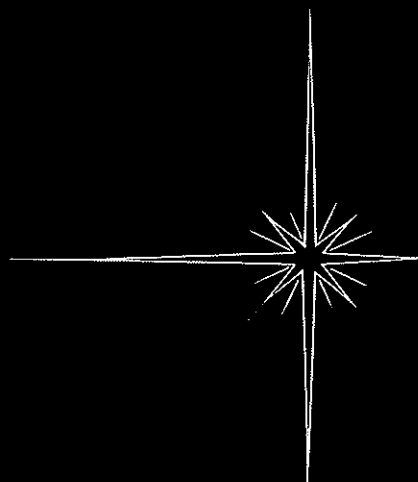


See page 2.

Mystical Union.

When Deity and Humanity Formed a



OF THE NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF FREE WILL BAPTISTS

contact

DECEMBER, 1976

The Virgin Birth: Mystical Union of Deity and Humanity

By Harrold D. Harrison

Each Christmas season millions of people the world over sing the words of the familiar carol, "Silent Night, Holy Night." Yet few are aware of the significance of the phrase, "Round yon Virgin Mother and Child."

There has been and continues to be a great deal of confusion in circles of unbelievers and liberal theologians relative to the subject of the virgin birth of Jesus Christ. But even in this scientific age of humanism and unbelief, it is an important, integral and inspired truth of Christian dogma, which brings blessing and understanding to those Christians who study its meaning and purpose.

The Scriptures do not set forth a systematic, sequential defense for the authenticity of the virgin birth. They merely state the simple, sublime truth. It was not necessary for Jesus, Mark, John or Paul to present it *per se*, for it is certainly inferred in their teaching on the incarnation.

Note the beauty, simplicity and matter-of-factness with which it is expressed:

Now the birth of Jesus Christ was on this wise: When as his mother Mary was espoused to Joseph, before they came together, she was found with child of the Holy Ghost. Then Joseph, her husband, being a just man, and not willing to make her a publick example, was minded to put her away privily. But while he thought on these things, behold, the angel of the Lord appeared unto him in a dream, saying, Joseph, thou son of David, fear not to take unto thee Mary thy

wife: for that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Ghost. And she shall bring forth a son, and thou shalt call his name JESUS: for he shall save his people from their sins. Now all this was done, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken of the Lord by the



prophet, saying, Behold a virgin shall be with child, and shall bring forth a son, and they shall call his name Emmanuel, which being interpreted is, God with us. Then Joseph being raised from sleep did as the angel of the Lord had bidden him, and took unto him his wife: And knew her not till she had brought forth her firstborn son: and he called his name JESUS (Matthew 1:18-25).

The angel Gabriel was the bearer of glad tidings to Mary.

And in the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent from God unto a city of Galilee, named Nazareth, To a virgin espoused to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David: And the virgin's name was Mary. And, behold, thou shalt conceive in thy womb, and bring forth a son, and shalt call his name JESUS. Then said Mary unto the angel, How shall this be, seeing I know not a man? (Luke 1:26,27,31,34).

THE MIRACULOUS BIRTH

An examination of Christ's miraculous birth is not intended to convey the idea that the miracle lay in the manner of birth but in the nature of His birth. Insofar as we know, Jesus' entry into life as a babe was no different from any natural childbirth.

The fact that Jesus was conceived in the womb of the virgin Mary makes His birth miraculous. His divine nature had no mother, and His human nature had no father. He inherited His human nature from His mother, but He did not inherit a personality; thus He was free from Adam's sin.

The person who rejects the miraculous here must reject the other miracles of the Scriptures or admit to being inconsistent. Those who argue that the virgin birth is a biological impossibility fail to reckon

with the fact of a supernatural God.

Sinful man, left to himself, would have had no hope of finding life and peace. It was necessary that God intervene in a miraculous way for man to find redemption. Boettner says that miracles are "organically related events in a great system of redemption." Since this is true, one who scoffs at the miraculous is guilty of scoffing at the reality of redemption.

Thank God for the miracle of redemption!

THE MESSIANIC BIRTH

Matthew 1:22 reminds us that the virgin birth of Jesus was the fulfillment of the prophecy of Isaiah 7:14 and 9:6 in particular. Those who would deny this truth are challenging the authority and infallibility of the Scriptures. If John 3:16 is true, then it follows that Matthew 1:22, 23 are also true. The view which one holds at this point immediately places him in the position of looking at Christ from either the naturalistic or the supernaturalistic viewpoint.

For some 400 years the Jews had been without a prophet. Isaiah's prophecy had been given some 700 years earlier. The minor prophets, too, had spoken of the coming of Messiah. The fullness of time had come. God had sent forth His Son, born of a woman, born under the law, to redeem them who were under the law. (See Galatians 4:4.)

At last God had come down to earth in human flesh to tabernacle with man. Jesus was sent into the world so that man could have on a human plane a visible manifestation of who God is and what God is like. Jesus — the God-man, Immanuel, God with us — was made flesh. The first messianic promise as given in Genesis 3:15 has had a partial fulfillment. The prophetic messianic utterances made to Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, David and the prophets were being fulfilled. The Lamb of God of which John the Baptist was to speak had come to take the sin of the world upon Himself.

Messiah has come. Hallelujah! The New Testament writers trumpet forth the fact of Jesus' messianic

role. Jesus, Himself, acknowledged this role to the woman of Samaria when He said, "I that speak unto thee am he [the Messiah]" (John 4:26).

Christ, who had come into His own creation and unto His own chosen people, the Jews, was by and large rejected of them. Now all may come to Him by faith and be received.

THE MEDIATING BIRTH

The nature of Jesus' entrance into this world was supernatural; the manner of His exit was supernatural as will be the manner of His return. There is also a supernatural ministry He is performing in the interim. The writer of the Book of Hebrews tells us that He was made a partaker of flesh and blood that through death he might destroy the devil and deliver them who lived in fear of death. He was made like unto His brethren that He might be a merciful and faithful High Priest in things pertaining to God, particularly in making reconciliation for the sins of the people. For since He was tempted, yet without sin, He is able to succor them that are tempted. (Compare Hebrews 2:14-18.)

Man, who was at odds with God, needed a Mediator — One who could plead man's case, One having merit of His own. Jesus was born into the world for this purpose. His incarnation, the mystical union of Deity and humanity, was necessary to accomplish this purpose.

Paul wrote, "For if, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by his life" (Romans 5:10). We are further told, "For there is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus" (1 Timothy 2:5).

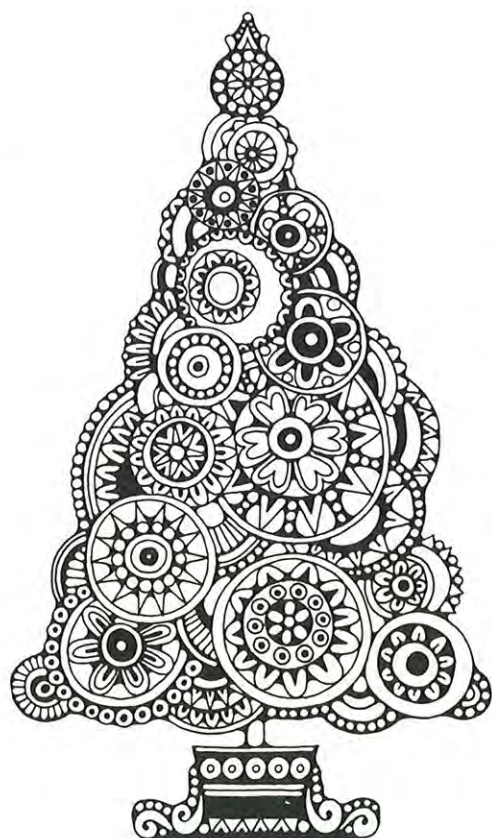
In this mediating position He serves as our Great High Priest, who is conscious of our infirmities. He compassionately invites us to come with boldness to His great throne of grace and mercy. (Compare Hebrews 4:13-16.)

Yes, the virgin birth of Jesus was miraculous in its nature, messianic in its scope, and mediating in its function. ▲

ABOUT THE WRITER: A former pastor now administrator and promoter, Mr. Harrison serves as manager of the Promotion and Sales Division of the Free Will Baptist Sunday School Department, Nashville, Tennessee. He holds a master's degree from Middle Tennessee State University, Murfreesboro.

Not The Danger of Commercializing Christmas

By Susan Burgess
Staff Writer



For years pious and sincere Christians have expostulated on the dangers of commercializing Christmas. There exists a fear of losing the true meaning of Christ's birthday amid strings of lights, tinsel, trees, toys, parties and pre-Halloween Christmas decorations and sales in department stores. How true it is that few comprehend what this special season of the year actually means; and even fewer have received the most precious Christmas gift of all.

Yet how many of the millions in our country who gaze at gaily decorated store windows have the opportunity or inclination to attend church services where the message of Christmas is taught? For many this commercialization is the only source of information and the only reminder of such a unique birthday celebration.

Unfortunately, the celebration of Christmas is being relegated to the closet along with the neglected artificial tree in its box and the collection of old wrapping paper. The number of those celebrating Christmas seems to have dwindled in recent years. There are fewer houses each year decorated with shiny, colored lights, and more families are deciding Christmas gifts are just too much trouble when a person can buy anything he wants for himself anyway. Today's lessen-

ing emphasis on the outward celebration of Christmas has actually diminished the amount of time the average person spends in contemplating the spiritual import of Christ's birthday.

But God celebrated that first Christmas in a big way. Over 700 years before Christ's grand entrance into the world as a baby, God began His advertising campaign. Isaiah proclaimed in 7:14, "Therefore the Lord himself shall give you a sign; Behold, a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel." As the schedule for this exciting event hastened to completion, God appeared to Joseph in a dream to tell him of the impending birth of Mary's child.

The heavenly Father chose a larger audience for His next special message in living color. As described in Luke 2:9-14, the angel of the Lord served as anchorman for the long-awaited news broadcast that the Savior had been born that very day. Then a magnificent angelic choir joined the messenger in praising God and blessing mankind.

That beautiful, awe-inspiring presentation got results, too. The shepherds immediately started on their pilgrimage to Bethlehem to see the newborn baby. Similarly many today experience a sense of renewed religious commitment when they journey home for the holidays to the place where they first heard that ever-young Christmas story and to the loved ones who first repeated that story in their childish

In fact, God in His Christmas preparations did not even omit the decorations. The star which He hung in the Bethlehem sky was the brightest, most dazzling star ever admired by humans and angels alike. That brilliant star guided the Wise Men to Jesus' cribside, where "they presented unto Him gifts; gold, and frankincense, and myrrh" (Matthew 2:11). Just as we *exchange* gifts at Christmas, the Magi's first Christmas gifts were actually thank-you presents for "the gift of God . . . eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord" (Romans 6:23). We as they can say, "Thanks be unto God for his unspeakable gift" (II Corinthians 9:15).

Since God employed diverse methods in promoting that initial Christmas celebration, Christians should not fear losing the true meaning of Christmas through commercialization. Each ornament hung on a pine-needed tree, each strand of tinsel wound around a store's light fixtures, each burned-out bulb replaced in a string of tree lights, each Christmas card addressed to friends, each breath of cold exhilarating air gulped on a star-spangled night, each snowflake melted on a windowpane is a reminder that this is a special time of the year. Every "Merry Christmas" greeting spoken, every gift given, every gift opened, every twinkling tree adored by a starry-eyed child bears the message of God's greatest gift given to mankind on the first Christmas day.

Our newspaper ads and radio and TV specials will never out promote or be more successful in creating excitement and anticipation for that special day than God's prophets, visions or angelic messengers. Our choirs will never out Christmas-carol God's "multitude of the heavenly host praising God." Our brightly decorated Christmas trees will never out shine God's Bethlehem star. And most of all our expensive gifts will never out value God's unspeakable gift—Jesus Christ, our Savior.

Thank you, God, for your first Christmas celebration. May we do our best to see that it is never forgotten. Amen. Δ

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Editor-in-Chief: Rufus Coffey
Administrative Editor: Eugene Workman
Editorial Assistant: Susan Burgess
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FELLOWSHIP MEETING OF CONCERNED FREE WILL BAPTISTS SET FOR ST. LOUIS AREA

BRIDGETON, MO.— As a result of a meeting of a small group of Free Will Baptists at the Trinity Church in Bridgeton following the Missouri State Association last June, the consensus was that one of the most basic needs among Free Will Baptist pastors and laymen is a fellowship meeting based solely upon the Treatise. Such a meeting has been scheduled for January 3-5, 1977, at the Trinity Church in Bridgeton. The purpose of this fellowship is to strengthen the faith of individual pastors and laymen and to develop a more cohesive spirit of cooperation with and love for one another.

Speakers for this fellowship meeting will be Michigan pastor Milton Worthington, Central Free Will Baptist Church, Royal Oak, and the Reverend O. T. Dixon, faculty member, Hillsdale Free Will Baptist College, Moore, Oklahoma. Serving as song leader and soloist will be Missouri pastor Ted Wilbanks, Grant Avenue Free Will Baptist Church, Springfield.

Registration will begin at 3:00 p.m. Monday, January 3, with the evening services set for 7:00 both nights. Tuesday's program begins at 8:30 a.m. In addition to the preaching, specific times of sharing and discussion are scheduled. All services of the 2-day event are open to interested Free Will Baptists.

Host pastor Russell Spurgeon is hopeful that "such a fellowship will contribute to a broader concern of a caring and sharing fellowship throughout our denomination."

Those desiring housing information may contact Mr. Spurgeon at 12143 Old St. Charles Road, Bridgeton, Missouri 63044.

SOUTH CAROLINA PASTOR INCLUDED IN WHO'S WHO IN RELIGION

TIMMONSVILLE, S.C.— The second edition of *Who's Who in Religion*, which is published by the Marquis Publishing Company of Chicago, will include the name of Dr. Irvin Hyman, pastor of the Bethany Free Will Baptist Church near Timmons ville. Several Free Will Baptists were included in the first edition, and others are expected to be named in the current edition.

Hyman is a 1951 graduate of Free Will Baptist Bible College and holds the B.D., Th.M. and D.Min. degrees from Luther Rice Seminary in Jacksonville, Florida.

Mr. Hyman is active in both the district and state associations of South Carolina Free Will Baptists. Among the positions he now holds is clerk of South Carolina State Association of Free Will Baptists.

He has pastored churches in Georgia, Florida and North Carolina and is the author of 6 booklets, including "What To Do When You Don't Know What To Do."

NOTE: Due to the lack of space, the standing columns, "Our Women Speak" and "Christian Doctrine," are omitted from this issue.



FREE WILL BAPTIST

newsfront

WILSON CHURCH BREAKS 2 RECORDS WITH ATTENDANCE OF 1,226 ON 14th ANNIVERSARY

WILSON, N.C.— The anniversary-homecoming day at Peace Free Will Baptist Church on Sunday, October 10, was a capstone in the 10-year ministry of Pastor Gordon Sebastian and an attendance peak for the 14-year-old congregation. The special day drew record attendances of 1,226 for Sunday school, 1,350 for morning worship and 932 for the evening service. There were 28 decisions for Christ in the morning services.

However, the church broke more than their own attendance records, according to a church spokesman. From all available records this was the largest attendance for a single service at any one church in the history of the city of Wilson.

The highlight of the day was Sunday evening when a special "This Is Your Life" program honored Pastor Gordon Sebastian. Although the program was a total surprise to Brother Sebastian, it was not a secret to the congregation and the majority of the townspeople. Over 25 people from Brother Sebastian's past took part in the special presentation. Of all the people involved, perhaps the greatest surprises were Brother Sebastian's mother and sister, who came all the way from San Francisco, and his Navy buddies from the early 1950's — Henry Van Kluyve, a Free Will Baptist minister; Wayne Barclay, an Assembly of God minister; and Mr. Ted Young of San Diego, California, the man who led Mr. Sebastian to the Lord on August 15, 1951.

At the conclusion of the program Mr. Jimmy Cone, a deacon of the church, presented Mr. Sebastian with a plaque for his 10 years of service with the church and gave Pastor and Mrs. Sebastian a trip to the Holy Land, both on behalf of the church.

As a part of the anniversary celebration there was a 10' x 10' cake that took a week to make and required 3 ladies each working 8 hours for 3 consecutive days to ice. There was more than enough cake for the 1,350 people present.

Peace Church was organized in 1962 as a result of a revival held by Brother Sebastian, who was then pastoring Mount Calvary Free Will Baptist Church in Hookerton. The church organized with 13 charter members and called the Rev. Don Pegram as pastor. At that time the congregation purchased an old church building on the corner of Pender and Academy Streets in an older section of Wilson. On October 9, 1966, Brother

Sebastian became pastor of the congregation. Under his leadership the church grew to the point that in 1969 a \$120,000 bond program was floated to relocate the church to Tilghman Road. The church rests on what was the farm of Mr. W. H. Godwin, a charter member.

Growth of this congregation has necessitated that the original church plant, consisting of a 350-seat auditorium and educational unit, be expanded on 2 different occasions. The first was 1973 when an additional educational unit was added and the parking lot enlarged. In the spring of 1975 an annex was added to the auditorium, which now provides seating for 600 adults. The present physical plant is valued at over \$400,000.

Peace Church has a near 600 average in Sunday school attendance weekly. Their bus ministry, which was launched in the fall of 1973, consists of 10 buses and one station wagon. Over 200 children and adults are transported to services weekly.

Mr. Rodney Whaley joined the church staff in the spring of 1974 as minister of youth and music. In May, 1976, Mr. Paul Brunner accepted a position as bus minister and children's church minister. Under Mr. Brunner's direction, the bus attendance has risen 1/3 over its previous average, and the children's church attendance has tripled with a high of 268 on September 26. Mr. Brunner is gifted in the use of puppets, which he employs extensively in the ministry to children.

ATTENTION PASTORS!

Did your church gain at least 12 new members during 1976?

If so, we want to list the name of the church, the number of new members and your name in *CONTACT Magazine*.

The challenge to increase church membership rolls by 12 was given by Executive Secretary Rufus Coffey in a letter to all pastors last January. At that time he stated that the names of the churches which made the increase of 12 or more members would be publicized.

Please share this information with us by January 20.

TAG KILGORE FORMS EVANGELISTIC ASSOCIATION

PIKEVILLE, KY.— Over 5 years ago, the Reverend Tag Kilgore said, the Lord impressed upon him the need for full-time evangelists. During the ensuing years he has continued to seek the Lord's leading concerning the field of evangelism while pastoring churches in Tennessee and Arkansas.

Brother Kilgore states, "God used this time to teach me to love souls and to enlighten me to the needs of the church . . . Now the time has come, and God has cleared the way for me to be able to serve Him in the capacity of an evangelist." He recently resigned the pastorate of the Capitol City Free Will Baptist Church in Little Rock, Arkansas, and has formed an evangelistic association.

Brother Kilgore is a native of Kentucky, a 1972 graduate of Free Will Baptist Bible College, Nashville, Tennessee, and also an alumnus of Mid-America Baptist Seminary in Little Rock. He has received the endorsement of Public Relations Director Paul Kettelman, Free Will Baptist Bible College,

and General Director Bob Shockey, Home Missions Department, both of Nashville, Tennessee; Instructor O. T. Dixon, Hillsdale Free Will Baptist College, Moore, Oklahoma; and pastors Ben Scott, North Little Rock, Arkansas, and A. B. Johnson, Harold, Kentucky. Evangelist Kilgore may be contacted at 201 Scott Avenue, Pikeville, Kentucky 41501.

The Reverend Kilgore and his wife, the former Joy Wade, have 2 children.

HORTON HEIGHTS YOUTH SET A FIRST FOR "STACK THE RACKS" PROJECT

NASHVILLE, TENN.— The youth of Horton Heights Free Will Baptist Church, Nashville, are the first in the United States to receive all 3 participation awards for their fund raising efforts in behalf of the National Youth Conference's "Stack the Racks" project. This 1976-77 project, which is under the auspices of the Church Training Service Department, is designed to increase the number of volumes in Free Will Baptist Bible College's Welch Library. Paul Kettelman, public relations director for the college, presented the group with the bronze, silver and gold plaques.

"The young people of Horton Heights Free Will Baptist Church are to be commended for their initiative and for the uniqueness of their plan to help with the 'Stack the Racks' library project for Free Will Baptist Bible College," Kettelman said. "The spirit in which it was carried out was exemplary and hopefully will be an incentive for other young people in our denomination."

The Horton Heights youth staged a rock-a-thon to raise the funds. They circled the church's fellowship hall with rocking chairs, secured sponsors who paid the rockers by the hour, and wound up with \$450.

The bronze award is given to each youth group which raises \$50 for books; the silver award certificate is given to those progressing to the \$100 level; and the top honor, the gold award certificate, goes to groups that reach a total of \$250 for the "Stack the Racks" project.

NEW QUARTERLY MEETING ORGANIZED IN MISSOURI

SIKESTON, MO.— Three Free Will Baptist churches in southeast Missouri met August 13, 1976, to organize the Bootheel District Quarterly Meeting. The organizing members are the First Church in Sikeston, pastor Denzil Durbin; First Church in East Prairie, pastor Harrison Brack; and the Free Will Baptist Mission in Malden, pastor Bill Adkinson.

Brother Adkinson, newly elected moderator, stated, "By organizing the quarterly meeting, we are saving many miles of travel and promoting a closer bond of unity among the churches in this area." The organizational meeting was hosted by the First Church in Sikeston.

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INFLATION-STOPPING OFFER

You can save \$1.00 per year on your subscription to *CONTACT* Magazine by renewing before December 31, 1976. Effective January 1, 1977, the yearly subscription rate will become \$5.00. That's still only about 8½¢ more for each of the 12 monthly issues. We wish that an increase was not necessary, but current income from subscriptions is not sufficient to absorb the recent postal hikes and the increase in printing costs.

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OKLAHOMA COLLEGE EXPANDS EXTERNAL STUDIES PROGRAM OFFERINGS

MOORE, OKLA.— Hillsdale Free Will Baptist College has expanded its Modular Education Program with 6 additional courses according to Thomas Marberry, director of External Studies. The new courses include *Life of Christ Mini Course*, *Acts*, *Great Women of the Bible*, *New Testament Men*, *Bible Characters: Adam to Boaz* and *Bible Characters: Samuel to Malachi*.

"These are basic Bible courses designed for the student who has not had any college training in Bible which can be very helpful to anyone who wishes to understand his Bible better. They should be most helpful to Sunday school teachers, CTS leaders and other concerned Christians," Marberry said.

Students may work on these courses at their own pace but must complete each course within 6 months of the time it is begun.

"Cost for each course is \$25.00. This includes all workbooks and other needed materials except a Bible. First-time students taking a course for credit are also charged a matriculation fee of \$10.00," Marberry added.

Offered on a noncredit basis or for one semester hour of credit from Hillsdale, the courses when taken for credit may be applied toward a degree from Hillsdale. For additional information, please write to Hillsdale Free Will Baptist College, Department of External Studies, Box 6343, Moore, Oklahoma 73160.

Hillsdale College, which is owned and operated by the Oklahoma State Association of Free Will Baptists, is accredited by the Oklahoma State Regents for Higher Education to operate as a junior college and to offer appropriate associate of arts degrees and has been authorized by the Regents to offer courses leading to a bachelor of theology degree.

newsfront

(continued)

NEW CHURCH STARTED IN WILMINGTON SUBURB

OGDEN, N.C.—A group of Free Will Baptists interested in establishing a mission in the Wilmington area have secured a church building in the community of Ogden and are now holding services. The Rev. Fred Carraway, who formerly was associate pastor of Grace Free Will Baptist Church in Greenville, has assumed pastoral leadership. He is residing in nearby Castle Hayne.

The recently acquired church is a 5-year-old building with 5,000 square feet of heated and air-conditioned space. The sanctuary will seat approximately 150 people, and there are 4 large classrooms. It is located on Highway 17 on the northeast outskirts of Wilmington.

The mission work was established without the support of a mission board or group. However, Brother Carraway shared that the Grace FWB Church in Rocky Mount and the Grace FWB Church in Greenville have been instrumental in helping the mission get established.

Brother Carraway stated, "God has been blessing in all ways. The first Sunday we met in our new building, we had 31 in attendance, received a \$240 offering, and had a Jehovah's Witness accept Christ as her Savior."

OKLAHOMA CHURCH WORSHIPING IN NEW AUDITORIUM

WAGONER, OKLA.—The congregation of the First Free Will Baptist Church of Wagoner is now worshiping in its new auditorium, which has a seating capacity of 300. Pastor "Bill" Walker, who has served with the congregation for the past 2½ years, stated that the former church building was remodeled for educational space, providing 10 classrooms, and the new sanctuary was added. The total cost of the project was near \$35,000. Most of the work on the building was done by members of the church.

During the past fiscal year 46 new members have been received into the fellowship of the church. The average Sunday school attendance is 100 with an average CTS attendance of 45. The church has a Woman's Auxiliary and a Master's Men chapter.



Currently . . .

By
EUGENE WORKMAN
Administrative Editor

About 8,000 sermons ago John West, Tulsa's Free Will Baptist pastor-at-large, began his ministry. His 8,000th attempt came in October, 43 years after he began preaching. That is an average of 3½ times per week. Brother West said that he has kept a record of his work from the beginning and that when one keeps accurate records "you see you don't do as much as when you guess at it." The Oklahoma minister continues to stay as involved in various religious activities as before his retirement from the "active" pastorate of the First FWB Church, Tulsa, several years ago.

Pastor and Mrs. Ken Goff, First FWB Church, Flat River, Missouri, have moved into the new parsonage which the congregation recently had built.

Pastor Dennis Reeves, Soul's Harbor FWB Church, Vinemont, Alabama, reports that the church is using every available inch of space. The church, which was started about 2 years ago as a mission, was formally organized in August. Attendance is now averaging 130 in Sunday school. The real squeeze comes in the auditorium, which comfortably seats about 180 people but has been accommodating nearly 230 per service. Some weeks ago a junior church, which now averages 50 children per week, was started to help alleviate the crowded conditions during worship services; but new people continue to come to hear the Gospel preached. Pastor Reeves is praising the Lord for this problem. **Roger Hood** serves as assistant pastor.

Pastor Charles Miller, First FWB Church, DeSoto, Missouri, reports that Church Training Service attendance continues to set records. There were 135 present Sunday, October 24.

Free Will Baptist Chaplain (Major) Gerald Mangham, United States Army, recently was awarded a master of theology degree from Princeton Theological Seminary and is now stationed in Aschaffenburg, Germany.

Because of the continued increase in Sunday school attendance and lack of additional space, the **First FWB Church, Johnson City, Tennessee**, began dual Sunday schools on December 5. The first Sunday school begins at 9:00 a.m.; morning worship follows at 10:00; and the second Sunday school begins at 11:00 a.m. The buses are running on the present schedule, the only difference being that the bus riders attend worship services first and Sunday school afterwards. They still arrive home at the same time. **Clarence Phillips, Tennessee State moderator**, pastors this church.

The congregation of the **Sylvan Park FWB Church, Nashville, Tennessee**, recently

completed a great Sunday school contest which covered a 6-week period in September and part of October, according to **Pastor Bob Jones**. The average attendance was 198, which is 3 more than the church's yearly average through September. Pastor Jones is also praising the Lord for the 8 new church members gained during the contest.

Billy Keith, assistant pastor, **Grace FWB Church, Rocky Mount, North Carolina**, reports an increase in bus riders for the year ending September, 1976. The average was 190 per Sunday as compared with 167 for the year which ended September, 1975.

With all the interest in the occult, witchcraft, demonism, satanism, etc., **Pastor Richard Adams, East Side FWB Church, Elizabethton, Tennessee**, personally feels the church should not sponsor Halloween observances. As an alternative fellowship, various age groups of the congregation held harvest time parties, designed to thank God for all His goodness. The adults met on Friday night, while all the children and youth had separate parties on Saturday night. Ample trick-or-treat goodies were passed out by parents so that the children would not need to be out on the streets.

The second phase of the building program for the **First FWB Church, O'Fallon, Missouri**, includes the expansion of the auditorium to seat 400, the addition of a baptistry, more classrooms and a church office. Additional property has been purchased across from the church for parking facilities. **Pastor Donald Lombard** has been with the church since it began as a mission. The first building was dedicated in October, 1972. At that time the Sunday school attendance was approximately 40, and at the present the average is 125.

In order to have greater cooperation among the churches of the **Southern Quarterly Meeting of Tennessee's Cumberland Association**, the officers are preparing a calendar of activities for the district. This should be a great assistance in correlating local church programs with district and associational activities for 1977.

Capitol Hill FWB Church, Oklahoma City, Oklahoma, has begun a new ministry for the blind. The church has started a Sunday school class and now has members from 3 families enrolled. These new members will join in the regular worship times of the church and will also sing in the choir. **Homer Young** pastors.

Several Free Will Baptist churches in **Nashville, Tennessee**, were among the many in that state capital city who supported a recent antipornography ordinance passed by the Metro Council. The antipornography ordinance is designed to get "lewd and indecent publications" out of the sight of minors. All stores selling such materials will not be able to market them from conspicuously placed magazine racks. Nashville Free Will Baptists not only gave their support for the ordinances by writing and phoning their councilmen, but many were on hand for one or more of the 3 readings, which were necessary before the bill was passed on the final reading. On the same

(Please turn to page 15)



National Association of Free Will Baptists

1977

CALENDAR

OF

ACTIVITIES

The denominational calendar is designed to suggest to the churches significant emphases and events which may be observed during the year. These suggestions are made with the understanding that each church, association and denominational organization will choose emphases and events in keeping with its own needs.

For handy reference, this calendar may be removed from the magazine by simply prying up the center staples and slipping out the calendar. The remainder of the magazine will remain intact if the staples are then pushed back into place.

Published by
THE EXECUTIVE OFFICE OF THE NATIONAL
ASSOCIATION OF FREE WILL BAPTISTS
P. O. Box 1088 / Nashville, Tennessee 37202

Rufus Coffey, Executive Secretary
Eugene Workman, Executive Assistant

1977		JANUARY					1977
Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	
EMPHASES: January Bible Study WNAC Enlistment Month						1	New Year's Day
2 FWB Layman's Day of Prayer January 2	3 Spring Semester Begins FWBBC - Jan. 3	4	5 Full Moon	6	7	8	
9	10	11	12 Last Quarter	13	14	15	
16	17	18	19 New Moon	20	21	22	
23 30	24 31	25	26 First Quarter	27	28	29	
NATIONAL YOUTH WEEK — "Declaring the Faith" January 31-February 6							

1977		FEBRUARY					1977
Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	
EMPHASIS: National Teacher Training Month		1	2	3 Full Moon	4	5	
NATIONAL YOUTH WEEK — "Declaring the Faith"							
6	7	8	9	10 Last Quarter	11	12	Lincoln's Birthday
13	14 Valentine's Day	15	16	17 New Moon	18	19	
20	21 Washington's Day	22	23	24	25 First Quarter	26	
27	28						

1977		MARCH					1977
Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	
EMPHASIS: Spring Sunday School Enlargement Campaign		1	2	3	4	5 Full Moon	
6	7	8	9	10	11	12 Last Quarter	
13	14	15	16	17	18	19 New Moon	
BIBLE CONFERENCE FREE WILL BAPTIST BIBLE COLLEGE March 13-17							
20	21	22	23	24 St. Patrick's Day	25	26	
First Day of Spring							
27 First Quarter	28	29	30	31			

1977		APRIL					1977
Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	
					1	2	
3 Full Moon Palm Sunday	4	5	6	7	8 Good Friday	9	
WNAC PRE-EASTER WEEK OF PRAYER AND OFFERING FOR FOREIGN MISSIONS April 4-8							
10 Last Quarter Easter Sunday	11	12	13	14	15	16	
17 Foreign Missions Call-A-Thon Sunday April 17	18 New Moon	19	20	21	22	23	
24	25	26 First Quarter	27	28	29	30	

1977		JULY	
Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday
3	4 Independence Day	5	6
10 NYC '77 Day of Prayer July 10	11	12	13
17 NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF FREE WILL BAPTISTS—Detr Nat'l. Youth Conference July 17-21	18	19 WNAC Annual Meeting—July 19	20
24 31	25	26	27

1977		MAY					1977
Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	
1	2	3 Full Moon	4	5	6	7	
8 Mother's Day FWBBC Baccalaureate 8 p.m.—May 8	9 Last Quarter	10	11	12 FWBBC Commencement 10 a.m.—May 12	13	14	
15	16 FWBBC Summer School Number 1 Begins—May 16	17 New Moon	18	19	20	21	
22	23	24	25 First Quarter	26	27 FWBBC Summer School Number 1 Ends—May 27	28	
29 WNAC Servicemen's Sunday May 29	30 Memorial Day FWBBC Summer School Number 2 Begins—May 30	31					

1977		AUGUST	
Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday
	1	2	3
7	8	9	10
14 New Moon	15	16	17
21 First Quarter	22 FWBBC Fall Semester Begins Aug. 22	23	24
28 Full Moon	29	30	31

1977		JUNE					1977
Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	
			1 Full Moon	2	3 Jefferson Davis' Birthday	4	
5	6	7	8 Last Quarter	9	10	11	
12	13	14	15	16 New Moon	17	18	
19 Board of Retirement Father's Day Offering June 19 Father's Day	20	21 First Day of Summer	22	23	24 First Quarter FWBBC Summer School Number 2 Ends—June 24	25	
26	27	28	29	30 Full Moon			

1977		SEPTEMBER	
Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday
EMPHASES: WNAC Student Loan Month CTS Promotional Campaign — "CTS is TOPS"			
4	5 Last Quarter Labor Day	6	7
11	12	13 New Moon	14
18	19	20 First Quarter	21
25	26	27 Full Moon	28

1977			
Thursday	Friday	Saturday	
	1	2	
7 <small>Last Quarter</small>	8	9	
14	15	16 <small>New Moon</small>	
21 <small>Michigan—July 17-21</small>	22	23 <small>First Quarter</small>	
28	29	30 <small>Full Moon</small>	

1977			
Thursday	Friday	Saturday	
4	5	6 <small>Last Quarter</small>	
11	12	13	
18	19	20	
25	26	27	

1977			
Thursday	Friday	Saturday	
1	2	3	
8	9	10	
15	16	17	
22	23	24	
	<small>First Day of Autumn</small>		
29	30		

1977 OCTOBER 1977						
Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
EMPHASES: Fall Sunday School Enlargement Campaign National Layman's Month						1
2	3	4	5 <small>Last Quarter</small>	6	7	8
9 <small>FWB Layman's Sunday October 9</small>	10 <small>Columbus Day</small>	11	12 <small>New Moon</small>	13	14	15
16	17	18	19 <small>First Quarter</small>	20	21	22
23 <small>30</small>	24 <small>31</small> <small>Veteran's Day Halloween</small>	25	26 <small>Full Moon</small>	27	28	29
MISSIONARY CONFERENCE — FWBBC campus October 31—November 2						

1977 NOVEMBER 1977						
Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
		1	2 <small>Missionary Conference Ends—Nov. 2</small>	3 <small>Last Quarter</small>	4	5
	PRINCIPALS' CONFERENCE FWBBC Campus Oct. 31—Nov. 1					
6	7	8 <small>Election Day</small>	9	10	11 <small>New Moon</small>	12
13	14	15	16	17 <small>First Quarter</small>	18	19
	WNAC WEEK OF PRAYER AND OFFERING FOR HOME MISSIONS November 14-18					
20 <small>National Home Missions Sunday November 20</small>	21	22	23	24 <small>Thanksgiving Day</small>	25 <small>Full Moon</small>	26
27	28	29	30		EMPHASIS: National Home Missions Month	

1977 DECEMBER 1977						
Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
EMPHASES: Willey Memorial Christmas Gift to Foreign Missions WNAC Season of Prayer and Offering for State Missions				1	2	3 <small>Last Quarter</small>
4	5	6	7	8	9	10 <small>New Moon</small>
11	12	13	14	15	16 <small>FWBBC Fall Semester Ends—Dec. 16</small>	17 <small>First Quarter</small>
18	19	20	21	22	23	24
				<small>First Day of Winter</small>		
25 <small>Full Moon</small>	26	27	28	29	30	31
<small>Christmas Day</small>						

declaring the faith

youth week '77

January 31 — February 6

*"That which we have
seen and heard
declare we unto
you . . ."*

1 John 1:3

For Plans and Posters
Send \$1.00 to
Church Training Service Dept.
P.O. Box 1088 / Nashville, Tenn. 37202

Influence of A Pioneer

Dave Franks reminisces of his acquaintance with the father of Free Will Baptist missions in Latin America.

"There is a full moon tonight. Looks like an excellent night for horseback riding," said Mr. Willey.

It was indeed balmy in Pinar del Rio, Cuba, that summer night of 1954. Preparations had been made for "Pop" Willey, veteran Free Will Baptist missionary, to take summer missionaries to visit a plantation the following day. The entire group was planning to leave after lunch to arrive in time for evening services.

But when Brother Willey saw the full moon, he took the opportunity to go ahead that night in order to spend the next day inviting people to services. So he rode off alone on horseback under the full moon. The result of this midnight ride by the rugged individualist, who was impatient in his desire to reach those who had never heard, was witnessed the next evening when over 100 people came to the service. Scores of people raised their hands to say that they had never heard the Gospel before. It was reported that the heavy rain prevented others who had planned to attend from crossing the river.

I remember very vividly the first time I met Brother Thomas Willey. I was a freshman at Free Will Baptist Bible College in Nashville, Tennessee. He was the first missionary I had ever known personally. His son Tom Jr. was also beginning his studies at FWBBC. Once when "Pop" Willey spoke in a chapel service, he showed very strongly his determination to do what he felt was



"POP" WILLEY

God's will regardless of human organizations and limitations. He said, "My mission board has 3 members: God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Spirit." That's all the authority he needed. Little did I realize that in the years to come our paths would often cross.

During the summer prior to my senior year at Bible College, I was one of 6 students who went to Cuba to see first hand the Free Will Baptist work there. We attended orientation classes conducted by Brother and Sister Willey. We stayed at the Cedars of Lebanon Seminary and visited churches on the island. This school had been established by Mr. Willey for the training of national evangelists and pastors so they could be equipped to reach their own people and thus multiply the efforts of the foreign missionary. He knew that the Cubans could reach their own people better than an American with limited understanding of the Cuban language and culture.

I still remember admonitions shared by Brother Willey in his orientation classes which have proven to be true to my missionary experiences. One of the points he emphasized was that the mission

field will "show up" the weaknesses of a person as well as his strengths. The "real you" comes to the surface. The national can "see through you." Another essential element is to be adaptable or able to change one's cultural habits. Always be willing to admit when you are wrong and confess it. Be resourceful. Be indispensable; always have something worthwhile to offer the people. Know enough so that there will be a demand for your services. To win people, one must be friendly. Unless you can win a person's friendship, you will never win him to Christ.

These summer experiences and the orientation sessions proved useful measurement tools for those of us serving in Cuba. Four of our group, who were considering mission work, decided foreign service was not God's will for them; and 2 of us, who had not planned to be missionaries, later went to foreign fields.

Mr. Willey's missionary vision included not only Cuba but the whole world and Latin America in particular. He did a survey of Brazil which was influential in my decision to go to Brazil to begin our Free Will Baptist work there. He arranged such details as a place for me to study the Portuguese language and someone to meet me when I arrived in Brazil.

In the early days of our present Free Will Baptist foreign missions program, there was little vision or interest in missions among many Free Will Baptists. Mr. Willey also proved to be a pioneer at home in promoting the cause of missions. At times when he would have a mission service scheduled in a country church, he would be the first to arrive. So he would just build a fire in

ABOUT THE WRITER: Mr. Franks arrived in Brazil, South America, in January, 1958, to begin a ministry for Free Will Baptists. He is presently on furlough from duties in Conselheiro Lafaiete, Minas Gerais. The Alabama native is a graduate of Free Will Baptist Bible College, Nashville, Tennessee.

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INFLUENCE OF A PIONEER

(Cont. from page 13)

the church's old wood stove to warm the building before the arrival of the few people who would gather for such a service. He would greet them in his usual manner—a big smile and his great one-armed bear hug. He prepared the way in many areas of our denomination for new missionaries to be accepted in the years that followed.

While in the states for one furlough, it was my privilege to travel with Brother Willey in itinerary services. He knew the value of a good sense of humor. He told of being in Birmingham, Alabama, for a mission service where he received an offering for missions. That night when he arrived at his hotel room with the money, he opened the door to his room only to discover a woman with a pistol in her hand. She said she knew that he had the mission money and demanded that he give it to her. He did not know what to do. In his mind he could already see the morning newspaper headlines, "Missionary Shot in Hotel Room with Woman." In desperation he felt he must do something; so he suddenly yelled to the woman to look behind her. As she turned, he plunged toward her to grab the gun. At that moment his toe got caught in the bed sheet, and he woke up! It was just a dream. Mr. Willey's humor was at work. He always said a sense of humor was a necessary quality for the morale of a missionary.

After Mr. Willey was forced to leave Cuba in 1960, he continued his mission work among the Cubans in Miami, Florida. It had been my privilege to visit with the father of Free Will Baptist missions in Latin America several times en route to or from Brazil. The last time I saw him was particularly moving. He was in the hospital in Miami shortly before his "home going" on October 18, 1968. He still demonstrated his strong character, determination and vision. The disease of cancer had taken his voice. Since he could not talk, he wrote notes to me expressing his desire to visit Brazil again. He was calmly awaiting that new



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

COOPERATIVE PLAN OF SUPPORT

October, 1976

RECEIPTS:

State	October '76 Co-op	October '76 Design.	October '75	Year to Date
Alabama	\$ 482.45	\$. . .	\$ 443.68	\$ 1,806.29
Arizona	. . .	. . .	. . .	849.90
Arkansas	1,486.53	. . .	1,327.74	19,518.65
California	855.14	. . .	776.08	7,695.75
Florida	16.66	. . .	850.92	10,471.36
Georgia	309.10	. . .	126.83	2,779.47
Idaho	. . .	. . .	. . .	232.27
Illinois	1,360.86	. . .	793.40	12,008.28
Indiana	. . .	. . .	. . .	238.60
Iowa	. . .	. . .	147.98	1,788.11
Kansas	82.80	. . .	183.03	2,291.58
Maryland	184.12	. . .	. . .	989.58
Michigan	. . .	. . .	. . .	95.40
Mississippi	65.70	. . .	118.41	513.67
Missouri	4,470.03	(4,470.03)	3,534.53	37,398.26
New Mexico	. . .	. . .	. . .	131.66
North Carolina	75.00	. . .	161.56	1,416.81
Northeast Assoc.	. . .	. . .	. . .	193.90
Northwest Assoc.	80.27	. . .	100.62	706.03
Ohio	10.00	. . .	20.00	9,957.83
Oklahoma	46.65	. . .	5,923.27	52,336.66
Tennessee	1,204.00	. . .	524.82	9,397.11
Texas	25.00	. . .	25.00	2,502.65
Virginia	113.43	. . .	. . .	407.25
Virgin Islands	67.00	. . .	. . .	716.00
West Virginia	31.67	(31.67)	. . .	71.27
Totals	\$10,966.41		\$15,057.87	\$176,514.34

DISBURSEMENTS:

Executive Office	\$ 6,118.09	\$ (763.17)	\$ 5,450.92	\$62,459.13
Foreign Missions	1,701.43	(1,417.33)	3,390.45	37,646.98
Bible College	1,263.03	(981.23)	1,954.99	24,861.98
Home Missions	908.53	(708.66)	1,839.11	21,514.47
Church Training Ser.	444.30	(277.84)	935.18	12,729.83
Retirement and Ins.	405.73	(272.56)	918.38	10,604.78
Layman's Board	71.38	(32.54)	356.74	4,068.08
Commission on Theo- logical Liberalism	38.08	(32.53)	94.60	1,004.68
Miscellaneous	15.84	(15.84)	117.50	1,624.41
Totals	\$10,966.41		\$15,057.87	\$176,514.34

vision—the one of his risen Lord. He wrote that he was waiting to hear his name called to go home.

The memory of Brother Willey should be kept alive in our denomination, for he had the vision necessary to reach those who have not heard the Gospel. Today it is difficult to find men with the same amount of

dedication and willingness to do God's will at any cost as the Reverend Thomas H. Willey. But this is what is needed and required to accomplish great things for God.

A gift to the Willey Memorial Christmas Fund will help continue the work Brother Willey began in Latin America in 1936. △

CURRENTLY . . .

(Cont. from page 8)

night the council also passed on the third reading a tougher version of a "massage parlor" law, one which prohibits the touching of sexual parts for compensation. Other cities which have Free Will Baptist congregations are also being plagued with an upsurge of massage parlors, and Christians in these areas should speak out and do their part in getting similar ordinances passed.

Wesconnet FWB Church, Jacksonville, Florida, is one of several Free Will Baptist churches establishing libraries. As an added incentive to encourage the people to read, certificates will be given to those individuals who read 5, 10, 15 etc. books over a specific period of time, according to **Mrs. Faith Posten** who is acting as church librarian. **Howard Bass** pastors.

Although Free Will Baptists have been united under the umbrella of the National Association since 1935, there are several churches and associations in our fellowship whose existence predates the National by as many as 10 decades. This is true of **Arkansas' Old Mt. Zion Association**, which convened last August for its 135th annual session. The churches of the association reported receiving 80 new members by experience and baptism during the past associational year.

Sunday evening services at **Fellowship FWB Church, Kingsport, Tennessee**, are becoming the "in place" to be, according to a church spokesman. Many visitors, particularly from churches who do not have evening services, are being attracted to Fellowship's Sunday evening worship because "it moves at a good pace with no time lost for nonessentials; the Holy Spirit is able to move prior to and during the preaching of timely messages; the fellowship is great; and the services are usually dismissed by 8:30 p.m. so that school children can get home and into bed on time." **Pastor Winston Sweeney** feels that with a little effort on the part of the church family, there will soon be as many in the evening service as the morning.

Pastor James O'Dell, Bear Point FWB Church, Sesser, Illinois, reports that during Sunday school on the Sunday following their recent fall revival, there were 3 decisions made for Christ. The Sunday school hour is usually overlooked as the time for pulling in the net with the emphasis being given only in the worship service. Perhaps this will be a turning point for this church.

Pastor Bill Van Winkle, First FWB Church, Murfreesboro, Tennessee, believes in putting his people to work to reach campaign goals. Such was true prior to the October Sunday School Enlargement Campaign when he assigned a certain page of the

Murfreesboro phone book to each family. The families were to call each residence before October 1 and give the answering person an invitation to their church services. If every family in the church called one page, over 5,000 households and about 20,000 individuals would have been reached.

Pastor Dennis Wiggs, First FWB Church, Beaufort, North Carolina, is praising the Lord that since moving into a new building last February, the church has been able to pay most of the bills connected with the relocation and construction of the new church plant. The total cost of the new building, land and furnishings was approximately \$540,000, which was underwritten by a bond program.

It sounds as if the members of the **Woman's Auxiliary at First FWB Church, Vero Beach, Florida**, are extending their interest beyond that of missions. They are sponsoring a weekday session for "stretching, groaning and weighing in." I wonder if the sessions are voluntary or if **Pastor William Collins** encouraged them to follow the Apostle Paul's advice to "lay aside every weight . . ." that would hinder in the Christian race. Maybe the member's of some Master's Men groups should follow the example of these ladies.

It took real effort and work on the part of Sunday school teachers and members of the **First FWB Church, Garland, Texas**, but they surprised their pastor **David Archer** with an attendance of 169, far exceeding their goal of 118 for that Sunday. It was a good foretaste of what could be done in the Sunday School Enlargement Campaign and was only 14 shy of the record Sunday school attendance of 183.

In reading scores of church publications each month, I find that many of them do not bear dates. Since the postal service often takes from 1 to 2 weeks for delivery, it is hard to know to which Sunday reference is being made when the paper reads, "last Sunday" or "next Sunday" or "Sunday after next." I imagine members of the congregations also would appreciate dates now but particularly in the future if they refer back to previous publications. A printed date would also aid church staff members who might wish to check the files for statistics of a specific week of an earlier year.

This Bicentennial year **Florida's Salem Association of Free Will Baptists** honored its 4 oldest members at the annual session in October. The ministers are the **Reverends J. E. Nichols, J. C. Watson, J. W. Roberts and J. B. Lovering**. Brother Lovering was the only one able to be present for this special service conducted by the **Rev. Jim Pelt**, pastor of the host church, **Christian Home FWB Church, Blountstown, Florida**.

A group of Free Will Baptists have purchased land and begun to build a sanctuary in **Okeechobee, Florida**. The group

hoped to be worshipping in the building by Thanksgiving. The work is not under the sponsorship of a mission board. The mission has affiliated with Florida's **Indian River Association**.

With October being the month that our National Sunday School Department promotes the Fall Enlargement Campaign, accounts of several promotions were shared in church publications. Two of the most interesting yet practical ones, "Twin Sunday" and "Balloon Sunday," were staged at the **Guin FWB Church, Guin, Alabama**, where **Richard Cordell** pastors. On Twin Sunday each Sunday school member was urged to bring a "twin" who would be willing to stand up with him at the Sunday services. Physical resemblance was not a requirement, but the "twin" could not be a regular attendee of the Guin Sunday school. On Balloon Sunday approximately 500 balloons became airborne following the morning service. In each balloon was a slip of paper bearing John 3:16, the name of the church and of a person present that day. More exciting than the takeoff of the balloons could be the return of the balloons; for if the person who finds a balloon returns it to the church, he and the person whose name is on the paper will receive a gift. Pastor Cordell said they expected some balloons to be returned from out of state. However, that depends on which way the wind was blowing on Balloon Sunday.

Sunday, October 17, was an exciting day at **West Tulsa FWB Church, Tulsa, Oklahoma**. **Pastor Connie Carriker** and his faithful Sunday school workers saw 888 people in attendance for the Sunday school hour. This is a record for the church and for any Free Will Baptist church in Oklahoma. Approximately another 60 people were present for worship services, making the total attendance near the goal of 1,000. The growth has not come overnight but has occurred during the 13 years Brother Carriker has served with the congregation. This record is commendable.

In lieu of the traditional missionary conference, the students of **California Christian College** observed a Missions Emphasis Week, October 18-22. Missionary guests **Howard Gage, Lonnie Palmer and Frank Cousineau** were able to spend class sessions, chapel periods and special missions services in sharing their particular missionary burdens.

The news of **California Christian College** will now be carried in a publication called *Outlook*. College happenings were formerly a part of the state paper and carried under the column, "News-lette."

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

January—Bible Study Month

For Free Will Baptists

FOR RECOMMENDED LITERATURE, WRITE JANUARY BIBLE STUDY, P.O. BOX 1088, NASHVILLE, TN. 37202

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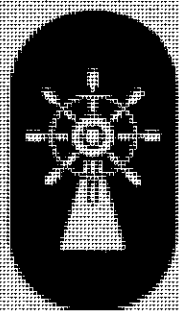
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FROM THE BRIDGE

“Hail, the Incarnate Deity”

By Rufus Collier
Executive Secretary

The phrase, “Hail the Incarnate Deity,” from the familiar Christmas carol, “Hark, the Herald Angels Sing,” echoes a fundamental truth of the Christian faith.

The Incarnate Deity was Jesus Christ, who laid aside His divine being and clothed Himself in human form. He, who was one in substance with God, identified Himself with the human family by assuming the nature of mankind. Through the virgin birth He, who was coeternal in rank and being with God, embodied the flesh of a human being. “Behold, the virgin shall be with child, and shall bear a Son, and they shall call His name Immanuel,” which translated means, “God with us.” (Matthew 1:23, NASV)

How Jesus Christ, the divine Son of God, became enfleshed in a human body is a great mystery. Yet it is a glorious fact which forms the heart and core of Christian doctrine. “The Word became flesh, and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, glory as of the only begotten from the Father, full of grace and truth” (John 1:14, NASV).

Without the incarnation of Christ, there would be no Christmas story to tell. In fact, the word “Christmas,” literally means “Christ-sent.” Thus, Christ was sent to bridge the gap between God and man.

Reveal God

Down through the centuries God had made Himself known by dreams, visions, direct communication, nature and by angels. Now God chose to reveal Himself through Jesus Christ. “No man has seen God at any time; the only begotten God, who is in the bosom of the

Father, He has explained Him” (John 1:18, NASV).

In John 14:9 Jesus affirms that “he that hath seen me hath seen the Father.” This truth is further stated in 1 John 5:20, “And we know that the Son of God has come, and has given us understanding, in order that we might know Him who is true, and we are in Him who is true, in His Son Jesus Christ.” Moreover, this is in accord with what Christ taught in Matthew 11:27, “No one knows the Son, except the Father, nor does anyone know the Father, except the Son, and anyone to whom the Son wills to reveal Him.”

Redeem Mankind

Because of sin man was estranged from God. The only way that lost mankind could be reconciled and restored to fellowship with God was through a redeemer. In order to provide redemption, “God sent forth His Son, born of a woman, born under the Law, in order that He might redeem those that were under the Law, that we might receive the adoption as sons” (Galatians 4:4-5, NASV).

Therefore, the incarnation was a prelude to Calvary. The plan of redemption could not be effected without the virgin-born Christ child coming into the world to provide an atoning sacrifice for sin. Thus, the eternal, immortal, invisible God robed Himself with the mantle of humanity and appeared on earth in the form of human flesh. No wonder Paul exclaimed, “Great is the mystery of godliness: God was manifest in the flesh.”

Peter said, “Christ also hath once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God” (1 Peter 3:18). The central truth of the Gospel is the redemptive work of Calvary “whereby God was in

Christ reconciling the world to himself.”

Rescue from the Devil

Another important reason why the Incarnate Christ came to earth was to deliver enslaved souls from the clutches of Satan and the power of temptation. This glorious truth is found in Hebrews 2:14-18.

Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, He also Himself likewise took part of the same, that through death He might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil. And deliver them who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage. For verily He took not on Him the nature of angels, but He took on Him the seed of Abraham. Wherefore in all things it behoved Him to be made like unto His brethren, that He might be a merciful and faithful high priest in things pertaining to God, to make reconciliation for the sins of the people. For in that He himself hath suffered being tempted, He is able to succor them that are tempted.

Satan is the arch-enemy of the believer. But through the power of Christ he is a defeated foe.

During His human existence here on earth, Christ knew what it meant to encounter Satan and his host of demonic powers. Yet He triumphed over the evil one. He sympathizes with us when we are attacked by the adversary. He hastens to our rescue in order that we might be victorious over the assaults of Satan. As our high priest (Hebrews 7:24-28), He intercedes for us that we may continue to live victorious over temptation.

Inasmuch as the Incarnate Christ came to reveal the reality of God, redeem us from sin, and rescue us from Satan, we are compelled to sing with renewed vigor this Christmas.

Christ, the highest heaven adored,
Christ, the everlasting Lord!
Late in time befo'ld Him come,
Offspring of the virgin's womb,
Veiled in flesh the Godhead see,
Hail the Incarnate Deity,
Pleased as man with men to dwell,
Jesus, our Immanuel.

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