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Did God Say Something About My Marriage?

By Melvin Worthington

Why so many marital break-ups? Why so much family conflict? What factors contribute to the constantly rising divorce rate? Is there any solution to the problems affecting marriage and the family?

Because marriage is a divine institution designed by God, the best source for solutions to problems affecting marriage is the Bible. A biblical awareness of the nature, need and norm of marriage is absolutely essential if a holy and happy marriage is to be achieved. Genesis 1:26-31; 2:18-25; Matthew 19:1-12; 1 Corinthians 7; Ephesians 5; 1 Peter 3 and Colossians 3 need to be read in order to understand the material presented in this article.

MARRIAGE INSTITUTED

Genesis 1:26-31; 2:18-25 and 1 Corinthians 7 describe God's ideal plan for marriage. This institution was planned by Almighty God for the good of mankind. The record of creation suggests that marriage, generally speaking, is necessary for the happiness of mankind. It is God's answer to man's loneliness.

God's plan is for a man and woman to enter into a voluntary, mutual compact in which each promises faithfulness to the other. In the case of Adam and Eve this

union was complete and unbreakable. In a special sense all who marry are reproductions of them, and in essence their union is the same. One cannot improve on God's plan for marriage.

Marriage is founded on the nature and need of man. In creation God made them male and female and ordained marriage as the indispensable condition for the continuance of the human race.

It was to be a compact between one man and one woman to live together as husband and wife until separated by death. In Matthew 19:4-6 Jesus indicated that marriage was ordained of Almighty God for a purpose and that it constituted a relationship so sacred that the obligations would take precedence over those of grown children to elderly parents.

The biblical marriage relationship can exist only between one man and one woman, and this union is permanent. Only by death of one or both of the parties, except for reasons specified in the Word of God,

can this union be dissolved. Since the death of one of these parties dissolves the union, it is therefore lawful for the survivor to marry again.

MATES INVOLVED

Man was created by God and placed in Eden to dress and keep it (Genesis 1:26-31; 2:15). After Adam was placed in the garden, God saw it was not good for him to be alone. He had been created a social being, and God determined to make a "help" meet for him. Among all the animals not any could meet Adam's needs. He was lonely, and loneliness is not wholesome. But in woman God designed a helper corresponding to man, one who was equal to and adequate for him. The word "meet" in English means suitable, fit, proper or equal. Thus woman was made for man to be a suitable helper and to complete him.

From the very beginning God intended that marriage should be an exclusive and intimate relationship. Woman was not simply to cling to man as an appendage, for God ordained that a man should cleave unto his wife in mutual commitment of true union. For man to achieve his objectives in life it is necessary to have the help of his mate in every way, from the propagating of his kind down through the scale of his

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varied activities.

The woman's position is defined by the expression "like him" which means "as agreeing to him" or "his counterpart." The woman is the kind of help man needs, agreeing with him spiritually, mentally and physically.

The creation account never suggests that the woman is inferior to man but rather the opposite is implied. She completes, complements and corresponds to him, for she is suitable both to his nature and necessity. She is altogether like him in shape, constitution, disposition and affection.

She is to stand continually before him, familiarly to converse with him, to be always ready to succor, serve and satisfy him. Her eye, respect, care and desire are to be to him. The pleasure of helping and pleasing Adam was to be Eve's entire business.

The institution of marriage as divinely willed and approved by God is recorded in Genesis 2:18-25. God brings Adam and Eve together, and they are united. This unity is not for one act of life but for all acts of life. The physical relationship is important in marriage, but it is not the whole of marriage. In marriage the man and wife do not do just one thing together but all things together.

MANDATES IMPLIED

God made them male and female for a specific purpose. The uniqueness of the marriage relationship is that it is between a man and a woman. God's ideal for marriage is an intimate relationship between one man and one woman.

The unity of the marriage relationship must be considered as a vital ingredient. The two persons united in marriage become one. They become complete in their personalities. Marriage does not narrow life but completes it.

It brings a new fullness, satisfaction and contentment to life. Two personalities are united in which the two complete each other. Adjustments and sacrifices must be made on the part of both parties. As a result the final relationship is fuller, more joyous and more satisfying

than any life in singleness and isolation could be.

The *undertaking* of the marriage relationship is a very practical experience. In marriage both parties share all the circumstances of life. Marriage is not the solution to all life's ills, but it affords the possibilities of happiness and blessing.

Understanding the marriage relationship is the key to a happy and holy marriage. The marriage relationship is cultivated throughout the life of the parties. There is a continual development of a oneness between the two mates. Many marriages fail as a result of not understanding this basic principle.

No marriage is complete which does not unite and blend the wedded parties at every point. Every interest must be common to both. Their hearts throb with the same joy and sharing of each pang of sorrow. The same burdens rest on the shoulders of both as their whole lives are made common in all interests.

Both husband and wife must make a significant contribution to the marriage relationship. In the light of the creation account each has a distinctive role. Some general principles in the Bible suggest the distinctive roles of husband and wife.

The following principles are by no means exhaustive but will serve as practical guidelines to help married couples develop a more meaningful relationship.

I. The Husband's Role

His Leaving (Genesis 2:24): The husband must leave his parents and cleave to his wife. This suggests that in marriage there is the establishment of a new relationship which takes preeminence in the lives of the husband and wife. Ties to parents are broken in such a way that he might cleave to his wife. Remaining ties that hinder or hamper the husband's fulfillment of his obligation to cleave to his wife must be cut or the marriage is in trouble.

The umbilical cords must be severed and a completely new



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MARRIAGE (from page 3)

identity, life-style and family unit must be established. When the principle of leaving and cleaving is observed, a sound and solid basis is laid for a happy marriage.

His Loving (Ephesians 5:25-33): The husband is to love his wife as Christ loves the Church. 1 Corinthians 13 sets forth the qualities of this type love. Cleaving suggests the principle of love. The cleaving of husband to wife is an aspect of their love and an evidence of a right heart relationship to each other.

His Laboring (Genesis 3): The account of sin and its resulting curse on the human race suggests that the sphere of activity for the husband is outside of the home. The general biblical teaching is that the husband should make the living for his family though there might be an exception under specific circumstances.

His Living (1 Peter 3:7): Peter exhorts the husband to dwell with his wife according to knowledge. This would involve understanding,

"In marriage two people see each other . . . when the moonlight and roses become the kitchen sink and walking the floor at night with a crying baby."

patience, consideration, etc. The husband is to perform all matrimonial duties to the wife prudently and wisely as they become his divine duty.

His Listening: The husband should be a good listener. The interests of his wife should be of great importance to him. Courtesy is vital to a good marriage. There is no place where rudeness is so unpardonable as inside our own doors and toward our loved ones. There should be maintained the most

"There is no place where rudeness is so unpardonable as inside our own doors and toward our loved ones."

perfect courtesy, the gentlest attention, the most unselfish amiability, the utmost affectionateness between the husband and his wife.

His Leading (Ephesians 5:22-23): The husband is directly responsible for home leadership. This position is not one to be bragged about but to be fulfilled with meekness and wisdom. He, as the divinely appointed head of the home, is required to set the example for his wife to follow and to give her guidance in both aspects of leaving and cleaving.

Nothing is more clearly stated in the Bible than the truth that man is the leader in the home. He leads by precept, practice and principle. Most husbands fail to realize that leadership in the home must be characterized by compassion, consideration, control, communication, and courtesy. No wife will have a hard time submitting to the leadership of the right kind of husband.

2. The Helpmate's Role

Her Listening: Ephesians 5 teaches that the wife is to be submissive to her husband. A great deal of marital difficulties result from a lack of listening on the part of the wife. Her position in the home would imply that she needs to spend a great deal of time listening. The disposition of the wife toward her husband is exhibited through her ability to listen to him. Involved in this would be obedience to his directives.

Her Loyalty: The wife needs to maintain a spirit of loyalty to her husband. In this way she supports and encourages him and thus helps him become the leader and provider that he ought to be. Please note Ephesians 5 and 1 Peter 3.

Her Loving: The wife must love her husband. The qualities of this love are set forth in 1 Corinthians 13. This is easy for the average woman. No woman will be truly

happy until she is completely submitted to the husband she loves.

Her Laboring (Genesis 3): The basic sphere of activity for the woman revolves around the home. Proverbs 31 and Titus 2 suggest this principle. The highest calling for any woman is the call to motherhood and homemaker.

Her Leaving (Genesis 2:24): The wife must cut the ties with her parents, leave them and cleave to her husband. All her emotional spiritual and physical needs can be met by her husband.

Marriage is a sharing of all life's circumstances. In marriage two people see each other when they are not always at their best. They see each other when they are tired and weary, when money is tight and when the moonlight and roses become the kitchen sink and walking the floor at night with a crying baby.

Unless two persons are prepared to face the daily routine of life as well as the glamour of life together, marriage will be a failure.

The basis of marriage is togetherness, and the key to togetherness is considerateness. If marriage is to succeed, both wife and husband must always be thinking more of the other than self.

Marriage is simply love which is able to understand, and therefore to serve, the love which is able to forgive. It is Christlike love which knows that in forgetting self it will find self and that in losing itself it will complete itself.

Somerset Maugham's mother was a beautiful woman and loved by all. She married an ugly little man. Someone questioned her in regard to her selection of a husband and her being faithful to him. She answered, "He never hurts my feelings."

No finer tribute can be given. The key to a happy marriage is *consideration for your companion.* ▲



VIVE LES FEMMES

Women have always been easier won to Christianity than men. The reason is not difficult to isolate. Women in every generation hear a sound in Jesus' teachings that they've not heard from any other quarter. There has never been a greater friend of women's dignity than Jesus of Nazareth. In 30 AD Israel's nonmale population openly claimed His liberating Gospel.

It's about time the church today gave thought to catching up with Jesus. Most churchmen have spent too much time wiretapping gossip about the wrong women.

They assume every woman is a Jezebel scavenging for an Ahab to dominate. Or a seductive Delilah intent on clipping dozing Samson's strength. Or a scheming Sapphira (Acts 5) so brazen she could look God in the face and lie. They care-

fully forget that Sapphira's husband had lied and died first; she only followed his example.

The subordinate Old Testament role of woman seems to be a result of the fall rather than creation. But for that matter man too is assigned a more subordinate role after the fall. About all this proves is that neither male chauvinists nor women's libbers find any comfort in Genesis 3.

To be sure there is a rogues' gallery of wicked women if one wishes to spotlight them. But then there's another list boasting the

curs of a thousand generations: Cain, Judas Iscariot, Nero, Herod, Attila the Hun, Hitler. Name-calling and historical proof-texting is no answer.

While it is true that Jesus shattered crusted traditions encasing women in brittle social roles, liberation for women rises much earlier from the Old Testament. God Himself wrote the declaration of women's freedom, rights, honor and integrity; and He did so on creation's sixth day.

Woman is not pictured in Genesis 2 as a necessary evil, but as the female counterpart to man and essential to the image of God. It took more than male to mirror the image of God; it took female also. Man was incomplete without woman in Eden, and things haven't changed since then.

Women's rights were protected and guaranteed under authority of divine law. The same code specifying "Honor thy father..." concludes with "...and thy mother." Ladies should not despair that childbearing was their most important role in Old Testament chronology. The majority of men sallied through that same era sheep-herding and goat roping.

How intriguing it is that when a property owning Israelite woman was wooed and wed by a suitor from outside her tribe, her husband had to take his wife's family name (Numbers 27:1-8; 36:6-9). Modern arguments over whose name changes are not new after all.

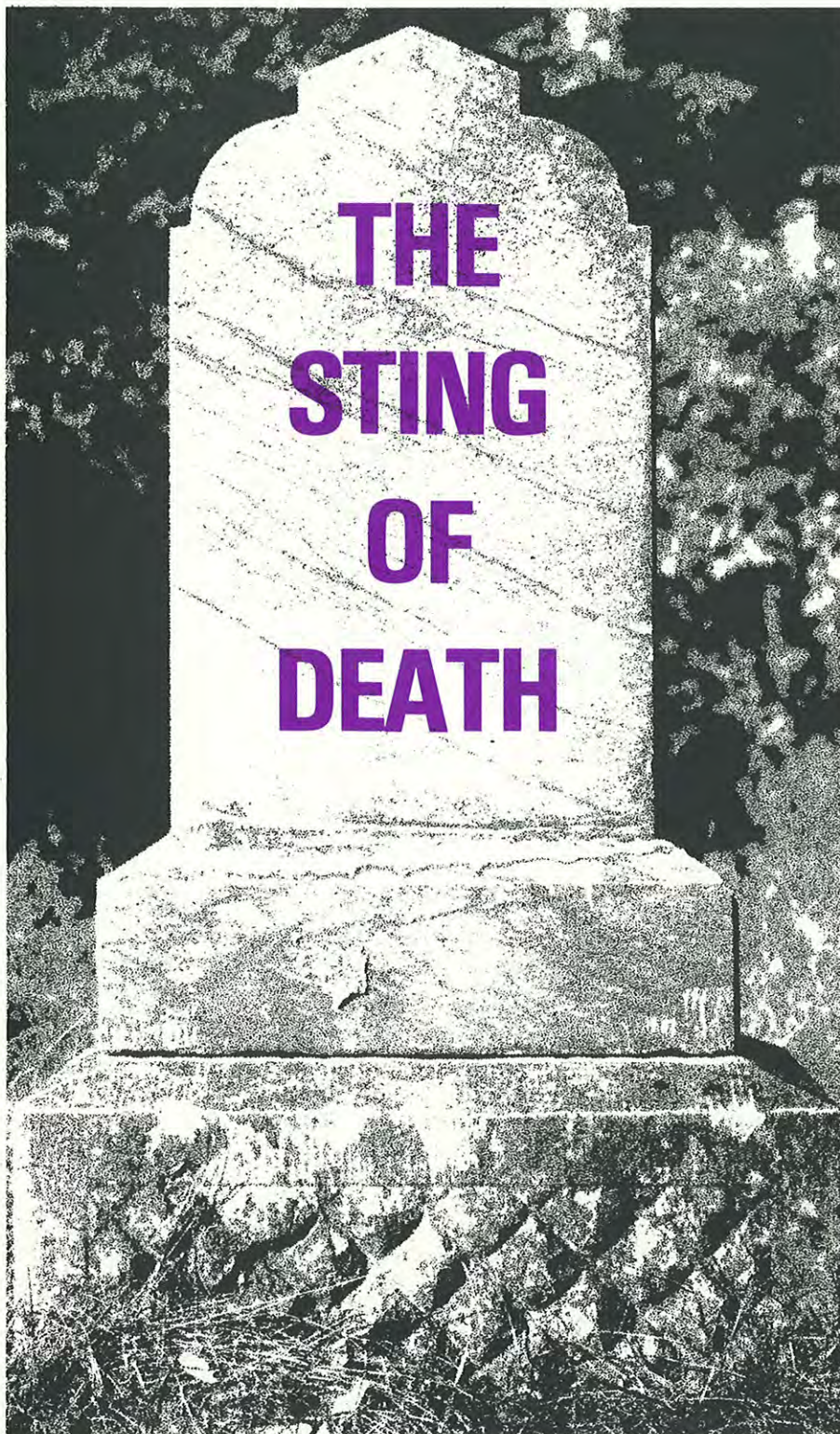
Men who enjoy reading Romans owe a debt to a lady named Phebe (16:1,2). Lois and Eunice so influenced Timothy that the Holy Spirit keeps a permanent record on display (II Timothy 1:5,6). Ask Apollos about the scriptural insight of Priscilla (Acts 18:26).

Jesus washed the disciples' feet and taught 12 men a lesson. But guess who washed Jesus' feet and taught the whole world a lesson (Luke 7:38)? Where Jesus' ministry was concerned—whether it be His birth, His death or His resurrection—women got there first and stayed the longest.

When Paul and John soared to linguistic ecstasy looking for something of worth and beauty with which to compare God's Church, their Holy-Spirit-inspired minds could find nothing more noble than a woman, a bride.

Outside the home and church, prescribed male/female roles of dominance and submission do not exist. God's universal laws of decency, courtesy, common sense and personal initiative prevail. Many women today are comfortable wearing Proverbs 31's three-fold virtues of shrewd business-woman (vs. 16, 24, 26), loving mother (vs. 15, 27), and contented wife (vs. 11, 12, 28).

The man who feels he must remind woman to stay in her place should make sure he doesn't disagree with God on where that place is. ▲



THE STING OF DEATH

The phone call came. It was expected. "Pop has gone to be with the Lord. Come home as soon as possible."

I could now test the content of all my funeral messages firsthand. In my Kentucky ministry I had been known as "Burying Sam" and "Marrying Sam" because of the numerous funerals and weddings at which I officiated.

I remembered telling families on many occasions that Christians should count it joy when their loved ones go home to be with the Lord. I had often quoted Romans 8:28 as a source of comfort. I had reminded families that when we weep, we weep selfishly in loneliness and because of personal loss. How would I now react to the announcement that Pop was dead?

My father had died when I was two. I had no memory of him or his death and, therefore, no pain. Pop was my stepfather, but he was the only father I had known. He had loved me and had never hesitated to sacrifice—to give of himself to meet my needs.

The next day I stood by his casket. There seemed to be a hint of a smile on his face. I did not weep. His sufferings were ended, and he was in the presence of the Lord.

AMERICAN WAY OF DEATH

Before considering personal and individual responses to physical death, it might be good to briefly look at the general American response to death. With a little observation, it soon becomes evident that Americans refuse to face death openly. The prevailing attitude demands that we ignore death in hopes that it will go away. Although many purchase insurance, it is often because insurance is cheaper at an early age rather than because the individual really expects that he might die and his family be found in need. Very few people take the time or accept the expense involved in making a will. All of us know that we have to die, but we are not willing to admit that the time of death could be very near.

On the medical scene we cannot

be convinced of the possibility of death until death actually comes. Even in those cases where death is inevitable, the act of death is always a surprise. After months of expectant waiting, bereaved families still find themselves totally unprepared when a loved one dies. When death does come, doctors make valiant efforts to restore breathing and heartbeat of an individual who has already suffered untold agony.

We are much like the story of the evangelist in the old west who stated from the pulpit, "All of you who want to go to heaven, raise your hands." Everyone in the congregation raised his hand. But then a hardened westerner in the back of the church stood to his feet with his six-guns in his hands and said, "All of you who want to go to heaven right now, raise your hands." Needless to say, the response was not nearly so immediate or so complete.

Americans have taught themselves to ignore death and are so good at the game that death becomes unreal and unseen.

DEATH OF LOVED ONES

There are three prevalent responses of the Christian to death in the immediate family: (1) extreme emotion usually caused by feelings of guilt, (2) controlled emotion usually the result of acute awareness of loss, and (3) calm acceptance resulting from assurance that the loved one is with the Lord.

The Guilt Response

It is not possible in a single article to classify every individual response to death and then categorically say this response must be based on an inner sense of guilt, loneliness or calm assurance.

However, I have witnessed a number of individuals facing death and have found that uncontrolled public show of emotion is most often expressed by individuals who feel a strong sense of guilt.

It would not be fair to say that in every case the sense of guilt comes from neglect of the loved one or from intentional indifference. Quite often external circumstances—distance, health, finances—demand that limitations be placed on our

relationships. The scope of this article does not allow identification of all sources of guilt. However, whether it is based on unavoidable circumstances or on actual neglect, the guilt is just as real and the pain just as sharp. The individual feels that he has failed the loved one in life and that he must now compensate for that guilt by expressing excessive emotion.

The Response of Loneliness

An open display of extreme emotion has become traditional in America. Preachers seem to think they have failed in their responsibility if their messages don't encourage family members to tears through constant reference to relationships with the loved one in life and the deep sense of loss that will come after the funeral. At some funeral services it is quite easy to forget that the funeral was designed to comfort and meet the needs of the living.

Nonetheless, the Christian is not to be indifferent to death. Nor is the Christian denied the release found in weeping. Weeping is a natural response—a purely human reaction which could indicate grief, joy, excitement, or (for the Christian) a keen awareness of the presence of the Holy Spirit in a particular situation.

However, in order that our emotions have their proper place in our reaction to the death of loved ones, it is necessary that we understand the source and the basis for our weeping. For the Christian weeping is not for the dead, but for the living. We simply weep for ourselves. We

are lonely. There is, especially at the time of the funeral, an awful awareness of emptiness and of the loved one's absence.

I do not condemn this type of emotion, but the Christian cannot continue to carry the burden of loneliness and live in defeat. Part of the Lord's preparation for healing is found in the knowledge that the weeping is personal. It is the cry of loneliness.

The Response of Calm Assurance

The Scriptures are very clear on the proper Christian attitude toward the death of loved ones. Paul opens his great heart in I Thessalonians 4: 13-18. In verse 13 Paul tells the church at Thessalonica, "But I would not have you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning them which are asleep, that ye sorrow not, even as others which have no hope." After reminding his readers of the position of the dead in Christ, Paul closes the chapter by saying, "... Comfort one another with these words."

The message is clear. Christians are not like the unsaved either in our grief or in our response to grief. We have hope. Because Jesus lives, our loved ones also live.

For this reason John could write later in Revelation 14:13, "... Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord from henceforth: Yea, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labors. ..." There is even the hint in this latter passage that

"How odd it is that some who have been Christians for many years face death with the same fear that stalks the unsaved man."



DEATH (from page 7)

the dead in Christ have an advantage on those of us who are living. Their struggles, sufferings and heartaches are over. They are in the presence of the Lord.

DEATH OF THE CHRISTIAN

In our conversations recently, my wife, who is a nurse and has come in contact with death frequently, has expressed a growing burden because of the attitude of lifelong Christians toward approaching death. Again there seem to be three basic responses of Christians to their own deaths.

The Response of Fear

How odd it is that some who have been Christians for many years face death with the same fear that stalks the unsaved man. Suddenly, the confidence that they had proclaimed is gone. Their hearts and minds are filled with doubt. "Suppose God is not there? Suppose I am not being ushered into life?" they question.

One of the greatest hindrances to the 20th century church is the blight of immaturity that exists in most churches. Because of negligence on the part of the individual Christian or the church itself, Christians remain babes in Christ for the most of their lives.

They go through all the motions—church, public confession of faith, baptism, Sunday school—but they never gain maturity and confidence in the Word. They are ineffective in witness; they seldom strengthen the church; and they are surely unprepared to face death with confidence. How desperately we need to learn the confidence of the Psalmist who wrote, "... Though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil ..." (Psalm 23:4a).

The Response of Personal Concern

Probably more prevalent than the response of fear is the concern for personal ease and comfort. This response, of course, would be limited to those who suffer from physical ailment or accident. My wife probably weeps more over this

response than the other. Christians who have known the Lord for many, many years cry out for mercy and relief. There is no evidence or expression of anticipation. They recognize no comfort in coming eternity, no thought of seeing Jesus.

The cry is, "Lord, have mercy on me." "Lord, why must I suffer this pain?"

Is there, again, an evidence of the failure of the church in meeting the needs of its people? Are there few messages concerning the second coming of Christ? Because of the American attitude toward death, we not only hide our heads in the sand and determine that death will not come, but we also ignore the possibility of any intervention in the life

"Death will open the final door that separates the individual from his Christ."

that we have come to take for granted.

We have become fully conditioned to think only of our own comfort and our own needs. Even if we can hide that attitude in life, it finds its way to the front in the face of death. The cry is not, "Jesus, I'm coming home," but rather, "Lord, release me from my pain."

The Response of Eager Expectation

When my stepfather died, it was the answer to his own prayers. If he had fear, it was the fear that he would be a burden to the family that he loved as much as life. He prayed that the Lord would not allow him to remain bedridden in order that his family would be relieved of the responsibility of his care.

There was more than that. He had walked in close step with the Lord for more than 60 years. The Lord was his friend; they were intimately

related. His death was not one of anguish. There was no fear. There was the expectation that after all these years he would meet the Savior face to face.

Is there really scriptural basis for such confidence? Can there be such a relationship with the Lord Jesus that death is a time of excitement and anticipation rather than fear and dread?

Hebrews 12 indicates that in life we should continually be looking to Jesus. Jesus is our goal, our guide, our reason for living. The Scriptures remind us that the Christian's relationship to Christ is that of brother-to-brother, friend-to-friend, and bride-to-bridegroom. Colossians 1:27 describes the Christian experience as "... Christ in you." The relationship is that of oneness.

In the marriage relationship every passing day brings the couple closer together. In the same way every day with Jesus, every step in His path, every encounter in prayer, every awareness of His presence should draw the Christian closer to His Savior. Over the years that relationship should grow so intense and the desire to be with Jesus become so constant that death will be anticipated and anxiously awaited because it will open the final door that separates the individual from his Christ.

Because of that growing relationship and because of the experience of Christ with death and resurrection, Paul can say in I Corinthians 15, "O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory? The sting of death is sin; and the strength of sin is the law. But thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ." For the Christian there is no sting in death. The grave will not, cannot know victory over the Christian heart. Death is the open door to life. It is not to be feared, but rather to be expectantly awaited as we continue to serve and to gain knowledge of Christ.

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Walking in Resurrection Power

*Easter is past,
but you can wear
an Easter morning
smile 365 days a
year.*

By Graeme A. Savage

Easter! That's when we celebrate the glorious historical fact that the crucified Savior conquered death and the grave. We explain how He was raised by the Holy Spirit as exalted victor to whom every knee shall bow and every tongue confess.

These great affirmations of faith both point us to the heart of history and on to its climax. But what do they really say to us today? They give assurance of past victory. They unfurl banners of coming glory. They give assurance of dynamic and inspiring reality now.

He lives for His people, in His people, through His people, moment by moment in all the variety of experiences which are theirs.

NEGATE THE EMMAUS-ROAD NEARSIGHTEDNESS

On the day of the resurrection two people walked the road to Emmaus. As they journeyed, Jesus joined them though they did not recognize Him. Every day of our lives as Christians we continue our pilgrimage, and Jesus has joined us. Yet all too often we remain

completely oblivious to His presence with us.

His power, His influence, His teaching, His love, the evidence of His dynamic presence, all remain obscure because we have yet to see with eyes of true faith the incredible result of being born again, of being made new creatures who have entered into a new relationship in which Jesus is life. This is partly what Paul had in mind when he said, "For to me to live is Christ" (Philippians 1:21).

Many Christians' personal lives continue to express the sense of emptiness and anguish of spirit that Mary Magdalene poured out in desperate grief in the garden. If only they would permit the Lord to open their understanding, they



would experience the amazing joy of realization that He is with them and integral to their lives.

DUMP THE SIMON PETER DESPERATION

Others, like Peter, are overcome with a sense of defeat and shame and are ready to throw in the towel. But the Lord in perfect patience and measureless love is seeking to kindle again the flame of love and devotion.

The demonstration of His commitment to each of His own could not be more complete. It is a commitment which can overcome that deserved sense of unworthiness and replace it with confidence. Christ's indwelling fullness makes total difference between defeat and victory, between shame and glory.

To every believer the message of Easter comes with great and thrilling reassurance that today in our lives the risen Lord, the triumphant Savior, is all in all. Thus we walk in newness of life. In fact, God's Word on the basis of the reality of the resurrection challenges us, "Even so we also should walk in newness of life" (Romans 6:4).

CLAIM THE CONQUEROR'S REALITY

But what does this mean for us today? First, it means that the quality of our new life in Christ will be seen in the quality of our living.

Romans 6 is replete with exhortations to grasp the reality that in this new life we are "dead to sin" (v. 11); "Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal body" (v. 12); "Sin shall not have dominion over you" (v. 14); "Being then made free from sin" (v. 18 and 22).

Surely Christ's living in us in resurrection life, power and glory is a guarantee that in Him we are "more than conquerors." We are challenged to reckon on this reality and claim it by faith in daily experience.

That is the beginning and only the beginning. "Old things have passed away," and with it there is

"... the power of His resurrection cannot be separated from the fellowship of His suffering...."

the reality that "all things have become new." Not only the negative reality is to be claimed, but also the positive reality is to be appropriated victoriously day by day.

This incredible potential is suggested in such biblical affirmations as "Christ in you." The possibilities that lie dormant in the life that is truly possessed by the victor who is risen in power and glory are beyond the ability of the mere mind to comprehend or describe.

It is true He said, "Without me ye can do nothing" (John 15:5). But He also said, "Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that believeth on me, the works that I do shall he do also; and greater works than these shall he do; because I go unto my Father" (John 14:12).

The only qualification in that statement made by Jesus is faith, faith in Jesus crucified, risen, glorified. "If ye have faith . . . nothing shall be impossible unto you" (Matthew 17:20). This is the reality when we are walking in resurrection living. But, also, it is a potential about which far too many Christians are all but completely ignorant.

PUSH THE "CHRIST FIRST" BUTTON

It is this potential that inspires the heart cry of Paul in Philippians 3:7-14, a heart cry that should find an ever increasing echo of response in the attitude of everyone who has begun to walk with the Savior. "But what things were gain to me, those I count loss for Christ. . . . I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord . . . that I may win Christ . . . That I

may know him, and the power of his resurrection."

This speaks of a dynamic, growing, expanding knowledge of personal experience and abiding relationship that expresses itself in power for the glory of the Savior.

But notice that "the power of his resurrection" cannot be separated from "the fellowship of his sufferings, being made conformable unto his death."

TELL SELF "NO" UNTIL IT'S TRUE

Walking in resurrection life and light is yet walking in the shadow of the cross, a cross which we must voluntarily take up in total self-denial: the cross of rejection, misunderstanding, and loss; the cross of reproach, shame, and reviling.

The same Paul who speaks of "knowing him," also speaks of being "made as the filth of the world, and the offscouring of all things" (I Corinthians 4:13). Identification with the risen Savior in His glory at the same time involves identification with the despised and rejected man of sorrows.

To know the glory of victory is to accept the need to "go forth . . . unto him without the camp, bearing his reproach" (Hebrews 13:13). Thus Paul reminds Timothy, "If we suffer, we shall also reign with him" (II Timothy 2:12).

FLASH THE IDENTIFICATION BADGE

The presence of the living Christ dwelling in us involves identification with Him in His suffering and reproach. It is in this that we begin to grasp the meaning of Colossians 1:24: "Who now rejoice in my suffering for you, and fill up that which is behind of the afflictions of Christ in my flesh for His body's sake, which is the church." This is the suffering that results in blessing and edification, the self-denial and self-abnegation which enriches others.

The Lord, living out His life for others in selfless love, leads us along the same road which He

(Continued on page 28)

PARDON MY CULTURAL BARRIERS

By Daryl Ellis

Life is full of difficult problems even for the Christian.

Difficult problems seldom have simple and quick solutions. Ground must be broken by stimulation, interaction and serious consideration. A call for consideration comes before a call to action.

When encountering the word, *culture*, our minds usually travel to darkest Africa, colorful Far East or unpredictable Europe. Nothing's wrong with those thoughts. Why not include the variety of styles within our own country, too? Culture involves habits, customs and modes of living. To some extent your local church may have cultural variations.

Students of culture and foreign missionaries have better qualifications to write on the specifics of cultural interaction. I do not suggest for even a moment that I am knowledgeable about the many

different cultures. Yet, from a foundational standpoint, such knowledge is not necessary.

REALLY SEEING OUR WORLD

The key to moving towards overcoming cultural barriers is understanding ourselves, namely, our own attitudes. Attitudes have a way of distorting truth.

We have a responsibility to examine attitudes concerning interpersonal relationships. I proudly proclaim that I am a believer, a member of the Body of Christ. Then, I wonder, "What does that mean for me?"

Embracing the teachings of the Bible compels me to have a concern for all peoples. Christ died for all mankind and wants them all to be saved. Christ uses believers to share the Gospel.

Our scope of evangelism must be flexible to meet the field of harvest. Although the Gospel never changes, our responsibility is shaped by the groups of lost persons.

America has undergone change in many ways. Population concentrations are in flux. Movements north to south, urban to rural, segregation to integration and a decreasing white middle class are sample trends.

If we do maintain that we have a biblically sound theology, we must ready ourselves to share it with everyone, even in America. Pointing to the foreign missions program as a justification of our way of carrying the Gospel to everyone is hardly acceptable. Possessors of truth have a responsibility to handle it as such. If we do have the truth, let's act upon it.

The attitude we have toward ourselves is fundamental to successful relationships with others. Fraught with insecurity, instead of reaching out to others, we strike as coiled serpents. Failure to understand ourselves limits our ability to deal with others.



BARRIERS (from page 11)

Denominational leaders have alerted us to the inferiority cloud that seems to hang over many minds in our group. We must proceed with confidence based on assurance in our God, our doctrine and our people.

Let us be cautious of hopping on bandwagons such as collecting degrees merely for the sake of impression and boasting in ourselves. Such newfound confidence is nothing more than make-believe self-assurance.

SIZING UP OUR PROBLEMS

Our attitudes do affect us. Going even further, those attitudes affect our problem-solving ability. The next area of concern is our honesty in dealing with problems. When a difficult issue arises, we often forgo beneficial wrestling with the difficulty and opt for a "yes or no" solution.

We avoid hard objective reasoning that could potentially lead to a variety of opinions. It sounds so noble to declare, "There is no gray area here. It is right or wrong, and I am on the right side."

An American culture is not more biblical than a European one. White culture is not inherently better than black culture. We Americanized Christians should not use our culture as the standard by which all other culture should be measured.

We must admit our cultural practices as being such, not label them as being biblical injunctions on the way to live. If we aren't careful, our choice of life-style becomes the *required* life-style.

Perhaps you would agree that Jonah was affected by the "we are it" syndrome. Although his problem

was a nationalistic pride, that same destructive force is contained in cultural pride, denominational pride and racial pride. It has led to some outrageous movements in our generation.

LIVING WITH OUR DIFFERENCES

The final consideration is a frightening one. Do you ever recognize the possibility that your attitude toward other persons can be shaped by a sinful nature? We acknowledge that everyone of us must cope with our natural inclinations. Selfishness, arrogance and pride are sinful attitudes. Nevertheless, we attempt to justify our disposition because of the circumstances.

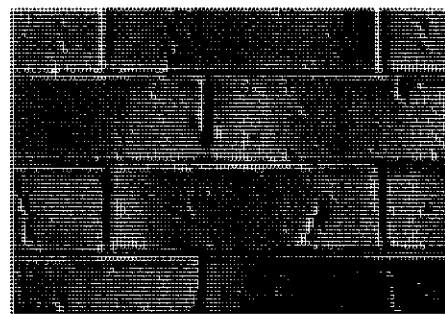
Often reasons given for not accepting certain ethnic and racial groups are their actions or life-style. The Gospel of Jesus Christ transcends all excuses. Reading the Sermon on the Mount will make us all aware of that fact. We must love the unlovable!

It is disturbing to hear so much condemnation of sin when so little understanding is shown about the vastness of the doctrine of sin. The Bible teaches that no one is acceptable to God without the righteousness of Christ on his account. Granted, a personal righteousness is developing in the Christian. However, our personal righteousness will be left standing at the station if we are on our way to acquire right standing before God.

Yes, the world is sinful, but so are we. The difference is found in the work of Christ, not ourselves. The words of Christ ring loudly, "For the Son of Man is come to seek and to save that which was lost" (Luke 19:10).

Ever heard someone say, "I wish that family would start in church. They are just the kind of people we would like to have in our church." We must reaffirm our conviction of the universal depravity of mankind, regardless if some look acceptable, and others do not. Once we find out who is in the boat with us, the barriers will not loom so large.

Cultural barriers do exist. Whether it be American to African, northerner to southerner, Carolinian



to Missourian, or black to white, the fact remains. We can get excited and demand immediate action. Or we can consider the matter, understanding not only the cultural differences but also the people who do not seem to even care about anyone except "their own kind."

Change is slow. Those advocating constructive change must be patient to develop attitudes before setting a new course of action.

To serve Christ is a humbling experience. Can we boast? Would we dare proclaim our necessity to be a part of God's plan?

Marvel that we can serve the Master. He allows us to represent Him. He entrusts us with His Gospel. Such responsibility calls for soberness, reason and sound judgment bathed in the love and wisdom of our God.

Let us recognize the need to minister to all races and nationalities.

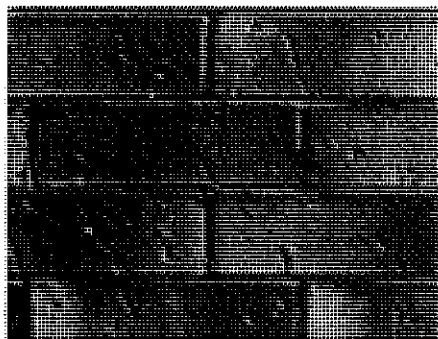
Let us be honest to admit our personal fallibility and that we are just a part of the Body of Christ.

Let us be conscious of our attitudes, realizing they could be tainted with selfishness and partiality.

A difficult problem? Oh, yes. But a solution is possible. This calls for mature men and women who care. Genuine concern will not be thwarted by problems. We must get involved with others and seek to understand one another.

There's that old saying: We must start at home. I believe God wants us as Free Will Baptists to start by learning to overcome our prejudices within our own denomination.

ABOUT THE WRITER: Daryl Ellis is assistant pastor of Grace Free Will Baptist Church, Arnold, MO. A graduate of FWBCC, he is currently enrolled at Covenant Theological Seminary, St. Louis, MO. ▲



THE ART OF HOSPITAL VISITATION

By Robert Shockey

When a person is admitted to the hospital, he has time to think of God. Therefore, one of the widest doors of opportunity in the pastorate is hospital visitation. Perhaps this vital ministry is so neglected because training institutions have failed to stress its very important and needful study in the curriculum.

Seven major conditions of the sickroom make it imperative that a religious ministry be available to those patients who desire it and even those who do not desire it. These conditions are pain, anxiety, hostility, guilt, boredom, despair and loneliness. They are dreaded enemies of mankind both inside and outside the hospital, but they are much harder to cope with from a sickbed.

Many times the patients have particular problems which require considerable time, guidance and counseling. But patients should be counseled at the proper time. Rarely should a pastor seek to give counsel during visiting hours while others are coming in and going out. To do so gives the patient an added sense of fear and confusion. A time should be chosen when the pastor will not be interrupted by outsiders, family or hospital personnel. If another patient is in the room, the conversation must be kept as private as possible.

Prayer is a very important step in counseling the patient. Before

counseling begins, the pastor should pray definitely for the patient (mentioning his name) and for wisdom and understanding as he seeks God's will. Such a prayer gives the patient confidence and assurance, two stepping stones for helping in any circumstances.

SUFFERING'S PURPOSES

One of the questions that is usually asked the minister is "Why am I suffering?" It is a logical question, especially if the person is a Christian and is doing his best to serve God. Here is a wonderful opportunity for the minister. He can assure the patient that sickness and sorrow comes to all. There is no escape for the burdens of life. We have not been promised exemption from suffering, but thank God there is wonderful help and strength for the Christian.

Although we are unable to explain much of the suffering, we do know a power that can conquer suffering. The minister needs to point out that sickness is not a great calamity in life. It could well be the gateway to many blessings and a fuller life in God.

Suffering can bring blessings into the lives of unbelievers also. One

morning I was awakened by the ringing of the phone. It was an anxious voice that spoke, pleading for help for a loved one who had just experienced a severe heart attack. Praying all the time that God would allow me to make it to the hospital before it was too late, I hurriedly dressed.

Minutes later I arrived at the hospital only to find the family in tears. Some were afraid that if I counseled with him about his soul, the excitement might be too much for him. After a few moments of meditation, I assured the family that if I could help lead him to Christ it would be far better than letting him live a few more hours and then go into eternity without God. With part of the family's consent, I proceeded to give him God's wonderful plan of salvation and urged him to repent of his sins and accept Christ as his Saviour. This he did and immediately began to rejoice with so much emotion that I did fear that possibly he might overexert himself.

Praise the Lord, God allowed him to live and give his testimony to his family and many others. He admitted that while his suffering was

HOSPITAL VISITING HOURS

2:00-4:00 p.m. and 7:00-9:00 p.m.



difficult to understand, it brought him to the realization of his need for a Savior and resulted in eternal life plus all the benefits of being an heir of God and a joint-heir with the Lord Jesus Christ.

In some instances, the minister could explain that while we have good health, we give too little time to the nurturing of our precious souls. We get so busy at the office, school, shop and home that we forget to take time for God. In working out His plan for our lives, the all-wise God may deem it necessary to take us through some soul refining or soul searching experience to prepare us for greater service.

The second objective of hospital visitation is to coordinate the spiritual ministry with the physical ministry. The pastor should also take the opportunity to give a few timely words of encouragement and instruction. It is evident that while hospitals are interested in helping the patient physically, too little time is given in helping the patient adjust to the daily procedures.

PRACTICAL ADVICE

First, assure the patient that recovery depends largely upon him. The doctors, nurses and medicine can do great things, but they can't do everything.

Second, encourage the patient to cooperate with the hospital personnel and follow the instructions given in every detail. Don't hide medicine. Don't eat anything that has not been prescribed by the doctor.

Third, don't worry, grumble, or complain about the service you are getting or about your condition. Your mental outlook has a lot to do with your physical condition.

God gives the prescription for a cure from worry in His Word. Notice Philippians 4:6-8:

"Be careful for nothing (in nothing be anxious); but in every thing by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God. And the peace of God, which passes all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus. Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true,

whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, if there be any praise, think on these things."

If we think on these things, our minds as well as our hearts will not be troubled with the cares of this life. If we use our minds to think on the things that are right, we don't have time to think on the things that are wrong. We don't have time to worry over the things that trouble us.

Fourth, seek to lead the patient into a daily fellowship with God by encouraging him to read his Bible and pray. The power of God is not limited. Therefore, it is necessary for the patient to cultivate these privileges.

Pastors need a close working relationship with the doctor and hospital personnel. To treat the whole man, all the members of the healing team must work together. Many doctors do appreciate the combined efforts to help the individual patient. Perhaps we have not taken advantage of this association with the medical profession because we have not seen the need or because we are afraid that we will not be accepted.

Again we must consider the needs of the patient. Pain is only one condition. A pill or injection may be given, and relief is the result. But the other conditions, anxiety, hostility, guilt, boredom, despair, and loneliness, are not as easy to relieve. Therefore, it may take a combination of the physical, mental and spiritual ministry to bring a patient back into a normal, happy and useful life.

More emphasis needs to be given to this area. The minister should make himself available to the medical staff for consultation when the need arises. Recently I was called upon to render service to a particular patient where the doctor was unable to determine the patient's problem. The patient had a fear of what the doctor might think about some things she had done. After about 30 minutes of counseling with this young lady, she gave

her heart to Christ. I was then able to convince her that it was necessary to give the doctor all the facts. This she did, and the doctor was able to help her immediately. In this case, time was of essence, and a combination of our efforts helped to put this young lady on the road to recovery.

For the casual hospital visitor or the laity who feel that hospital visitation is part of their calling, the following list of do's and don'ts are simple suggestions for visiting. Remember every visitor that enters the hospital either helps or hinders the patient. Much damage has been done when the visitor says or does something without thinking about the effect it will have on the patient.

DO'S FOR HOSPITAL VISITORS

1. Do your visiting during visiting hours.
2. Do check with the receptionist before going to the patient's room.
3. Do be quiet.
4. Do consider the other patients.
5. Do be cheerful.
6. Do cooperate with the medical staff.
7. Do let the doctors diagnose the case.
8. Do let the pastor know who is sick.
9. Do call the nurse if you notice anything unusual about the patient.
10. Do leave on time.

DON'TS FOR HOSPITAL VISITORS

1. Don't smoke in the room.
2. Don't sit on the bed.
3. Don't talk about your problems.
4. Don't take food into the room.
5. Don't have more than two visitors in the room at one time.
6. Don't get aggravated with the personnel.
7. Don't grumble and complain in the presence of the patient.
8. Don't use the rest rooms provided for patients only.
9. Don't do anything that would upset the patient.
10. Don't forget to pray.

ABOUT THE WRITER: Mr. Shockey is director of National Home Missions Department, Nashville, TN. ▲

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Kansas City, Missouri

July 16-20, 1978

Please fill out form completely

and mail to Free Will Baptist Housing
1221 Baltimore, 11th Floor
Kansas City, MO 64105.

ALL RESERVATIONS MUST BE CLEARED THROUGH FREE WILL BAPTIST HOUSING. Each request must give definite date and approximate hour of arrival and include names and addresses of all persons who will occupy the rooms requested. If it is necessary for you to cancel a reservation, please notify the Housing Bureau promptly. At least two choices of hotels/motels are desirable. Reservations will be filled in order of receipt.

Reservations must be made by July 1, 1978.

ACCOMMODATIONS DESIRED:

- _____ Room(s) for one person (one full size bed)
- _____ Room(s) for two persons (one full size bed)
- _____ Room(s) for two persons (two double beds)
- _____ Room(s) for () three or () four persons (two double beds)
- _____ Room(s) with twin beds for two persons
- _____ Suite-Parlor and () one bedroom () two bedrooms

(For office use only)

RESERVATION FOLLOW THRU

DATE & INITIAL

Received at Housing Bureau

Processed to Hotel/Motel

Received at Hotel/Motel

Confirmed to Guest

Returned to Housing Bureau

HOTEL OR MOTEL

1st choice

2nd choice

3rd choice

Planned arrival date

time a.m. p.m.

Planned departure date

time a.m. p.m.

NAMES OF OCCUPANTS

Street

City

State

Zip

- 1 _____
- 2 _____
- 3 _____
- 4 _____
- 5 _____
- 6 _____
- 7 _____

(Names of all parties must be listed. Please print names and complete addresses. Bracket the names of those staying in the same room. We cannot confirm unless rooms requested balance with number of persons listed.)

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CONFIRMATION

Address _____

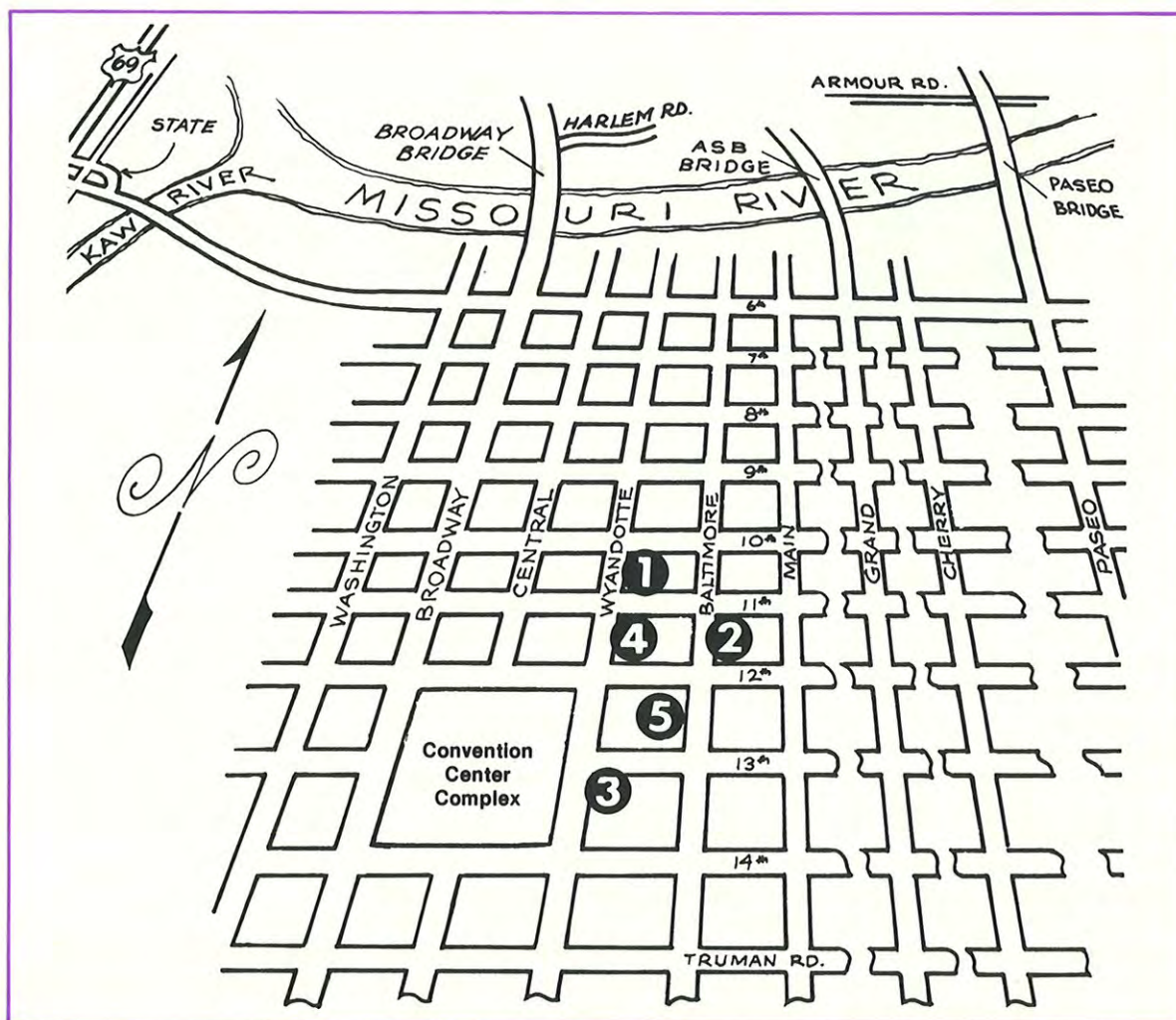
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July 16-20, 1978 / Municipal Auditorium

Kansas City, Missouri



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|---|---------|---------|---------|----------|--------|------|
| | *SINGLE | DOUBLE | TWIN | SUITES | TRIPLE | QUAD |
| (1) Continental Hotel | \$20 | \$24 | \$24 | | \$27 | \$30 |
| (2) Dixon Inn | \$16-21 | \$21-27 | \$21-28 | \$50-65 | \$24 | \$28 |
| (3) Holiday Inn City Center | \$24 | \$28 | \$28 | \$75-140 | \$32 | \$36 |
| (4) Phillips House | \$18 | \$22 | \$22 | | \$26 | \$30 |
| (5) Radisson Muehlebach Headquarters Hotel | \$26 | \$32 | \$32 | \$70-190 | \$36 | \$40 |

*KEY TO TYPES OF ACCOMMODATIONS: Single—1 bed, 1 person; Twin—2 twins, 2 persons; Double—1 bed, 2 persons; Triple—2 beds, 3 persons; Quad—2 beds, 4 persons.



FREE WILL BAPTIST

newsfront

TENNESSEE EXECUTIVE SECRETARY RETURNS TO PASTORATE

JOHNSON CITY, TN — Rev. John Gibbs, Tennessee's first full-time promotional man, notified state association officials in February that he is returning to the pastorate. He served three years in the public relations post.



Gibbs, 39, has accepted pastoral responsibilities at Wooddale Free Will Baptist Church, Knoxville, Tennessee. He begins his new duties June 1.

During his tenure as Tennessee executive secretary, Mr. Gibbs traveled more than 40,000 miles annually and spoke 150 times a year. He also edited the *Echo*, a bi-monthly publication. He attended statewide conferences and ministers' meetings and represented Tennessee at the annual national Leadership Conference.

As a direct result of Gibbs' actions, several churches have united with the state association. When probed regarding accomplishments, Gibbs cited statewide spirit of cooperation as his most significant. He reflected that in three years Tennessee swelled from one to 16 churches supporting the Cooperative Program. Several hundred converts in 1977 evidenced John Gibbs' effectiveness as gospel soloist and preacher.

Gibbs agreed that while continued church support of the executive secretary office probably would reflect as a compliment to him, likewise a decrease in support when he terminated the position would reflect areas of weakness.

Explaining his decision to leave the executive secretary responsibilities, Gibbs said, "I was a pastor with a pastor's heart doing a job that

needed to be done. But I've been waiting for the time I could return.

"I want to see people saved and then stay to watch them mature. I am anxious to get back into missions giving on the local church level."

Wooddale Church will be Gibbs' fifth pastorate. He previously pastored twice at Good Springs Church, Pleasant View, TN (1961-63 and 1969-75), and once each at Bryan Park Church, Richmond, Virginia (1966-69) and West End Church, Springfield, TN (1963-66).

WORKSHOPS HIGHLIGHT 36TH ANNUAL SOUTH CAROLINA STATE ASSOCIATION

TURBEVILLE, SC—The South Carolina State Association of Original Free Will Baptists met February 16, 17 at Horse Branch Free Will Baptist Church, Turbeville. Nearly 100 people representing South Carolina's 98 churches and five missions participated in the state's 36th annual session.

Education and evangelism captured attention as Harrold Harrison and Bob Shockey led seminars on Thursday and Friday. Harrison, manager of Promotion and Sales, National Sunday School Department, piloted listeners through a Sunday school organization and motivation workshop. Shockey, director of National Home Missions Department, conducted a spirited visitation and soul-winning seminar.

Delegates reelected Moderator Norwood Gibson, who pastors Bible Free Will Baptist Church, Florence. They also endorsed a \$1,000 fund-raising project to underwrite the state promotional office.

Other speakers on the association program included Bill Poteat, pastor of Pamplico Free Will Baptist Church, Pamplico, and Bill Jacobs, pastor of Mullins-Marion Free Will Baptist Church, Mullins.

LAYMAN'S BOARD TO SPONSOR SOUTHEASTERN CONFERENCE

WHITE BLUFF, TN—The National Layman's Board has scheduled a Southeastern Regional Master's Men Conference May 5, 6, according to Loyd Olsan, general director. Sessions will be housed at Hillmont Camp in White Bluff, Tennessee, 40 miles west of Nashville on Highway 70.

All Master's Men state senators have been invited to participate in the two-day pilot project. The primary conference objective is to make local Master's Men chapters more effective. Loyalty to the pastor and direct lay involvement in the church will be stressed.

The four principal lay speakers slated to lead discussion activities are Ron Smith, Oklahoma state senator; Steve Johnson, Alabama state senator; Don Elkins, Layman's Board chairman; and Ernie Winchester, member of Forestdale Free Will Baptist Church, Birmingham, Alabama.

On Friday a tour of the Free Will Baptist National Offices in Nashville is planned for the visiting laymen.

Due to limited facilities available, only 80 laymen can be accommodated at Hillmont Camp. Further inquiries should be directed to Loyd Olsan, Master's Men general director.

BIBLE COLLEGE SETS NEW ENROLLMENT RECORDS

NASHVILLE, TN—Dr. Robert Picirilli, FWBBC registrar, reports that more students attended Free Will Baptist Bible College this year than any in the school's history. A record 640 students enrolled from 28 states and several foreign countries.

A second semester enrollment of 532, also a new school record, was posted on January 3. Sixty new students joined 472 who returned from first semester.

Preachers and missionaries continue to make up a sizable portion of the student body. This year 192 are studying to preach and 33 are preparing for mission fields.



FWBBC SLATES 'BETTER IDEA' DINNERS IN THREE STATES

NASHVILLE, TN—Free Will Baptist Bible College Director of Development Ronald Creech has announced the launching of a new concept in fund raising, the FWBBC Victory Dinner.

Seven of the cash offering/faith promise banquets are already confirmed in North Carolina, Oklahoma and Georgia during a 35-day push spanning April 7-May 13. Other area dinners are in the planning stages in several states:

FWBBC will underwrite the total cost of each dinner at some local restaurant or other large, suitable location. Attendance is restricted to adults, high school juniors and seniors, and their dates. Everyone who comes will be given the opportunity to make a cash gift to the college and asked to faith promise a designated amount to be given within 12 months.

The Victory Dinner idea is easily adapted to any locality, according to Creech. Some pastors are presenting the challenge within their churches first and then allowing the actual Victory Dinner to be a harvest occasion to tabulate widespread pledges from many congregations.

"This is one of the most exciting programs to come along in years," reports Mr. Creech. "Initial enthusiasm and across-the-board cooperation is gratifying and almost overwhelming."

FWBBC friends and alumni are encouraged to contact local area

Ronald Creech, FWBBC director of development, challenges Tulsa, OK, pastors to sponsor FWBBC Victory Dinner.

chairmen for specific information regarding the Victory Dinner being planned near them.

April 7 Greenville, North Carolina
Frank Davenport, pastor, Faith Church, Goldsboro, NC
Roger Tripp, pastor, Grace Church, Greenville, NC

April 8 Smithfield, North Carolina
Sam Truett, pastor, West Calvary Church, Smithfield, NC
John Craft, pastor, Unity Church, Smithfield, NC

April 21 Tulsa, Oklahoma
Don Jones, pastor, First Church, Tulsa, OK
Leonard Pirtle, pastor, Owasso Church, Owasso, OK
Glen Hood, pastor, Trinity Temple Church, Tulsa, OK

April 28 Washington, North Carolina
Glen Thomas, pastor, Davis Church, Davis, NC
Larry Stevens, pastor, Pleasant Acres Church, New Bern, NC

May 13 South Georgia Association
William Morris, pastor, First Church, Statesboro, GA
Billy Hanna, pastor, First Church, Savannah, GA

If these FWBBC Victory Dinners prove to be as successful as preliminary interest indicates, the college hopes to expand its "better idea" dinners into a nationwide program.

CONVENTION MUSIC AVAILABLE FOR MASS ADULT CHOIR

NASHVILLE, TN—Blaine Hughes, convention music coordinator has selected two songs for the 1978 mass choir. The choir will perform during convention sessions held in Kansas City, Missouri, July 16-20.

Sheet music for "Redemption Draweth Nigh," written by Gorden Jensen, arranged by Ronn Huff, and "Where the Spirit of the Lord Is," written by Steve Adams, arranged by Ronn Huff, may be obtained by writing to CONVENTION MUSIC. (See below.)

Select the music you wish to order by circling the number and placing the quantity desired in the appropriate boxes.

The cost of the sheet music is 60 cents per copy. This price includes postage. Payment must accompany order.

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BAILEY THOMPSON NAMED TO HILLSDALE PROMOTION POST

MOORE, OK — Rev. Bailey Thompson, Free Will Baptist evangelist and pastor, has been named promotion director for Hillsdale Free Will Baptist College, according to Bill M. Jones, Hillsdale president.



Thompson assumed his duties March 1. He is in charge of all promotional activities for the campus.

An evangelist for the past two years, Thompson has 30 years

Hawkins, Wolf, Norman, Allen and Poteau, Oklahoma, as well as Odessa, Texas, and Phoenix, Arizona. He pastored at Poteau for 15 years.

The Lexington, Oklahoma, native served as dean of men at Hillsdale during the 1975-76 school year, while his wife Barbara was dean of women. He has also served as state moderator in Texas, Arizona and Oklahoma. He held the latter position five years.

He is assistant chairman of the Hillsdale Board of Trustees.

As president of Revival-Time Association, Bailey Thompson has held over 300 revivals.

ministerial experience. His pastorates have included churches in

CONGREGATION EXPLORES SCHAEFFER FILM SERIES

NASHVILLE, TN—Donelson Free Will Baptist Church, Nashville, is viewing the film series, *How Should We Then Live?* produced by Francis Schaeffer. The 10 episode series begins with "The Roman Age" and finishes with "The Final Choices." Mr. Schaeffer's films cover the entire range of Christian thought and point out influencing factors on the Christian movement.

According to Ed Cook, Donelson pastor, a number of his people were already aware of the films and some had seen portions of the series. Their interest resulted in the series being obtained for the church.

They show two episodes on the last Sunday night of each month. A discussion time follows each showing.

The Donelson Church wanted to sponsor the series for several reasons. "We want to provide a service to the community in having them share with us the benefits of these films," Pastor Cook relates. "We want to expose our church to the community as a strong Bible-believing and practicing group, and we want to use these films as a missionary outreach.

"Realizing Schaeffer's films take an intellectual approach, we hope to reach some people who may be having a problem accepting Christ because of an intellectual hang-up. Then, too, our own people need exposure to the wealth of information Dr. Schaeffer shares. Christianity can be defended from a higher educational viewpoint.

"We want our people to see that Christianity has influenced the world and at the same time the world has marked Christianity."

How Should We Then Live? is a powerful film series filled with educationally expanding information. The one area of weakness, as Donelson's pastor sizes up the panorama, could be that the films are on an intellectual level beyond those who have not been exposed to world history, art and various philosophical and theological positions.

The series began at Donelson Church January 29 and will conclude May 28.

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A/C 214 657-6524 Box 931 Henderson, Texas 75652

ESTATE CONTRIBUTES \$75,000 TO FOREIGN MISSIONS DEPARTMENT

NASHVILLE, TN—A check for \$75,000 was received in February by the Department of Foreign Missions as a settlement of the estate of the late Daisy H. Zinnamon of Van Buren, Arkansas, who died June 30, 1976. Mrs. Zinnamon had included Foreign Missions and her church in her will.

The Zinnamons were members of First Free Will Baptist Church, Fort Smith, Arkansas, pastored by Reverend Rupert Pixley. The church also received \$75,000.

Foreign Missions General Director Rolia Smith stated, "This serves as a good example of what estate planning can do for the cause of Christ and world outreach. Our finance department stands ready to give anyone counsel and guidance."

ENVELOPE EVANGELISM INTRODUCED TO NORTHWEST

SEATTLE, WA—Families in the Seattle area who encounter new, unexpected or unusual circumstances receive a personal letter from First Free Will Baptist Church, Seattle. Pastor Millard Sasser has prepared a series of letters offering congratulations, words of sympathy or a message geared to whatever a family's new situation is.

This new dimension in community awareness was begun in January. Several church members carefully scan local newspapers for notices of tragedies, births, weddings, awards, community achievements, etc. Then volunteers send letters in keeping with the new situations.

Pastor Sasser says this approach is not a community crisis outreach only. However, when a Seattle family faces death, injury, serious illness or accident, First Church wants to be there. The congregation feels that joyous occasions as well as sad ones can be open doors for presenting the promises of God.

As in most other American cities, Seattle residents tend to be ignored after they have been greeted by community welcome wagons. Envelope evangelism is one church's way to let its city know someone cares when success comes and when heartache strikes.

CTS SURVEY DISCLOSES FREE WILL BAPTISTS AS 'INDIVIDUALISTS'

By Larry Hampton

NASHVILLE, TN—In December the Church Training Service distributed survey forms to every Free Will Baptist church. Twelve categories provided respondents an opportunity to candidly appraise *Teen Action* and *Teen Encounter* as well as providing opportunity to make suggestions for improvements to these teen level periodicals.

As one scans the results of this survey, it becomes obvious that Free Will Baptists are individualists. Some churches meet for CTS on Tuesday or Thursday evenings, but the bulk meet on Wednesday or Sunday night. Of the respondents almost twice as many have a Sunday meeting time as do those using Wednesday evening.

Of those churches not listing a CTS, only a few expressed interest in initiating such a program.

Five of the reporting churches develop curriculum

locally. Two others use no material apart from the Bible. A small number use curriculum from other publishing houses.

Over half of the congregations submitting information group their teens together for CTS. The greatest number use *Teen Action* for this combined group. Only two groups use *Teen Encounter* for a combined group. Those churches dividing their teens ordinarily choose one of the magazines and use it with both groups.

The survey indicates a felt need for leadership training and the development of Bible study skills. There is a definite interest in materials explaining how to witness.

Meager interest surfaces for elective materials. More than half of all returned surveys expressed an interest in material discussing contemporary issues.

A significant number favor programming which focuses on biblical examination of current societal trends.

The Church Training Service Department is still interested in receiving completed survey forms.

600 STORM MID-SOUTH PASTORS' AND WORKERS' CONFERENCE

DOTHAN, AL—The 1978 Mid-South Pastors' and Workers' Conference convened in Dothan February 13-15. More than 600 people, including 110 pastors, attended activities during the three-day meeting, according to Richard Cordell, conference chairman. The convention was hosted by First Free Will Baptist Church.

Workshops and preaching services were led by Richard Adams, Joe Ange, Billy Bevan, Don Pegram, Brian Peters, Ralph Rice, Robert Shockey and Elmer Towns. The speakers shared platform responsibilities from Monday through Wednesday evening. John Gibbs was song leader and convention soloist.

Assembled ministers and laity heard messages ranging from how to develop an effective children's church to principles of doubling Sunday school attendance. Conferencees were challenged to build larger churches through improved soul-winning efforts.

A spacious fellowship hall housed exhibits. National offices personnel as well as representatives of several other Christian organizations were among exhibitors present.

This convention, which is sponsored by Alabama's state association, was thoroughly planned and well executed. The annual event is underwritten by offerings received during the meeting.

Plans for the 1979 conference are already underway and will be announced at a later date.

Taggart said that five books of the Old Testament were the hardest and that exhaustion was also a problem. "We got pretty tired on the first day," he said. "We started at 6 p.m. and the next shift didn't come on until 8 a.m. the next morning. We also had some tired eyes by the time it was over."

Taggart said the Old Testament took 52 hours to read, and the New Testament, 14 hours, 58 minutes.

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GENESIS TO REVELATION, IT'S 66 HOURS 58 MINUTES

JACKSON, MS (UPI)—There were a number of exhausted teenagers with droopy eyelids, but a Pontotoc, Mississippi minister found out how long it takes to read the Bible straight through.

The answer is 66 hours, 58 minutes.

Rev. Don Taggart had been curious for a number of years about how long it would take to read from Genesis to Revelation. With the help of eight young church volunteers he found out. The nonstop reading session was tape-recorded.

"I always wondered about this, but I was not ready to tackle it by myself," said Taggart, 22, pastor of Bethlehem Free Will Baptist Church in Pontotoc. "I had been planning to do this for almost a year but had never been able to enlist any help. I

decided that during the Christmas holidays I would try it."

Taggart, a native of Vernon, Alabama, assembled the teenagers on a Tuesday evening and the group completed reading the 1,834-page King James Version the following Friday.

"We worked in shifts, two on each shift," he said in a telephone interview. "We kept going on a continuous basis for the entire period. Each person would read about 20 or 30 minutes, and the next person would then take over."

Taggart, a student at Itawamba Junior College in Fulton, Mississippi, said he believes the feat is a world record. He has mailed the certification to the *Guinness Book of World Records* in London.

newsfront

(continued)

SURGING INTEREST PROMPTS MORE EXTERNAL STUDIES AT HILLSDALE

MOORE, OK—Hillsdale Free Will Baptist College has added a non-credit course in Free Will Baptist Doctrines to its External Studies curriculum, according to Thomas Marberry, director of External Studies.

Designed for the Free Will Baptist who wants to know more about his denomination but who does not desire college credit, the course can be taken by an individual student working alone in his home at his own pace.

"It is flexible enough that it may also be used by pastors who wish to teach the course in their churches," Marberry explained.

Basic textbooks for the course are the Free Will Baptist *Treatise* and *Free Will Baptist Doctrines* by Dr. J. D. O'Donnell.

Individual course cost is \$5.95, including textbooks and all materials necessary. Churches may purchase the course on a group plan for \$5 each in quantities of 10 or more. Extra workbooks without the textbooks are \$2.50.

These courses may be ordered from the Department of External Studies at Hillsdale or from the Free Will Baptist Bookstore in Oklahoma City. Each student who completes the course will be awarded a certificate in recognition of his achievement.

The course will be given free of charge to everyone who makes a gift of \$100 or more to Hillsdale during 1978. If you would like to receive a free course, write for information to Hillsdale Free Will Baptist College, P.O. Box 6343, Moore, OK 73160.

COOPERATIVE PLAN OF SUPPORT February, 1978

RECEIPTS:

| State | February '78 | | February '77 | Yr. to Date |
|------------------|---------------------|------------|---------------------|---------------------|
| | Co-op | Design. | | |
| Alabama | \$. . . | \$. . . | \$. . . | \$ 568.20 |
| Arizona | | | | 165.47 |
| Arkansas | 4,113.15 | | 2,755.38 | 5,477.82 |
| California | 1,030.03 | | 842.25 | 1,802.86 |
| Florida | 349.83 | (333.17) | 16.66 | 366.49 |
| Georgia | 444.91 | (100.00) | 162.80 | 788.82 |
| Hawaii | | | | 100.00 |
| Idaho | | | 69.84 | |
| Illinois | 56.31 | | 822.39 | 1,578.42 |
| Indiana | 50.00 | | 50.00 | 50.00 |
| Iowa | 246.72 | | | 429.42 |
| Kansas | 63.13 | | 90.48 | 235.07 |
| Maryland | 220.43 | | 40.00 | 260.43 |
| Michigan | 232.44 | | 499.96 | 232.44 |
| Mississippi | 102.81 | | 62.55 | 203.62 |
| Missouri | 5,475.60 | (5,475.60) | 5,256.43 | 9,392.80 |
| North Carolina | 179.00 | (54.00) | 121.85 | 453.15 |
| Northwest Assoc. | 25.20 | | 215.15 | 82.02 |
| Ohio | 693.60 | | | 1,339.14 |
| Oklahoma | | | 6,453.89 | 5,057.59 |
| Tennessee | 1,233.87 | | 1,416.43 | 2,323.78 |
| Texas | 257.62 | | 352.57 | 592.79 |
| Virginia | 24.86 | | 31.58 | 52.69 |
| Virgin Islands | 150.00 | | 113.00 | 294.00 |
| West Virginia | 17.55 | | 34.48 | 36.70 |
| Interest | | | | 398.69 |
| Totals | \$ 14,967.06 | | \$ 19,407.69 | \$ 32,282.41 |

DISBURSEMENTS:

| | | | | |
|--------------------------------------|---------------------|--------------|---------------------|---------------------|
| Executive Office | \$ 6,872.23 | \$(1,160.60) | \$ 6,905.90 | \$ 13,339.64 |
| Foreign Missions | 2,659.06 | (1,816.18) | 4,429.35 | 6,482.03 |
| Bible College | 2,022.16 | (1,201.97) | 2,691.12 | 4,399.95 |
| Home Missions | 1,496.96 | (888.09) | 2,388.22 | 3,583.56 |
| Church Training Serv. | 935.28 | (441.40) | 1,230.62 | 2,081.34 |
| Retirement and Ins. | 761.30 | (366.17) | 1,045.99 | 1,711.56 |
| Layman's Board | 159.42 | (44.18) | 428.60 | 527.53 |
| Commission on Theological Liberalism | 60.65 | (44.18) | 120.65 | 156.80 |
| Other Ministries | | | 167.24 | |
| Totals | \$ 14,967.06 | | \$ 19,407.69 | \$ 32,282.41 |

KENTUCKY BIBLE INSTITUTE ENROLLS 57 STUDENTS

CATLETTSBURG, KY—The Kentucky Bible Institute opened second quarter classes in January at Sandy City Free Will Baptist Church, Catlettsburg, according to Pastor Herman McFaddin.

McFaddin reports 57 who registered for KBI's fall quarter. Forty-two of the 57 received Evangelical Teacher Training Association certificates. Sustained area support for KBI and its local outreach caused instructors to express delight.

Courses for the winter quarter include Church Government, Old Testament Survey, Teaching Techniques, and Revelation. Instructors in addition to host pastor McFaddin include Blaine Etterling, Forest Chamberlain and Redford Meadows.



Currently ...

By
JACK WILLIAMS
Editor

One of the few places in the world that has a Free Will Baptist rescue mission is the skid-row area of **Tampa, Florida**. Pastor **Roger Duncan, First FWB Mission**, says his congregation opened the **Janice Hall Memorial Rescue Mission** in a special effort to reach the men and women who have no one to care. The rescue mission is located at 1112 North Franklin Street.

Between 50-75 persons are present for each service on Tuesday, Thursday and Saturday. Four people are staying at the mission now as a direct result of the outreach.

Some 40 persons have joined the Fisherman's Club at **Capitol Hill FWB Church, Oklahoma City, Oklahoma**. The Fisherman's Club is an effort to put all the outreach ministries of the church under one large organization. One monthly meeting is stressed rather than weekly meetings. Although visitation teams go out each week, the monthly rally is a time for tabulating reports and challenging fishermen.

According to Pastor **Homer Young**, the February and March special rally speakers were **Rev. Connie Cariker**, pastor of **West Tulsa FWB Church**, and **Dr. Jim Vineyard**, pastor of **Windsor Hills Baptist Church**.

Reports of nursery toy showers are cropping up all over. The latest one comes from **Princeton FWB Church, Ontario, California**. Instead of exchanging gifts with each other, everyone who attended a valentine party brought a toy for the church nursery. **Wilburn Clark** pastors.

Some new year's vows are more highly visible than others. Ask Pastor **George Lee, Victory FWB Church, Goldsboro, North Carolina**. Several members took a new year's resolution to sit near the front of the church during all services. The pastor was so elated about their decision that he wrote "Currently," "By last Wednesday night we even had two men on the front row."

They have come up with another good idea at **Deep Creek FWB Church, Midville, Georgia**. Members gather back issues of good magazines and ship them to their missionary in **Brazil, Sam Wilkinson**. **Leroy Lowery** pastors. Some may want to send overseas subscriptions directly to missionaries.

The youth service outreach took on a new dimension at **First FWB Church, Murfreesboro, Tennessee**, January 12. Not only did local young people participate, but their influence reached into the **William Jennings Bryan Literary Society** on the campus of **Free Will Baptist Bible College, Nashville**, and brought that society's quartet to Murfreesboro. One quartet member brought the

message while others urged him on with well-timed amens. **Dr. J. D. O'Donnell** pastors.

They're on TV in **Norfolk, Virginia**. Pastor **Dale Burden** and the choir from **Fairmount Park FWB Church** recorded a special Tuesday night broadcast which was televised February 12 from channel 3 in Norfolk. The special program was entitled "House of Worship."

CONTACT welcomes "The Chain," publication of **Forest Grove FWB Church, Knoxville, Tennessee**. Pastor **Douglas Roberson** has placed "Currently" on his mailing list. The east Tennessee church had over 300 in worship during a "Prove Your Love" Sunday.

"Manna" reminds people of the goodness and provision of God. Perhaps that is the reason Pastor **Delbert Akin** and members of **First FWB Church, Ardmore, Oklahoma**, chose that name for their newsletter. The first printing of "Manna" reports the Oklahoma congregation organizing a Church Training Service on March 5.

The **South Florida Quarterly Conference** is assisting **CONTACTO** (CONTACT in Spanish) in its effort to reach the Spanish-speaking people of the area and around the world. The Florida churches have contributed over \$100 to help defray printing cost. Men of the conference gave hours of work to repair the building used as **CONTACTO** office and work area. **Tom Willey Jr.** edits **CONTACTO**.

Fifty-one people attended a February 4 home and family banquet at the Wagonwheel Restaurant in **Laverne, Tennessee**. It was the first such banquet for the **Laverne FWB Church**, according to Pastor **Roger Luther**. Guest speaker **Ken Riggs**, professor at **Free Will Baptist Bible College, Nashville**, delivered a thought-provoking challenge.

Northwest FWB Church, Oklahoma City, Oklahoma, did more than increase their giving by 30 percent. Pastor **James Murray** led the congregation in purchasing a house and half acre of land, building a 30' x 60' classroom structure, and giving more than \$10,000 to missions and Christian education.

Although Christmas happenings are more than four months old by now, here is a story from **North Carolina** that needs to be told. Members of **Trinity FWB Church, Greenville**, gave a special birthday offering for Jesus. Pastor **Van Dale Hudson** said members responded with \$4,397.

The account in Acts 16 of Lydia and her household believing had a familiar ring at **Oak Hill FWB Church, Oak Hill, Ohio**, when **John Jefferies** preached one evening. A mother and her three sons were saved. **Elmer Hill** pastors.

Dr. J. D. O'Donnell, adult editor of Sunday school curriculum, conducted an areawide Bible institute at **Union FWB Church** February 20-24. Pastor **Calvin Evans** said the **Wheelerburg, Ohio**, church had made

arrangements for **Dr. O'Donnell** to conduct courses for which credit could be received through **Bethel Bible College, Paintsville, Kentucky**.

Pastor **Arley Joe Ball, Free Will Baptist Mission, Okeechobee, Florida**, saw more than 100 percent growth in three weeks. Attendance climbed from 16 to 39 in less than a month after he arrived in January.

Remodeling a church gets to be big business. Before the folks at **Heads FWB Church, Cedar Hill, Tennessee**, had finished their January business meeting they voted improvements on all educational facilities. The extensive program includes ceilings, paneling, carpet and lighting. **Ron Parker** pastors.

If you know how to work it, the bus ministry can still be a soaring success. Pastor **Merel Guess** and his eager members started their bus ministry in February, 1977, with nine students. They now average more than 50 students per Sunday. **First FWB Church, Arvin, California**, has swelled its attendance from 39 in 1976 to an enrollment of more than 130 in 1978.

One of **West Virginia's** newest churches is **Central FWB Church, Huntington**. Under the careful guidance of Pastor **Carl Vallance**, membership has now climbed to 145 and offerings stabilized near the \$900 per week mark.

The deacon board at **Lawnwood FWB Church, Tulsa, Oklahoma**, has adopted a new program. The deacons and their wives are participating in "The Deacon Family Ministry Plan." This program helps spiritual leaders get acquainted with church members and offer any assistance they might need. Pastor **J. C. Morgan** affirms the use of this new program to try and involve every member in the growth of the local church.

Alabama has produced some unusual churches. **Winfield FWB Church, Winfield**, where **A. J. Looper** pastors, is one of those. A recent newsletter indicates that the congregation plans to lose two young men in attendance for four years. No one seems alarmed about it. The young men are **David Crowe** and **Ronnie Lawler**. Both men have entered the ministry and are going off to Bible College. One of the marks of a great church is the number of workers it launches into the great harvest.

Pastor **Glenn Hood** of **Trinity Temple FWB Church, Tulsa, Oklahoma**, has discovered a way to capture the attention of his young people. This Oklahoma church may be one of the few in the entire denomination that regularly publishes a youth newsheet. The publication is by, for and about youth.

Fawn Grove FWB Church, Dorsey, Mississippi, was organized in 1933 in a one-story frame structure. After a major reconstruction in 1975, Pastor **J. V. Mills** has led the congregation in a note-burning ceremony.



A woman's place is in the kitchen. That's the way they see things in **First FWB Church, Fort Smith, Arkansas**. And they see it with a wide yellow streak. Somehow Pastor **Rupert Pixley** and the men convinced the ladies of the church to paint both the kitchen and the fellowship building a bright yellow. Hats off to the farsighted men and to the industrious ladies.

The big contest is over. **Debra Williams** won it. When Pastor **Darrell Pickel** of **White Oak Hill FWB Church, Bailey, North Carolina**, sponsored a "Name Our Weekly Publication" contest, Debra submitted the winning name. White Oak Hill's weekly publication is titled "**The Lamplighter**." For being so creative Debra was awarded a book by Tim LaHaye, *The Beginning of the End*.

Pastor **Jerry Dudley** is waving statistics out in **Stratford, Oklahoma**. Resident membership at **Stratford FWB Church** increased 22 percent during 1977. The budget shot up 75 percent over the previous year. More than 19 percent of the gross income went to outside ministries.

If you need a real quick answer to prayer, contact **Howard Bass**, pastor of **Wesconnett FWB Church, Jacksonville, Florida**. On the morning of January 30, Brother Bass was in his study and prayed that the Lord would help his church acquire a \$6,000 piece of land across the street. About five minutes later his telephone rang, and a voice said, "My wife and I have prayed about it, and we believe the Lord wants us to give \$1,000 toward the purchase of that land."

Now here's an organization with a name that spells out its intentions. Pastor **M. C. Taylor**, **First FWB Church, Church Hill, Tennessee**, writes about the organization of a club in his church called the **Willing Workers Club**. Members are pushing for every man in the church to put his name on the list.

When was the last time you went to a service that was so exciting that the congregation raised the roof? You should have been there on February 3 at **Berean FWB Church, Independence, Missouri**. Pastor **Dennis Bowman** assures that people gathered for miles around for the express purpose of raising the roof of his church. The roof needed repairing; so the church sponsored an old-time gospel singing, fellowship, refreshments, and a free-will offering to pay for the roof.

Word comes that the **Cookeville FWB Church, Cookeville, Tennessee**, sponsors a radio program five days a week. Pastor **Raymond Riggs** is on station WPTN, AM and FM, at 11:15 a.m. daily.

On February 5 every Sunday school class at **First FWB Church, Stanley, North Carolina**, began keeping their Sunday school offering for classroom improvement. Pastor **Billy Buchanan** said the funds were to be used to paint classrooms, carpet floors, replace curtains, purchase blackboards and other equipment necessary for more effective teaching and learning.

It appears they have found the handle for visitation evangelism outreach at **Village**

Chapel FWB Church, Ceres, California. Members are going out by two in order to reach their city. It must be working. Seventeen new members joined the church in January. **Adrian Condit** pastors.

When Pastor **Ben Scott** started the 6:00 a.m. men's prayer meeting more than 20 months ago at **First FWB Church, North Little Rock, Arkansas**, a few doubters said the men would grow weary and quit. But more than 100 Monday mornings later, the Arkansas pastor and his men are still maintaining their prayer vigil. This may be one more reason why Arkansas is on the verge of blossoming anew with Free Will Baptist work.

Pastor **Milburn Wilson** is trying to schedule another service like he had the night of January 15. That was the occasion when nine people were saved in one service at **Sherwood Forest FWB Church, El Sorbrante, California**.

Pastor appreciation days are always nice occasions. **Union Chapel FWB Church, Chocowinity, North Carolina**, told Pastor **Fred Hall** how much they loved him on one of those special days. Their love for Pastor Hall was \$900 wide.

Rev. **Guy Owens**, minister-at-large in **North Carolina**, writes glowingly about the children of **Jefferson Park FWB Church, Rockingham, North Carolina**. He says, "This church has the most children I have seen in any church yet. They fill up the front pews first." **William Jacobs** pastors.

A huge outdoor rally protesting the showing of the film, "Oh, God!" was conducted in **New Bern, North Carolina**, under the direction of **Coastal Association** ministers. Pastor **Bill Regan**, **First FWB Church, Moorehead City, North Carolina**, said, "This is a testimony to the town that

there is a proper reference to the Lord and a God-honoring way to give Him the glory due His name."

In an update on that January 22-February 21 areawide missionary conference in **Alabama**, coordinator **Richard Cordell** reports that cash offerings to missions totaled \$4,511.90. Faith promises and commitments reached \$41,903.90.

Any number of churches have proteen programs. But Pastor **Billy Bevan** and **Tupelo FWB Church, Tupelo, Mississippi**, have gone one up on everybody else. They have begun a projunior program for young people in grades two through six. The Wednesday meetings include a short choir practice, time spent memorizing Scripture and a lesson on Christian character.

West Tulsa FWB Church, Tulsa, Oklahoma, has a war on its hands. They call it the Sunday school civil war. The entire Sunday school enrollment has been divided into, you guessed it, the Yankees and the Confederates. What is more, the commanding generals are drafting members into their armies. They deliver draft papers to prospective soldiers. **Connie Cariker** pastors.

What does a church do when it wants to sponsor senior citizens' services, men's prayer breakfast and special youth banquet all in one week? According to Pastor **Robert Owen** and **First FWB Church, Winter Haven, Florida**, you sponsor a missions conference. Not only did this Florida church get regular missionary mileage out of **Ken Eagleton, Patsy Vanhook, Joe Ange, Tom Willey Jr.** and Pastor Owen, but they were also able to utilize each person's unique abilities in other areas of church and community outreach. February 19-26 was the big event.

There is a thief running around with a new PA system. He stole it from **First FWB Church, Moore, Oklahoma**. However, Pastor **Dan Farmer** assures *CONTACT* readers that the church has purchased an identical public address system to replace the stolen one.

A few weeks ago this column reported that an enterprising group of **Missouri** Free Will Baptists sponsored a golf tournament. Well, they are at it again. Pastor **Bill Van Winkle**, **First FWB Church, Berkeley, Missouri**, whipped up a Ping-Pong tournament February 24, 25 and actually got participants to pay an entry fee.

Promotional Director David Joslin reports five **Arkansas** churches joined the Co-operative Plan in January. Joslin has been soundly praised all over Arkansas and the denomination for his excellent leadership.

Cofers Chapel FWB Church opened its big missionary heart again on January 29. That was **Jerry Gibbs'** day at the **Nashville, Tennessee**, congregation. A \$1,500 cash offering was raised for the missionary's account. **Eugene Waddell** pastors.

Associate pastor **Leroy Welch**, **Southern Oaks FWB Church, Oklahoma City, Oklahoma**, has introduced the graded choirs concept to his congregation. Singers are divided into primary choir members, junior choir members, youth choir and adult sanctuary choir. **James Puckett** pastors.

COMING NEXT MONTH

- National Convention Preview
- Private Colleges and the Tax Game
- Stewardship Renewal

DIRECTORY UPDATE

PASTORAL CHANGES

ARIZONA

Harold Sanders to First Church, Surprise from associate pastor of First Church, Phoenix

CALIFORNIA

Larry Messer to First Church, Salinas from Bethel Church, Kansas City, KS

Charles Roam to Campbell Church, Campbell

FLORIDA

Arley Ball to First Mission, Okeechobee from Phelps Church, Phelps, KY

IDAHO

William Tharp to Airport Road Church, Twin Falls from First Church, Surprise, AZ

ILLINOIS

Wayne Meade to First Church, Springfield from Salyersville Church, Salyersville, KY

INDIANA

Tim Hackett to First Bible Church, New Castle from Pleasant Grove Church, New Hope, AR

KENTUCKY

Ronald Bowling to Phelps Church, Phelps

MISSOURI

Mickey Sanstra to Harmony Church, Kansas City

NORTH CAROLINA

Novis Edwards to St. Johns and Antioch Churches, Goldsboro from Bethel Church, Pensacola, FL

Cecil Boswell to Emmanuel Church, Washington from Friendship Church, Ashland City, TN

OKLAHOMA

Dale Smith to Purcell Church, Purcell from Free Will Baptist Mission, Rolla, MO

TENNESSEE

John Gibbs to Wooddale Church, Knoxville from executive secretary Tennessee State Association

OTHER PERSONNEL

Mike Creech to Fellowship Church, Flat River, MO as associate pastor and director of day-care center

Keith Perkins to Friendly Church, Columbus, OH as associate pastor

Rick Vanderburg to Noble Church, Noble, OK as minister of evangelism

Bailey Thompson to Hillsdale Free Will Baptist College, Moore, OK as promotion director

Burl Brewer to First Church, Murfreesboro, TN as assistant pastor

Home missionary **Wallace Hayes** reports that the **Lebanon FWB Mission** has purchased five acres and bought a 24' x 60' building with five classrooms. The congregation is averaging 33 with a high of 46 in **Lebanon, Tennessee**.

First FWB Church, Tucson, Arizona, sponsored an evangelical outreach seminar January 19-21. Special speakers were **Roy Thomas** and **Bob Shockey** of the National Home Missions Department. **Dan O'Donnell** pastors.

They set a different kind of attendance record at **Bear Point FWB Church, Sesser, Illinois**, on December 18. That was the Sunday the church had a total of 55 people present who were 11 years old and under. **James O'Dell** pastors.

Pastor **David Sutton, Ada FWB Church, Ada, Oklahoma**, has issued the warning that his congregation was defrauded out of \$3,000 from an organization known as Pictorial Church Directories.

CONTACT welcomes the *Liberty Proclaimer*, publication of **Liberty FWB Church, Fenton, Missouri**. **Jerry Norris** pastors.

Mount Moriah FWB Church, Ethelsville, Alabama, has 25 new Free Will Baptist hymnals thanks to the adults in the congregation. They bought the books as a gift for the church. **Willard Pless** pastors.

Sometimes big opportunities roll in on the high tides near San Francisco. That's what members of **Petaluma FWB Church, Petaluma, California**, thought when member **Mike Rickman** bussed them several miles for

an hour tour on the USS Enterprise, the largest aircraft carrier in the American fleet. **Carl Young** pastors.

Pastor **Ken Doggett, Oak Park FWB Church, Pine Bluff, Arkansas**, has been a longtime advocate of radio programs. Brother Doggett is a physician who believes in taking his own medicine. He preaches six days a week on radio station KYDE. Brother Doggett has had a successful radio ministry wherever he has pastored.

Pastor **Bob Wells and Faith FWB Church, Columbia, Tennessee**, are celebrating the burning of the mortgage January 22 on the property where their new 250-seat church will be built this spring. Church youth raised \$1,111.11 toward paying off the indebtedness with a rock-a-thon in late 1977.

There is a quiet man in **Ohio** who has been doing his work with little fanfare but a great deal of efficiency. He is **Alton Loveless, Ohio promotional director**. State records show that in addition to printing the *Ambassador*, Ohio's state paper, 11 times a year, conducting institutes around the state, operating the *Ambassador Bible Bookstore*, and attending state and national functions, Brother Loveless has won more than 300 people to Christ in the last 3½ years. This is the kind of state promotion that endears men to their constituency.

At least this proves you are never too old to rally around the flag. The 35 golden agers of **Fellowship FWB Church, Flat River, Missouri**, adopted the erection of a flagpole near the church's educational building for

their 1978 project. It is a memorial to **Rev. Albert Tucker. Grant Saverance** pastors the congregation.

A terrible thing has happened. In a record miracle offering a local church gave \$767.65. The editor promised to get the information in this month's "Currently" column. Here it is. But somewhere along the line, both the name of the church and the pastor who called it in were misplaced. Do you not remember the old saying that it matters not who gets the credit as long as God gets the glory?

There has been such a demand for cassette tapes of messages by Pastor **Robert J. Durham, Grace FWB Church, Rocky Mount, North Carolina**, that the congregation is seriously considering purchasing a tape duplication machine. This is but one more way for the pastor to multiply his ministry to his flock throughout the surrounding areas.

Does every family in your congregation receive copies of **Heartbeat, Mission Grams, Scope** and other free literature printed by the national departments? If they do not, consider doing like other churches and sponsor an official sign-up after the Sunday morning worship hour. Every Free Will Baptist family should receive these valuable publications. ▲

By Tom Willey

For the last 35 years a Free Will Baptist minority have had no printed Treatise, no Free Will Baptist Sunday school literature, no League or Church Training Service materials, no *Co-Laborer* or *Attack*, no *Heartbeat* or *Mission Grams*, no *CONTACT* to keep them informed of what has been happening in their denomination.

In most cases these Christians live long distances from anyone else of like faith. Usually, the only Free Will Baptists these congregations know, outside of a little group, are their pastors and some friends. Yet for many years these believers have struggled along and remained faithful to Free Will Baptist doctrine and tradition, something that most of them actually know very little about.

These faithful Christians are the Spanish-speaking Free Will Baptists who worship and serve in nine widely separated areas of our world. When the first Convention of Spanish American Free Will Baptists met in Panama City, Panama, in March, 1974, one priority set was that a magazine be produced which would help meet the needs of our young churches and unify Spanish-speaking Free Will Baptists.

1974 LITERATURE PRIORITY

Four years ago it seemed to be an almost impossible dream. But God in His infinite wisdom has made this

dream come true. The first issue of *CONTACTO* (contact in Spanish) rolled off the presses on January 14, 1978.

CONTACTO is aimed directly at Free Will Baptist churches working with Spanish-speaking people. In the past *Impacto*, a publication with evangelistic emphasis, was used as an interdenominational magazine produced by Free Will Baptists. But though *Impacto* was good, it floundered.

Now approximately 40 young churches in the United States, the Caribbean, Mexico, Panama and Uruguay need uniform orientation into the denominational doctrines. They would be greatly encouraged to know other Spanish-speaking Free Will Baptists face many of the same problems they do.

Benito Rodriguez and I were commissioned to produce *CONTACTO* in 1974. We did not know how the Lord was to gain His purposes. As we look back now, we can see how He directed step by step.

We began by determining what type publication would best meet the needs of our people. Between the two of us, Benito and I have a combined experience of over 50 years working with Free Will Baptists in Latin America. We have visited and ministered in all (with the exception of our newest field in Spain) our Spanish mission fields.

We weighed whether the magazine should stress evangelism

or church growth. From our experience we knew that both were desperate needs. Ultimately we decided to publish a quarterly magazine for the churches and a monthly tract that would be an evangelism supplement.

During the past four years, those who were present at the 1974 Panama meeting have been sending contributions for the magazine. A nest egg of \$400 accumulated.

BOLD PRINTING VENTURE

Upon investigation we found that in the Miami, Florida, area we could produce 2,000 copies of a 16-page magazine for about \$600 and print 40,000 tracts for about \$500. So by faith we stepped out with no backing from any denominational agency. In the meantime costs had gone up, but the Lord provided so we have been able to produce the magazine. It is now in the hands of the people.

Due to the rise in prices we were not able to produce the tracts at the same time. We hope to have them out as soon as the needed funds arrive. One factor that altered the price on the tracts was that we decided to produce 90,000 rather than the original 40,000 and thus obtain a greatly reduced per unit price. The tract project is to be a paying project. Once we get initial funding, we feel it will pay for itself.

CONTACTO will need supplementary funds to continue. Most Free Will Baptists south of the border are not able to pay even a

CONTACTO:

Response to

Literature Blackout

SIN CHALLENGES THE CHURCH



PART VII

By Leroy Forlines

In the last article I dealt with the fact that if we are going to help those in the church who have fallen into sin, we must be willing to approach such people and help them find the solution to their problems. It is important that we show our concern while at the same time we leave no impression that we condone the sin involved.

In this article I want to discuss some of the things that are involved in actually helping people. Please keep in mind that some in the church who have fallen into sin have never been saved. I am not trying to answer that question in each case. I am only considering that they are/ or have been members of the church and they have fallen into sin.

Much of what will be said will also be helpful in dealing with people who have never had any affiliation with a church.

Whenever a person who has made a profession of faith and has seemingly manifested evidence of salvation for a considerable length of time drops out of church or falls into sin, there is some explanation. There are no moral accidents. Things do not just happen with no motivating influences. A happy, well-adjusted person does not suddenly become an alcoholic. A happy, well-adjusted husband or wife does not suddenly become involved with sexual immorality. When both husband and wife are happily married, they do not suddenly appear in a divorce court.

We can attempt to help people in one of two ways. We can simply call attention to their guilt and encourage them to repent. Or we can in addition to recognizing their guilt try to help them understand why they committed the particular sin and help them deal with the underlying problems. If we are going to

be very helpful, we must use the second approach. The fact of guilt must ever be clear both in our own minds and the mind of the person we are trying to help. But we must seek the underlying causes.

To seek to explain why a person commits a particular sin does not mean that we explain away the guilt. Sin is sin no matter how understandable the circumstances may be that led to the sin. To explain why a person did something is not the same as justifying the sin. In explaining why people sin, it is not enough to explain that it is caused by the inclination to sin that remains with us because the sin nature has not been totally eradicated.

That is true of all Christians, but not all Christians fall into serious sin. We need to seek to understand each case.

Whenever a church member falls into sin, there is some significant problem. Among the problems that cause many to sin are depression, self-rejection, rejection by others, false guilt, stress from overload that has extended over a long period of time, recurring problems of maladjustment of personality that was a product of a broken home or an alcoholic father or an otherwise bad home background, and the feeling of despair. With such people, the pieces of the puzzle of life are not fitting together, and they do not know how to handle their problems. They turn in the wrong direction.

In the next article I want to begin dealing with why these problems lead many to sin and what can be done to help such people. ▲

fraction of what it costs to produce and send *CONTACTO*.

The magazine is not to be given away, but subscribers will be charged according to the area in which they live. Some of the areas where it is most needed are where it is most expensive to send, and yet these people have the least available funds.

How do we solve the problem? We feel that we have a solution. Each page of *CONTACTO* costs about \$50 to produce per quarter. If enough churches, associations and individuals will sponsor a page, we will be able to get the magazine out each quarter. Several groups have shown an interest in this plan, and we believe the Lord is going to supply what is needed.

One thing should be understood clearly: *CONTACTO* is a Free Will Baptist publication. It will have little or no appeal to anyone else. So far all financial aid has come from Spanish-speaking Free Will Baptists and the Victory Association of south and central Florida.

If you speak Spanish or know someone who does and would like to subscribe, the United States subscription rate is \$2 per year. Those interested in subscribing or supporting the magazine should write to *CONTACTO*, P.O. Box 450755, Miami, Florida 33145.

ABOUT THE WRITER: Tom Willey, who now edits *CONTACTO*, has served with Free Will Baptist foreign missions in Cuba and Panama. ▲





OUR WOMEN SPEAK

Lighting Up!

By Barbara Morrison

A few months ago a girl I worked with moved out of Nashville and into a small town. Because her home church was now some 40 miles away, I suggested that she try one of our Free Will Baptist churches just a few miles from her home.

Excited and encouraged at the prospect of finding a good church to attend, she took her family one Sunday morning to visit one of the churches that I had recommended. During the service she was impressed with the friendliness of the people and the program it offered her children. By the time the morning service was over, she had decided that this church just might

be the one to replace her own home church, even if it did mean changing to a different denomination than she belonged to now.

As she drove out of the parking lot, she gave a quick glance over her shoulder to thank God for this church. But the picture she saw ruined the whole visit. There on the front porch stood what looked to be the whole congregation with their cigarettes lit and hanging out of their mouths.

My friend has now decided that my denomination is not for her. Granted, not all Free Will Baptist churches have this problem, but far too many do. How many people

have turned away from our churches because people can't wait until they get home or at least get into the parking lot, if they are that desperate, before they light up? Why must they smoke on our church steps?

Some people say that they see no sin in smoking. Is it a sin if it puts a blemish on our churches or causes some soul to turn away? Is our denomination not growing as fast as it could because of little thoughtless things that some church members do? Could you help make your church a better witness for Christ?

Your church is what you are. Isn't it? ▲

ABOUT THE WRITER: Mrs. Morrison attends Woodbine Free Will Baptist Church, Nashville, Tennessee.

WALKING (from page 10)

trod. Therefore, "Let us run with patience the race that is set before us, Looking unto Jesus . . . who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God" (Hebrews 12:1,2).

This is the reality for us of "Christ in you, the hope of glory" (Colossians 1:27). This is what Paul is witnessing to in Romans 8:17, "And if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ; if so be that we suffer with him, that we may be also glorified together."

The heart cry of the child of God who by faith walks in resurrection life in full fellowship with Jesus is ever, "That I may know him," no matter what it costs.

LIVE AS GOD'S PILGRIM

This is to be in the world but not of it. It is to live the life of Christ so as to fulfill the will of the Father for

the glory of His name but to be ever mindful that this is a pilgrimage and probationary time. While it may be difficult, "The sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us" (Romans 8:18).

Understanding this, we apply the concepts of Colossians 3:1-4:

If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God. Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth. For ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God. When Christ, who is our life, shall appear, then shall ye also appear with him in glory.

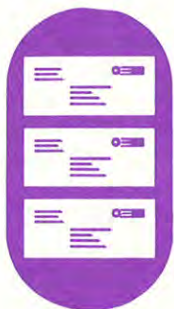
This is the dynamic living faith of Christ in us which enables us to rise above circumstances, to endure patiently problems and opposition, to accept the inevitability of suffering and rejection, because we know that He has "made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus" (Ephesians 2:6).

Walking in resurrection power is

a life few really understand, and even fewer really experience daily. Yet, this is not the way it should be. Too often we quote Galatians 2:20 so glibly: "I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but *Christ liveth in me*." But what of the practical outworkings of this? How we need to understand all that is involved and apply it effectually in our experiences.

Is the risen, living, victorious Christ actually that real to us? He wants to be. He will be when in faith we appropriate the fulness of His promise, His purpose, His person.

ABOUT THE WRITER: Dr. Graeme Savage is the former president of Salem Bible College, Salem, FL. He has pastored Free Will Baptist churches since arriving in the United States from Australia in 1970. ▲



OUR READERS COMMENT

READER FINDS ARTICLE EASY TO UNDERSTAND

I Like *CONTACT*, especially articles like the one Ben Scott wrote (How to Emphasize Christmas in Our Churches) in the December issue. I like its simplicity. It's easy reading.

I agree in doctrine with the article, "Will You Also Go Away?" But I wonder if it should have been published.

H. S. Vandivort
Cabool, MO

UNBIASED APPROACH LAUDED

I want to commend... *CONTACT*, our national publication. Your coverage is thorough. Your unbiased approach is commendable.

Joseph G. Ange
Director of Religious Activities
Free Will Baptist Bible College
Nashville, TN

SUGGESTIONS FOR IMPROVEMENT OFFERED

There is one improvement which I feel would help your magazine. *CONTACT* is supposed to be a family magazine. However, there are few articles for our children.... Why not have a page or two of activities for them? These activities could include puzzles, word search, or just a short story that would interest them.

Marilu McDonald
Taft, TX

ALUMNUS REMINDED OF COLLEGE'S VALUE

I just finished reading "I Went Back to College" in the February *CONTACT*. I was very moved and brought to the point of tears as my heart swelled with pride. Thanks for reminding us how much our school means to those of us who have walked there. It is good to know that FWBBC still influences lives as it did mine.

Margrette (Earnest) Hughes
Canton, NC

DENOMINATION IS KNOWN BY ITS PUBLICATIONS

Even though our denomination has reached its 250th birthday, I believe mine is the privilege to grow up in its maturing years. One factor that identifies this maturity is the realization that a written legacy is needed. We are now seeing some great written doctrinal and practical epitaphs. This will remain an unquestionable reminder of the spiritual greatness of our denomination.

CONTACT Magazine is a great link in the diversified Free Will Baptist chain. A man is known by his words, and I believe a denomination is known by its journal of the words of its great men.

I extend a godly praise to the editors and writers of our Free Will Baptist publications.

Herman McFaddin, pastor
Sandy City Free Will Baptist Church
Catlettsburg, KY

MISSIONARY REJOICES OVER 'THE TRACT'

We are rejoicing together over the love and grace of God demonstrated in the life of Anita Sparks when she shared her testimony in (November, 1977) *CONTACT*.

Please continue to have this type article. Include the full spectrum of God's grace: the known and the unknown.

We appreciate also the religious news outside of Free Will Baptists. We serve a BIG God. We are excited to praise and thanksgiving and also to intercessory prayer at the news.

Patrick and Susan Dickens
Missionaries to France

CHRISTIAN HIGH SCHOOL TEACHER SHARES CONTACT WITH STUDENTS

The (November, 1977) article "Depression: The Valley of Emotion" by Dan Parker was interesting. However, I really like two paragraphs he wrote on the Word of God.... Mr. Parker stated in his article an excellent truth. I quote: "It is vital for the counselor (I inserted teenager) to actually know Jesus as Savior and Lord and have an extensive knowledge of the Bible."

I teach in a Christian high school in St. Louis. As a teacher, I am always looking for brief writings I can give my students to complement what I teach.

Rebecca Pugh
Wood River, IL

*Did You Miss
"The Sting
of
Death"
on page 6?*

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By Susan Burgess

Like Elijah, I too searched for God in the wind, in the earthquake, in the fire. I looked for displays of His power. Where were the miracles, the phenomenal rescues, the restorations of sight and hearing, the strengthening of crippled legs? Had the God of power dissolved?

Then in snatches of tales I heard of such healings and assorted miracles. Yet it was strange how miracles seemed to only abound in foreign countries or happen to the neighbor's friend's cousin's aunt in a Pentecostal church. Why didn't God unveil His power here, right where I could see it? Hearsay evidence of the olden days just wasn't enough.

Were TV healer/dealer, magician/physician, miracle workers all the evidence existing that a God of power lived and worked today? Their evidence was plentiful, but I had no faith in it.

One flamboyant charlatan failed to cue a TV healee sufficiently. After he performed the frenzied ritual necessary to heal the woman's blindness, she obediently sat down. But the camera, obviously hoping to catch a last shot of her rejoicing, saw her instead pulling prescription glasses from her purse and adjusting them on her face. Doubtlessly, it wasn't the God of perfection and power who cured her blindness.

But why wasn't her blindness (or at least her nearsightedness) cured? She was attending a service held for the express purpose of physical healing. Someone was praying for her to be

healed. Although the trappings of the supernatural healing process were present, a blindness of the heart still existed. Her soul still groped in a dungeon of darkness.

The physical eyes were not blind; the vision was just distorted. But the soul had never seen.

The charlatans were helpless, but the Bible lists multitudes of God's successful healings. Could that vibrant, waiting power used by God actually be called down at man's whim to entertain the huddled, expectant television junkies?

PURPOSE OF MIRACLES

Through contemplation of such failures and study of God's winning record as detailed in the Bible, I gradually began to glimpse the true power of God. Apparently, God's power is not used on the physical for the physical's sake alone but

supernatural deeds validated Jesus' claim to Messiahship. "For the works which the Father hath given me to finish, the same works that I do, bear witness of me, that the Father hath sent me" (John 5:36).

The healing of the paralytic related in Matthew 9:1-8 illustrates another service miracles perform. Jesus first emphasized the complete spiritual healing taking place by saying, "Son, be of good cheer; thy sins be forgiven thee." The physical healing—the man's being able to walk—was only a symbol of the spiritual miracle which had already taken place in the paralyzed heart.

POWER OF MIRACLES

Thus, God uses His magnificent power as an attention getter, a crowd scatterer, a street cleaner. Matthew Henry wrote, "Faith

In Search

also for spiritual benefit. Jesus recognized the seeming variance in the disposition of God's favor: "And many lepers were in Israel in the time of Eliseus the prophet; and none of them was cleansed, saving Naaman the Syrian" (Luke 4:27).

Israel had mislaid its zeal for evangelism. Naaman was the only Syrian leper in a position to influence not only the common people but also the military and royalty. The well-known captain could spread the evidence of God's power throughout Syria and its conquered territory. Thus God chose the swiftest vehicle to carry the news of His mercy and might.

In addition to their use as advertising, miracles prove God's fulfillment of every prophecy through His Son Jesus. Such

comes by hearing the word of God; miracles do but make way for it." When someone or something blockades the spread of God's Word or endangers the work of His believers, He may choose to remove the hindrance through a miracle.

Naaman's friends, the Syrians, experienced the pulverizing force of a miracle of God in a later battle with God's potent gladiator Elisha. Even though God allowed heathen armies to punish His people for severe sins and even though they certainly deserved punishment this time, destruction of Israel's loyal troops was not in God's battle plans at that moment.

The Syrian bullies thought executing one old prophet, who could somehow eavesdrop on secrets told in the king's bed-

chamber, would be simpler than wrestling armored Israelites. But one prayer defeated them. The Lord's mountaintop army of fiery horses and chariots were only insurance, for when Elisha confidently prayed, the Syrians were blinded. (See II Kings 6:18.)

Paul's life is also dotted with examples of God's sustaining miracles. Religious snakehandlers today are seeking the power Paul possessed. He was able to shake off a tenacious viper that had slithered from a bundle of driftwood. But Paul suffered no ill effects because he still had to make the journey to Rome. Jewish plots, shipwrecks or snakebites could not prevent God's servant from being a witness of the Gospel's power in the capital of the empire.

Of course, the greatest physical and spiritual miracle, the

become senile and impotent.

PARAPHRASE OF MIRACLES

Obviously, my definition of God was still correct. So the concept of power as I expected it to be displayed was wrong. I wanted God to exhibit man's power; that is force: force in despair.

Bishop Festo Kivengere, refugee from Uganda's religious persecution, wrote, "When a man uses force, he confesses that he cannot change the situation which threatens him, and so, being weak and insecure, he turns to methods of elimination." Thus Uganda's President Idi Amin has forcefully persecuted and executed Christians in his country because he cannot change them to loyal Muslim supporters of his regime.

But these present-day martyrs are not being persuaded by force. Instead their faithfulness in the

pray, "Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do." Soldiers, Pharisees, rulers, Romans, masses, even all the power of Satan himself could never change Jesus or deter Him from His purpose.

But Jesus could change lives of the worst offenders, like the thief on the cross, with just a word. It is doubtful that the thief had ever seen a miracle; he had only heard a prayer. But that day he joined the saints in paradise.

The identical unique, almighty power utilized by the crucified Jesus to forgive and transform exists today. God is not limited to just passing by in a wind which tears the mountains or in an earthquake that breaks the rocks or in a fire that chars the earth.

But He's in the still small voice. It was the quiet voice that told a servant girl to persuade Naaman's wife that God could heal. It was the assuring voice that instructed Elisha to look toward the mountain for deliverance. It was the persistent voice that asked Saul of Tarsus why he persecuted the church.

It was the same sweet voice that whispered, "Mary," on that resurrection morning.

The still small voice is working miracles and manifesting power today—not by destorying in despair but by changing lives. It is changing men like Zacchaeus to generous givers, women by the well to faithful wives, and the hardened hearts of Christians to the compassionate spirit of our Lord. ▲

Of Miracles

resurrection of Jesus, was absolutely essential to the Creator's redemptive plan for His world fallen into slavery. The resurrection miracle is the very foundation upon which our faith is built.

Although I realized these reasons for the performance of miracles were true and the occasions for their occurrences appropriate, I still wanted to see God's power today. I didn't want to hear puny, evasive excuses about God's power being exhibited in Bible days only or God-works-differently-today answers.

The Bible promises, "Jesus Christ, the same yesterday, and today, and forever"; and "Thou, Lord . . . art the same, and thy years shall not fail"; and "with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning." God had not

face of death has brought revival to hundreds in Uganda.

Nero, emperor of Rome, exerted intense force in his efforts to either destroy Christianity or change its adherents to idol worshipers. First century Christians were objects of amusement. Clad in hides of beasts, they were torn to death by dogs. As dusk closed in during Nero's garden parties, flaming Christians illuminated the grounds.

Nero is dead. The Roman Empire is destroyed. But Christianity is a living, functioning organism because its founder is alive in the heart of each believer. The cruel force of the emperor who ruled the world could not destroy its life-changing power.

Christ on the cross didn't have the power to wipe a drop of sweat from his forehead, but He could

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