

*“As the hart panteth after the water brooks, so  
panteth my soul after thee, O God. My soul thirsteth  
for God, for the living God. . . .” (Psalm 42:1, 2b)*

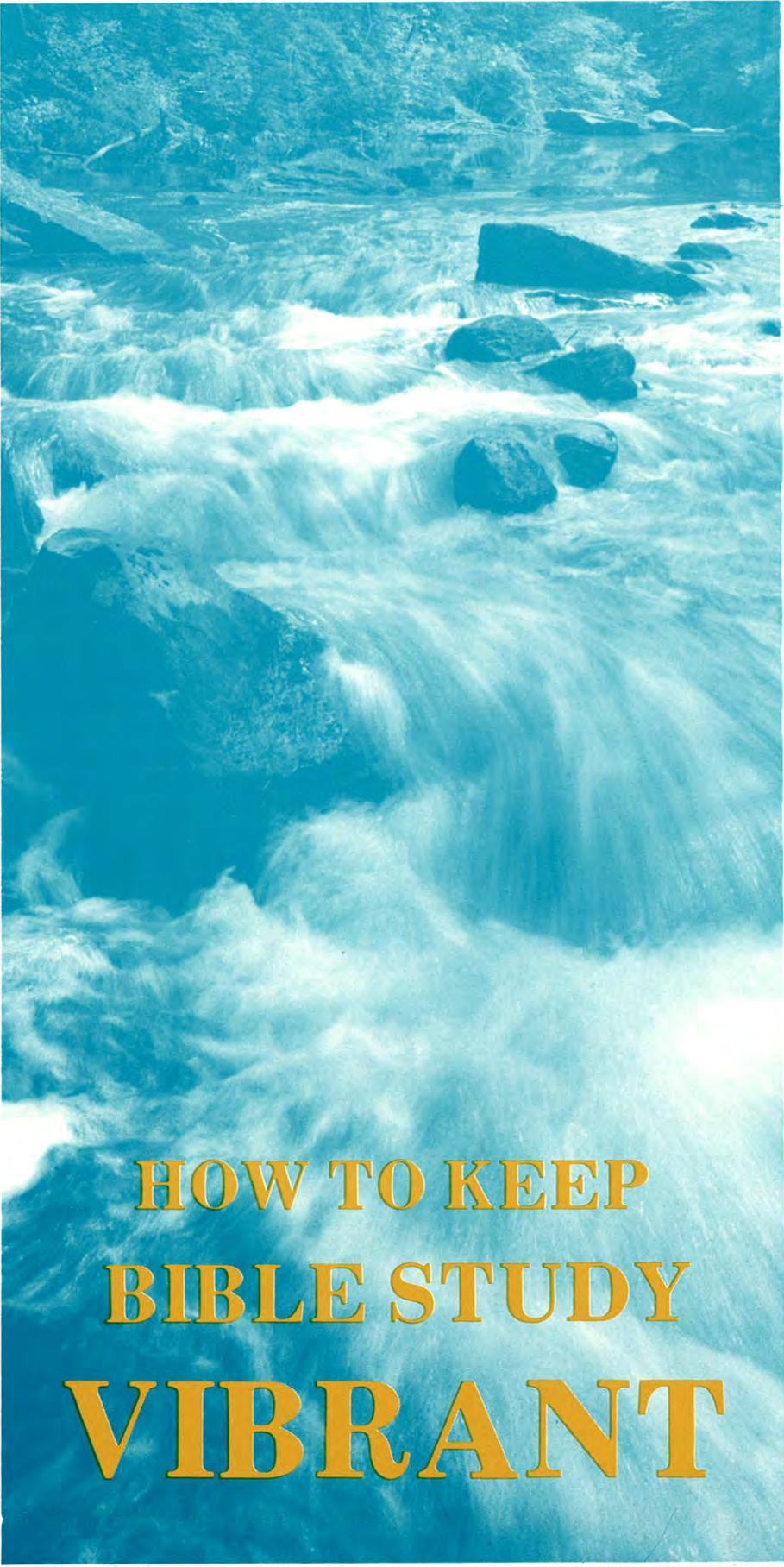
**IN THIS ISSUE: How to Keep Bible Study Vibrant**

OCTOBER, 1976

**contact**

OF THE NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF FREE WILL BAPTISTS





# HOW TO KEEP BIBLE STUDY VIBRANT

By Don Robirds

I'm lazy, humanly speaking. If the truth were known or faced, you would probably have to admit the same about yourself. In addition to this, I get physically exhausted from the work I do in spite of the lazy streak.

Does it strike a familiar chord?

Do you ever dread to look in your Bible? Does it seem like work? Does it ever appear repetitious? Do you ever get to the point where you wonder if there is anything new for you?

Let me confess: I've experienced this frustration!

But what can be done about it?

Let me offer some suggestions that have been a blessing and a help to me. Now, I didn't say I was going to give you a "short cut" to Bible study! There is no simple, effortless way to study the Bible. It takes time, thought, quietness and meditation mingled with prayer and some memorization.

Bible study might be categorized into 3 basic types: reading for familiarity, devotional study and doctrinal study. All 3 areas or methods are good and important, but I want to consider primarily in this article the second category: devotional study.

Basically, devotional study is for personal enrichment to help us know where we are in relation to God's desires and to set goals for self-improvement (growth in grace) as we gain spiritual insights.

While I am a preacher, I am not considering this from the basis of sermon preparation (which involves what I include here plus much more) but from the purely practical approach to personal growth or spiritual maturation.

Two keys have proven to be very important to me. The first is that of *personalization*, and the second key, similar to the first, is what I would term *contemporary application*.

Usually I approach the Scriptures by first reading through a passage (preferably an entire book). This gives God a chance to hit me broadside. Then I like to



spend time in the passage. Sometimes I go over the same passage in many different ways during the same study. Other times I may make one or two approaches and then move on to another passage or book. Later, I may go over the same passage using still another of the approaches which I am about to mention.

The varieties of ways that I use have come from numerous sources. I really don't know where they all originated; so I don't know whom I should credit. I hope my disclosing of these will not be infringing on someone's rights; nevertheless, readers can take these suggestions and use them for their own spiritual enrichment.

Historical books are particularly suited to the drama approach. I try to picture the constant warfare between God and Satan; place all the characters on one side or the other; examine their motives, actions and results; and determine the victor (even though we know who is the ultimate victor). I note what resources each character has at his disposal for the accomplishment of his objective whether good or evil and try to learn what ultimate spiritual lesson God intended for us in the story.

Word studies are always interesting. Pick a word which you may not have understood in the past. Look it up in the dictionary, a concordance and perhaps even in a Bible dictionary. Determine its meaning in the context, and make comparison (through the use of a concordance) of its usage in various other passages. Do the same with really outstanding words like "grace," "love," "faith," "victory," etc. Use center references in your Bible to find similar words and expressions in other passages.

Compare the 4 Gospels,

preferably through a parallel edition which puts all 4 side by side. Compare translations of various passages in other versions, and seek to memorize outstanding expressions.

I often use a verse by verse examination of the passage in which I try to evaluate myself and my application of the verse to the present. Five key questions were pointed out to me by a missionary in Brazil. These have been especially helpful to me. They are designed to help us personalize the Scriptures: (1) What does the verse teach *me* about the *person of God*? (2) What *promise* does this verse make to *me*? (3) What *commandment* does this verse give *me* to fulfill? (4) What *sins* does this verse teach *me* to avoid? (5) What *examples* does it give *me* to follow?

Having looked at the passage through one or more of these ways (particularly the latter), I seek to make a personal application through a prayer of commitment and through verbalization of the personal spiritual goals I am setting in the light of what I have seen of God and myself in the study.

An example might be the approach to II Timothy 2:24,25a, "And the servant of the Lord must not strive; but be gentle unto all men, apt to teach, patient, In meekness instructing those that oppose themselves. . . ." The prayer might be as follows: "Father forgive me for my past involvement in strife. I will seek by Thy grace to be more patient, and I will seek to *gently* correct those who oppose the message I preach. I will seek to be kind as I teach them so that I might win them to Jesus Christ." Thus I have personalized the passage in prayer and will seek to apply it in life.

Personalization demands an important portion of my Bible study but so does contemporaneous application. In other words, I seek to break down history, the Gospels, the epistles, etc. into contemporary terms which pack meaning for me. Then I seek to determine basic principles which

were intended so that I might apply them in my daily living. (In doing this one has to be careful not to change scriptural intent and thus become guilty of error.)

As a witness for Christ I have sought to find principles from the life of Paul which would be helpful in today's world. For example, in Acts 17 Paul preached on Mars' hill to a group of skeptics, idolaters, and superstitious people. He did not spend time arguing with them about their views. He *simply* and *tactfully* made use of a situation which appeared to him as a "door opener." He was not ugly nor accusing. He did not point fingers. Some were mad; some were glad. Some believed, and others mocked. The results were left to God.

I can apply this in my approach to lost men, skeptics, idolaters, etc. today. I have done so and have found it works!

Another simplified contemporary application is made from Esther. She appeared to be a "nobody." She had no lineage, no special reason for recognition, and belonged to a race despised by most heathen kings and kingdoms—the Jews. She probably wondered why she was born in such a situation. God showed her that she indeed had come to the kingdom for a special time. Almost miraculously she went from commoner to queen, from a nobody to a somebody, from a meaningless life to a meaningful life, which she offered freely to save her people.

God knows me and has made me for a purpose just like He did Esther. My place is different; but knowing God, I realize it is not insignificant no matter how humble. Now I can see more clearly how "all things work together for good to them who love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose" (Romans 8:28).

As these Bible studies have produced fruit in the past, they promise to do the same in the future. My Bible will remain fresh, vibrant and vital to my soul. Try it and see if you don't find it the same.

ABOUT THE WRITER: Mr. Robirds is editor of HEARTBEAT Magazine which is published by the Free Will Baptist Foreign Missions Department. He formerly served as a missionary in Sao Paulo, Brazil.



# CARPENTER FOR CHRIST

A UNIQUE MAN OF FAITH LEADS HIS CHURCH IN TRIPLING ATTENDANCE IN JUST 6 MONTHS.

By Staff Writer

Because David Hicks built a thriving construction firm on honesty and good interpersonal relationships, he felt these same principles would work in the pastorate. Six years ago his business was flourishing to the tune of one-half million dollars a year. But God had another kind of building in mind for the then 49-year-old father of 3 girls. One year after calling him into Christian ministry, God placed Hicks in the pastorate of First Free Will Baptist Church in McEwen, Tennessee. Here this "carpenter for Christ" built a mission work into a thriving full-time church.

In October, 1975, God gave David Hicks another assignment. This time it was Dickson, Tennessee, a small town in middle Tennessee with a population of 8,000. But to hear Pastor Hicks during an eruption of his joyful enthusiasm about the new work, one would think God had called him to a metropolis of 8 million and he is responsible for the salvation of the entire population.

Hicks preached his first sermon as pastor of First Free Will Baptist Church in Dickson on October 12, 1975, to 47 people. Offerings were averaging be-

tween \$300 and \$400 a month. Six months later attendance averaged 145 with an all-time high of 168. Despite Brother Hicks' absence from the church during most of the summer of '76 due to a heart attack, the average attendance of last spring has been maintained. This speaks well of the leadership which Pastor Hicks has been cultivating since arriving. This past year 60 persons have joined the church. Offerings now range between \$2,000 and \$2,200. The congregation has raised Hicks' salary twice since he assumed this pastorate. He stated his salary philosophy tersely: "If I don't put it on the board, I don't deserve it."

When asked to what he attributes this continual growth, Pastor Hicks answered, "First, a man should know his calling. God called me to pastor, not be an evangelist."

The 55-year-old pastor continued, "Living a clean life and preaching God's Word are vital to a fruitful ministry. I don't think God will honor a man's prayers if he's a phony."

"I think a pastor should *know* his people, *love* his people and *use* them," he said thoughtfully. One of this pastor's goals is to "become all things to all men." In coming to know not only his

members but unchurched people throughout Dickson County, Hicks places great importance on talking to people about *their* interests. He daily tries to communicate with people on their level. "People are starving to death for love," said this compassionate pastor. "I never stand in the pulpit before my people without telling them I love them. And during the week I prove it." After sharing the plan of salvation with a Dickson County bootlegger Pastor Hicks said, "I've told you how to be saved. Now, it's up to you whether you choose to repent or perish. But remember this: regardless of your decision, I want to always be your friend." The bootlegger accepted the Lord.

Hicks also believes the members of the Dickson Church want to help him build a church in this rapidly expanding community. So he puts everyone to work and motivates them to strive for a level of maximum efficiency. For new believers this motivation is kindled in the new converts' classes. There were 30 who finished the two recent classes, one for ages 6-12 and the other for ages 13-adult.

As the sincere pastor continued, he convincingly said, "Little things make my ministry. I never park illegally at the hospital. And I'm careful how I conduct myself in the hospital."

Hicks is certain that *leading* his people is more effective than driving them. He also brags on them for doing good. "I compliment them from the pulpit," he said. "But I talk to them personally about things in their lives that need changing. I never

**At the request of CONTACT's staff, Pastor David Hicks came to the office to share what God is doing in the First Free Will Baptist Church, Dickson, Tennessee.**



mention from the pulpit specific things in their lives that I think need changing. There's a job for me, and there's a job for the Holy Spirit. There are too many people trying to do the job of the Holy Spirit. I don't put people down from the pulpit!"

Preaching the Word—not personal opinions—is one of the reasons people are coming to the Dickson Church, Hicks believes. He claims the promise that God's Word will not return to Him void. But he has no promise concerning his personal convictions. Hicks rejoices when believers come to him telling how the Holy Spirit is ministering the Word to their hearts and bringing conviction. But when the members tell their pastor what they're laying aside, he cautions, "Don't say a word. Rather than toot your horn, let people see the change in you."

We asked this zealous pastor if the church has a visitation program. We soon learned that he has a unique outreach ministry. Hicks has prepared over 100 3"x5" index cards on which are written names and addresses of unchurched people and delinquent members. "At your leisure," Hicks tells his people, "I want you to visit a family this week. Don't go into a home and jump on a family and tell them they're lost. They already know that. Be nice to them. Tell them the highlights of our church, and tell them we need them to help us." Hicks stresses to his people the importance of going out and winning the confidence and love of unchurched people. Each person who takes a card puts his name under the prospect's name and the date he visits.

"I tell our teenagers if they see young men with hair so long they can sit on it, invite them to church," Hicks said. "Tell them I'll love them. When a person gets right with the Lord, he'll straighten out his life. We let the Holy Spirit trim the hair."

Pastor Hicks plans picnics, hayrides and various activities for the youth. The young people play

(Please turn to page 6)



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## CARPENTER FOR CHRIST

(Cont. from page 5)

softball once a week. "Don't ever tell kids they have to come to church to play on our softball team," he warns his youth. "I'd better not hear tell of that. Love the young people, and they'll come to church." The young men of the church were recently guests at a father-son outing. The women sponsored a mother-daughter banquet.

Deacons in the First Church are making plans to take the senior members out to dinner one evening. Already the Woman's Auxiliary has honored this group with an evening meal and program. Pastor Hicks works at seeing that every age level receives the same amount of loving care, and he injects variety into the church life.

David Hicks is a man of exceptional vision. "We're planning like we're going to live a

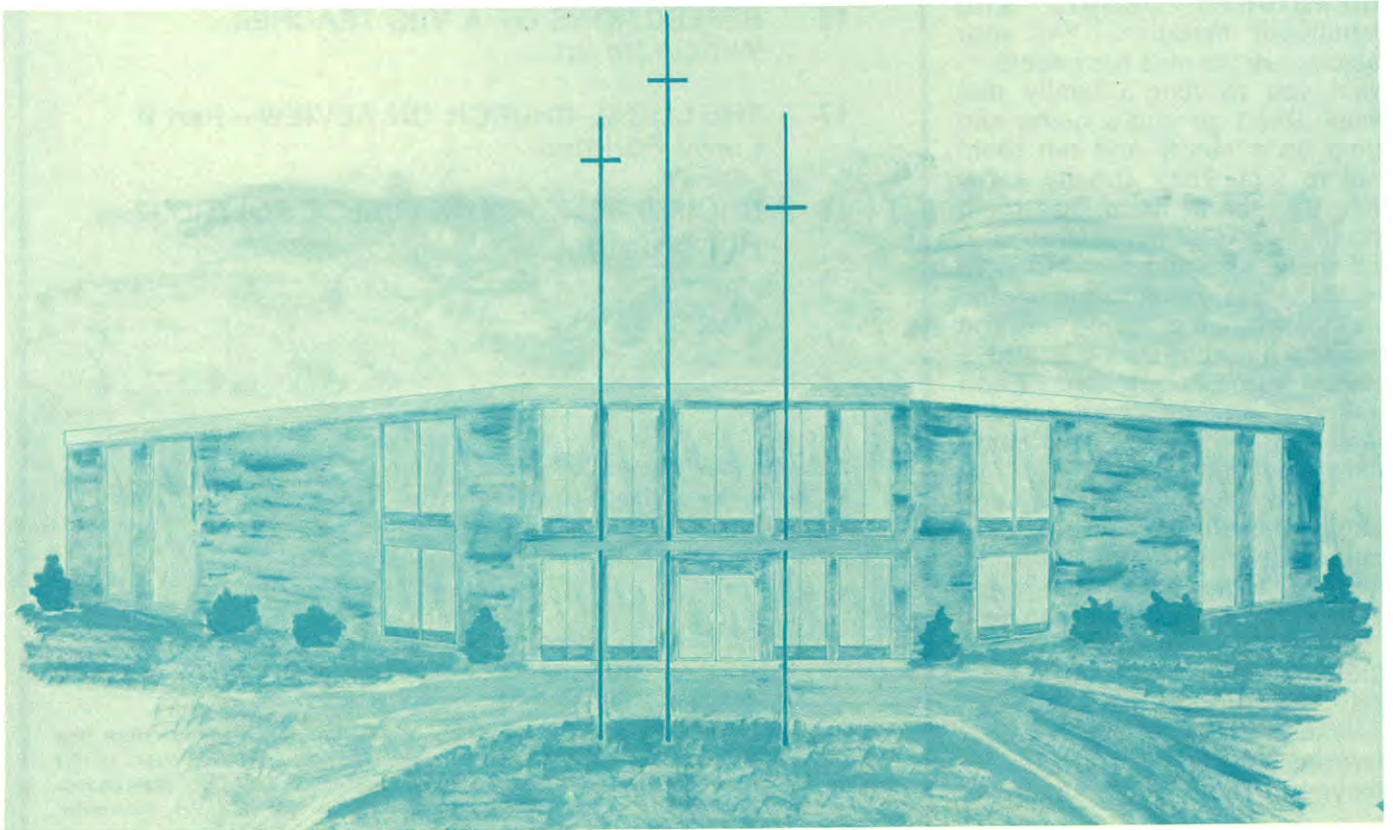
thousand years and trying to live like every day is the last," he said smilingly. Because the church building is not large enough to accommodate any more people, this former contractor has drawn plans for a building that will seat 1,000 people and is designed for use as a Christian Day School serving kindergartners through seniors. God has provided a choice 10-acre tract for the new building at half the cost for which the surrounding property is selling. Pastor Hicks will superintend construction of the building, saving the church at least \$100,000. Hicks designed the plans in such a way that sections of the plant will be added at varying intervals. He hopes the first unit will be under construction by late fall. The newly acquired site is adequate for the church's future expansion. It is ideally located on the edge of town, a town that is characterized by numerous new subdivisions.

This enthusiastic pastor has made preparation for some much-needed assistance in his rapidly

growing ministry. Prior to his heart attacks he had already begun training Roger Luther to become the church's first associate pastor. Luther was teaching one of the church's two new converts' classes. Pastor Hicks was taking him on visitation so he could learn the proper techniques of soul winning before ordination. Thus Luther just stepped in and shouldered the pastoral responsibilities during Hicks' illness.

David Hicks motivates and inspires his people by his own dynamic example. He challenges his people every time they come to church. And when he leaves the church building, he is one fine illustration of *setting the example*.

Backed solidly by the prayers and cooperation of his dedicated wife Ruth, David Hicks maintains an aggressive ministry that places soul-winning, honesty, love, shepherding and compassion at the very top of his priority list. △



ARCHITECTURAL DRAWING OF FIRST CHURCH, DICKSON, TENNESSEE



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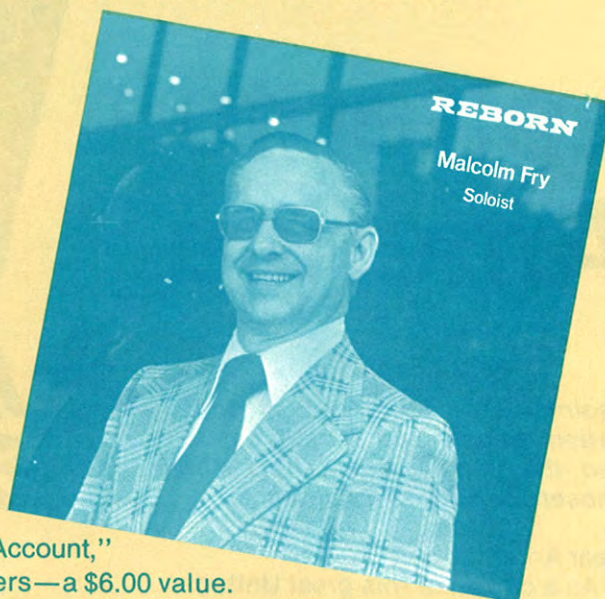
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# Letter to America

By Malcolm Fry

*Psalms 33:12 "Blessed is the nation whose God is the Lord; and the people whom he hath chosen for his own inheritance."*

Dear America:

As a citizen of this great United States, I proudly proclaim my loyalty to you. Born out of the sweat and blood of devoted countrymen, you stand tall among imprisoned nations as the symbol of freedom. Your lands stretch from sea to sea loudly proclaiming, "The Home of the Free!" To a troubled world your outstretched arms kindle a spark of hope. Wars have not conquered you; hate has not divided you; and communism will not hasten your destruction. Libraries are filled with the accounts of your heroes and their deeds. No doubt, you have saved the world from annihilation time and time again. Immigrants have kissed you. For you men have died. Women have prayed for you, and of God you have been blessed.

**ABOUT THE WRITER:** Dr. Fry directs the ministry of the Church Training Service Department for Free Will Baptists. The former home missionary is the author of several books, booklets and tracts, including "Precepts for Practice."



William Tyler Page wrote:

*I believe in the United States of America as a government of the people; whose just powers are derived from the consent of the governed; a democracy in a republic, a sovereign nation of many sovereign states; a perfect union one and inseparable; established upon those principles of freedom, equality, justice, and humanity for which American patriots sacrificed their lives and fortunes. I, therefore, believe it is my duty to my country to love it, to support its constitution, to obey its laws, to respect its flag, and to defend it against all enemies.*

I agree wholeheartedly with his words.

Your rolling prairies, thundering mountains, winding streams, fish filled lakes, dense forests, country towns and crowded cities paint a panorama of breathtaking beauty. A touch of glory is added by each.

I appreciate you, America. All my earthly possessions are derived from you. You have provided well for my parents and

myself. Your doctors brought me into this world; your hospitals nursed me to health; your fields have provided for me the best food; your schools have given me an education; your enterprises have offered me employment; and your churches have provided me spiritual direction. I promise that on election day I will go to the polls and cast my ballot for the man I feel will best represent me in your government. Through him I will have a voice in every decision made in this nation.

No other country can excel or equal you. Those who curse you are fools and will eventually be silenced. No other land in all the world has in so brief a history contributed so much and asked so little—only that we live together in peace and freedom. For you, America, today's freedom proudly stands on yesterday's sacrifice.

And though I don't agree with or understand all the things I see, I'm grateful that our nation is one of liberty.

I still believe in America, land of the free and of the brave.



I know that God has touched  
our land and His blessings  
to us gave.

I realize you are not perfect, but  
neither am I; and should we the  
citizens attain to perfection, you  
too will have no flaws. I stand at  
attention with tingling sensation  
every time your flag is raised.

*Sign of a nation great and strong  
Toward her people from foreign  
wrong;*

*Pride and glory and honor — all  
Live in the colors to stand  
or fall.*

Tears easily flow down my  
cheeks at the singing of your na-  
tional anthem. I appreciate you,  
America. You have given to me  
such grand opportunities. Thank  
you!

America, I hope you can  
understand what I am about to  
say. I do not mean to be  
contradictory, but I must be  
honest with you and myself. Even  
though I appreciate you and feel a  
great sense of loyalty to you, I  
must leave you. The slogan is so  
true, "America, Love It or Leave  
It." Your slogan forces me to  
leave you. You see, I am in love,  
America, but with another coun-  
try. The love for this other country  
is wooing me, and I will soon be  
saying good-bye. A visitor from a  
far away land has won my heart.  
He has returned to His homeland,  
but the love I have for Him and  
His country linger on in my heart.  
He has promised to return for me  
and to take me with Him. I expect  
Him any day now, and I dare not  
be untrue. Please try to under-  
stand. I hope that you will permit  
me to continue on in your lovely  
land until all arrangements are  
completed for my journey.

*Love not the world, neither  
the things that are in the world.  
If any man love the world, the  
love of the Father is not in him.  
For all that is in the world, the  
lust of the flesh, and the lust of  
the eyes, and the pride of life,  
is not of the Father, but is of  
the world. And the world  
passeth away, and the lust  
thereof: but he that doeth the  
will of God abideth for ever  
(1 John 2:15-17).*

Should I in the future have to  
make a hasty departure from your  
shores and not be permitted to  
say good-bye, I will say it now.  
Allow me with my good-bye to  
remind you of the words of the  
poet Alexis De Tocqueville:

**AMERICA'S GREATNESS**  
*I sought for the greatness and  
genius of America in her  
commodious harbors and her  
ample rivers, and it was not  
there.*

*I sought for the greatness and  
genius of America in her  
fertile fields and boundless  
forest, and it was not there.*

*I sought for the greatness and  
genius of America in her rich  
mines and her vast world  
commerce, and it was not  
there.*

*I sought for the greatness and  
genius of America in her public  
school system and her institu-  
tions of learning, and it was  
not there.*

*I sought for the greatness and  
genius of America in her  
democratic congress and her  
matchless constitution,  
and it was not there.*

*Not until I went into the churches  
of America and heard her  
pulpits flame with righteous-  
ness did I understand the  
secret of her genius and power.*

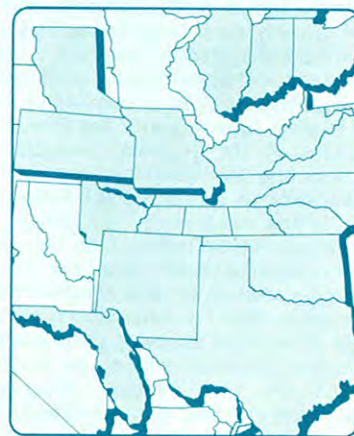
*America is great because  
America is good, and if  
America ever ceases to be  
good, America will cease to  
be great.*

Holy Writ pens it thusly, "Righ-  
teousness exalteth a nation: but  
sin is a reproach to any people"  
(Proverbs 14:34).

If our paths should ever cross  
down through the ages of  
eternity, I will have only memor-  
ies of appreciation for you. I hope  
my short stay here has been a  
profit to you. You have been  
great, but I must be leaving.

Good-bye, America, may God  
bless you. △

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## WOMEN STUDENTS SWELL NUMBER OF FWBBC'S CAMPUS RESIDENTS

NASHVILLE, TENN.— The increase in the number of dormitory women at Free Will Baptist Bible College has offset the decrease in the number of married students enrolled for the 1976 college year, according to Registrar Robert Picirilli. Women students have filled to capacity 3 campus dormitories. The College began its 35th year of providing a Bible-centered education for students from throughout the denomination by enrolling 543 students from 27 states and 3 foreign countries August 24-25. There were 541 enrollees for the 1975 fall semester.

Classes break down as follows: 188 freshmen, 142 sophomores, 99 juniors, 77 seniors and 37 special students.

The beginning of the new college year saw the addition of 2 new faculty members and 2 staff members with 2 others leaving the college family. The new workers are Mrs. Rachel Crawford, a registered nurse and pastor's wife of 31 years, who will serve as dean of women; her husband Robert, former pastor and Executive Secretary of the National Association, who is joining the public relations staff as an assistant to Director Paul Kettman; Mrs. Lillian Huffman, a native of Providence, Rhode Island, who has completed residence study toward her doctorate of education in general administration at the University of Northern Colorado and brings 18 years of teaching experience in public and Christian schools to her new position in the Teacher Education Department; and Mrs. Barbara Riddle, who holds a M.A. in physical education and another M.A. in special education from Tennessee Technological University and who will direct the women's physical education program on campus.

Mrs. Sarah Lacey Nicholas, who has been on the faculty since 1957, retired from active teaching. Dr. Douglas Simpson, who served on the faculty for 6 years, resigned to accept a position at Tennessee State University.

## FWBBC DEAN UNDERGOES HEART SURGERY

NASHVILLE, TENN.— Dr. Charles Thigpen, academic dean of Free Will Baptist Bible College, Nashville, is making satisfactory progress following heart surgery September 9. Doctors performed an arterial bypass on the main heart artery after the dean suffered two heart attacks, both described as "mild," on August 10 and 17.

School officials estimate that Thigpen, 50, will be out most of first semester, recuperating. His responsibilities have been temporarily shouldered by other administrators and teachers.



FREE WILL BAPTIST

**newsfront**

## HILLSDALE COLLEGE'S FALL ENROLLMENT SHOWS SLIGHT DECREASE

MOORE, OKLA.— The 183 students who began the 1976 fall semester at Hillsdale Free Will Baptist College August 23 were greeted by 5 new faculty and staff members. The total enrollment is down slightly from the fall semester of 1975 when 196 enrolled.

"This decrease, especially in freshmen, makes me concerned about pastors, parents and students who find vo-tech and state schools more attractive than their denominational schools—particularly when the same course work is available," President Bill Jones stressed.

The statistical breakdown shows the following numbers for each class: freshman, 75; sophomore, 56; junior, 22; senior, 17. Special students showed the greatest percentage of decrease with 9 enrolled.

New teachers include Derrell Clark, O. T. Dixon, Dorothy Harris and Geri Ann Ross. Mrs. Rita Jane Wilson is dean of women.

Clark, a Hillsdale graduate, will coach basketball and baseball, teach physical education and serve as acting dean of men. An ordained minister, he holds a B.A. in physical education and religion from Bethany Nazarene College.

Pastor of the First Free Will Baptist Church, Norman, Oklahoma, from 1967 until this past summer, Dixon has taught pulpit speech and social studies on a part-time basis at Hillsdale since 1971. He will teach Bible and education this year. His M.A. degree is from Oklahoma City University.

Mrs. Harris holds both B.A. and M.A. degrees from Central State University, Edmond, Oklahoma. She was director of the news bureau at Central State for 7 years and taught journalism part time at the college. She will teach journalism, business and psychology at Hillsdale. She will also edit *Insight* and help prepare promotional materials for the college.

A 1972 magna cum laude graduate of Hillsdale, Miss Ross also holds her master's degree from Central State. She will teach speech and social studies this fall.

As dean of women Mrs. Wilson will supervise the girls' dorm and counsel the women students. She formerly taught music in the Keota public schools for 6 years as well as private lessons for 10 years.

## KENTUCKY LAYMAN ENTERS MUSIC MINISTRY

BOWLING GREEN, KY.—Ralph Sturdivant, Christian businessman from Bowling Green, has acknowledged God's call to a ministry of singing.

In announcing his ministry, Ralph stated, "I do not consider myself to be an entertainer. My sole purpose is evangelism through song in a church atmosphere with special music for revivals, regular church services, special church events, conferences, etc. The selection of songs is carefully limited to those that deliver inspiration and a fundamental Bible message." Instrumentation is from a sound track.

Ralph with his wife Gloria and children Terry and Sherry are active charter members of the newly organized Trinity Free Will Baptist Church in Bowling Green. He does not make any charges for services because he believes God will provide as Christian people contribute to take care of expenses. The family travels in a mobile home, which is completely equipped, so that the church does not need to be inconvenienced for lodging or meals. Ralph may be contacted through Christian Witness, Inc., P.O. Box 121, Bowling Green, Kentucky 42101; telephone 502/842-9269.



STURDIVANT

*Magazines have a ministry . . .*





## MASSACHUSETTS CONGREGATION BUYS CHURCH BUILDING

NORTH CHELMSFORD, MASS.— The Randall Memorial Free Will Baptist Church held the first services in its recently purchased new church home August 8, 1976. There were 40 present for Sunday school with 60 in worship service and 63 in the evening services. The church relocated 8 miles from Billerica, where it began as a mission under the direction of Rev. Mack Owens.

Pastor Owens says that thus far the congregation has not lost any of its people as a result of the move. The new location will open up a wider ministry in the Greater Lowell area. The church now has bus ministries in the Lowell and Billerica areas. The members are contemplating buying a third bus in the near future.

Randall Memorial's new church plant was purchased from another Baptist church which relocated.



## ALABAMA CHURCH PASSES HALF CENTURY MARK

CORDOVA, ALA.— Fourteen charter members and 2 former pastors were among the crowd who helped the First Free Will Baptist Church of Cordova observe its 50th anniversary Sunday, August 22, 1976. The anniversary message was delivered by the Rev. S. T. Shoots of Colquitt, Georgia, who is the oldest, active former pastor.

The effectiveness of the church's outreach is not necessarily measured in

terms of time. However, since organization in July, 1926, the church has sent forth 11 ministers, 1 foreign missionary, 5 home missionaries, 8 ministers' wives, and 2 full-time Christian workers. Scores have also been saved as the result of the witness of this church. The church's organization followed a revival meeting conducted by the late Rev. J. B. Bloss. During that meeting over 450 people made professions of faith, and almost every church in Cordova received new members as a result of this evangelistic campaign. The First Free Will Baptist Church itself was organized with more than 100 charter members.

The original church plant was a frame building on First Street. The group worshiped in that building until 1954 when a new brick structure was built across the street from the first church building. In 1975 an educational unit was completed and gave the church access to a fellowship hall, kitchen, rest rooms, pastor's study and 14 additional classrooms. At the present time the church is without a pastor.

## SPECIAL DAY AT OHIO CHURCH ATTRACTS PEOPLE FROM 9 STATES

WHEELERSBURG, OHIO— Representatives from 9 states were among the 1,380 persons attending the fourth annual Evangelistic Outreach fellowship and homecoming sponsored at Union Free Will Baptist Church near here Sunday, July 18. This attendance set a new record for the 119-year-old congregation.

In anticipation of the overflow crowd Pastor Calvin Evans had arranged for simultaneous services to be held in the church sanctuary and in a large tent with a capacity of 700, which was erected at the rear of the church building. The Rev. Jesse Fyffe of Ashland, Kentucky, and the Rev. Homer Willis of Nashville, Tennessee, were the morning speakers.

Pastor Evans also serves as director of Evangelistic Outreach, Inc. which ministers through a weekly radio-television outreach over stations in several states. He is editor of a bimonthly publication, *Evangelistic Outreach*.

## SECOND PASTORS AND WORKERS CONFERENCE SET AT KINSTON

KINSTON, N.C.— The second Free Will Baptist Pastors and Workers Conference is scheduled November 22-24, 1976, at the Bethel Free Will Baptist Church in Kinston.

Speakers for this pre-Thanksgiving conference include Rev. Gordon Sebastian, Free Will Baptist pastor, Wilson, North Carolina; Rev. Bob Shockey, Home Missions director, Nashville, Tennessee; Evangelist Bobby Jackson, Greenville, North Carolina; Dr. B. R. Lakin, evangelist, Titusville, Florida; Dr. Tom Malone, pastor-evangelist, Pontiac, Michigan; Dr. Jim Vineyard, bus minister, Hammond, Indiana; and Gordon Luff, Lynchburg, Virginia.

Richard Kennedy, publicity chairman, states, "The purpose of this meeting is to stir and motivate God's people to soul winning and building great churches." Registration for the conference is \$5 per person or \$50 for a group of 10 or more from one church.

For further details or information on housing, write Pastors and Workers Conference, P.O. Box 3427, Kinston, North Carolina 28541.

## VIRGINIA MISSION ORGANIZED INTO CHURCH

BEDFORD, VA.— The First Free Will Baptist Church of Bedford was officially organized with 28 charter members July 10 at a meeting of the New River Quarterly Conference of Maryland.

Pastor William Steele held the first services on February 15 with 12 present. On Sunday, August 8, there were 55 in services. Since beginning the mission, Brother Steele reports there have been 21 baptisms. The group is continuing to meet

in the Odd Fellows Hall, 866 East Main Street in Bedford.

The congregation has purchased a choice piece of property in Bedford and will begin building a church plant as soon as a \$4,000 indebtedness is removed from the property. Brother Steele reports this mission endeavor was begun without the sponsorship of any district, state or national home missions board.



## newsfront

(continued)

### PRINCIPALS' CONFERENCE SETS FALL PROGRAM

NASHVILLE, TENN. — The annual Principals' Conference of the Fellowship of Free Will Baptist Christian Day Schools is scheduled for November 2, 3, and 4, according to President Lorenza Stox. The group will meet on Free Will Baptist Bible College campus from 2:30-5:00 p.m. on Tuesday and Wednesday, November 2 and 3, in conjunction with the fall Missionary Conference. The final session on Thursday, November 4, will convene at 8:30 a.m.

The program for this conference will consist of seminars on the following topics: financing the Christian school program, selecting textbooks and curriculum for the Christian school, standards in the Christian school, teachers' relationships to the school and the church, and organizations which can help Christian schools. Speakers will include members of the organization and other Free Will Baptist educators.

Officers for the fellowship in addition to President Stox are Vice-president Milton Windham, Secretary Horace Gaskins and Treasurer Steve Ange. Members of the organization represent 25 Free Will Baptist Christian day schools.

### ARKANSAS MINISTER COMPLETES LIFE'S JOURNEY

MOUNTAIN HOME, ARK.— For over 70 years Carl Davis served the Lord. For 62 of those years he was an ordained Free Will Baptist minister, being one of the last of the old circuit riders. In his early ministry he visited his churches once each month, riding to his appointments on horseback. On May 23, 1976, he went to be with the Lord at the age of 90.

Brother Davis preached his last sermon May 9, 1976, at the Wake Cemetery, where he had also preached his first sermon. One of his life's goals was to average preaching one sermon each day for the year and for 3 years fell short of his goal by only 2, preaching over 350 sermons during each of those 3 years. Prolonged poor health had hindered his recent ministry on a regular basis.

The funeral was conducted at his home church, Davis Chapel Free Will Baptist Church in the Center Point community, with Rev. Owen Harvell officiating.

### ALABAMA CHURCH EXPANDING FACILITIES

CENTER POINT, ALA.— Construction on a new 370-seat auditorium for the Center Point Free Will Baptist Church is underway. The new building is situated to the front of the previous structure and will be connected by a walkway. The former auditorium will be utilized for classroom space. The church property consists of 1 1/2 acres.

According to Pastor Glenn Hood, who has served with the congregation for 5 years, the cost of this project is being financed through a \$123,000 bond program. It will provide space for a pastor's study, nursery and 2 classrooms. Completion date for the new structure is not yet definite.

The church has an average Sunday school attendance in the mid-50's. During the Spring Sunday School Enlargement Campaign attendance averaged 68.

### MISSION CHURCH STARTED IN ROME, GEORGIA

ROME, GA.— The Reverend Thomas Coxwell, a former Alabama pastor, has started a new Free Will Baptist mission in the north Georgia town of Rome. First services were held the third Sunday of July, and attendance has been averaging 10. The group meets in a rented building on Burnett Ferry Road.

Brother Coxwell states one of the needs at this time is for dedicated lay couples to move to Rome to assist in the work. Rome offers a real opportunity for Free Will Baptists to build a church in this city of approximately 35,000 population. The nearest Free Will Baptist church in north-west Georgia is at Dalton, approximately 50 miles away.

Readers who have friends or relatives in the Rome area who could be potential prospects for this new mission are asked to contact Brother Coxwell at 505 Cleveland, Rome, Georgia 30161.

### FLORIDA CHURCH TO BUILD NEW AUDITORIUM

PANAMA CITY, FLA.— Pastor Milton Gann states that construction will soon start on a new auditorium for the First Free Will Baptist Church of Panama. The new brick structure will seat 275 people. All bonds for financing have been placed.

The new building will contain over 2,800 square feet of floor space and in addition to the auditorium will provide 2 rest rooms, offices for the pastor, youth and music directors, a nursery and a fellowship area. The structure will be centrally heated and cooled.

The new auditorium will be adjacent to present facilities and will be connected by a breezeway. The present facilities will become a youth fellowship hall. Pastor Gann states that the congregation hopes that in the future a day-care center will be a part of the expansion program.



## Currently . . .

By  
**EUGENE WORKMAN**  
Administrative Editor

Pastor Donald Seay, Arcadia FWB Church, Arcadia, South Carolina, reports 59 new members received during the past church year. Inasmuch as the average Free Will Baptist church only received 2 1/3 members in 1975, it is encouraging to hear of this church's progress. Arcadia Church, of which David Carter serves as associate pastor, also reports 150 tithers.

Churches starting kindergarten ministries this year include Northwest Church, Oklahoma City, which began Northwest Christian Academy on September 7; and Grace Church, Rocky Mount, North Carolina, who got the go-ahead for state licensing in time to begin the school year September 7 also. James Murray pastors Northwest Church, and Robert Durham pastors Grace Church.

The First FWB Church, Kankakee, Illinois, topped the 50 mark in attendance August 1 when 51 were present for Sunday school. Pastor John Hollis and his congregation had set a goal of 50 for several weeks before reaching it. The average attendance for July was 44. These numbers represent progress in this mission work. The group is seeking a permanent meeting place or land on which to build.

Grant Avenue FWB Church, Springfield, Missouri, will celebrate its 20th anniversary with special services October 16 and 17. Ted Wilbanks pastors.

On August 15 the Rev. Bobby Glenn Smith observed his first anniversary as pastor of College Lakes FWB Church, Fayetteville, North Carolina. Among the accomplishments noted for the first year were 50 first-time decisions, 37 baptisms, 43 new members, a high attendance of 203 in worship service, opening of day-care center, completion of church's bond program, pay off of other financial obligations—some in advance of their due dates, and inclusion of missions and education in the church budget.

Helping to meet the needs of fellow believers is often a neglected aspect of a church's ministry, but not so with the Grace FWB Church, Rocky Mount, North Carolina. They are hosting a concert of Christian music in an effort to raise a love offering for Susan Hall Lutterlow, who sings with her parents Jerry and Sara Hall and her 16-year-old twin brothers as a part of the Hall Family Gospel Singers of Charleston, South Carolina. Susan is now being treated for leukemia at the National Institute of Health in Bethesda, Maryland.



The Halls have already lost 3 children because of this disease. **Pastor Robert Durham** and **assistant Billy Keith** are promoting this concert.

A recent Sunday school attendance contest between the **Trinity Hill FWB Church, Nebo, North Carolina**, and the **Rocky Pass FWB Church, Marion**, resulted in record monthly averages for both churches. Trinity Hill had an all-time high attendance of 223 with an average for the month of 168, the best in the church's history. At Rocky Pass the monthly average was 244, also the church's highest monthly average and an increase of 42 over a year ago. **Carl Rolland** pastors Trinity Hill, and **A. C. Truluck** pastors Rocky Pass.

Reports of first-time decisions as a result of vacation Bible schools have been shared by 2 churches. At the **Rocky Pass Church**, where attendance averaged 138, 16 young people made professions of faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, according to Pastor Truluck. **Woodbine FWB Church, Nashville, Tennessee**, had 25 young people saved as a result of its Bible school. The enrollment high was 260, according to **Mrs. Debbie Lynn**, who directed. **Elro Driggers** pastors.

Dedication services for the new church plant at **Fawn Grove FWB Church, Dorsey, Mississippi**, was an event July 18, 1976. The construction on the new building began in midsummer 1975, and the first services were held in December. However, dedication services were delayed until summer. The church was organized in 1933 under the leadership of the late Rev. James Haas, who served as the first pastor. The **Rev. James V. Mills** is currently pastor.

The congregation of the **Bessemer City FWB Church, Bessemer City, North Carolina**, is seeking to give its pastor, **D. L. Whaley**, a unique gift for his 63rd birthday on November 7—a debt-free title to their church property. In April the church established a Miracle Fund for the purpose of paying off the \$19,000 indebtedness before the dedication of their church property, which is set for Pastor Whaley's birth date.

**Editor Bobby Shephard** and the staff of the **Old Mount Zion Newsletter**, a publication of the Old Mount Zion Association of Free Will Baptists in Arkansas, are to be commended for the well-done news-filled publication. With 25 churches in the association, the bimonthly newsletter shares news items from these churches as well as events that would be of interest to the entire association. It is perhaps the best associational news publication which comes to my desk.

At the national meeting in Tulsa this past July, Congressman John Conlan urged Christians to speak out on community and state affairs which are contrary to Christian principles. **Pastor Bobby Parker** is urging the congregation of **Howard Grove FWB Church, Cottonwood, Alabama**, to do that very thing in connection with the attempt by persons in Houston County to push through the



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

### COOPERATIVE PLAN OF SUPPORT

August, 1976

#### RECEIPTS:

State	August '76 Co-op	August '76 Design.	Year to Date
Alabama	\$ 109.99	\$ (98.09)	\$ 1,210.62
Arizona	...	...	644.43
Arkansas	2,265.31	...	16,120.90
California	717.24	...	6,077.78
Florida	944.03	...	9,974.34
Georgia	...	...	1,819.55
Idaho	78.19	...	232.27
Illinois	1,341.58	...	9,134.84
Indiana	50.00	...	238.60
Iowa	248.26	...	1,514.88
Kansas	105.31	...	1,977.49
Maryland	30.00	...	750.46
Michigan	...	...	95.40
Mississippi	22.68	...	386.47
Missouri	3,678.89	(3,678.89)	28,762.59
New Mexico	...	...	131.66
North Carolina	175.00	(50.00)	1,216.81
Northeast Assoc.	...	...	193.90
Northwest Assoc.	...	...	440.09
Ohio	10.00	...	9,947.83
Oklahoma	5,470.95	(5,142.00)	46,558.55
Tennessee	984.83	...	7,065.62
Texas	25.00	...	2,085.52
Virginia	...	...	233.57
Virgin Islands	64.00	...	560.00
<b>Totals</b>	<b>\$16,321.26</b>	<b>\$17,089.00</b>	<b>\$147,374.17</b>

#### DISBURSEMENTS:

Executive Office	\$ 6,397.82	\$(1,169.97)	\$ 5,801.62	\$ 50,956.88
Foreign Missions	3,443.19	(2,887.86)	3,509.23	31,692.22
Bible College	2,149.32	(1,598.48)	2,615.92	20,788.57
Home Missions	1,924.00	(1,533.32)	2,121.94	18,155.64
Church Training Ser.	1,052.19	(748.52)	1,293.81	10,848.86
Retirement & Ins.	900.39	(657.45)	1,161.49	9,008.57
Layman's Board	360.39	(289.53)	406.52	3,536.14
Commission on Theological Liberalism	93.96	(83.85)	90.82	848.52
Miscellaneous	...	...	87.65	1,538.77
<b>Totals</b>	<b>\$16,321.26</b>	<b>\$17,089.00</b>	<b>\$147,374.17</b>	

legalization of dog racing to finance the public school system. This is another example of the fact that the end result does not necessarily justify the means of reaching it.

Another church whose members are heeding Mr. Conlan's advice is the **Bear Point FWB Church, Sesser, Illinois**. **James O'Dell** is pastor. Several members helped in circulating petitions opposing unlimited liquor licensing in Sesser. In early July the city council acted favorably in voting to retain the present restrictions

concerning the number of liquor licenses that could be issued within the city limits.

Recent newcomers to **CONTACT's** Church Family Plan are the **Faith FWB Church, Baton Rouge, Louisiana**, **Paul Daniels** pastor and **Arrington Heights FWB Church, Lexington, North Carolina**, **J. P. Langley** pastor.

Most of the information for this column is gleaned from church bulletins, newsletters and other published sources. Put me on your mailing list. △



Highlights of each national meeting are the sermons that are shared with Free Will Baptist conventioners. Jack Williams reports on each of the 1976 worship services of the 40th annual session held July 11-15 in Tulsa, Oklahoma.

## DIGGING INTO THE WORD BICENTENNIAL STYLE

### **Sunday Morning: PREACHING ON THE HOusetop**

"Preaching on the housetop" is almost what quite literally took place on Sunday morning in Tulsa. More than 900 early arrivers rode the elevators to the Mayo Hotel's 16th floor where they heard Oklahoma's Free Will Baptist Pastor-at-Large John West deliver a message titled "Anchored Till Morning."

Worshippers sat under the Crystal Ballroom's 4 exquisite chandeliers surrounded by golden harps on the walls and pairs of golden-winged dragons perched on the roof crossbeams. They heard Reverend West brief them on what America wants, what America has and what America needs as he launched his sermon. West, who edits the widely read *Optimism* from his Tulsa home, was calm, deliberate and systematic in his development.

The congregation warmed gradually to the speaker as he cited, "When the world is at its worst, the church must be at its best." Warning that there is no life without storms and that "we must have something to keep us from drifting," West offered the 4 anchors to parallel Acts 27:21-29: anchored in Christ, anchored in the church, anchored in the Bible, anchored in service.

Acknowledging that churches have tax-exempt status, the veteran preacher startled his audience with a piercing conclusion: "I

visit some churches that I think should pay taxes . . . since they're not doing any teaching!"

### **Sunday Night: EVANGELIST IN THE ARENA**

Nearly 4,300 Free Will Baptists poured through the turnstiles in Tulsa's Assembly Center Arena to hear South Carolina based evangelist Robert Shelton address the 1976 National Youth Conference. The well-behaved crowd was put through its paces by music director Blaine Hughes. A 4-man color guard marched smartly down the arena's length to begin the huge rally; a lone trumpeter sounded out "The Star Spangled Banner."

Evangelist Shelton, a mellow-voiced speaker, climaxed the 2-hour service with an impassioned 45-minute sermon from Luke 19:11-13. He advised that purity and the second advent were linked inseparably. He decried loose morals in political circles and called the youth of the denomination to the Bible as they faced "the contradictions of life." Shelton spoke sternly on the necessity of selective TV viewing. He regretted that the cults and the communist ideologies seemed to elicit more actual dedication from youth than did the Church for Christ.

The smooth speechmaker conversed warmly on the American churches' vision of evangelism. He submitted that probably no more than 5 percent of the nation's population was genuinely Christian. He further

concluded that had it not been for 3 things, wrath would already have fallen on America. The 3 wrath-averting remedies were that America still has a base of born again believers, that America is concerned with evangelism, and that America cares for the Jews.

Even though his message centered on "doing business" for God in service, Shelton made several references to restraining himself from preaching on eschatology. He related that during the past 2 years fully 75 percent of his preaching has been on prophecy or eschatology.

Rounding out the evening with a flair, Dr. Malcolm Fry presented the National Home Missions Department with a gigantic (literally) check for almost \$9,000 designated as "Cash for Cajun Country." The 1975-76 Church Training Service project was geared to assist home missionary Larry Russell and the work in Baton Rouge, Louisiana.

The mass Oklahoma Youth Choir and 4 other musical teams shared hymns of praise.

### **Monday Night: THE KEYNOTE SERVICE**

On toward 8:45 Monday evening, Wade Jernigan wrapped the prophet's mantle around his shoulders and began thumping the pulpit in dead earnest. The conservatively attired president of California Christian College preached to the 4,635 present in Tulsa's arena on "The Foundation of Freedom."



Jernigan, 48-year-old North Carolina native, stormed on stage, charging that most who use the term "freedom" know neither "what price freedom nor with what responsibility freedom." He found an eager audience when he swung at the Charismatic emphasis on experience and feeling as opposed to written scriptural admonition. Jernigan dramatically underlined his statement, "There can be no freedom where there are no restraints." Freedom and responsibility are coextensive.

Earlier, a waltz of state flags accented the widespread Free Will Baptist influence in the United States as state representatives hoisted their colors to the stage area already ablaze in crimson. Clerk Waldo Young called the 40th annual session to order and introduced Moderator J. D. O'Donnell. After O'Donnell smiled, "I'm glad to be a Christian denominated Free Will Baptist," he presented Tulsa Mayor Robert LaFortune, who officially welcomed the National Association to the city. LaFortune painted a verbal picture of Tulsa's economic versatility but concluded his remarks pointing up the importance of spiritual values to the American culture.

#### **Tuesday Night: "I LOVE AMERICA"**

More than 4,300 delegates and visitors shouted encouraging "amens" as the Free Will Baptist Bible College Ensemble sang a half-hour "I Love America" patriotic musical. The vocal worship prelude overcame a tape disorder and swept the worshipers into the evening's activities.

Recognition was given to the Gideon's Army project. Gifts exceeding \$55,000 have been accumulated in an effort to pay off the National Offices Building indebtedness. Project director J. D. O'Donnell reported that although the full goal of \$150,000 was not reached, the funds received thus far have shortened by 3 years the monthly obligations on that property.

Then 45-year-old Arizona Congressman John Conlan addressed the gathering, continuing his remarks begun earlier that evening in the Pastors' Dinner. "The Christians are starting to wake up and come out of the political woodwork," he said. "You can't live the Christian life in a vacuum." Pushing his point, Conlan verbalized, "The 2 greatest untold stories today are the rise of Christian bookstores and the rise of Christian radio stations."

The slender official slammed communism, socialism and humanism. He gave his personal testimony, the story of an angry young intellectual who escaped the agnostic grip 25-years ago through a dormitory Bible study. The entire delegation rose in a standing ovation to Conlan's message. W. S. Mooneyham, president of World Vision, was called to the platform to give a special prayer for America in this crucial election year.

#### **Wednesday Night: 5,700 IN MISSIONARY SERVICE**

The largest crowd on record attended the Wednesday evening Missionary Service in Tulsa. The 5,739 Free Will Baptists circled the arena platform to hear Robert Shockey, National Home Missions director, "Proclaim Christ's Freedom." Preceding Shockey's discourse, his associate Roy Thomas spotlighted the denomination's home missionary force. Across the arena Don Robirds, director of communications for Foreign Missions, introduced the foreign missionary laborers.

It was evident that Bob Shockey retained his Kentucky enthusiasm as he drew an echo of amens and hallelujahs during his Bible-spanning, topical sermon. Speaking from a springboard in Luke 4, Shockey pieced together the American wars, the Old Testament Year of Jubilee and his personal testimony of conversion. He summoned a word picture of Calvary to tell the audience, "Because of the cross God was satisfied; Jesus was crucified; and I was justified." As he

hovered near his conclusion, the mountain preacher-turned-national executive erupted, "The darkest day in human history... the day Jesus died." Bob then took Jesus' "It is finished" statement, hurled it beyond the universe and beat on the eastern gate of Heaven with it. More than 150 filled the long altar to make varied commitments.

The Hillsdale College Choir and soloist Blaine Hughes accented the mood of consecration.

#### **Thursday Morning: THE LAST SERMON**

Elizabethton, Tennessee, pastor Winford Floyd admitted to some anxious moments during the other worship services this week fearing the other speakers would "say it all" before his chance came. Floyd spoke to the delegation just prior to the final business session.

In a fresh, crisp delivery Floyd blasted denominational legalists who harassed those disagreeing with them. "We are not under obligation to submit ourselves to their demands," rang Floyd. "A mature Christian voluntarily relinquishes personal freedom on occasion to help a weaker brother."

Driving home his theme, "The Liberated Christian," he pointed an accusing finger at 3 errors regarding law and salvation. The first error is legalism which propagates a salvation by lawkeeping rigidity. This error is refuted by the book of Romans. The second error, Antinomianism (lawlessness), advocates an "anything goes" philosophy and is dealt a death blow by the book of James. Likewise, "Galatianism" (saved by grace, kept by works) is denounced by Paul in Galatians.

The liberated Christian is to serve God, not because of fear, but because of gratitude and love for God. How should liberated Christians conduct themselves? Not by signing a list of agreements, cited Floyd, but by signing the New Covenant. "If grace doesn't give you a high standard of living, a legalistic preacher in the pulpit never will." △





## OUR WOMEN SPEAK

# Reflections of a VBS Teacher

By Wincie Smith

My body aches; my feet hurt; my head is bursting. But my heart is full of overflowing, and my soul is rejoicing! Why? Our church just finished a wonderful week of Bible school.

What a privilege it is to see young eyes and tender hearts brighten at the sound of our precious Lord's name! And what a joy I experience knowing that in some cases I am the first one to tell them of the wonderful Savior.

Oh yes, there's confusion and very often bedlam. But through all that noise runs a sweet chord of love that binds and unites each one in an unspeakable harmony. I believe that harmony is beautiful music to God's ears.

There's a sweet spirit that abides in Bible school through all the noise, that lives in spite of the troublemakers, that survives even though we're off schedule and can't catch up and that endures even on the day we run out of refreshments.

Why? It is because the harmony of everyone working toward the common goal of winning souls for Jesus vastly exceeds the tiredness and craziness. It's like oil on a rusty machine: it smoothes out the movements.

In my opinion, there is no higher calling than that of teaching children. Yes, I believe it is a calling. Only Jesus can give the grace and the patience that it takes to teach them. It was Jesus Himself who said, "Suffer the little children to come unto me..."

It's easy to love the loveable ones, but it takes the love of Jesus and the grace only He can give to love the unloveable ones. Children I hardly know at the first of the week often become "my kids" by the end of the week.

Yes, I'm worn-out; my house is a wreck; and my washing is waiting. But the mystery of it all is that those urgencies diminish when I hear one little child whisper, "I love you, Teacher."

Tears well in my eyes; my throat goes dry; I look in that child's eyes—and all I see is Jesus.

*Children here, children there—  
There must be children  
everywhere!*

*I look in the corner,  
and there sits one.  
I try to grab him,  
and he bites my thumb.*

*"Why did I do this?"  
I hear my voice cry,  
And just about then  
He pokes me in the eye.*

*My grace is sufficient says  
the Lord in His Word,  
But after three days I ask,  
"Are you sure?"*

*Then on the fourth day  
I draw a long sigh.  
If tomorrow weren't Friday,  
I think I would die.*

*Then on the last day  
My tired heart tingles  
When I'm given some flowers  
from one of the angels.*

*A hug and a kiss she gives  
with a smile,  
And I'm sure that I've walked  
at least 100 miles.*

*I'm glad that the Lord allows  
me to teach,  
And I'm glad that all these  
children we reach.*

*Teaching's a blessing  
of this I am sure,  
But, man, I'm glad VBS  
only comes once a year!*

**ABOUT THE WRITER:** Mrs. Smith is a Texas homemaker, who is active as a Sunday school teacher in the First Free Will Baptist Church, Garland. △

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## CHRISTIAN DOCTRINE

# The Local Church on Review

### PART II

By Leroy Forlines

The type church government that has been traditionally practiced by Baptist groups is called Baptist Church Government. The stress is on local autonomy which means that a church is a self-governing body. The autonomy of the local church is to be safeguarded when churches go together to form associations. The associations do not interfere with the internal affairs of the local church. Within the local church itself the authority does not rest in the pastor or board but in the congregation. For this reason it is called Congregational Church Government.

Those who believe in Baptist Church Government believe the New Testament supports such a view of church government. The New Testament church was a self-governing body. Each church elected its own officers (Acts 6:1-6). Each church elected its own delegates and representatives (Acts 15:1, 2, 22; I Corinthians 16:1-3). The power to discipline members belonged to each church (Matthew 18:15-17; I Corinthians 5:13; and II Thessalonians 3:6, 14, 15). It is true that Paul made recommendations regarding discipline, but the action was left up to the church. The authority of the pastors was such according to Peter that they were not "lords over God's heritage" (I Peter 5:3). Even Paul who had apostolic authority said, "Not for that we have dominion over your

faith, but are helpers of your joy: for by faith ye stand" (II Corinthians 1:24).

Some have felt that the Jerusalem Council in Acts 15, which dealt with whether circumcision was required for salvation, was an example of authority over local churches. However, an examination of the facts proves otherwise. The church at Jerusalem was chosen to deal with the problem, not because Jerusalem was the seat of authority for churches, but because it was the source from which the false teachers had come (Acts 15:1, 24). The relationship between the church at Antioch and Jerusalem was endangered and needed to be settled. The church at Antioch sent representatives to go with Paul and Barnabas to Jerusalem (Acts 15:2). It is true that the apostles were in Jerusalem, but the matter was heard and decided on by the whole church (Acts 15:4, 6, 22). There was no organizational relationship that existed between the church at Jerusalem and the other churches. The church at Jerusalem was not dealing with a problem in another church. Rather, they were dealing with a problem that claimed to have its origin in Jerusalem. The report that went out disclaimed any authorization of the teaching that circumcision was required for salvation (Acts 15:22-29). There is no interference in the self-rule of other churches by the Jerusalem Council.

The important question is this: Are we bound by the example of

the New Testament? Certainly, we are not obligated to do something just because the early church did it. However, it is believed that the autonomy of the local church is based on some principles that must be maintained. Christ is the head of the church (Ephesians 1:22). Every believer has direct access to God through Christ (I Timothy 2:5). The believer must be left free to fulfill his responsibility to God in making decisions and obeying God (Romans 14:5, 12). It is believed that to grant authority to higher bodies over the church interferes with this liberty and responsibility of the believer before God. When the authority of the church rests in the congregation, this preserves the rights of individual believers before God. We do not have to duplicate the exact pattern in detail of the early church, but we must maintain the principles it maintained.

Baptistic Church Government is not a pattern or system of church government. It is a principle of church government. It rests on the principle of the rights and the responsibilities of the individual before God. This principle is best preserved in a group setting when the authority rests with the congregation. △

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## 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

## ALABAMA

Johnny Sexton to Cooper Church, Hamilton from Spring Hill Church, Gordon

## ARIZONA

Mark Vandivort to Free Will Baptist Mission, Flagstaff from Columbia Church, Columbia, Missouri

## ARKANSAS

James Spears to Mt. Zion Church, Hindsville from First Church, Fayetteville

Ernest Johnson to First Church, Fayetteville from Mt. Zion Church, Hindsville

Earl Dean Morris to Hope Church, Fayetteville from Christian Home Church, Hindsville

Gary Thomas to First Church, Star City from assistant pastorship, Cavanaugh Church, Fort Smith

Early White to Mt. Pleasant Church, Hamburg from Trinity Church, Phoenix, Arizona

Raymond Dees to New Hope Church, New Hope

Richard Robinson to First Church, Corning

Henry Brown to Booneville Church, Booneville from Oliver Springs Church, Van Buren

## FLORIDA

Jim Mullen to Piney Grove Church, Chipley from pastoral assistant, Faith Church, Goldsboro, North Carolina

## ILLINOIS

Doyle Pruitt to Alexander Church, Olive Branch from East Sweetwater Church, Sweetwater, Tennessee

## MARYLAND

Mac McMillan to Mt. Calvary Church, Perryman

Cecil C. Presley to Welcome Home Church, Bel Air from Lake Park Church, Richlands, Virginia

## MISSOURI

James Davis to First Church, Monett from Franklin Church, Franklin, Tennessee

Kent Tallent to Columbia Church, Columbia from Hazel Creek Church, Kirksville

## MISSISSIPPI

Dwight Fletcher to Fellowship Church, Richton from Manchester Church, Manchester, Tennessee

## NORTH CAROLINA

A.C. Morgan to Sandy Acres Church, Columbia from Faith Church, Washington

Earl Hanna to Trinity Church, La Grange from Community Church, Hillsboro, Tennessee

Earl Bittle to Homer's Chapel, Black Mountain from Boger City Church, Boger City

## OKLAHOMA

Doyle Hood to Hilltop Church, Wewoka

Ed Beaver to 5th Street Church, Okemah

Ed Hollie to Hillcrest Church, Wagoner

## SOUTH CAROLINA

Mike Tart to Bay Branch Church, Timmonsville from Kendale Acres Church, Sanford, North Carolina

## TENNESSEE

Herman Pannell to Calvary Church, Nashville

Bob Edmonson to Manchester Church, Manchester

Jonathan Thigpen to First Church, Hixson

## VIRGINIA

Jack Stallings to Collinswood Church, Portsmouth from Martin Hill Church, Booneville, Mississippi

## OTHER PERSONNEL

## ARKANSAS

Bob Followwill to North Crossett Church, Crossett as Director of Music from Minister of Music and Visitation at Capitol Hill Church, Oklahoma City, Oklahoma

## NORTH CAROLINA

J. E. Windom to principalship of Mount Calvary Christian Academy, Hookerton from principalship, Bethany Christian School, Norfolk, Virginia

Jim Marcum to pastoral assistant, Faith Church, Goldsboro from pastorship, Trinity Church, La Grange

## OKLAHOMA

Howard Gwartney to Capitol Hill Church, Oklahoma City as minister of music and youth from pastoral assistant, Northwest Church, Oklahoma City



# Should Religion Influence Politics?

By Rufus Coffey  
Executive Secretary

The current political campaign, which normally precedes the district, state and national elections November 2, provokes some important questions about the relationship between politics and religion. Particularly since one of the major presidential candidates has been more outspoken about his Christian profession of faith, sincere Christians are discussing religion and politics more than in previous elections. Therefore, it is important to consider carefully if Christians should vote only for Christians or if there are any other factors to consider. Some Christians are asking if it really matters if we participate in the democratic process by supporting a candidate and voting. If so, on what basis or to what extent should Christians become involved in



politics?

It is not my purpose to endorse any candidate or suggest even remotely for whom any reader should vote in the forthcoming election. Rather it is my purpose to propose certain principles for Christians to consider in any election. A Christian must always be guided by **principles** rather than personalities or parties.

### PRINCIPLES, NOT PERSONALITIES OR PARTIES

First, believers should recognize that according to Romans 13:1-7, government was instituted by God for the welfare of mankind. The basic design of government is to control the behavior of the members of society. It is a means of resolving conflicts between individuals and groups which stem from the natural sinful state of man.

Government leaders are chosen to protect the rights of all citizens as a whole, promote justice, preserve freedom, enact just laws and combat evil by penalizing those who violate their privileges.

Secondly, God is the Lord of nations. In His sovereign will God superintends the affairs of nations and selects various kinds of men to accomplish His purposes. In Daniel 4:17 we read that God wants us to know that He rules the kingdom of men, giving it to whomever He wills and setting up over it the lowest of men.

But another factor, which is even more significant for Christians to realize, is that God uses earthly or natural causes to accomplish His will on earth. In His providence God works out His purposes through human instrumentality. This is where we as believers fit into the plan of God. Elections are not left to God alone. He intends that man become involved in the process of choosing government leaders. The process of selecting government officials who are responsible for the decisions relating to the rules upon which society is governed is called

*politics*. Therefore, in spite of many negative connotations that have come to be associated with politics, the fact remains that we cannot have a democratic government without politics. Good government depends upon political skill.

### MEANING AND PURPOSE OF POLITICS

Even if some politicians abuse their offices or resort to unethical practices, we must not lose sight of the meaning and purpose of politics. Neither should we reject politics as a whole because of corrupt politicians any more than we would reject medical aid because of malpractice on the part of a few doctors.

Christian citizenship demands that believers become involved in the democratic processes. Christ admonished His disciples to "render therefore unto Caesar the things which are Caesar's; and unto God the things that are God's." Thus, the believer lives in 2 spheres. Our heavenly citizenship does not prevent us from exercising our stewardship of influence in the present world as the "salt of the earth."

However, Christians must recognize that we do not always have an ideal choice. Every system has its weaknesses because no perfect government exists. But in facing reality this does not give us reason to cop out on our political responsibilities. Citizenship is the foundation of our nation, and each citizen is a block in that foundation. Spiritual principles are an integral part of America's foundation and heritage. Religion plays a vital role in the development and preservation of our value system. Christians have a higher degree of moral consciousness. We should strive to build a government which is guided by the principles of Christianity for the good of humanity and the glory of God. But even when Christians do not have a clear-cut choice of godly leaders, they can still seek to exercise their influence in choosing competent

officials, who would be more sympathetic with the ideals and values that have made us one nation under God.

### QUALITIES TO LOOK FOR

In addition to considering the religious beliefs of a potential government official, there are many other important factors to consider. The ability to govern is of utmost importance. Regardless of how sincere a person is in his religious faith, he must demonstrate strong qualities of leadership. Piety is no substitute for skills and competence.

Integrity is another vital consideration. Whether the official is a magistrate, mayor, governor, congressman or president, citizens expect their officials to be men of character who demonstrate honesty, sobriety and moral convictions. Headline events of scandals, dishonesty, immorality and corruption over the past few years among public officials have caused many citizens to become frustrated, disillusioned and cynical about our government. Christians must not lose faith because of past disappointments. Rather we should exercise great discernment and demand a better quality of leaders in the future.

Christians must become more widely informed. They must not rely upon a biased media or the cosmetic salesmanship of some public relations agency, which projects a false image of a candidate. It behooves Christians to carefully weigh the issues and the philosophy, policies and attitude of the particular candidates for offices. Above all, the Christian must seek the mind and will of God in earnest prayer.

Finally, a Christian ought not become disillusioned, indifferent or cynical if the candidate he supports does not win. The Christian voter can vote for a losing candidate just as a Christian doctor can perform an unsuccessful operation. We must act in faith with all good conscience and leave the final results to our sovereign Lord. Δ



**CONTACT**

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# November Is NATIONAL HOME MISSIONS MONTH



- \* Pray for 31 Home Missions families serving in the United States, Mexico, and the Virgin Islands.
- \* Pray for 10 states, 26 capital cities, and thousands of towns in America where there are no Free Will Baptist churches.
- \* Pray for our two Army, one Air Force, and one Civil Air Patrol chaplains serving in America and Germany.
- \* Plan to observe National Home Missions Sunday, November 21st in your church, or a weekend Home Missions Rally.
- \* We challenge your church to give the whole offering on National Home Missions Sunday, and challenge you as individuals to give a whole week's pay! These offerings will help build Free Will Baptist churches across America.

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