960.

To complete work on his doctoral dissertation, Thigpen visited all 22 of the colleges his examination covered. His research included sending questionnaires to the English Department Chairman, registrar, librarian and all members of the English faculty in each school. He reports excellent cooperation from those he contacted. His study will be valuable for helping these institutions know how they rank in the state among similar colleges and what are the strengths and weaknesses in their English programs.



Charles A. Thigpen

Dr. and Mrs. Thigpen have 4 children. Jonathan and his wife Yvonne are working with the Free Will Baptist Church Training Service Department in Nashville. Laura teaches music at Randall Memorial FWB Church day school in Memphis. Ann and her husband Gary Maines are students at Bob Jones University, Greenville, S.C. Ruth is in the seventh grade at Woodbine Christian Academy in Nashville. Dr. Thigpen is presently serving as interim pastor for the Woodbine congregation.

ARKANSAS MISSION WITNESSES DECISION ON FIRST DAY OF SERVICES

DE QUEEN, ARKANSAS — Grace Free Will Baptist Mission conducted its first services in the recently acquired and remodeled building Sunday, December 7, and witnessed one first-time decision on that initial day of services. Pastor Thomas K. Johnson stated there were 23 present for Sunday school, 29 for the morning worship and 33 for the evening worship.

The mission is operating under the direction of the Arkansas State Mission Board. The group is meeting in a remodeled house located on a 10-acre tract purchased for a total cost of \$22,200. The state mission board will serve as trustee of the property until such a time as the group is formally organized into a church.

The remodeled building contains 4 classrooms, 2 rest rooms and a sanctuary which will seat approximately 75 people. Pastor Johnson, who also began a mission in North Carolina, says that the Grace Mission has the nicest facilities he has ever seen for a mission group. The Johnson family moved to De Queen in August, and Mr. Johnson was on itinerate from August through October in Arkansas, Oklahoma and Kansas. The mission group is also receiving funds from other states at this time, according to Pastor Johnson.

ALABAMA FREE WILL BAPTISTS OPEN INSTITUTE

GUIN, ALABAMA — Alabama Bible Institute opened its doors for classes January 6, 1976, at the Guin Free Will Baptist Church. Rev. Richard Cordell, pastor of the church, and Rev. Bonnie Hughes, pastor of Hamilton Free Will Baptist Church, are serving as directors of the institute.

The purpose for Alabama Bible Institute is the training of leaders and Christian workers in area Free Will Baptist churches. Classes are not limited to Free Will Baptists but are open to all sincere Christian workers who wish to further prepare themselves for Christian service.

Courses being offered January 6 through March 30 are Bible Doctrine, Evangelism, New Testament Survey and Music Fundamentals. Teaching these courses are pastors Cordell and Hughes; Billy Sharpston, First Free Will Baptist Church, Vernon; and Danny Thompson, First Free Will Baptist Church, Red Bay. The schedule calls for additional courses and the Evangelical Teacher Training Association studies to be offered at a later time.

For further information write to Alabama Bible Institute, Box 553, Guin, Alabama 35563.

CHURCH PERSONNEL CHANGES

These changes in Free Will Baptist pastoral and other church personnel are provided by CONTACT Magazine as a service to its readers. No person will be listed as having left a place of service until he is called officially to serve with another congregation.

PASTORATES

GEORGIA

Adam Scott to Homerville Church, Homerville from Lebanon Church, Effingham, South Carolina

MISSOURI

Glen Hood to Thayer Church, Thayer from Westside Church, Midland, Texas

SOUTH CAROLINA

John Reed to Lebanon Church, Effingham from principalship of West Duplin Christian Academy, Warsaw, North Carolina

TENNESSEE

Ralph Hampton to Cross Timbers Church, Nashville

TEXAS

Jack Markland to First Church, Seminole

OPERATION PARTNERSHIP NEEDS ONLY \$85,000

NASHVILLE, TENN. — Approximately \$85,000 remains to be raised before the debt on the National Office Building can be eliminated, according to Rufus Coffey, executive secretary of the National Association of Free Will Baptists. Since the program was initiated in November, 1974, Gideon's Army members have succeeded in raising over \$37,000 in cash. An additional \$10,000 has been pledged.

Initially, Operation Partnership called for 3,000 Free Will Baptists to contribute \$50 each to pay this debt in full and finance the campaign. Gideon's Army, which is made up of men and women who have been challenged to raise \$500 or 10 pledges of \$50, was organized to facilitate this effort. In addition individual churches are setting goals of at least \$100 or receiving special offerings for Operation Partnership.

Removal of this indebtedness on the National Office Building will benefit each department housed in the structure. For example, in 1975 the Foreign Missions Department paid 41% of its current total monthly rent toward the elimination of this obligation. If the building were debt free, the Foreign Missions Department would have an additional \$5,401.75 a year to go directly to Free Will Baptist missionary endeavors. Other departments would experience similar savings per year: Home Missions and Church Extension Department would save \$2,339.67; Sunday School Department, \$4,118.72; Woman's National Auxiliary Convention, \$1,236.09; Executive Church Bonds, \$124.23; and the Executive Office, \$1,501.11. This means that almost \$15,000 a year could be used to advance the work of Free Will Baptists rather than the insurance company which holds the mortgage note. Over the next 10 years this will be a significant savings for each department and the denomination as a whole.

Campaign Coordinator J. D. O'Donnell urges all Gideon's Army members and others who have made pledges or who wish to share in Operation Partnership to send in their contributions as soon as possible. A mortgage-burning ceremony is set for this July at the national convention in Tulsa, Oklahoma.

BICENTENNIAL EMPHASIZED IN THEME FOR SUNDAY SCHOOL'S SPRING ENLARGEMENT CAMPAIGN

NASHVILLE, TENN. — "Free Will Baptist beginnings predate the birth of our nation by 49 years. We were there when it happened. Our heritage is rich because of it. It was because of the aggressive, pioneering spirit of men like Paul Palmer, Benjamin Randall and countless others that our nation and our religious liberty are free today."

So said Harrold Harrison, manager of the promotional division of the National Sunday School Department, in announcing that in conjunction with the current "Spirit of '76" emphases, the theme chosen for the Sunday School Enlargement Campaign this bicentennial spring is "Free Indeed." The theme is based on the truth of John 8:36, "... Ye shall be free indeed."

The enlargement emphasis is designed to bring the unsaved, the unchurched and the unenlisted into the unfettered life in Jesus Christ. Sunday

schools are placed in 8 categories for competitive purposes. Therefore, they compete only with Sunday schools of comparable size.

The spring campaign will begin on Sunday, March 7, and continue through Sunday, March 28, 1976. Sunday schools in each division which experience the greatest percentage of gain over the 13 weeks average attendance for September, October, November, 1975, will be declared winners.

Campaign materials are available from the Sunday School Department, P.O. Box 17306, Nashville, Tennessee 37217. Eligibility for winning requires that the entry blank be accompanied by an order for enlargement materials of at least \$10.00. The form and order should reach the Sunday School Department by March 5, 1976.


WYOMING CHURCH PLAYS "SANTA" FOR FWBBC

NASHVILLE, TENN. — Members of the First Free Will Baptist Church, Torrington, Wyoming, gave Free Will Baptist Bible College a special Christmas present in the form of more than a thousand dollars worth of food to be used in feeding students. Reverend Fred Lucas, pastor of the church, packed the provisions — beef, potatoes and beans — in a U-Haul trailer and delivered it personally to the school's Cumberland Cafeteria prior to the holiday.

The drive began as a project of the church's CTS, directed by CTS President Wyoma Hansen. The group wanted to do something special for the college and decided to donate 3 head of beef to the school. The beef dressed out at over 1,300 pounds of ground beef, wrapped and frozen. Stanley Willadsen and Alan Korell, members of the Torrington Church, helped the drive by donating generous amounts of potatoes and beans.



RECEIVING FOOD FROM WYOMING — Dr. L. C. Johnson, right center, president of Free Will Baptist Bible College, expresses appreciation to Rev. Fred Lucas, pastor of the First Church of Torrington, Wyoming, for more than \$1,000 worth of food delivered to the College. Food Service Manager E. W. Tippett, right, joined Dr. Johnson in expressing appreciation for the generosity and initiative of the people responsible for this unique project. At left is Larry Hill, a member of the Torrington Church.



What Kind of Christian Are You?

When Jesus said to the religious leaders of His day, "Ye entered not in yourselves, and them that were entering in ye hindered" (Luke 11:52), He made a very serious charge.

In effect He said those who ought to be the greatest help in spiritual things are sometimes the greatest hindrance.

There are 4 classes of Christians today who would come under our Lord's denunciation.

THE SPONGE

This is the Christian who loves to attend meetings and hear the Gospel, but who is just like a sponge — merely sitting and soaking up all he hears. He never thinks of giving out of what he has received, either in prayer or in Christian service, but is content to listen, to taste and to approve (or disapprove).

The sponge is not one of the metaphors used in the Scripture to describe the believer — such as a "well springing up" or "rivers of living water" which flow from the life of the true Christian. The sponge is a self-centered person who is concerned only about what he gets — never what he can give.

THE TRAMP

Another type of Christian is the spiritual tramp — the Christian who has no fixed place of abode. In his carefree existence he wanders wherever his fancy takes him, going from church to church, listening to preacher after preacher. If he doesn't like the preacher, song leader, choir, congregation, or someone or something else, he simply moves on.

Spiritual tramps avoid the responsibility of a church home. The only record they leave behind is of their

"wanderings in the wilderness." And tramps seldom achieve anything. A detached Christian is about as much good to the body of Christ as a detached arm or leg.

THE FLIRT

What of the spiritual flirt? He is first cousin to the tramp. In the natural a flirt is someone who wants to get amusement, excitement and entertainment out of a personal relationship without accepting the responsibilities of marriage.

There is, of course, an excitement in the Christian life — the thrill of big meetings, of listening to great preachers, of attending conventions. They all bring a certain enjoyment to the Christian, but to let these be an obsession is to make a travesty of the Christian life.

The spiritual flirt goes to church primarily to be entertained. He's not willing to accept the meat of the Word. He wants to live on desserts.

Marriage speaks of self-denial, sacrifice and love. It speaks of a multitude of small things that fall under the title of "duty." It speaks of dusting, cooking, crying children, financial problems, restricted freedom. But these things are accepted by love and turned to good, for marriage speaks of giving.

The Christian life is a marriage — a union with Christ. There are aspects of that union which call for discipline — the laboring alone in prayer; teaching in the Sunday school; the abundance of duties that must be performed. The spiritual flirt steers clear of these things!





Made in His Image

Part IV

By Leroy Forlines

In the last article I defined personality as the way a person thinks, feels and acts. Personality functions on the conscious and subconscious level. Each person has a particular personality pattern. This pattern is an expression of the way the subconscious mind has been programmed in the past.

We know some people who look on the bright side of life. In varying degrees from one person to another, they are pleasant and optimistic. We know other people who look on the negative side of life. In varying degrees they are sour, critical, depressed and pessimistic. We know some people whose pattern of life portrays in varying degrees holiness, love, wisdom and a concern for excellence. We know others whose pattern of life expresses in varying degrees sin, hatred, poor judgment and sloppiness.

Some of the patterns of personality given above are desirable and some are undesirable. The question is "Can we change our personalities?" The Christian doctrine of redemption assumes that personality can be changed. The ultimate aim of redemption is to conform the personality to the likeness of Christ (Romans 8:29). This means that our way of thinking, feeling and acting will be patterned after the way Jesus thinks, feels and acts.

This conformity to the image of Jesus' personality will reach its complete fulfillment in the next life. In this life the Christian reaches a measure of likeness to the personality of Christ. A person is a spiritual person to the extent that his personality is conformed to the image of Christ.

In personality change it is important that we recognize that there is both

human responsibility and divine enablement. It is a mistake to interpret our relationship with God as cause and effect such as exists between physical objects and such as exists between persons and physical objects. A physical object has no choice about whether or how to respond or refuse to respond to the influence of another person. Therefore, it is better to speak about influence and response rather than cause and effect. When we do say, "He caused me to do it," we actually mean he influenced me to do it.

Our relationship to God is a personal relationship. God is personal and we are personal. The miracles that Jesus performed were performed upon physical objects. He healed sick bodies. He turned water into wine. He multiplied the loaves and fish, etc. These miracles were performed in a short time. The changes that He brought about in people's lives covered a period of time. There was divine influence, but a human response was required. On the human side this meant repentance followed by study, meditation, obedience, etc. On the divine side this was confrontation with divine truth, regeneration, divine enablement, etc. The divine and human side in personality change will be farther elaborated in the next article. △

THE SNOB

The fourth type of Christian is the spiritual snob — one who feels he is so much better than others that he can look down his pharisaic nose at saint and sinner alike. If while reading this you've been thinking of all the people you know who fit into the 3 previous groups, look out!

The self-centered spiritual snob shows himself as one who is more particular than the Holy Spirit and who stands ready to completely withdraw himself from any who do not measure up to his standard of spirituality — instead of trying to help them.

THE REAL THING

Thank God that the 4 types of Christians mentioned previously are in the minority. Most of those who are born again are striving to be truly spiritual Christians — Christians whose lives are patterned after the life of the Son of God. They make their own interests secondary and are concerned with filling their places in the Body of Christ.

The spiritual Christian is the one whose love for God is seen in his actions, words and attitudes. His love and respect for his brethren in Christ will not let him stoop to pettiness. He is the positive epitome of the attributes that are lacking in the sponge, tramp, flirt and snob. Through his true Christian spirit he encourages the unsaved to accept his Master.

What kind of Christian are you?

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OUR WOMEN SPEAK

Will I Be A Grouchy Old Person?

By Joan Gardner

The trip to the nursing home had always been a blessing to me; but as I left that day, I was perturbed. A grouchy old lady had spoiled my entire visit. She had complained about everything and griped the entire hour.

As I drove home, I began to pray. I realized that some day not too far away I would be old, and I surely didn't want to be like that lady. My prayer had 3

points:

"Lord, help me not be grouchy when I get old.

Please, don't let me drift away from you as I grow older.

If I can't be sweet when I get old, Lord, let me die young."

Age is a gift that God gives us a little at a time. Some people receive it gratefully, and others despise the gift. There are 2 kinds of old people. There are those who are a joy to know, and those who are a "pain in the neck." The

question is how can I be a sweet old lady when my hair turns gray and the wrinkles won't cover with makeup? You may say, "Be saved." Let me point out to you I have known many older citizens who claimed salvation and yet were so selfish they dishonored the Lord.

A motto hung on the wall in my high school. It said:

**"WHAT YOU ARE TO BE
YOU ARE NOW BECOMING."**

Today people live very selfish lives. All their time is spent to make money, and all the money is used to give them comfort. Very few people have any concern for others, and very few give their time to spread the Gospel. We expect to live for self until age 65 and then retire from our lives of selfishness. Did you ever wonder how an old man or old lady became so greedy? They practiced greed all their lives.

Mrs. Jane (name changed) was one of the most faithful members of our church. Even though she was not always in good health, she was always present with a smile and encouragement for the younger people. Those who had known her for many years said that she had always been faithful and had pulled the church through many hard times.

Mr. John (name changed) was a grouch. If we had dinner together, he

QUINLAN 'LIFE OR DEATH' CASE RATED TOP NEWS STORY OF '75

NEW YORK (EP) — The Karen Quinlan case, which raised questions about the "right to die," was the top religious news story of 1975, chosen by the news and photo staffs of Religious News Service.

Ordination of women and the problems it posed for the

Episcopal and Roman Catholic Churches ranked second.

The 10 top stories in order of selection were as follows:

1. Karen Quinlan case posed theological, legal and medical problems involving definitions of death and the "right to die."

2. Ordination of women troubled the Episcopal Church, specifically involving 15 irregular ordinations and trials of 2 male priests, and confronted the Roman Catholic Church at a national conference held in Detroit.

3. Southeast Asian war ended, and U.S. churches took leading roles in resettling refugees from Vietnam and Cambodia.

4. U.N. resolution equating

Zionism with racism was widely condemned by Christian groups as anti-Semitic.

5. Canonization of Mother Elizabeth Seton as first native U.S. Catholic saint was a highlight of the Holy Year.

6. Church-state tensions engulfed Lebanon, Portugal, South Korea, the Philippines, Rhodesia, South Africa, Northern Ireland and Chile, where the CIA was revealed to have used U.S. missionaries for intelligence purposes.

7. World Council of Churches' Fifth Assembly emphasized human rights with special attention to Third World, women and youth.

complained that the food was cold, or we forgot the bread, or the coffee was too hot. He was never satisfied. Everyone said, "That's just the way John is; he's never been satisfied in his life."

If you know a sweet old person, you can be sure he was also a sweet young person. I am thankful that God does in some cases save those in older years, but this does not happen often and almost never to one hardened by a selfish life. Ecclesiastes 12:1 says, "Remember now thy creator in the days of thy youth, while the evil days come not, nor the years draw nigh, when thou shalt say, I have no pleasure in them."

Pray that God will make you sweet in old age, but not as I prayed coming from the nursing home that day. Our prayer should be for today:

"Lord, don't let me be grouchy today.

Lord, keep me close to You today.

Please, let me live *all my days* for Your Glory."

Practice being *today* what you want to be like when you retire.

ABOUT THE WRITER: Mrs. Gardner is the wife of Bill Gardner, associate pastor of First Free Will Baptist Church, Columbus, Mississippi. They are the parents of 3 children. △

8. Hartford Appeal was drawn up by theologians to protest what they saw as 13 contemporary Christian "heresies."

9. Charismatic movement won increased recognition, but suffered internal conflicts and was disavowed by some church groups.

10. (tie)

a) Abortion issue emphasized by Kenneth Edelin trial, new political thrust by U.S. Catholic bishops, greater Protestant activities both pro and con.

b) Progress in relations between Vatican and Orthodox Churches was symbolized by Pope's dramatic gesture in kissing feet of Metropolitan Meliton. △



THE SOUNDING BOARD

After reading "Are Buses and Tongues Related?" (November, 1975), do you agree or disagree with Joseph Bragg's opinion that some leaders in churches which maintain large bus ministries are projecting an attitude of spiritual snobbery toward those who shepherd smaller flocks?

ALABAMA LAY MEMBER DECRIES SPIRITUAL SNOBBERY

After reading "Are Buses and Tongues Related?" I felt like shouting, "How true, how true!" I had felt like as a lay member I was being too critical in some of my thoughts. I get so upset when I hear preachers talking down the smaller churches, teaching their congregations to be snobs. What's a number in church without the warmth of the love of God clearly visible on every member. Have some of our ministers forgotten that all shall be weighed in the balance? I've heard so many stand in the pulpit downing or

judging other churches, then telling how many other churches are getting in church on their buses (some of these their own churches), and then turn right around and down the people that are brought in. Is this not being somewhat hypocritical? Let's not forget Job 15:34 . . .

No matter how large or small the church, let us remember when these precious souls are brought in, the one thing they don't need is snobbery. Let's bring them into the fold for Christ, not push them back out into the pits of hell. . . .

Ruth Sellers, member
Howard Grove Free Will Baptist Church
Cottonwood, Alabama

FOR FUTURE DISCUSSION

In an effort to provide proper facilities for church-related functions such as wedding receptions, to enable a church to host an associational meeting for a meal, and to promote fellowship among members around the table, many churches have fellowship halls with kitchens. In some sections of our denomination, some interpret Paul's admonition in I Corinthians 11:20-22 to forbid eating in the church building. Do you agree or disagree with this interpretation of the aforementioned scripture?

Send your reply to Editor, CONTACT Magazine, P.O. Box 1088, Nashville, Tennessee 37202. Discussion should be limited to 300 words or less. All comments must be signed by the writer and include the name and address of the church with which he is affiliated. Replies should reach the editor by the first week of the month following the date of the issue in which the question is presented. △



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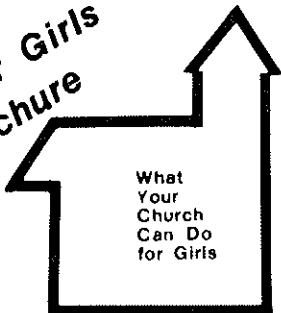
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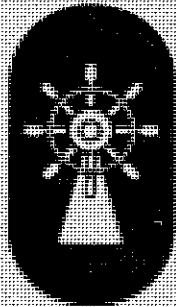
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FROM THE BRIDGE

ON YOUR MARK, GET SET, GROW!

By Rufus Coffey,
Executive Secretary

For the announcer it is "Time for lift-off". For the actor it is "Curtain time!" When it is time for a theatrical game to start, the umpire cries, "Play ball!" For the racer, the starter calls out to "Start your engines!" In one competing in a race the official exclaims, "On your mark, get set, ready, go!" To all, these separate commands simply mean that it is the moment to get moving. For the church the present cry is "On your mark, get set, grow!"

Church growth is the name of a movement that is crossing among many varied evangelical groups in the United States and Canada. In light of the static or declining growth of many denominations, the renewed stress on church growth is very real.

Simply stated, church growth is the expansion of the Church through the multiplication of disciples. A disciple is one who gives evidence of personal conversion by following Christ as a leader in the fellowship of the Church.

KINDS OF GROWTH

The task of making disciples involves both quantitative and qualitative growth. To be sure, not all believers or churches grow at the same pace or in the same manner. Neither do they grow to the same level. Nevertheless, there will be a measure of growth.

Genuine discipleship means that individual believers grow spiritually. There will be growth in understanding

of purpose, growth in service, growth in stewardship, growth in commitment, growth in prayer and growth in faithfulness. As believers grow individually in the Body of Christ, it is only natural that the Body itself will grow. Biologically one living cell produces another living cell. Likewise, a viable disciple will produce another disciple. Thus, the church as a living organism will reproduce itself and grow statistically.

If the Church is not growing spiritually, and to some degree numerically, something is wrong. It is diagnosed as stagnant. Just as a doctor examines a patient to diagnose the condition, it is necessary to examine the church to diagnose its spiritual health. The church that is not expanding and multiplying through winning, baptizing and teaching new disciples has a serious health problem.

EXAMPLES OF GROWTH

Many churches excuse their lack of growth by a lot of plain talker such as "being faithful" or "ministering." People seem to forget that our Lord cursed the fig tree (Matthew 21:18-19) because of its poor quality and lack of fruit. The parable of the sower deals as much with the quantity of the harvest as it does with the quality of the soil. Jesus instructed on several occasions that He expected tangible results. In Matthew 9:35-38 Jesus instructed His disciples to pray for laborers to reap the ripened harvest before it was wasted in the parable of the empty banquet table.

(Luke 14: 15-23). Jesus taught His disciples to go out into the highways and hedges and compel them to come in "that my house may be full."

New Testament Growth

Even the most casual reader of the book of Acts cannot fail to observe how rapidly the church grew. From the initial 3,000 conversions on the day of Pentecost, the Lord added to the church daily (Acts 2:46-47) so that the number grew to 5,000 shortly thereafter (Acts 4:4). Converts began to multiply so rapidly that the Christians began to have no room. According to Acts 6:31 and Acts 16:5, this growth necessitated the establishment of additional local churches. By the time we come to Acts 21:20, we read there were "myriads" of believers. (Compare Scofield margin.)

Free Will Baptist Growth

Free Will Baptists tend to become more concerned about growth. Statistics indicate we are not achieving our maximum potential. In several areas a few of our churches are experiencing relatively rapid growth, such as the Tidewater section of Virginia, Columbus, Ohio, and sections of North Carolina. But as a whole, denominational growth is rather meager.

While there is an average of one new church being organized each week, membership gains are far less encouraging. The Southern Report in our 1975 Minutes reveals the average membership gain per church last year was 3 members. The average church membership is 93, which is the same as it was in 1973. Although new churches are being organized, most congregations are not growing very rapidly because last year it took 93 members 4 months to win one new member.

MANNER OF GROWTH

Specialists in church growth tell us that a church grows in several ways. First, there is natural or biological growth which stems from the addition of the children and families of present church members. This averages 25% over a 10-year period. Then the church grows through the transfer of members from other congregations. In reality this is only a shift of members rather than actual growth. The real test of growth is direct evangelism. This means that the church is actually reaching out to the uninvited and unchurched to win new

converts through direct soul-winning efforts.

From time to time we hear of large numbers of decisions in evangelistic services both within and without our denomination. However, we do not find the fruit of evangelism which is evidenced by disciples rather than by decisions. No church can be content with professions of faith. New converts must be led into the fellowship of the church where they can experience spiritual growth and development in order to go out and disciple others. All of our plans and methods and activities in the church are vain unless we keep in focus that the ultimate mission of the church is to make disciples.

PRINCIPLES OF GROWTH

If the church is to grow, there are certain lines of principles to be considered. The list is not complete or fully developed. However, these seven factors set forth some of the common denominators found in all churches that are experiencing growth.

First, it must be recognized that church growth is the work of our sovereign Lord. Christ is building His Church through His people who are yielded to the Holy Spirit. God is pleased to use those who faithfully proclaim the Word of God and bear witness from a fully dedicated life.

According to the pattern of the New Testament, a church yielded to God's will can expect to grow when the people are obedient to the Word and seek to glorify His name through extending His Kingdom. A church can expect to grow when there is a willingness on the part of the people to pay the price of prayer, sacrifice and hard work. God always rewards commitment and dedication. Obedience and attention to the Lord

ship of Christ along with Spirit-filled and Spirit-directed members will inevitably produce fruit.

Another key factor is a continuing passion for souls. Evangelism is the heartbeat of a growing church. Genuine concern for the souls of men prevents barren altars. But this concern must be manifested by going out into the highways and hedges and compelling souls to come to Christ. The promise of Psalm 126:5 is still true:

"They that sow in tears shall reap in joy. He that goeth forth and weepeth, sowing precious seed, shall doubtless come again with rejoicing, bringing his sheaves with him."

Strong pastoral leadership is another vital force in stimulating church growth. A dynamic and emergent pastor sets the pace for the congregation. As the pastor takes the lead in proclaiming the Word of God and zealously entreating, he will find responsive hearts. Believers will be challenged to get wrenched through the dedicated life and example of a godly pastor.

The extent of lay involvement is also vital to church growth. The laity must be mobilized and stimulated to use their gifts in fulfilling God's will. Although there is the danger of anonymity among some church members, it is also true that many others are eager to serve if given an opportunity. But they must be trained. There seems to be an over-emphasis on exhortation while there is a minimum amount of training. The glaring weakness in churches that do not grow is a lack of training to equip believers to perform God-given responsibilities.

Other factors could be emphasized if space permitted, such as promotion, adequate facilities and a balanced church program of worship, fellowship, service, music, youth activities, etc. But there are no carved methods. Neither is church growth automatic. There appears to be a combination of factors coupled with hard work, dedication and the proper motivation to glorify the Lord.

Statistics indicate that we need to get excited and enthused about church growth. We must recover our sense of purpose and mission. Empty churches, empty pews and empty altars usually reflect empty hearts. On the other hand, a church that knows where it is going usually gets there. We must pray, plan and work intelligently in order to see our churches grow.

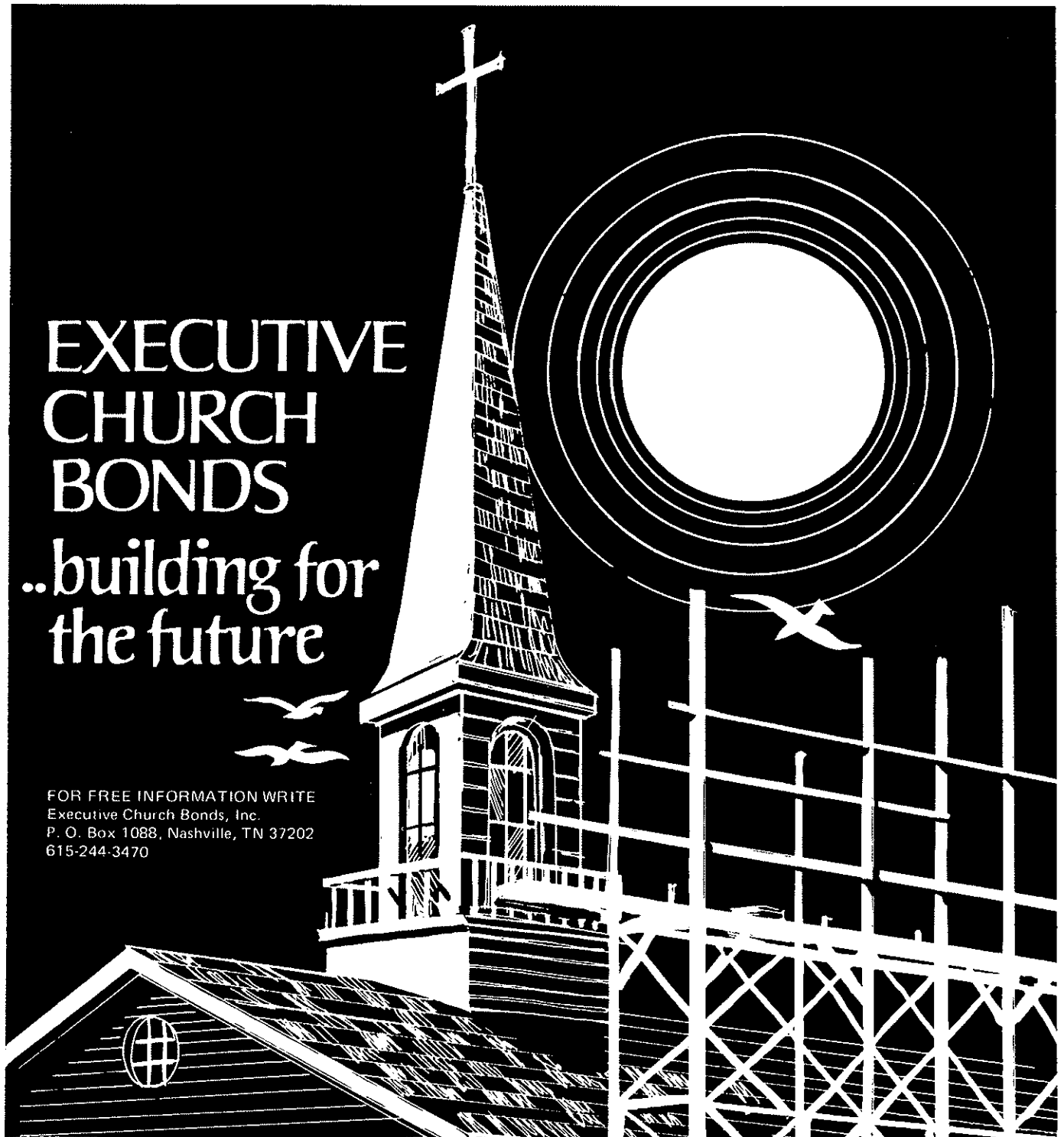


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