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contact



Unless we align our Christmas celebrations with these principles, our sleigh will be headed in the wrong direction.

By Robert Morgan

Imagine piling all our church Christmas observances onto a giant sleigh—a red one sitting in softly falling snow.

Toss the Christmas tree near the front. In goes the cantata, jumbled beside the bagged treats. A bent angel's wing protrudes from under a shepherd's bathrobe. Teetering precariously near the edge is the pastor's annual gift. Parties, banquets, sermons and carols are all jumbled together.

Now we're loaded up, ready to go somewhere. The reins are in our mittens, and we are in the coachman's seat. But where are we going? Where do we want to take our churches during Christmas? What is our church goal during the seasonal slide through the snow?

We must be guided by what the Bible says, yet scripture says nothing at all about celebrating Christmas. The historical record of the nativity is there, but without the slightest suggestion that we make a holiday of it. The Reformers, in fact, were against Christmas! And the Puritan Parliament of England outlawed it in 1643, imprisoning any pastor who preached of Christmas Day.

The pilgrims arrived at Plymouth with the same idea. Historically, many Christians have opposed Christmas, largely because it descended from the yearly Roman day of worship to Mathris, the god of the sun.

But, though the Bible says nothing about Christmas, it says a great deal about holidays. Paul allows for their observance, and in the Old Testament, Moses was quite specific about it.

Leviticus 23 is God's chapter about holidays. Here He gives us three reasons for celebrating them. Although the specific holidays mentioned are Jewish feasts, the principles of purpose are timeless in their authority and practicality.

CHRISTMAS IS FOR WORSHIPPING

The primary reason given by God for establishing holy days (we call them holidays) was for worshipping. The Lord's appointed times of Holy Convocation they were called.

They were to be days of celebration and sacrifice, two activities which must always go together—though we have inflated the former beyond all proportion while reducing the latter to a few symbols. Like today's bread bakers, we have stripped our product of its wholeness, "enriched" it with synthetics and packaged it behind a slick wrapper.

Worship, however, is defined specifically in this chapter as the personal process of remembering afresh who God is, then in that light, repenting of sins, and rejoicing in His forgiveness.

It takes more than a nativity scene, a Christmas carol or even an inspiring Christmas sermon to do that. It's altogether possible for a Christian, even a church, to dash through the season without having a genuine worship experience.

CHRISTMAS IS FOR RESTING

Do you rest or rush through Christmas? Thirteen times in Leviticus 23 the Lord reminds His wandering Jews to rest on holidays.

I'm afraid we are letting the world pressure us into ruining Christmas. Americans spent eight billion dollars last year alone on holiday giving—enough to exhaust anyone financially, physically and emotionally.

Some churches, unfortunately, have their holiday schedules stuffed fuller than the Christmas turkey. The pressures of parties, plays, programs and family preparations leave many believers



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VOTE FOR CHRISTMAS *(From page 3)*

wrapped in the ribbons of holiday fatigue, taxed but not relaxed.

I heard of one church who sang, "We three kings, exhausted we are. . . ." They had a sigh, rather than a song, in the air.

CHRISTMAS IS FOR TEACHING CHILDREN

Children are the third reason in Leviticus 23 for holy days. The Jewish festivals were especially designed as "object lessons" to allow the youngsters to relive their fathers' history and to observe the faithfulness of their fathers' God.

The festival of booths, for example, was a week long national campout to let the children experience what it was like to follow the Lord through the wilderness. The Lord knew what today's Christian educators are rediscovering: it is one thing to get a Bible verse in a child's mind, but something else to get it into his life.

How ideal Christmas is for this! The enchanting story of Bethlehem, packed with rugged reality and theological truths, seems perfectly designed to teach young people about Jesus Christ.

Wrapped in four picture postcard chapters are the doctrines of the Incarnation, salvation, the Person of Christ, the work of the Holy Spirit, guidance, angels and much more. It takes more than a recitation, annual play or yearly Sunday School Christmas lesson to transport these truths into a child's daily living. This is a job God has given to parents.

Let the gathered church, like Simeon and Anna in the temple, inspire and explain, but let us keep Christmas largely in the home where it began. That is the grandest place for God's holidays.

SOME PRACTICAL SUGGESTIONS

On the basis of Leviticus 23, and the purposes for holidays found there, here are four practical suggestions:

First, carefully plan in advance every Yuletide church service, making sure the wonder of the

Incarnation is enhanced, not replaced by the celebration. Gear each service towards a worship experience, de-emphasizing traditions that are not spiritually aligned to Leviticus 23.

Though it may not be necessary to completely discard them, let us move them, like old ornaments, to the back of the tree. Feature the spiritual realities rather than the traditional relics.

Second, take a day or two off, perhaps immediately after Christmas Day. Make it a genuine time of rest, for one cannot remain spiritually keen while physically exhausted.

Third, plan a seasonal study with the children and teenagers in the church. Appoint adults to coordinate and guide the project, but let the youngsters "write, produce, direct and present" a genuine Christmas experience of their own to the congregation (you should have begun in September).

Fourth, begin meaningful family traditions . . . especially for the children.

I know one family who begins a week before Christmas to tell the children an abbreviated, but accurate and animated, account of the Bible story in nightly installments, climaxing on Christmas Day with the Gospel.

Another family, weeks before Christmas, selects and studies a verse together, then using that verse, designs their own Christmas cards.

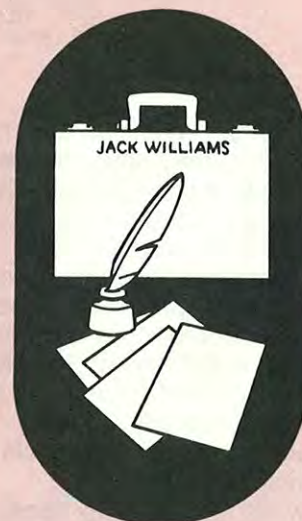
Some families study the nativity scene in the Bible, then build an accurate one for the living room desk.

Through the years, the children in such families come to cherish the God whom their parents sought for them more than the gifts which their parents bought for them.

This year, for a change, guide your sleigh into the wonder of worship, the obedience of rest and the excitement of childlike discovery. O come, let us adore Him . . . like that! ▲

ABOUT THE WRITER: Robert Morgan is pastor of Harris Memorial Free Will Baptist Church, Greeneville, Tennessee.

Briefcase



Is there a place for the Free Will Baptist denomination in the 1980's?

Or will Free Will Baptist conventions become in the 80's what Edsel rallies were in the 70's—antique gatherings of valuable old relics that are polished once each year and displayed in a belated effort to convince John Q. Public what a great deal he missed?

This denomination stepped into the 70's starting blocks thinned to 2100 churches and 178,000 members. That was an average of 85 per church. Ten years later the movement registers 2500 churches and 232,000 members—a respectable increase of 54,000 members, while average church attendance rose to 93.

But is our group primed for the 1980's? Some are still preoccupied with 1960's post-mortems and strung out on 1970's frustrations and disillusionments. They'll be 1984 changing the dates on their tithe checks.

The 80's waited as long as they could. With the stroke of midnight on December 31, ready or not here they come.

NO VACANCY IN THE 80's

There won't be a place for some of the things we tolerated in our ranks during the 70's—nor for us if

Here Come The 80's

we don't shake them.

Remember the seven-year bus war we hatched in the early 70's when busers squared off with non-busers? That was about the silliest thing we ever did, and it cost us dearly. Who doesn't burn with embarrassment when he recalls how we canonized some brothers and unevangelized others based on whether their churches owned a 54-passenger GMC bus.

Oh, the issue finally cooled, but it almost caused melt-downs in several areas and did blemish friendships.

We scrapped 10 rounds in the 70's over our favorite internal hassle—whether evangelism or edification was the Church's task. We somehow couldn't see far enough to let the one include the other. In the final analysis, "evangelism only" advocates outpointed the "edification only" crowd hands down.

We're better at winning people than we are at training those we win. Some of us need to convince the rest of us that we can't disciple those we don't win and we can't keep those we don't disciple.

Does anyone care to comment on the dollar-that-God-loves-best attitude? From crisis to crisis in the 70's, speechmakers told audiences that the denominational dollar best spent for God was: a) the foreign missions dollar, b) the home missions dollar, c) the Bible College dollar, d) the youth camp dollar, e) none of the above.

Since every department, college and state outreach is part of our extended church family, perhaps we

should adopt the philosophy of the mother with nine children who when asked which child she loved most, wisely replied: "The one who is sick until he gets well and the one who is away from home until he returns."

God does not love dollars. He examines motives.

The 70's drained our energies with fast-breaking coast to coast rumors. Our suspicions of one another made us paranoid. States eyed other states. Ministers questioned other ministers' decisions. Colleges talked openly about the integrity of other colleges.

It was the best of times and the worst of times. We kept our powder dry and confronted doctrinal error, but acted like we didn't hear the cries for bread from Third World countries.

The 80's will run off and leave us bickering beside the road unless we minister to the total man. That means telling the Good News as well as demonstrating the Good News with good works.

MID-LIFE CRISIS

The passkey to the 80's for Free Will Baptists is change, innovation and creativity.

The providential hand of God is evident as our educational institutions adjust and shift to meet the 80's. Three major colleges changed leadership in preparation for the next decade. This past October, two college presidents were inaugurated.

L. C. Johnson led Free Will Baptist Bible College through the 50's, 60's

and 70's. But the energy conscious 80's belong to the new kid on the block, Charles Thigpen. At Hillsdale College in Oklahoma, Bill Jones charted the 70's, but a layman, Don Elkins, will plow the first row in the 80's. The same is true in California where just a few months ago Dan Parker replaced Wade Jernigan as California Christian College president.

For the first time since 1935, we seriously face a decade that will bury our great men. Those who gave us our national organization in 1935 and guided us till now may see the denominational flag raised in 1980, but by 1990 most of those grand old men will be awaiting the resurrection trumpet.

We will miss their "transition experience" in the 80's when we dig fresh graves from Norfolk to San Diego and commit to God our Elijahs. We must, for the most part, duel the 80's without the men who salvaged the 70's and saved the 60's.

While it is true that we will bury many assets and some liabilities as well, the 80's may belong to those young men struggling with first-pastorate colic. But the reins of the 80's will fit most comfortably in the hands of middle-aged pastors who matured in a culture run wild. Let's learn a lesson from our own past and not give too much control too soon to the untested.

We must guard against the sentimental whims of those who would carve the 1980's into a decade without doctrine. Doctrinal softness is the death knell of Free Will Baptists. Our 250 years of mergers, takeovers and reorganizations should teach us that we cannot sell our doctrinal birthrights in order to chum with the charismatics or placate the Calvinists.

Don't look for many easy questions in the next 10 years, or easy answers either for that matter. We've exhausted our quota of options. The 80's promise to be a decade of living in the trenches of reality.

But as the 80's edge nearer with their mysteries and obstacles—I can't think of a fellowship on earth I'd rather face them with than the Free Will Baptist people. ▲

Greed and Its Consequences



By Gordon Sebastian

Some years ago a young pastor who had just graduated from Bible College learned a valuable lesson about "invisible sins."

Sunday after Sunday the young preacher strongly cried out against the wicked ways of the world, warning his newly acquired congregation to avoid dangerous iniquities.

These sins were the "visible sins" that could be easily described and recognized—sins such as drinking alcoholic beverages, dancing, smoking, movie going, wearing immodest clothing.

However, while the minister was nailing various visible hides to the sanctuary wall during the first six months of his pastorate, an army of "invisible sins" was attacking and conquering the minds and hearts of many members.

What were these sins that had been slipping in through the back door of the church? They were those hidden attitudes of envy, jealousy, bitterness, hate, unforgiveness, faultfinding, pride and greed.

In just 10 short months this invisible army of iniquity was successful in crippling what 20 years of prayer and toil had built.

There was the business meeting that witnessed one deacon drawing back his fist to hit another. And the

staged walk-out of 17 embittered members, the two splinter-groups leaving to start two new churches. Then came the forced resignation of the young pastor.

This writer vividly recalls the devastating power of "invisible sin" for he was that young pastor.

Of all the sins involving one's spirit and attitude, there is one that Jesus directly and indirectly referred to more than any other—greed.

See for yourself. The four Gospels are replete with Jesus' lessons and lectures about possessions, with His commands to forsake all to follow Him and with His warnings against covetousness and greed.

GREED AND THE BIBLE

The last of the 10 commandments speaks directly to the sin of greed, "Thou shalt not covet." Upon close examination we discover that each one of the other nine commandments can easily be broken as a result of greed in one's life. Greed can cause a man to worship another god, to even produce idols of that god of his greed. It can drive him into the camp of those taking God's name in vain.

In his desire to grasp for more, greed can push a man to violate the sabbath and to ultimately forsake his responsibility to his parents in the later years of their lives. Greed has always been associated with lying, stealing, killing and immorality.

Greed and greed alone accounts for the tragic downfall of scores of Bible personalities. It was greed that drove Lucifer to grasp for God's throne which resulted in his being cast down as profane from God's presence (see Isaiah 14 and Ezekiel 28).

It was this same greed for greatness that Satan used to affect the downfall of Adam and Eve. Greed built the tower of Babel which resulted in the confusion of the languages. It destroyed Achan and his family after the victory at Jericho.

Greed turned the face of Solomon away from Jehovah in his old age. It murdered Naboth for a mere cluster of grapes. It prevented a rich young ruler, who wanted to follow Jesus, from getting his wish.

Greed sent a man tradition calls Dives straight to hell. It turned Jesus over to His enemies for 30 pieces of silver. It struck Ananias and Sapphira dead in the stunned presence of the early church.

Greed plucked the jeweled crown of reward from the head of Demas after he had labored with Paul for many years.

In spite of all the Bible's pages describing the tragic consequences of greed and the Bible's clear teaching that the greedy cannot go to heaven (see I Corinthians 6:9, 10) and scripture's explicit command to keep no company with those who are greedy (see I Corinthians 5:11)—greed is still one of the major sins infecting members of today's church.

GREED AND TODAY'S CHURCH

Just look at Bill and Barbara. Greed caused them to over-extend themselves in every direction in order to keep up with the Joneses.

In one moment of sinful greed John decided to trade cars. This time it would not be for one he could afford, but rather for one like his boss could afford—a 1979 Lincoln Continental.

Soon John had to get a second job, a job that would once and for all put an end to his service for God in the bus ministry.

Of course, there are the Smith children. There are three of them—all teenagers. Ask the church's youth minister about them. He tried for years without success to develop the lives of these three for God. But they have absolutely no interest in the church, nor in the things of God. What's wrong?

Even though their parents are members of the church, they are so wrapped up in the world, so involved in their quest for wealth that they have never had time to give their children the discipline and love they needed.

Their materialistic life style has managed to completely nullify the

"In one moment of sinful greed, John decided to trade cars—for one like his boss could afford."

Their uncontrolled greed paralyzed their every attempt to manage their money. They are so far behind they'll never catch up. Every creditor in town is lined up at their door with his hand out for a month-overdue payment. This couple has completely blown their testimony for Jesus.

And what about John, who was bringing in more on his one bus route than the other three routes combined? He had to quit just when his route was doing better than ever before. Why?

godly influence of all the Sunday School teachers and ministers their children have ever had.

But surely you have known of Mike and Mildred. They were one of the greatest teams for God that their church ever had.

Mike was a deacon, a Sunday School teacher, a choir member and a very successful soul-winner. Mildred, his wife, worked in the bus ministry, sang in the choir, sang lead in a trio and was also a good soul-winner.



GREED (From page 7)

However, all of that has now changed. They are no longer working in any church.

You see, Mike was given an opportunity to nearly double his salary. It meant moving to another city in another state. Mike took for granted that God had opened this door for him.

He never considered that Satan might be behind this "golden opportunity" to increase his income. He failed to seriously seek the face of the Lord in this matter, to counsel with his pastor about the move, to inquire about the kinds of churches in this far off city.

Two years have passed, and as yet Mike and Mildred have been unable to "settle down" in a church and go to work as before. The subtle sin of greed once again managed to rob a growing church of two of its best workers and perhaps permanently wreck their service to the Lord.

GREED AND THE PULPIT

Perhaps, though, the saddest story of greed in today's church is what this sin did to pastor Bob.

Over 20 years ago Bob, then a teenager, announced his call to the ministry. He attended Bible college and graduated with a "B" average. He married a girl he met at college, one of the most consecrated Christian workers he had ever known.

The two of them gave themselves to the Lord and to one another in the ministry of the church. Success seemed to follow their sacrificial service as they labored in several different communities. In his last pastorate Bob saw his congregation double in only three years.

But as this last congregation grew so did the pressures of pastoring, and so did the problems of pettiness among carnal members. Finally, Bob had enough!

He resigned and took a job selling insurance. Of course, he intended this to be only a temporary arrangement. He originally intended to use his new livelihood as a means of taking a brief leave of absence from his calling.

However, something unforeseen took place. Bob fell in love with selling. He enjoyed the new freedom from pastoral problems and pressures, and, above everything else, he and his family revelled in a financial prosperity and security never before known to them.

Thus, when later faced with the decision to go back to the problems and sacrifices of pastoring, the subtle sin of greed had done its damage.

Brother Bill will never pastor again.

The same worldly greed that conquered Demas had slain another one of God's choice servants.

Oh, the power of greed! It destroys marriages. It exploits youth for gain. It corrupts politicians. It aborts babies. It abandons the elderly. It starts wars. It bankrupts nations. It strangles churches. It keeps missionaries from their fields. It even dares to rob God.

No wonder the Apostle Paul warned Timothy, "For the love of money is the root of all (sorts) of evil" (I Timothy 6:10). And no wonder the New Testament disqualifies any man from the ministry, who is given to greed (see I Timothy 3:3).

▲

ABOUT THE WRITER: Gordon Sebastian pastors Peace Free Will Baptist Church, Wilson, North Carolina.

DIRECTORY UPDATE

ARKANSAS

James Mutchler to Mt. Bethel, Rose Bud from First Church, Arkadelphia

Ralph Doggett to Salem Church, Glenwood

Loren Collins to Hope Church, Fayetteville from Pilgrim's Rest Church, Springdale

Eldon Bagwell to Pilgrim's Rest Church, Springdale from Huntsville Church, Huntsville

FLORIDA

James Simmons to Mt. Carmel Church, Perry from Pleasant Hill Church, Bonifay

Earl Langley to Harmony Church, Lake Butler from Goodsprings Church, Pleasant View, TN

GEORGIA

Jerry Thorne to New Life Church, Geneva

Bob L. Jones to Cedar Springs Church, Cedar Springs from Sylvan Park Church, Nashville, TN

LOUISIANA

Gary V. Page to Gordon Avenue Church, Monroe

MISSISSIPPI

Fred Lockwood to Tupelo Church, Tupelo from Ebenezer Church, Glennville, GA

MISSOURI

Leroy Blankenship to Fourth Church, St. Louis from Verdella Church, Iantha

NORTH CAROLINA

Dean Dobbs to Pleasant Acres Church, New Bern from First Church, Dothan, AL

OHIO

Tommy Wallace, Sr., to Sumway Church, Sciotoville

OKLAHOMA

Melvin Tyson to Lewis Avenue Church, Tulsa

TENNESSEE

Howard Messer to First Church, Erwin from South Avenue Church, Lancaster, SC

OTHER PERSONNEL

K. Wayne Smith to Gordon Avenue Church, Monroe, LA as minister of music and youth

Guidelines For Grandparents



By Cathy Henry Judd

Maybe you know her, the lady with the bumper sticker that says, "Ask me about my new grandbaby."

But you don't have to ask; she lurks about with a purse full of snapshots. "Here he is when he came home from the hospital . . . well, actually, that's just his blanket. It was snowing and we bundled him up pretty tight. And here's his first . . ."

On and on it goes; Grandma's at it again. But it may just as well be Grandpa—his wallet bulging with photos and his conversation sprinkled with "the cutest things" the grandbaby said or did.

A grown man who runs a successful business and controls the futures of a dozen people may be reduced to tears by his grandson's first haircut. A mature and level-headed woman who brought her children up "by the book" may allow the grandchildren to ride roughshod over the rules and

habits of a lifetime.

SPECIAL TREASURES

What is it with grandparents? What's so special about those little bundles of noise that come into one's life at middle age and can turn a levelheaded adult into a mushy sentimentalist? Time!

When one's children are young there isn't enough time. There's always a diaper to change, a load of laundry to wash, a meal to cook, a living to earn.



GUIDELINES (From page 9)

So God gives grandchildren in the later years, the unbusy years, when there is time for memories. And they are accepted, these little ones, the gift from one's own children who were loved in such a rush, and they are loved in leisure.

Perhaps God created grandparents for memories. The business of growing up is so serious, the frustrations so great, that home often becomes a routine. Parents are just the people one lives with. But grandma's house—that's a special place where memories are created and nourished to be cherished later when one sends his own children off to grandma's to make their own memories.

The memories of childhood are woven around grandparents—Christmas at Grandma's, summer vacation, playing in the treehouse at Grandma's, helping Grandpa haul hay. To a child, grandparents are among the most wonderful people in the world, ranking somewhere alongside Superman and Wonderwoman.

Who else has a cookie jar full of cookies, a pocketful of nickels and a heart that melts if he just says please?

SENTIMENTAL TEMPTATIONS

To a parent, grandparents can be among the most frustrating and unsympathetic people in the world.

"God gives grandchildren in the later years, the unbusy years, when there is time for memories."

One young mother quips, "Train up a child in the way he should go and Grandma can undo it all in one weekend."

The cookie jar and pocketful of nickels can be a source of irritation, and the oft-printed motto, "When all else fails, ask Grandpa," more fact than fiction.

The grandparents themselves may find the "little bundles of joy" a source of inconvenience if they accept the role of built-in babysitter that so often is expected of them. No matter how special the relationship, grandparents are people too, with lives separate from those of their children and grandchildren.

A good working relationship between all family members will allow for this fact and not assume that Grandma and Grandpa have nothing else to do but "keep the kids."

Our awakened society has long seen the necessity of counseling and training programs for parents. Churches and social groups offer family seminars that cover every facet of the family relationship.

The role of grandparent is one of the most important of our human relationships, yet there is no training program in which one may enroll to prepare him for it. Even the years of parenthood do not qualify one for the task of being a good grandparent.

The successes and failures of parenthood often temper one's judgment when he is faced with this new generation of offspring. He determines that he wants these young ones to have more than he was able to give his own children. He determines that he will spend more time with them than he spent with his son or daughter.

In short, sentiment often overrules the better judgment he might have used.

One example is that of grandparents who only see their grandchildren once or twice a year. They may make the occasion "Christmas in July," lavishing the child with love, affection, and gifts in order to make up for the lack of time together.

Another is the grandparent who sees his grandchildren every day and takes over the discipline, contradicting a parent to favor the child. Sentimentalism may overflow

into one's relationship with close friends and complete strangers, hence the "picture gallery syndrome."

SCRIPTURAL TROPHIES

Dr. Spock has nothing to offer in way of guidance; but Paul (who was probably never even a grandpa) offered a bit of Spirit-inspired advice that seems to fit the situation when he instructed his followers to be "temperate in all things."

"... there is no training program to prepare one for the role of grandparent, not even the years of parenthood."

Temperance may be defined as moderation and lack of excess. How can that apply to grandparenthood? Just as it does to every individual human relationship (temperate in *all* things).

Paul instructs his followers to look ahead to the future, consider the consequences of every action and be motivated accordingly. In I Corinthians 13 he discusses charity (love) and lists its characteristics (patience, kindness, thoughtfulness, forgiveness, honesty).

Any action motivated by love and temperance will be one which lifts and strengthens. Indulgence and excess have no part in a relationship motivated by love.

Consider the cases mentioned earlier. The grandparent who sees his grandchild infrequently may feel the need to "buy" his affection with excessive indulgences. Perhaps he could substitute instead a genuine friendship bolstered by correspondence and

small remembrances throughout the year.

The grandparent who sees his grandchild constantly and frequently overrides the parents' authority should well consider the effect of his actions in regard to the child's future respect for parental authority. A child finds security in stability. Rules which fluctuate with the situation provide no stability.

Temperance should be the watchword in "all things" says Paul. Even in the picture gallery carried by proud grandmas and grandpas? Yes!

Consider this suggestion which may prove helpful: Watch the reaction of the audience. When he begins to nod and drowse, ask him about his grandchildren.

Grandparents—grandchildren. There is no relationship quite like it. It is a relationship existing between people of the most impressionable and sensitive ages—the young and the old.

The love, trust and open acceptance of each for the other gives a unique satisfaction. It is a relationship to guard and protect and take seriously. It should be a relationship motivated by love, temperance and concern for the well-being of the individuals involved.

Grandparents should strive to be more than a bountiful Santa Claus figure who hands out gifts and cookies and tells Mommy not to spank. He has the responsibility of being guide and example, healer of hurts and maker of memories.

Perhaps the relationship can best be described in the remembrances of various adults:

"I remember the little songs Grandpa used to make up. We would sing a rhyme about whatever we were doing and he would fit my name in it just right."

"We could make as much noise as we wanted at Grandma's—until it was time for the news. Then Grandpa sat down in his big chair and turned on the radio. We sat down and waited, then the noise was ok again."

"I remember squirrel hunting with my grandpa. The dog would tree the squirrel and Grandpa

would get a good shot. Then we would start back for the house talking about the dumplings Grandma would make for dinner."

"There was no one my age to play with at Grandma's, but that didn't matter. Grandma was just a little older. She could 'play like' better than I could."

Grandchildren are a gift of youth in declining years. Grandparents are a gift of memories made in fun and laughter and remembered with love. ▲

ABOUT THE WRITER: Catherine Henry Judd teaches first grade at Glenwood Elementary School, West Plains, Missouri. She is a frequent contributor to CONTACT.

Light on Life's Questions . . .

By Wade Jernigan

QUESTION: *Did Jesus Christ have physical brothers and sisters?*

ANSWER: Roman Catholicism teaches that Jesus had no physical brothers and sisters, but the Word of God teaches something quite differently. Matthew records the following pertaining to Christ's family: "Is not this the Carpenter's son? Is not his mother called Mary? And his brethren James and Joses, and Simon, and Judas? And his sisters, are they not all with us? Whence then hath this man all these things?"

No further reference is made to Christ's brothers by name in scripture, except for James. Paul who received his revelation from Jesus Christ and not from man (See Galatians 1:11,12, I Corinthians 11:23, Galatians 1:16-18) called James "the Lord's brother" in Galatians 1:19.

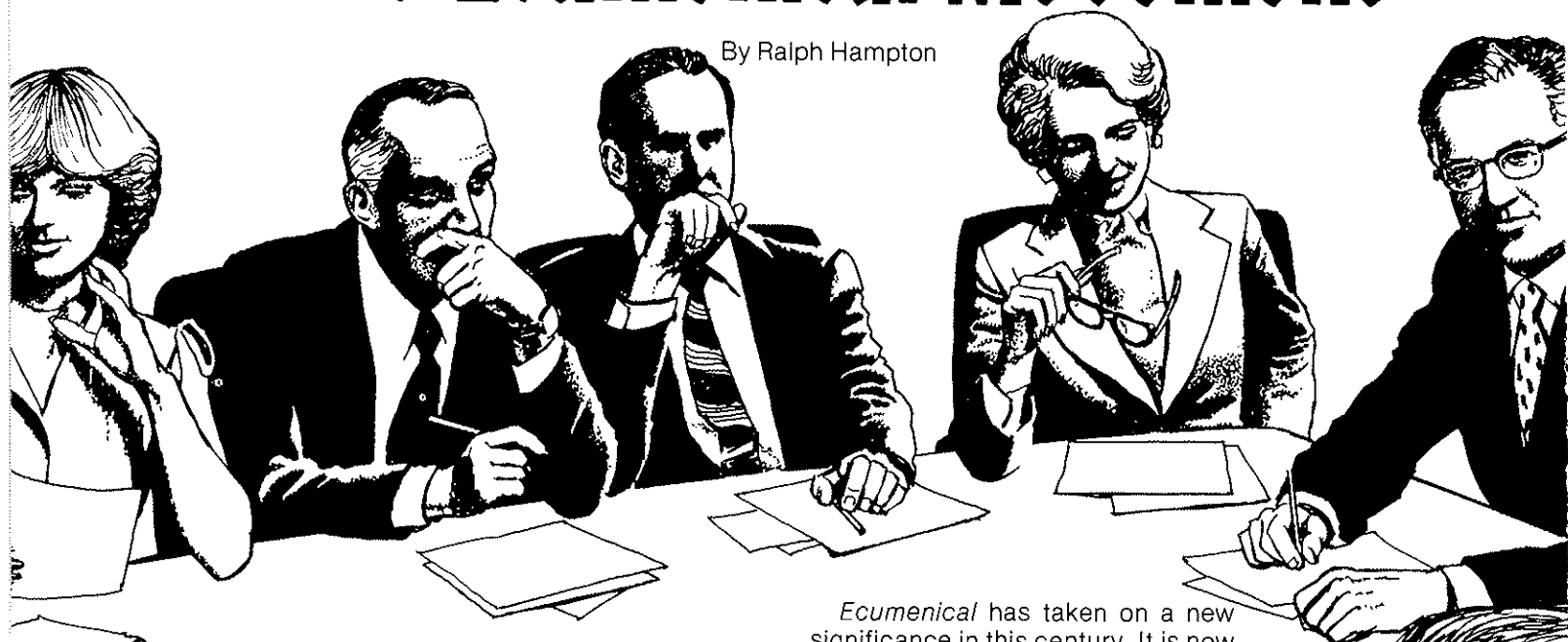
Some suggest that those mentioned as brothers and sisters may have been step-brothers and sisters. Others conjecture that these may have been cousins. There is no evidence that will support the step-brother/step-sister argument. The "cousin" explanation has a flaw. Quite often a male cousin may have been called a brother, but that is not true of female cousins.

There is no reason to look for any other explanation than what is given in the Word. Christ had brothers and sisters.

Readers may address their questions to Mr. Jernigan at P.O. Box 1088, Nashville, Tennessee 37202. Please limit each question to one specific topic. There will be no personal correspondence regarding those questions which are not used in the magazine. The column will not necessarily be considered the official voice of the denomination relative to the problems involved.

Reassessing The Ecumenical Movement

By Ralph Hampton



"It is not an overstatement to say that the ecumenical movement is the most arresting and significant development in modern Christianity." These words were penned by Charles Clayton Morrison, a leader in the ecumenical movement in 1953 (*The Unfinished Reformation*, p. 1).

Fundamental Christians share neither his optimism nor his enthusiasm for the ecumenical movement, but we must take account of it. All of us are touched by its impact. Unfortunately, far too many know almost nothing about the ecumenical movement, as it has come to be called.

What does the name mean? The word *ecumenical* comes from a Greek word meaning the inhabited world. Its first use in Christianity was in connection with the church councils of the fourth and fifth centuries.

Those councils were assembled to deal with doctrinal issues that threatened the unity of the church. They were called ecumenical councils because they supposedly represented the entire church world-wide.

Ecumenical has taken on a new significance in this century. It is now used to express the goal of unity and universality for the church, a united church in a united world.

Concern for church unity is not new. The leaders of the ecumenical movement like to point out John 17:21 where Jesus prayed that the church would be one as the Trinity is one in order that the world might believe upon Him.

Church history reveals that a concern for unity has been manifest in every age of the church. It was a concern for visible unity and conformity that prompted the Roman Catholic Church to torture and slay "heretics" who stood for the Word of God.



Even Luther and other leaders of the Reformation did not mean at first to separate from Rome, but to reform and purify the church of their fathers. After the split with Rome was a fact, the reformers vainly sought to achieve some kind of union among themselves.

The modern ecumenical movement really got its start in the great missionary movements of the 19th century. An ecumenical spirit was fostered by the Moody campaigns and the founding of the YMCA and the YWCA. Active leadership for the movement came from missionary leaders.

A growing concern developed that the denominational divisions of the homeland were being transported to the mission fields of the world. It was argued that Protestant Christianity should speak with a united voice instead of competing for souls.

Under the leadership of John R. Mott, the first world Missions Conference was held in 1910 in Edinburgh, Scotland. The meeting quickly developed into a conference on Christian unity because of the careful planning of its leaders. Out of that first conference, the International Missionary Council was born—the first agency working for church unity world-wide.

From the first, denominational leaders had a major influence on the movement. Mott, an American Methodist, was joined in the first Missions Conference by the archbishop of Canterbury, head of the Church of England. This was no handful of disorganized missionaries seeking Christian unity.

In the years after 1910, two other organizations were created which gave further impetus to the new ecumenical movement. Doctrine was not discussed at Edinburgh, and at least some leaders thought Christian unity should have a doctrinal basis. The result was a Faith and Order Conference in 1927 in Lausanne, Switzerland.

Charles Brent, an American Episcopalian was the founder of this new organization. By this time, the Eastern Orthodox Church was ready to be represented in the ecumenical

meetings. Though invited to the conference, Rome politely refused. Rome was *the* Church and possessed unity.

Two years before the Faith and Order conference, Nathan Soderblom, a Swedish Lutheran, assembled the first Universal Conference on Life and Work to emphasize the unity of the church through social ministry.

In the 1930's, leaders of these three groups began to lay plans for a world federation of churches. World War II forced a postponement until 1948. In that year, 147 church groups from 47 nations formed the World Council of Churches with Christian unity as its primary objective.

Eventually the International Missionary Council, Faith and Order, and the Life and Work movements were merged into the World Council of Churches.

From the first the World Council was torn with dissent over the purpose of Christian unity. At least some of the early leaders were somewhat evangelical in theology. They saw the WCC as a means of giving a united witness for Jesus Christ to a lost world.

The majority of the WCC leadership had other ideas. They conceived of the organization as a means of obtaining the needed political clout to enable them to implement the social gospel.

Even the nature of Christian unity was a bone of contention. Some WCC leaders defended the concept of denominational integrity within a loose federation. The more common view was that the WCC would lead to one super-church to replace all denominations.

Many early ecumenical leaders, such as Charles Morrison, saw the WCC as a means of giving Protestant Christianity a powerful voice to offset the Roman Catholic Church. It was not long before other leaders were declaring that Rome must be included in the ecumenical movement.

A high water mark for the WCC was reached in 1961 in New Delhi, India. Included among 23 new members received at that assembly were

the Orthodox Churches of Russia, Poland, and Rumania—all communist countries.

For the first time, the pope authorized official observers to attend a session of the WCC. In turn, he invited the "separated brethren" to attend his own ecumenical conclave then in session, Vatican II.

Rome's new interest in the ecumenical movement was further demonstrated in the 1960's. In 1960, the pope received the Archbishop of Canterbury. In 1964, he went to Jerusalem to meet the Patriarch of Constantinople, the spiritual leader of the Eastern Orthodox Church. In both cases, the pope found eager, ecumenical arms ready to receive him. The Eastern Orthodox Church leaders have periodically promoted unity with Rome since the two groups separated in 1054.

In recent years, Rome has actively courted the Anglican Church, the least Protestant church of the Reformation. Anglicans and American Episcopalians have shown considerable readiness at times to return to the Roman fold. The late Episcopal Bishop, James Pike, declared that while papal infallibility was a problem, the concept of papal leadership for a united church was no hindrance at all.

On the other hand, Rome has made some attractive overtures. A new Roman rite is now used in Britain for receiving members from the Anglican Church. It does not call them converts; neither does it speak of absolution from excommunication as earlier rites did.

Marriages between Anglicans and Roman Catholics no longer require permission from the bishop. The parish priest may grant it. Now, only the Catholic partner must promise to try to bring up his children to be Roman Catholics. No promise is sought from the non-Catholic partner.

Toward Protestants in general, Rome has extended open arms since Vatican II. No longer are Protestants heretics, but separated brethren to be welcomed back to



the fold under one shepherd, the pope. In 1961, Pope John established a Secretariat for the Promotion of Christian Unity to work toward that end.

In the meanwhile, the WCC actively pursued its program for church unity. Any ideas that it would be a loose federation of churches was quickly put to rest by its first president, Visser t' Hooft. By the time he left office the WCC was committed to nothing less than universal church union, a structural unity the world could see.

As part of the master plan, councils were to be formed in each nation. In the United States, the old Federal Council of Churches, organized in 1908, was restructured in 1950 as the National Council of Churches to encourage church unity. For the first time, home missions, foreign missions, and Christian education—functions once jealously guarded as denominational prerogatives—were granted to an ecumenical organization.

Although a majority of the Protestant Churches in the United States are claimed by the WCC, the largest American denomination is not in the fold—the Southern Baptist Convention.

The strategy for achieving visible church unity has been denominational mergers. Morrison proposed that the churches in each nation should merge to create national churches which in turn would join to form one international body.

In the United States, for example, a merger of only about 50 denominations would create a church embracing 90 percent of all Protestants in the country. This strategy has had limited success, most notably in Canada and South India. Between 1910 and 1961, 42 denominational mergers took place around the world. However, the really big mergers have never materialized.

In 1960, the then stated clerk of the Presbyterian Church, Eugene Carson Blake made a proposal for a giant church merger (He was speaking from the Episcopal pulpit of Bishop James Pike at the time). As a

result of Blake's proposal, the Consultation on Church Union (COCU) was created.

Nine major denominations are or have been involved in discussions.

tion of homosexuality and the inspiration of Scripture, have prompted division among existing groups in recent years. It would appear that merger as the route to church unity

“... the most potent ecumenical force of the 1970's is the charismatic movement... it provides a simple basis for unity—speaking in tongues.”

but 19 years later there is still no merger. In fact, the prospects are dimmer than ever for reasons we will examine a bit later.

Included in COCU are the Episcopal Church, the United Methodist Church, the United Church of Christ, the United Presbyterian Church, the Disciples of Christ, the Southern Presbyterian Church of the U.S.A., and three black Methodist denominations.

Even Britain has its version of COCU. It is called the Churches' Unity Commission (CUC). Formed in 1974, it includes all of the eight major denominations in the nation plus the Roman Catholic Church. In 1976, “Ten Propositions” outlining the first steps toward church union were submitted to the participants.

In 1978, the Anglicans and Methodists expressed positive attitudes toward the proposals. However, the Baptists and Roman Catholics rejected the propositions. In a like spirit, the small Methodist church of Scotland refused to follow through on plans to merge with the Presbyterian church.

In the United States, the present strategy seems to be to concentrate on mergers of kindred denominations. Even that has its pitfalls. In 1978, three Lutheran groups were unable to get together and broke off further merger talks. In fact, every merger or proposed merger runs the risk of creating another splinter group.

Furthermore, current issues such as ordination of women, the ques-

is a lost cause.

What has gone wrong with the ecumenical dream? Many things. First, it was a dream out of touch with reality. It was not a dream shared by the rank and file of any denomination, nor the majority of the ministers of those denominations. Although a spirit of unity sometimes prevails among churches on a local level, there is almost no support to be found at that level for church union.

There is no basis for unity and never has been. Morrison and others confessed that union could never be based upon doctrine. The philosophy expressed in the slogan “Doctrine divides, but service unites,” has also proved inadequate.

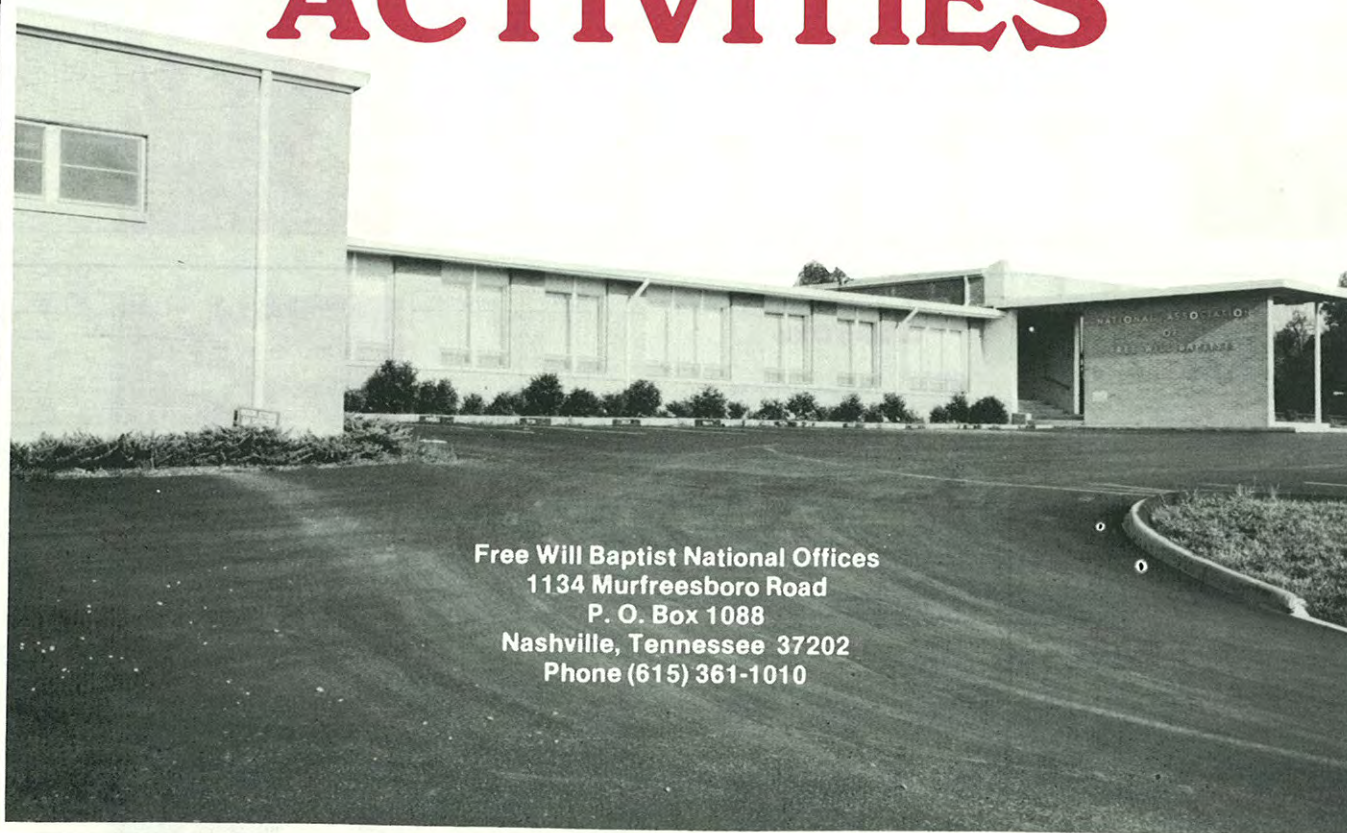
Recently, efforts have been made to structure a “theology” for the ecumenical movement, but that too is a source of contention. Some ecumenists still want some Biblical basis for unity, even a watered-down liberal, lowest common denominator type theology. Many argue that the basis for unity should simply be “Christian profession.” The most vocal group is proclaiming a new “theology”—a theology of revolution for society.

Ecumenical leaders freely admit that the movement is in trouble. For example, late in 1977 after a meeting of COCU in New Jersey, Lewis Wilkins, an organization

(continued on page 19)



1980
DENOMINATIONAL
CALENDAR
OF
ACTIVITIES



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Nashville, Tennessee 37202
Phone (615) 361-1010

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
January		1 New Years Day	2	3	4	5
EMPHASIS: WNAC Enlistment Month						
6	7	8	9	10	11	12
			Spring Semester Begins at FWBBC Jan. 9			
13	14	15	16	17	18	19
20	21	22	23	24	25	26
27	28	29	30	31		



SUNDAY	MONDAY
April	
6 Easter Sunday	7
13	14
20	21
	Foreign Missions Call-a-thon April 20
27	28

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
February					1	2
EMPHASIS: National Teacher Training Month						
3	4	5	6	7	8	9
10	11	12 Abraham Lincoln's Birthday	13	14 Valentine's Day	15	16
17	18 George Washington's Birthday	19	20	21	22	23
24	25	26	27	28	29	



SUNDAY	MONDAY
May	
4	5
11 Mother's Day	12
	FWBBC Baccalaureate Service 8:00 P.M. - May 11
18	19
25 Armed Forces Sunday	26 Memorial Day

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
March						1
EMPHASIS: Sunday School Enlargement Campaign						
2	3	4	5	6	7	8
9	10	11	12	13	14	15
FWB Bookdealers Meeting, Nashville, TN March 12-14 BIBLE CONFERENCE FREE WILL BAPTIST BIBLE COLLEGE March 9-13 Spring Vacation for FWBBC—March 13-18						
16	17 St. Patrick's Day	18	19	20	21	22
Spring Vacation for FWBBC—March 13-18						
23	24	25	26	27	28	29
30 Palm Sunday	31					



SUNDAY	MONDAY
1	2
8	9
15 Father's Day	16
22	23
29	30



SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
October			1	2	3	4
Fall Sunday School Enlargement Campaign September 28-October 26						
5	6	7	8	9	10	11
Fall Sunday School Enlargement Campaign September 28-October 26						
12 Laymen's Day	13 Columbus Day	14	15	16	17	18
Fall Sunday School Enlargement Campaign September 28-October 26						
19	20	21	22	23	24	25
Fall Sunday School Enlargement Campaign September 28-October 26						
26	27	28	29	30	31 Halloween	
Missionary Conference FWBBC Oct. 27-29						



SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
November						1
EMPHASES: Home Missions Month National Church Training Promotion Month						
2	3	4 Election Day	5	6	7	8
Home Mission Board Meeting November 3-5						
9	10	11 Veterans Day	12	13	14	15
16	17	18	19	20	21	22
23	24	25	26	27	28	29
30						
FWBBC Thanksgiving Holidays November 26-30						



SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
	1	2	3	4	5	6
Semi-Annual Foreign Missions Board Session December 1-5						
7	8	9	10	11	12	13
14	15	16	17	18	19	20
21	22	23	24	25 Christmas Day	26	27
28	29	30	31 New Year's Eve	December		
EMPHASIS: WNAC State Home Missions Emphasis						

January 1980

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September 1980

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October 1980

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November 1980

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December 1980

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spokesman, declared that the optimism of the 1960's was gone. He went on to point out eight problems faced by ecumenists.

The two most significant problems concerned the black churches and the Roman Catholic Church. It appears the black churches have definitely decided they want to maintain their separate identities. Merger would be too costly for them.

The Roman church is unwilling to be just another denomination in a group of denominations as the WCC and NCC are at present. Rome is only willing to be a party to an ecumenical movement where all roads lead to Rome. At present, the majority of Protestant groups are not ready to go that far.

Other obstacles faced by the ecumenical movement noted by Wilkins are the modern dislike of bigness, a return to local emphasis, distrust of authority and the desire to maintain traditional identities (*Christian Heritage*, December 1977, p. 16).

Even more recent and more significant, the WCC is having its problems. First, it is in a financial bind, partly due to inflation, but also due to WCC policies. In January 1979, the Central committee of the WCC met in Jamaica to deal with some of these policy problems.

The general secretary, Philip Potter, admitted that the focus of the WCC is no longer on church union. Now the chief immediate concern is with radical economic, social and political change—a new economic order, a "Christian socialism."

This theology of revolution is being promoted primarily by church leaders from the third world. Their voice is prevailing. One problem centered around a grant by a WCC agency, the Program to Combat Racism. This agency gave \$85,000 to guerilla groups in Rhodesia. As a result, three church groups including the Salvation Army, suspended their membership in the WCC. Many other groups voiced their protest, yet the grant met with general favor among the committee leaders.

Potter acknowledged that the Program to Combat Racism had also

funded violent groups in South Africa which have slain innocent people, including Christian missionaries. Not only has the WCC rejected evangelical theology, it has now abandoned the liberal ecumenical theology of church union in favor of a theology of social reconstruction by revolution.

Yet, all three views are to be found in the group. Such a condition is hardly conducive to unity or union.

What does the future hold for the ecumenical movement? It appears that the one church idea will be about as successful as the one world idea of the League of Nations and the United Nations.

Some church mergers will take place, but real strength will continue to decline among the liberal ecumenical denominations. They have constantly lost membership and vitality over the past decades.

It is likely that as the liberal ecumenical movement grows more radical, conservative factions will come out from them to form yet other groups. Traditional ecumenism is in deep trouble in terms of its original goals.

By no means is ecumenism dead however. The Roman Catholic Church may well be the chief beneficiary of the efforts of earlier Protestant ecumenists.

One of the most potent ecumenical forces of the 1970's is the charismatic movement. It has crossed denominational lines and Protestant-Roman Catholic barriers as nothing ever has.

It has even succeeded in bridging the gap between avowed evangelicals and acknowledged theological liberals. It provides a simple basis for unity, the charismatic experience—speaking in tongues.

It appears that what the greatest plans of man could not achieve may be accomplished supernaturally, by Satan himself. There is no question that the charismatic road leads to Rome either. Just as the liberals before them, the "evangelical" charismatics are rejoicing in the open attitude of Rome.

With no theology but experience untainted by revealed truth, there may yet be an apostate super-church in our time.

Those of the far left of the New Evangelical movement have also emerged as an ecumenical force in the last decade. In some ways they are the heirs of the traditional liberal, ecumenical, social-gospel tradition. Interestingly, many of these New Evangelical leaders have also shown considerable tolerance toward the charismatic movement.

It was an uncritical, compromising evangelical spirit which gave impetus to the ecumenical movement in the World Missions Conference. Now, a latter day, compromising evangelicalism is breathing new life into a faltering institutional ecumenism.

But is there not a biblical ecumenism? Is the church not one? Indeed, but it is a unity based upon revealed truth.

Union without a doctrinal basis is not biblical. The lack of union does not preclude genuine unity nor does unity require union.

Church history has demonstrated that a super church would have destroyed sound doctrine and the true church with it but for the grace of God.

The fullest manifestation of Christian unity will be realized only when Jesus comes again and the Church is triumphant over all her foes. ▲

ABOUT THE WRITER: Ralph Hampton chairs the department of Christian Ministries at Free Will Baptist Bible College, Nashville, Tennessee.

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1000 OKIES CAUCUS; VOTE \$1.2 MILLION BUDGET

OKLAHOMA CITY, OK—"This was our biggest and best state meeting ever," reflected Moderator James Murray immediately after he gavvelled to a close the four-day, 71st annual session of the Oklahoma State Association.

The October 15-18 gathering attracted more than 1000 delegates and visitors to Capital Hill Free Will Baptist Church for day sessions and Hillsdale Free Will Baptist College for evening sessions. Don Elkins, new president of Hillsdale, was formally inaugurated during a brief ceremony at the college on Tuesday evening.

Delegates approved a \$1.2 million budget for state outreach, but rejected cooperative plan allocations suggested by the National Association in favor of designated coop receipts as suggested by their state

budget committee.

After hearing reports from both national and state representatives, delegates spent most of their Thursday business session hammering at nine resolutions (including three proposed constitutional changes), of which they passed four, defeated two, tabled two and referred one to a committee. One significant resolution will be sent to the 1980 National Association calling for the annual convention to be underwritten by state fees.

The theme of the state meeting was "Building The Church". Major speakers included Oklahoma pastors Charles Biggers, Jerry Dudley, Dan Harper and foreign missionary Lonnie Sparks. The state Woman's Auxiliary, Master's Men and Ministers' Conferences preceded the state association.

FAITHFUL DEACON COMPLETES 30 YEARS ATTENDANCE



Scott.

VERNON, AL — Deacon Paschal N. Yerby, member of First Free Will Baptist Church, Vernon, has not missed a service in 30 years according to pastor Thomas Scott.

Yerby was ordained on June 5, 1949, under the leadership of Rev. A. L. Warren. He served faithfully with pastors Malone Cobb, R. P. Ritch, M. H. Hollis, Billy Sharpston and current pastor Thomas Scott.

Brother Yerby chairs the deacon board at First Church, a position he

has held 20 years. He has also been in attendance at 30 consecutive sessions of the Vernon Association in Alabama. He was Sunday School Superintendant 19 years and taught classes as well. He presently directs a men's Bible class in CTS.

Through the years, not even deaths of loved ones or out of state vacations prohibited Deacon Yerby from attending his duties. Pastor Scott says, "He is an inspiration . . . he is not afraid to step out on faith in areas that will improve the witness of his church."

Mr. Yerby's son, Richard, resigned his commission with the United States Marine Corps and is a missionary in Japan.

HEART ATTACK CLAIMS REV. DOYLE COX



WEWOKA, OK—Rev. Doyle Cox, 53, pastor of Wewoka Free Will Baptist Church, Wewoka, died September 29 of a massive heart attack suffered while shopping

with his family in Midwest City.

Brother Cox was born March 28, 1926, in Center, Oklahoma. He married Velma Voyles in 1955 and to this union was born two daughters, Teresa and Lori.

Rev. Cox answered the call to preach in 1955. He pastored Happyland, Healdton, Sulphur and Wewoka Free Will Baptist Churches. He chaired the Oklahoma State CTS Board and was active on both state and national levels in denominational outreach.

He is survived by his wife, Velma; two daughters, Mrs. Teresa Berg and Mrs. Lori Streater of Wewoka; his mother, Mrs. Estelle Cox of Ada; two sisters, Mrs. Wanda Jo Murphy and Mrs. Beverly Franz of Ada.

In a tribute to Doyle Cox, Rev. Dan Farmer, pastor of First Free Will Baptist Church, Moore, Oklahoma, wrote, "He taught many of us how to be gentlemen for he was a gentle man in so many ways. Doyle was gentleman in his genuine love for the Lord . . . in his dedication to the ministry . . . and in his humility, both in heart and life."



William Hill (L) and Pastor Johnnie Floyd, Jr., burn \$80,000 mortgage at First FWB Church, Hazel Park, Michigan.

CUBANS RALLY FOR YOUTH RETREAT

PINAR DEL RIO, CUBA—During the week of August 5-12, some 112 Cuban youths registered for two retreats conducted at Cedars of Lebanon Conference Center (before Castro, Bible Institute) about seven miles outside this city.

The invited speakers included Rev. and Mrs. Benito Rodriguez, pastor of the Ebenezer Free Will Baptist church in Miami, Florida. Rodriguez also edits *CONTACTO* magazine. During the first four days

of the week retreat, Benito and Carmen taught and preached on the theme "Striving with Christ on the Road of Life". Numerous other young people from nearby churches attended the evening services.

The last days of the week were shared with the Mixed Retreat (Youth and Adult), with the theme "Let Us Be Clothed With the Spirit". More than 140 believers signed up for this retreat with large crowds from the surrounding churches each night.

"With all of the transportation problems involved, as it was vacation time, the brethren who attended made a sacrifice," confirms Rodriguez. "The young people really lived services with their music. Many are very talented with their guitars, trumpets, accordians and the piano."

The Rodriguez' trip to their homeland was closed out with a full day of services in the Free Will Baptist church in Pinar del Rio.

TENNESSEE PASTOR DIES AT 34



MANCHESTER, TN—Rev. Donald Ernest Matthews, 34, pastor of Faith Free Will Baptist Church, Manchester, passed away Thursday, August 16, at Coffee County

General Hospital after an extended 20-month illness.

Reverend Matthews had ministered two years at Faith Church. Prior to his tenure in Manchester, he pastored four years in Peoria, Illinois.

Brother Matthews was born in Van Dyke, Michigan, to the late James Thomas and Edna Shaver Matthews, Sr. He spent most of his adult life in Humphreys County, Tennessee.

Reverend Matthews is survived by his wife, Mrs. Lillie McCarson Matthews of Manchester; four brothers, James Thomas Matthews of Kingston, Tennessee; Richard Matthews of Roseville, Michigan; Wallace C. Matthews, Sr. and Frank Matthews, both of Waverly, Tennessee; six sisters, Mrs. Iona Hams and Mrs. Pauline Brown of Waverly; Mrs. Betty Harvey, Mrs. Edith Bullington, and Mrs. Lois Buchanan of McEwen; Mrs. Vera Hartsell of Warren, Michigan.

CHURCH SCHOOL PRINCIPALS TO MEET IN NASHVILLE

NASHVILLE, TN—A number of Free Will Baptist pastors and church school principals will meet at Free Will Baptist Bible College, Nashville, Tennessee, December 3-5 for the annual Principals Conference, which is sponsored jointly by the college and the Fellowship of Free Will Baptist Christian Schools (FFWBCS).

Attorney David Gibbs of the Christian Law Association will be this year's keynote speaker. Gibbs has

been a successful defender of church schools in cases involving them with state and federal governments.

The announced program includes three addresses by Mr. Gibbs in addition to sessions on character training, self discipline, staff evaluation, testing, and the problems of new teachers. The meeting concludes with its annual business session before noon on December 5.

REVIVAL NETS 70 DECISIONS

MACON, GA—Members of White Oaks Free Will Baptist Church, Macon, experienced church and community revival October 8-14 resulting in 50 rededications and 20 conversions.

Pastor Billy Sharpston led members in five days of cottage prayer meetings in preparation for the revival effort. Evangelist John Edwards, pastor of First Free Will Baptist Church, Decatur, Alabama, preached the Georgia church into the altar.

When the week climaxed, 20 people were baptized and united with the White Oaks Church. Pastor Sharpston confirms, "We have been in a state of revival three months."

White Oaks registered over 200 in morning worship as their October revival concluded.

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FWBBC INAUGURATION ATTRACTS NATIONWIDE ATTENTION

NASHVILLE, TN — Approximately 1,000 people attended the inauguration of Dr. Charles A. Thigpen as third president of Free Will Baptist Bible College on October 2 according to Director of Publications Bert Tippet. The service was conducted in the college's Activities Building.

In addition to the nearly 600-member college family, guests included representatives from 16 colleges and universities, local Nashville government, and every department of the denomination's national ministries. Hundreds of Free Will Baptists flooded the West Nashville campus to share in the historic event. Members of Dr. and Mrs. Thigpen's families also attended.

The investiture was read by Rev. Randy Cox, chairman of the trustee board, who charged Thigpen with the same words given to him by Rev. James F. Miller in 1962 when Cox became a trustee: "Keep her true."

In his inaugural message, President Thigpen declared his support for the college's basic objective, the

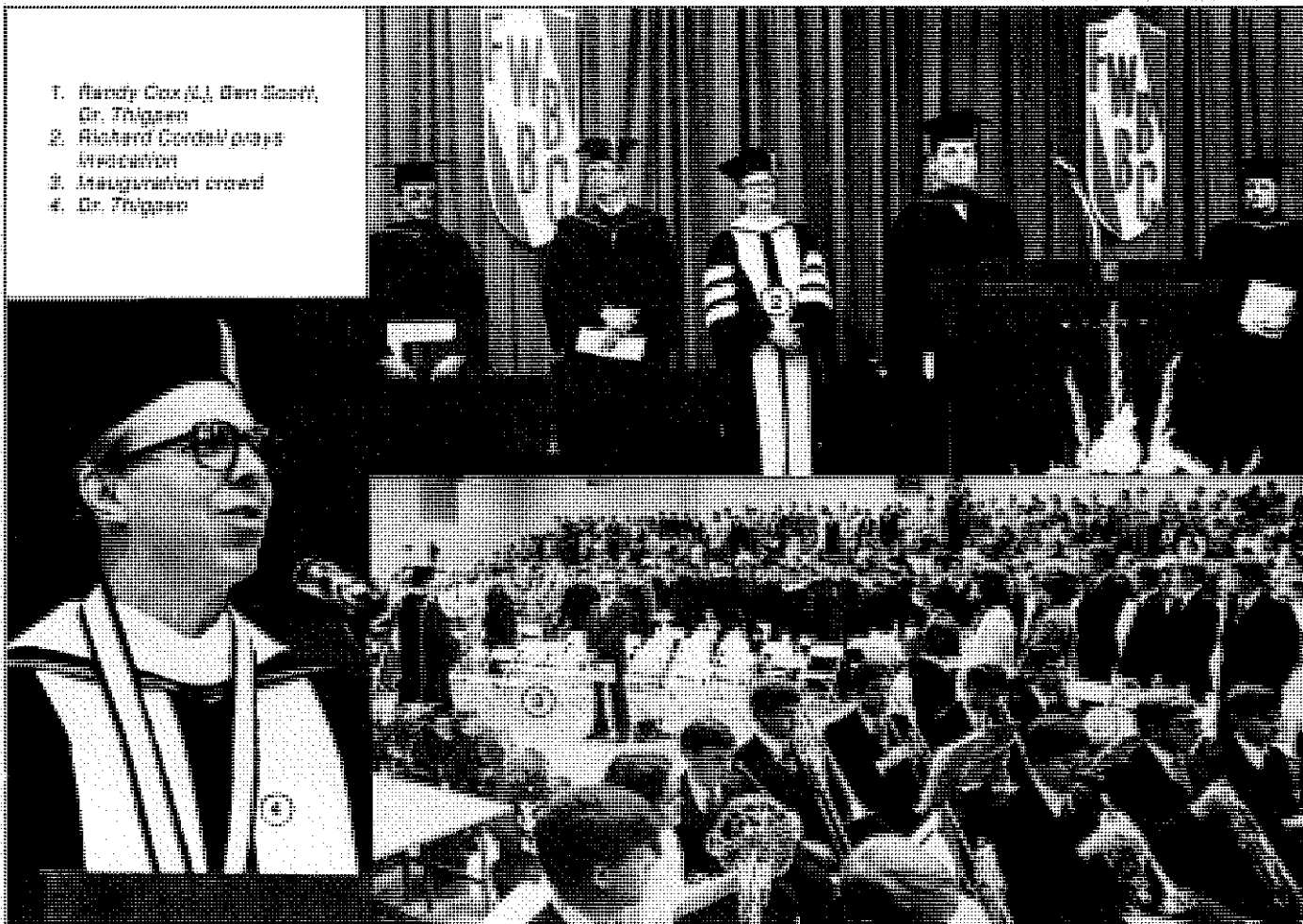
training of Christian workers. "This does not mean there will be no changes," he said. "It does mean that the objective and philosophy of the college will be carefully preserved and that changes made will be within this context."

Highlights of the program in-

cluded a brief sketch of the college's history by Chancellor L. C. Johnson and special greetings and pledges of cooperation by representatives of the Alumni Association, student body, faculty and other denominational departments. Dean Robert Picirilli presided at the service.



1. Randy Cox (L), Ben Scott, Dr. Thigpen
2. Richard Cordell prays invocation
3. Inauguration crowd
4. Dr. Thigpen





Currently . . .

They had a unanimous vote at **First FWB Church, DeSoto, MO**, on the morning of August 19. The next day **Jack Morris**, chairman of the deacon board, acted on that unanimous vote and presented the key to a new LTD Ford to pastor **Charles Miller**. Thanks for taking care of your pastor.

CONTACT readers will recall the account of a fire at **Friendship FWB Church, Coats, NC**, in May. Pastor **Troy Daniel** and members had just moved into a new church when the fire struck. Missionary **Clint Morgan** from **Ivory Coast, Africa**, read about the blaze and wrote a letter commending Pastor Daniel and his members. Morgan was on itinerate and even though the Friendship Church was meeting without a building, they gave a cash offering of \$100 and pledged \$77 dollars a month. Morgan writes that members of Friendship Church have not missed one month, even since the fire, in their faith promises.

Remember **Hurricane Frederic**? On September 13 almost seven inches of water fell on Nashville in a four and a half hour period. Some water damage was sustained in the **National Offices** as a result of the intense rainfall. Hardest hit was the Foreign Missions Office. Department Directors manned brooms and built temporary dikes to prevent further flooding in other offices.

F. W. Watson has a plaque on his living room wall from Continental Southeastern Lines Incorporated. The plaque commends Mr. Watson for driving more than two million miles without a chargeable accident. Since the plaque was awarded he has logged another quarter-million miles. Watson is a member and officer in **College Lakes FWB Church, Fayetteville, NC**. **Bobby Glenn Smith** pastors.

According to pastor **Jerry Norris** of **Calvary Fellowship FWB Church, Fenton, MO**, 20 guns were removed from his office on a recent Sunday. Easy now, don't panic! The guns were water pistols. Norris says this points at the fact that many pastors' offices are often abused. He also cited having to cart away cups and trash left in his office each Monday morning. Most pastors' offices are open areas and turn out to be catch-alls for various kinds of litter. How do you care for your pastor's office?

Something a little out of the ordinary happened at **Sunny Lane FWB Church, Del City, OK**, according to pastor **Frank Wiley**. One police officer performed a wedding ceremony for another police officer. **Stanley K. Konopinski** an officer for the Oklahoma State Welfare Department and chaplain of the Del City Police Department, performed the wedding ceremony for Officer **Linda Marshamn**. Stanley Konopinski is a member of Sunny Lane Church and a graduate of Hillsdale FWB College.

The Gospel of Grace broadcast is a radio outreach of **Grant Avenue FWB Church, Springfield, MO**. Pastor **Millard Sasser** says the program airs Monday through Friday at 4:15 p.m. on radio station KLFJ.

During the week of September 20 a letter arrived at **Gateway FWB Church, Virginia Beach, VA**. The letter was unsigned. It contained a brief statement of restitution "for the cleansing of my soul for I have broken the eighth commandment; thou shalt not steal". Pastor **Dale Burden** said the letter was accompanied by ten \$100 bills and a \$50 bill.

Here is another account of a church taking care of its pastor. Members of **North Modesto FWB Church, Modesto, CA**, presented pastor **Ronn Jackson** with a new Oldsmobile Cutless Supreme. The gift came shortly after the Jacksons shipped their son, Jason, to California Christian College for his freshman year.

Major renovations have been completed at **St. James FWB Church, Phenix City, AL**, according to pastor **Dennis Keen**. The renovations include the new ceiling, windows, wall paper, remodeling the auditorium and adding all new church furniture.

David Bryant was elected Master's Men State Senator from Ohio. Bryant is a member of **Williams Road FWB Church, Columbus, James Blair** pastors.

CONTACT congratulates **Unity FWB Church, Bradley, IL**, and pastor **John Hollis**. In September of 1973 the work averaged two in attendance. In September 1979 attendance is 73. How many hundred-fold increase is this in six years?

We don't hear very much about large offerings for visiting evangelists in our ranks. That's too bad. Perhaps pastor **Jack Cox** and members of **Mt. Calvary FWB Church, Hookerton, NC**, have begun a trend to remedy that situation. Cox reports the largest offering ever received for an evangelist was given to **Carl Nelson** at the conclusion of a recent revival meeting. Offerings totaled \$815.

They had a special praise service called "Choctaw Jubilation" at **Choctaw FWB Church, OK**. Pastor **Jerry Dudley** said the purpose of the celebration was to commemorate the completion of their new building. The worship center seats 250 plus and is located at 1265 North Henney Road.

Homecoming Revival at **Cookeville FWB Church, Cookeville, TN**, included a salute to senior adults October 14-21. On October 14, Rev. **John Welch**, 92, addressed the congregation. **Raymond Riggs** pastors.

Every office in local associations is important, but none is more so than that of association clerks. **Old Mount Zion Association** in northwest Arkansas received an impromptu gift offering of \$160 for 30-year clerk, Sister **Willie Bohannon**. Congratulations to this faithful servant. **Eldon Bagwell** moderates the association.

In a special Hillsdale FWB College service on September 9, members of **First FWB Church, Poteau, OK**, received an offering to purchase a lawnmower for the college. Later that week pastor **Richard Gallant** presented a 10-horsepower riding lawnmower to Hillsdale president **Don Elkins**.

Master's Men Director **Lloyd Olsan** spoke at **Fellowship FWB Church, Nashville, TN**, October 14. When he concluded his address the church treasurer, **Bill Foster**, presented Mr. Olsan with a \$500 check for his department. **Joe Grimmert** pastors.

Three north Georgia Free Will Baptist Churches involved themselves in a Sunday attendance contest this fall. The three included Northside FWB Church of Marietta/Atlanta, where home missionary pastor **Larry Nix** began services on March 4 of this year. Also in the contest was First FWB Church, Thomaston with pastor **Mike Creech**. Decatur FWB Church in Decatur, GA, recorded 35 first-time visitors on October 7, according to pastor **J. E. Blanton**.

Evangelist **Gilbert Pixley**, Fort Smith, AR, concluded a revival at **Bethel FWB Church, Kansas City, KS**, in October. Pastor **Elwin A. Clifton, Jr.**, says the church has a new excitement with the numerous new acquaintances as a result of the revival efforts. A number were saved and several new commitments were made.

A new **Bible Institute** was announced at **Abigail FWB Church, Vernon, FL**. Classes began September 25 with **Gerald Fowler** and **Bud Hill** as instructors.

Victory FWB Church, McMinnville, TN, set a goal eight months ago to purchase property. The first Sunday in October was designated as "Big Building Fund Sunday". Pastor **Kenneth Kirby** and members contributed almost \$2,000 toward the purchase of land on that Sunday. A professional contractor was saved on a recent Sunday and wants to help erect the new building. ▲



By Ruth Sellers

CHILD ABUSE

Where does it really start? When we hear the words "Child Abuse", we automatically think of a child being beaten or molested. Right now there is so much about child abuse in the news, because more is coming to light concerning children being murdered or molested by their parents.

But, I am thinking of another child abuser that is in most every home in America. It's the monster, television. Television is abusing the minds of our children.

I try hard to monitor or censor every program by reading ahead of time what it's going to be about. Sometimes I take a stand and say, "This program will not be seen in this house."

Have you noticed we can't even watch the news any more without

curse words? Even game shows include off-color talk. We all know even the smallest child picks up things said on TV more easily than anything parents can tell them.

I've almost come to the conclusion that all classrooms should be taught from TV instead of teachers, because today's child relates more to tube than to a teacher.

I for one am tired of it! Our TV stays off more than it's on.

James 1:21 advises, "Wherefore lay aside all filthiness and super-



OUR READERS COMMENT

REBUKES JERNIGAN AND REID

In the August issue of *CONTACT*, Wade Jernigan wrote an article on "Anointing with Oil". His use of the scripture is equal to finding error with the Word.

And in September, Garnett Reid in his "Royal Meeting" article puts the charismatic movement in league with abortion and homosexuality. Now I want all to know that I do not believe anyone has to speak in tongues to have the Holy Ghost.

But when we catalog the sign gifts of the Holy Ghost with the evils of abortion and homosexuals, we overstep our right to be fundamental in teaching. These two articles are a threat to our Christian heritage. We cannot explain away any of God's work or Word with our unbelief.

Rev. E. Reuben Bell
P.O. Box 373
Graceville, Florida

DISAGREES WITH Q AND A

In the September issue of *CONTACT*, in the question and answers, by Reverend Jernigan, part of the answers I agree with and part I disagree.

First, I do not believe in communicating with the dead. I do believe the Bible says what it means and means what it says.

I believe in miracles in the Bible. The Word of God says, "And Samuel said to Saul, why has thou disquieted me, to bring me up?" (1 Samuel 28:15). Paradise used to be below. Jesus moved paradise above when He was resurrected from the dead. It was Samuel's soul that communicated with Saul. His body was asleep.

In 1 Samuel 28:19 Samuel said, "Tomorrow you and your sons will be with me". This prophecy was fulfilled in 1 Samuel 31:6.

I do not believe in talking to the dead, but I believe the Word of God is exactly as it reads. I believe God let this happen for a purpose. Even the witch didn't expect this to happen. That is the reason she cried out with a loud voice (verse 12). She had carried on a false witchcraft before this incident.

Elmer Keener
134 North Main Street
Canton, North Carolina

PROVOKED AT QUOTE

I was very much provoked at a quote you had by William Bradford Huie in the October "Briefcase".

I live in the same town as Huie, and I can assure you he is nothing to quote after.

I enjoy most *CONTACT* articles, but why waste space quoting something by someone like him. I've lived here 10 years, and I've never seen anyone who thought well of him. He fits that quote pretty well, since he likes to feel superior.

Betty J. Goode
711 Barclift Street
Hartselle, Alabama

ACE ARTICLE UNFAIR!

It has taken me a long time to respond, but after reading "Readers Comment" in the September issue of *CONTACT* about your May article "ACE: A Pace Ahead," my concern to write you was renewed.

I felt Dr. Ken Riggs' article did more to hinder by attitude than by fact. The message I received after reading his article on ACE was that Dr. Ken Riggs' research was not complete and that he had a bad attitude toward ACE's concept toward education.

Granted, the ACE concept is not foolproof—it is only as good as those that put it into practice—however, this educational concept was not given adequate opportunity through the facts that Dr. Riggs brought out to help other educators get a clear picture of the program.

I am also concerned that *CONTACT* has printed this article, and as yet no other article has appeared to give a clearer idea of the ACE approach.

Charlie Sartor
553 E. Nectarine
Oxnard, California



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

COOPERATIVE PLAN OF SUPPORT September, 1979

RECEIPTS:

State	Sept. '79 Co-op	Sept. '79 Design.	Sept. '78	Yr. to date
Alabama	\$ 19.90	\$. . .	\$. . .	\$ 1,433.95
Arizona	176.52	. . .	322.56	853.49
Arkansas	3,478.85	. . .	5,571.15	24,965.22
California	1,114.17	(1,114.17)	724.38	8,138.95
Florida	. . .	. . .	224.64	2,608.50
Georgia	438.00	(133.00)	115.00	3,597.17
Idaho	. . .	. . .	136.75	371.72
Illinois	983.32	. . .	1,345.35	12,192.47
Indiana	. . .	. . .	. . .	100.00
Iowa	. . .	. . .	220.43	1,603.68
Kansas	223.06	. . .	185.03	1,248.58
Kentucky	. . .	. . .	. . .	475.00
Maryland	111.15	. . .	140.00	641.15
Michigan	. . .	. . .	. . .	3,792.45
Mississippi	. . .	. . .	87.86	950.47
Missouri	6,068.44	(6,068.44)	5,027.08	41,286.20
New Mexico	. . .	. . .	. . .	107.08
North Carolina	162.00	(87.00)	420.00	2,104.72
Northwest Assoc.	. . .	. . .	. . .	531.99
Ohio	10.00	. . .	. . .	6,346.72
Oklahoma	5,261.74	(5,243.41)	. . .	43,932.20
Tennessee	1,241.62	. . .	814.09	8,272.17
Texas	105.36	. . .	317.21	2,076.00
Virginia	89.28	. . .	61.78	467.77
West Virginia	8.96	. . .	20.20	82.87
Virgin Islands	143.84	. . .	. . .	1,731.84
Totals	\$ 19,636.21		\$ 15,733.51	\$ 169,912.36

DISBURSEMENTS:

Executive Office	\$ 6,836.71	\$(1,983.44)	\$ 6,246.54	\$ 59,550.66
Foreign Missions	4,825.38	(4,197.13)	2,904.13	40,595.30
Bible College	3,106.95	(2,529.57)	2,356.04	25,836.62
Home Missions	2,660.88	(2,370.70)	1,898.39	22,539.96
Church Training Serv.	. . .	. . .	1,133.46	. . .
Retirement and Ins.	1,430.44	(1,013.73)	878.43	13,528.29
Master's Men	638.49	(424.79)	227.66	6,477.10
Commission on Theo- logical Liberalism	137.36	(126.66)	88.86	1,206.08
Other Ministries	. . .	. . .	. . .	178.35
Totals	\$ 19,636.21		\$ 15,733.51	\$ 169,912.36

fluity of naughtiness, and receive with meekness the engrafted word, which is able to save your souls."

A child's mind is so precious, let's not let TV distort it.

Push the button parents. Let's stand up and fight for some good home entertainment or none at all!

Without TV you really get to know your family. There's even spare time for extra devotions.

ABOUT THE WRITER: Ruth Sellers is a member of Howards Grove Free Will Baptist Church, Cottonwood, Alabama. ▲

ADVOCATES TOLERANCE OF THE INTOLERANT

Your article "Kerosene Cross" (October, CONTACT) was very pointed and timely. In the October, 1979 issue of NEWSWEEK a Justice Department report cites a 450 percent increase in racial vandalism in a recent six-month period. This country is getting too tense again where racial questions are concerned.

One suggestion about your article. "Kerosene Cross" had an excited and excitable tone that almost might suggest that when a KKK member burns a cross we should burn his sheet. Tit for tat won't glorify Christ in this foray.

Klanism stems from an overblown opinion of oneself based on the supposed inferiority of another. This ugly side of human nature finds expression within the church, pastor toward congregation and vice versa. Such an attitude should be outlawed everywhere.

But since attitudes are hard to legislate, we may do well to try by example to teach attitudes acceptable to God. We might start by refusing to be so intolerant of the intolerant that we will not seek through the Gospel and the grace of God to win them one by one to the Christ who came not to condemn the world "but that the world through him might be saved" (see John 3:17).

Millard Johnson, Pastor
Trinity Free Will Baptist Church
Erwin, Tennessee

By William S. Deal

“**F**or unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord” (Luke 2:11).

About seven centuries before this grand event, the old prophet Isaiah picked up the telescope of divine revelation and looking through it saw the Babe of Bethlehem coming into the world. Laying the scope down lightly he cried, “For unto us a child is born, unto us a Son is given.”

Then he adds in the same breath, “And the government shall be upon His shoulder: and His name shall be called Wonderful, Counselor, the Mighty God, the Everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace” (Isaiah 9:6). What words of divine description! What ascriptions of glorious terms to the Ancient of Days now come to dwell among men and make His home with the meek and the lowly.

IS COMMERCIALIZATION GOOD?

Christmas has become so commercialized that many feel it has lost much of its significance to most people. Over-commercialization of any event may tend to obscure its original purpose and meaning, but it does not invalidate its value nor encrust its reality with a decadence which makes the day any less glorious to those who appreciate its meaning.

What holiday in United States history has not been so commercialized? Take July Fourth. Look at the huge sales of fireworks and other types of sales.

Memorial Day likewise is also

And what about Mother's Day? And Father's Day, though not as much, is also commercialized.

Easter is so loaded with commercialism that few children outside the church relationships ever know the significance of the day. But do all these associations lessen the true meaning of the day?

And what about each Sunday? How much more can a day be commercialized and paganized that is the Lord's day? And yet, multiplied millions still worship the Christ on this day and give Him encrusted with a commercialism.

thanksgiving, wonder and loving reverence, all come to Him who came so long ago on that peaceful winter's night, in far away Palestine.

Palestine, smallest of all lands in many respects; insignificant and hardly newsworthy, except that Jew and Arab quarrel there and occasionally fire guns at each other. Yet, the candle of the Lord was lighted there nearly two thousand years ago.

And since that lone night so long ago, mankind has hardly ceased to mention, now quietly, now noisily; then with quill and pen, now with

Christmas—

glory and adoration as much as if the outside world all stood still while Christians reverently bow and worship in their sanctuaries.

I do not too strongly object any more to the fact that the world adds attraction to the birthday of the King of Kings by its commercialization of the glorious event which made this day possible. It may be that in this way it adds something to the fact of joy and peace and happiness which comes through the advent of the Christ child into the world.

There is no commercialization of the birthday of Mohammed or of Confucius or Buddha. And because there is not, they are also practically unknown. No one flies their flags, shouts their praise or wears anything to signify that they ever lived. No one recites any poetry or tells any great, heartwarming stories of their birthdays. No one sings any songs that announce their advent into the world of men.

MARVEL AT THE DAY

So, what do we have in the birthday of the Saviour-King? Adulation, honor, worship, praise,

thunderous presses all over the world, the gladsome notes of joy that began to be sung that night.

Angel choirs have been disbanded and returned into heaven. Human choirs have been organized, practiced and set to singing. From the lowly hymn of Luther, German Reformer—“Away in the Manger”—to the mighty strains of the rich and powerful music maestro Handel, with his famous “Handel's Messiah,” they sing for hours to millions all over the world, wherever the Gospel is preached and the Christ child's story is told.

Hundreds of millions of happy children march around millions of Christmas trees on Christmas Eve and fall into peaceful slumber on that holy night. They awake on that blessed Christmas morn with laughter, songs and endless songs of joy in their hearts and on their tongues.

After billions of toys have been enjoyed, carressed, explored, examined and often partially destroyed in their childish glee, then they set off for churches by the millions more. There, robed for the occasion, they recite joyous poems



and sing gladsome refrains as old as the centuries and as gladsome as the heart of angels who first sang of such joys and splendors.

Their hearts are filled with overwhelming joys, their eyes dance with an unearthly delight, and their whole lives become enthralled and caught up in the most spectacular drama on earth—the Christmas Story—told in poetry and in prose, sung with joys and quiet happiness, preached by older men, dramatized by older people in ten thousands of forms, manners and ways.

and freedom from worry and tension and anxiety be found as in one Christmas Day? And will this ever cease, with all its blessings and boons of joyful pleasure? No, it can never cease. For Christmas is born in the heart of every child, and it lives immortal in the bosom of every adult, so long as Christ lives in his heart and is not crucified by the selfish, cruel world.

Away with the cynics who would destroy our peace and glory of the blessed Christmastide. He yells into our ears, "But look at all the misery and tragedy, hunger and

not in ceasing to glorify the Christ child on this His Holy Day. The answer lies rather in sharing all these joys and blessings with all the world, as fast and as long as



the World's Happiest Day

Then when the worship, songs, poetry, sermons, cantatas and concerts, and dramatizations are all over, they head for homes again. There they feast from tables groaning with loads of the richest foods. And they top this off with dainties of all kinds—sweets and desserts and delicious puddings and drinks and joyful stories of long ago and even just yesterday.

The afternoon wears away far too fast. Then falls the evening tide, crowded with tens of thousands of other pleasant and good activities. There are song, sermon, drama and other forms of honoring the Christ child and continuing to re-tell His story, as told many millions of times now by millions of people, all over the world, across all the Christian ages.

Finally, when everyone is safely at home and the night shades are drawn, one of the greatest, most happy and blessed days of all the year ends peacefully in dreamland slumber.

ANSWER THE CYNIC

Where in all the world can so much happiness and joy and peace

loneliness all over the world around you? How can you make merry and feast and revel in your Christian joys when all this worldwide sorrow and trouble is shouting to high heaven for your attention? What kind of Christian must you be to act in this way, while hundreds of millions grind in their misery and shame, unreached by your Christmas message and untouched by your Christ child's love and compassion?"

Let us answer the cynic: How much will it help all earth's needy millions if we close off all the Christmas joys; if we refuse to tell the story anymore, anywhere on earth; if we silence the children's songs and poetry of the Saviour-King; if we turn out the lights on the Christmas trees and stop the services in all the churches?

What will it help if we try to dismiss the Christmas story as just so much fantasy and stop the songs and feasts of happiness on Christmas Day? What will the world gain by all this negativism? Where will its children turn for even the faintest rays of hope or dimmest sounds of new joy?

No, Mr. Cynic, the answer lies

we ever can.

What if every doctor decided he could no longer eat or sleep as long as suffering, disease and death stalked the land? What if every law officer decided he could never eat or sleep as long as any crime was unsolved? And if every minister decided he could never sleep again as long as mankind is suffering, sinful and sick?

What would happen to all these people? And to the world for whom they died? You know the answer.

Likewise, we cannot kill Christmas to help the world. We had better celebrate Christmas in the spirit in which it was intended then rush out to the world with portions of its joy and peace and in this way do our share to help redeem and save and bring the world to God.

In this way, let us celebrate Christmas so that all the world will ultimately hear this great story and join in its celebration. ▲

ABOUT THE WRITER: Dr. William Deal holds the M.A. and Th.D. degrees. He has written 30 books, hundreds of articles and features for many magazines and papers and is a California state licensed counselor in Marriage, Family and Youth Relations.

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— Compiled by CONTACT Staff

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**DON'T MISS
"GREED AND ITS
CONSEQUENCES"**

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THE FRUIT OF THE SPIRIT

PART VI



Self Discipline

By Robert Picirilli

Included in the list of the fruit of the spirit in Galatians 5:22, 23 is "temperance," which means self control or self discipline.

This quality is essential to success in nearly any walk of life. It is also essential to happiness, because it translates into self respect. More important, it is one of the marks of spiritual maturity. Peter includes temperance/self discipline as one of the things a growing believer adds in with his faith (see II Peter 1:6).

The word occurs only in four more places in the New Testament: Acts 24:25, I Corinthians 7:9, Titus 1:8, I Corinthians 9:24-27. The last reference is the most helpful for understanding the word. There Paul gives both an illustration and a statement of his own practice. The illustration is a good athlete: "One who is contending as an athlete practices self discipline in all things."

We know that to be so. One who excels as an athlete must practice self denial of certain freedoms and pleasures others may enjoy. He disciplines himself with an incredible regimen of training, putting in endless hours of painful practice and exercise. Why? Because the goal (v. 25: "a corruptible crown") is everything; he is willing to pay the price of discipline required.

Just so, Paul says, "I keep my body under, and bring it into subjection." "Keep under" literally means to buffet, beat: Paul beats his body into submission (figuratively, of course) and makes it serve him, not he it.

Such is the nature of self discipline. In a sense, one almost recognizes two "selves" within himself: mind versus body; will versus passion; spirit versus flesh. Call it what you will, self discipline forces the lower to submit to the higher, the temporary to the permanent, the feelings to the will, the pleasurable to the profitable, the whim to the carefully considered thing.

Self discipline is self mastery,

overcoming rather than being overcome, controlling rather than being controlled, ruling by will power rather than being a victim of emotions, wants or circumstances.

We need to learn self discipline in many ways, from little things to big ones. Brushing your teeth regularly or not biting your nails are matters for self discipline in personal habits. Self discipline of the physical appetites keeps you from overeating or sleeping too late.

Routine responsibilities like washing the dishes or grading papers are easier with self discipline. In self discipline there is mastery of the passions, like wrath or lust. Even in the spiritual disciplines like prayer and Bible study, the secret of success is usually self discipline.

Analyze your own circumstances: do you need more self discipline? Study the biblical picture. Define specific areas where you need self discipline. Pray about those very matters. Then obey God by making it your will to discipline yourself. ▲

CONTACT

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TO CHERISHED OLD FRIENDS

*We would
like to take
this opportunity to
wish all our friends and
constituency all the joy,
the hope and the wonder of
Christmas. May the meaning
of the holiday be deeper,
its friendships stronger,
its hopes brighter, as
it comes to you
during the
New Year*

CONTACT STAFF

AND VALUED NEW FRIENDS