

APRIL, 1981

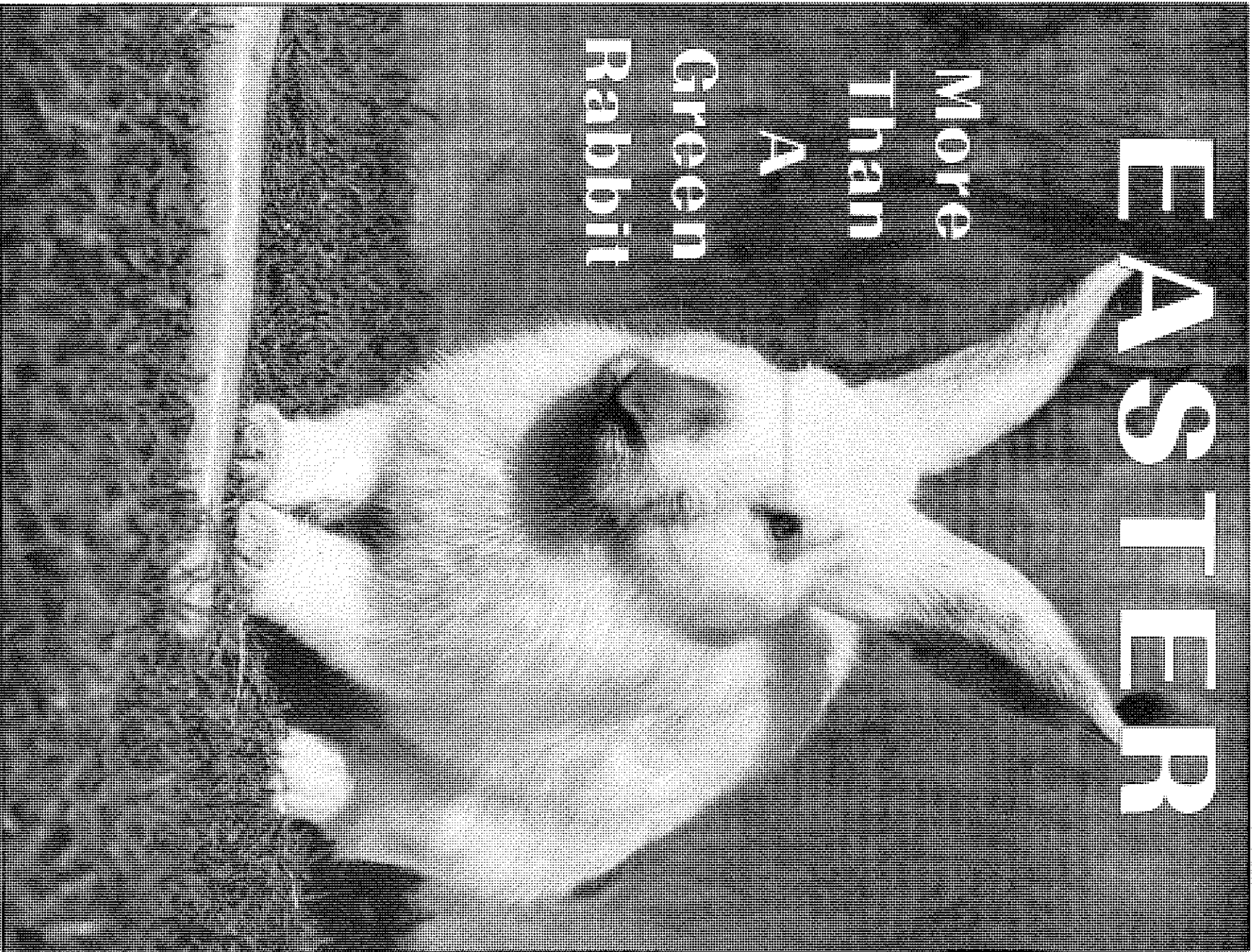
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OFFICIAL PUBLICATION OF THE NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF FREE WILL BAPTISTS



EASTER More Than A Green Rabbit



By J. D. O'Donnell

Easter is here. What are your main thoughts about Easter? The Easter parade?

All can't take part in the New York Easter parade when Fifth Avenue is blocked off and thousands of people march to show off their Easter finery. But they do make one of their semi-annual visits to church to do the same.

In the minds of some, Easter season is associated with carnivals, masquerades and feasts that start six weeks before Easter (Lent season) and climax on Easter Sunday. Mardi Gras (Fat Tuesday) begins this Lent season. Mardi Gras is a time of hilarity and looseness (costume balls, parades and celebrations) preceding the self-denial of the Lent season.

To many Easter is a much quieter season. They enjoy painting and dyeing eggs. Colored rabbits or baby chicks have become a staple item around Easter season. Baskets of chocolate or candy eggs, rabbits and chicks are part of the world's commercialization of Easter.

Next to Christmas, Easter is probably the most commercialized Christian holiday or holy day.

Many things associated with Easter had origins in heathen worship. The very name Easter appears to have come from *Eostre*, a Teutonic goddess of spring, or from *Eostur*, the Teutonic festival of spring. (The word Easter in Acts 12:4 is a translation of the Hebrew word for Passover.)

The Norse celebrated this festival at the vernal equinox when nature is in resurrection after winter. The rabbit and the chicken, noted for their reproducing capacity, and the egg likewise such a symbol were a part of their celebration. Colored eggs symbolized the rays of the returning sun and the northern lights.

Both Greek and Latin religions had myths of a goddess who returned at this time from the nether regions to the light of day. In Egypt the rabbit symbolized birth and new life.

But wait before you do away with the Easter season. The church has taken this season and the accompanying symbols and has given them somewhat of a Christian significance.

It is true that, if the Easter bunny bringing Easter eggs is the main thrust of our Easter, we are wrong. If bright clothing, green rabbits and colored eggs are the height of our celebration of the season, we have missed the point. The symbols have replaced the reality, and that is not right.

The symbols of Easter are legitimate only when they represent and call to mind the new life afforded by the resurrection of Jesus Christ and the joy the resurrection brings to us. Easter should be a time of great rejoicing at the victory Jesus achieved over death for us. If the symbols call this to mind and give testimony to this fact, they can be meaningful.

But Easter is more than an Easter bonnet or a green rabbit! Easter is the message: "The Lord is risen indeed" (Luke 24:34). Look at the record. This is one of the most attested facts in ancient history.

"That he was buried, and that he rose again the third day according to the scriptures: and that he was seen of Cephas, then of the twelve: after that, he was seen of above five hundred brethren at once: of whom the greater part remain unto this present, but some are fallen asleep. After that, he was seen of James: then of all the apostles. And last of all he was seen of me also, as of one born out of due time" (1 Corinthians 15:4-8).

Peter, James, and John forgot the Transfiguration and Jesus' prediction of His death and resurrection. Faithful women came to His grave unexpectant of a resurrected Lord. The rest of His disciples were downhearted, disappointed and discouraged.

Only His enemies believed. They set guards to watch. But the unexpected happened and the fact had definite witnesses.

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RABBIT (From page 3)

Easter's message establishes the truth of Christianity. Jesus was declared to be the Son of God by the resurrection. The truth of all His teachings was established by the Easter miracle.

Easter, not the Cross, consummated His work of redemption. A crucifix with Jesus hanging on a cross has no place in a Protestant church. He was "delivered for our sins and was raised again for our justification."

"He died for all, that they which live should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto him which died for them and rose again." He "lay down his life that he might take it again."

The redemption message is "if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved."

Easter is also the pledge of the resurrection of God's people: "Now is Christ risen from the dead and become the firstfruits of them that slept." Paul repeats that pledge by saying: "If we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them which sleep in Jesus will God bring with him."

Easter is the pledge of believers to live a risen, changed life: "Therefore we were buried with him by baptism into death, and, like as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life."

We should live in fellowship with the living Christ. One theologian has given these emphases about the resurrected Christ:

(1) To live in a world where Christ is risen is to live in a world where Christ is our contemporary.

(2) To live in a world where Jesus is risen is to live in a world where Jesus is Lord.

(3) To live in a world where Jesus is risen is to live in a world where Jesus is inescapable.

(4) To live in a world where Jesus is risen is to live in a world where Jesus is at work.

The Easter message is an everyday message. Every first day of the week (Sunday) is in honor of His resurrection. Our task is to preach the living Christ and to invite men and women to an encounter with the risen and reign-



*Thank You for
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COOPERATIVE PLAN OF SUPPORT January 1981

RECEIPTS:

State	Jan. '81 Coop	Design.	Jan. '80	Yr. to Date
Alabama	\$ 366.97	\$...	\$ 350.64	\$ 366.97
Arkansas	2,693.43	...	1,529.27	2,693.43
California	1,265.78	...	701.39	1,265.78
Florida	2,496.34	(57.30)	1,506.73	2,496.34
Georgia	793.88	(65.00)	742.63	793.88
Illinois	1,057.52	...	1,636.83	1,057.52
Kansas	245.05	...	124.90	245.05
Maryland	40.00	...	218.11	40.00
Michigan	1,581.00	(1,581.00)	1,655.01	1,581.00
Mississippi	103.12	103.12
Missouri	5,333.95	(5,333.95)	4,305.08	5,333.95
North Carolina	375.70	...	315.13	375.70
Ohio	544.44	...	880.40	544.44
Oklahoma	7,892.11	(7,852.54)	13,605.04	7,892.11
Tennessee	639.37	...	1,300.32	639.37
Texas	60.00	...	139.68	60.00
Virgin Islands	162.00	(162.00)	329.50	162.00
Virginia	2,216.46	...	105.50	2,216.46
Washington	30.00	...
West Virginia	9.85	...	10.17	9.85
Totals	<u>\$27,876.97</u>		<u>\$29,486.33</u>	<u>\$27,876.97</u>

Disbursements

Executive Office	\$ 9,197.88	\$(2,775.82)	\$ 5,350.69	\$ 9,197.88
Foreign Missions	6,006.38	(4,373.59)	8,915.69	6,006.38
Bible College	4,522.27	(2,889.48)	5,670.83	4,522.27
Home Missions	4,178.65	(2,962.08)	5,543.17	4,178.65
Retirement & Ins.	2,499.04	(1,314.47)	2,565.25	2,499.04
Master's Men	1,271.47	(631.16)	1,197.13	1,271.47
Commission on Theological Lib.	201.28	(105.19)	243.57	201.28
Totals	<u>\$27,876.97</u>		<u>\$29,486.33</u>	<u>\$27,876.97</u>

ing Lord of life and history.

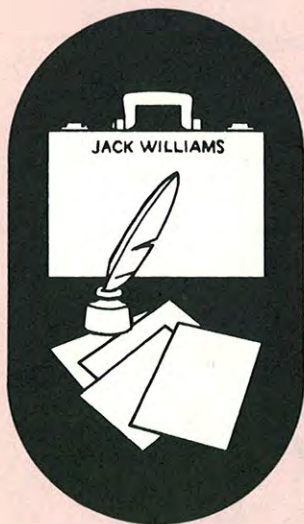
Dyed rabbits are cute. Colored eggs are beautiful. But the Easter story is too precious to be shadowed behind beaks and bunnies.

Easter tells of a living Christ who is in our midst and is pleading for men to acknowledge Him as a living Savior.

Pink, blue and green rabbits and purple and red chickens are a poor substitute for the greatest truth in the Bible: "Now is Christ risen from the dead." ▲

ABOUT THE WRITER: Dr. J. D. O'Donnell is president of Bethel Bible Institute, Paintsville, Kentucky.

Briefcase



Before You Leave...

The late Rev. E. H. Lindquist, minister in the Evangelical Free Church, captured the essence of denominational loyalty when he wrote:

I marvel and have done so for many years when I notice how some Free Church people consider their own church, work, mission, system, denomination and everything connected therewith as very mediocre, while everyone and everything else is so remarkably wonderful.

The neighbors' preachers, meetings, singers, services, systems—oh, just everything is SO much better. And if perchance they can find some excuse for slipping away at intervals to their interesting undertakings, they certainly do it.

Other conventions do seem to run smoother than ours when you visit their exhibits, attend their worship services, and then leave before it's time to vote on next year's budgets.

Even their kids seem better be-

haved. Never mind that you didn't see last night's scuffle to bed them down or this morning's struggle through the oatmeal and orange juice.

Another group's work stands taller than ours, because you believe everything their publications say and won't subscribe to your own denominational magazine to find out what's going on with us.

Their preachers sound like heavy-weights, because you only hear them at some conference with a big cheering section delivering sermons they've polished and preached at similar conferences in 20 states. Most any preacher can get it together for a four-part series if he practices the same material often enough.

I am amazed that the average Free Will Baptist knows more about and seems more interested in the major independents than he does his own denomination.

It's no trouble rounding up a gaggle of Free Will Baptists to defend the politics of Jerry Falwell or the methods of Jack Hyles—those same Free Will Baptists seldom have a kind word to say about their own denomination.

By all means, be charitable toward non-Free Will Baptists. But by all means, be at least as charitable toward the brotherhood.

Every so often, pockets of embarrassed Free Will Baptists surface who remove the name "Free Will Baptist" from their church signs—in order to, so they say, be more acceptable to the community.

Some apologize for the doctrine, criticize our financial system, threaten to lead denominational walkouts and hoot for independent causes.

I don't believe you should hold a gun on a fellow and force him to be a Free Will Baptist.

If you're that disillusioned with the denomination, take a hike! But before you go, here's a few things you'll want to leave behind.

First, leave us your heritage. Don't walk away still claiming to be part of a gospel-preaching movement that's been in America 250 years.

Leave the name, too. "Free Will Baptist" doesn't belong on an independent, non-denominational organization. We're a family.

On your way out, try to find some new friends. Your old ones are all Free

Will Baptists. We gave you our friendship because you flew the same "Free Will, Free Grace, Free Salvation" colors.

If you're a preacher, drop your ordination papers by my office. Get somebody else to ordain you.

Oh, and please leave us your church. Remember, it's just you who wants to go. Don't be a thief and steal a Free Will Baptist church. Go start your own.

Stuff your education in a sack and return it to FWBBC. Your B.A. degree was paid for by Free Will Baptist tithes.

And send back your Free Will Baptist Treatise. That particular doctrine belongs to a special group of people with whom you no longer wish to be identified.

While you're at it, better let me have your Free Will Baptist Hymnal and that stack of Sunday School literature you ordered from Randall House.

I'm sure you won't mind if we stop your subscriptions to CONTACT, HEARTBEAT, MISSION-GRAMS, etc. Tell your children they can no longer attend the National Youth Conference. Youth camp is cancelled until you have time to build your own camp.

Do disband your Woman's Auxiliary and shred your Master's Men charter.

And before I forget it, would you mind resigning from the National Sunday School Board or is it the Commission on Theological Liberalism?

One last thing. Since Free Will Baptists have never done anything for you, you'll probably want to declare your salvation experience invalid. It was some Free Will Baptist preacher who brought you to Jesus, wasn't it?

Former National Moderator Dr. J. D. O'Donnell asked the right question in the February, 1981 issue of *Bethel Echoes*, "If you were accused of being a Free Will Baptist in a court of law, would there be enough evidence to convict you?"

There is a price to pay for being a Free Will Baptist. I, for one, think there's a greater price paid by those who walk away.

If we're going to pick fruit in the Free Will Baptist vineyard, let's slap the Free Will Baptist label on everything that's ours and quit acting like we draw wages from the big independent spread across the fence. ▲



Come Weep With Me

By Odie Nunley

Ministering to the bereaved is a ministry in which everyone can serve. One of the ways God shows His love is through the believer and this can be expressed in many different acts of kindness.

"Cancer! But he's just a baby!" My first experience with death came to me as a young boy. My nephew was diagnosed with cancer when he was only a few months old. I saw my sister and her family struggle through a year and a half of much uncertainty before his death.

The phone rang, bringing the sad

news of a best friend's death. "It happened suddenly on the basketball court. He didn't suffer."

Still it was hard to understand why God would take someone with such a zest for living. Newly married, president of the student body, seemingly well prepared to serve the Lord—his death seemed such a waste.

It was a beautiful spring day. Driving home after work, I was making plans and dreaming about buying our first house. My dreaming came to an abrupt halt as the fire chief met me and said, "You need to go right to the hospital. Your son has been burned."

A beautiful healthy almost three-year-old. My first born. I wanted to cry, "No, Lord!" At the hospital I

found my wife with a pastor friend and neighbors. In less than 24 hours our son was dead. Our lives would never again be the same.

Most of the following days are a blur. But some things stand out—the Christian friends who sat with us, our families who came as soon as they heard, the salesman who gave us his credit card to make necessary long distance calls, people who came by our home before and after the funeral, friends who cleaned the house and left food, friends and relatives recalling precious things about our little Paul, those who wept with us for our loss.

Through these encounters with death and other experiences of sorrow to come, I learned valuable lessons

that would benefit others to whom I would minister.

Identify With Them

There are many ways to minister to the bereaved. And the first is that we must be able to identify with them.

None of us could go to every situation and say, "I know just how you feel," because in truth, we do not know just how they feel. In some way we can weep with them.

When Jesus came to the home of Mary and Martha and was told that their brother, Lazarus, had died, "He groaned in the spirit and was troubled." John 11:35 says, "Jesus wept."

When others saw His tears they said, "Behold, how he loved him." When our Lord saw how deeply His friends were grieving, His heart was touched and He identified with them.

Allow Them To Mourn

After the funeral of our young son, we returned to our home. I stood at the back door looking in the corner of our yard where Paul spent so much time playing.

I was crying when my precious wife came up behind me and said, "You need to get a hold on yourself. We must be strong and set a good example because we are believers."

We have since realized our mistake. Mourning is a very necessary and healthy step to take in recovering from the loss of a loved one. Many times, meaning well, we are too quick to urge our friends to stop their grieving. The grieving process varies in length according to individuals and situations.

We need to recognize the typical stages of grief. First, there is shock, then emotional release. Some don't have the ability to concentrate on anything but the lost object. We need to be aware of symptoms of physical distress, feelings of depression and gloom.

Often there are feelings of guilt, sometimes hostility. There may be an unwillingness to participate in the usual patterns of conduct. The healing process begins to emerge when there is a gradual realization that withdrawal from life is unrealistic. The final stage is readjustment to reality.

We need to be there to help our

friends through this time, not just after the funeral, but for many days to come. When Moses died, the children of Israel wept for 30 days.

The normal grief process should not last more than two years, in most cases only a few months.

Be A Good Listener

When you arrive at the house where friends and family have gathered, go quickly to the relatives of the deceased that you know and express yourself in a few words, if nothing more than, "I am sorry . . . I love you . . . God bless you."

Be careful not to get sidetracked with other friends before you get to the family. A person should say the good things that he remembers about the person who has died.

It means much to a family when a friend can recall some special event with the deceased while he was living.

Sometimes a family member may or may not want to talk about the death. If they do want to talk we might just say, "Tell me about it." We must be careful lest we be guilty of interrogating.

If this was a death where the deceased was terminally ill and the family was prepared, there is not the same shock as when the death was sudden or the result of an accident. If it was an accident and a member of the family was present or involved, they may have great feelings of guilt.

In this case be careful not to ask questions such as, "Did you take him to the doctor? Did you give him this or that?" They feel badly enough without having to answer such questions.

Don't forget the children in the family. Listen to them and be careful in answering their questions.

Use caution in telling children that a person who has died has only gone to sleep, for this may cause them to fear going to sleep and not waking up.

Be careful in telling children that Jesus took them to heaven with Him, for they may decide they want nothing to do with Jesus if He caused such hurt.

It may be best to simply tell them the loved one has died. This is just his body, the house he lived in on earth, and his soul lives on; and that someday

we will all be together again.

Go To The Funeral

What an impact it may have on the elderly when they go to the funeral of a friend and so few people are there. They may say to themselves, "When I die, who will come to my funeral? It looks as if no one cares."

Funeral attendance differs over our great country, but it seems that we are seeing a decline in attendance. People are too busy, or they have jobs and think they can't afford to take a couple of hours off work.

Little do they realize how important it is to the family to have them at the funeral. Don't forget to sign the register book. Though the family may not realize you are there during the service, when they return home and look through the register, it makes them feel good to know you were there.

At my Dad's funeral, one of the things I most remember is that the men who worked with Dad or knew him would introduce themselves, and instead of expressing so much sympathy, they shared some experience they had with my dad or what they remembered best about him. This had a lasting impression on me.

Send A Card Or Call

You may not think a card will mean much, but it means more than you may ever know. We saved all the cards sent after the death of our son, and years after his death have re-read them. It gives us a warm feeling to know people care.

When the death or funeral is in another city or state and it is impossible to attend, a phone call, which is something very personal, will be long remembered.

If you are willing to give a part of yourself and be directed by the Lord, He will minister through you by comforting and loving the bereaved. You will find your life richer and more meaningful.

When you hear the bereaved cry, "Come weep with me," be there. ▲

ABOUT THE WRITER: Rev. Odie Nunley is in his 10th year as pastor at Guymon Free Will Baptist Church, Guymon, Oklahoma.

By Wade Jernigan

Have you ever attended a quarterly meeting? I have.

Do you believe they serve a useful purpose? I do.

Give me 10 minutes of your time and I'll tell you why.

Quarterly meeting is the term that shall be employed in this writing to designate that every three-month-coming-together of area Free Will Baptist churches for fellowship, friendship, and followship.

There are certain sections of the denomination that call these meetings Fifth Sunday Meeting, Union Meeting and Quarterly Conference.

FORESHADOWED

Quarterly meetings have been foreshadowed by certain "together" activities of the first century Church.

When Peter was called into question for preaching the Gospel to the Gentiles (Acts 11), the issues seem to have been settled in a meeting that was broader than just the Jerusalem Church. Luke states in Acts 11:1 that the apostles and brethren *that were in Judea* were all aware of Peter's difficulty.

He then (v. 2) points out that they who were of the circumcision contended with him. Whereupon Simon was given the privilege to "rehearse the matter from the beginning and to expound in order" (v. 4). This meeting of the "apostles and brethren" gave a floor upon which could be discussed the differences that existed, the truth that had been revealed and a settling of the matter.

Likewise, Paul and Barnabas got into difficulty for associating with the Gentiles and not requiring circumcision (Acts 15:2). Antioch Church sent them to Jerusalem to the Conference.

That this was a rather broad meeting of the brethren can be seen by what's written in verses 4 and 6. "When they were received of *the Church*, and of *the Apostles* and *elders* . . . and the apostles and elders came together to consider of

this matter."

At the end of the debate, James, who seemed to be the moderator, addressed himself to the assembly and recommended that letters be written explaining the decision of "the whole church" (Acts 15:22).

FOUNDING

Whether the early denominational fathers sought a scriptural basis for the quarterly meeting, history does not record. But that they were strong believers in associated

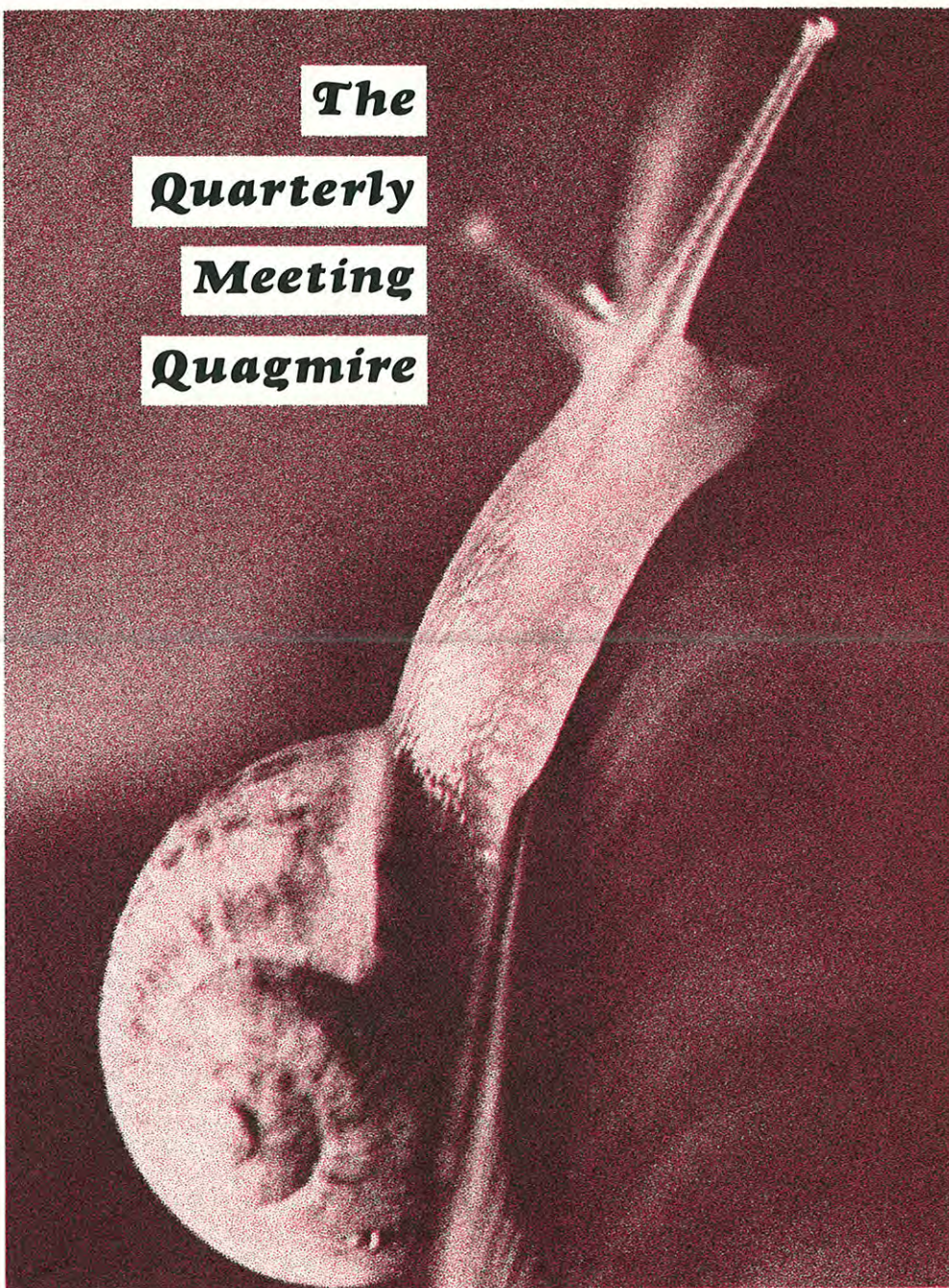
gatherings is very much in evidence.

One need only browse for a few minutes in the histories of both the Randall work in the North and the Palmer movement in the South to determine the emphasis placed by the fathers on these meetings.

These were meetings for fellowship, friendship and followship. Churches needing moral support from one another sought it in the fellowship of the churches at the quarterlies.

During those formative years, other denominational groups were so hostile toward the "Free Willers"

The Quarterly Meeting Quagmire



until inter-church fellowship was not to be found except with sister churches.

Doctrinal distinctives had to be so propounded, so as to forge a denominational structure, that fellowship with others was out of the question.

Friendship for the ministers was to be had only among like kind for the most part. This within itself may have very well accounted for the rapid growth and expansion of the fledgling denomination.

Fellowship was learned in these quarterly meetings. Methods, doctrine, practices and distinctives were laid down, and all were called upon to adhere.

When the above stated things were the order, great crowds attended. Revivals broke out and scores of people were converted. Such were the quarterly meetings in Early America.

Church reports were read and heard with interest. Much time was spent in prayer. Doctrinal preaching was in vogue. Any differences among the brethren or churches were settled. A united effort was called for. Progress was sought.

There was no problem getting delegates to attend. Ministers were required to be in attendance and obligated to tender a report of ministerial activities.

FAILING

All of the aforesaid continued well into the 20th century. Only in recent years has there been a decline and deterioration. How does one account for the late developments?

Some would preach the funeral of the local associational quarterly and simply "bury the dead." Others would seek to revive, revitalize and restructure what yet appears to be able (when well) to answer an accute need of ministers and churches.

These seem to be motivated by Christ's admonition to the congregation at Sardis. "Be watchful and strengthen the things that remain, that are ready to die . . ." (Revelation 3:2).

Maybe if value can be seen, faults can be detected and corrected and some new formats can be offered,

the quarterly meeting will be extricated from the bog.

FINDINGS

Words that may be employed here to effectively deal with the issue are tradition, trite, time, trouble and tiredness.

Segments of the constituency, not as denominational as they ought to be nor as appreciative as they should be of the heritage, have branded the quarterly meeting a tradition.

For the most part these have taken an ultra-independent attitude and for all practical purposes have become independent in course and action. Several have already left the ranks having started the outward course by despising the quarterlies.

Not all traditions are wrong. Paul admonished the Thessalonians in this regard when he wrote, "therefore, brethren, stand fast and hold the traditions which ye have been taught . . ." (II Thessalonians 2:15).

There is a sense in which Paul's further warning could be applied here: " . . . withdraw from every brother that walketh disorderly and not after the tradition which he received from us" (II Thessalonians 3:6).

Webster's simplest definition for "trite" is worn out or stale. Stale may well define some quarterly meetings. There is such a sameness about one after another until no life is sensed in the affair.

Knowledgeable men with planning wisdom, having ability to lead, should be elected as officers. Never should these positions be filled simply because one is popular or just in order to give "the man some experience."

A well thought out, prayed over, planned program should be in the offering each quarter. This can best be insured by having a program committee. No moderator or clerk should be pressed into duty without having some type of programmed outline to follow. Without planning, we condemn the quarterly meeting.

"Time is of the essence." Yesterday, when Free Will Baptist ministers, in the majority, seemed to be the most vitally concerned about the ongoing of the kingdom as

promoted by their denomination, there was time for the quarterly gatherings.

Now there is such an emphasis placed on an expected success until the conscientious (sometimes intimidated) pastor feels he must avail himself of every seminar and special training class taught by the so-called successful in order to keep up. So much time is consumed in this procedure until one thinks himself unable to spare the time for his local associational responsibilities.

Too, in some associations the time allotted for the sessions has become so limited until it's hardly worth the effort to attend. Again, lack of planning can be cited as the primary cause.

"Don't trouble trouble until it troubles you." It has been said, "I'd go to the quarterly meeting but there's generally trouble."

Those early foreshadowing meetings of the first century, in all probability, came about because of trouble. Coming together should not spell trouble, but trouble should never keep Christians from coming together. Trouble has been used too often as an excuse.

Of course, when there is an agenda to follow, trouble has not much of a chance to foster or fester.

"In our modern society," they say, "folk are too tired to attend." For that reason, men for the most part are excused as delegates and housewives (as though they do not work) are sent to expedite business for the kingdom. Scripture records that the ark of the covenant was carried on the shoulders of men (Numbers 7:9).

When pastors believe in the quarterly meetings, male delegates attend, officers with leadership ability are elected, programs are planned, helps are offered and capable preachers are assigned to preach doctrinal sermons, quarterly meetings will resurrect and be effective again.

Where the case is otherwise, one will find the quarterly meeting in quagmire—bogged down. ▲

ABOUT THE WRITER: Dr. Wade Jernigan is a Free Will Baptist evangelist operating out of Fresno, California. He is a member of the Commission on Theological Liberalism.



STOP THIEF!

By Leroy Cutler

Stopping by the church one Saturday morning, I discovered that the building had been burglarized.

Someone had ripped out the public address system, taken office equipment, projection equipment and money from a brief case. I called the police immediately.

I found it hard to understand why anyone would want to burglarize the church.

But as I thought on this I realized that the Bible asks "Will a man rob God?" The answer is yes—"In tithes and offerings."

How many business men do you know who are faithful to pay their bills but think nothing of robbing God by failing to pay their tithe to the Church?

The Church is being robbed by its own members in ways they do not even realize.

Church Thieves

Many Christians give only when they attend. If they miss a service they

never bother to make up for the Sunday missed. This person must be prompted to attend in order to get his support.

Another way some people rob God is to make a generous one-time gift. However, this gift to the Lord's work on an annual basis is smaller than the widow's who gives a small amount regularly.

Another member has a special television evangelist he likes, so he sends to that ministry on a regular basis. Many of these are self-appointed prophets who devour widows' houses by offering them empty promises which Peter calls "clouds without water."

They promise instant success, riches and healing. All you have to do is send them an offering. For these gifts these members get nothing in return not even a vote: only another letter containing another return envelope for the next gift.

Wouldn't it be wonderful if everyone gave to the church what they claim on their income tax report? If the IRS ever starts sending a report to the local church for gifts reported, it could prove embarrassing for some.

For years I never saw the financial records in churches I pastored—I chose not to. However, in recent years I have changed my thinking on this. It has been a real eye-opener for me since I began reviewing the records.

As I looked over the receipts for a quarter I found that those who tithed regularly were the ones who seemed to be the happiest and had the least problems. Could it be because they tithed?

Assorted Thieves

The winner of a national marathon race disclosed that he received food stamps from the government while preparing for the race. I couldn't help but think, "Is this what the food stamp program is for?"

Here was a perfectly healthy young man, able to work, letting the government feed him while preparing for a race. He also disclosed that he received money for giving talks to organizations but refused to give the amounts. He said it was a secret.

Stealing applies to the executive who takes pencils, paper clips and stamps. It has been said concerning

Harry Truman that he refused to use even a stamp from the office for his personal mail.

What about the carpenter who takes nails, screen wire and materials from the job for personal use? Or the mechanic who takes tools belonging to others or replaces parts on a customer's car when it is not needed?

What about the person who tends to personal business while on company time? Or the secretary who runs to the department store to make a purchase during working hours while the boss is away?

Pilfering (stealing by employees) has become a major problem for many businesses. It was reported that Jacksonville, Florida city employees took roofing shingles home and had roofed their own homes with them.

Misrepresentation seemed terrible when Oldsmobile used Chevrolet engines. But what about preachers who misrepresent the truth about God? Some people will miss Heaven because they listened to the wrong information.

The Right To Possessions

Every mother tells her child, "No, that doesn't belong to you; give it back. You don't take things that belong to other people."

This is a mother's way of telling her child what God said to Moses, "Thou shalt not steal" (Exodus 20:15).

This eighth commandment forbids us to injure our neighbor by taking his possessions. It guarantees each of us the right to own property and claim possessions.

Albert Barnes says its deeper meaning is found in the tenth commandment, "Thou shalt not covet." No human eye can see the coveting heart. It is witnessed only by him who possesses it and by Him to whom all things are naked and open.

Jesus summed up all the commandments into two: (1) Love God with all your heart, and (2) Thy neighbor as thyself.

The first four of the Ten Commandments deal with man's relationship to God. The other six deal with man's relationship with man.

Keil and Delitzsch say that God's commandments "first of all secure life, marriage, and property against active invasion or attack, and then, proceed-

ing from deed to word and thought, they forbid false witness and coveting."

Life Is A Possession

Life is guaranteed by God in the commandment, "Thou shalt not kill." To take a life is to steal that which God has given. We did not choose to be born, but we were a gift from God.

No man has a right to take a life whether it be his own (suicide) or the life of another (murder). The commandment "Thou shalt not kill" guaranteed to every person the right to possess that God-given life.

Anyone who took the life of another was punished by forfeiting his own life. (Genesis 9:6). The greatest theft in the universe is to steal a man's life from him—even the life of an unborn child.

One's Mate Is A Possession

Leviticus 20:10 in simple terms states God's position on protecting one's mate from being stolen by another. The most subtle of all stealing is to steal the affections of another person's husband or wife.

God's prohibition against adultery is not only directed against any assault upon the husband's dearest possession, for the tenth commandment guards against that, but upholds the sacredness of marriage. It applies equally to the woman as to the man.

"Thou shalt not steal" applies here also. To purposely seek to get another person's husband or wife is stealing.

Property Is A Possession

The command "Thou shalt not steal" not only prohibited the removal of another man's property, but also included injury done to his belongings.

The Pharisees saw this as an outward act. However, Jesus said it was deeper than the act itself. It also included the thought of sin when a person brings his gift to the altar and remembers that his brother has something against him. He is to leave his offering before the altar and first be reconciled to his brother.

Possessions should never separate



THIEF (From page 11)

the love relationship between a Christian and another person.

The law protects a person's property with licenses, deeds, titles, patents, copyrights and other means. However the greatest protection one has is the moral character of those around him. Other people who have your interest at heart are your protection. Especially if it is their desire to please God in all things.

In Luke 19:8 we find the influence of the Old Testament law that required a thief to return more than he had stolen. Zacchaeus told Jesus that if he had defrauded anyone he would return four times as much as he took.

The modern day principle of paying a fine to the treasury of a community is not found in the scripture, unless Leviticus 5:6-19 be interpreted as referring to such.

Stealing happens today in many forms from false advertising, inferior products, improper weights and measures, kick-backs, flim-flam schemes, pay-offs, over-charging, bribes and extortion.

Certain positions require by law that a man be honest in order to meet

the qualifications for the office. In the Old Testament a judge appointed by Moses had to be honest (Exodus 18:21). In the New Testament it was also a requirement for bishops and deacons.

The primary source of stealing then is a heart that is not right with God. It does not consider God's law and has no regard for his fellow man except as a means of increasing his own bank account.

Agur prayed, "Give me not poverty, lest I steal." Extreme poverty seems to be a breeding ground for thieves. Proverbs also warns us against laziness that causes a person to steal instead of working to supply his basic needs.

A great evil of our day seems to be the fast living pace that causes one to live above his means and promise more than his ability to pay.

The temptation to appear rich and successful has brought many to poverty's door, proving again that the LOVE of money is the root of all evil.

Stealing has no place in the Christian life. If you are tempted in this way, you should ask forgiveness of God and the person who has been wronged.

The Blood of Jesus has covered this sin along with all the rest. Peter says,

"But let none of you suffer as a murderer, or as a thief, or as an evil-doer, or as a busybody in the other men's matters." ▲



ABOUT THE WRITER: Rev. Leroy Cutler pastors Immanuel Free Will Baptist Church, Jacksonville, Florida. The North Carolina native graduated from FWBBC in 1958. He holds the Doctor of Ministry degree from Luther Rice Seminary. Dr. Cutler has also earned a commercial pilot license and has flight instructor rating.

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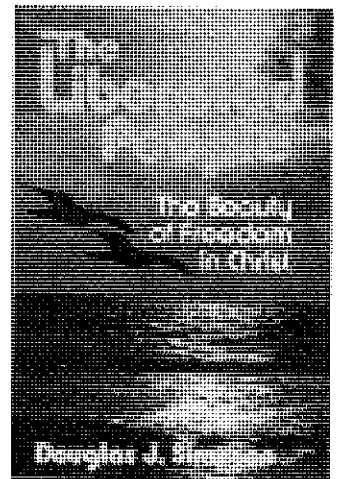
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The testimony of one church

Compiled by the
Central Free Will Baptist Church Staff

Total missions giving exceeded \$50,000 in 1980 at Central Free Will Baptist Church in Royal Oak, Michigan.

Tom and Patty McCullough, missionaries to France and members of Central, were commissioned on June 29th and presented a check for \$11,000.

Steve and Becky Riggs, short-term missionaries to France and members of Central, returned home to share their needs with the church on August 31st and received an offering in excess of \$2,000.

On October 12th, Paul and Amy Robinson, missionaries to Uruguay and members of Central, came home for Paul and Amy Robinson Day. They received an offering of nearly \$6,200, which greatly encouraged them and boosted their sluggish account.

Central's Missionary budget for 1980 was \$15,000 for undesignated missions giving alone.

It would be a gross misunderstanding for one to get the idea that Central Church is full of rich members and that just by passing a plate, thousands of dollars could be received at a moment's notice.

The burden of missions has been with people since the church was started by a small group of believers in a storefront building in Highland Park, Michigan in 1937.

Central's first pastor, Rev. Raymond Riggs, became our denomination's first Foreign Missions Director, and returned some years later for a second tenure as the church's pastor.

Other pastors, known and respected because of their great concern for world evangelization, include Dr. Charles Thigpen, president of Free Will Baptist Bible College; Dr. Joe Ange, longtime Foreign Missions Board member and director of the Christian Service Department at Free Will Bap-

tist Bible College; and the present pastor, Rev. Milton Worthington.

Rev. Worthington, like his predecessors, is a pastor who continually keeps before his people the needs of a lost and dying world. Members report that never a week passes but that their pastor lifts up in prayer the names of Central's Christian workers, missionaries and former pastors laboring around the world.

This increasing emphasis by her pastors and key lay-people accounts in large part for Central's strong, healthy missionary heartbeat.

The membership at Central includes no doctors, bankers or lawyers—just regular people who have a concern for missions. There are some mechanics, tool makers, factory laborers, one or two engineers, some secretaries, a small sprinkling of teachers, a few buyers and some salesmen.

But when needs are presented and members are asked to pray for direction in giving, God burdens individual hearts, and needs are met.

For instance, on Robinson Day, one member who had been laid off work for over a year, approached the church treasurer and said that he was giving a check but would like it held for a couple of days until he was sure it would be covered by funds in his account. When the envelope was opened, the check was for \$500.

Central counts itself especially fortunate because it is strategically located to participate in the Missionary Internship training program, which all of our missionaries on the field worked with the Central Church while in Missionary Internship training. Twelve Missionaries from other evangelical boards have been privileged to be at Central when no Free Will Baptist missionaries were available.

All these missionaries are provided with salary, housing, utilities, insurance

and gas. What a blessing and unique privilege to be a partner in helping to develop and thrust forth such a multitude of witnesses.

There is a Prayer Band at Central that meets each Sunday at 5:00 p.m. This group alone supports 12 missionaries. Other classes or groups in the church support 10, not to mention individuals who support various missionaries.

Not only has the Central Church been very liberal in her missionary giving, but also in the giving of her sons and daughters as well. As has been mentioned, Paul and Amy Robinson, Tom and Patty McCullough, and Steve and Becky Riggs are all from Central.

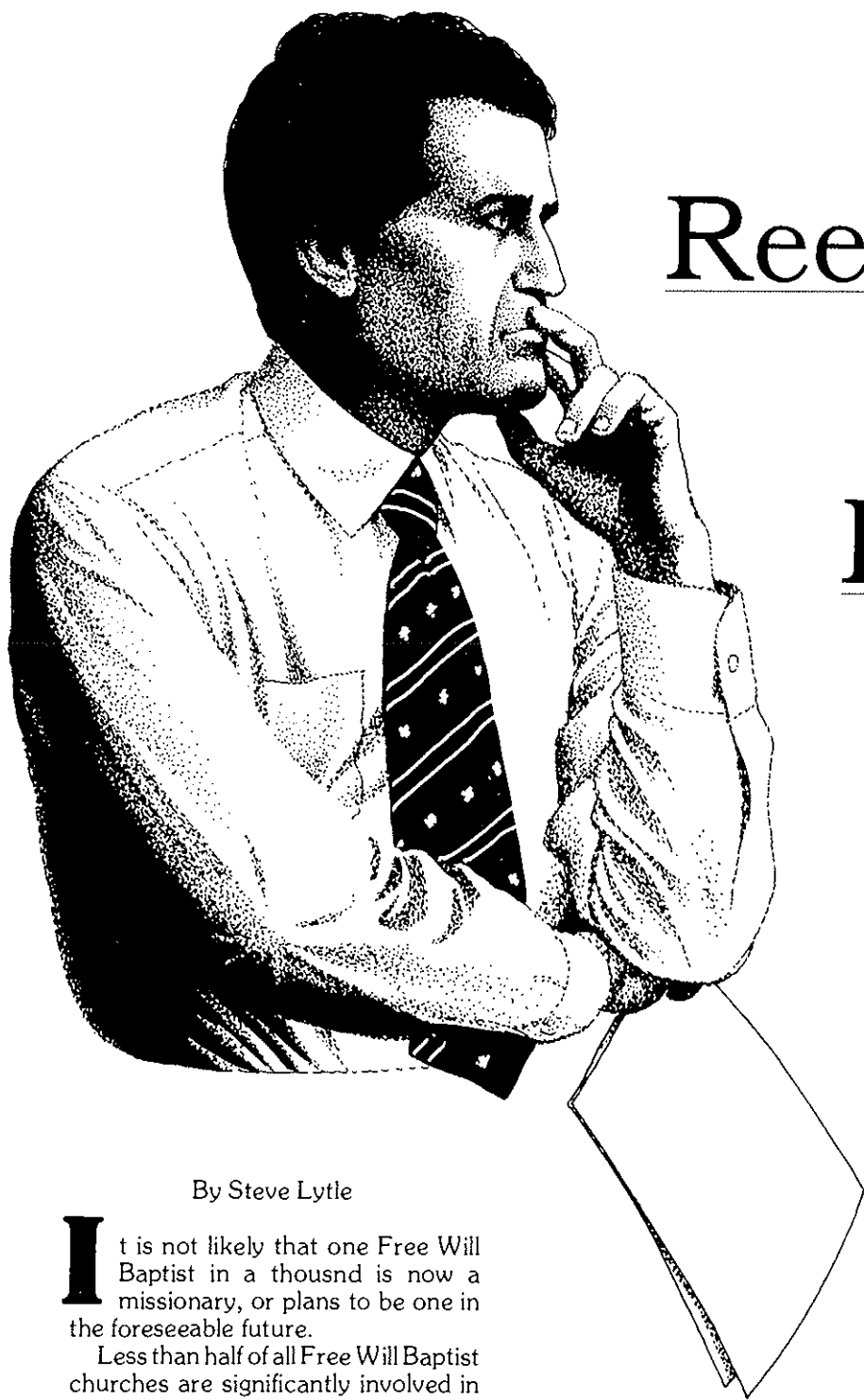
Marcia Ellison, multi-term missionary to Uruguay, was raised in this church. Mark Paschall, a member of Central and a student at the University of Michigan Medical School, spent the summer of 1978 working with Dr. Miley in Ivory Coast.

An annual missionary conference is held each November. This is a highlight of the year, not only for the church, but quite often for the missionaries who attend. Activities are planned that involve every age group from the very young to the very old.

As God directed and provided, a "Ministry to the Missionaries" was started in 1978. Once a month at no charge we send a sermon outline, music and two messages to missionaries upon their request.

Each year Pastor Milton Worthington leads the congregation in choosing a verse for the year. The 1980 verse was Proverbs 11:30b "... He that winneth souls is wise."

Through its unique missionary involvement, this church is in the process of extending itself to the far corners of the world and is having an integral part in the winning of souls in the regions beyond. ▲



Reexamining The Essentials Of Missions

By Steve Lytle

It is not likely that one Free Will Baptist in a thousand is now a missionary, or plans to be one in the foreseeable future.

Less than half of all Free Will Baptist churches are significantly involved in missions giving. It is not just the ravages of inflation that cause so many missionary accounts to be in the red.

Some only give lip service to missions. One veteran pastor even suggested that some Free Will Baptists might be anti-missions.

It is time to again look into the Word of God for the biblical basis of missions. John 20:21 lists six factors relating to missions, either directly stated or implied.

In the words "As my Father hath sent me," we discover God the Father, who is the *subject* of missions, sending the Son (the mediating *Person* of missions) into the world, which is the *object* of missions. Two of the factors are stated, and the third is implied.

The same is true in the second statement: "Even so, send I you." Stated explicitly are the Great Commission, *mandate* of missions (so send

I), the *method* of missions, redeemed men (so send I you).

The final factor is the Holy Spirit, the *power* of missions. Though He is not mentioned by name, He is, nevertheless absolutely essential in the missionary venture.

The Lord Jesus, in sending disciples into the world to preach the gospel, promised the indwelling presence and power of the Holy Spirit to energize and make effective their ministry (John 14:16-17, Acts 1:8).

FACTOR 1: GOD, THE SUBJECT OF MISSIONS

Missions begin where the Bible be-

gins—with God. Paul declares “all things are of God,” (II Corinthians 5:18) and that God has done all “to the praise of his glory” (Ephesians 1:14).

Someone has said, “It is in the very being and character of God that the deepest ground of the missionary enterprise is to be found.” Missions stems from God’s own nature.

One very important dimension of God’s character strides into view—He is interested in His creatures and has repeatedly demonstrated His concern for them. God loves this world of men as evidenced by John 3:16, “For God so loved the world . . .”

“Divine love is that impelling and dynamic quality in which God moves out of Himself and in which He related Himself in all His beneficence and sufficiency to His creatures” (Peters).

That which demonstrates the reality of love is its willingness to give. God proved His love for humanity because He gave His Son. God loved, and God gave. Therefore, in any consideration, whether missions or evangelism or soul-winning, we begin with God.

FACTOR 2: THE WORLD, THE OBJECT OF MISSIONS

According to John 3:16 the object of God’s love is the world. Though He dealt with specific individuals and/or nations at times in history, the Bible makes it clear that God cares about all men and wants all to be saved (II Peter 3:9, I Timothy 2:4).

Missionary references are sown in every major section of Old Testament literature. In Genesis 3:15 when God promised that the woman’s seed would crush the serpent’s head, He made that promise to the entire human race, inasmuch as Adam and Eve were the parents of the human family.

In Genesis 12 when God called Abraham out of idolatry in Ur of the Chaldees, He gave him a number of promises. In addition to personal and national blessings promised to Abraham and his descendants, God declared that through Abraham *all* earth’s families would be blessed.

Exodus 19:6 reveals that Israel was to be a mediatorial nation—“a kingdom of priests.” They were called by God

as witnesses to the true and living God.

Later in the kingdom period, Solomon recognized this truth in his dedicatory prayer in I Kings 8:43, “That all people of the earth may know thy name to fear thee as do thy people Israel . . .” Though the Lord dealt with Israel in an exclusive and unique way, His ultimate purpose was the salvation of all mankind.

Numerous Psalms are missionary in nature. Psalms 2, 33:8, 66:1-4, and 98:3 are examples which show that Israel’s psalmists recognized that the God of Israel was also God of the nations.

The prophets spoke repeatedly to and about the nations of the world, and set forth God’s concern for all men.

Isaiah 45:22 declares: “Look unto me and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth.” (See also Isaiah 42, 43, and 49:6)

New Testament references that the will of God is to save the whole world are too numerous to discuss here. Phrases such as “to every creature,” “to all nations” “among all nations,” and “unto the uttermost part of the earth,” make it abundantly clear that the object of mission is truly the whole world.

FACTOR 3: JESUS CHRIST, THE MEDIATING PERSON OF MISSIONS

If we believe the Bible, we must be convinced that Jesus is the only Savior this world will ever have (I Timothy 2:5).

As George Peters well stated: “He alone is *the* God-man. He alone is *the* light of the world, *the* Bread of Life, *the* Door into the fold, *the* Good Shepherd, *the* Way, *the* Truth, *the* Life, *the* Resurrection. There is no other name in which salvation is given.”

Jesus Christ is *mediator*—the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world (John 1:29), the propitiation for sins, everybody’s sins (I John 2:2). Only through Him and His finished work is access to the Father possible.

An incident which illustrates this point took place in our work in Panama. Some of the believers in the Los Santos province had a serious confron-

tation with Catholicism.

The local priest became angry because of the gospel’s impact in one particular town and reprimanded an elderly believer: “Why do you let those Protestants come here and teach? They don’t teach you about the Virgin.”

“No,” replied the old man, “but they teach us about the Son. Which is more important?”

Jesus is also *Master*. Though He once died, He is now alive forevermore, and holds the keys of death and hell.

The Bible states that ultimately every knee shall bow, and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord (Philippians 2:11). One day all men of all nations, of all races, and of all religions will confess Him to be Master of the universe!

This in no way implies universal salvation for all, but rather a universal acknowledgement of who Christ is.

Jesus is the *Messiah*, the Anointed One of God.

Peter declared that God had made Jesus, whom the Jews had crucified, to be both Lord (Master) and Christ (Messiah) (Acts 2:36). He alone has been chosen, designated by God to be the Savior of mankind.

Jesus Christ was a *Missionary*. Hebrews 3:1 states that He is the Apostle and High Priest of our profession, and was faithful to the Father who had appointed Him. This reminds us of His words in John 20:21: “As my Father hath *sent* me . . .”

An apostle is a sent one, and God sent Christ into the world on the supreme mission of redemption. Jesus Christ was the greatest missionary the world has ever known. He is our example in all things, and in what greater way than in His being a missionary?

We are not mediators, much less are we masters, nor yet can we be messiahs. But we can be missionaries, for “As the Father hath sent me, even so send I you.”

FACTOR 4: THE GREAT COMMISSION, THE MANDATE OF MISSIONS

Christ declared that all power, or authority, had been given to Him (Matthew 28:18), and on the basis of that



authority He told us to go and make disciples. If Jesus Christ is Lord of our lives, then the Great Commission which He gave is not optional, it is obligatory.

We as God's Church are not in total obedience to Him unless we become vitally involved in doing that which our Lord and King commanded. And lest we miss His mandate, the commission was given five times in the gospels and Acts, and was the final message Jesus gave His disciples before ascending to the Father (Matthew 28:19-20; Mark 16:15; Luke 24:47-48; John 20:21; Acts 1:8).

The missionary mandate is directed to *all* followers of Christ for *all* nations and to *every* creature. This is God's program for the Church.

Many times we see only that need nearest to us. We can see lost men at our door, in our community, across our nation, but sometimes fail to be concerned about people who live half a world away.

Occasionally, misguided patriotism (and I strongly believe in love for country) causes us to say within ourselves: "Well, if those fanatics persist in treating America like dirt, why should we bother taking them the Gospel? The Communists are atheists, and are out to destroy America, so they're of no concern to me."

But we dare not let even a virtue as compelling as patriotism interfere with the divine mandate. Jesus Christ sends us to the world, and our highest allegiance must be to Him!

If God gives an open door, we should storm even the gates of the Kremlin with salvation's sweet story!

FACTOR 5: REDEEMED MEN, THE METHOD OF MISSIONS

God's basic and unchanging method to reach a lost world with the gospel is through redeemed men who will go and proclaim that gospel.

"How shall they hear without a preacher?" asks Paul. If the myriad millions who have never heard the name of Jesus are to be saved, someone must go and preach to them.

Eric Fife in his book *Man's Peace, God's Glory* asks a pertinent question:

"Why do I preach? He goes on to state that:

If I preach because I'm paid—that's materialism.

If I preach because I enjoy it—that's selfishness.

If I preach because I want to help my church or denomination—that's ecclesiasticism.

If I preach because I want to further the cause of the mission board—that's organizationalism.

If I preach because I'm interested in people—that's humanitarianism.

But If I preach because Christ wants me to—that's Christianity.

God's men preach because they are compelled by love to be obedient to Jesus Christ in proclaiming His salvation both at home and abroad.

I believe the Holy Spirit calls individuals to the ministry of the Word and then directs them to a work.

Men often confess their calling to preach, but then draw a curtain around the United States, or sometimes even around the state or country where they live, as if to say that God must let them do their preaching within certain geographical confines.

But what's wrong with preaching the gospel in another country and in another language? One of the greatest joys I've known in the ministry has been to proclaim the message of salvation in Spanish in the Republic of Panama.

In my opinion, there are two things greatly needed in our denomination. One is more pastors in our churches and more ministerial students in our Bible colleges willing to prayerfully consider and actively pursue the possibility of preaching the gospel in another land.

May God deliver us from the typical invitation for Christian commitment which says: "God wants to call some of you young men to preach, and some of you young ladies to the mission field."

Something is tragically wrong when most of those actively seeking a foreign missionary career are women. As grateful as we are for every volunteer, male or female, I ask the question: Where are the men?

We also need missionary pastors to inject the missionary mandate into the heart of their church's ministry. We must have pastors who will preach missionary messages, challenge young

people, promote the cause of missions, and lead their churches into real involvement in prayer and financial support.

There is a world out there—five billion souls—and over half have never heard an adequate presentation of the gospel. If redeemed men don't go and tell them of Jesus, who will?

FACTOR 6: THE HOLY SPIRIT, THE POWER OF MISSIONS

Christ promised the indwelling power of the Holy Spirit to enable redeemed men to fulfill the divine mandate (Acts 1:8).

We dare not tread on the dangerous ground of missionary endeavor if we do not have God's Spirit within us. He convicts men of sin and reveals to them their need of a Savior.

He moves mysteriously in regeneration and comes to take up His abode in the soul who trusts in Christ. He is the power of missions.

As we ponder the essentials of missions, the six significant factors from John 20:21, may we prepare our hearts for the Holy Spirit's work in our lives.

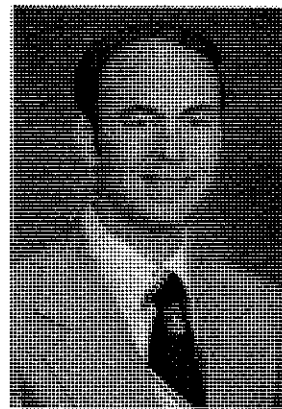
Let us saturate our minds with the Word of God.

Let us be aware of the spiritual needs of the day.

Let us practice true intercessory prayer.

Let us use logical thinking: Why not me? Why should I not be a missionary?

Opportunity plus ability equals responsibility. ▲



ABOUT THE WRITER: Rev. Steve Lytle is a Free Will Baptist missionary to Panama. He graduated from FWBBC in 1972. Missionaries Steve and Judy Lytle have two children, Michael (6) and Phillip (3).



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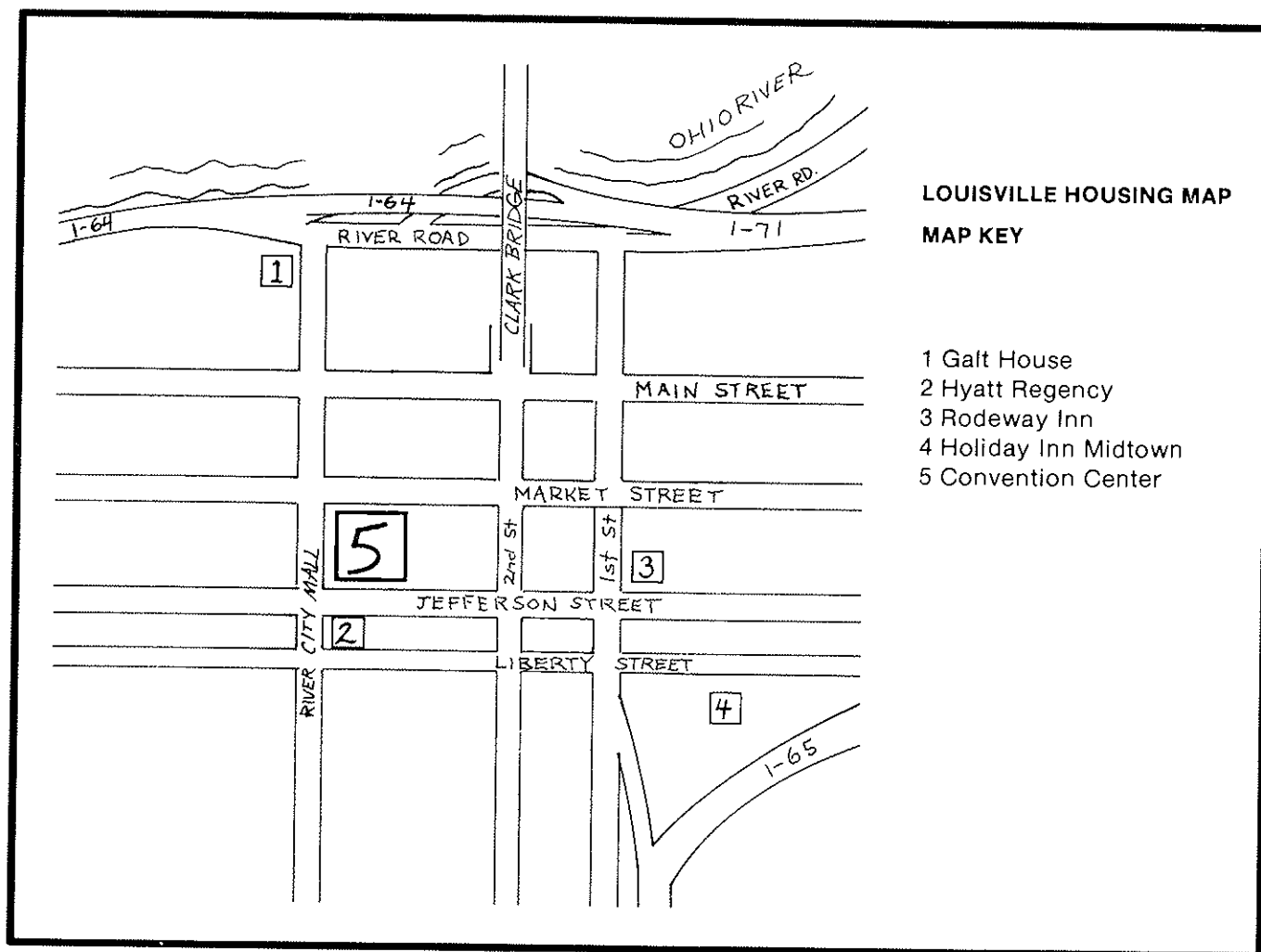
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Tomorrow, First

Step on Gold!



By John Gibbs

Eighty miles southeast of Nashville, Tennessee, lives a bright young Christian lady named Sherry Johnson—she is 24 years old and has gained the love and respect of those who know her.

Sherry attends First Free Will Baptist Church in McMinnville. She loves the Lord and shares her faith as often as she has opportunity. She dreams of going to heaven, fellowshiping with the saints and seeing the One who saved her.

Sherry likes gospel singing, especially songs that speak of having a new body or walking on streets of gold and doing many of the things she cannot do now. For you see, Sherry Johnson, a Christian with a radiant testimony, grapples every day of her life with cerebral palsy.

Sherry loves to attend church and hear God's word preached and taught. Her pastor, Rev. Robert Bryant, says he is challenged by her faithfulness to God's house and her determination to

be strong in the Lord.

Rev. Bryant attributes much of Sherry's spiritual strength to her parents, Charles and Jimmy Johnson, who find time to stay busy in their church.

For Mrs. Johnson, the trauma of Sherry's extreme palsy condition had to be reckoned with early. She remembers well the seizures and anxious moments when she thought her daughter would not survive.

Mrs. Johnson recalled one incident when she looked into the ashen face of Sherry and could only pray, "Dear Lord, if you want her life, take it, here she is . . ." At that moment, Sherry opened her eyes, smiled, and said, "Momma, what are you crying about?"

With her faith in God renewed, Mrs. Johnson requested that Sherry's doctor stop administering the drugs which had controlled the seizures. From that time on, the seizures stopped.

Then came the struggle of school. The Johnsons enrolled Sherry in the Gribble Special Education School, de-

signed for the handicapped and retarded. Fighting to be recognized as much as possible as a normal person, Sherry went on to graduate from Gribble with the distinction of being the first and only person to graduate with high school credits.

Still determined to develop whatever ability she had, Sherry decided to take some college courses. Her professors testified that she was an inspiration to them and the whole class.

Now Sherry labors much of the day over her typewriter. Using just one finger, she types messages of faith and cheer to the sick in her church, as well as articles and poems for the church bulletin.

Sherry now attends Tennessee Vocational Technical School near her home. There her class time is spent primarily in finger exercises and typing.

Sherry Johnson's life is one of inspiration, courage and dedication. But she also reflects on her times of discouragement, depression and dependence—the times of waiting till someone could help, the discouragement of not

being able to get a book from the shelf or hang up a coat, the depression of having to stay in the house day after day.

The personal things that she has to depend upon her mother to do. Wanting to type faster and use more fingers. The moments when she loses patience and almost says something she should not say.

Because of impaired speech, Sherry has to repeat her words two or three times before they are understandable. This forces her to select each word carefully. These are obstacles that Sherry meets face to face every day!

Sherry's extraordinary faith and determination began to grow that Sunday in 1968 when her pastor preached a message that crushed her heart. Slowly she wheeled herself down the aisle and prayerfully wept her way to salvation.

From that day forward she has had her parents and the Lord Jesus to help

her through those days of struggle and despair.

Her primary concern now is for the well-being of others. She enjoys corresponding with other young people who may be blind or handicapped in some other way, even though it takes her hours to type a letter.

Sherry Johnson is a very special person who, like many other handicapped young people in the Free Will Baptist ranks, exemplify the extra grace and strength that the Lord gives to those who need it. If others could voice their testimony it would probably sound like Sherry's . . .

I used to question God about being handicapped. I would look to heaven and say, "Why me? Why am I in this wheelchair?"

For a long time I prayed that God would let me walk. One day God revealed to me that He had a purpose for placing me in this wheelchair and that I must accept His will.

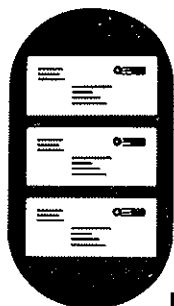
Psalm 46:10a says, "Be still and know that I am God. . . ." I am in a position to be still and observe the greatness of the Lord and the actions of people concerning Him. I take what I see and try to write short articles and poems to help people see the love God has for them.

Although my life is a struggle and often filled with pain, still my heart is filled with the joy of Christ. I like to describe my joy in Christ as a fountain which constantly sends a spray of water high into the air, then falls down over the tiers to replenish the supply.

Through all my ups and downs I have this abiding joy. I wear a smile to show God's love which is my source of strength. By the help of God, my dear family and friends, I have my simple existence.

When God completes his purpose for my life here, I'm looking forward to going home and taking my first step on the streets of gold. ▲

ABOUT THE WRITER: Rev. John Gibbs is Director of Development for the Home Missions Department. He has been a close friend of Sherry Johnson for more than a decade.



OUR READERS COMMENT

DISILLUSIONED WITH FREE WILL BAPTISTS

I read with much interest the article, "Why I Am A Free Will Baptist" (January, 1981), and while I am generally sympathetic, I do feel that it had an obvious built-in prejudice that leaves the impression that the only church for any Christian is a Free Will Baptist Church!

After my conversion, I joined a Free Will Baptist church and spent almost fifteen years there. I taught and preached Free Will Baptist doctrine faithfully, and as far as I was concerned the sun "rose and set" on the Free Will Baptist denomination; I was totally dedicated to the cause of the denomination.

I learned to love and appreciate each and every one of my Free Will Baptist brethren. I learned much, and much of what I believe, I learned as a Free Will Baptist.

I greatly appreciated their consistency in Christian walk (a lot of denominations could learn from them), their firm commitment to the inerrancy of the scriptures, the blood atonement, the virgin birth, the second coming, their faithful stands on the tenets of Arminian theology, their belief in the three ordinances, etc.

But over the years I found myself gradually becoming disillusioned, not with Free Will Baptist pastors or individuals, but with the denomination!

I feel that as a denomination Free Will Baptists have several serious weaknesses:

(1) Free Will Baptists are exclusivists at

heart. There seemed to always be a smug attitude that said that "because I am a Free Will Baptist I'm just a little better and a little more spiritual than those who are not so enlightened" (this is true of Baptists in general).

(2) While Free Will Baptists have been great evangelistically, they do not stress maturity in Christ as they should. This has been one of the Free Will Baptist denomination's greatest failures.

(3) Free Will Baptists have a tendency to be doctrinally narrow. In much Free Will Baptist theology, "God is in a box" unable to work outside the confines of an already established set of precepts. Free Will Baptist theology needs to expand and discover new truths.

(4) Free Will Baptists are resistant to "change." Free Will Baptist are tradition-bound and are as much caught up in Baptistic tradition and ceremony as other formal religions are in their pagan rituals.

I do not for one moment regret the time I spent as a Free Will Baptist. But it is my conviction that in my life, continued growth was best accomplished with a body of believers that emphasized a teaching ministry in the context of a church that was not so rigid in their beliefs and theology.

Ted Morgan
Fresno, California

ARTICLE WAS UNNECESSARY

There was an article in the February issue of *Contact* that gave me some deep trouble. I refer to "Should A Layman Ever Ask A Pastor To Resign?" Chuck Snow was the author.

I am sure that the spirit of this article was good. I do not challenge the motives nor personal integrity of the writer, nor do I question the content of the article. I just feel that it was all unnecessary.

In a time when the pastor is facing so many problems within and without the church, he doesn't need instructions or hints given to his laymen that help aid his demise. He needs encouragement to help overcome these problems.

I am afraid that what this article has done is to declare "open season" on pastors who are trying, under God, to do their best.

Therefore, please don't give us anymore of this kind of diet. It really isn't what we need at this time.

George C. Lee, Pastor
Victory Free Will Baptist Church
Goldsboro, North Carolina

GOOD TO LAUGH!

The article by Mark Kelton, "The Best Things Happen to PK's," (February, 1981) was great.

Indeed, preachers and their families do have the best stories to tell, and they need to be shared with others.

It is good to laugh! Proverbs 17:22.

Marlene Lynn
Van Buren, Arkansas



FREE WILL BAPTIST

newsfront

NATIONAL ASSOCIATION INCLUDED IN ESTATE

CABOOL, MO—The late Vergil J. Bandy bequeathed \$28,243.78 to the National Association of Free Will Baptists in his last will and testament, according to the Texas County, Missouri, Circuit Court, Probate Division.

Executive Secretary Melvin Worthington was notified in August, 1980, by an attorney for the Bandy estate that while the National Association was named recipient of the funds, all monies received were to be distributed to the Free Will Baptist Home Missions and Foreign Missions Departments.

Funds from the Bandy estate were divided equally between the two missions departments. An equal amount went to the Free Will Baptist Children's Home in Greeneville, Tennessee.

Mr. and Mrs. Bandy were members of Big Creek Free Will Baptist Church near Houston, Missouri, where he served as a deacon. Rev. Delbert Gayer pastors the church.

Because the Bandys had no children, they wanted their estate to continue in the Lord's service among the Free Will Baptist people.

CHURCH NOW DEBT-FREE

PETALUMA, CA—Following a special note-burning ceremony in this northern California city, Pastor Carl K. Young declared that Petaluma Free Will Baptist Church was free of all debts on sanctuary and education buildings.

Eighty-nine-year-old Harlin Grogan, oldest member of the congregation, helped fire the note. Nancy Martin, the only remaining charter member, was present for the festivities, as was the church's first convert, Bill Martin. Martin is now church treasurer.

Rev. Herman Hersey, director of the Department of Retirement and Insurance in Nashville, was guest speaker for the occasion.

Pastor Carl Young is in his 25th year as pastor of the Petaluma congregation. The church plant, constructed mostly by volunteer labor, includes a nine-classroom educational building, an eight-classroom with auditorium



(L) Bill Martin, G. W. Lobaugh, Carl Young, Harlin Grogan, Jim Diamond

youth chapel, in addition to a 300-seat sanctuary with an 11-classroom basement.

Since the church's beginning, seven men have been called into the ministry from its membership.

MASTER'S MEN CHAPTER UNDERWRITES STUDENT

LEEDS, AL—The Master's Men chapter of Fairview Free Will Baptist Church, Leeds, agreed to bring a 26-year-old Haitian ministerial student to the United States and pay his first year's educational expenses at Free Will Baptist Bible College.

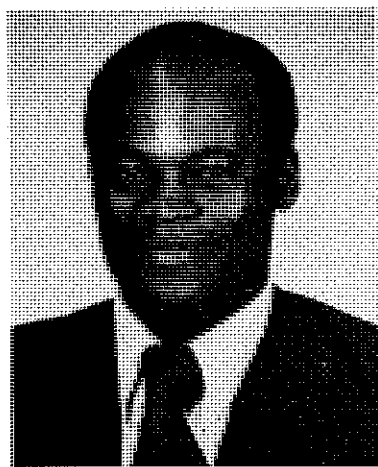
The student, Elidieu Cayo Raymond, is completing his first year's study, according to FWBBC Registrar Charles Hampton. The Alabama Master's Men group has invested some \$3000 in Mr. Raymond's ministerial training this year.

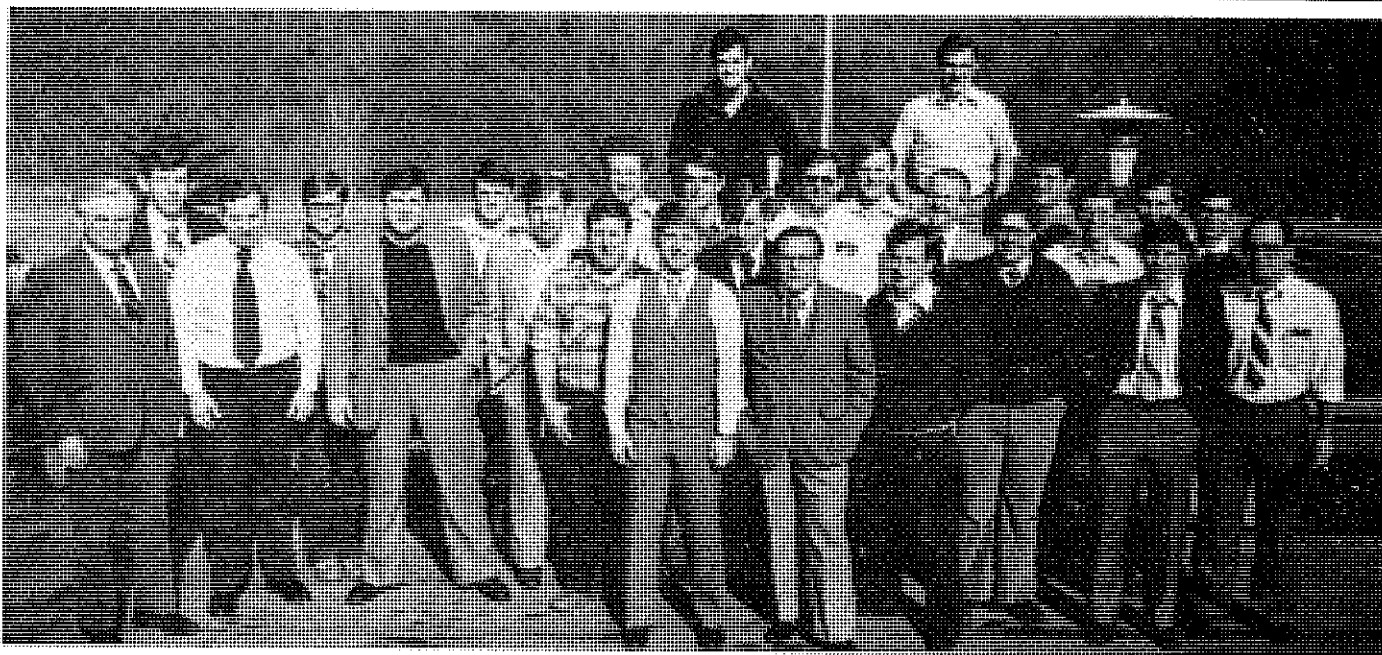
Raymond, single and from Port-au-Prince, graduated from high school in

Haiti where he studied business. Icy Mae Frederick, a member of the Fairview Church in Leeds, had done lay missionary work in Haiti, where she met Mr. Raymond and suggested that he come to America to study at FWBBC.

The Haitian minister speaks French and a little English. He sings in the College's Mixed Chorus and works on campus in the dining hall.

FWBBC Registrar Hampton says, "... this is a story that needs to be shared. It may serve to challenge others to do what this Master's Men chapter has done."





TWO-DAY TOUR TALLIES 114 DECISIONS

NASHVILLE, TN—Free Will Baptist Bible College teachers and students counted 114 decisions the weekend of January 24-25, as they visited churches across North Carolina.

Twenty-seven college representatives held services in 18 churches of North Carolina's Coastal Association and 10 other churches in the state. They brought back \$18,772 in cash, checkbooks and commitments for the college Development Fund.

Tour sponsor and coordinator Ronald Creech said, "The Coastal Association and the North Carolina churches amazed me. It was one of my most enjoyable weekends."

The group left Nashville by chartered bus at 5 a.m. Friday, January 23, and dropped off college representatives at points in the western part of the state. The rest of the group traveled to New Bern, where they were met by Coastal Association pastors.

On Saturday, the group attended the Coastal quarterly meeting where Leroy Forlines, Joseph Ange and Stanley Outlaw preached. A quartet composed of Rev. Forlines, Joseph Jones, Bert Tippet and Paul Harrison sang. Randy Wright, a junior Music Major from Amory, Mississippi, played a trumpet solo.

The group gathered for the return trip to Nashville on Sunday afternoon and arrived at the college at 5:30 a.m., Monday, tired, but rejoicing.

\$90,000 SANCTUARY DEDICATED

CONWAY, AR—Mt. Calvary Free Will Baptist Church, Conway, conducted dedication services for its new building Sunday afternoon, February 1, 1981.

Fred Warner, pastor of First Free Will Baptist Church, Russellville, delivered the dedicatory message. The morning worship service was conducted by Mt. Calvary Pastor Mike Mutchler. Dinner was served at the church by the Woman's Auxiliary with open house scheduled from 1-2 p.m.

Attendance for the Sunday School hour was 69 with an offering of \$762.40. Approximately 100 persons attended the afternoon dedication service.

The building was constructed at a cost of approximately \$90,000. The sanctuary has a 175 seating capacity

with educational space to accommodate the same number of people. The church is operating on a yearly budget of approximately \$33,600.

Mt. Calvary was organized May 5, 1978. For more than two years, the congregation met for worship in a house located at 1312 College Avenue.



newsfront

(continued)

FWBBC OFFERS SUMMER INTERNS TO CHURCHES

NASHVILLE, TN—Free Will Baptist Bible College hopes to place 50 students in local churches this summer as part of the Pastoral Internship Program, according to Dr. Joseph Ange, program director.

The 10-week summer internship outreach benefits both the student and the church. "The program is no summer vacation," Ange said. "It requires enthusiastic service from the

interns and weekly reports of messages preached, classes taught, people dealt with and books read."

Since 1975, an average of 44 interns each summer have worked and learned under the supervision of experienced pastors in 27 states, the Virgin Islands and three foreign countries.

The interns reported 1,251 conversions and 3,000 rededications during their 1980 summer efforts. The six-

year report confirmed that students had preached 2,006 sermons, dealt with 21,385 persons and distributed more than 45,000 tracts.

Local pastors are encouraged to write FWBBC for additional information on how they can have interns in their churches. The address is:

Dr. Joseph Ange
c/o Free Will Baptist Bible College
P.O. Box 50117
Nashville, TN 37205

REQUESTS FOR TICKETS TO MEAL FUNCTIONS 1981 NATIONAL CONVENTION

Number	MEAL	Total
_____	Music Ministries Breakfast \$5.00 each Tuesday, July 21; 7:00 a.m. Hyatt Regency/Regency South B Speaker: Charles Hampton	\$ _____
_____	WNAC Fellowship Dinner \$8.50 each Tuesday, July 21; 5:00 p.m. Hyatt Regency/Regency Ballroom Speaker: Verla Pettit	\$ _____
_____	Master's Men Breakfast \$5.00 each Wednesday, July 22; 7:00 a.m. Hyatt Regency/Regency Ballroom Speaker: Jack Williams	\$ _____
_____	FWBBC Alumni Luncheon \$6.25 each Wednesday, July 22; 12:00 noon Galt House/Cochran and Addition Speaker: Charles Thigpen	\$ _____
_____	Pastor's Dinner \$9.00 each Wednesday, July 22; 5:00 p.m. Commonwealth Convention Center/Rooms 207-211 Speaker: Damon Dodd	\$ _____
Total Enclosed \$ _____		_____

PLEASE PRINT:

NAME _____

ADDRESS _____

CITY _____ STATE _____ ZIP _____

Mail requests to TICKET SALES, P.O. Box 1088, Nashville, TN 37202. Please send check or money order. DO NOT send cash. All requests must be received by **June 30, 1981**.
(Note: Order all youth banquet tickets from NYC Office.)

NO TICKET REFUNDS AFTER JUNE 30, 1981

RANDALL UNVEILS SPRING/SUMMER RELEASES

NASHVILLE, TN—Christian liberty, ordination, abortion, and euthanasia are captured in print and on tape in Randall House's new spring/summer releases, according to Assistant Director Harrold Harrison.

Headlining the new publications with a March 1 market appearance is Dr. Douglas J. Simpson's *The Liberated People*, an incisive analysis of the biblical principles of Christian liberty.

Candidates for ordination to the ministry will find a handy guide in *Preparation For Ordination*. The April release was written by Retirement and Insurance Department Director Herman Hersey and contains a valuable bibliography to help build a basic reference library.

By early summer, Dr. Laverne Miley's cassettes and booklets *Abortion: Right or Wrong?* and *Euthanasia: Mercy or Murder?* will be ready for students, ministers and laymen to purchase.

The summer quarter, 1981, will also find the final free issues of *Scope of Christian Education* being mailed to subscribers. *Scope* will become a quarterly publication, combined with the former *Sunday School Superintendent's Guide* and *CTS General Director's File of Helps*.

The new-format *Scope* is initially priced at \$1.50 quarterly.

OFFICIALS URGE EARLY NYC REGISTRATION

NASHVILLE, TN—National Youth Conference officials issued instructions that all conferees (all those who have completed Grade 1 in the school year just ended through age 24) *must* register and receive the official NYC '81 Identification Badge.

Without the badge no admittance will be permitted to any conference activities, except for the evening service. This registration is in addition to fees for Bible Competition and Music and Arts Festival entries.

Adults (25 and older) do not have to register to attend the conference. Coaches or directors of choirs or chorales will not be charged a fee to attend NYC '81.

Children and young people can register now for only \$4.50 per person.

In spite of inflation, this is the same price charged the past three years. Preschool children are admitted free to all activities.

After July 1, a late fee is added to the registration fee that brings the total to \$5.00. This fee includes all the conference activities with the exception of the two banquets, special event, and entry fees for Bible Competition and the Music and Arts Festival.

The FAMILY PLAN is available again this year for those who pre-register. This plan gives a price break to families with two or more children. The following restrictions exist:

1. Only those who pre-register may take advantage of the FAMILY PLAN.

2. Registration forms for members of the same family *must* be mailed

together in order to receive a discount.

3. Only children who are attending and registering for the conference are counted in determining the fee. (If there are five children in your family but only two attend NYC '81, the "two children rate" applies.)

FAMILY PLAN DISCOUNT CHART

2 children (same family)	\$4.00 each
3 children (same family)	\$3.50 each
4 or more children (same family)	\$3.00 each

To register for the conference, fill out the official 1981 Registration Form, clip and mail to: NYC '81, Box 17306, Nashville, Tennessee, 37217.

1981 NATIONAL YOUTH CONFERENCE Registration Form (one per person)*

PLEASE PRINT — ALL INFORMATION MUST BE COMPLETE

Name _____
First Middle Last

ADDRESS _____

CITY/STATE _____ ZIP _____

GRADE JUST COMPLETED ____ SEX ____ BIRTHDAY ____ / ____ / ____

NOTE: ADULTS DO NOT HAVE TO REGISTER TO ATTEND NYC '81!

CHECK ONE, BASED ON
GRADE JUST COMPLETED

- ☐ Learner (grade 1-3)
- ☐ Adventurer (grade 4-6)
- ☐ Herald (grade 7-9)
- ☐ Crusader (grade 10-12)
- ☐ Ambassador (age 18-24)

CHECK ONE:

- ☐ \$4.50 (individual)
- ☐ \$4.00 FAMILY PLAN
- ☐ \$3.50 FAMILY PLAN
- ☐ \$3.00 FAMILY PLAN
- ☐ \$5.00 (after July 1)

ONLY FOR
THOSE WHO
PRE-REGISTER
.....
PRIOR TO
JULY 1

TICKET(S):

- ☐ Junior Adventurer (\$5.00)
- ☐ Youth (\$8.50)
- ☐ Special Event (\$4.00)

MAIL TO: POST OFFICE BOX 17306
NASHVILLE, TENNESSEE 37217

***DOES NOT INCLUDE BIBLE COMPETITION OR MUSIC AND ARTS FESTIVAL ENTRY FEES**

BURGESS WINS FOUNDATION SCHOLARSHIP

CARBONDALE, IL—The Scripps—Howard Foundation selected Susan Burgess as one of five Southern Illinois University-Carbondale students to receive journalism study scholarships during the spring semester.

Vernon Stone, director of the University's School of Journalism, said the scholarship was awarded on the

basis of academic performance, evidence of dedication to the journalism profession and financial need.

Mrs. Burgess, former editorial assistant for CONTACT magazine, commutes to the university from Sesser, Illinois, where her husband, David, pastors Hazel Dell Free Will Baptist Church.

Susan Burgess is a junior in SIU's news-editorial sequence.

In 1979, Mrs. Burgess was awarded a \$500 Mel Larson Journalism Scholarship by the Evangelical Press Association (See July, CONTACT, 1979, p. 18).

Pastor **Tommy Street** of **Friendship FWB Church, Ashland City, TN**, wrote to confirm that the church had 90 people saved in 1980 and 85 who followed in baptism. Rev. Street said the group had 32 saved in January with 29 being baptized.

Head's FWB Church, Cedar Hill, TN, has a 50 percent increase in Church Training Service attendance. Pastor **Steven Hasty** said 60 people attend the Sunday night activity at the church.

CONTACT welcomes THE COMMUNICATOR, publication of the Master's Men chapter at **First FWB Church, North Little Rock, AR**. The Arkansas State Master's Men Senator **Wendell Leckbee** edits the four-page publication. This is the first publishing effort by a Master's Men chapter in any of the state organizations. If any other state organization is interested in this type publication, why don't you write Wendell Leckbee, 1 Amber Lane, North Little Rock, AR.

Pastor **Gordon Sebastian** mentioned to members at **Peace FWB Church, Wilson, NC**, a need for sound equipment. The proposed project was explained as costing \$6,000. The group responded so readily that little time had elapsed before almost \$5,700 in pledges for the equipment had been received.

You never miss a baptistry until it's cold weather and you don't have one. That's why we congratulate **First FWB Church, Shelby, NC**. Pastor **Ken Piercy** and members installed a new baptistry during the month of February.

First FWB Church, Blakely, GA, celebrated its 50th anniversary on March 29. Pastor **Roger Russell** and the membership set aside the entire day to celebrate 50 years in the Lord's service.

A new church was started in **Iverness, FL**, by Rev. **Carlos Baldwin**. The group has been meeting in the Floral City Community Building in Iverness. Radio and newspaper advertising resulted in initial interest with 17 in Sunday School.

A group of **Illinois** teenagers sponsored a Bible read-a-thon a few weeks back. It took the **East Central District** youngsters 60 hours, 16 minutes to read the entire Bible aloud. Money raised by the

read-a-thon will be used to pay National Youth Conference expenses in Louisville, KY, this summer.

January was designated Operation Friendship Month by **Bethany FWB Church, Norfolk, VA**. Members got to know each other better through fellowship in their homes. It was also a time of getting better acquainted with their new pastor, Rev. **W. B. Hughes**.

Before Mrs. Elma Lou Heath Watson died, she said that she did not want the word "died" on her monument. Instead she wanted the word "transferred" to appear as a testimony to her faith in Christ. Her pastor, **Bobby Glen Smith**, preached, the transfer service for Mrs. Watson. She was a member of **College Lakes FWB Church, Fayetteville, NC**.

The **Divine FWB Church, Cleveland, OH**, finished remodeling the church building, baptized 16 converts and received 13 new members. **Hansford Reed** pastors.

Pastor **Jim McAllister** said that 1980 was the greatest year in the history of **Farmington FWB Church, Farmington, MO**. He based that observation on the fact that 153 joined the church, 130 were baptized and 115 started and finished the group's follow-up ministry.

There's a \$288,000 addition under way at **First FWB Church, Raleigh, NC**. Pastor **Randy Cox** says the church is adding 10,716 square feet to its present facilities.

Members of **Fellowship FWB Church, Kingsport, TN**, voted to contribute \$1,000 dollars to the Free Will Baptist Graduate School. By the way, this is the same church that last year gave more than \$20,000 to missions, \$4,000 to Free Will Baptist Bible College, \$2,000 to Free Will Baptist Home for Children and invested \$2,100 in their radio ministry. **Winston Sweeney** pastors.

CONTACT welcomes THE GRAND NEWS, publication of **First FWB Church, Ardmore, OK**. **Earl Scroggins** pastors.

Huntsville FWB Church, Huntsville, AR, sponsors a "Dial-A-Devotion" program for local residents. The ministry is under the direction of Pastor **Lonny Burks**.

And here's an interesting note. **Plainview FWB Church, Plainview, AR**, recently had the biggest crowd ever for a worship service. Pastor **Randall Williams** said every seat in the house was filled. When they got through counting, a total of 153 people were there.

First FWB Church, Pocahontas, AR, voted to begin the Poncahontas Christian Academy according to Pastor **Ron Parker**. The academy begins classes this fall. News of Pocahontas Christian Academy was carried in the first issue of THE MESSENGER, a bi-weekly publication of First Church.

Congratulations to Pastor **Connie Cariker**, who is in his 20th year at **West Tulsa FWB Church, Tulsa, OK**.

Members of **Victory FWB Church, Goldsboro, NC**, outfitted Foreign Missionary **Ken Eagleton** with a new suit, tie and shirt. The group then sent Mrs. Eagleton a new dress. Pastor George Lee said that when the shopping spree was over, the church then added \$500 in cash to the Eagleton account. Since then the church gave missionary **Tommy Hughes** \$400 to aid him and his family with expenses concerning a trip home from the field because of illness. The church gave \$500 to the Free Will Baptist Graduate School.

Waltonville FWB Church, Waltonville, IL, received 39 new members in 1980, saw 27 first time decisions, 27 rededications and baptized 22. The group also built a new educational building. **Howard Flota** pastors.

Faith FWB Church, Milan, IL, plans to relocate on West 14th in South Rock Island where they have purchased 11 acres. Pastor **Jim Summerson** said construction on the new facility will begin this spring.

If you'd like to have a real interesting article on compromise, why don't you write **Danny Dwyer** who pastors **Sylvan Park FWB Church, Nashville, TN**. The February issue of THE WATCHMAN, which is published by the Sylvan Park Church, carries this fine article written by Pastor Dwyer. ▲

DIRECTORY UPDATE

ALABAMA

Kenneth Driggers to Spring Hill Church, Gordon, from First Church, Enterprise
Donnie E. Hussey to Huntsville Church, Huntsville, from Fairview Church, Leeds

HISTORY CORNER

By William F. Davidson

Earlier History Corner articles showed that the present denomination can be traced to 1727 when Paul Palmer founded the first General Baptist Church in North Carolina. By 1794, the last great General Baptist leader was dead and the movement began to recognize the need for a new identity.



Nicknames Are Hard To Shake

Enter the Free Will Baptists

Lemuel Burkitt and Jesse Read, Regular or Calvinistic Baptist historians, did their opponents a special favor in recording, as early as 1803, that the General Baptist churches had been known as Free Will Baptists well before the end of the 18th century.

However, since Burkitt and Read's interest was directed toward their own denomination, they stopped short of revealing the source of the new name.

R. K. Hearn, a mid-nineteenth century Free Will Baptist historian, depended on living witnesses to determine that the Free Will Baptist name came as a nickname imposed by the Calvinistic Baptists.

Hearn relates that General Baptists in the Conetoe settlements of eastern North Carolina had gained some success during a time of difficulty experienced by the Calvinistic Baptists.

In order to reverse the gains, the Calvinists began a propaganda campaign in which they called the General Baptists "Free willers," a slam against their Arminian position on a "general" atonement.

By 1812, when the first Confession of Faith was drawn up, the two names "General" and "Free Will" were used synonymously. The use of the two names indicated that the denomination claimed a link with the older group on the one hand, and that it sought to establish a new identity on the other.

Official Adoption of the Name

Elias Hutchins, historian of the New England Freewill Baptists, indicated that the southern group officially adopted the new "Free Will Baptist" name during the 1828 Annual Confer-

ence.

Although Annual Conference minutes are not available before 1829, Hutchins was a contemporary and had constant contact with the southern group. His testimony bears the weight of an eyewitness.

In any case, the 1829 *Minutes for the Annual Conference* indicate that the name was firmly and officially established.

Evolution of the Name

Burkitt and Read spelled the name "Free-will Baptists." The 1829 *Minutes* capitalized the "W" and by the middle of the 19th century, R. K. Hearn dropped the hyphen. The Free Will Baptists were here to stay. Nicknames are hard to shake. ▲

ILLINOIS

Archie Mayhew to First Church, Mt. Vernon, from Ivory Coast, West Africa as foreign missionary

MICHIGAN

Phil Mutchler to First Church, Benton Harbor
John Pruitt to Grace Church, Taylor
Robert Trimble to First Church, Grand Rapids, from Temple Church, Greenville, NC

MISSOURI

Dale Blackwell to First Church, Houston, from Sikeston Church, Sikeston
Charles Moyers to Sikeston Church, Sikeston

John Shebaum to Richwoods Church, Richwoods

Jimmie Tolbert to First Church, Flat River, from Whittaker Church, Whittaker

Gene Crews to Wayside Church, Willow Springs

Ralph Douglas to New Rock Springs Church, Cabool

OHIO

Lucion Baker to Pleasant Hill Church, Delaware

Bobby Blackburn to Columbus FWB Mission, Columbus

William Chadwick to North Church, Columbus

OKLAHOMA

Guy Goad to Salina Church, Salina
Joel Kircher to First Church, Cushing

TENNESSEE

W. H. Teague to West Green Church, Mosheim

OTHER PERSONNEL

David Archer to West Tulsa Church, Tulsa, OK, as Christian Education Director from First Church, Cushing, OK

Craig Bickle to Airport Church, Tulsa, OK, as associate pastor



The Pastor and His People

By Leroy Forlines

Part XVI

This article concludes the series on the pastor and his people. This final article will summarize what has been studied and make some concluding observations.

The Authority of the Pastor

To the best of my knowledge, I did not omit one verse of New Testament scripture that would shed light on the nature of the pastor's authority.

I have not knowingly omitted or avoided any verse or verses that would have shed different light on any subject covered in this entire series. I acknowledge my human frailty and that I could have overlooked some important passage or misinterpreted some passage.

I welcome those who truly submit to the authority of God's Word to call to my attention what appears to be an oversight of a passage or a misinterpretation of a passage, especially if in their opinion it would significantly alter the thrust of what has been said on basic principles.

I will not restate the proofs for my conclusions. Proof as I understood matters has been given throughout the series. I will simply sum up what has been said.

The leader-follower model of the pastor and his people in the New Testament expressly excludes authoritarianism and lordship over the people

on the part of the pastor.

The leader-follower model is the shepherd-flock model. This model is considerably different from other leader-follower models such as the master-slave, dictator-subject, and general-private models.

The shepherd-flock model is *not a weak type of leadership*. Leadership authority does not have to flow from the raw power of the position of the office to be strong.

When a pastor lives up to the ideal of the New Testament, he is a highly respected man of God. This is indicated by the title "elder." He is respected for his Christian character, maturity and wisdom.

The terms "pastor" and "bishop" in designating the chief leader of the church refer to him as a caring person who takes care of the needs of the flock with diligence.

The pastor when following the New Testament model does not order his people around. Rather he cultivates their respect! He loves them. He equips himself for his work so that the people have confidence in his leadership.

With the teaching of scripture and sound reasoning, he is able to lead the people. He is not an authoritarian boss who inflicts unnecessary wounds upon those who cross his path. But he is without question the chief leader of the church.

The Submission Of The People To The Pastor's Leadership

When studying leader-follower models, we need to be concerned about

the type of following just as we are concerned about the type of leading.

In some cases of following or submitting, there is the responsibility to follow a prescribed list of orders or instructions based on a contractual agreement or legal or moral obligation. Another type of following is based on respect for the person leading and commonly held purposes and goals.

When there is submission to a prescribed list of orders or instructions, the level of input to the leader or leaders from those following would either be very limited or non-existent.

When submission is based on respect for the leader or leaders, and agreement on commonly held purposes and goals, the relationship is either voluntary or has a strong voluntary element.

This type of leader-follower relationship depends for its success upon good interpersonal relationships. The leader not only draws from his own wisdom, but also from wisdom of those under his leadership. This is the kind of relationship that will exist between the pastor and his people whenever the biblical model is followed.

According to the New Testament, the pastor is to be highly respected, deeply appreciated and loved by his people. He is to carry out his responsibility under God with a deep love and concern for his people.

They are a flock for whom he is deeply concerned, not just a work force to help him carry on the work of the Lord as he sees it, without regard for their ideas.

The pastor, while seeking to lead his people in paths of righteousness and service as he understands the

teaching in the Bible, recognizes the rights of his people.

Redeemed laymen have been redeemed by the same Savior as the pastor. They have the same Bible the pastor has. They have the same personal and spiritual make-up that he has. They are indwelt by the same Holy Spirit that dwells in him.

They will stand before God to give an account of how they have lived by God's Word just as the pastor will.

This means that the pastor must diligently study the Word of God and must by scripture, the power of the Holy Spirit, and sound reasoning seek to get the people to follow his teachings and his plans.

Laymen must be encouraged to study the Bible and think for themselves. This will allow them to develop as strong Christians.

For a church to grow and be strong, it must have strong lay leadership as well as strong pastoral leadership. A strong capable, confident man of God who is pastor will not be threatened or intimidated by strong lay leadership.

Strong laymen will not be attracted to a church where there seems to be no chance for them to develop their strength as leaders and use their gifts.

The Pastor And The Deacons

The pastor is not to be viewed as a paid employee of the church to be supervised by the deacons. He does not serve under the deacons. Rather, the deacons serve under him.

The pastor is not a hired worker, but an elected leader. He is supported as a matter of ethical principle, out of love and respect so he can give his time to ministering to the needs of his people and lead them into a ministry to others.

While the deacons serve under the pastor, they are not to be a group of "yes men" who help the pastor convince the congregation to go along with the pastor's ideas and programs.

The deacons give input to the pastor. They help him remain alert and sensitive to the needs of the congregation. There should be give and take, but the pastor should be respected as the chief leader.

In cases where the pastor is unable to give the leadership needed by the

church and this seems to be the general opinion of the congregation, it would be the responsibility of the deacons to inform the pastor.

If the pastor so chooses, he can resign. If he questions whether this is the general opinion of the people, he can ask for a vote.

If a church has a history of pastors leaving because of advice or pressure from the deacons or any other "power figure" in the church, it is time for the church to see if the problem resides more in the deacons or other "power figure," as the case may be rather than a history of bad experiences with pastors.

Changes need to be made on the level where the problem exists.

The Need For Long Pastorates

It is understandable that there will be some cases where the pastor will remain at a church for only a short term. However, this should be the exception rather than the rule.

A pastor who changes churches every one to three years never really becomes all that a pastor is supposed to be.

The people should respect the office of pastor, but the full respect that should be accorded a pastor must be earned. It cannot be conferred.

The pastor who lives a consistent life, grows in his understanding of the Bible, matures in understanding his people and his work, and becomes better known in the community will be able to have a far greater ministry than one who sojourns for a short while in the area.

Churches who have become accustomed to short-term pastors will now know how to fully recognize a pastor in the full sense of the work which a man of God comes and cultivates their respect and appreciation over a longer period of time.

It is almost, if not altogether, impossible to build strong churches without long-term pastors.

Supporting The Pastor

When anybody examines the teaching of scripture, there is no room for

debate over whether pastors should be paid for their services.

In cases where the church cannot provide adequate income, it is acceptable for there to be an agreement for the pastor to supplement his income with additional work.

There is no more scriptural support for the idea that God will miraculously meet the needs of pastors whose salaries are inadequate than that He will miraculously meet the needs of laymen whose salaries are inadequate.

While the Bible warns all Christians to avoid becoming too much in love with money or material things, pastors and laymen are given the same warnings.

It is neither wrong nor unspiritual for a pastor or other church-paid worker to have a concern about the adequacy of their income when they have been reasonable about what adequacy means.

The Bible does not set forth austerity as the ideal for church-paid workers.

I do not mean to imply that all church-paid workers are underpaid. I do mean to say that, generally speaking, we need to get away from the myth that their needs will be supplied regardless of what salary is given.

We need to get away from the myth about how they are supposed to fare. Those who deal with salary-setting need to apply the principles of Christian ethics, a heart of concern, and sound business principles (sound in the light of scripture and experience) to salary setting.

This will no doubt call for much more attention to stewardship in meeting the needs brought about by these changes. When the church becomes concerned about doing right regarding church-paid workers, I believe God will honor this on their part.

While a proper relationship between the pastor and his people, will result in personal benefits to both pastors and laymen, I believe it will form one of the foundation stones toward building strong and growing churches for the glory of God and the salvation of sinners.

For those who have not kept up with this series and would like to see the scriptural support given for conclusions in this chapter, they can find it in the series "The Pastor and His People" which began with the January, 1980 issue of CONTACT. ▲



Bessie

Burden-Bearer

By Hennie Helpmeet

Even as a child Bessie was somewhat of a loner. Not that she wanted it that way, but perhaps God started early to school her for adulthood.

In her sparsely populated community, she seldom found a neighbor her own age. And because her mother failed to prepare Bessie for some of the temptations of youth, she was forced to meet them in ignorance or with what help she "picked up on the streets."

Upon receiving Christ as a teenager and moving to the city, Bessie continued to be a minority. She never quite understood some of the convictions the Lord implanted in her heart. It certainly did make it difficult for her to be a favorite of the fickle.

And then one day God brought Ben into her life. He was all she had ever hoped and dreamed. At last there was

someone to share her joys and sorrows.

Life might not *all* be coming up roses, but at least some of the thorns had been removed!

When Bessie and Ben took their marriage vows, they not only gave themselves to each other but to God, for He had a definite place for them.

Ben was a pastor. Some areas where he labored were small and often quite dry, and Ben as the shepherd sometimes found it difficult to make every provision for his "favored flock."

Bessie began to see that even the poverty of her youth had been a course in her schooling. She could feed and dress her family on meager capital.

One thing that did trouble her, though, was the sense of loneliness and not belonging that sometimes returned. She discovered that one could be in the midst of a crowd but not really a part of it.

Seemingly she was accepted by her

husband's congregation as one of the "girls." On the other hand, she sometimes felt she was not really an integral part of it.

Although some women in the church sometimes told her the hidden history of others, and a few mentioned their own misdemeanors, Bessie knew she did not dare confess to any such confidante. Many a young pastor's wife had learned this the hard way.

Ben still gave a listening ear, but his life was so filled with church-related activities that she didn't have the heart to heap her trivial troubles on his already sagging shoulders.

Then, too, there were matters relating to him that she could not bring herself to discuss with him. Neither could she risk injuring his reputation or hurting the cause of Christ by sharing them with anyone else.

How difficult it was in such a situation! What was she to do? In too many instances she simply reverted to her childhood behavior and suffered alone and in silence.

Bessie knew there were references in the scriptures such as "Trust in the Lord . . . and He will direct thy steps," "Casting all your care upon Him for He careth for you," "Great peace have they . . . and nothing shall offend them."

She read the Word and other Christian literature. She tried to make her life a living witness, and she prayed. But she carried her own burdens. When in tears she took them to the Lord, she always seemed to pick them up again when her prayer was ended.

But, finally, one day the full impact of "There is a friend that sticketh closer than a 'sister'" gripped her heart.

That friend would always be nearby when she needed Him. She would not need to worry that her confessions or obsessions would be repeated. But best of all, this One could do something about the need.

Her "Now I Lay Me Down to Sleep" prayers would never be the same. And when she sang "Take your burden to the Lord and leave it there," she would know the real joy of having done just that! ▲

ABOUT THE WRITER: Hennie Helpmeet is a Christian woman who from her own experiences has made some observations that might be of benefit to others like her.



THE SECRETARY SPEAKS

By Melvin Worthington

Faithful Followers



THE NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF
Free Will Baptists

The religious and political world today places much emphasis on leadership. Seminars and workshops are conducted from coast to coast to cultivate leadership.

Media bemoans the fact that we have strong leadership in neither the political nor the religious world. There is a constant cry for strong, stable leadership in our denomination.

In the midst of this leadership flap, it seems to me that the essential ingredient for effective and efficient leadership has been overlooked. Good leaders must have loving and loyal followers.

The disciples were instructed to follow Jesus (Matthew 4:19). Paul admonished the Ephesian believers to be followers of God (Ephesians 4:1). The Corinthian Christians were urged to be followers of Paul as he followed Christ (I Corinthians 11:1).

Effective leadership is determined to a large degree by the quality of those who follow. In order to lead, one must know something of what it means to be a follower.

Fortunately, leaders do not appoint themselves as leaders and everybody else as followers. That decision still belongs to God in His sovereign wisdom.

No clearer example of this principle can be found than the case of Paul (Acts 9). The same principle is evident when we examine the lives of Moses, Daniel, Jeremiah and Isaiah.

Paul splendidly illustrates the principle in I Corinthians 12 where he displays the human body as the Church. God places each member where it will be most useful.

God has not called all men to be great or prominent. But He has called all to be faithful followers. Strong, stable and scriptural leaders must have devoted, dedicated and disciplined fol-

lowers.

In denominational life there must be a place for leadership and followship. Free Will Baptists need to respect the servants who have been elected to serve as leaders.

In spite of the fact that God down through the years has given excellent leadership to Free Will Baptists, our leaders on all levels have often been viewed with suspicion and subjected to unwarranted and harsh criticism.

Those who elect others to positions of leadership must in turn respect that leadership. Pastors who would be effective leaders in their churches must have followers. Likewise denominational servants who serve in various capacities of responsibility must have followers to be effective.

Do we consider ourselves loving and loyal followers of Christ? Are we in turn loyal and loving followers of those we place in positions of leadership within our denomination? What characterizes a faithful follower?

Faithful followers are characterized by OBEDIENCE. Their love and loyalty is demonstrated in their obedience to the Word, will and work of God.

John declares that one's love for God is demonstrated by keeping His commandments (I John 5:3). Earthly parents are pleased when their children are obedient. Our heavenly Father rejoices when we faithfully follow His commandments.

Though one may not be great, he can follow obediently. Joseph Parker sums up this principle, "Let me say that the hour will be dark in which we pine for things romantic at the expense of a quiet and deep life. Christianity teaches us that no child is to be despised, no work to be considered mean, and that suffering may have all the honour of service. Woe to us when we can live only on stimulants!

"When the house is accounted dull, when only sensational books can be endured when music and drama-painted show are essential to our happiness, life has gone down to a low ebb and death is at the door. Let us do our quiet work as if we were preparing for kings, and watch attentively at the door, for the next comer may be the Lord himself."

Faithful followers are OBSERVANT. They discern what pleases their leader and determine to do it. Their greatest joy comes from knowing that their leader is pleased.

Jesus always did that which pleased His Father (John 8:29). Faithful followers are aware of the wishes and will of their leaders. No church or denomination can effectively minister if every one does "that which is right in his own eyes."

Each Free Will Baptist needs to be keenly aware of the purpose, program and policies of the denomination.

Faithful followers have a sense of OBLIGATION. No one can be a faithful follower who does not sense his obligation. Free Will Baptists have a happy obligation to support the Free Will Baptist Family. This responsibility, though joyous, is not optional but an obligation.

It is not an unreasonable request that those who eagerly follow God also willingly support and follow the denominational servants they have elected to lead them. ▲

THE SECRETARY'S SCHEDULE

- April 2-4** National Master's Men Conference, White Bluff, TN
- April 5** Peace FWB Church, Indianapolis, IN
- April 6-7** Pastors and Workers Conference, Fort Wayne, IN
- April 20-26** Heritage Temple FWB Church, Columbus, OH

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