



Contact

OFFICIAL PUBLICATION OF THE NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF FREE WILL BAPTISTS

JANUARY, 1978

The Maturing Christian
Personal Bible Study Can Be Exciting
Spiritual Pygmies
The House That Jack's Men Built



CORDELL



THOMAS



McALLISTER



JACKSON

SYMPOSIUM ON CHURCH GROWTH

Four prominent leaders analyze the problems of Free Will Baptist growing pains. Pastors Jim McAllister and Richard Cordell, evangelist Bobby Jackson, and National Home Mission Department Field Director Roy Thomas compare notes in exclusive CONTACT coverage.

What kinds of church growth are spoken of in the Bible?

THOMAS: Only one kind of church growth is spoken of in the Bible, and that is numerical growth.

Some may raise the question of financial growth. One preacher said, "Our church is not increasing in number, but we are taking in more money and own more property than ever before." The Laodicean Church said just before she died, "I am rich and increased with goods, and have need of nothing" (Revelation 3:17). The reason for additional property and larger buildings is to accommodate more people. So financial growth is only necessary as a means to reach more people.

Spiritual growth is taught as a means to numerical growth. Ephesians 4:11-16 reveals that workers are given to minister to the church so the members can

mature and the body increase. If the body does not increase, the members have not matured, and there is no true spiritual growth.

CORDELL: The fact is obvious. The church that grows numerically is the church that demonstrates the quality spiritual growth many people talk about but do not demonstrate.

McALLISTER: Acts 2:42 speaks of growth in doctrinal unity while Acts 2:47 says the church grew in fellowship, also.

What are some keys to church growth?

JACKSON: A Christ centered program and biblically based teaching ministry are basic keys to church growth. A continual evangelistic outreach through pulpit and personal contacts coupled with a qualified staff to carry it out are vital.

THOMAS: There is one key to church growth. It is evangelism (or soul winning.)

Every problem of the church will be solved by evangelism. When people get involved in evangelism, they will study their Bibles. They will pray, clean up their lives, and win people to Christ. This will put new people in the pews, increase the offerings, provide more workers, break up cliques, and fill the services with the joy of the Lord.

CORDELL: Leadership is the primary key. The pastor is the principal leader. Concern is a prime requisite. Commitment to a biblical mandate is essential.

There must be perpetual vision of a growing church and future planning which prepares for and anticipates growth. Then, of course, there has to be hard work on a continuing basis.

Why should we expect church growth?

McALLISTER: God has promised that if we meet His

conditions, we will be blessed. One of His blessings will be some degree of growth. Some rules apply to church growth. Congregations that understand church growth will grow. Congregations that want growth will grow. Churches that pray for growth will grow.

CORDELL: "God so loved the world" is more than a missionary phrase. It is a statement of priority. As the love of God is communicated to the lost world, converts are made and the church grows.

JACKSON: The church is a living organism. That which is alive grows.

Christ promised to build His church and predicted its success through the ages.

Is growth really necessary, and if so, why?

CORDELL: Growth is the only possibility for survival of the church. It is the only hope for the church to fulfill the will of God that all men hear the Gospel.

The Holy Spirit made a point of keeping up with the growth of the early church as recorded in Acts.

JACKSON: The only alternative is stagnation and ultimate death.

McALLISTER: To excuse ourselves for not growing is to go contrary to Scripture. The Bible promotes the idea of "increase." It has been said, "The moment you are born, you start dying." I don't believe we start dying until we stop growing. A church that is not showing growth is in a dying process.

What motivates church growth?

THOMAS: The Holy Spirit motivates church growth. The early church met in the upper room for fear of the Jews (John 20:19). But the Holy Spirit produced a boldness in them which caused them to rush out and turn the world upside down for Christ.

McALLISTER: An excited pastor can do much to motivate growth in the church. If the pastor knows and understands the rules of growth, has a vision of great goals, and sets out to excite his people, he can motivate them to see the need and possibility of growth.

What are hindering factors to church growth?

McALLISTER: Dead, lifeless, boring, nonevangelistic preaching. Unscriptural, dull singing. A cold, formal, unfriendly atmosphere in the church. All these plus a lack of unity usually brought about by communication gaps stifle growth.

CORDELL: Weak leadership by pastor, deacons and teachers. Discouragement, being overcome by circumstances, and simply maintaining the *status quo* or being content with a comfortable number.

THOMAS: Lack of faith, self-satisfaction and tradition. Every large church was in someone's heart and mind before it ever became large on a street corner.

If people don't think they can win souls, they can't.



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CONTACT

VOL. XXV, No. 1

Published monthly by the National Association of Free Will Baptists, Post Office Box 1088, Nashville, Tennessee 37202. Address all correspondence and subscriptions to this address. Subscription rates: 1 year, \$5.00; church family plan, \$4.20 per year; church bundle plan, 38 cents per copy. Individual copies 50 cents each. Second class postage paid at Nashville, Tennessee. Copyright privileges, reserved ©, 1978 Member of the Evangelical Press Association.

CHURCH GROWTH (from page 3)

God has never blessed unbelief. So a church must believe it can grow, or it will never grow. A church must want to grow!

Which of these hindering factors is the greatest obstacle to growth, and why?

JACKSON: I believe it's lack of evangelistic outreach. Many times this is caused by a poor image projected by the church in a community. Churches develop the no-growth, no-concern, no-outreach image. Such an image is a great barrier to reaching new people.

McALLISTER: The greatest obstacle would be hard to decide. An evangelistic church thrives on good Gospel preaching by a friendly, excited, compassionate preacher who is burdened over souls. However, unless he can lead the congregation to be friendly, people won't continue attending.

So I probably would say boring preaching would be the greatest obstacle.

THOMAS: Lack of faith is the greatest obstacle to church growth. If a church has faith that it can grow, it will overcome other obstacles.

CORDELL: Leadership must be the area to concentrate on. The pastor is of primary importance. He cannot be detoured by even the best of lay leadership. He is the greatest obstacle to growth. He is also the greatest motivation toward growth.

The primary leader is the positional factor. His position is dominant. His personal image and his positional image are traditionally sacred. Few try to outshine the pastor. If he is unpopular, he is moved elsewhere. But he must be moved since he cannot be a subordinate leader.

What can we do to overcome these barriers to church growth?

CORDELL: We need a campaign that starts with (not reaches) the grass roots level pastor. Our average pastor is woefully lacking in the basic skills for the pastorate.

THOMAS: Churches and pastors should study growing churches and learn from them.

McALLISTER: The pastor can build a fire under himself. He can reevaluate his ideas concerning the type of services he leads. He should reevaluate his own attitude toward the people and the church.

JACKSON: Ministries in music, preaching, teaching and visitation must be developed and built upon the keys to growth, such as Bible-based teaching and evangelism. Then the community should be saturated with the message that the church is such a church. This projects an image that attracts people to church.

What are some signs of church growth?

THOMAS: One sign of church growth is the existence today of the largest local churches that have ever existed. Among Free Will Baptists, we are enjoying the greatest time in our history for church growth. In

“Figures do not lie. If the church has the same or less attendance now than 10 years ago, it has not grown.”

the last few years the “300 Club” and “500 Club” have been organized by the National Sunday School Department for churches reaching those attendance averages. We have local churches with attendance over 1,000.

JACKSON: Spiritual attitudes among members are producing sacrifice, labor, unselfishness, harmony. These will result in a financial increase, an increase in workers and an increase in converts.

CORDELL: We have a few leading churches in our ranks that are doing a good job. However, we do not have the growth today we experienced a few years ago. I am afraid there are some sad reasons for this.

First, criticism has discouraged some who were trying hard to find ways to grow. (The critics were not growing either!)

Secondly, some have reached a level of contentment. The hard work such as the bus ministry has gotten old. Workers are not easily recruited.

Finally, denominationally we are not geared for growth. Programs do not produce growth. Example must precede programs. Our denomination will die if it continues its present pace!

How do we measure church growth?

THOMAS: Church growth can be measured by taking the average attendance for a given year and comparing the average attendance of subsequent years. Figures do not lie. If the church has the same or less attendance than 10 years ago, it has not grown.

McALLISTER: Long ago I heard, “A church does not exist except as it exists in the minds of the people in the community.” I believe we should measure a church by its influence for righteousness in a community and its outreach for souls.

Is the congregation reaching out at home and through missions to reach the unreached? Does the church have an influence for God in the community?

CORDELL: Usually we measure growth the way the Bible measures growth—by numbers! How many? It

is hypocritical to try to present growth any other way when we *all* measure success and growth numerically.

Do you see any evidence of growth in your local church?

McALLISTER: Yes, numerically the First Free Will Baptist Church, Farmington, Missouri, has grown from 130 to 400 in 3 1/2 years. Financially, our giving has tripled, and our denominational giving to home and foreign missions, Co-op Plan, FWBBC and Hillsdale College has greatly increased.

We have started a Christian school, taken strong stands in our community against ungodly living and practices, and reached the status where practically everyone in town knows about our church and its stand on most issues.

THOMAS: I am a member of Woodbine Free Will Baptist Church, Nashville, Tennessee. It is a growing church. The church began about 18 years ago in a house. Today it has a building which will seat 700, averages 400 in Sunday school, has a bus ministry, a day care ministry, a Christian school with all 12 grades, a deaf ministry, a teenage soul-winning ministry. Souls are saved in most of the services. Attendance is climbing each year.

CORDELL: We are growing very little in comparison to what we should be doing. I came to Guin Free Will Baptist Church, Guin, Alabama, in June, 1975. For 75 weeks prior to that the average was 157 in Sunday school. The high day had been 255 during a revival.

We have since reached 522 on a high day and averaged 216 for another 75 weeks. Now, that is some growth. We have added several programs to our existing organization. That too is growth. But I am disturbed over the apathy and contentment locally and throughout our denomination.

“Congregations that understand church growth will grow. Congregations that want to grow will grow. Churches that pray for growth will grow.”

How can Free Will Baptist churches experience growth?

THOMAS: Any Free Will Baptist church that wants to grow can grow. We need to realize it is not our doctrine, our name or our denominational association that hinders growth.

The lost are out there, and we can reach them if we will go after them. If our people, pastors and laymen alike, will get busy in personal soul winning, and if our churches will use every available means to win every available person at every available time, our churches will experience growth.

CORDELL: In the minds of most, these thoughts prevail: “We have arrived!” *or* “We can’t do it!”

Excuses dominate us. We must be willing to admit our need and cooperate in an effort to build strong evangelistic churches, or we will splinter off the ones who try and stagnate the rest.

McALLISTER: We must learn the rules of growth and maintain an evangelistic atmosphere and philosophy. The pastor must be sound in the Word yet exciting to hear. He must be in the place of leadership and know (or be finding) the proper steps to take to direct a growing congregation.

The church *must* build credibility in the community. When we speak, people should listen and care what we think. ▲

RECOMMENDED READING LIST

Working With Volunteer Leaders in the Church
Reginald M. McDonough (Broadman)

How Churches Grow
Donald McGavran (Friendship Press)

The Birth Care and Feeding of a Local Church
Donald J. MacNair (Baker)

Your Church Has Possibilities
Robert Schuller (Regal)

Understanding Church Growth
Donald McGavran (Eerdmans)

Why Churches Die
Hollis Green (Bethany Fellowship)

How To Grow A Church
Donald McGavran (Regal)

Dear Anita . . .

We've never met. But I know you. Like Joan of Arc, your crusade for righteousness has focused worldwide attention on you. Like Deborah of Judges, circumstances have chosen you to lead another army.

I salute you as a gentle, loving wife and mother. You are standing for Christian principles when many men would have faltered and stumbled. My hat is off to such a quiet, refined, cultured, artistic woman who has stepped out of the grandstands to engage in the conflict. Where did you get your training? Who taught you to articulate truth so well?

I belong to a staunchly fundamental group. My denomination has a 250-year-old unblemished record opposing the gay blades who traffic in homosexuality. But most of us sit comfortably in the top tiers of the stadium and watch the action through binoculars. We cannot involve ourselves like you. We've not been invited to participate in this superbowl of moral convictions.

Someone might throw a pie in our direction. Our jobs could be threatened. We don't have a renewed contract like you. Why our families might be exposed to public ridicule! Our reputations could be on the line. I supposed you noticed that we did not bus anyone down to Dade County, Florida, last summer to help you.

You are in the glasshouse. Hooray for you! You're carrying the ball. You haven't fumbled. You've run right up the middle and straight into the teeth of a hacksaw defense that knows no quarter. You're in a league where only you play by the rules. Your opponents set themselves up as both adversary and umpire. They suspend the rules of decency. The game is rigged. You can't even point out their unsportsmanlike conduct without whistles blowing and penalty flags flying.

But we're really cheering for you, Anita. Why we've been growling, passing resolutions and thumping pulpits. We've also shaken our heads in disgust at editorials written by radicals or liberal columnists vilifying you. We've heard the sick jokes by broad-minded comedians,

Briefcase



Dear Anita

catty actresses, and late night talk show hosts who are quick to scream for anybody's rights except yours.

You seem to have touched a nerve in the do-your-own-thing crowd. They've discovered that they're not as tolerant as they thought they were when the shoe is on the wrong foot. But rather than admit it, they've turned on you and hired top-dollar journalists to write material which depicts you as a narrow bigot.

None of us has a platform like you do. Mind you now, we've got the answer to this whole homosexual whirlpool. And what's more we can say it better than you can. Why we can whip the theological pizzazz on that gay tide so fast and so well with all our biblical prowess. At any rate you understand how it is.

Of course, we know you are under bombardment and catch the flak from all sides—biased media, gay activists, gay sympathizers, religious softies. It must be tough.

A few of us threatened an O J boycott if the Florida Citrus Commission had booted you out. We've not

launched a 100,000 person letter-writing campaign yet, but you never know. And we've not marched in the streets while we flashed "I love Anita" signs, but it's a thought.

Some of your critics drop the names of famous artists, writers and theater people who are gay as if that made everything all right. But it changes nothing. Truth is never determined by roll call. To justify homosexuality because one gay may have been a literary Pulitzer prizewinner makes about as much sense as becoming an alcoholic in order to write novels because Truman Capote claims to be one.

We all remember the Genesis account of a society where the norm was gay and the minority was straight. The gays of that day became violent when a fellow named Lot did not want to endorse their life-style (Genesis 19). Things got so out of hand it took a miracle of God to rescue Lot and the judgment of God to halt the Sodomites. Some of us think the same thing could happen today.

Like their ancient counterparts, 20th century gays don't just want the right to be what they choose. They lobby for public endorsement, government sanction, constitutional protection, the blessing of the church, and legal rebuff of any who question them.

This is more than a social problem. It is a legal catastrophe, a moral dilemma, a theological wasteland, a political time bomb.

An alternative life-style? A cultural preference? Balderdash.

Anita, my sister, you are confronting America's garbage dump values. Rubbish dwellers hurl foul rebukes at any who unmask them. Homosexuality isn't just wrong; *it is sin!* It is worse than sin; it is perversion. Twisted, deluded, life-crushing, society-eroding, home-destroying evil. It is dark and sinister. The case against homosexuality is far too serious to be cleansed by situation comedy sarcasm.

Gay, they call it—gay, indeed. The definition will not fit if they mean lively and joyous and merry. Their kind of gay is wanton and licentious. Gay bars, porno houses, bizarre sexual behaviour, and spiraling

crime rates all go hand in hand. We know that legislation can't really halt militant homosexuality. Nothing is ever going to justify and make right what God says is wrong. So what if statistics show that 5-10 percent of the total population is gay? Don't those same statistics show that 90-95 percent are not and don't want to be?

Anita, thank you for marshalling every resource available and attacking this creeping moral paralysis. You're doing well. Hope you have the strength to hold on. Please be careful, and don't take a misstep. That's all we need now is for you to crumble under the stress and lash out in bitterness.

We're for the news conference and the helpful books being written. Let Christian counselors, psychiatrists and psychologists wrestle with the problem. Bring in learned medical persons and students of human nature. Pour all human effort for decency into the struggle.

But the only sure and final answer is so simple as to be profound. Paul said it while writing to a group of Christians in Corinth to give them a list of life-styles that were under God's wrath (I Corinthians 6:9,10). Then he told a truth so great we still can only nod in agreement: "And such were some of you: but ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, and by the Spirit of our God."

There is hope for the homosexual just as there is hope for the thief—the same hope. Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ; confess personal sin; and forsake that sin. There'll be no practicing homosexuals in heaven for the same reason no extortionists will be there. But if we faithfully proclaim the power of God, heaven may have a surprising number of former homosexuals.

A parting word, Anita. Your game plan is working. Your strategy is accomplishing two things. First, it has Gays, Inc. stalled and on the defensive. Second, your action is like a trumpet in the mountains rallying the troops of God. Your effort has not been in vain. Your accolades await the day when the King shall whisper to you, "Well done, good and faithful servant; enter in. . . ." ▲

THE ATTACK PROGRAM: OPPORTUNITIES UNLIMITED

Roger Reeds

Free Will Baptists have never had an opportunity like they have today. We are one of the few Bible-believing, Bible-preaching denominations left in America. We have had a slow growth over the past several decades. It is time now for us to accelerate and grow rapidly.

In presenting our denomination with the challenge to reach an enrollment of one million in Sunday school by 2000, the Sunday School Department wished to serve as a catalyst in our move to reach the lost with the Gospel. Now we, along with the Home Mission Board, are presenting a plan that can readily become the means to that end. That plan is ATTACK!

Attack is an adaptation of the Action plan of Southern Baptists. We are using the program with their complete permission. The program has been reworked entirely to meet the specific needs of Free Will Baptists.

The Action program began with Southern Baptist Pastor Andy Anderson. Anderson came to pastor Riverside Baptist Church, Fort Myers, Florida, in 1956. The church grew from a membership of 599 to 2,000. Average Sunday school attendance increased from 225 to over 900.

Then Mr. Anderson was in an automobile accident that nearly took his life. Upon his recovery and return to his pulpit, the church ceased to grow. As Anderson analyzed the lack of growth, he hit upon the Action plan.

His Sunday school rolls showed

attendance averaged 40 percent of the enrollment present on any Sunday. A check of denominational records revealed that the enrollment-attendance percentage was approximately the same.

It is that basic rule or law that forms the foundation of our Attack program.

EXPLAINING THE ATTACK PRINCIPLE

Here is how the law of enrollment-attendance works.

The Sunday school with an enrollment of 500 probably has an attendance between 200 and 300 each week (40 to 60 percent). It is the church's desire to have 500 people in attendance each week. The law of enrollment-attendance says the school cannot average 500 in attendance if the enrollment is only 500. There is but one way to increase the attendance to 500: The enrollment must be increased. And the enrollment-attendance law says it must be increased to 840-1,250, depending on whether the school averages 40 or 60 percent of enrollment. Once the enrollment has increased, 500 will be in Bible study each week.

It has been proven that a church with an aggressive, outreaching program of enrollment will average 40 percent of its enrollment in attendance. A few churches average more, but a high average is often an indication of stagnation rather than growth! It usually means a lack of enrollment emphasis, resulting in a



ATTACK (from page 7)

high percentage of regular attenders.

The idea of Attack is to enroll new Sunday school members anywhere, anytime and under any circumstances. There are only two prerequisites:

1. They are not enrolled in another Sunday school.
2. They agree to be enrolled.

At his church, Andy Anderson experimented with the idea for 10 months. In that period the church increased its enrollment from 1,000 to 1,650 and their average attendance from 400 to 650 or 40 percent of their enrollment.

The purpose of this presentation is not to champion any one denomination or church and say they are the ideal. The purpose is to discover the ways and means that Sunday schools grow. Church workers may not be able to use every idea that is advanced, and they may not agree with everything that is said. Perhaps they can glean something of value to use in their Sunday schools.

INITIATING THE ATTACK PROGRAM

Begin with concern and commitment.

Napoleon Hill of *Think and Grow Rich* fame identified a burning desire as the starting point of all achievement. To illustrate he told the story of the great merchant Marshall Field, who stood on State Street, Chicago, along with a group of other merchants on the morning after the great fire. Every man's business house was in ashes, and they were debating whether to stay in the destroyed city or go somewhere else to begin anew. All the others chose to leave, but not Field.

He pointed a finger to the heap of smoldering ruins where his store had stood the day before. "Gentlemen, on that very spot I will build the world's greatest store, no matter how many times it may burn down," he said. Field did what he promised, Hill says in his book, because of a burning desire to achieve. A church and church leaders likewise must have a burning desire—and that desire must be to reach people for Christ.

Turn commitment into reality—Attack!

The Southern Baptist Convention has led the way in Sunday school growth for the last 50 years. It all began in 1920 when Arthur Flake, a layman, went to work for their Sunday School Board as head of the Department of Sunday School Administration. In this position he did his major life work. In 1922 he wrote *Building a Standard Sunday School*, which outlined basic laws that contribute toward building larger Sunday schools. He developed, standardized and popularized a philosophy and methodology of Sunday school organization and administration on which most of the present Southern Baptist Sunday school program is based.

In 1927 he suggested a 25-year program in which the "Laws of Sunday School Growth" would be applied. His motto for the program was "52 to 1 by 52." This sounds like a mathematical equation, but it meant simply that Southern Baptist churches ranked 52nd in 1927 and that by the end of 1952 they would rank first in Sunday school enrollment among denominations.

*"Attack is only
a plan, and God
does not anoint
plans but people."*

Ironically Arthur Flake died in 1952 at 90, but he lived to see his denomination move to second place numerically. Since 1952 Southern Baptists have reached the goal of first place that Arthur Flake coveted for them.

Flake's three laws of Sunday school enrollment which culminated in that group's skyrocketing growth are simple but powerful maxims.

1. Enrollment includes both attenders and nonattenders.

No Sunday school has 100 percent attendance of Sunday school enrollment. No Sunday school has 0 percent attendance of enrollment. The average attendance will normally be 40 percent to 60 percent of total enrollment.

2. Attendance increases as enrollment increases.

Increased enrollment means increased attendance. The formula is $E = p + a$, or $1,000E$ (Enrollment) + $500p$ (present) + $500a$ (absent). If the numerical value of E is raised, the equation result increases accordingly.

3. Decreased enrollment results in decreased attendance.

When the enrollment is pruned, the result is a decline in attendance. The only reasons for removal of people from the rolls are death, moving away and joining another Sunday school.

SURVIVING THE ATTACK PROBLEMS

Be willing to risk.

People will accuse you of playing the "numbers game." The church must become concerned about numbers. God desires them; Jesus desires them; the church should desire them. We are not concerned about numbers just for the sake of numbers but for the sake of souls. Someone has said that we ought to be hearthunters instead of headhunters.

People will accuse you of neglecting quality in favor of quantity. But can there be quality in a program where there is no emphasis on quantity, no emphasis on reaching every possible person for Christ?

A third risk is the possible lowering of the average attendance. If the church is more interested in averages than anything else, this risk may be extremely great. Some will reject an enrollment program because of the possibility of seeing this average decline. They prefer the seeming quality of a high attendance level to the actual presence of men and women, boys and girls.

Yet look at the alternatives. With no enrollment emphasis at all, the enrollment gradually declines, and declining enrollment inevitably means a lower actual attendance.

Does the church want a lower actual attendance? With an emphasis on percentages, the tendency is to keep paring the rolls of excess or nonattending members. Here again the smaller roll seems to produce a higher percentage of attendance. What it produces in reality is a lower actual attendance.

Another risk is that many new people may not be "our kind of people." Many churches are located in changing neighborhoods. Many are yet located in the inner cities. Many are being surrounded with apartments. These churches face the challenge: What to do about the different kinds of people who live around us?

"The only reasons for removal of people from the rolls are death, moving away and joining another Sunday school."

Still another risk is the possibility of foot-dragging and criticism by the more staid members of a congregation. "We have never done it that way" has been called "the seven last words of the church!" by Ralph Neighbour Jr. But still these words are too often heard. The pastor, Sunday school director and progressive leadership must decide whether those who have too little faith to see what God can do will determine the direction of the church program, or whether the church will be led and directed by the Holy Spirit.

COOPERATIVE PLAN OF SUPPORT				
November, 1977				
RECEIPTS:	November '77		Nov. '76	Yr. to date
	State	Co-op			Design.
Alabama	\$. . .	\$. . .	\$ 28.00	\$ 1,977.09
Arizona	. . .	. . .	. . .	1,305.97
Arkansas	3,391.54	. . .	3,232.10	24,024.12
California	869.83	. . .	738.14	8,976.58
Florida	192.83	. . .	2,259.55	359.51
Georgia	115.00	(80.00)	227.42	1,760.91
Hawaii	100.00	. . .	. . .	100.00
Idaho	252.55	. . .	104.76	449.14
Illinois	1,324.90	. . .	851.43	13,434.34
Indiana	. . .	. . .	. . .	200.00
Iowa	. . .	. . .	526.75	2,459.59
Kansas	. . .	. . .	89.78	1,126.18
Maryland	130.00	. . .	85.00	957.02
Michigan	. . .	. . .	. . .	1,453.76
Mississippi	104.26	. . .	78.15	1,099.94
Missouri	5,054.70	(5,054.70)	4,348.47	47,450.94
New Mexico	. . .	. . .	. . .	312.94
North Carolina	174.00	(54.00)	175.00	1,787.41
Northwest Assoc.	. . .	. . .	57.16	738.12
Ohio	851.59	. . .	4,374.01	8,340.10
Oklahoma	6,843.15	(6,648.23)	5,044.91	54,567.02
Tennessee	699.32	(18.00)	932.45	11,258.88
Texas	. . .	. . .	292.01	1,882.20
Virginia	27.65	. . .	78.48	302.76
Virgin Islands	125.00	. . .	128.00	915.00
West Virginia	19.80	. . .	39.95	293.67
Totals	\$ 20,276.12		\$ 23,691.52	\$ 187,533.19
DISBURSEMENTS:				
Executive Office	\$5,053.87	\$(1,538.62)	\$ 2,933.98	\$ 69,863.20
Foreign Missions	5,154.22	(3,874.64)	6,185.26	40,756.41
Bible College	3,345.74	(2,106.81)	4,927.09	25,798.03
Home Missions	2,884.63	(2,018.03)	3,836.57	22,458.96
Church Training Serv.	1,719.73	(983.83)	2,689.98	12,575.68
Retirement & Ins.	1,439.59	(850.87)	2,203.50	10,546.21
Layman's Board	545.72	(374.03)	732.00	4,043.18
Commission on Theological Liberalism	132.62	(108.10)	163.16	1,110.03
Other Ministries	. . .	. . .	19.98	381.49
Totals	\$ 20,276.12		\$ 23,691.52	\$ 187,533.19

Saturate the program with prayer. Attack will not be successful unless it is wrapped in prayer. It is only a plan, and God does not anoint plans but people.

Whenever church committees meet to organize the program, they must establish the plans in prayer. Every meeting must be held in the spirit of the Spirit.

The leaders should meet daily to seek God's guidance. Charles Spurgeon said, "If the anointing which we bear comes not from the Lord of hosts, we are deceivers, since only in prayer can we obtain it.

Let your fleece lie on the threshing floor of supplication till it is wet with dew of heaven."

Here is a plan that will work but only if we work the plan. Many Free Will Baptists are becoming involved in the Attack program. Are you?

ABOUT THE WRITER: Dr. Roger Reeds is director of the Free Will Baptist Sunday School Department, Nashville, Tennessee. ▲

The ATTACK Plan manual can be ordered from Randall House Publications, P.O. Box 17306, Nashville, Tennessee 37217. The manual price is \$3.95. Other ATTACK aids may be ordered from the same address.

*The pygmy phenomenon has its
parallel in the church. Yes,
in the church we have*

SPIRITUAL PYGMIES

Rufus Coffey
Executive Secretary

A *pygmy* is a person small in stature. Groups of dwarflike people populate Africa, Asia, Malaysia and several other areas of the Central and South Pacific Ocean. They are abnormally small because their height only ranges between 4'5" and 4'8". Consequently, their growth appears to be stunted.

The pygmy phenomenon has its parallel in the church. Many believers have never fully developed to "the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ." Impaired growth has left them spiritually dwarfed. Instead of attaining God's design for a full-grown spiritual stature, these "babes in Christ" have not progressed beyond infancy. They might be characterized as spiritual pygmies because their Christian growth is stymied.

But God wants believers to grow and develop from their infantile stage through childhood and adolescence to spiritual adulthood. Just as natural laws of growth exist and function under normal circumstances, God has provided the means for spiritual progress. By God's grace, the power of the Holy Spirit and strength derived from God's Word, God's children are able to advance to a higher level of maturity.

GROWTH THROUGH THE WORD

Paul exhorted the Ephesian Christians to "grow up!" The command in Hebrews 6:1 (Amplified Bible) is even more forceful: "Let us go on and get past the elementary stage in the teachings and doctrine of Christ, the Messiah, advancing steadily toward the completeness and perfection that belongs to spiritual maturity."

This is accomplished by feeding upon solid food rather than continuing on a milk diet. God expects believers to progress beyond the bottle-fed state to the more solid nourishment of meat. As Phillips expresses in Hebrews 5:12, 13, "Anyone who continues to live on milk is obviously immature—he simply has not grown up."

Spiritual growth begins with believers studying, learning and applying God's Word to their daily lives. The Scriptures are profitable for teaching, refuting error, correcting those who go astray and instructing believers in God's way.

Believers are perfected. This means that believers are fully equipped and complete through the knowledge and growth gained from being saturated in the Scriptures.

GROWING THROUGH FAITH

When believers allow God's Word

to dwell in them richly, their faith increases. Faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the Word of God. The Thessalonian Church was commended because their faith was growing exceedingly (11 Thessalonians 1:3).

Faith is believing God and resting one's confidence in His revealed Word. It reckons upon the facts that what God has spoken is true and that His promises are reliable. Faith is exhibited by obedience to the Word. It is demonstrated by the godly conduct of a transformed life.

The Christian life is nurtured by faith. It begins in faith, continues in faith and ends in faith. This is why a believer ceases to grow when he ceases to believe. Therefore, Christians must "stand fast in the faith." Perseverance in the faith is essential to growth.

GROWING THROUGH PRAYER

A growing faith produces an active prayer life. When Paul heard of the faith, love and hope exhibited by believers at Colosse, he wrote, "We also, since the day we heard it, do not cease to pray for you" (Colossians 1:9).

Faith-inspired prayer expresses itself in earnest petition, persistent intercession and continuous thanksgiving. No growth can be accomplished apart from a deep, consistent prayer life.

GROWING THROUGH SERVICE

Paul's prayer for the spiritual health of God's people at Colosse also included the petition, "Being fruitful in every good work" (Colossians 1:10). Believers are to show the reality of their salvation by their service. They are to exercise their spiritual gifts through activities or ministries primarily directed toward fellow believers. Through exhibiting good works, believers display spiritual vitality.

The natural outflow of a life committed to Christ is our reasonable service (Romans 12:1). The manifestation of God's mercies

challenges us to present ourselves "a living sacrifice" for service to God and to fellow believers. In order for us to fulfill our spiritual service, God has given particular gifts (Romans 12:3-13; Ephesians 4:11-16; 1 Corinthians 12:4-11, 28). These gifts are to be utilized in building up the body of believers.

Christ set the example for service, and a dedicated servant will follow in His steps.

GROWING THROUGH FELLOWSHIP

The local church is a body of believers united through the Holy Spirit by love and fellowship. This spiritual unity and oneness of purpose expresses itself in concern for one another's welfare. Christian fellowship is the sharing of a common life in Christ. This mutual association binds believers together in common interests, common goals and common responsibilities.

Christians grow and mature as they join with other believers in congregational study, soul winning and mutual efforts to strengthen one another's faith. Spiritual fellowship is absolutely essential to growth.

GROWING THROUGH WORSHIP

Believers also grow through daily communion with God. Active involvement in worship is necessary to sustain spiritual growth because God is the source of our spiritual strength.

The new life begotten in us by the Holy Spirit is cultivated as we adore God, our Creator, and Christ Jesus, our Redeemer. Through the Holy Spirit we commune with God in prayer, praise, thanksgiving and meditation upon the Word. True worship always results in revitalized faith and service.

The early church set the example of worship in Acts 2:46, 47. We are exhorted further in Hebrews 10:19-25 to come boldly into the holy presence of God. All believers, without exception, have access to God through Christ, our great high priest. Public worship with fellow

believers enables us to grow and mature as saints.

GROWING IN LOVE

Of all the virtues and graces with which the Christian is adorned, love

*"The garment of
love unifies
all other graces
and weaves them
together to
produce a life
robed with the
beauty of Christ."*

is foremost. In Colossians 3:14 it is characterized as "the bond of perfectness." The garment of love unifies all other graces and weaves them together to produce a life robed with the beauty of Christ.

Love is the supreme manifestation of the composite fruit of the Spirit in the believer's life. In Galatians 5:22 it stands first in line as the fruit of the Spirit. Paul in 1 Corinthians 13:13 recognizes the

(Continued on page 12)

SPIRITUAL PYGMIES
(Continued from page 11)

priority of love. Therefore, no growth can be experienced unless love reigns supremely. Love for God and our fellow believer is the fulfillment of the law. And if we love one another, God's love is perfected in us (Romans 13:8).

GROWING IN GRACE

Numerous elements enter into the believer's growth. We must allow the Holy Spirit to show us various areas where we need to grow. For instance, churches are paralyzed financially when believers do not grow in their stewardship responsibilities. Other believers are defeated in their personal Christian experience because they have not grown sufficiently to resist the world, the flesh and the devil. Instead of being victorious in the daily conflicts of life, they are overcome by constant defeats. What is the answer?

The resounding promise of God's Word echoes, "My grace is sufficient." After God saves a believing sinner, He imparts by grace spiritual power to live in accordance with His revealed will. This divine energy which enables the believer to grow and reach spiritual maturity is called *grace*. God in mercy bestowed His grace unmeritoriously to equip believers to fulfill their spiritual responsibilities. Grace is the divine dynamic that removes all human excuses and brings the believer into conformity to the image of God's Son. Grace is the standard whereby maturity is measured.

The goal of the Christian life is spiritual maturity. But growing up is not instantaneous. It is a continuing process. It takes time to develop spiritually. But as we appropriate all the means of grace available and apply the truth of God's Word, we can begin to experience new growth.

As we gain new vitality, we will rise to a new level of maturity. God designed us to be strong and vibrant, not to be pygmies.



FREE WILL BAPTIST

newsfront

SALEM BIBLE COLLEGE HOSTS FLORIDA STATE ASSOCIATION

SALEM, FA—The Florida State Association met on the campus of Salem Bible College, Salem November 2-4, 1977. More than 150 participated in the three-day session. Gene Helton moderated the November gathering.

The association theme emphasis was "Go! Bring Forth Fruit." Developmental messages were preached by Florida ministers Bill George, Gary Fry and Norlin Jones. Out of state guest lecturer Harrold Harrison, Sunday School Department, Nashville, Tennessee, provided an afternoon Sunday school workshop and seminar.

Executive Committee recommendations dominated business sessions. The committee endorsed the inclusion of both Church Training Service and Retirement and Insurance Departments in state cooperative giving allotment. Gary Fry was named editor of the state paper, *The Co-Ordinator*.

After careful consideration the Executive Committee's proposal regarding Salem College was accepted. State delegates voted to *not* assume complete control and financial responsibility for the school. Cooperative gifts to the institution will remain the same as 1977.

TENNESSEE VOTES MOVIE OPPOSITION

ELIZABETHTON, TN—"WHEREAS, two movies are in the planning stage, namely *The Passover Plot* and *The Many Faces of Jesus*, and

WHEREAS, the name of Jesus is blasphemed,

BE IT RESOLVED that the Tennessee State Association of Free Will Baptists voice strong objection to these films and urge our churches to inform their people of evils of the films and lead other people to oppose them."

The adoption of this resolution was but one important action of representatives of seven district associations in Tennessee, November 7-9. "Proclaiming the Truth" was the theme of the 40th annual session of the Tennessee State Association of Free Will Baptists which met at East Side Free Will Baptist Church, Elizabethton.

The keynote message was delivered by Dr. Charles Thigpen, dean of Free Will Baptist Bible College. He also directed workshops on pastoral relationships. Other speakers included Jerry Gibbs, missionary to France; Wallace Hayes, pastor of the new mission in Lebanon, Tennessee; and Bill Johnson, pastor of First Church, Erwin.

Approval was given to the purchase of five acres for location of a new church in Lebanon.

During the three days 78 ministers were registered, along with 81 delegates and 188 visitors.

Clarence Phillips was reelected moderator; Dann Patrick, assistant moderator; R. Eugene Waddell, clerk; Earl Langley, assistant clerk; and I. L. Stanley, treasurer.

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CHURCH CLIMAXES DECADE OF GROWTH

O'FALLON, MO—On October 16, 1977, Pastor Donald Lombard and members of First Free Will Baptist Church, O'Fallon celebrated 10 years hard work when they dedicated an additional sanctuary and educational facility. The new 40' x 70' building is slightly larger than the original structure completed in 1971.

Missouri Promotional Secretary Clarence Burton delivered the dedication sermon. He was assisted by Russell Spurgeon, pastor of Trinity Free Will Baptist Church, Bridgeton and by host pastor Lombard.

First Church, O'Fallon was launched as a Missouri home mission project in 1966. The group organized with 23 members June, 1967. Attendance tripled in three years. A worship site seating 225 was built in 1971. With the 1977 construction completed, seating capacity at First Church has increased to 450. Membership stands at 195.

Donald and Carolyn Lombard have served the O'Fallon Church for nearly eight years.

ALABAMA STATE ASSOCIATION ATTRACTS 400

EUFULA, AL—The combined state association and ministers and deacons meeting brought overflow crowds to Sardis Free Will Baptist Church, Eufaula, November 10-12. Moderator Jack L. Rollins in his third year of leadership guided the business sessions of the state association. Rev. W. B. Hughes led the ministers and deacons conference.

Delegates to the meeting voted to endorse Anita Bryant's stand against the homosexual issue. The same resolution calls for letters to be sent to Miss Bryant and the Florida Citrus Commission affirming



Pastor Donald Lombard looks across parking lot of new sanctuary at First Church, O'Fallon, Missouri.

this action.

In other business a motion was referred to the state Executive Committee to study the possibility of using an auditorium for future state associations rather than a local church. A report will be forthcoming at the 1978 session.

Ron Edgil, Nate Ange, Bob Shockey and Wayne Phillips preached during the state association. Preceding the state association, the ministers and deacons meeting sponsored a one-day "Family Relationships Program." Dr. Melvin Worthington spoke on the relationship of husband and wife; Danny Thompson, on relationship of parents and children; E. B. Ledlow, on relationship of home and church.

Alabama physican Dr. David H. Pope addressed 114 early risers at a 7 a.m. layman's breakfast.

State board elections were as follows: Mission Board W. B. Hughes (1984) and E. B. Ledlow (1981); Christian Education Board Bobby Peters (1982) and Ricky Cash (1979); Retirement and Insurance Board O. Z. Johnson (1982); Children's Home Board Jesse Womack, Maxwell Harper and Doug Carlisle.

The 1978 session will meet in Winfield, Alabama, November 9-11. State pastors and laymen were encouraged to attend a February 15-18 pastors and workers conference in Dothan, Alabama. Keynoting the conference will be nationally recognized church growth analyst Dr. Elmer Towns.

REV. NEWTON P. GATES CALLED HOME

DETROIT, MI—Rev. Newton P. Gates, 83, of Detroit, died in the Arnold Home, Detroit. He was born February 18, 1894, in Clay County, Arkansas.

Mr. Gates was the founder and first pastor of First Free Will Baptist Church, Hazel Park, which was the first Free Will Baptist church in the state in 1938. He was also the founder of the Liberty Association of Free Will Baptist Churches of Michigan and the founder and first pastor of Free Will Baptist Temple, Detroit.

He received a professor of music degree from the Arkansas State Normal Music College and wrote gospel hymns.

His wife Virgia West Gates, whom he married on February 25, 1917, in Arkansas, died on January 1, 1973.

Surviving are two sons Graydon D. of Troy and Lowell W. of Warren; a daughter Mrs. Raymond (Winona Mae) Riggs of Cookeville, Tennessee; a half-sister; 9 grandchildren; and 11 great-grandchildren.

Funeral services were conducted at Central Free Will Baptist Church, Royal Oak. Rev. Charles Cooper of Troy Free Will Baptist Church and Rev. Milton Worthington of Central Free Will Baptist Church, Royal Oak officiated.

Burial was in Roseland Park Cemetery, Berkley.

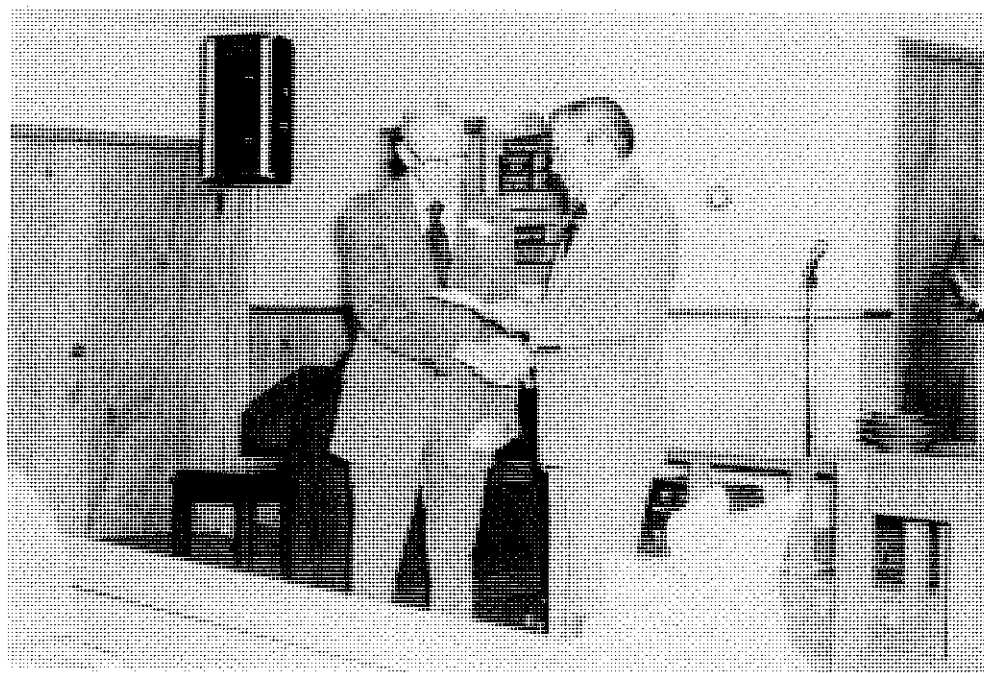
(Continued on page 14)

**LETTER FROM PASTOR RESULTS
IN GOVERNOR'S PROCLAMATION**

VERNON, AL—Rev. Milton Gann, pastor of Liberty Free Will Baptist Church, Vernon, wrote Alabama Governor George Wallace informing him of the church's successful Senior Citizens Day on Sunday, November 20.

Governor Wallace responded warmly, "I think your idea is a great one, and I would certainly be delighted to proclaim the Sunday before Thanksgiving as Senior Citizens Day in Alabama."

The November Senior Citizens Day attracted 200 to Liberty Church. Special recognitions were given to 42 men and women, all over 65. Gann said that November 20 was a great day in the history of the church; "I hope this gesture of appreciation that took place at Liberty will inspire other churches to show special honors to the seniors



Pastor Gann presents Mr. Thomas Hankins a certificate for being the oldest member of Liberty Free Will Baptist Church.

of our society."

Certificates were presented to deacons who had rendered special services. A certificate of appreciation was also awarded Mr. Thomas Hankins for being the oldest member. Mr. Hankins at 93 may be the oldest member attending

regularly any Free Will Baptist church.

Along with certificates, corsages and special seating arrangements in the church's sanctuary, a luncheon was served in honor of these special people after the morning worship service.

'CTS IS TOPS' DRAWS ENTRIES FROM 14 STATES

NASHVILLE, TN—Fifty Free Will Baptist Church Training Services in 14 states were represented in the 1977 National CTS Promotional Campaign, "CTS is TOPS."

The Campaign was conducted during the month of September. The attendance for each of the four Sundays was measured against the average attendance in CTS for March, April, and May, 1977. Tabulation of the results revealed that those churches which utilized all the promotional plans and programs together with their own initiative and creativity reaped the greatest increase.

National awards will be given in each of the four divisions to the top church with the largest percentage of increase in attendance in CTS. The following is a compilation of winners and runners-up.

TOP ATTENDANCE GAINERS

	SPRING AVG.	SEPT. AVG.	PERCENT. OF INCRS.
DIVISION A (150 and up):	No Results Submitted		
DIVISION B (100-149):			
Woodbine Church, Nashville, TN— <i>Winner</i> Elro Driggers, pastor; Rex Lynn, director	133	153	15%
DIVISION C (50-99):			
First Church, Blakely, GA— <i>Winner</i> Donnie Hicks, pastor; Charles English, director	77	109	42%
Fellowship Church, Flat River, MO— <i>1st runner-up</i> Grant Saverance, pastor; Mike Creech, director	67	84	25%
Valley Forge Church, Elizabethton, TN— <i>2nd runner-up</i> Arther Luster, pastor; Carl Roberson, director	63	78	24%
DIVISION D (49 and below):			
Stacy Church, Stacy, NC— <i>Winner</i> Thomas Rolan, pastor; Leon E. Peppers, director	25	61	144%
First Church, Monett, MO— <i>1st runner-up</i> Dr. James Davis, pastor; Pearl Alexander, director	35	68	94%
Fellowship Church, Bryan, TX— <i>2nd runner-up</i> Johnny Williams, pastor; Gene Stuenkel, director	45	66	47%

NEW CHURCH FILLED AT MISSISSIPPI STATE MEETING

GREENVILLE, MS—Pastor Wendell Walley and members of First Free Will Baptist Church, Greenville welcomed 125 delegates and visitors as they hosted the Mississippi State Association November 4 and 5. The new brick structure is a product of Mississippi home missions.

Mississippians attended a one day Bible conference as well as the state Woman's Auxiliary Convention in addition to the regular state association activities.

Delegates voted a constitutional change allowing the state Home Mission Board to elect its own treasurer from among its members and keep its own books. Until this session the state association treasurer was also the mission board treasurer. Voting members accepted a resolution to assure an annual pastors' and laymens' retreat on the state level. The body gave a unanimous salute to A. V. Armstrong, state treasurer, in appreciation for 11 years service.

Speakers for the associational

meeting were Bill Smith and Mark Daniel. Bible Conference speakers included Mike Mutchler, Mike Jones, Bill Roberson and Dan Gaskins. Helen Ketteman was keynote speaker at the Woman's Auxiliary banquet.

Officers elected for 1978 were Moderator William E. Atkinson, Assistant Moderator Luther Gibson, Clerk Dan Gaskins, Treasurer A. V. Armstrong, editor of state paper Dan Gaskins. Elected to terms on state boards were Dwight Fletcher, Home Missions (1982); Mike Mutchler, Christian Education (1982); Mark Daniel, Conference Board and Itinerate Ministries (1980); Floyd Barber, Historical Commission (1980); Wayne Yarborough (1980) and Jimmy Walley (1978), State Auditing Committee; Charles Walden, Children's Home.

Charles Henderson of Corinth Church, Waynesboro was elected as the Master's Men state senator.

The 1978 State Association will convene with the Fellowship Church, Richton.

LAYMAN DOYLE TERRY CLARIFIES STATUS

HANFORD, CA—Layman's Board member Doyle Terry verified that he does hold membership in a Free Will Baptist church that is affiliated with the National Association of Free Will Baptists.

Terry is a Free Will Baptist worker of long standing. At the time of the 41st annual national convention in Detroit last July, Mr. Terry was a member of a Free Will Baptist church which had, against his wishes, temporarily withdrawn from the local state association.

While that matter is being resolved, Brother Terry has joined the Hanford Free Will Baptist Church, Hanford, California. It should be understood that Doyle Terry's commitment to Free Will Baptist doctrine was never at any time called into question. The action cited by CONTACT in its September issue, page 10, was simply a move on the part of the National Association to insure that Brother Terry could continue to serve unencumbered on the National Layman's Board. His term expires in 1981.

'FORWARD TO VICTORY' CAMPAIGN NETS MODERATE GROWTH

NASHVILLE, TN—Free Will Baptist churches from 26 different states participated in the "Forward To Victory" Fall Enlargement campaign sponsored by the Free Will Baptist Sunday School Department. An average net increase of 51.31 percent was posted by first and second place winners in the eight different divisions. The net increase for all those reporting was 23.61 percent.

Several new names of participating churches appear among the winners in their divisions.

Appropriate trophies are being awarded the first and second place winners

Division	Church	Mar-May Avg.	Camp. Avg.	Increase
A	No Winner			
B 1st	West Tulsa, Tulsa, OK	411	484	17.76%
C 1st	First, Erwin, TN	304	384	26.32%
C 2nd	Mt. Calvary, Hookerton, NC	353	440	24.65%
D 1st	Capitol Hill, Oklahoma City, OK	231	300.4	30.04%
D 2nd	Central, Johnson City, TN	204	260	27.45%
E 1st	Victory, Goldsboro, NC	157	234	49.04%
E 2nd	First, Ada, OK	174	249.4	43.33%
F 1st	Boger City, Lincoln, NC	104	183	75.96%
F 2nd	Village Chapel, Ceres, CA	111	175	57.66%
G 1st	Victory, Andrews, SC	60	101	68.33%
G 2nd	Dibble, Dibble, OK	65.3	102.6	57.02%
H 1st	Raccoon, Greenup, KY	25	49	96. %
H 2nd	Grace, DeQueen, AR	15	29	93.33%



FWB NEWSFRONT
(Cont. from page 15)

JIM PURSELL
NAMED ARKANSAS
CTS DIRECTOR



JIM PURSELL

CONWAY, AR—The Reverend Jim Pursell, Van Buren, Arkansas, native, was designated Arkansas' first state CTS director during the August state association. Pursell has since resigned his eight-year pastorate at Eastside Free Will Baptist Church, Muldrow, Oklahoma, to assume the newly created position.

His duties include coordinating year-round Camp Beaverfork activities in addition to church training leadership. He will promote youth activities in state, quarterly and local church meetings. The responsibility of renting youth camp facilities to non-Free Will Baptist groups flows through his office. Camp development and maintenance procedures also accompany the new CTS director. In addition, Pursell will serve as state CTS treasurer.

Jim, Brenda and their 2 sons (Wade and Randy) have experienced success in children's church and bus ministries. They plan workshops for interested congregations. The Pursells are widely known and well-received throughout the Arkansas State Association.

LEADERSHIP CONFERENCE
UNDERScores COOPERATION

NASHVILLE, TN—Free Will Baptist leaders from 14 states met in the Nashville area December 6-9 for the annual Leadership Conference. Orientation sessions at the highly mobile meeting moved from the Sunday School Department, 114 Bush Road; to Free Will Baptist Bible College, 3606 West End Avenue; to Henry Horton State Park, Chapel Hill, Tennessee.

State promotional men toured office plants and conferred with denominational executives. This year's theme, "Moving Forward Together," allowed each national department to show how it contributed to total denominational outreach.

Well-known Nashville newsman Bob Bell Jr., religious editor for the *Nashville Banner*, conducted a Wednesday morning workshop explaining the techniques of preparing newscopy. Jim Lauthern, manager, Printing Production, Sunday School Department, shared a two-hour layout and graphics session.

Wade Jernigan, president, California Christian College, Fresno; Charles Thigpen, dean, FWBBC; and H. D. Harrison, manager, Promotion and Sales, Sunday School Department, developed workshops on administrative skills, effective use of time, and Bible institutes.

Rufus Coffey, Free Will Baptist executive secretary, assessed the year-end conference, "This meeting was everything we hoped it would be. I expect to hear of and see maturing strides in strategic areas as a direct result of this meeting."

CHURCH ORGANIZED AT
GEORGIA STATE ASSOCIATION

STATESBORO, GA—Georgia's 41st annual state meeting November 17-19 included the organization of the host church, Statesboro Free Will Baptist Church. The Friday night gathering witnessed 50 charter members elect William (Buddy) Morris as pastor of the seven-year-old mission work. Approximately 200 Georgians and visitors attended.

Dominating association business was a report presented by the Board of Christian Education and Camping regarding 28.7-acre Camp Mt. Bethel. Delegates wrangled with three options concerning the camp's future: whether to sell the camp, maintain *status quo*, or launch a \$400,000 expansion program. After lengthy discussion, the assembly voted to keep the camp as is this next year.

Wayne and Connie Lacey were endorsed to assume management of Christian Supply Store (Georgia's state bookstore) effective January.

Moderator Dr. Melvin Worthington was given authority to appoint a Georgia Historical Commission. Damon Dodd chairs the commission. Serving with him are Adam Scott and Dr. James Ursery.

A statewide committee was authorized to develop standards and guidelines for licensing and ordaining ministers. The group is to report in 1978.

Strong preaching characterized the Statesboro meeting. The theme, "A Peculiar People in a Peculiar Church," was developed by Billy Hanna, Savannah; William Travis, Thomaston; and Robert Wood, Dalton.

The 1978 session is scheduled to meet in Dublin. Associational officers were retained: Moderator Dr. Melvin Worthington, Albany; Assistant Moderator Lamar Parish, Funsten; Clerk James Roebuck, Sumner; Assistant Clerk James Osborn, Hawkinsville. William Morris, Statesboro, was confirmed as Georgia representative on the national General Board. Chuck Snow, Decatur, will serve as Master's Men state senator. ▲

NORTH CAROLINA CHURCH CONSTRUCTS NEW FACILITY

RALEIGH, N.C.—First Free Will Baptist Church, Raleigh, North Carolina, is constructing a 13,360 square foot facility to house a growing Sunday school and Raleigh Christian Academy. The building is financed through a \$245,000 bond issue which was sold in just five days, July 11-19. The building will also include a modern day care center and church and school of-

fices.

Pastor Randy Cox states, "We continually rejoice at the marvelous blessings of God upon His work here." Working with Pastor Cox is Associate Pastor Doug Henderson and school Principal Richard L. Tippet. The new building is scheduled to be completed by June 1, 1978, at a total cost of \$280,099.

THE MATURING CHRISTIAN

If we remain babes in Christ we can expect to be childish promoters of the insignificant or erroneous.

Douglas J. Simpson

One of the really nice things about accepting Christ as personal Savior is that a whole new exciting way of living is opened up to us. Or, as Christ put it, He came so that we "might have life, and that . . . [we] might have it more abundantly" (John 10:10). The abundant life of which Christ spoke is, of course, impossible without salvation; however, being a Christian does not *automatically* provide us with it.

Participation in the abundant life is the result of growing in Christ after we have been converted. Those who experience the abundant life are referred to in a variety of ways; e. g., victorious believers, spiritual Christians, dedicated church members. All of these designations are important, but many times they are either too narrowly conceived or are actually too narrow by definition.

Although victory over sin is definitely a crucial idea, the abundant life includes more than this. We realize too that dedication is vital to the good life in Christ. But Paul makes it unmistakably clear that dedication (presenting our bodies) needs to be followed by a transformation into the person and life Christ wants each believer to be and to enjoy here on earth

(Romans 12:1,2). Furthermore, we ought to be spiritual believers. If, however, being spiritual simply means having the power of God while praying or evangelizing, then being spiritual is much too narrow a concept to cover all that is implied by enjoying Christ's abundant life.

James may give the best description of the abundant life when he says that each of us ought to "be perfect and entire, wanting nothing" (1:4). To be perfect, as we know, means to be *mature*. To be entire, means to be *complete in all parts*. Thus, James is saying we need to be *completely mature* Christians. That is to say, we need to be mature in every facet of our lives, to be *well-rounded, mature believers*.

Being a mature Christian is worthwhile within itself because we are afforded not simply an escape from eternal damnation (as important as this is), but we are also able to experience the abundant life Christ wants us to enjoy after we become Christians. Experiencing a little bit, but from one perspective a great deal, of what eternity with God will be like is valuable in itself. We can, however, find pragmatic reasons for maturing in Christ.

As an example, maturity is important because it enables us to become individually and collectively, as local churches and as a

denomination, a delight to God. If we remain babes in Christ as the Corinthians did, we can expect to be divisive followers of men (I Corinthians 1:12), defilers of the temple of God (3:16), proud defenders of immorality (5:2), jealous protectors of material possessions (6:1-5), crushers of weak brothers (8:11,12), sharers in the ways of Satan (10:20), and childish promoters of the insignificant or erroneous (13:11).

As Free Will Baptists, we have a very important additional reason for striving to become mature believers. We like to discuss Hebrews 6 and II Peter 2 with those who reject the possibility of "falling from grace." It is helpful that we understand these passages; yet it is fundamental that we recognize the context of these two chapters.

In Hebrews 5 there is a discussion of babes in Christ, not newborn babes but immature, stunted babes. People who do not grow in Christ are the ones who stand in the greatest danger of falling from grace. Of these nongrowers, the writer of Hebrews records: "It is impossible . . . If they shall fall away, to renew them again unto repentance; seeing they crucify to themselves the Son of God afresh, and put him to an open shame" (6:4,6).

Peter's discourse on growth and



THE MATURING CHRISTIAN

(Cont. from page 17)

apostasy is similar in nature. He speaks of how to avoid falling (II Peter 1:10) and of the unstable people who are likely to be led into moral and doctrinal error if they do not grow (2:14).

No wonder Paul urges the Ephesians to develop into well-balanced, mature Christians, "unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ" (Ephesians 4:13). "We" are, he argues, to be "no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive" (4:14).

We could look at other reasons for the importance of maturing in the Lord, but if we will not listen to Peter, Paul, and the author of Hebrews we would not "be persuaded, though one rose from the dead" (Luke 16:31).

A person is never absolutely, totally mature in Christ. *Maturing in Christ is an unending process.* The title, "The maturing Christian," suggests both of these ideas. We should be continually maturing, never thinking of ourselves as "having arrived." Indeed, the person who really thinks he has arrived is probably still home packing his suitcase!

Yet we must not think of maturing as a totally unbroken progression. We need to see the process and progress in terms of a jagged line on a graph.

Diagrammatically speaking, maturing Christians experience some up's, down's, and leveling's with an *overall increase* in certain qualities, dispositions, and behaviors.

The concept of progression applies to individual qualities as well as to our overall growth. We should, in other words, be continually increasing in our love and continually comprehending and practicing its "breadth, and length, and depth, and height" (Ephesians 3:18). When we are saved, we may rate a zero on love. As we mature in the Lord Jesus Christ, we should gradually rate 3's, 4's, 5's, and

upon an infinite scale.

A second point about the nature of Christian maturity is that there are *stages of maturation* just as there are *stages of growth* in the physical realm. Peter definitely speaks of the first stage when he says: "As newborn babes, desire the sincere milk of the word, that ye may grow thereby" (I Peter 2:2). Milk is appropriate at this stage but inappropriate as a total diet for later stages (Hebrews 5:12-6:2; I Corinthians 2:1,2). The final stage was noted earlier when we quoted James' words: "perfect and entire, wanting nothing" (1:4). Paul's words are also pertinent: "a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ" (Ephesians 4:13).

What could be second and third stages might be alluded to by John. He speaks of children, young men and fathers. Perhaps although it is far from certain, *little children*

*"A person is
never absolutely,
totally mature
in Christ."*

refers to those Christians who have grown beyond infancy and *young men* speaks of spiritually strong but not well-rounded fathers in the Lord (I John 2:12-14). At any rate, it seems appropriate to include infants, children, youth and adults in the spiritual growth metaphor. Each stage has different needs, problems and concerns to some extent. So we must know how to feed different kinds of sheep as well as know what kind of diet each personally needs.

Christian maturity is characterized by both qualities and activities. *Being* a mature Christian is *not* separated from *acting* as a mature Christian. Qualities are to be reflected in behavior. Yet the qualities are of greatest concern at this point because they determine our behavior.

What are these qualities? The New Testament is filled with qualities that are a part of the maturing Christian. Paul approaches them from the viewpoint of the fruit metaphor in Galatians 5:22,23: "But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, Meekness, temperance." These qualities are the result of the maturing Christian's continually being filled by the Spirit of God (Ephesians 5:18).

Paul also uses a building metaphor in Ephesians 4:12 and in a number of other passages. Usually the word *edify* or some form of it is used in the King James Version. In I Corinthians 8:1, for example, we read that love builds up or edifies weak believers. Thus, growing in Christ is like building a lovely edifice. To stop at an incomplete stage of Christian construction is analogous to simply building only the foundation of what could have become a beautiful temple of God. The materials used in such construction would include the spiritual fruits as well as the other qualities mentioned.

Peter's approach to Christian maturation is in terms of adding qualities to our faith. He says the person who adds these qualities will not be unfruitful in Christ. His list of qualities is as follows: virtue, knowledge, temperance, patience, godliness, brotherly kindness, charity (II Peter 1:5-7).

Perhaps the most picturesque way of describing Christian growth is stated in terms of clothing ourselves. We are to put on a new person which includes dressing up with such beautiful garments as mercy, kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness, longsuffering, forbearance, forgiveness, charity (Colossians 3:12-14).

In another place, we are instructed to "put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness" (Ephesians 4:24). Peter suggests adornment be of an inner nature and include "the ornament of a meek and quiet spirit" (I Peter 3:4).

And we must not forget that our garments are more than *attractive*; they are also *protective* and *offensive* (in the sense of making gains in our enemy's territory). Note Paul's picture: "Stand therefore, having your loins girt about with truth, and having on the

Christ without making a comment (I Peter 3:1).

In conclusion, we must stress the necessity of personal diligence by all believers. Peter says give "all diligence." In essence we need to consider it urgent to grow in Christ. Next, we need to study intensively and extensively how maturation occurs. The key includes renewing our minds so that the Holy Spirit can use the Scriptures to transform our total beings (Romans 12:2).

Maturing includes exercising our senses "to discern both good and

"Being a mature Christian is not separated from acting as a mature Christian."

breastplate of righteousness; And your feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace; Above all, taking the shield of faith And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit" (Ephesians 6:14-17).

When we examine our lives in light of these and other biblical pictures of maturing in Christ, we get an awesome feeling of how immature we actually are. On the other hand, we are encouraged because the Holy Spirit will eagerly produce these fruits if we properly respond to His leadership and if we work together in perfecting each other, in building each other up in Christ (Ephesians 4:12). We can be encouraged, too, by the fact that as we clothe ourselves with supernatural garments, we will win more people to the Lord Jesus Christ. As Peter said of wives, so it is of all believers when we adorn ourselves with God's apparel: We will win others to

evil" (Hebrews 5:14). Discernment will affect both our doctrines and our values and should result in the transformation of both our ideas and our personalities. Finally, we need to do in-depth study and application of those concepts that express the kinds of persons we should be. On the other hand, the same needs to be done with those concepts that convey the types of people we ought not to be (Galatians 5:19-21; I Corinthians 6:9,10; Colossians 3:5-9).

May God grant each of us the motivation, discipline and assistance from His Spirit and other believers that we need to discover and pursue things that really matter, now and forever.

ABOUT THE WRITER: Dr. Douglas J. Simpson is a member of Horton Heights Free Will Baptist Church, Nashville, TN. This article is a condensed section of his book THE MATURING CHRISTIAN, which was recently published by Randall House. ▲

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Currently . . .

By
JACK WILLIAMS
Editor

Between October 16 and November 13, **First FWB Church, Bakersfield, California**, had 40 saved. The church had a high attendance of 725 on November 6. **Claudie Hames** pastors.

Oops! CONTACT erred in its October pastoral changes column. **Nathan Ruble** is pastor of **Northside FWB Church, Phoenix, Arizona**. CONTACT had mistakenly printed that **Bennie Burrows** was pastoring the church. We apologize to both men and the Northside Church.

Garvin Page, pastor of **Baxley FWB Church, Baxley, Georgia**, says the congregation has constructed a new building on the church property. The additional facilities include five classrooms, storage area, large social hall and pastor's study. While the men were at it, they built a double carport on the parsonage.

Leaders at **Grace FWB Church, Rocky Mountain, North Carolina**, have begun a youth choir and an organized sports program. This in itself is not so unusual in Free Will Baptist churches, but the bottom line on this youth program is that any teen who wishes to sing in the youth choir or participate in the organized sports program must first become an active participant in the teenage soul-winning visitation. **Robert J. Durham** pastors.

Pastor **Bill Van Winkle** and members of **First FWB Church, Berkeley, Missouri**, believe in practicing what they preach. The pastor has continually advocated starting new churches. On November 13, six families from the First Church began conducting services in the **Fenton, Missouri**, area for the purpose of mothering a new church. Their home church sent them away with prayers and blessings. **Jerry Norris** will give leadership in the new church.

It may be old hat in some churches but not in **First FWB Church, Choctaw, Oklahoma**. Pastor **Charles Bigger** announced that a bus ministry began on October 30. Bus visitation is scheduled for 9:30 a.m. each Saturday.

It sure is nice to be indispensable.

Members of **First FWB Church, Fort Smith, Arkansas**, learned the meaning of that phrase recently when Pastor **Rupert Pixley** was gone for a week. It took five men to replace him: one preached the Saturday afternoon radio broadcast; another, Sunday morning; a third, Sunday evening; and it took two to handle the Wednesday evening prayer meeting.

Hats off to **First FWB Church, Murfreesboro, Tennessee**. On Sunday evening, November 6, **Wilburn Warner, Clark Miller, Ray Watson** and **Steve Sanders** were ordained as the first deacons in the history of the church. **Dr. J. D. O'Donnell** pastors.

They are talking about revival in **Capitol Hill FWB Church, Oklahoma City, Oklahoma**. During the week of October 24 Pastor **Homer Young** reports that 27 conversions were witnessed as the result of the soul-winning emphasis.

Thanks to many long hours of donated labor, **Shiloh FWB Church, Bristol, Virginia**, is flashing three new Sunday school rooms. Pastor **Walter Statzer** indicates that the folding partitions separating the rooms can be opened up to make one large room. The church treasurer notes that all bills for materials have been paid. This was possible without the church having to borrow any money to finance construction.

There was a big birthday celebration in **Sesser, Illinois**, on October 23. The **Bear Point FWB Church** observed its 106 anniversary, according to Pastor **James O'Dell**. Former pastor **Floyd Hartley** preached the anniversary message during afternoon festivities.

Missionary **Jerry Gibbs** may double back through **Goldsboro, North Carolina**, in the near future. One can hardly blame him if he did. While Jerry and his family were in the services at **Victory FWB Church**, the men of that congregation bought Jerry a new suit, tie, shirt and sweater. The Woman's Auxiliary purchased a new outfit for his wife Barbara. Then just for good measure the generous church contributed \$520 to the Gibbs' account. **George C. Lee** pastors.

A choir retreat is scheduled for **Tupelo, Mississippi**, January 20 and 21. **Larry Gunnoe** reports that the second annual gathering will convene at **Tombigbee State Park**. Special guest will be **Blaine Hughes, Norfolk, Virginia**.

Pastor **Richard Cordell, Guin FWB Church, Guin, Alabama**, is telling about a fire

in the church parking lot recently. Young people from the **Guin, Winfield** and **Vernon** churches gathered to watch a fire consume over \$4,200 worth of rock records, tapes and other music. In addition to that expensive fire, another young man incinerated a collection of Elvis Presley records and tapes that was estimated to be worth over \$2,000 on the collectors' market.

Fellowship FWB Church, Flat River, Missouri, has begun a new ministry among some of its members. A men's prayer breakfast began on November 5. Pastor **Grant Saverance** and some concerned men are gathering once a month to promote prayer and spiritual exchange.

It was "Give of Yourself" night in **Kingsport, Tennessee**, on November 17. Pastor **Winston Sweeny** called his people together to visit the sick, those who were unable to attend church and those who needed to receive a visit in love and kindness from members of **Fellowship FWB Church**. According to the pastor, the night's emphasis was, "Come and let God bless someone through you."

First Bible FWB Church, New Castle, Indiana, set a new attendance record on October 9. According to Pastor **Dan O'Donnell**, 413 gathered for homecoming activities on that date. Guest speakers included **Bill Gardner** and **Henry Patterson**.

No one is quite sure how they did it, but **Berean FWB Church, Independence, Missouri**, managed to get McDonalds, The Pop Shop, and Burger King all involved in their vacation Bible school. It seems McDonalds donated napkins and cups; The Pop Shop gave cold drinks; and Burger King contributed paper crowns for the VBS commencement. **Dennis Bowman** is the smiling pastor.

Here's a praise note for **Heads FWB Church, Cedar Hill, Tennessee**. The congregation is enjoying a bumper year financially. October receipts are 100 percent over the same time a year ago. September

receipts are 112 percent over last year. Yes, this church does have a pastor. His name is **Ron Parker**.

Ideas for gathering Free Will Baptist history are always worth passing on to CONTACT readers. A member of **College Lakes FWB Church, Fayetteville, North Carolina, Elizabeth Sandy Roessger**, has prepared a brief history of that church. The history was printed in the weekly news bulletin. **Bobby Glenn Smith** pastors.

Pastor **Billy Bevan** has taught his people to attend CTS. Members of **Tupelo FWB Church, Tupelo, Mississippi**, have consistently maintained an average of about 120 in the Sunday evening training session. CTS is a vital part of a total ministry. This church believes it and acts accordingly.

Did you ever see a five foot long birthday cake made in the shape of a cross? That was the size and shape of things at **Capitol FWB Church, Sacramento, California**, when they celebrated the fifth year of church growth. **Larry E. B. Condit** pastors.

Most folk who schedule an all-night prayer meeting do so about once a year. That's not the way things are at **First FWB Church, DeSoto, Missouri**. Pastor **Charles Miller** reports that by October 30 the church had observed its third straight Saturday all-night prayer vigil. It must be working because the Sunday school attendance has increased. CTS is up. Sunday evening worship service attendance is rising, and the church has just closed out a revival meeting.

Radio Station WRAG now carries weekly Sunday broadcasts at 1:00 p.m. sponsored by **Mount Moriah FWB Church, Ethelsville, Alabama**. Pastor **Willard Pless** invites listeners to dial the program after morning worship each Sunday.

Layman of the Year award at **First FWB Church, Moore, Oklahoma**, goes to **Charley**

Scott. Brother Scott serves as Sunday school superintendent and choir director. Pastor **Dan Farmer** speaks glowingly of Scott's friendliness and warmth during church services.

The folk at **Fairmount Park FWB Church, Norfolk, Virginia**, have been trying out James 4:2, "You have not because you ask not." They asked, and now they have. What they have is a black Cadillac limousine, which was presented as a gift to **Gateway College** for traveling student groups. They also have a piano contributed by **Mr. and Mrs. Robert Love, Dale Burden** pastors.

Cofer's Chapel FWB Church, Nashville, Tennessee, has a reputation as a mission-minded congregation. A note in a recent Sunday morning bulletin reminded members that the 1977 missions goal is \$13,500. Missionary-hearted Pastor **Eugene Waddell** holds the cause of world outreach before his people in services and in each Sunday school class.

Pastoral longevity has been a hallmark of **Carl Young's** ministry. Brother Young has just celebrated his 21st year as pastor of **First FWB Church, Petaluma, California**. On that Sunday 289 attended worship service, and seven were baptized.

You had better hold on to your copies of **The New Morning Star (Revisited)**. According to **Jimmie Tolbert, Michigan** state clerk, the publication is being discontinued. Tolbert cited lack of interest and dwindling subscription rolls as the reasons for terminating the state paper. The care and feeding of Free Will Baptist state papers is a difficult, time consuming and often thankless task.

Canton FWB Church, Canton, North Carolina, is an assembly with an accumulation of knowledge. Pastor **Larry Hughes** indicates the church roll has 39 persons listed who are over 60 years of age.

On October 2 the younger members of the church honored these members over 60 in a special "Senior Saints Day." Some 35 of the senior saints were able to attend the services, which included "a fellowship supper, cake, flowers, certificates, photographs and lots of love."

Patricia Eubanks really wanted to win a family Bible in a pack-a-pew emphasis. She was disappointed when 20 of the people she invited failed to show. But then 32 guests did arrive on time for services at **Hazel Dell FWB Church, Sesser, Illinois**. Pastor **Glen Poston** was delighted to present Patricia with the Bible.

Among the other duties of Pastor **James Murray** of **Northwest FWB Church, Oklahoma City, Oklahoma**, is the publication of the weekly church paper, "**The Guilding Light**." What makes the publication all the more valuable to members is that Brother Murray takes the time to prepare a well-developed Bible study each issue.

The entire Sunday school staff of **Trinity FWB Church, Bridgeton, Missouri**, participated in a 4-day Sunday school seminar November 9-12. **Harold Harrison** of **Free Will Baptist Sunday School Department, Nashville, Tennessee**, pinpointed problem areas and gave guidance on developing attitudes and techniques for a growing Sunday School. **R. B. Spurgeon** pastors.

CORRECTION

Chaplain Walter Golding is a captain in the United States Air Force. A CONTACT interview inaccurately reported Chaplain Golding's rank as First Lieutenant in the November, 1977 issue.

DIRECTORY UPDATE

PASTORAL CHANGES

ALABAMA

Willard Pless to Mount Moriah Church, Ethelsville
Dennis Kizzire to Springfield Church, Vernon from Mount Moriah Church, Ethelsville
Dennis Keen to St. James Church, Phenix City from Faith Church, Cary, North Carolina

ARKANSAS

Phil Ange to Grace Church, Newport from First Church, Newport
Bill Adcock to First Church, Newport from First Church, Paris
Jack Morris to Farmer Church, Hindsville
James D. Turner to First Church, Sheridan
Hubert Hutchins to First Church, Paris

CALIFORNIA

Bob L. Thomas to Concord Church, Concord
James Clark to San Jose Church, San Jose
Benny Brown to Santa Clara Church, Santa Clara

COLORADO

Howard Gwartney to First Church, Denver from minister of music and youth, Capitol Hill Church, Oklahoma City, Oklahoma

FLORIDA

E. Ruben Bell to St. Johns Church, Bonifay
James Simmons to Pleasant Hill Church, Bonifay
Gerald Fowler to Piney Grove Church, Chipley

GEORGIA

Thomas McCall to Bainbridge Church,

Bainbridge from Patmos Church, Leary

ILLINOIS

Daniel E. McEvers to First Church, Peoria

OKLAHOMA

Ewall Davis to First Church, Nowata

TENNESSEE

Tom Maines to First Church, Johnson City from Charity Hill, Elizabethton
Clarence Phillips to Moore's Chapel, Elizabethton from First Church, Johnson City

OTHER PERSONNEL

David Shores to Blue Point Church, Cisne, Illinois as assistant pastor from pastorship Pleasant View Church, Walnut Hill
Dennis Artman to Phillips Chapel, Springdale, Arkansas as youth director

WHERE HAVE THEY BEEN?

Wade Jernigan

Just where do away-from-home college students attend church if, in fact, they do attend? This question is plaguing the minds of concerned pastors throughout the Free Will Baptist denomination.

It is a question that caused me much concern while I pastored in a college city. Young people from Free Will Baptist churches attending the university seldom if ever showed themselves at the local congregation. Even though they were well known to me and came from prominent Free Will Baptist families, they did not come to church. A few exceptions existed, of course. However, some even attended other Baptist churches (of whatever sort) or went to the most popular local assembly (regardless of denomination).

Time and again I have visited in the home church of some student and upon making inquiry as to whether the person in question did in fact enroll in the university, I was told that he had indeed. On such occasions the parents learned for the first time that their son or daughter was attending elsewhere because a dear friend belonged to a certain group.

All too often Free Will Baptist

students lose their church identity after leaving for college. Of course, it is understandable when a student worships with another group because Free Will Baptists have no church in that area. But when a well-established church is nearby, why does the Free Will offspring involve himself in a denominational organization contrary to his upbringing? The disturbing thing is that this seems to happen to denominational leaders' children as well as to Mr. Average Free Will's family.

Not long ago I was in a famous college-university city. While there I learned that at least 40 Free Will Baptist students attended one of the

five colleges. No mention was made about how many may have been in attendance at the other schools. This question was posed: "Where do those Free Will Baptist students attend church?" Local pastors named sons and daughters of outstanding denominational leaders who were in the group of 40, but the students had not attended any Free Will Baptist church to their knowledge. The pastors are greatly concerned.

Exerted effort had been put forth in several cases to get students to attend a local church but to no avail. Excuses given by the individuals invited varied, but none satisfied the local preacher. Where do they attend? Why do they not attend a church of their own affiliation?

PASTORAL CARELESSNESS

Pastors must share some of the blame. Quite often the home church pastor does not encourage the student to attend a local Free Will Baptist church away from home because of personal, preconceived ideas about the other preacher or a prejudice toward some view he may hold. Rather he should take time to explain that though the majority of the denomination agrees in doctrine and practice, each geographical section may hold to traditional ways



in worship or thought that may be a drastic departure from the ways learned by the student at home. A different style of worship may exist in many areas, such as preaching (both in manner and message), praising, praying and persuading. In this way the student will not be shocked upon attending another church which worships differently. In all probability he will come to understand and accept the differences and thus learn to appreciate the sincerity of other people.

Not all church personalities are alike. Students need to be prepared to accept the difference. Better it is for a student to attend a Free Will Baptist church where the truth is preached and at times be embarrassed, than to worship where he feels comfortable but in time is lost through man's persuasion.

While it is true that the home church pastor in many cases has failed, it is also true that the college town pastor has failed as well. When the pastor is informed that a certain student is attending college in his city, he quite often assumes the student will without further invitation just show up on Sunday. However, this is not always the case. Some pastors are very faithful to follow through; but when the student attends, the differences in worship are so spelled out that the visitor feels he and his pastor as well are under attack.

No pastor should shrink from declaring things as he understands them to be; yet he should not stress things in such a critical vein until the visiting student feels insulted. Caution should be exercised when a pastor realizes that a difference exists and through that caution seeks to help the student who often is already distressed because of his new surroundings. The away-from-home church should offer a sanctuary for the student. That is the one place where he should feel welcome.

PARENTAL SHORTCOMINGS

Parents are at fault in this distressing situation much of the time. During the formative years stress has not been laid upon faithfulness to one's own denomination. Children are allowed

A former pastor probes the attendance records of Free Will Baptist students in college towns.

even while at home to frequent churches of other persuasions. This visiting gives the child a it-doesn't-matter attitude. So when the student leaves for college, he has that attitude well ingrained into his thinking. Since it doesn't matter all that much to the parents, the student is not encouraged to be faithful to his church while away.

I made it a practice not to take my children to another denomination's churches nor let them frequently attend them for any reason. Thus, they never became acquainted with nor felt at home with such groups. Parents have a responsibility to pass to their children a denominational heritage.

Parents in college towns have also failed visiting students. In other denominations parents in the local church are encouraged to "adopt" visiting students. To my knowledge this has not been advocated by many Free Will Baptist churches. If a student is accepted into the regular activities of the church and is made to feel a part of the fellowship, he will become even more a part if he has church parents who encourage involvement. Free Will Baptist parents are not one whit behind others but for some reason have not taken the initiative in this outreach.

PEER PRESSURE

Peer students have failed in their responsibilities also. Unless one has experienced the visiting student's role, he can hardly understand the pressure that is often brought to bear by selfish, unthinking local college-age students upon the visitor. The local youth feel invaded and view the outside student as a threat. Such should not be the case. Various social functions should be

planned that would enable the visiting student to get acquainted with others his own age. At these functions the one in charge should make it a point to see that all are introduced properly and made to feel a part of the group. Though he may be on his own, he does not want to be alone.

Everyone should be alert to demonstrate Christian hospitality and friendship. Also Christians must be aware of showing partiality. Sometimes young people or even the whole church can project the attitude that a student is not very spiritual if he is attending a secular college. This attitude can alienate students.

Pastors, parents and peers should make it a point to contact the away-from-home student and find out where he attends and how often. Many young people are being lost while away in college—not to liberalism, modernism and the like, but through neglect or proselytism. Pressures can be brought to bear so the student will seek out his own. Parents should always make sure that the local pastor knows their child is attending college in his city. Pastors should also keep brother preachers informed of members who are enrolled in college in their towns. Peers should constantly express concern over a student's absence from church. Maybe an occasional visit to the campus dormitory or a special "Student Sunday" emphasis by the local church in the college city would help.

ABOUT THE WRITER: Dr. Jernigan is president of California Christian College, Fresno. He is the author of THE UNSEALED BOOK an amillennial view of the book of Revelation. ▲

Personal Bible Study Can Be Exciting

Randy Cox



There has never been a time when believers more desperately needed to know what God says than now. Only as we *know* can we be conformed to the image of His dear Son. We must know what He says before we can be what He designs and do what He desires.

The Bible is a mansion of 66 uniquely constructed rooms. Eight basic suites are in this mansion: Law, History, Poetry, Prophecy, the Gospels, Acts, the Epistles, and the Apocalypse (Revelation). Walking in

this mansion should indeed be exciting.

Whose book am I studying when I pick up the Bible? The importance of your answer cannot be overestimated. Your approach to the Bible hinges on your answer to this question. Is it a *good* word or *God's* Word; a *great* book or *God's* book; a *rule* for life or *the* rule? Is it authoritative on all about which it speaks or on part? Is it your authority for living or only advice to be weighed with that from other written works and advisors?

Your attitude toward the Bible determines your approach. When your attitude is right towards the Bible, personal Bible study can be exciting. Paul gives us the right attitude in II Timothy 3:16. All Scripture is inspired, breathed out from God. All Scripture is profitable. God is talking to me. The Bible is His inspired, infallible, inerrant Word spoken to me.

Why study the Bible? First, because God commands it (II Timothy 2:15). It is essential to being a "workman." The right quality workman is one approved by his master and unashamed in his efforts to please Him. Study is the only way to become proficient in handling God's Word right.

Secondly, the new nature craves the Word. It is our food (I Peter 2:2; Hebrews 5:14). It spawns faith (Romans 10:17; Hebrews 11:3). It generates fervency (Jeremiah 20:9; Luke 24:32). It fortifies for daily living (Ephesians 6:14). It brings joy to the otherwise fainting soul (Jeremiah 15:16).

When should I study? Your study of God's word should be *daily* (Psalm 1:2; Joshua 1:8). There are two divisions in each 24-hour period, day and night. A fixed place in at least one should be set for personal Bible study.

A workable pattern of Bible study is a real need. Do not make your beginning personal Bible study goal that of reading the Bible through starting with Genesis. This should be your ultimate goal (more than once) but not at the outset.

The following order is suggested

as a pattern. Begin with the Gospel of John. Read it through at least five times. This will remove doubts about your salvation. Then read Philippians which tells how to respond in troublesome circumstances. Next, read I John in which you will note that the key word is "know." The emphasis is on assurance. After this, I Corinthians, Matthew, Mark, Luke, Acts, Romans, the other epistles and then the Revelation.

Read the Old Testament intermittently during this beginning pattern. Only as you read the New Testament, can you properly apply Old Testament principles to present-age needs. Note that when Malachi 1:6,7,8 is read with I Peter 2:5,9 and Romans 12:1, the present-day significance of the Old Testament passages are seen.

In continuing your Bible study, you should read the Bible through. A concentrated book by book or special chapters study is very rewarding. Tracing topics through the Bible is most enlightening. Biographical studies are very valuable as you learn from and about the 2,930 people mentioned in the Bible.

What is an effective method of Bible study and application? Begin with prayer. Ask God to cleanse you. Ask Him to give you strength to focus your attention on the Word. These are essential to being taught by the Spirit. Study on purpose. Set a special time, or it will not be done.

Study methodically, regularly and repetitiously at times. Remember your aim is retention (Psalm 119:11). Study submissively so that when God tells you what to do or not to do, you will be ready to conform (change). We must be responsive to God's Word in a positive way if we desire Him to give us further enlightenment. Write down something you learn each day. Tell someone what you

learned from the Word of God. Through this method, God's Word becomes a part of you. That is application.

Worthy helps are advantageous in personal Bible study. Here, however, a caution flag must be raised. Know what the Bible says first. That is overwhelmingly more important than knowing what somebody else says the Bible says. Remember it is personal Bible study that can be exciting.

The following list is by no means exhaustive, but it is a good foundation of *helps* for Bible study: *Unger's Bible Dictionary*, *Halley's Handbook*, *Strong's Concordance*, a one volume commentary on the entire Bible (*Matthew Henry or Jamison-Faucett-Brown*), the *New American Standard Version* of the Bible (*not Revised Standard Version*), and a Webster's collegiate dictionary. Some people wonder why a dictionary. You will be rewardingly surprised at how enriching Bible study can be simply by using a dictionary to look up the meaning of certain words.

The most beautiful quality in the life of any Christian is faithfulness. Be faithful in your study of God's word. The reward will be seen in every area of your life. Remember we must *know* what God says before we can *be* what He designs and *do* what He desires.

ABOUT THE WRITER: Randy Cox is pastor of First Free Will Baptist Church, Raleigh, North Carolina. He is a graduate of Free Will Baptist Bible College. ▲

THE WORTH OF WAITING

Rhonda J. Thomas



One day while reading a devotion on waiting, I ran across a prayer by Glen H. Asquith. "O, Lord of the still small voice, may I demand less and less the wind, the earthquake, and the fire." I copied it down and stuck it in my Bible. When I get impatient and expect God to answer immediately, I reread this prayer.

Frequently a hurry-up attitude creeps into our Christian lives. When it comes to receiving an answer to prayer or knowing the will of God, we are guilty of trying to zip through the express lane. We embrace the same attitude as David when he prayed, "Make haste, O God, to deliver me; make haste to help me, O Lord" (Psalm 70:1). To our finite minds, waiting is a waste of time. However, God has made

some definite promises to those who acquire the ability to patiently wait.

Isaiah 40:31 reflects the prophet's ideas about waiting. Because many Christians are too busy or impatient to wait, wrong choices are made and frustration results. Therefore, some of us creep through life when we could run or soar.

Psalm 37:34 promises an inheritance to those who wait. This inheritance is not only referring to eternal things. Practically, we may receive this inheritance through tangible forms such as financial blessing or relief from physical affliction. This inheritance could also be expressed through intangible forms such as direction or deliverance.

The worth of waiting is clearly expressed in these words:

I waited patiently for the Lord; and he inclined unto me, and heard my cry. He brought me up also out of an horrible pit, out of the miry clay, and set my feet upon a rock, and established my goings. And He hath put a new song in my mouth, even praise unto our God: many shall see it, and fear, and shall trust in the Lord (Psalm 40:1-3).

Truly the Lord is good to those who wait!

ABOUT THE WRITER: Mrs. Thomas is a member of Concord Free Will Baptist Church, Concord, California, where her husband Bob pastors. She is a graduate of California Christian College. ▲

SIN CHALLENGES THE CHURCH

PART IV

Larry Fortines

Previous articles in this series have shown that in the most severe dealings of the church with sin, both judgment and restoration are involved. In the New Testament there is always a desire to restore the fallen church member. There was never a desire to exercise bare-armed authority of law apart from an interest in restoring the fallen brother.

At the same time if repentance was not forthcoming, necessary action required by judgment was to be administered. However, it was hoped that even the judgment itself might lead to repentance (I Corinthians 5:5). The person was to be received back into the church after matters were made right (I Corinthians 2:6-8).

The bringing together of the concern represented by judgment

and restoration is also seen where formal discipline is not involved. A good example of combining these concerns is Galatians 6:1. A concern is manifested with regard to "a man overtaken... in a fault." To be overtaken seems to mean that the person fell into sin because he was caught off guard rather than by a willful or deliberate act. He is guilty of a fault or sin.

The concern of holiness means that he is not permitted to continue in the sin. He is to be reminded of his sin. The concern of love is seen in the fact that as Christians we are to be concerned that such a brother be restored. We cannot be satisfied in simply condemning and criticizing. Our concern is that the person see that he is wrong and that he take steps to correct his action. It is desired that he be restored to a fellowship with God and with fellow Christians, and to a position of usefulness in the cause of Christ. Love is also seen in the attitude with which the help is to be given. It is to be done "in the spirit of meekness (or gentleness)."

In I Timothy 3:2 Paul tells Timothy to rebuke rebuke, whom with all long-suffering. To rebuke means to call the person's attention to his sin. To reprove means to be so effective in calling the person's attention to his sin that he is convicted or experiences conviction in regard to his sin. The concern to reprove and rebuke manifests a commitment to holiness. Exhortation combines both the interest of holiness and love. The person is

encouraged to take the right path of action.

Love is seen when the rebuking, reproofing and exhorting are done with all long-suffering (or patience). The "spirit of gentleness" in Galatians 6:1 and the "long-suffering" in I Timothy 3:2 tells us that our attempts to correct must not be done with a harsh, rigid, critical attitude.

Another word that is used with reference to working with people in a corrective way is translated "admonish" in Romans 15:14 and "warn" in I Thessalonians 5:14. This word combines both of the concerns of holiness and love. Holiness is seen in the fact that it involves warning and rebuking when such is necessary. Love is seen because it involves encouragement.

Holiness and love must always be combined in dealing with sin in the church whether it be in the formal sense where official discipline is involved or whether it be in the informal sense where rebuking, reproofing, exhorting and admonishing are involved. Holiness with love subtracted would not be holiness. Rather it would be hardness, rigidity and cruelty. Love with holiness subtracted would not be love. Rather it would be spiritual sentimentality where anything and everything is tolerated.

In dealing with sin, there is a tension between holiness and love. By maturity enough through discipline we can achieve a balance of holiness and love. We can preserve both the interests of judgment and restoration.



2,000 MAKE COMMITMENTS AT MOONEYHAM CRUSADE

MEDAN, Indonesia (EP)—The head of World Vision International, the evangelical relief agency based in Monrovia, California, reports that more than 2,000 Indonesians made a "commitment to Jesus Christ" during the first 2 days of a 3-city crusade here.

Dr. W. Stanley Mooneyham is sharing the pulpit with the Rev. Petrus Octavianus, president of the Indonesian Missionary Fellowship and Indonesia Evangelical Fellowship.

Other parts of the crusade were scheduled for Pematang Siantar and Pangkalan Brandan. Dr. Mooneyham has made 2 previous crusade trips to Indonesia, the most recent in May, 1976.

CHANCES FOR STABLE MARRIAGES RISE WITH INCOME, EDUCATION

WASHINGTON, D.C. (EP)—The chances for a stable marriage appear to improve with higher income and education levels, according to a report by the Bureau of the Census, U.S. Department of Commerce.

Its study revealed that 84 percent of college graduate couples—in which the husbands were 35 to 54 in 1975—were still in their first marriages. By income, 83 percent of couples with family earnings of \$20,000 or more were in their first marriages.

In comparison, 80 percent of couples having high school educations and 71 percent who did not complete high school were in their first marriages.

By income, 78 percent of couples having family incomes \$10,000 to \$20,000 were in their first marriages. For couples with family incomes less than \$10,000, the proportion of couples in their first marriages dropped to 72 percent.

The report, however, found some paradoxes and cautioned that more education does not necessarily guarantee marriage stability.

ELVIS PRESLEY SNUBBED BY CHURCH QUARTET AFTER AUDITION

ATLANTA, GA (EP)—The return of "The Statesmen" gospel quartet to Atlanta reminded Opal Cook here how desperately a young teenager in Memphis wanted to join the group.

"Elvis was *always* there at the Assembly of God church," Mrs. Cook recalled. "More than anything else, he wanted to sing in the church quartet. It was made up of young people from the church, including the preacher's son.

"Elvis hinted, begged, nagged and persuaded until the minister reluctantly agreed to give him an audition," Mrs. Cook said.

But when the pastor heard the young man sing he advised: "Son, I know you *want* to sing. I wish I could say yes to you. But I think I might as well tell you the truth. You just *can't* sing, and you'd better get your mind on something else besides music. You'll never make it there."

The young man turned and went out. And it was night.

FROTHY TUESDAY THE 13TH, 'SOAP' POLLUTES THE CHANNEL

The American Broadcasting Company went ahead with its half-hour telecast "SOAP" September 13, despite strong objections from religious leaders asked to preview the show. This action means the company doesn't really want to hear from listeners with regard to questionable programming.

The half hour of degenerate attempts at humor, described by previewers as "vulgar," "in bad taste," and an "assault on family life," has damaged television's credibility as a public servant.

Perhaps the chief losers are the children who watched the show in prime time.

"The problem is not that 'Soap' deals with sex but that it treats sex in an irresponsible manner," stated Foy Valentine and Harry N. Hollis Jr. of the Southern Baptist Christian Life Commission. "It irresponsibly laughs at and shamelessly exploits the tragedies of adultery, homosexuality, impotence, incest, crime, senility." To that could be added "murder."

Each local ABC station has the right to air its choices. But if pleas for better programming from citizens are going to be ignored as "censorship," then what hope is there for reversing television's downward skid into the pit of pruriosity?

Prayer and letters to sponsoring companies remain the twin opportunities for cleansing the tube of its film of soap.

CRISWELL REFERENCE BIBLE TO BE PUBLISHED NEXT YEAR

DALLAS, TX (EP)—Dr. W. A. Criswell, pastor of First Baptist Church here, is heading a team at work on a major reference work keyed to the King James Version of the Bible.

The Criswell Reference Bible is due out in December, 1978, with an initial press run of 200,000.

Thomas Nelson Publishing Co. of Nashville predicts its new offering will be a successor to the multimillion seller Scofield Reference Bible by the late Rev. Cyrus Scofield, another Dallas pastor. It first appeared in 1909 but has been reissued several times.

HERBERT W. ARMSTRONG AND SON HIT BY CHARGES OF IMMORALITY

PASADENA, CA (EP)—Six former students of Ambassador College, an educational institution of the Worldwide Church of God, have launched a broad attack on the leadership of the cult at its home base here.

The expose alleges mishandling of funds by top church leaders who are charged with living opulently on members' tithes, and seduction of coeds by the son of the church's founder.

The "Ambassador Report" represents an attempt by critics of the church leadership to provide documentation for misconduct charges that have kept the Armstrong organization in turmoil in recent years. Targets include Herbert Armstrong, 85, who built the church mainly through radio evangelism, and his son Garner Ted Armstrong, 47, also a broadcast evangelist.

By requiring members to tithe up to 30 percent of their annual incomes, the Armstrongs have a yield of more than \$60 million a year in tax-free income, according to the report. The report alleges that the tithes have left some church members destitute, while the Armstrongs and other church leaders live luxuriously in church-owned mansions.

Publishers of the report are Leonard and Margaret Zola, John Trechak, Mary E. Jones, Robert Gerringer and Bill Hughes. They say they have been with the church from four to 15 years. All except Miss Jones are graduates of the college. Miss Jones attended for two years.

GALLUP: U.S. CHURCHMEN ILL-INFORMED ON TRENDS IN INVOLVEMENT, COMMITMENT

CHICAGO, IL (EP)—Pollster George Gallup Jr. said here that U.S. religious leaders are alarmingly ill-informed on the changing levels of religious involvement and commitment.

Citing a grave need for "measurements on the level of spiritual maturity" in the U.S., Mr. Gallup added, "We know more about what breakfast foods people like and why than we do about the spiritual health of the American people."

The famed Princeton-based pollster made his comments in the October issue of *U.S. Catholic*, published here by the Claretian Fathers. He said that through his new religion research center he hoped he would be able to provide data to religious leaders that would give them "a sophisticated and realistic look at religion and how it is changing in this country . . ."

SCHOLARS MAP 10-YEAR PUSH FOR 'HISTORICAL, BIBLICAL, VERBAL' INERRANCY

CHICAGO, IL (EP)—Biblical scholars, fearing evangelicals could drift into neoorthodoxy by "default" rather than as a result of clear thinking, gathered in Chicago in late September to map a 10-year educational thrust defending biblical inerrancy.

Called the International Council on Biblical Inerrancy, the new group intends to alert the church and the world to "the impressive coalition of scholars, pastors, evangelists, organizational leaders, media persons and laymen" which holds to what the council refers to as "the historic doctrine of verbal inerrancy."

The council, according to *Eternity* magazine's November issue, hopes to discredit what it says is the claim that only a few uninformed fringe evangelicals still believe in verbal inerrancy. The group will contend those denying inerrancy are not the main body of evangelicals and are "out of step with the Bible, with church history and with good logic."

Without inerrancy, the council says, there is no solid basis for biblical authority and hence no sure word for theology or Christian living.

The council is headed by James Boice of Philadelphia. With him are Gleason Archer, Edmund Clowney, Norman Giesler, John Gerstner, Harold Hoehner, Donald Hoke, J. I. Packer, Robert Preus, Earl Radmacher, Francis Schaeffer and R. C. Sproul.

To the scholars, the choice is between embracing "the existential methodology of Kant, Kierkegaard, Barth and Berkouwer" and "standing with Christ and the apostles for the historic view of verbal inerrancy."

TEACHER BACKS GENESIS ACCOUNT OF CREATION, LOSES HIS JOB

LONDON (EP)—A state labor tribunal has upheld the dismissal of a religion teacher who refused to teach an official syllabus that describes the creation accounts in Genesis as "myths, legends, and religious folklore."

David Watson, 57, former head of religious education at the Rickmansworth Comprehensive School near London, told the State Industrial Appeals Tribunal that he had refused to follow the official syllabus because he strongly believes in the literal interpretation of the Genesis creation account.

"I wanted to put before the children the other side of the picture, which they had not heard from anyone else," he told the tribunal.

The tribunal ruled, however, that the teacher had been guilty of "misconduct" because "no matter that the reason may have lain with his conscience, he was refusing to carry out what was a legitimate requirement of his employer."

ANITA, PIE ON FACE, PRAYS FOR ASSAILANT

DES MOINES, IA (EP)—A young man who identified himself as a homosexual hit Anita Bryant with a banana cream pie and heard her pray for him as he bolted from the press conference.

Tom Higgins of Minneapolis, who threw the pie, told newsmen: "We have another bigot with a sticky face."

Anita and her husband Bob Green prayed for the man "to be delivered."

Outside Green passed Higgins and three friends talking to newsmen. The singer's husband grabbed a pie held by one of the group and shoved it into the face of one of Higgins' friends.

CONGREGATION BUYS OUT X-RATED THEATER AND WILL REPLACE IT WITH A NEW CHURCH

COGAN STATION, PA (EP)—Fairlawn Community Church here, a Christian & Missionary Alliance congregation, has found a way to eliminate two evils with one move.

It has decided to purchase the nearby Route 15 Drive-In for \$42,500 from its owner, Solar Sportsystems of Buffalo, New York. In so doing, the congregation will end the showing of X-rated movies at the outdoor facility and will also acquire land to put up a new church out of the flood plain on which its present building is located.

According to the church's pastor, the Rev. Ernest S. Grames, the only thing remaining to be done is to effect a zoning change to permit the use of a commercial property for a new church.

The sale of the 13-acre property will mean an annual loss of \$877 in tax revenue to the township in which it is located. Church properties are exempt from taxes there.

PRESIDENT CARTER'S EXAMPLE SEEN BOOSTING SUNDAY SCHOOL ROLLS

MINNEAPOLIS, MN (EP)—A Minnesota pastor says that publicity about President Jimmy Carter's Sunday school teaching has had a favorable effect on church and Sunday school attendance.

The Rev. David Yeats, minister at Wooddale Baptist Church in Richfield, Minnesota, credits Carter's religious role as helping reverse the trend in declining church rolls. By his example, the President of the United States has encouraged people to see that Sunday school is not "just for kids," Yeats said.

Executive Director of the Minnesota Sunday School Association, Arnold Carlson, said that in the evangelical churches, which stress that their followers have a personal relationship with Jesus Christ, there has been a "definite increase" seen in Sunday school interest.

Ten years ago Sunday school and church attendance was falling in the United States. "The '60s phenomenon and its disenchantment with life resulted in a fallout that affected the churches," Carlson said.

Now a revival of interest in Christian education has also been seen in increasing enrollments at numerous seminaries around the country.

SBC LEADER CITES BIBLE ILLITERACY IN THE U.S.

NASHVILLE, TN (EP)—Biblical illiteracy is of "epic proportions" in America, says Rev. Jimmy Allen, president of the Southern Baptist Convention.

"No wonder citizens are flimflammed by every kind of religious pitchmanship," he added. "Not only are they patsies for eastern religion and sects, but also for every kind of parachurch group which sounds like the bugle calling for their attention."

He concluded: "The Bible has become a foreign language to many Americans."

'INTERCRISTO' DIRECTORY SHOWS PEOPLE NEEDS WORLDWIDE

SEATTLE, WA (EP)—The 781-page Directory of Christian Work Opportunities has been issued by Intercristo showing more than 18,000 personnel openings for Christians around the globe.

The hulking book will be updated every six months as it presents the Church's "people needs" for willing workers.

"This is a 10-year dream come true for our team," said Phil Butler, Intercristo president, "the chance to put our whole, constantly-updated file of information directly into the hands of the public."

The \$40 directory will serve anyone, he said, who asks, "Is there a place God can use me?" The data processing, directed by Ron Edminster, translates Intercristo's huge file of job information (used by more than 400 agencies annually) into the book format.

THE HOUSE THAT JACK'S MEN BUILT

STAFF

There is a suburban church in Birmingham that conducts public hangings. The gallows is a sanctuary bulletin board where new members' pictures swing.

Membership rolls hover at 225. Within one year the members say they will be worshipping in a \$600,000 two story, 35 classroom building with seating capacity topping 725.

The 1977 National Layman of the Year attends here. No one pesters him for autographs. He's just one of the boys. This group's pastor leads two lives. Members recognize him as stellar guide. He doubles as "The Prophet" over a C.B. pulpit operating out of his kitchen.

What's with a church that sports a man in charge of its nursery, has "amens" flashed in sign language from a front pew by the choir director's spouse, runs backyard puppet shows, and retains a University of Alabama Ph.D. candidate as unofficial press agent?

MEET JACK

Welcome to the fresh new world of Forestdale Free Will Baptist Church, Birmingham, Alabama: the church that Jack's men built. "Jack" in this case is Jack L. Rollins, bellwether pastor. He's the sole pastor Forestdale's rank and file have known.

Their story began one September Sunday in 1962 when Rollins announced to 14 startled faithful that he was theirs. Soon afterward the other shoe fell. He walked away from his lucrative administrative position with a local trucking firm and informed the church, "Whatever you all pay, I'll take it."

The men call him "Brother Jack." They love him and even bought him a new car to drive. He is accessible, always easy to find and willing to talk. The 48-year-old six-footer has preached since 1949 in Alabama's Cahaba River Association. He shuns hard-sell pastoral approaches. Preaching comes easily and often to Jack Rollins. The focal point and cutting edge of his citywide outreach is hospital visitation. He visits anyone anytime. Doctors as well as nurses know him on sight and call him by name.

"Brother Jack" surrounds himself with good men, strong men. He trusts them. He says, "I'm not afraid to involve my men. They're no threat to me." Jack and his men stand at ease with each other. There is openness and warmth. They reek with enthusiasm. Unposed smiles stretch across their faces.

MEET JACK'S MEN

The Forestdale garrison view themselves as Birmingham's melting pot. In their fellowship building contractors rub shoulders with school teachers. Real estate agents talk eye to eye with truckers and graduate students. Plant foremen and greenhorns tread common ground in this Alabama men's society. They agree on a common objective: "We want to go first class. We want to get out of the

woods of old traditions."

Not all the fellows participate in Master's Men, but many do. Some work nights, and some work days. Those who can make it to Master's Men meetings do; those who can't are not boycotted. About 45 Forestdale men shoulder local church responsibilities. Their average ages are 35-45.

One 34-year-old revealed that doctrinal purity is what first attracted him. An older man said the lives of the people got to him. Another layman Ernie Winchester explained, "Nobody tries to dominate. We are falling into our roles. We are content to identify a man's involvement with his point of strength. Some can teach. Others mow grass. Everybody is important and knows it."

Delegated authority distributes the work load. Whatever formula Pastor Rollins has discovered, it's working. The church bristles with lay involvement. Highly visible men function on every level. They do not consider their involvement especially praiseworthy or unusual. They think they're normal and are somewhat taken aback that many churches cannot produce men. No job is too large for a layman and none too small. That's why, "We're trying to involve more men with the little fellows." At Forestdale men are even in charge of the nursery.

Forestdale's men point to their pastor as the catalyst behind the church. The pastor is quite adamant that his men deserve all the credit, and he's serious when he says it. The men capitalize on each other's strengths. They have seized and are using their spiritual gifts. Theirs is a verdant, greenhouse chapter in

Christian *koinonia*.

SEE WHAT JACK'S MEN DO

Church strategy results in three organized visitation programs weekly. Laymen assume responsibility for staffing the visitation. Their tactics are folksy and genuine.

"We play down the professional, big game hunter approach in soul winning. We all have friends outside the church. The secret of our success is that we really care; we are sincerely concerned about each other and the people we visit. We sometimes almost adopt a man, his problems and his family. We make every effort to identify with those who need us. This is not child's play. It's for real."

The bus ministry attracts men. Henly Misso, 1977 National Layman of the Year, was saved off a bus route. Misso, a diesel mechanic, was chosen by his peers at Forestdale to represent them in national competition. Even though these bus routes have produced a Henly Misso, bus evangelism is only one of several dimensions. It does not dwarf other just as vital areas.

At times Forestdale flexes its muscles against dog racing in Birmingham. They load a bus with men and swarm the courthouse area in protest. They utilize television and radio to oppose community social ills. Rollins' men smile, "We have a good reputation in this town, and we guard it. We're as well known for what we're against as what we're for."

This is a church of activists. Like the pastor volunteers, "Our men are doing something. If the need arose, they'd do more."

These men believe in pushing forward together. That's why they usually go en masse (some 30 or so) to the national convention each year. C.B. units keep most of them within constant earshot of one another. Camaraderie spills over into their preservice prayer vigils. They are as comfortable hurling softballs at church picnics as they are while mapping junior church principles.

Forestdale men are not publicity hungry. But they do believe in telling Birmingham what they have to share. Money is allocated regularly



for newspaper ads, radio and television spots, news articles, brochures, bus literature and other quality communication. To a man they are convinced that while media coverage is essential, nothing can substitute for personal, word-of-mouth communication.

HEAR WHAT JACK'S MEN PLAN TO DO

Forestdale's architects don't stutter when they speak of erecting a \$600,000 church three miles down the boulevard. Pastor Rollins interjects, "We've got white collar and blue collar men who can fill a church of 725. It isn't just the pastor that excites them; it's the challenge of the work. They believe they can do anything."

It is not all talk with these Birmingham visionaries. They put their money where it counts—in the church treasury to pay bills. While erasing \$185,000 construction costs from 1963, this group squirreled away \$83,000 in building funds and bought and paid for the new building site (another \$30,000). Their annual offerings top \$85,000. The church tithes its gross income to outside causes.

Next project on the horizon is a Christian school. One public school teacher affirms, "We're serious about a first class Christian school. We'll probably spend an extra \$100,000 in our new building to meet educational construction codes. Our city needs a Free Will Baptist school. And we intend to have a model private school—kindergarten through high school. Any such outreach would be subject to church control."

The men have faced up to the facts of long-term financial obligations. They are girding for them. They expect to give, plan, be businesslike, and win other men to broaden their resource base. As one grinning supporter puts it, "Since we don't sell anything, don't have cakewalks, don't have rummage sales or chicken dinners, we all know it has to be financed by tithes and offerings."

The house that Jack's men built is looking for a second man to divert some pressure from Pastor Rollins. They are adjusting for a youth influx. Unending competition with a strong, vibrant group of Forestdale Church women keeps them alert. The jubilant, glad-handing crowd is about to erupt from their overwhelmingly cramped quarters into Birmingham's western rolling hills.

Forestdale has earned community integrity. The church knows how to weave new families into its fabric. They don't just plan to grow; they intend to keep what they have. It's like one fellow told Jack Rollins after the pastor had delivered a doctrinal sermon and invited those who disagreed with him to leave: "Preacher, I don't see any need in getting out. You'd just come back and get me."

Every now and then one runs across a pastor who is a model shepherd. Occasionally one may locate a model congregation, eager, loving and appreciative. Forestdale Church seems a happy combination of both—a model shepherd and a model congregation accomplishing something beautiful for the glory of God in Alabama.

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February 1978 "Teach me good judgment and knowledge..." (Ps. 119:66).

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
EMPHASIS: National Teacher Training Month						
			2	3	4	
NATIONAL YOUTH WEEK — "Disciplined Disciples" January 30 — February 5						
5	6	7	8	9	10	11
12	13	14	15 Ash Wednesday	16	17	18
19 Tina Turner	20	21 Valentine's Day	22	23	24	25
26	27 Presidents' Day	28				

Need Help?
Want more information?
Write or call
Teacher Training
Free Will Baptist Sunday School Department
 P.O. Box 17306
 Nashville, Tenn. 37217
 615 - 361-1221