

"...the heavens, are the Lord's: but the earth hath he given to the children of men," Psalm 115:16.

INSIDE: Stewardship education Award winning fiction Convention preview







STEWARDSHIP EDUCATION IN THE LOCAL CHURCH

By Rufus Coffey, Executive Secretary

S tewardship is a familiar word to most Christians. However, the term is often heard and used without a full understanding of its meaning and implication.

The general mental picture of the word often produces a spelling like this: \$teward\$hip! To be sure, stewardship involves money, but this is not where it begins. Merely limiting stewardship to material possessions produces a distorted view.

Stewardship is a way of life which encompasses all that a Christian is and has. It is a concrete and practical expression of one's discipleship, grace, consecration, dedication and love. It is the response of one's total being to all that God has done and continues to do for the person who has experienced His saving grace.

Stewardship is to the Christian life and church what the ticking of a watch is to the mainspring of that watch. A watch cannot run without a mainspring. Neither can a church operate, however vigorously it may be organized, without a dynamic moving force. Phillips translates II Corinthians 5:14, "The very spring of our action is the love of Christ." As we receive the love of Christ and allow His love to motivate us, we respond in much the same way as the works of a watch respond to its mainspring. Stewardship is the obedient and joyful response of man to the love of God. It begins with receiving, not with giving. The person has to receive and experience the love of God before he can respond to it. Then a Christian must be taught how to respond in a meaningful way. The manner in which we teach a believer to respond joyfully, gratefully and obediently to God's redeeming love by means of life, service, resources is stewardship education.

PURPOSE OF STEWARDSHIP EDUCATION

The overarching objective of the Christian's life should be to participate in God's plan for mankind and the word which He created. Christians must come to understand their place of responsibility to this divine purpose.

The Bible is the living story of how man was created to glorify God. This original purpose for man was thwarted because of sin. The reconciliation of a sinful man to a loving God has been made possible through the Lord Jesus Christ. He came to redeem mankind through the giving of Himself. When His mission on earth was complete, He entrusted to His followers the responsibility of continuing His mission "to seek and to save that which was lost." Every Christian shares in this mission: "As my Father hath sent me, even so send I you" (John 20:21).

The task of stewardship education is to lead the believer into a deeper understanding of the privileges



and responsibilities of the Christian life. Stewardship teaching should prompt believers to win others to Christ and to lead them into lives of commitment so that they will recognize all they are and have is a trust from God to be used in turn for the winning of others and the fulfillment of God's purpose for the world.

In order for believers to become more aware of this responsibility, they must come to understand the broad scope of stewardship as it affects every area of life. Some of the multidimensional facets of stewardship include the following:

We are stewards of our lives because we read in Acts 17:28, "In him we live, and move, and have our being." Our personality, influence and total being must be committed to Him.

We are *stewards of our time* because Ephesians 5:16 instructs us to "redeem the time." Other translations express it thus: "Make the most of your time"; and "Every opportune season must be used."

We are *stewards of our bodies* because I Corinthians 6:19 teaches us, "Know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit?" The Christian's body must not be desecrated because it is a sacred trust indwelt by the Holy Spirit.

We are stewards of our talents according to Matthew 25:14-30. Although talents were an ancient weight or unit of money, they have come to be referred to as a special gift or ability. Just as the servants in the parable had various sums, so each believer has been given different talents.

We are stewards of our material possessions. The Bible is clear both in the Old and New Testament that money and property is a gift from God and that a portion belongs to Him. While the tithe is the beginning point, God's standard of giving under grace is stated in I Corinthians 16:2, "As God has prospered."

We are stewards of our environment. The Psalmist declares (24:1), ''The earth is the Lord's, and the fulness thereof; the world, and they that dwell therein.'' As earth-keepers we are responsible to preserve the heritage we have received. It is not to be squandered for selfish purposes.

We are stewards of the Gospel because of the unique position of Christians as "stewards of the manifold grace of God" (I Peter 4:10). Again in I Corinthians 9:17 Paul declares, "A dispensation (or more correctly translated, a stewardship) of the gospel is committed to me." Like Paul, we are "debtors of the gospel." Thus failure to teach stewardship is a neglect of a paramount responsibility.

Several fundamental factors are incorporated into ideal stewardship. Fulfillment of stewardship responsibilities must take into consideration the following guiding principles.



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STEWARDSHIP (from page 3)

The steward recognizes God's ownership of all things. (See I Chronicles 29:11; Psalm 50:10; Haggai 2:8; James 1:17.)

The steward recognizes he is the property of another (I Corinthians 6:19b,20).

The steward recognizes a trust has been committed to him (I Timothy 6:20).

A steward recognizes he is to produce for his master (Luke 19:13; Matthew 25:16,17).

A steward recognizes he is to be faithful (I Corinthians 4:2).

A steward recognizes a day of accountability is coming (Luke 12:42,43).

PROGRAM OF STEWARDSHIP EDUCATION

Good stewardship doesn't just happen. It results from a combination of certain forces. Certain procedural steps are essential for the implementation of a planned program of action.

Objectives of the Program

People-centered: Stewardship has to do with "people" not budgets, buildings or shrewd promotional schemes. Genuine stewardship is not so much a program as it is a relationship.

Bible-based: Stewardship stems from interpreting and understanding the Scriptures concerning Christian obligations.

Church-focused: The stewardship program must take into account that the church is God's instrument for world evangelism. The church is a channel through which we extend our witness to fulfill Christ's mission.

Pastor-directed: Leadership by the pastor is the key to success. The interest and enthusiasm of the pastor sets the pace for the congregation. The vision of the people will not exceed that of the leader.

Family-oriented: While stewardship must be taught at every level in the church, it must also involve every home. Unless that which is taught in the church is supported and practiced in the home, very little is accomplished. The home and church are partners in developing mature stewardship attitudes.

Spirit-motivated: Fleshly schemes to manipulate the emotions are futile. Genuine and lasting results stem from personal dedication and the leadership of the Spirit.

Areas of Development

Developing Personal Giving: Help believers plan their personal spending and teach them to exercise economy in their standard of living. Teach that responsibilities of stewardship begin at home. Motivate properly.

Developing Church Giving: Institute a central treasury. Build a worthy budget. Survey the potentials and plan accordingly. Emphasize the tithe.

Developing Estate Giving: Provide counsel and guidance for Christians to make their wills and to dispose of their estates at the time of death. This is a vast untouched resource within our church.

Developing Denominational Giving: Encourage direct giving, Initiate cooperative giving.

Types of Programs

Visitation: Visit every member of the church in the home to personally present the church's program, goals and budget. This cultivates family involvement through an every-member canvas.

Mail: Primary emphasis is placed on distributing materials through the mail. Letters and promotional materials along with commitment cards are sent with an explanation of the church's budget or the particular appeal.

Sunday worship service: After letters have been sent to the members concerning the church program, budget, etc., plan a special dedication day when the congregation makes their commitments. A follow-up visit of those members not attending takes place on Sunday afternoon or during the week.

Special banquet service: After a special church dinner commitments are received.

Stewardship is not a temporary shot-in-the-arm campaign but an ongoing program. It requires careful, long-range planning with specific intermediary goals. There must be a constant emphasis throughout the year. People must be continually reminded of their obligations. Without a perennial plan stewardship concern will gradually wane.

PROMOTION OF STEWARDSHIP EDUCATION

The most carefully laid plans are of little value without adequate promotion. Methods of promotion may vary, but the following suggestions can be used.

1. Hold a "School of Stewardship" or a "Stewardship Conference." This can be for one week or one night during several successive weeks. Study courses and films can be used to inform and inspire people to accept their responsibility.

2. Preach and teach stewardship from the pulpit. Preach a series of messages or teach a series of lessons in Sunday school.

3. Use tracts, pamphlets and recommend books for reading. Include stewardship leaflets or literature in the Sunday bulletin or midweek mailings.

4. Prepare displays on stewardship for the church bulletin board.

5. Encourage various organizations of the church to build programs around stewardship themes during the year.

6. Secure audiovisual aids to use several times during the year. Stewardship skits can be given on Wednesday or Sunday evenings.

Briefcase



Parable of the Black Samaritan

Before dawn Friday, March 3, a Nashville man, Alfred Carraway, member of Harding Place Free Will Baptist Church, started to Knoxville on business. He developed car trouble on an isolated stretch of Interstate 24 between Nashville and Murfreesboro.

Two men driving a red and black Chevy van stopped to help him. While Carraway was explaining his automobile malfunction, one of the men stepped behind him, pulled a blackjack from his coat, clubbed Carraway in the head and broke his left arm.

They stole his wallet containing approximately \$200 cash and eight credit cards. To prevent his calling for assistance, the pair tore Carraway's CB radio from the dash. Mr. Carraway, unconscious by now, was stripped and thrown nude into a ditch beside his disabled car.

His assailants then took a hammer and methodically smashed the windows in Carraway's 1975 Oldsmobile. All this happened before 6:30 a.m.

Motorists questioned later reported seeing Carraway's car but thought it had been abandoned. A prominent Nashville pastor (name withheld at his request) told reporters from a local newspaper that he had been driving that particular stretch of I-24 east at 6:45 a.m. (only 15 minutes after Carraway was assaulted). The clergyman admitted seeing the vehicle and Carraway in the ditch. When interrogated as to why he did not offer assistance, he shrugged and said, ''I thought the man was dead.''

The story took an even more bizarre twist when James Fields (name changed), a denominational aide, came forward Sunday afternoon with an embarrassing admission. Fields was headed to Murfreesboro when he saw the Carraway car. Fields said he stopped and inspected the vehicle.

He was returning to his own car when he heard a moan. He walked down the embankment and stumbled over Carraway's blood-splattered body. Fields says he doesn't recall what happened then, but he must have panicked because the next thing he remembered was driving into Ed Moro's Shell Station in Murfreesboro.

Fields said he was ashamed to confront anyone with what he had seen until reading about Carraway's problems in Saturday's newspaper.

But the Carraway story doesn't end there. Shortly after Fields hurriedly left the roadside carnage, Mr. Thomas R. Stacy, drummer for Marshall and Redfern, Inc., North Carolina based furriers, stopped to investigate the stalled vehicle.

Stacy, via telephone conversation from Raleigh, North Carolina, told newsmen he was nauseated by the sight of Carraway's gaping wounds. It was obvious to the black salesman that Carraway needed medical attention immediately.

Stacy said he tried to hail passersby, but no one would stop and aid a black man standing over a nude, blood-covered white man. He finally gave up and managed to splint the arm of the now near death Carraway. Stacy used a small first-aid kit in swabbing the head and facial lacerations.

Stacy, an outspoken black power enthusiast, managed to lift Carraway into his car and drive him the six miles to a Murfreesboro hospital emergency room. He gave police a statement and waited to hear some word on Carraway's condition. The predawn victim survived his ordeal with a fractured skull, deep facial cuts, and multiple bruises in addition to his broken arm.

Here's the unbelievable part. Carraway was still unconscious and had no money and no identification on him. When hospital personnel inquired of police who would pay for emergency treatment and other fees, Thomas Stacy—the black Samaritan quickly volunteered to stand good for the injured white man's expenses!

And Jesus said, "Which now of these three, thinkest thou, was neighbour unto him that fell among thieves?"

Will Government Regulations And Taxes Gobble Up Private Colleges

By Tom Sass

The year: 1995. The place: Nashville, Tennessee. The occasion: Free Will Baptist Bible College's final

The reason:

exercise for her last graduating class. Recent legislation has handed the Bible College a fatal blow, causing the financial collapse of one of the last surviving private colleges.

mpossible? We, of course, don't think this is going to happen. But according to recent studies, the future is shaky for America's private colleges. All indicators point to hard, uphill battles for private institutions of higher learning.

WAR ON THREE FRONTS

Schools like Free Will Baptist Bible College are actually fighting a threefold warfare.

First, there are the financial pressures felt by every Christian student who decides to choose FWBBC instead of his or her state university or local community college. There is just no way any privately funded college can compete dollar-wise with federal and state-supported schools.

When student costs are tabulated, private colleges are forced to pass on inflationary pressures to the student. This is not necessarily so in public, tax-supported schools. Although tuition may increase slightly, the bulk of these higher costs are shouldered by taxpaying citizens.

Second, there is the ever-growing power of the federal educational agencies. The Department of Health, Education and Welfare (HEW) is by no means a stranger to any of us. In one way or another it has probably touched the life of every reader. Unfortunately, HEW is trying to command tribute from those over whom it has no jurisdiction. Countless universities and colleges are choking in the stranglehold of federal guidelines, rules, regulations and "affirmative action" programs recently enacted in the name of rights.

Unfortunately for the populace, Uncle Sam seems to be the ultimate winner of more and more rights. One university administrator after another has confessed that accepting federal aid was the deciding factor in forfeiting the school's independence to govern itself. Federal aid eventually means federal control.

The 1976 case of Hillsdale College (Michigan) is a superb example of federal aggressiveness. Hillsdale is a private college. It accepts no direct federal aid for the purpose of maintaining itself. However, HEW required the school to begin submitting annual reports of its books and activities because certain *students* who attended Hillsdale were receiving federal aid.

In other words, here is a school which has never asked for a government handout in any manner being told to submit time-consuming, confidential reports with regard to many facets of their overall operation. Hillsdale recoiled at the threat of government control. The president of the school challenged HEW's demand by stating that the aid was requested by the student, and not by Hillsdale.

The government has not given its final decision concerning this case. But even if the verdict swings in favor of Hillsdale, this confrontation has shown every private institution they must be prepared for future challenges from HEW.

The third threat to private colleges like Free Will Baptist Bible College is in the shape of a little three-letter word called "tax." Though all nonprofit private colleges and universities now are sheltered by tax exemption, a foundation is being laid to alter this privilege. This could actually be a double-barreled threat. First, the cost of operating the college will increase if the school loses its sales tax exemption. In Tennessee this would mean an increase of six percent on all taxable purchases. Second, gifts could be expected to decrease since such gifts would no longer be income tax deductible.

No doubt many would continue supporting FWBBC regardless of the tax deductible structure. However, some might cut their giving. Since no business can run in the red, the eventual loser is the student, who must pay a higher semester bill.

APATHY FROM TWO ALLIES

What in a nutshell is really strangling most dying private colleges? One factor is student apathy toward the institution itself. After all, if there is little difference between a private college and a state college or university (which costs less), why pay more?

Quite frankly, that is a good argument. Furthermore, this is the exact reason FWBBC must remain unique. Bible College students usually choose FWBBC because it is *not* like other schools. They want a college with unique distinctives, such as a commitment to the Bible and to Christian behavior. As long as the Bible College remains independent and unique, we believe there will be dedicated Christian young people to fill its dormitories and classrooms.



GOVERNMENT (from page 7)

Another death note is struck when donor apathy sets in. Loss of interest from those who give to support the work is a critical factor. Without donors (usually those who are genuinely concerned about the work) the college loses valuable backing from people who care.

ALTERNATIVES TO GOVERNMENT CONTROL

What can we do to avoid witnessing the final chapter for our denominational college? Are there any alternatives? Among all the seemingly grim facts, there are rays of hope.

First and foremost, schools such as Free Will Baptist Bible College were called into existence by a power far greater than HEW. And God honors those who honor His Word. But we must remember that Christ has chosen to further His work through the efforts of redeemed men and women. Our efforts must be united behind the cause to make a Christian education available for every serious-minded Free Will Baptist who wishes to pursue this goal.

"Schools such as FWBBC were called into existence by a power far greater than HEW."

Free Will Baptist Bible College must protect itself from the onslaughts which have proven harmful, even fatal, to other private colleges. An awareness must be cultivated within the Free Will Baptist denomination to provide a stronghold against all possible invaders. The very best method parallels the beginning of Free Will Baptist Bible College. That was through education—education of our people showing the need for such an institution. "Universities and colleges are choking in the stranglehold of federal guidelines HEW is trying to command tribute from those over whom it has no jurisdiction."

The need is still there. "Without a vision the people perish." Without the continual realization that dedicated Christian workers are desperately in demand on foreign shores, in our churches and in Christian day schools, our college will lose value and purpose in the eyes of many.

That realization will become more evident as our world value system continues to slide toward new lows. The Bible teaches this is a repeated history. When true Christians are oppressed, they rally around the Cross with newfound strength and vigor.

Unfortunately, our land is plagued with an "I don't care" attitude, which has drifted into every mainstream of life and even into some of our churches. This feeling of apathy has crippled the cause of the Christ. (Who ever heard of a Bible hero who never cared?)

Regaining a sense of urgency in our denomination will have a direct impact on the future success or failure of our Bible College. The stakes are high. The possible losses should the college close, however, are probably higher.

What can you personally do to help insure that FWBBC and other church-sponsored institutions will be open 20 years from now? First, let's pray for Christ's guiding hand on those who are in leadership roles. Without use of the prayer tool, we are fighting a losing battle.

But our prayers must be backed by giving to help stay the financial arena. Salaries must be paid. There is daily physical plant upkeep. More new buildings are essential to meet the steady growth we are experiencing. This capped by inflation means the budget must continue to inch upward.

We as Free Will Baptists must be prepared to sacrifice in order to keep the doors of Free Will Baptist Bible College open. But even more doors are necessary to fill the college's present and future demands. The dormitories are full. The student body, for example, is so large that as many as 100 students must watch chapel by closed-circuit television in another building.

These critical needs will not be filled by federal and state aid. Instead, our people must accept their greatest challenge in the face of inflation, pressure from HEW, reports of major tax structure revisions, and a steadily increasing student body which demands physical expansion.

Pray for Free Will Baptist Bible College. She was built to serve our denomination's needs for pastors, missionaries, Christian teachers, Christian businessmen and businesswomen along with dedicated laymen who are seeking higher education under the Free Will Baptist banner.

Then back your prayers with gifts to sustain and advance the work. Those prayers and gifts are all that separates FWBBC from the predictions that most private colleges will close their doors within 20 years.

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By Anita Haney

slammed my book shut and gathered my purse and books together as I heard the brakes screech from the huge city bus.

I stood and shivered in the northern, winter winds.

The driver opened the door, and warm air rushed out from inside. I heard the clatter of morning conversation from other passengers.

Boarding, I discovered the bus unusually loaded this morning. I spotted a vacant seat and quickly sat down for fear of having to stand.

The elderly man sitting next to me reminded me of my own Papa Williams, my grandfather on Mother's side of the family. He was a large man with a long nose, rosy cheeks and laughing eyes. Snowy locks of hair showed beneath his cap. Yet, unlike my grandfather, the old man's clothes were dirty and torn.

After a few minutes of silence, I was about to speak to him when he slowly stood and pulled the rope above his head to signal the driver that this was where he wanted off the bus.

I arose from my seat and stood in the aisle to let him out. He nodded his head in a gesture of thanks and slowly got off the bus. As he crossed the street, I stretched my neck in curiosity to see where the old man was headed. I felt sad when I saw him walking toward the Charity Mission House. I shrugged my shoulders, opened a book and began to read.

After several minutes of reading, I glanced up surprised that the bus was almost to my stop. I wrapped my scarf around my neck, picked up my things and pulled the rope which sounded the buzzer.

As the door opened, my breath came out in puffs of white. I tucked my head down to fight off the cold, biting winds and impatiently waited for the green light to change to yellow, then red. I briskly crossed and headed for the University.

ater that day I got off the bus at the same stop where I had boarded early that morning.

The sun was shining brilliantly, making the early afternoon pleasantly warmer.

I walked down the sidewalk at a merry pace feeling proud of getting

an "A" on my speech test. I always had to study so hard to get a good grade in that class.

Suddenly I slowed my pace. Ahead of me was that same old man, slowly trudging toward the bus stop.

As I drew closer, I smiled, "Hello, Sir!"

He nodded gentlemanlike and said in a raspy, worn voice, "Good day, Miss. I seem to have missed my bus."

I answered, "Well, you won't have to wait long for the next one. I think one stops here about every 15 or 20 minutes."

He acknowledged my correct information with another nod of his head.

"Would you like me to wait with you? It's a beautiful day and the fresh air would do me good."

His eyes seemed to light up, and a broad smile covered his rosy cheeks, which made me sense his reply before he spoke.

"I think that would be very nice," he answered.

Walking slowly toward the bus stop, I said abruptly, "Oh, by the way, my name is Rachel Davidson."



The CELEBRATION

Award Winning Short Story in the Sunday School Department's March Writers' Contest



CELEBRATION (from page 9)

An unusual expression fixed on his face as he replied, "And I am Joseph Sneed."

After a long lull, the old man said, "From looking at all your books, I'll bet you are a student somewhere."

"Yes, Sir. I'm a junior at the University. I'm majoring in special education. I hope to teach handicapped children some day."

"That sounds fine," he said.

By now we had reached the bus stop and sat down. I tightened my scarf, shivered, and asked him, "Do you live here in town, Mr. Sneed?"

"Well, child, I suppose you could say that my home is down on 5th Street at the Charity Mission House."

"Oh, I see," I replied.

The old man hung his head and rubbed his hands together, exposing two naked fingers that had slipped through two holes in the end of his gloves. Trying to hide them while he talked, he said, "My wife died seven years ago next month. Her name was Rachel, just like yours."

I then knew the reason for the odd expression on his face as I told him my name.

With tears filling his eyes, he continued, "After my Rachel was gone, I came to the big city to live with our only child Kate. She was a widow. She lost her man in the war. Two years ago she was killed in a train crash. She rented the house where she lived; so I knew I could never manage to keep up the monthly bills. I had nowhere to go. So.... Well, here's where I am today."

I was shocked at how much he had opened up and begun to talk. It was as if he were yearning for the company of a friend, yearning for someone to hear him.

He cleared his throat, "Why, you're a stranger to me, and just look at the way I'm talking. I'm sorry, Miss Davidson. I'm sure you don't want to hear an old man's troubles."

"No, don't be sorry," I answered. "I want to hear what you have to say. I want to be your friend. So say anything you want to." "'I've never told anyone this," he whispered. "I'm so"

I quickly interrupted him, "Where do you go, Mr. Sneed, when you get on the bus here everyday?"

"I go out to Mallory Park and feed crackers to the ducks on the pond."

As he talked, he opened his big coat pocket to reveal crumbs left from his previous visit at the park.

I paused a moment, then asked, "I hope you wouldn't consider me an intruder, but would you mind if I met you here in the morning and went along with you? Since it's Saturday, I don't have any classes at the University."

"I don't see why you'd want to go anywhere with an old man like me. I don't want to be a bother to anyone."

"You aren't. Besides, I haven't fed ducks since I was a little girl."

I waited to hear what he would say next. The bus interrupted our silence with a giant hiss as the driver stopped the bus to give the old man his daily ride back "home."

"'These ducks are my real friends. This is what I live for . . . It means something to have someone.""

I shouted above the noise as he rose to his feet, ''I'll be here at 8:00 tomorrow morning. Goodbye, Mr. Sneed.''

"Goodbye," he yelled, slowly waving his hand.

As he boarded the bus, I turned and started walking slowly toward home, thinking to myself what a good day it had been.

could see the bus stop from my apartment window, and as I peered through the curtains the next morning, I exclaimed with surprise, "He's already there!"

"Who's already where?" asked Susan, my roommate.

"Mr. Sneed. You know, the elderly man I was telling you about."

"Oh, yeah," Susan answered.

As I was putting on my mittens, a puzzling thought came to mind. "For some reason, Susan, I feel compelled to carry my Bible along."

"Is Mr. Sneed a Christian?" asked Susan.

"Well, we didn't have time to talk about religion at all yesterday. I barely know him, but I feel sure he is. He's awfully nice."

Susan suggested, "Why don't you carry my small New Testament in your coat pocket? Then if you need it, you'll have it."

"Hey, that's a good idea," I agreed and slipped the small book in my pocket. I thanked Susan and went out the door.

The freezing early morning air hit me in the face as I stopped outside and started up the sidewalk toward the bus stop. Morning traffic was already heavy, and I wondered why all these people weren't sleeping late on such a cold Saturday morning in February.

As I neared the bus stop, I yelled, "Good morning, Mr. Sneed!"

He looked in my direction with surprise as if he didn't believe I'd really come. "Hello, hello, Miss Davidson."

"Please call me Rachel," I said.

We both smiled as I sat beside him on the cold, wooden bench.

He said, 'Seems as they would make warmer spots to wait for these buses, doesn't it?''

"Maybe we need to offer that suggestion to the mayor," I stated jokingly.

We both saw the bus several blocks down the street. So we stood and walked to the curb with anticipation.

As we got on the bus and easily found an empty seat up front, I asked him, "Didn't forget your crackers, did you?"

Proudly, he answered, "Never! Mrs. Bradshaw, down at the Mission would never let me do that."

After those words, we both were silent throughout the excursion through town and down the road to Mallory Park.

With the bus coming to a halt, we stood and quickly stepped out in the brisk air. The winds smelled sweet and fresh here, and it brought me memories of when I was 10 years "The 90-year-old man shyly informed me that he had never prayed."

old, swinging on the swings and wading in Crystal Creek.

"It's nice out here," I finally said after much silence and walking.

We walked a while longer before he acknowledged that he even heard, and then quietly he said, "This is my haven, Rachel. This is what I look forward to every day almost what I live for. These ducks are my real friends. They know I'll be here three times a day. They actually look for me. It means something to have someone."

As we reached the banks of the pond, he was crying. "My Rachel and I would have been married 71 years tomorrow, our anniversary, February 9, 1906. I remember it as if it were yesterday. We always celebrated in such special ways.

"Rachel loved the sunshine, and believe it or not it was never cloudy on even one of our anniversaries. The sun always shone. I believe it shone just for her as a gift to her from God. She brought me such sunshine for 64 years. That's a long time to spend with one woman."

After he paused, I waited a few seconds to see if he would say more, then I said with admiration, "That's a beautiful way to speak of your wife. It sounds like the two of you had a wonderful life together."

"There's only one regret I have about my long life. Rachel always tried to get me to go to church with her and Kate and become what she called a Christian. I haven't been a bad man. I've been good to my neighbors and always paid my debts, but she said that wasn't enough.

"She and Kate went to church all the time and read the Bible and prayed at night. On her dying bed she told me she hoped and prayed I'd become a Christian so we could be together in Heaven someday. I guess I was just too stubborn. Rachel, I don't know whether you are a Christian or not. I want to see my wife again, but I don't know what to do.''

Sobbing bitterly, he said, "Can you help me, or show me to a preacher who could?"

If the time he was talking, I was recalling the words I had heard in one of my pastor's sermons just a few weeks ago, "Share Christ with someone. It could change their life or most important their destiny... their destiny ... their destiny."

As the haunting words echoed through my head, I couldn't hold back tears. I wept and said, "Mr. Sneed, let God show you from the Word how you can be a Christian."

He nodded and motioned for me to open the Bible which I had already taken out of my pocket. I swallowed hard, removed my mittens, and with trembling hands began turning the pages.

"In John 3:16 God tells you He loves you, 'For God so loved Joseph Sneed that He gave His only begotten Son, that if Joseph Sneed would believe in Him, he would not perish, but have everlasting life.' "

The old man looked up startled, "Does it really say that?"

I smiled and said, "It sure does. It's wonderful, isn't it?"

He said, "It seems too easy."

"But that's good, isn't it? If it were difficult, then not too many would make it to Heaven."

"Go on and read some more," he eagerly requested.

I continued reading, "Romans 3:23 says, 'For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God.' This means no one deserves God's gift of salvation and everyone is born a sinner. And because of this we are all condemned to die according to Romans 6:23 which says, 'For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.' Then I John 1:9 tells us that 'If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.' It's all so simple, Mr. Sneed. Will you accept Christ today?"

"Oh, child, this is what I've searched for seven years since I lost my Rachel. I've been ashamed to ask anyone for help. Yes, I'll accept Him right now.''

"Will you bow your head and ask God to forgive you and to come into your heart just now?" I asked.

He shyly informed me that he had never prayed, but he bowed his head and slowly knelt down on the frozen ground. I smiled with joy and knelt beside the 90-year-old man who prayed for the first time in his life.

With tears streaming down his cheeks, he began, "Oh, God, up there in Heaven, I just found out from this dear girl how to be a Christian. I'm glad you made it so easy. I'm only sorry I waited so long about accepting Your way. Please forgive me and make me a good Christian like my Rachel was, and take care of her and Kate until I come to be with them. Thank You, now."

I put my arm around his shoulders and said, "Mr. Sneed, you're the first person I've ever shown the way of salvation to. My pastor tries to teach us to be soul-winners and share Christ."

The old man wiped his face on his glove, took a dirty handkerchief from his pocket, wiped his nose and said, ''I've never felt so young and alive. I feel 20 years younger. I wish I could start over 20 years ago.''

"She leaned forward in her chair and said, 'I'm sorry . . . He had a very bad heart attack late last night.""

Excitedly, I asked him, "Mr. Sneed, since tomorrow would have been your anniversary, could I meet you at 8:00 in the morning and come back out here with you? We could celebrate your anniversary and your new birth in Christ, and you could go to church with me at 10:00."



CELEBRATION (from page 11)

He answered, "That would make me so happy!"

We left after feeding the ducks and walked silently to the bus stop.

he next morning I couldn't quite get my thoughts together. I couldn't remember what day it was until I recollected what had happened the day before with Mr. Sneed.

I raised up on one elbow and looked at the wall clock. It was 7:15.

"Get going, get going, get going," ticked the clock.

I opened the curtains to view the beginning of the day ahead of me. The sun glared so brightly it blinded me. I said aloud, "Well, Mr. Sneed, you have another sunshiny anniversary."

I ate breakfast and dressed. By now it was 7:45. I put on my coat and mittens and once again braved

"'I know that I don't have much time left. But I was hoping you'd come so that I could talk to you.""

the bitter cold as I opened the door and began walking to the bus stop.

Much to my surprise. Mr. Sneed had not arrived at our meeting place. I sat down on the bench and looked in all directions to see if maybe he decided to walk on such a beautiful morning. I impatiently waited until 8:30 and was now beginning to wonder if he had changed his mind or maybe wasn't feeling well.

When I just couldn't wait a minute longer, I decided to go to Mission House and see if he was still there. I only had to wait a couple of minutes for a bus. I boarded and glanced at the few faces, hoping one would be that of Mr. Sneed's. I sat on the front seat near the heater and warmed my hands and feet.

The ride to Mission House seemed like 30 minutes instead of five. When the old brick building was finally in view, I hurried down the steps, hardly giving the bus time to stop. I curiously looked the old building over as I walked up a bricked path to its front door.

Opening the door, I saw a middleaged woman, whom I assumed was Mrs. Bradshaw, sitting behind a desk and reading the newspaper. She stopped reading and looked up when she heard the door open. She waited for me to speak first.

I cleared my throat and said, "Excuse me. I'm wondering if Mr. Joseph Sneed is here, or if you could tell me where I could find him, please?"

She removed her eyeglasses and leaned forward in her chair. While folding her newspaper, she said, "I'm sorry to tell you that Mr. Sneed was taken to Memorial Hospital late last night. He had a very bad heart attack."

Horrified, I replied, ''Oh, no! That's terrible! Is he alright? I mean is he . . .?''

Mrs. Bradshaw interrupted me, "He was in critical condition but resting quietly around 6:30 this morning."

Hurrying toward the door, I said, "Thank you very much. I've got to get to the hospital now."

"Wait a minute," she said. "Are you Rachel Davidson?"

With a puzzled look I answered, "Yes, I'm Rachel Davidson."

She opened her desk drawer and retrieved a piece of paper. She said, "Mr. Sneed said to be sure and give this to you when you came today."

I took the folded paper from her. It was an envelope, yellowed and limp with age, folded with something inside. I slowly opened the envelope. My eyes opened wide in unbelief as I saw its contents.

It was the most beautiful round locket I had ever seen. On the outside were delicate engravings of flowers and tiny, sweeping lines. On the clasp was a small, red stone, which I assumed was a ruby. I gently opened the locket and inside were engraved these words in flowing, fancy letters: "TO RACHEL. YOU BRING ME SUNSHINE. FEB-RUARY 9, 1906."

Seeing that I was unable to speak, Mrs. Bradshaw said, "He wanted you to have it." As I rubbed my fingers over its shiny casing, I said, "It's so beautiful."

She interrupted my thoughts by saying, "Why don't you get to the hospital now, Miss Davidson? Mr. Sneed is in Room 424."

"Yes, I will. Thank you so much," I answered.

Shutting the door behind me, I ran to the bus stop. The journey to the hospital seemed like an eternity to me. When we finally arrived, I ran across the parking lot, up the sidewalk, and through the automatic doors. Some people were getting on the elevator; so I squeezed in with them and punched the fourth floor button.

S tepping off the elevator, I began looking for the room like a terrified child lost on the first day of school. Room #432, 434, 436.... "I'm going in the wrong direction," I said aloud. Frantically, I turned around and read Room #428, 426, 424! A nurse, carrying a medicine tray, was coming out of the room.

"Excuse me, please. I'm Rachel Davidson. I'd like to see Mr. Sneed, if I could."

"Yes, at his request you are allowed to visit since he has no family," she answered.

I thanked her and slowly opened the door. The curtains were drawn; the room, dimly lit. I walked to the bed. He was pale and still.

I gently placed my hand on his, knelt beside his bed and began to pray, "Oh, Lord, Mr. Sneed is such a dear friend. Please let him live, but if it is Your will to take him, please comfort him and help him not to suffer. He means so much to me. Thank You for letting us meet and for saving his soul."

I opened my eyes and looked at his face. He was staring at me and smiling.

He whispered softly, "Rachel, you came. I knew you would."

I tightly grasped his hand in both of mine and said, "Yes, I'm here. How do you feel?"

He weakly answered, "I know I'm very sick. I know that I don't have

(Continued on page 25)

RETURN

ΤΟ

KANSAS CITY!

1978 CONVENTION

By Staff

Free Will Baptists return to Kansas City, Missouri, July 16-20 for the first time since 1964. The 42nd annual national convention meets at KC's Municipal Auditorium. When delegates and visitors come to the "Show Me" state, they will be hosted by 15,000 members of 152 Missouri Free Will Baptist churches. Officials expect convention attendance to exceed 6,000, nearly double the 1977 total.

Meeting simultaneously with the National Association are the National Youth Conference and the Woman's National Auxiliary Convention. The youth begin their meeting on Sunday night with the keynote service and conclude Wednesday noon. The women have their annual one-day conclave on Tuesday.

Kansas City! The major city closest to geographical center of the United States beckons Free Will Baptists. A former frontier town where early settlers headed west for the Santa Fe and Oregon Trails, it's a place where such legendary characters as Wild Bill Hickok, Wyatt Earp and Bat Masterson practiced six-gun justice.

Kansas City is famous for its Truman Library, a unique Oriental art collection in Nelson-Atkins Art Galleries, the Worlds of Fun Amusement Park, River Quay and Westport Square, major league sports, Agricultural Hall of Fame, Walter Cronkite and Red Skelton. This is the year to fly. Runways at Kansas City's International Airport are but three jet hours from Anywhere, USA. No need to fret with the family car. All convention hotels are within two blocks of the Municipal Auditorium. A tunnel leads directly from headquarters hotel, Radisson Muehlebach, to the convention site. Delegates staying at the Muehlebach Hotel can take in much of the 1978 convention and never walk outside.

Every church should send its pastor and a lay delegate to the Kansas City meeting. Last year fewer than 500 pastors and 125 lay delegates registered at the national convention. There is still time to rearrange summer vacations and include the July gathering. Promote bus tours; charter planes; form an automobile caravan. And remember Kansas City belongs to Free Will Baptists July 16-20! Join the summer move to America's heartland.

"CHURCH ALIVE"-1978 THEME

Five men will develop the vibrant "Church Alive" theme in Kansas City. This emphasis was selected for 1978's conference to underline a growing urgency that churches cultivate spiritual alertness, effectiveness and maturity.

Jack Stallings Jr., Collinswood FWB Church, Portsmouth, Virginia, pastor, will deliver the preconvention message Sunday morning, July 16. His assigned subject is "The Church: Active in Worship." Stallings graduated from Free Will Baptist Bible College with the B.A. degree in 1966. He earned the master of divinity degree in 1969 from Covenant Theological Seminary.

Monday night's sermon is "The Church: Abiding in Fellowship." Connie Cariker, celebrating his 16th year as pastor of West Tulsa FWB Church, Tulsa, Oklahoma, tells the story of believers cooperating in Christ. The 42-year-old former oilfield roughneck has been mightily used of God as both pastor and revivalist since his conversion. He is a member of the National Sunday School Board.

"The Church: Advancing Through Edification" has been placed in the capable hands of Dr. L. C. Johnson, Free Will Baptist Bible College president. His Tuesday night message will focus on life principles to guide believers. Johnson, Georgia native, is a well-known conference speaker and educator. He has led FWBBC since 1941. He currently serves on the Overview Committee of the New King James Version.

Wednesday evening's missionary service will be capped by James McAllister's message, "The Church: Ablaze in Evangelism." McAllister pastors First FWB Church, Farmington, Missouri. He is a member of the National Home Missions Board. Brother McAllister has



NYC participants will visit one of the most striking architectural developments in Kansas City, the Great Ape House at Swope Park Zoo.

organized four churches in his 21year ministry. He teaches in Farmington Christian Academy.

Youth may have to wait, but youth does have its says this year. Floyd Wolfenbarger, 29-year-old Ohio State Moderator, is slated to preach the final convention message, "The Church: Abounding in Service." Wolfenbarger pastors First FWB Church, Springfield, Ohio. He is a member the National of Association's General Board. Mr. Wolfenbarger writes a monthly column, "For the Pastor," in the Ambassador, Ohio's state paper.

MASS ADULT CHOIR AND MEN'S CHORALE

Convention Music Coordinator Blaine Hughes urges choir directors to involve their choir members in the 1978 Mass Adult Choir. He stresses that individuals with musical ability who can read music are welcome to participate. Mr. Hughes has selected Ron Huff's arrangements of "Redemption Draweth Nigh" and "Where the Spirit of the Lord Is" for presentation in Kansas City.

This year's musical feast boasts a first-time added feature. Mr. Vernon

Whaley, minister of music at First FWB Church, Albany, Georgia, will conduct a special Men's Chorale. Whaley anticipates some 100 men will sing in the chorale. He has selected two songs, "Learning to Lean" and "Rise Up, O Church."

Rehearsals for the Mass Adult Choir are scheduled for 4:00 p.m. Sunday, Monday and Tuesday. Men's Chorale rehearsals are at 5:00 p.m. Monday and Wednesday. All rehearsals are scheduled in the Municipal Auditorium.

KANSAS CITY CUISINE

England's losses are convention fellowship dinners' gains. Both Jill Briscoe, speaking at the Woman's Auxiliary banquet, and Dr. Leonard Ravenhill, addressing Pastors' Dinner guests, were born in England, but they later migrated to the United States.

Since then Dr. Ravenhill has become a noted evangelist and revival expert based in Texas. The Tuesday 5:00 p.m. Pastor's Dinner will thus be sprinkled with a blend of nostalgia—as diners recall Ravenhill's first appearance before this group at the 1972 Fort Worth,

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Texas, convention— and optimism —as he challenges workers to spark revival in their churches. The wellknown author has written Why Revival Tarries, Tried and Transfigured, Meat For Men and Revival Praying.

Although Jill Briscoe's life also began in Great Britain, she, her husband Stuart, and their three children now reside in the northern state of Wisconsin. Mrs. Briscoe brings a background of education and youth work to her address before woman auxiliary members and their husbands on Monday at 5:00 p.m. As director of 'Telling the Truth,'' a multimedia ministry, she has authored There's a Snake in My Garden, Prime Rib and Apple and Here Am I—Send Aaron.

The Music Ministries Fellowship returns to a breakfast meeting again in 1978. The Tuesday, July 18, affair at 7:00 a.m. promises deep scriptural insights into hymnology and church music. Frank Garlock, guest speaker for the music enthusiasts, is director of Musical Ministries, Greenville, South Carolina. His first aim is to bring church music under the scrutiny of the Bible and thus glorify God by its performance.

Early morning meeters too, laymen will gather for breakfast Wednesday at 7:00. Cooperating with Master's Men goals, Dr. Wesley Jarman will endeavor to "Activate Men to Serve the Master." Dr. Jarman, superintendent of Union Public Schools, Tulsa, Oklahoma, is a charter member, deacon and trustee of Bethany Free Will Baptist Church, Tulsa. Layman of the Year and runner-up spots will be awarded from a record number of nominations submitted by Free Will Baptist pastors.

The Alumni Association plans a friendly get-together Wednesday, July 19, for lunch at 12:15 p.m. in the Holiday Inn. New President Billy Bevan will be introducing alumni projects benefiting Free Will Baptist Bible College.

21 WORKSHOPS AND SEMINARS

In keeping with the convention theme, "Church Alive," a number of workshops to help strengthen local church programs have been planned. Missouri Pastor N. R. Smith will lead a Monday session on the "Importance of Accurate Record Keeping." Smith will identify job description roles for church treasurer, clerk and historian.

Joe Ange, director of religious activities at Free Will Baptist Bible College, heads "Invigorating Church Growth Through Discipleship." Herman Hersey, Department of Retirement and Insurance director, launches a two-hour program of "Developing a Balanced Local Church Financial Program." Hersey will focus on local church budgeting.

Tennessee pastor Eugene Waddell will tell conventioneers "How to Start a Church Library" and how to locate, select, organize and catalogue books. Ohio Promotional Secretary Alton Loveless and CTS Director Malcolm Fry will lead respective workshops on Sunday school alternatives and harnessing spiritual gifts in the local church.

The need for enrichment in personal commitment has prompted four workshops. Welch Avenue Church's pastor Paul Thompson, Columbus, Ohio, speaks Monday afternoon on "How to Live the Spirit-filled Life." Guest lecturer and Pastors' Dinner speaker Leonard Ravenhill plans two pastor-oriented seminars underscoring personal dedication. "You Can Become an Effective Leader" is Home Missions Department Director Bob Shockey's Tuesday afternoon challenge.

Other topics to be discussed in seminar sessions include single adults in today's society, the case for biblical inerrancy, managing family finances, family life, trends in contemporary music, ministry of Bible institutes, and ministerial ethics.

A complete list of seminars and time of presentation along with complete program of the national meeting will be carried in the June issue of CONTACT.

WNAC PREVIEW

"Keys to Service" is the theme for WNAC's 43rd annual session. WNAC business and worship activities on Tuesday, July 18, will be conducted in the Municipal Auditorium, according to Executive Secretary Cleo Pursell. The Holiday Inn City Center will serve as WNAC headquarters and site of committee meetings on Monday.

Mrs. Jill Briscoe, author and lecturer, will address conventioneers at WNAC's Fellowship Dinner on Monday evening, July 17, in Hotel Muehlebach's Imperial Ballroom.

Carlisle Hanna, Free Will Baptist missionary to India, will deliver the major address at the WNAC worship service on Tuesday. Carlisle and Marie Hanna have 25 years



BRISCOE



JARMAN



WORTHINGTON



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seniority in North India. One of the Hanna's three children Don, a recent Covenant College graduate, has been accepted in the Medical University of South Carolina, Charleston.

NYC DIGEST

One of the most striking features at the annual Free Will Baptist conclave is the National Youth Conference. More than 3,000 young people and their sponsors will pour into Kansas City July 16-20. NYC coordinator is Tim Rolen, Fresno, California. "Conquest and Crown" are the dual themes at NYC '78. Youth activities are slated for the headquarters hotel, Radisson Muehlebach.

Al Worthington, former baseball pitcher for the New York/San Francisco Giants, Cincinnati Reds and Minnesota Twins, will deliver the NYC keynote address Sunday night in the Municipal Auditorium. More than 5,000 are expected to hear Worthington speak.

During his 21 years in the big leagues, Worthington pitched in 600 games and two World Series. Al Worthington was influential in leading fellow leaguer Felipe Alou to Christ. He has an instant rapport with the nation's youth.

NYC individual and team competition begins Monday morning, July 17. All activities of NYC '78 except the keynote service and evening services will be conducted at the Muehlebach Hotel. The NYC Awards Presentation is scheduled in the Imperial Ballroom at 10:00 a.m. Wednesday, July 19.

Two special events await NYC participants. Chartered buses will carry youth to Trail Town, home of Benjamin Stables, at 9:00 p.m. Tuesday evening where they will be treated to a rodeo performance. The second event is a 1:15 p.m. Wednesday visit by bus to the Kansas City Zoo in Swope Park.



CONVENTION CUES

RESERVATIONS—5 Easy Choices

See reservation form and hotel prices and locations on pages 17 and 18 in this color tabbed convention section.

REGISTRATION—New Time— New Place

Registration starts on Saturday, July 15, at 2:00 p.m. in the Muehlebach Hotel this year. Then on Sunday at 2:00 p.m. registration moves to the Municipal Auditorium Lobby.

PARKING—Handy and Dandy

There's no need to get out in the rain after parking your car. Just park underground and walk through a tunnel to the Municipal Auditorium or Muehlebach Hotel, which also has another adjacent garage. Guests at the Holiday Inn can park free.

DELEGATES—Tax Deductible

Duly-elected church and state delegates and pastors only "may deduct *unreimbursed* expenses for travel and transportation, and a reasonable amount for meals and lodging while away from home overnight in connection with the convention" (IRS publication 526). This includes gas, oil and parking fees.

AIRFARE—Super Savings

American is one airlines that offers a 40 percent discount for flights originating Friday through Sunday. Reservations must be made 30 days in advance and tickets picked up seven days early. You must return no less than seven days later. Check with your local airport or travel agent for further details and participating airlines.

TAPES—Instant Replay

Take time to contemplate what you learn at the convention, or enjoy sessions you won't be able to attend. Buy tapes at the convention or order them. A form listing all sessions taped—including seminars, major addresses, and WNAC highlights—will be available in the August CONTACT.

NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF FREE WILL BAPTISTS July 16-20, 1978 / Municipal Auditorium Kansas City, Missouri



Hotels & Motels

	*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.

NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF FREE WILL BAPTISTS APPLICATION FOR HOUSING RESERVATIONS

Kansas City, Missouri

18/CONTACT/May '78

July 16-20, 1978

Please fill out form complete	ly
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and mail to

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

WILL BAPTIST HOU date and approxima addresses of all requested. If it is no please notify the H choices of hotels/m filled in order of rec.	S MUST BE CLEARED THROUGH FREE JSING. Each request must give definite te hour of arrival and include names and persons who will occupy the rooms ecessary for you to cancel a reservation, Housing Bureau promptly. At least two otels are desirable. Reservations will be eipt. t be made by July 1, 1978.	(For office use only) RESERVATION FOLLOW THRU Received at Housing Bures Processed to Hotel/Motel		& INITIAL
		Received at Hotel/Motel		
Room(s) for two	e person (one full size bed) o persons (one full size bed)	Confirmed to Guest		
Room(s) for (Room(s) with tw	o persons (two double beds)) three or () four persons (two double beds) vin beds for two persons d () one bedroom () two bedrooms	Returned to Housing Burea	ม	
HOTEL OR MOTEL 1st choice				
			. a.m p.m . a.m p.m	
NAMES OF OCCUPAN		City	State	Zip
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7(Na stay	mes of all parties must be listed. Please print na ying in the same room. We cannot confirm unles	ames and complete addresses ss rooms requested balance w	. Bracket the names of those ith number of persons listed	e .)
SEND CONFIRMATION TO:	Name Address City		Zip	



MEN'S CHORALE SLATED FOR KANSAS CITY, MO

NASHVILLE, TN—All men are invited to sing in the Mass Chorale for Men in Kansas City, Missouri, during the July 16-20 national convention.

The men's chorale will perform under the direction of Vernon Whaley, minister of music, First Free Will Baptist Church, Albany, Georgia. Two songs, "Learning to Lean" and "Rise Up, O Church," will be sung by the special group.

Practice sessions are scheduled 5:00-5:30 p.m., Monday and Wednesday. Music directors or other interested individuals should direct further inquiries to the following.

Men's Chorale Vernon Whaley First Free Will Baptist Church 1601 Gillespie Avenue Albany, GA 31707.

HISTORICAL COMMISSION SPURS MINUTE DRIVE

NASHVILLE, TN—The Free Will Baptist Historical Commission is preparing a current list of all minutes in the Historical Collection. Copies will be distributed at the national convention July 16-20 in Kansas City, Missouri.

Complete sets of state, district and quarterly meeting minutes are urgently needed. Anyone who has Free Will Baptist minutes of any kind should deposit them in the Historical Collection before the national convention to make the listing as thorough as possible.

The Commission asks everyone to take an active role in preserving Free Will Baptist history. Minutes are still the most accurate records of denominational history.

Send minutes to Free Will Baptist Historical Commission, P.O. Box 50117, Nashville, TN 37205.

MISSISSIPPI HOSTS SECOND ANNUAL CHOIR RETREAT

TUPELO, MS—Choir members from north Mississippi and northwest Alabama gathered at Tombigbee State Park near Tupelo February 24-26 for a self-help weekend emphasizing volunteer church musicians.

Dr. Charles Hampton, president of Free Will Baptist Music Ministries, delivered key addresses at the second annual retreat. Hampton, music director at Cofer's Chapel Free Will Baptist Church, Nashville, Tennessee, gave three seminars dealing with the philosophy and purpose of church music.



Dr. Charles Hampton lectures at Mississippi Choir Retreat.

Other program personalities for the three-day event included Pastor W. B. Hughes, First Free Will Baptist Church, Hamilton, Alabama, and pianist Lynne Murphy, First Free Will Baptist Church, Florence, Alabama. Hughes in his two seminar sessions probed music from a pastor's perspective and explained basic sight-reading techniques for beginning choir members. Mrs. Murphy's workshop underscored accompanists' skills.

Choir retreat participants learned seven songs and performed a Sunday evening concert at Tupelo Free Will Baptist Church to conclude the weekend schedule.

Coordinator Larry Gunnoe is eager to broaden the retreat's outreach. To obtain additional data on 1979 retreat plans, write Larry Gunnoe, 107 South Canal Street, Tupelo, MS 38801.

MARCH WRITERS' CONTEST WINNERS FREE WILL BAPTIST SUNDAY SCHOOL DEPARTMENT

EXEGESIS

 Leroy B. Lowery Midville, GA
 Larry R. Lawerence Anderson, IN

BOOK

1. Carol McGinnis Mt. Pleasant, MI

TRACT

 Carol McGinnis Mt. Pleasant, MI
 Leroy B. Lowery Midville, GA

SHORT STORY

- 1. Anita Haney Guthrie, KY
- 2. Carol McGinnis Mt. Pleasant, MI

POETRY

- 1. Danny Dwyer Amory, MS
- 2. Rick Hurst Nashville, TN

SERMON

- 1. Leroy B. Lowery Midville, GA
- 2. Darrell Pickle Bailey, NC



(continued)

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.

	ADULT CHOIR MUS	IC	
		Qua	ntity
	demption Draweth Nigh'' here the Spirit of the	()
	Lord Is"	()
1	otal Quantity Ordered Total Cost		
Name			
Street			
City			_
State .	Zip	4	
DONC	T SEND CASH.		
ORDER	R FROM: Convention M	usic	
P.O. B	ox 1088/Nashville, TN 3	37202.	



MARCH BLIZZARD PROMPTS STATE MEETING CHANGE

JOHNSTON CITY, IL—Startled delegates battled high winds and frigid temperatures as a late winter blizzard threatened the March 3-4 Illinois State Association which met at Johnston City Free Will Baptist Church.

A hasty resolution moving the 1979 session to the fourth Friday and Saturday of March won unanimous approval. In other business delegates struck down a longstanding tradition to issue exhorter's licenses in the state. They also voted to cease licensing women preachers.

Members of the state Christian Education Board were handed unprecedented authority to seek

BOOK DEALERS ELECT ALTON LOVELESS PRESIDENT

NASHVILLE, TN—Free Will Baptist book dealers from seven states met March 15-17 at the Sunday School Department. During a closing business session at the annual convention, members elected Alton Loveless president.

Loveless, manager of Ambassador Bible Bookstore, Columbus, Ohio, replaces Lewis Campbell, Conway, Arkansas. Other new officers are Vice-president Harrold Harrison of Randall House Publications and Secretary Shirley Bowden.

Major activities centered on seminars, round-table discussions and area tours.

Art Blakely, sales manager for Scripture Press Publications, focused on marketing vacation Bible school materials. Zondervan Corporation's Gary Dohrman addressed co-op advertising while Connie Moore, Reedwood House, introduced microfiche and the Christian bookstore. Randall Bookstore and Shipping Division Manager Wayne Spruill explored in-store merchandising.

The book dealers toured Baptist Bookstore's Regional Mail Order Center as well as warehouses belonging to Thomas Nelson Publishing House and Good News Publishers. limited legal action against Illinois college students who defaulted in educational loan payments. Officials estimated that students were more than \$11,000 in arrears on repayment schedules.

The conference theme, "All the Body Knit Together," permeated worship sessions and took on Bible conference dimensions. Dr. Roger C. Reeds, director of Free Will Baptist Sunday School Department, spoke three times to state delegates as did Jack Williams, CONTACT editor. Youth banquet speaker was Tag Kilgore, pastor of First Free Will Baptist Church, Mt. Vernon, Illinois.

Moderator Larry Montgomery was reelected. A major project for state leaders before the 1979 session will be the formulation of standardized ministerial examination guidelines. Antiabortion, ERA, and pornography resolutions swept through uncontested.

ST. JAMES SLAYS WOLF

PHENIX CITY, AL—The wolf came to Sunday school at St. James Free Will Baptist Church, Phenix City, September 4, 1977, but members rose up to slay him. The Alabama congregation rallied from 11 in Sunday school to a record 177 by March, 1978.

Their six-month turnaround began when a few members suggested closing the doors, but others prayed. The pastorless flock prayed Rev. Dennis Keen into resigning his pastorate in North Carolina and accepting responsibility for St. James.

Dennis Keen's ministry began at St. James Church in mid-October, 1977. Attendance edged upward to 40 by December only to nose-dive New Years Day. Undaunted, members prayed, visited and promoted. Attendance climbed to 100, and Pastor Keen challenged the group to put him on a full-time basis.

In less than a month giving soared from a \$290 weekly average to \$650. The 177 record March attendance figure was St. James Church's intitial attempt in the national Spring Enlargement Campaign, "Always Abounding."



The mortgage burns at Eastside FWB Church Dothan, Alabama. Participants are (I. to r.) Virgle Hagler, Edward Brown, Donald Arnold, Ron Edgil, A. Z. White, Ross Kelly and Hubert Smith.

CHURCH MARKS DEBT-FREE SECOND ANNIVERSARY

DOTHAN, AL—Eastside Free Will Baptist Church, Dothan, burned their mortgage March 5. Pastor Ron Edgil detailed, "We celebrated our second year as a new church, and on that day we burned the mortgage thereby freeing ourselves from all indebtedness." Two more records fell that same day. A record high 82 attended Sunday school, and 142 shared in morning worship. The special Alabama service stretched well into the afternoon with dinner-on-thegrounds and singing.

With the big financial obstacle hurdled, Pastor Edgil says the congregation can now concentrate on growth in the community.

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BIBLE INSTITUTE HANDBOOK TELLS 'HOW TO' IN ADULT BIBLE EDUCATION

NASHVILLE, TN—Randall House Publications released a new book March 1 from the pen of H. D. Harrison, manager of Promotion and Sales Division, Free Will Baptist Sunday School Department.

Harrison's latest effort, *How to Start a Bible Institute,* is a "how to" manual on beginning and developing an adult education program.

The 63-page, \$2 paperback is printed in large easy-to-read type on $8\frac{1}{2}$ " x 11" pages. It is well outlined

and carries a thorough nine-page bibliography for further research data. Harrison's book is requisite for churches anticipating entry into Bible institute work.

How to Start a Bible Institute contains objectives, suggested curriculum, organizational procedures, and board and faculty composition as well as job descriptions.

Mr. Harrison says, "Bible institutes can successfully function in either a rural or urban area under a wide variety of conditions." Persons already engaged in Bible institute ministry will discover this new Randall House release to be a storehouse of extremely helpful suggestions for curriculum enrichment, teaching methodology, and overall program evaluation.



Currently ...

By JACK WILLIAMS Editor

Arkansas State CTS Director Jim Purcell has state ministers and laymen reaching for their checkbooks. In an effort to underwrite the expenses of maintaining **Camp Beaver**fork, the state young camp, Purcell has challenged Arkansans to adopt a checkbook program whereby constituents agree to pay \$5 per month for 13 months. More than 100 people responded to the innovative idea in February.

Missionary appointee Charlotte Tallent is \$1,000 nearer to France because of a trip to Southside FWB Church, St. Louis, Missouri. Treasurer Ted Ricks presented the Francebound missionary a \$1,067 check in January. Grover Terry pastors.

For several months this spring Pastor Homer Young and officials at Capitol Hill FWB Church, Oklahoma City, Oklahoma, have been praying about hiring several fulltime personnel to assist in their citywide outreach. After a long and careful study, the men led the church in launching an ambitious policy to employ six persons at once. New personnel include Ken Lundsford, music director; Gary Caison, youth director; Gary Wilson, CE director; Steve Klusmeyer, children's director; Johnny Groat, outreach director; Dlane Groat, secretary.

When folks call **First FWB Church, Ardmore, Oklahoma,** and get the impression they are talking to a machine, they may be right. Pastor **Delbert Akin** has installed an automatic answering machine to service the telephone in his office. Akin said the automatic answering machine will keep track of calls that invariably come in when he is out of the office.

The ranks of Free Will Baptists are thin as one nears the Canadian border in the great northwest. This is all the more reason why leaders in the **East Wenatchee**, **Washington**, area were exuberant over the largest single gathering of Northwest Free Will Baptist youth in recent years. Their February Valentine's banquet attracted 85. **Victory FWB Church** hosted the activities. **Richard Horner**, pastor of **Omak**, **Washington FWB Church**, brought the message.

The basement of First FWB Church, Murfreesboro, Tennessee, has turned into an exercise gymnasium on Monday and Thursday evenings. Member Mike Goats initiated the exercise routine. He has been getting good response from members. Dr. J. D. O'Donnell pastors.

"Retreat" has become a fairly common word in Free Will Baptist circles. Most of the time it means a ministers' retreat or a ladies' retreat or a youth camp. But Pastor Jim Nason, First FWB Church, Pontlac, Michigan, has a better idea. The April 21, 22 retreat sponsored by his church was for the men and boys. Nason stated he and his men were not trying to break with the tradition of the elders but that their retreat was heavily oriented with food, fishing and Ping-Pong.

CONTACT readers who are planning a Florida vacation should tune their radios on Saturdays at 10 a.m. to station WCRJ in Jacksonville, Pastor Howard Bass of Wesconnett FWB Church broadcasts the "Free Will Baptist Hour" each week.

For those who always wonder what they might miss by not being in church on a given Sunday night, February 5 at **Princeton FWB Church, Ontario, California**, was a real winner. Pastor **Wilburn Clark** said his church had a surprise visit from the Prophets gospel quartet, the Tradesmen and the Miller Family. These groups were in the area for concerts.

Southern Oaks FWB Church, Oklahoma City, Oklahoma, has a deacon of the month program. It works very well according to Pastor James Puckett. The March deacon of the month George Ray led a group of hardworking men to build a prayer and conference room for the Oklahoma congregation.

While everyone else was calling those special Easter offerings "30 pieces of silver," Pastor **Bill Van Winkle** and members of **First FWB Church, Berkely, Missouri,** came up with a new wrinkle. They call their Easter push "Project Judas Bag." All funds collected went to purchase a movie projector for the **Bill Fulchers** who are missionaries in Panama. Pastor Van Winkle recently awarded 40 E.T.T.A. credit cards to studious church members.

The concert choir of **Hillsdale Free Will Baptist College, Moore, Oklahoma,** toured five eastern states March 10-20 on their annual choir tour. Performances were given in Missouri, Ohio, West Virginia, Virginia and Tennessee.

East Nashville FWB Church sponsored a Bible college day February 12. Cash offering and checkbook commitments totalled \$715 for Free Will Baptist Bible College. Ken Riggs pastors.

Somewhere along the road Pastor Leroy Holman, Maranatha FWB Church, Ardmore, Oklahoma, has come up with a title for his church publication that may be one of a kind. The 8-page publication is called "Written Revival."

Are you interested in the political elections in other countries? The **Woman's Auxiliary**, **Cofer's Chapel FWB Church, Nashville, Tennessee**, is. French elections were held March 12. Free Will Baptist missionaries were facing closed doors if Communists won heavy support in France. The Cofer's ladies began a prayer vigil at noon on March 11 and prayed through the French elections. French voters soundly defeated Communist candidates. **Eugene Waddell** pastors.

Mike Boggs, principal Welch Avenue FWB Christian School, Columbus, Ohio, conducted teacher training sessions March 9-11 at Central FWB Church, Huntington, West Virginia. The training sessions came on the heels of a successful revival at the church with Homer Willis, evangelist based in Nashville, Tennesee. A number of converts were added to the church, which necessitated a more intensive training program. Carl Vallance pastors.

Here is a radio broadcast with a picturesque name. Beaming across the green mountains of **West Virginia** is **Sophia FWB Church's** radio broadcast, "Chapel in the Hills." Pastor **George Smith** conducts the 30-minute radio broadcast on Sunday from 8:00-8:30 on station WJLS.

The Free Will Baptist Hymnbook is a good buy for any local congregation. Pastor Raymond Riggs has been busily thanking members for their recent purchase of 400 new hymnals at Cookeville FWB Church, Cookeville, Tennessee.

Free Will Baptist Bible College Choir and Evangel Players toured three states during their spring break March 16-26. The choir under Abe Baerg's direction conducted services in Oklahoma and Arkansas. The Evangel Players visited churches in North Carolina.

Grace FWB Church, Rocky Mountain, North Carolina, has an associate pastor Fred Carraway who drives as hard a bargain as any used car salesman in North Carolina. Mr. Carraway saw a station wagon advertised in a local paper for \$800. He contacted the owner of the car who reduced the price to \$500. Carraway said he was going to buy the car for himself, but when the owner asked him, "If I gave you the car free for your youth ministry, would you put it in the church's name?" He was only too anxious to agree. Pastor Robert Durham reports that the church now has a 1972 Pontiac station wagon, thanks to salesman Carraway.

Victory FWB Church, Springdale, Arkansas, sponsored a Sunday school teacher training program March 20-24. Harrold Harrison, director of teacher training at Free Will Baptist Sunday School Department, served as instructor. Bobby Shepherd pastors.

Anthony Lane, pastor Clifty Chapel FWB Church, Huntsville, Arkansas, says his church is celebrating its 20th anniversary in June. Members are preparing a church scrapbook which will include articles, newspaper clippings, pictures, personal letters and other paraphernalia relative to the two decade history of Clifty Chapel.

One advantage of starting a new church is that everything you do is a first. Pastor J. D. Norris Jr., Lake Jackson FWB Church, Tallahassee, Florida, sends word of the first revival to be conducted in their new church. Home missionary Larry Russell, Baton Rouge, Louisiana, served as evangelist in the mobile chapel, which was packed wall-to-wall with people.

Warm Springs FWB Church, Warm Springs, Arkansas, probably holds an undisputed world record. A recent newspaper story carried in the **Pocahontas STAR HERALD** told of a marriage in the 92-year-old wooden church. While marriages themselves are not unusual, they seem to be in this church building. As far as anyone can remember, there had never been a wedding performed in this house of worship until Laurie Suhl and Robert Marsh decided to exchange their wedding vows there. Joe MacDowell pastors.

According to President Delora Johnson, the South Georgia District Woman's Auxiliary has adopted the Cuban churches for their project this year. Efforts are being made to raise \$5,000 to aid the Cuban Free Will Baptist churches in purchasing new equipment.

Here's another wedding story that is sure to stir up some interest. It is highlighted as "Jesup's largest wedding." It appears that on February 12 all the married couples at **First FWB Church, Jesup, Georgia,** decided to have their wedding vows read to them again. Pastor **Bobby Parker** had every married couple in the congregation to move from their pews and gather around the altar as their wedding vows were repeated. Jesup's families were reminded once again of their lifetime commitments to each other.

California state moderator Edward Johns preached the dedication message at Norwalk FWB Church, Norwalk, California, in January. Pastor Lloyd Reddick and the Norwalk congregation were celebrating completion of a debt-free two-story modern educational building.

Pastor Lawnie Coffman, Capitol City FWB Church, Little Rock, Arkansas, says in the past 10 months more than 45 new members have been added to the rolls of this Arkansas Congregation. Coffman serves as a member of the Board of Retirement and Insurance.

When Pastor David Reece, Union Chapel FWB Church, Greeneville, Tennessee, announced that a special offering would be taken, some eyebrows were raised. Pastor Reece was encouraging his people to give a tithe and a half. The 150-member congregation responded with an offering over \$3,000 to be applied on new building indebtedness.

Any pastor could be proud of a goal of 100 percent and climbing. Alfred Cutshall was, but the members of Limestone FWB Church, Limestone, Tennessee, were even more proud. To show their appreciation for Cutshall's 10-year ministry, members prepared a special appreciation day for the pastor and his wife. Limestone Church has grown from 100 to an average exceeding 250 under Cutshall's ministry. A new building was erected two years ago to accommodate the growing congregation.

California Christian College Alumni Association hosted a farewell banquet for Dr. and Mrs. Wade Jernigan February 17. Gifts, good wishes and more than \$800 were shared with the Jernigans as they prepared to leave California Christian College. Jernigan was concluding over 81/2 years of service at the central California institution.

John West, Free Will Baptist minister-atlarge based in Tulsa, Oklahoma, said he had quite an experience March 13-17. On those days Brother West preached to people who got up too early and who stayed up too late. West was on Tulsa's channel 2 television at 6:50 a.m. and 12 midnight each day.

Bethel FWB Church, Richton, Mississippi, conducted their first services in their new building February 12. Daniel Gaskins pastors.

COOPERATIVE PLAN OF SUPPORT March, 1978

RECEIPTS:

State		Ma	rch '78	March '77		Yr. to Date
		Co-op	Design.			
Alabama	\$	12.53		\$ 	\$	580.73
Arizona		531.20	(531.20)	220.96		696.67
Arkansas		1,771.15		1,394.66		7,248.97
California		1,068.66		626.38		2,871.52
Florida		292.43	(275.77)	16.66		658.92
Georgia		372.41	(100.00)	188.91		1,161.23
Hawaii						100.00
Illinois		1,731.02		1,706.78		3,309.44
Indiana				-,		50.00
Iowa				484.74		429.42
Kansas		206.65		404.74		441.72
Maryland		40.00				300.43
Michigan		60.30				292.74
Mississippi		98.49		73.00		
Missouri		5.506.02	(5,506.02)			302.11
North Carolina			(5,506.02)	3,972.73		14,898.82
Northwest Assoc.		161.15	4.9.9	175.00		614.30
		131.34	999			213.36
Ohio		800.00		3,848.86		2,139.14
Oklahoma		10,910.95	(10,600.10)	3,981.35		15,968.54
Tennessee		646.36	(45.00)	753.34		2,970.14
Texas		162.50		50.00		755.29
Virginia		35.00	09-9-9	19.30		87.69
Virgin Islands		123.00	0.44	79.00		417.00
West Virginia		16.30		62.84		53.00
Interest	-	6 A. I.			1	398.69
Totals	\$	24,677.46		\$ 17,654.51	\$	56,959.87
DISBURSEMENT	rs:					
Executive Office	\$	6,882.57	\$(2,244.38)	\$ 6,562.16	\$	20,222.21
Foreign Missions		6,265.72	(5,501.66)	3,626,41		12,747.75
Bible College		3,674.95	(2,931.45)	2,533.84		8,074.90
Home Missions		3,485.70	(2,933.73)	2,088.51		7,069.26
Church Training Serv.		1,989.39	(1,542.20)	1,285.18		4,070.73
Retirement and Ins.		1,559.26	(1,201.52)	1,048.12		3,270.82
Layman's Board		665.38	(563.57)	376.17		1,192.91
Commission on Theo- logical Liberalism						
Other Ministries		154.49	(139.58)	102.70 31.42		311.29
Totals	5	24,677.46			-	EC 0E0 07
101013	φ	24,077.40		\$ 17,654.51	\$	56,959.87

The Grace FWB Church ensemble, Arnold, Missouri, has been experimenting lately. Under the direction of assistant pastor Daryi Ellis, the ensemble gave their first public performance. What gave the group a different flavoring was the skillful inclusion of three flutes, four trumpets, two clarinets, a trombone and tenor sax with the singers. Glen Rehkop pastors.

Free Will Baptist Music Fellowship President Dr. Charles Hampton has begun publishing the bimonthly publication, "Cora" Tone." The first edition published in 1978 reported that a study committee is at work on proposals for future direction of the ministry of Free Will Baptist Music Fellowship. That report is due as a business item before the Music Fellowship at the national convention in Kansas City, Missouri, July 16-20.

Now that 1978 is 1/3 gone, Pastor Arnold Moore, Urbana FWB Church, Urbana, Ohio, sends word that his church intends to break their 1977 record. The record he has reference to is one that saw 42 conversions in the Urbana Church in 1977.

Welcome to another early morning Free Will Baptist radio broadcast six days a week from **Mansfield**, **Ohio**. Pastor **Fred Dutton** speaks at 6:15 a.m. every day except Sunday. The **Mansfield FWB Church** began this radio broadcast as a venture of faith.

Since being placed on a full-time status with the **Chillicothe FWB Church, Chillicothe, Ohio.** Pastor **Clifford Ball** has become a familiar figure in local hospitals. Eight have been converted while sick in hospital beds. Revivals have seen 31 other conversions in the church during this past year.

The North Modesto FWB Church, Modesto, California, did more than win first place in the



CURRENTLY (Continued)

National Sunday School Contest in 1977. They set a walloping goal of 77 souls in 1977. No one seemed embarrassed when the year ended with 121 conversions. While they were doing all that soul winning, the congregation managed to purchase a second bus, a new P.A. system and sanctuary drapes. They also began a monthly newsletter and did extensive repair and enlargement of classrooms. Pastor **Ronn Jackson** reports that increased attendance has necessitated double Sunday school sessions. Their slogan for this year is "Participate in '78."

Spencer, Oklahoma, is not about to capture the population explosion award. But that did not keep Spencer Road FWB Church and pastor Waldo Young from zeroing in on the power of publicity. Before the church presented its Easter pageant three times during Easter week, they sent out 3,000 invitations by mail. In addition, local newspaper publicity was secured. Then members got on telephones and went person-to-person telling about the presention.

King Gene Berry and Queen Sandy McKalip ruled at First FWB Church's youth banquet February 11. The DeSoto, Missouri, congregation is pastored by Charles Miller.

Everyone seemed to be happy at Sherwood Forest FWB Church, El Sobrante, Callfornia, when a church bus was located for only \$990. Pastor Milburn Wilson announced the find to the morning worship service with a note of joy in his voice. At the conclusion of the service **Mr. and Mrs. Russ Scott** stepped forward to give the \$990 to pay for the bus.

Donelson FWB Church has purchased 3.9 acres adjoining their present property. With this addition the church now has over 900 feet of frontage on McGavock Pike, one of **Nashville, Tennessee's** most traveled thoroughfares. Pastor **Ed Cook** says plans are to use existing buildings on the property for a youth activity center. A gymnasium is planned for the future. This church has approximately 10 acres of land in the Donelson community.

April 3-6 Harrold Harrison, Free Will Baptist Sunday School Department, Nashville, Tennessee, conducted a 4-day training institute at Victory FWB Church, Goldsboro, North Carolina. Members from Antioch and St. John Churches also shared in the training exercises. Pastor George Lee said. "Rev. Harrold Harrison is the dean of teacher training in Free Will Baptist circles."

Memorial FWB Church, Fresno, California, organized a Master's Men Chapter in February. President Gene Fry reports 19 charter members. Lonnie L. Rolen is pastor and founder of Memorial Church.

Northwest FWB Church, Oklahoma City, Oklahoma, has set a standard of excellence in its day-care center for all Free Will Baptist churches. Pastor James Murray reports that a state HEW worker Mrs. Karin Gregory visited the day-care center and left words of high praise. "Mrs. Gregory feels that our center is one of the best in our area of town. Her comment was that we are doing a service to the community greater than we realize."

Larry Clyatt pastors a church in Ina, Illinois, that has average attendance among Free Will Baptists (approximately 100), but that is not what makes Ina FWB Church unique. This local congregation of Southern Illinois Free Will Baptists gave a recordshattering 38 percent of their total income in 1977 to outside causes. CONTACT salutes Ina Church's stewardship.

DIRECTORY UPDATE

PASTORAL CHANGES

ALABAMA

Larry Shotts to Piney Grove Church, Beaverton

Thomas Chapman to Community Church, Harpersville

Steve Pryor to First Church, Selma from West Nashville Church, Nashville, TN

Gerald Baxley to Huffman Church, Birmingham

Finis Johnson to Memorial Church, Empire

Jack Ward to Shady Grove Church, Adamsville

ARKANSAS

Carl High to First Church, Paragould Grady Linebaugh to Thorn Grove Church, Knoble

Jerry Smith to Daisy Church, Daisy Darwin Kelton to First Church, Berryville from Salem Bible College, Salem, FL

Joe Melton to Danville Church, Danville from Sweet Home Church, Atkins

Gary Holman to Spring Creek Church, Belleville

Ray Boggs to Lamb Church, Waldron

CALIFORNIA

Ted Wilbanks to Harmony Church,

Fresno from Grant Avenue Church, Springfield, MO

Ken Mathis to American Church, Selma

J. Eddie Stutz to Elmwood Church, Stockton from Valley View Acres Church, Sacramento

GEORGIA

Henry Mitchell to Antioch Church, Pitts

Alton Everson to Mt. Ararat Church, Eastman from Philadelphia Church, Folkston

Tony Howell to New Hope Church, Cochran from Mt. Ararat Church, Eastman

Don Reed to Warner Robins Church, Warner Robins

Taylor Merritt to Corinth Church, Alma from Bethany Church, Hazlehurst

Johnny Beasley to First Church, Metter

KENTUCKY

Jack Woody Jr. to Tomahawk Church, Tomahawk

Mike Roberts to Cherokee Church, Cherokee

Wallace Adkins to Second Church, Ashland

Grant Saverance to Trinity Church, Bowling Green from Fellowship Church, Flat River, MO

MISSISSIPPI

Howard Simmons to Depriest Chapel Church, Gattman from Union Ridge Church, Sulligent, AL

Donald Holland to Main Street Church, Amory

Russell Clouse to Smithville Church, Smithville

Herbert Knight to Springdale Church, Oxford from Main Street Church, Amory

MISSOURI

Ronald Graham to Hurryville Church, Farmington from Pardue Memorial Church, Clarksville, TN

Bill Eden to Cedar Ridge Church, Long Lane

Lee Neill to Macedonia Church, Monett

Bill Jones to Little Vine Church, Niangua

Ted Matthews to Macedonia Church, Niangua

Dale Broyles to Marshfield Church, Marshfield

Everett Hopkins to Northside Church, Springfield

NORTH CAROLINA

Robert Ferguson to North View Church, Statesville

OKLAHOMA

Clearance Dodson to Atoka First Church, Atoka

Gerald Reeder to Pleasant View Church, Atoka

CELEBRATION (from page 12)

much time left. But I was hoping you'd come so that I could talk to you."

I couldn't fight back the tears and couldn't speak; so I nodded.

I knew it was difficult for him to talk, but he continued, "I want to thank you for sharing Jesus Christ with me and showing me how to be saved. I know now that I can go and be with my wife and celebrate our anniversary together and be together forever."

After pausing a moment, he asked, "Did you get the locket I left for you?"

I answered, ''It's the most beautiful thing I've ever seen. I don't know what to say.''

He weakly answered, "Just accept it and keep it whether you wear it or not. I gave it to my wife on our wedding day, 71 years ago today." I leaned over and kissed him gently on the cheek. He looked me in the eyes and said, "Now, child, go be a friend to another lonely person. Share Jesus Christ with someone else. Lots of lonely men and women just like me would welcome some companionship from someone who cares."

I nodded in agreement and squeezed his hand. He smiled, closed his eyes, and breathed his last breath.

I wept and knew the celebration had begun.

ABOUT THE WRITER: Anita Haney is a member of Olivet Free Will Baptist Church, Guthrie, Ky. Her husband Ken pastors the church. Mrs. Haney is the daughter of Rev. Hughes Ellis, pastor of Bethlehem Free Will Baptist Church, Ashland City, TN. ▲

THE UNITED STATES OF ADDERICA

SAVED?

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CONTACT Magazine P. O. Box 1088 Nashville, Tenn. 37202





STEWARDSHIP (from page 4)

7. Properly orient new members.

8. Use the envelope system.

9. Keep the people informed when the money is spent.

10. Select a stewardship committee to assist in promoting stewardship, especially for the every-member canvas plan.

Stewardship is a long, tedious process. But it is not without reward. Stewardship education enables a congregation to gain a sense of mission. As Christians grow and gain a deeper sense of responsibility, they find a sense of fulfillment and purpose. The satisfaction and blessings they receive motivate them to become more deeply involved and to give more.

In reality stewardship education leads the way to spiritual renewal. As people are called upon to give their best and put God first in their lives, revival is the natural result. When people obey the Word of God and practice its precepts, it produces revival. But this is not only because of their present day satisfaction and reward of stewardship, it also produces revival because of the anticipation of God's ultimate reward when we stand before the throne and hear Him say, "Well done, thou good and faithful servant."





25/CONTACT/May '

Ray Gwartney to Bethany Church, Broken Arrow from First Church, Pryor

Jess Stepp to Trinity Church, Muskogee from Duck Creek Church, Mounds

David Archer to First Church, Cushing from Garland Church, Garland, TX

Jimmy Nichols to First Church, Paul's Valley

TENNESSEE

Pat Buttram to Pleasant Ridge Church, McEwen from Community Church, Hillsboro

David Foster to New Hope Church, Joelton

TEXAS

A. J. Blackwood to First Church, Vernon

WEST VIRGINIA

Johnnie Williams to Grace Church, Blount

Norwood Webb to Ruthdale Church, Charleston

John Hudson to Slaughters Creek Church, Chelyan

Colen Angle to Brewsters Chapel Church, Fan Rock

PART VIII BY LEROY FORLINES

As was pointed out in the last article, there are no moral accidents. Things do not just happen without motivating influences. Whenever a person who has been faithful in church falls into sin, there is some significant problem. Among the problems are depression, the feeling of being inadequate to cope with life, and similar problems.

Why do these problems influence many to get involved in sin? Prolonged unhappiness is dangerous. It puts a person under pressure. The pain, agony and frustration of being unable to find satisfactory solutions forms the seedbed of doubt.

In its worst form doubt may arise concerning the very foundations, such as God, the Bible and Jesus Christ. The person experiencing deep difficulty wonders why God allowed it to happen, or why God does not immediately remove the problems.

Then he feels guilty for having such questions in his mind. He tries to suppress the questions rather than face them. He is afraid to talk to anybody about his questions. He is afraid that he may receive an outright rebuke.

If he is not afraid of being rebuked, he is afraid he would not be understood or could not find help with his questions. This causes him to feel that an important part of his experience is a world into which he cannot invite anyone. Such isolation is very damaging.

Others instead of having doubts about the Christian system doubt their own ability to be a good Christian. It seems to them the Christian life makes demands they are incapable of living up to. In spite of their most sincere efforts, they feel like they are failing. They become gripped with a feeling of despair. The thought begins to enter their minds: "What is the use trying? I cannot do it anyway." They become overwhelmed by a feeling of failure or self-rejection.

To avoid repeating a list of different words, I will use the word, "depression," not only to refer to depression but also other negative emotional states. Depression is

SIN CHALLENGES THE CHURCH

painful. It calls for an answer. If a person does not get help in finding the answer through a proper understanding of biblical truth and experience, there is a strong likelihood that he will look for it in some other way.

Among the wrong ways people use to find relief are alcohol, illegal drugs, sexual immorality, and success by worldly standards. These may offer temporary relief, but as one person said with agony in his voice, "It is only temporary." Temporarily, they ease the pain; but when it comes back, it is worse and usually adds several other problems.

Some people blame others for their problems. The blame may reach out to the pastor, an employer or a business partner. More frequently the blame occurs within the family. When a troubled person considers the unremedied fault of someone else in the family, he becomes deeply frustrated. Their relationship is very strained. Tragic consequences develop out of such circumstances.

Our first concern with depression is to help prevent it, or deal with it before it leads to tragedy. Many people give obvious evidence of being depressed. Others are not so easily detected. Many deeply disturbed people show no outward evidence of their disturbance to those who have only casual acquaintance with them. They frequently appear to be the life of the party.

The first thing we can do to help people is cultivate an atmosphere of concern. Make people feel that we will not take their concerns lightly. We must *never* rebuke a person for being deeply concerned about a matter. We may tactfully show people that they may have some of their problems exaggerated, but we must never rebuke them or refer to their problems as stupid or silly.

To have a feeling of concern toward people's problems is biblical. Paul said, 'Bear ye one another's burdens, and so fulfil the law of Christ'' (Galatians 6:2). If we show concern about people's problems, through experience we will learn something about how to help them.

However, we do not have to wait until we learn how to help before we can be of some help. The simple fact that we care will go a long way toward helping.

Try as we may, we will not be able to get all of the people in the church to avoid depression, especially on a temporary basis. It is not necessary for depression to lead to tragedy.

We must help people develop a value system that will withstand any kind of pressure. We must convince them that regardless of what happens they will be better off if they refuse to violate their Christian convictions.

We need to build high and thick walls of protection around our convictions. To do so we need to make serious value judgments concerning the negative consequences resulting if convictions are violated and the positive value resulting if convictions are not violated.

Value judgments must be a frequent subject of thought and meditation. All that has been mentioned must be accompanied by prayer and dependence upon the Holy Spirit (Matthew 26:41; Galatians 5:17; Philippians 4:13).

The next article will deal with helping those who have already fallen into sin. ▲

ave you ever found yourself in the middle of an interesting story when you noticed that the person to whom you were talking was miles away? Or maybe you've caught yourself competing with a newspaper or television for someone's attention. Being ignored doesn't do much for the ego, does it?

Everyone has screamed out in injustice, "Listen to me!" When people do not listen, we become frustrated and angry. We feel we have a right to be heard. When someone really listens to us, we feel important. We feel that we have ideas worthy of expression.

Listening not only makes others feel important, but can also be a ministry, a way of showing the love of God to those around us. Christians should develop good listening habits. It is essential in the process of making friends. Listening is the first step in bearing one another's burdens, for we can never minister effectively to those in need until we learn to listen, really listen, to what they are saying.

Try practicing the following listening principles. You'll find your hearing greatly improved!

1. Genuinely listen with your whole being, not only your ears, but your mind, eyes and heart also. Don't just hear what is being said, but concentrate on it. Think about it. Discipline your mind to keep it from wandering. and don't plan what you want to say while the other person is talking.

You can learn a lot about a person and what he is saying if you look him in the eye. Nothing shows disinterest any more poignantly than wandering eyes. Listen with the heart and feel with the person. Try to put yourself in his shoes, and decide how you would feel in a similar situation. Be sincerely concerned and show it on your face.

2. Treat the person with respect. No matter how insignificant what he says may seem to you, place due importance on it. It must be big to him, whether a big joy or a big problem, or he wouldn't be telling you. What is trivia to some may be of vital concern to others.

3. Don't interrupt when someone is speaking to you. You'll break his

5. Agree with what the person says. Don't feel you have to correct, scold or advise him. When he tells you about something that made him angry, don't tell him he needs to learn to control his temper. He already knows that. Tell him that you can see why he was mad, that you understand his feelings exactly.

You may think someone is coming to you for advice when actually he just needs to share the weight of his problem with someone else. Don't feel obligated to advise him, for many times he is already aware of the best plan of action in the situation. You are simply serving as his sounding board.

6. When someone is at a loss for words or struggling, help him express his thoughts. Verbalize his feelings. If you have a similar experience, share it with the person. Don't try to do too much of the talking, but it can help the person to realize that other people have been in the same predicament and have felt the same way. He will not feel that he is such an oddball, and he will be freer to reveal himself to you.

7. Don't take the person for granted. Don't assume that you know what he will say. Listen with open ears, and don't hear only what you want or expect to hear. Don't be biased with your own preconceived opinions and prejudices, but listen with an open mind to his opinions.

8. Try to uncover what the person is really saying. What he actually says may be entirely different from what he means. What are his needs below the surface talk? What is he reaching and hungering for? Does he need acceptance and recognition, or is he lonely and fearful? What is he hiding?

One of the best ways to show genuine love for one another is to listen. And listening is a ministry in which we can all take part. The Christian with a loving heart must of necessity have listening ears.

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27/CONTACT/May

Listening Ears

Loving Heart,

By Donna Carr

train of thought. Sharing something personal is difficult enough without having to stop and start again.

4. Respond appropriately. Nod your head and frequently interject a "yes" and an "I understand" when the person pauses. Don't grin or giggle when the subject is serious. and most important of all don't be shocked. No matter what the person says, don't let him see surprise or contempt smeared over your face.

NEWS OF THE RELIGIOUS COMMUNITY



'SIMPLISTIC' BIBLE INTERPRETATIONS ON MID-EAST ISSUES RAPPED BY GROUP

WASHINGTON, D.C. (EP)—A full-page advertisement criticizing the use of "simplistic interpretations of the Bible" in regard to the Middle East has been placed in the *Washington Post* and the *Christian Science Monitor* by an ad hoc group of 33 Christians.

Called American Christians for Peace in the Middle East, the group agreed on the ad as a response to earlier advertisements placed in *The New York Times* by evangelicals and fundamentalists. The earlier ads had voiced support for the State of Israel on the basis of interpretations of the Bible.

The ad is headed: "We Christians believe simplistic interpretations of the Bible & simplistic answers to the complete questions involved will not help bring peace to the Middle East."

Its message starts: "We are alarmed and distressed by recent attempts on the part of some Western Christians to impose solutions on the problems of the Middle East by employing a few selected verses from the Bible."

The ad asserts, "It is presumptuous for some Western Christians to seek solutions for the Middle East with a claim to divine insight, while disregarding the solutions that millions of Christians in the Middle East are themselves seeking. Eastern Christians who reside where Christianity began also read the Bible."

NEW ISRAELI LAW MAY MEAN TROUBLE FOR CHRISTIANS

JERUSALEM (EP)—The Israeli Parliament has passed a new law that could be "misused in restricting religious liberty in Israel," according to the United Christian Council (UCC).

The law, making it a criminal offense to offer material inducements for conversion to another religious belief, is based on the "myth" that Christians bribe people to join their religious community, said Southern Baptist representative Robert L. Lindsey.

Southern Baptists serving in Israel have representatives on the United Christian Council, which registered official protest of the law. In addition Southern Baptist representatives met with the director of the Ministry of Religion. Lindsey reported the meeting was good although "strong words" were exchanged.

"The offering of material inducements for conversion is totally unethical and has never been a part of our missionary effort," said J. D. Hughey, the Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board's administrator for that area. "The only danger is that false accusations may be made."

CHRISTIAN ACADEMIES ORDERED TO SUBMIT REPORTS TO STATE

RALEIGH, NC (EP)—Gov. James B. Hunt Jr. of North Carolina said Christian academies must file reports with the State Board of Education and give competency tests to students.

Some church-affiliated private schools have refused to submit reports to the state on the grounds that it violates the principle of church-state separation.

The academies are also strongly opposed to the state board's extension of competency tests to the Christian private schools. The tests are given to high school juniors each spring.

Gov. Hunt said the state is entitled to know if children in the academies are receiving adequate education. The dispute is expected to be taken to the courts.

MUSIC HELPED BLACK CHURCH SURVIVE IN 'STRANGE LAND'

NEW YORK, NY (EP)—Rev. Wyatt T. Walker of the Canaan Baptist Church of Christ said here, "If you listen to what black people are singing religiously, you can get a clue to what is happening to them sociologically."

He noted the use of the sacred music tradition in the civil rights movement, "The black church has survived because we've been singing the Lord's song in a strange land."

Dr. Walker discussed the relationship between black music and the black church at the closing session of The Institute for Religious and Social Studies at The Jewish Theological Seminary of America. He identified enduring African motifs, such as hand clapping substituting for African drums, in the history of black music.

SCHOOL BUS VS. CHURCH BUS KEY TO A SAFETY PROBLEM

TOPEKA, KS (EP)—A Kansas Law is being fought by churches on this proposition: Why can't a school bus, when converted for use by a church, carry all the built-in protective devices it had when it ferried children to a public school?

Two accidents involving passengers carried in church-operated buses have caused the controversy.

Under Kansas law flashing and rotating warning lights must be disconnected and socalled stop arms removed when school buses are converted for church use.

State Rep. Tim Hold (D-Wichita) and 15 other legislators have introduced a measure that would allow churches to use the "school bus" flashing light warning system.

Under the bill the legislators would require drivers of other vehicles to stop and wait for church buses displaying warning lights—a warning that usually means passengers, most often children, are leaving the vehicles.

CONGREGATIONS ARE CAUTIONED ON PICKING SUNDAY SCHOOL TEACHERS

MIAMI, FL (EP)—Churches frequently pick the wrong kind of teacher for Sunday schools, according to an Arizona clergyman who is president of a Bible film production house.

The criteria for teaching church school should be love of God and love of people who want to learn, Dr. Larry Richards told the Gold Coast Sunday School Association here.

The former Wheaton College professor said churches should not use the public schools as a model in selecting teachers. "In our public schools, the teacher is the authority by virtue of his knowledge. So in Sunday school we think that if a person knows a lot about the Bible, he therefore is qualified to teach," Dr. Richards said.

"But in Scripture, the teacher is the one who knows the reality of what he is teaching," he continued. "His relationship with the learner is one of closeness, friendship. He shares his own experience and gets a response to what he is teaching."

Dr. Richards, now president of ALIVE Productions which has made a 13-week Bible study film for television, said, "It is far more important to pick the right person to teach them than to fill all the open spots in the Sunday school faculty. You can sacrifice small class size to get the right person."

FAST-GROWING BAPTIST CHURCH SETS GOAL OF 50,000 MEMBERS

TULSA, OK (EP)—Eastwood Baptist Church here has launched a "house ministry" effort to increase its membership to 50,000 in 10 years.

The Southern Baptist congregation is using 25 buses to take teachers to surrounding areas to lead home Bible studies and worship.

Rev. Tom Elliff, pastor of the church, said, "The people would worship together at the church only once a week—and that not necessarily on Sunday. If this program goes the way we think it will, there will not be enough room to get them all together at one time."

Membership in the fast-growing church has risen from 1,640 in 1972 to 3,346 in 1976. It has ministries among migrants, exoffenders, and the deaf and maintains a legal aid service and a mobile television unit.

An effort had been made to raise \$750,000 for a new building, but it failed to reach that goal. Mr. Elliff said, "The ministers and deacons decided this was God's way of telling us He didn't intend our spending that kind of money on buildings; so we decided to go another way."

As part of its "house ministry" effort, the congregation has rented most of adjacent Lindbergh Elementary School on Sundays and has leased or bought space in shopping centers within a one-mile radius.

TEENAGER REFUSES COED SWIMMING **ON RELIGIOUS GROUNDS OF MODESTY**

ARGO, IL (EP)-A teenager who refuses to take coed swimming classes on religious grounds of modesty may find herself without a high school diploma. Students are required under state law to take four years of physical education to graduate from high school unless there is a substantial medical reason.

J. P. Connelly, superintendent, said that unless the girl, Cynthia Forrest, 13, "can come up with actual, legitimate, religious tenets. she will have to participate in our physical education courses" at Argo High School.

Miss Forrest's family belongs to the People's Missionary Baptist Church in Justice, a suburb south of Chicago, Karen Forrest, Cynthia's mother, said, "We simply believe that it is wrong to show your body. The Bible states that you must wear 'modest' apparel. Myself (sic) and my church say that your body must be covered, particularly in the presence of the opposite sex. We would not go to the beach. We don't wear bathing suits or short skirts. We dress modestly.'

O'HAIR RUMOR STILL THRIVES -AND IT'S STILL WRONG

ALLENTOWN, PA (EP)-The unfounded rumor that atheist leader Madalyn Murray O'Hair is out to drive religion off the airwayes is alive and well here despite many attempts to scotch it.

Since late October, 1974, the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) has received more than 7.5 million letters from people who are worried that Ms. O'Hair has mounted a campaign to prevent religion from reaching "many elderly people and shut-ins as well as those recuperating from illness

Ms. O'Hair is not a party to any such petition. That statement has been printed many times by newspapers and news services. The rumor still thrives.

Ben Armstrong, executive secretary for National Religious Broadcasters, Inc., says, "We think there's someone out there that's sending these petitions to local churches." He adds that there's "no way of tracing it."

Mr. Armstrong speculates that someone may "be trying to embarrass the religious broadcasters or the FCC.

Meanwhile at the FCC in Washington. Carroll White of the Complaints and Compliance Department, says 7,000 letters come in every day to protest Ms. O'Hair's alleged campaign. "Everyone's writing their Congressman about this, and we're getting all the letters," he said.

PRESBYTERIAN TASK FORCE **ENDORSES GAY ORDINATIONS**

NEW YORK, NY (EP)-A 19-member study group commissioned by the United Presbyterian Church to study the ordination of practicing homosexuals as ministers has recommended allowing ordination of qualified gays.

The task force voted 14 to 5 to recommend that regional units of the 2.6 million-member denomination install homosexuals in positions of church leadership.

If the report is adopted at the church's San Diego convention in May, it would make the United Presbyterian Church the nation's most liberal major denomination by extending full rights of membership and ministry to avowed. practicing homosexuals.

The study group spent 15 months and \$70,000 to study "Christian approaches to homosexuality.'

SECULARISM, NON-CHRISTIANS HELD GAINING IN THE WESTERN STATES

ALHAMBRA, CA (EP)-Secular culture and non-Christian religions are gaining increasing strength in the western states, according to speakers at a conference here.

"Protestantism, when moving West, pooped out somewhere in Oklahoma," said Dr. John B. Orr, director of the School of Religion at the University of California.

'Western society is characterized by the 'cult of the experience' in which good, open, beautiful experience is the highest good persons can achieve," said Dr. Orr, keynote speaker at the session on ministry in a secular culture.

Dr. Dennis B. Savage, pastor of First Christian Church, Whittier, California, said Disciples membership has dropped in Arizona, California and Nevada despite general population growth in those states. He suggested five steps to renewal; stop selfcriticism which destroys; talk about the vision of God; stress the "ongoingness" of the church; establish an identity; and discuss controversial issues.

UP-TO-THE-MINUTE NEWS: SAMSON DESTROYS TEMPLE

SYDNEY (EP)-""Here is the news.... Pharaoh Rameses has agreed that the enslaved Hebrews should leave Egypt immediately. This latest move follows last night's sudden plaque.

'The decision to let the Israelites go follows no less than nine previous agreements between Pharaoh Rameses and Moses, the Israelite leader.

"Assvrian forces have swept through Babylon and met very little resistance ... And Greek forces have surrounded Troy.

'Also in the program this week's man in the news will be Moses, the Israelite leader, and we'll be talking to two experts on foreign affairs who will assess the difficult tasks facing the Israelites."

The above "news," introduced with an appropriate station call sign and musical theme, form part of a series of cassette tapes called "Bible News."

The 15-minutes programs, which have just reached Australia, present Bible history in a contemporary current affairs news format. The tapes were produced in Britain and deliberately ape the style of the BBC Television News and of current affairs programs such as "Panorama."

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WORDS CAN KILL!

By A. B. Brown

ticks and stones may break my bones, but words can never hurt me," is a boast most often made by someone who has just been hurt by words. Words can and often do hurt deeply and bitterly.

Words are man's most potent and available weapon. They can be weapons of both good and evil, tools of assassination or admiration, of destruction or construction. Words help or hurt.

In the Ford administration Secretary of Agriculture Earl Butz was forced to resign because of "gross indiscretion" in his use of words relating to black people. George Romney was forced out of contention for the presidency by his own words relating to being "brainwashed" about Vietnam.

On the other hand, many of us have jobs today because of a good word by somebody. Thus the power or influence of our words is immeasurable. Kipling said, "Words are, of course, the most powerful drug used by mankind." God says, "Death and life are in the power of the tongue'' (Proverbs 18:21).

Since words are our most potent, readily available weapons for good or evil, we are compelled to be extremely cautious how we use them and how they use us. Several biblical principles should guide us in our choice and use of words.

DROWNING IN A WORD FLOOD

First, Christians must be on guard against the use of too many words. Proverbs 10:19 warns, "In the multitude of words there wanteth not sin: but he that refraineth his lips is wise." As a boy I knew an old whitehaired Free Will Baptist preacher who understood this text. After visiting for awhile he would often say, "Well, I had better be going because pretty soon we will have told all the truth and start telling lies."

Most of us fear silence. We feel that as long as two tongues are in close proximity, one of them ought to be activated. Sometimes silence is worth more than our words. A chatterbox is an insecure person. Someone once said, "Silence is the voice of the convinced; loudness is the voice of those who want to convince themselves." However, the point is if we talk too much, we say too much. In the multitude of words there are offcolor jokes, gossip, betrayal of trust, character assassination, half-truths, poor testimony, revelation of ignorance, and numerous other things which either are sin or lead to sin. In the multitude of words there is little consideration for those being bombarded. One of the basic rules of speech is being a good listener. Giving others an opportunity to speak is not only a speech rule but also a good rule of etiquette.

Matthew 12:36 speaks directly to the point of ceaseless chatter: "... every *idle* word that men shall speak, they shall give account thereof in the day of judgment." The word, "idle," according to commentator Albert Barnes, "... literally means a vain, thoughtless, useless word, that accomplishes no good. Here it means, evidently, wicked and injurious, false and malicious, for such were the words which they had spoken."

Reading Proverbs 10:19 alongside Matthew 12:36 clearly summarizes what God is saying. The NASV renders the Proverbs 10:19 passage, "When there are many words, transgression is unavoidable." Jesus then in Matthew 12:36 says that in the judgment we will give account for every "vain, thoughtless, useless word, that accomplishes no good."

Note the conclusion of that Proverbs passage: "But he that refraineth his lips is wise." Solomon put it this way, "A fool's voice is known by multitude of words" (Ecclesiates 5:3).

POLLUTING VERBAL STREAMS

Secondly, Christians are not to use the wrong kind of words. One of today's curses is swearmania. Nothing appears sacred anymore. In almost every direction the Christian turns, he is contaminated by word pollution. The devil knows if he can profane our language, he can profane our thinking. Once our minds become profane, we become profane. This process is stated in Proverbs 23:7: "For as he thinketh in his heart, so is he."

The kind of words used is spoken of in the Third Commandment, "Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain." The name of God stands for the person of God. A profane or irreverent use of His name reflects profane or irreverent attitude toward His person.

However, the commandment is both positive and negative. Where any sin is forbidden, the contrary duty is commanded. When we are forbidden to profane God, the contrary duty that we should reverence Him is commanded.

This has to do with our flippant, nonchalant attitude about God. Anything pertaining to God should be spoken of with the greatest sobriety. Our flippant attitude is most often expressed in the way we use His name or by our minced oaths.

A quick look at some of the most often used slang words of Christians will change our attitudes about these words if we take the Third Commandment seriously. "Gee" is, according to Webster's New International Dictionary, "a form of Jesus, used in minced oaths." "Golly" and "gosh" are euphemistic terms for God used in minced oaths. "Darn" is simply a backhanded way of saying "damn."

To use the words, "Jesus Christ,"

in any way other than a reverential serious manner is a violation of the Third Commandment. "O Lord," "O God" or "O Jesus" are most often used either as minced oaths or in a flippant manner.

Goodness, graciousness and mercy are attributes of God and, therefore, are not to be used nonchalantly. "Hallelujah" is another often misused or abused word. Not only are we to use the right kind of words, we must use right words in the right way.

Minced oaths are contrary to the spirit of the New Testament. Our Lord said, "But I say unto you, Swear not at all" (Matthew 5:34). A minced oath is an aborted curse reflecting a temper or temperament not brought under the control of the Holy Spirit. The true measure of a Christian is not what he does under normal circumstances. The real test is that of adversity or stress.

How do you react when somebody bends the fender on your new car? What do the unsaved hear from you when the company fails to pay you for that overtime last week? Do you fill the air with profane words or minced oaths when the point of impact is your thumb instead of the nail head? We are known more by our reactions than by our actions.

God says, "If any man among you seem to be religious, and bridleth not his tongue, but deceiveth his own heart, this man's religion is vain" (James 1:26).

The Israelites out of reverence for God refused to call Him by His revealed name and substituted another word in its place. If they went to the extreme in that direction, we have gone to the opposite extreme. Our lack of respect for His name is but an outgrowth of our lack of respect for His person. The Church of Jesus Christ needs to come back to a real awe, a holy respect, a godly fear of the thrice Holy God. Jesus taught that the first step of prayer is just exactly that, "Our Father who art in heaven, Hallowed be thy name."

CHOOSING WORD-USE GUIDELINES

Regarding words in general there are some basic guidelines. Christians are to avoid suggestive words. If the world has given a word an evil connotation, then choose another word. If a word or term is popularized by the wrong crowd, then we ought to avoid it if possible.

"Rock" may be a good word by definition, but the wrong crowd popularized it. Christians are to be careful about using it and especially applying it to something sacred. The term, "Christian rock," is a contradiction. If it is Christian, it can't be rock; and if it is rock, it can't be Christian.

What about words which belong peculiarly to the church or religious terms? Words change or lose their meanings over the years. For example, the word, "Christian," hardly means anything anymore. Nowadays everybody is a Christian.

The words, "evangelical" and "orthodox," a few years ago stood for something but today have been robbed of their original meanings. A term fast losing its original meaning in America is "born again." We must be careful to use words which communicate to hearers or readers our real position.

Words are barometers of the heart. They are symbols for our experiences. If an individual has had a genuine experience with God, then his words will reflect it. "For out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh. A good man out of the good treasure of the heart bringeth forth good things: and an evil man out of the evil treasure bringeth forth evil things" (Matthew 12:34,35).

Dr. L. C. Johnson, president of Free Will Baptist Bible College, says, "The tongue is like a conveyor belt. It only brings up what is in the heart." It is little wonder Jesus said, "For by thy words thou shalt be justified, and by thy words thou shalt be condemned."

If our words are that important, then our sincere prayer ought to be, "Let the words of my mouth, and the meditation of my heart, be acceptable in thy sight, O Lord, my strength, and my redeemer" (Psalm 19:14).

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