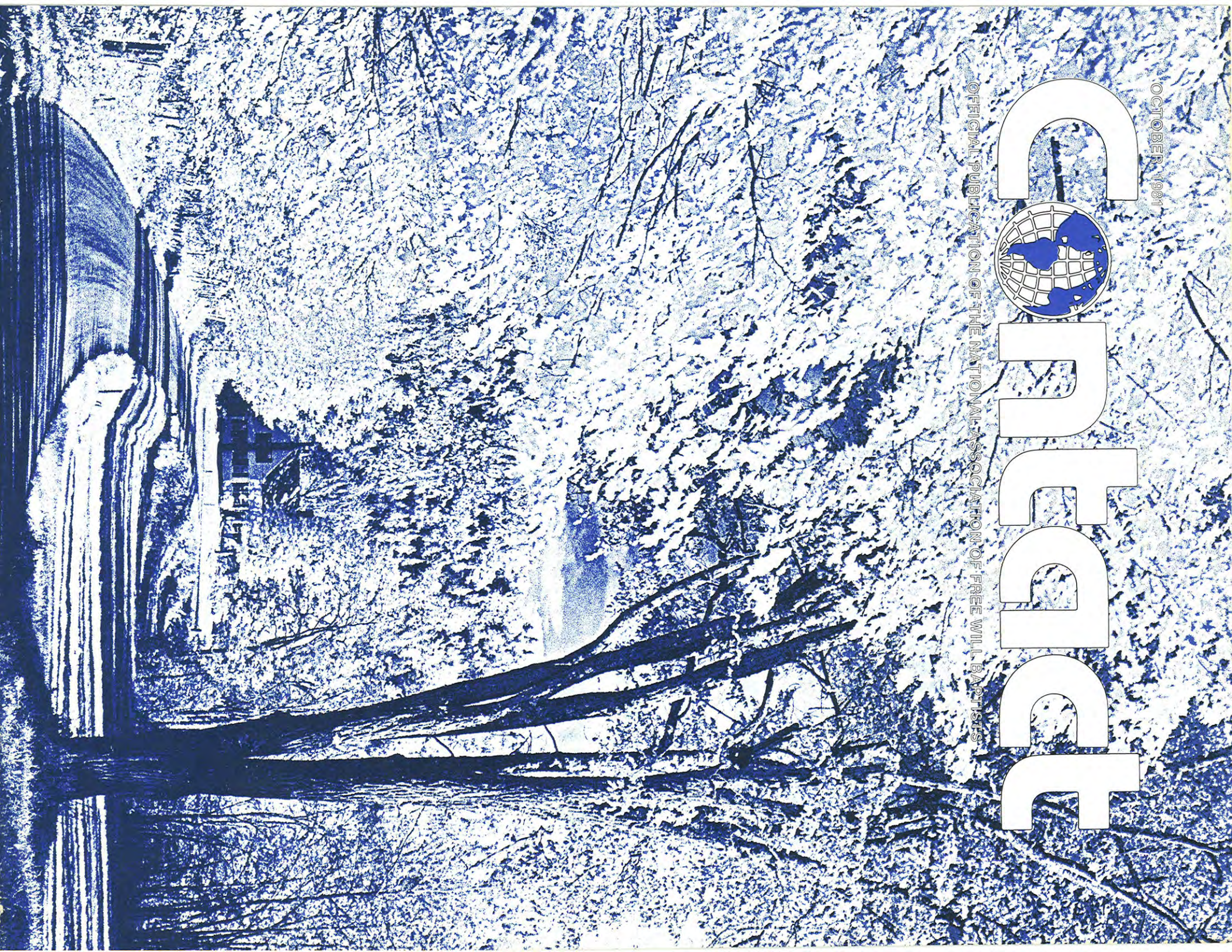


OCTOBER 1981

# UNITE



OFFICIAL PUBLICATION OF THE NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF FREE WILL BAPTISTS





A tender, realistic look at the graying of America, your church, your parents and you.

# Should I Send My Parents To A Nursing Home?



By Trula Cronk

2/CONTACT/Oct. '81

**I'm** proud of my generation. We put men on the moon and television antennas on every roof. We made it possible to arrive at the most remote spot on the earth the same day you leave home.

Guess who first transplanted living

organs, who conquered polio and added years to life expectancy? And who gave us Social Security, medicare, pensions and insurance programs to lessen the uncertainties of financial disasters?

My generation—that's who! No other generation has made more contributions to a better life.

But I bow my head. Among the things we have not done is adequately address the problems of aging. While I might never have come down with polio anyway, it's a sure thing that old

age is going to get me if I live long enough.

If the American dream is not to end in nightmare, those added years we gave ourselves must be quality years, not just lengthened existence.

Although statistics insist that most of us will die at home or after a short stay in a modern medical facility, the small percent who end their days in dilapidated boarding houses or understaffed nursing homes haunts us like a spectre, not clearly seen but acutely feared, as we gaze into our own futures.



## What About Grandma?

The prospect of being a permanent guest in somebody else's home, even that of a son or daughter, is not much better. For many, however, a more immediate problem than our own old age demands a solution. What can be done for aged and disabled parents?

American social programs give old age more dignity, more comfort and more independence than the aged have ever known. But we have *not* bestowed on our aged the honor and prestige afforded the elderly by many other societies. Loss of esteem is a knockout blow at any age, but it is absolutely devastating in old age.

I concede that for satisfying retirement years, adequate income is secondary only to good physical, mental and spiritual health. But companionship and a sense of worth are just as crucial.

What can we do with grandma when grandpa dies, and in her loneliness she begins to feel useless, gets a little confused and makes poor decisions now and then?

Or what can we do if she breaks a hip that won't heal and can't get around to care for herself anymore?

Ideally, everybody has a mother-in-law apartment and enough money to hire a nurse or housekeeper (if one can be hired), or at least the leisure for one family member to stay home and care for her or him or them.

But in reality, there is seldom a spare room in our nuclear homes, and mom can't afford to quit her job and care for grandma because to do so would jeopardize the children's education or her own old-age income.

A deeper problem may be that ideologically we are stuck on independence. We expect our children to be on their own by the time they marry, and we entertain visions of independence for ourselves right up to the hearse door.

But some are denied this vision, because disability imposes dependence. The time comes when many have to depend on others. Blessed is the person who has someone on whom to depend.

## What God Says

As in every life situation, the Bible speaks in principle about the responsi-

bility of caring for our own.

The Bible explains, "But if any provide not for his own house, he has denied the faith, and is worse than an infidel . . . If any man or woman that believeth have widows, let them relieve them, and not let the church be charged; that it may relieve them that are widows indeed" (In Timothy 5:8, 16).

While the believer's responsibility is clearly stated, no details are provided on how to discharge this obligation. This is the genius of the scriptures.

The Holy Spirit, in omniscient wisdom, hands us principles which every Christian culture in every age in any part of the world can implement in its own way.

As Christians we are responsible for loving care of disabled parents. How this is done should be decided by each family in honest recognition of family limitation.

Finances largely determine the alternatives open to a family, but foresight, knowledge and planning may increase the alternatives.

Where home care is possible and practical, it is to be preferred. But if such care is impractical—whether from the standpoint of facility, time or personality—there is nothing to prohibit creative and open exploration of other avenues of care.

Let's add here—desires to give our immediate family unnecessary luxuries or privacy should not be an excuse for refusing to open our homes to parents in need.

## What Circumstances Demand

But in fairness to all, remember that we live in a culture with little practice in juggling several generations under one roof. It may be unrealistic to expect a compatibility miracle right at the time when aged parents are suffering loss in all the major areas of life.

Many people experienced the presence of a grandparent in the home during their childhood. For some it was a rewarding and enriching experience, but for others it appears to have been traumatic.

One woman said her whole childhood was wrecked by a cantankerous

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## NURSING HOME (From page 3)

live-in grandmother who imposed her will on every decision and who was always critical, bitter and unhappy when she didn't get her way.

Another woman confessed that taking a parent into the home broke up her marriage. Whether this was a reality or an excuse, it does indicate that sharing a household brings great stress into a family, and only that family can decide how much is tolerable and when alternative care must be found.

And the fact remains that most parents fear they will be unable to adjust gracefully to a dependent role.

Every family should be allowed to make its own decision without fear of censor from relatives or Christian friends, and without assuming a crushing load of guilt.

Home care is often inadvisable for a variety of reasons. Sometimes children are old or disabled before parents begin to need care. Parents often require nursing care that no untrained person can give.

Some daughters have done double duty in job and mothering for so long, that they are simply too tired to assume the demanding role that invalid care requires.

And let's face it, some families never got along well under the best of circumstances, and that doesn't mean they don't love one another. It simply means that trying to live together may be a bad decision.

Sometimes grown children have the care of their own grandchildren because of broken marriages. Sometimes finances won't permit a family to assume care of a parent alone, and brothers and sisters don't always share the burden fairly.

### What About Creative Alternatives?

To seek outside care for a parent or disabled spouse does not signal lack of devotion or caring. It's often bowing to reality and recognizing that it is the only way to discharge one's responsibility with dignity and honor.

Choose a care facility wisely. Families should investigate available alternatives well in advance, while everyone is

competent to make wise and non-sentimental decisions.

This is something husbands and wives should do together. The surviving spouse will feel a great deal more confident about a plan they worked out together. The children and in-laws should share in the discussion and everyone urged to be honest in expressing feelings.

What's to prevent people from approaching this subject in creative ways? For instance—one extended family bought a house in a university town so all the cousins could live there and go to college, if they needed or wanted to.

Why couldn't family clans do this for their elderly and all share the burden, but keep their loved ones within the family circle?

One family with many members who served overseas as missionaries and in other capacities, bought communal land so that every member coming home would have a place to park a mobile home or build a house, enabling them to be together and look after one another when they needed to retire.

Some denominations build retirement and nursing homes which become institutional and more or less impersonal. Local churches or groups of churches could do this on a small scale so that care could be kept personal and in the community.

Even day care for the elderly, similar to that provided for children, enables many families to give their loved ones home care longer than would otherwise be possible.

### What To Do Now?

When public institutional care is the chosen alternative, either for temporary or permanent care, the choice should be made carefully.

No home is better than the people who operate it and perform the personal services for residents.

The pamphlet "Thinking about a Nursing Home?" gives a good general reference list to help ask the right questions in seeking a retirement facility. And it's free! (American Health Care Association, 1200 Fifteenth Street, N.W., Washington, D.C. 20005, Phone 202/833-2050)

An excellent book which lists many agencies working with the aged is

*Living in a Nursing Home* by Sarah Greene Burger and Martha Derasmo.

One advantage of outside care for parents is that being relieved of the physical care, children and friends can minister to other needs.

Older people continue to need personal identity, prestige and status, as well as interaction with other people and personal involvement in the lives of their children, grandchildren and close friends.

They should experience a sense of being needed and of being a service to the family, even if that service is limited to listening and praying. They need something to look forward to and a chance to participate in corporate worship services.

They need to retain a sense of having accomplished something in life. We have not discharged our responsibility to "care for our own" unless we can relieve their fears of being humiliated, abandoned or forgotten.

They will sometimes be lonely. They will often feel isolated and dependent, but this is part of the human problem wherever one is.

Children can share their love by being there on a regular-to-be-counted-on basis, even though their visits may not be every day or even every week. They can let the loved one know they are always on call and that they stand between him or her and the often cold impersonality of the institution.

It's a fact that people who have numerous visitors get better care by the staff than those who have none.

If you are having trouble accepting the necessity of putting a loved one in a nursing home, read Opal Hutchins Sallenberger's *I Chose To Live In A Nursing Home*.

Life is complicated. We all have responsibilities to many different people that cannot be shuffled to allow us to give full-time care to just one person.

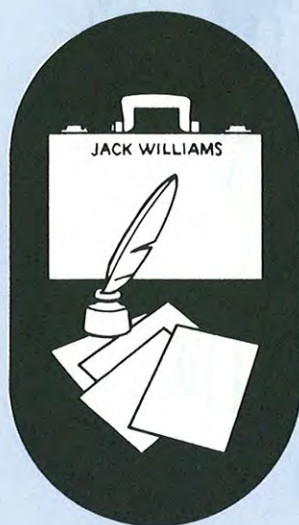
So we do the best we can and go on in peace. But let us keep working together to explore more and better ways of caring for our elderly.

And please, let's do it before we need such care ourselves. ▲

**ABOUT THE WRITER:** Trula Cronk is a state disability examiner for the Social Security Administration in Tennessee. She is a veteran FWB missionary, having served 24 years in India. Mrs. Cronk is a member of Horton Heights Free Will Baptist Church, Nashville, Tennessee.



## Briefcase



# Death By Strike

And there's more—the prison guards who'd rather be doing something else, the truckers who clog freeways protesting grievances, the doctors and nurses who storm out of operating rooms and intensive care units, *ad infinitum*.

**Has reason taken** a sabbatical? Must civilization be run by supervisory personnel? No one wants reversion to child labor and Simon Legrees, but neither can we tolerate this shotgun arbitration.

Common sense and public safety take precedence over vested interests. I'm opposed to nationalizing service and socialized medicine, but I struggle to feel positively when a neighbor's home and 20 years' hard work burn, and striking firemen sabotage the fire-plugs.

The same law officer who railed about civil disobedience in 1969, now slashes patrol car tires and flaunts the law until every punk crook in town knows the cop values money more than he does right and justice.

The right to be a policeman, a fireman, a doctor, and other crisis-related vocations precludes the right to tear it all down.

When strikes threaten the public, foul city streets with rats and filth, freeze the elderly in snow storms, steal a child's education—somebody's not playing with a full deck, brother.

**Let's praise the unions** for the great good they do, but when unions sponsor goon squads and destruction of public property, they need a swift kick in the pants and to be told to shape up or pack it in.

Do unions have such control that we dare not raise an outcry? I'm for collective bargaining, but I draw the line this side of national suicide.

Don't smile benignly at me and say we just can't do anything about it. You say it's gotten too big? Then dismantle the thing. We don't need something in this country that's bigger than the people.

The wrong people are in charge? Vote in new ones. I don't for one minute believe that every union official is a crook, but every one who is should be shown the door.

Not all union demands are unreasonable. But some are, and it doesn't take a Philadelphia lawyer to tell the difference.

**Before any of us** owe loyalty to a union, we have a higher allegiance as fathers, mothers, brothers, neighbors, friends and citizens. That responsibility to humanity and the country shames some of our actions.

And double shame on municipal leaders, administrators, and all the rest who are so pigheaded they force their colleagues to act like barbarians. When leaders won't listen and workers won't reason, we're not worthy of our own heritage.

The problem on the part of both employee and employer is greed. The strike weapon has become legalized terrorism and public extortion.

Is there an alternative? There better be. Union leaders and private and public sector work forces must sit together until they find it.

It won't take a nuclear war to destroy our country. Just get all the malcontents, the selfish and the insatiable in the same strike at one time and we'll burn, starve, neglect, and bully each other to death.

It's high time somebody besides Cain answered the question, "Am I my brother's keeper?" ▲

**B**y the time this gets to print, you may have forgotten that thousands stewed in airport terminals last August when air traffic controllers walked away from their radar screens, taking with them the invitation to fly the friendly skies. But that won't change the fact that something needs to be said.

The right to strike, like the right to bear arms, is a two-edged sword. We're up to our hubcaps in copycat strike-mania.

Some strikes are amusing—network sports announcers were the only people who sympathized with well-heeled baseball players sulking all summer by their backyard swimming pools.

Some strikes are mildly irritating—like newspaper pressmen who ignore subscribers. Others are inconvenient. But more and more frequently, strikes are becoming dangerous or disgusting or both.

Remember the strike by sanitation workers that piled garbage in your street? What about the teachers who were absent when school started? Did you wish you'd built an asbestos house when firemen staged a sick-in? Or that you owned a flak jacket when the Fraternal Order of Police holstered their pistols?





## ... As Halloween Goblin

By Donna Pittman

**T**wenty-three years as a wife and mother, most of those years in Free Will Baptist parsonages, conditioned me for almost anything. But last year was the final straw!

I resign as Halloween goblin. I, as an unimpressed witness, and my husband, as an unwilling victim of "Halloween fun," have been provoked to seriously reconsider this October holiday.

Months of thought, research and interviews produced these ideas, some of which may prove beneficial to others.

### The Halloween Problem

As Christians, a major concern must be the spiritual implications of Halloween. Probably, it's the most paganistic of our holidays.

Black cats have long been associated with black magic and bad luck. Apple bobbing in England was once practiced to predict the future.

The ancient Druids believed that on Halloween Eve ghosts, witches and spirits returned to the earth to harm people. They believed that cats were sacred and had once been human, but were punished for evil deeds.

The early Celts believed that by dressing as witches and ghosts, the evil spirits would mistake them for one of their own and not harm them.

All Saints Day is a creation of the Roman Catholic Church and combines pagan European traditions with so-called Christian festivities at Halloween.

Traditionally in America, Halloween has been a time for "trick or treat" and harmless pranks. But recent vandalism, obscenities, and pranks have made serious injuries commonplace.

Halloween has become a nightmare for law enforcement officials. Police Chief Lynwood Outlaw of the Grifton, North Carolina, Police Department defines vandalism and public safety as the major concern with traditional Halloween celebration.

Kinston, North Carolina, Police Chief Gary Broadwell agrees and adds, "The key to correcting Halloween excesses is for parents to direct young people to become involved with churches and civic groups that provide more positive outlets for youthful zeal."

### The Halloween Alternative

But while Halloween may be as American as apple pie, there are things Christians can do that honor Christ and enhance His cause. Be gone with such unsavory sorts as witches, werewolves and ghouls.

Halloween provides few spiritual pluses, yet the Christian is "to do all for the glory of God." Several pastors and youth workers offered suggestions that can remove Halloween's unpleasant mask.

One church suggests a scene from Heaven and Hell. This is an improvement over the traditional haunted house. Guides could conduct tours and introduce clients to angels, famous Bible characters, and other religious figures.

A large room decorated with flowers and brightly lighted could be Heaven. Another darkened room filled with cries and objects of woe could represent Hell.

A good Bible-based film such as "The Burning Hell" could make this a dramatic presentation. A gospel invitation, fellowship and refreshments could follow.

Another interesting idea is that of a masquerade party featuring guests dressed as Bible characters. Guests would need to know enough about their characters for a "Guess Who" game.

Games that illustrate biblical truth would be excellent at a Halloween party. For example, a bag with numerous familiar objects inside could be passed among guests who would be

allowed only to feel the objects. Guests then identify as many objects as possible by writing them down on a sheet of paper. The one with the most correct answers is awarded an appropriate gift.

The lesson: None of us has seen God, just as we could not see in the bag, but we know He is here because the evidence is overwhelming (John 4:24).

Many churches "trick or treat" for various charitable organizations. This is at best a questionable activity.

However, for those who do this, advertisement in advance is necessary and chaperones and safety guidelines are important.

It would be appropriate to read the parable of "The Good Samaritan" or the story of "The Ten Lepers." A brief devotional on God's love and our responsibility to others, with a party, could follow.

A folklore costume party would be interesting. Little Boy Blue, Jack and Jill, and Little Miss Muffet would make an interesting evening, with prizes awarded for the most original costume.

One youth pastor tells of a harvest festival. The month of October is a drive to raise monies for a special

project. At the end of the month they have a special festival which includes the entire family. The festival is filled with a film, games and activities and even a pig pickin'!

Many Christian schools have fall festivals with proceeds going to underwrite school expenses. This also provides a fun-filled evening for young and old. A carnival type atmosphere prevails and usually features a dunking machine, games, an auction and refreshments.

## The Halloween Challenge

Serious Bible study of the occult, demons, spirits and witches is needed in our churches. Many innocently become involved in these and related activities.

We owe it to our people to keep them properly informed and warned of unscriptural and pagan practices (See Colossians 1:28).

Regardless of your thinking about Halloween—whether to ignore it or join the revelry—we can only conclude that any Christian activity should honor the Lord.

To reassess one's position is never easy. Yet for a Christian the traditional

Halloween emphasis offers little that is Christ-honoring.

Surely the preoccupation with witches, spirits and messengers of darkness is unacceptable for the Christian.

A recognition of Halloween's paganistic origin and modern stance is adequate reason for Christians to concern themselves with channeling their interest in Halloween in a more positive and Christian direction. ▲



**ABOUT THE WRITER:** Mrs. Donna Pittman is an alumnus of Free Will Baptist Bible College. Her husband, Rev. James Pittman, pastors Grifton Free Will Baptist Church, Grifton, North Carolina. Donna, mother of five children, has extensive experience in Sunday Schools, Christian schools and auxiliary work.

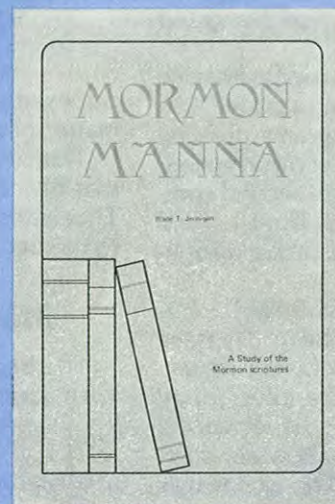
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# Whatever Happened To The Second Coming?

By Floyd Wolfenbarger

**T**he speaker unfolded his chart and hung it like a banner across the platform. I squinted to see the details. He promised an "amazingly clear and profoundly scriptural explanation of the *Second Coming*." But his lecture and his grand "Chick" tract failed.

I closed my eyes and tried to imagine Peter or Paul conducting a guided tour through the maze of diagrams, pointing out three parts of the first resurrection, four judgments, and two second comings. Even the colorful Daniel could not be imagined holding such a "prophecy conference."

In a recent widely-publicized event, a small band of prophecy devotees assigned a date for the Lord's return. Cancelling plans for the future, they waited prayerfully for the *parousia*. These people were not showmen staging a publicity event. The pastor was not pulling a hoax on his flock.

Their expectancy was based upon principles of interpretation currently in vogue and popularized by dispensationalists such as Lindsay, Kirban, and Wilmington. Though these men do not

set exact dates, the difference is a matter of degree.

This small sincere group discovered that Monday came and Jesus didn't. That leads us to ask "What happened to the Second Coming?"

## Man-Made Labels

The Second Coming has been lost in a maze of prophetic interpretations. It must be rediscovered and returned to its rightful place as a cardinal tenet of the faith.

The amillennialist among us often avoids the issue and sometimes apologizes for introducing so controversial a topic into his preaching.

He silently grimaces when a new convert wears his "Perhaps Today"

lapel pen he received from Jack Van Impe. He shudders to learn his Teen Sunday School Class has preempted Hebrews for a study course on *The Late Great Planet Earth*.

Finally, when a well meaning widow buys him a Scofield Reference Bible for his birthday, he resigns and goes west looking for a church that "knows not Darby."

The premillennialist, however, seems never afraid to preach the Second Coming. This does not mean that eschatology is a piece of cake. He has his own peculiar set of pressures.

He must pour over the list of ever-changing nations comprising the European Common Market. He has been told somewhere that he needs a new Old Roman Empire. He searches every Universal Products Code label for the nefarious number 666.

If he doesn't keep pace, he will appear dull and uninteresting compared to nationally prominent sign watchers. His files are full of obsolete sermons such as "Is Henry KisSINger the Man of Sin?"

The homilies of sure-minded proph-



ecy preachers are stacked high in the same theological corner as Miller's Great Disappointment in 1843 (Revised 1844).

Perhaps in no time since the 1830's has prophecy had a more prominent role in theology than today. However it seems that alignments in the Middle East get front-page headlines while the Second Coming is under Public Notices in the classifieds.

This distortion did not exist in the preaching of the apostles because they understood the nature of prophecy better than we often do. They were able to distinguish between promise and prediction in prophecy.

## Bible-Based Promise

Most people today view prophecy as a *foretelling of future events*. They sometimes say that it is history written in advance.

The human response to this view of prophecy is to look for events which naturally lend themselves to fulfilling the prediction. The emphasis then is to look for external and extra-biblical signs that fulfillment is getting closer.

On the other hand, prophecy is also a *promise*. This is true because prophecy is divinely inspired. A weatherman can accurately predict snow, rain, wind or heat, but he can never promise them. He has no control over the elements.

God, however, can promise things to come and no predictor can change His promises. The response to promise is faith. Faith is believing these promises even if no signs of impending fulfillment exist.

"Faith is the substance of things hoped for (promise) the evidence of things not seen" (Hebrews 11:1).

This is the hallmark of prophecy. Soothsayers and omen readers could *predict* (sometimes accurately), but only the prophet who revealed the word of the Lord could *promise*.

When Elijah prophesied of drought for three and one-half years, he was not predicting a drought already coming that God revealed to him. He was proclaiming one as a call to return to the Lord from Baal worship.

Whether an amillennialist or premillennialist, the minister of the gospel must reemphasize the element of *promise* in the Second Coming as did the Apostles.

When Peter addressed the scorers who denied the promise of His coming, he reminded them of the flood. There were no signs of impending rain. Jesus said they "knew not until the flood came, and took them all away (Matthew 24:39).

Like a thief in the night, Peter told them. He pointed to no signs. He said nothing of the Roman emperors, the destruction of Jerusalem, or Gog and Magog. He who had written "the end of all things is at hand," pointed only to one thing as assurance of fulfillment and inspiration for His faithful hope.

"Nevertheless we, according to His promise, look for new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness." Peter went on to say that this was Pauline eschatology as well (II Peter 3:13).

## Five-Fold Purpose

The details of the rise of the Anti-Christ, the great tribulation, the thousand year reign, the Middle East alignment for Armageddon and Gog and Magog—if they are a part of God's plan, are certainly not His emphasis.

The Second Coming was proclaimed to instill *righteousness*. So many of the parables of Christ teach that men should live so as to be accountable to the returning Master. When Paul spoke of the "blessed hope", he reminded Titus to therefore teach sobriety and godliness in this present world.

Peter urged his readers who looked "for such things; be diligent that ye may be found in His peace without spot and blameless." Every man that has this hope of His coming in him will purify himself.

The Second Coming was proclaimed to instill *urgency*. Perhaps this is the main reason the disciples spoke very little about external evidence of fulfillment. Men are unrighteous and will delay obedience until the last.

If all the world knew that Jesus would return in 2186 A.D., there may be no Christians by that time because folks would not have a sense of urgency.

Jesus' parable of the wise and foolish virgins emphasized the need to be ever diligent, for we do not know when the bridegroom is coming.

The people of Noah's day perished because they waited for signs of rain to

believe. We must work for the night is coming when no man can work.

The Second Coming was declared to instill *perseverance*. Peter spoke of being armed with the same mind as the suffering Christ. Face the scorn, evil-speaking, and fiery trials of the wicked upon the righteous.

We are only to live the rest of our time in the flesh doing the will of God. This is possible because the "end of all things is at hand." We have the promise that the struggle is temporary, the victory is assured, and the reward is eternal.

The Second Coming was declared to instill *comfort*. Paul comforted those sorrowing over deceased loved ones with a beautiful discourse of the Lord's return.

Calling on them to have faith (I Thessalonians 4:13-14) he proceeds to declare that the Lord, the Lord Himself, shall descend. The saints, dead and alive, will be joined as the resurrection is merged with the rapture. This was, and still is, one of the greatest comforts to the saints—The Second Coming!

The Second Coming was proclaimed to instill *fear*. Paul continues after comforting believers to issue a solemn warning to unbelievers.

"The day of the Lord so cometh as a thief in the night. For when they shall say peace and safety; then sudden destruction cometh upon them... and they shall not escape" (I Thessalonians 5:2-3).

It has been a good while since I heard the Second Coming proclaimed. I have watched endless predictions come and go—some by sincere souls who long for His coming, others by biblical charlatans who are little more than carnival palm readers.

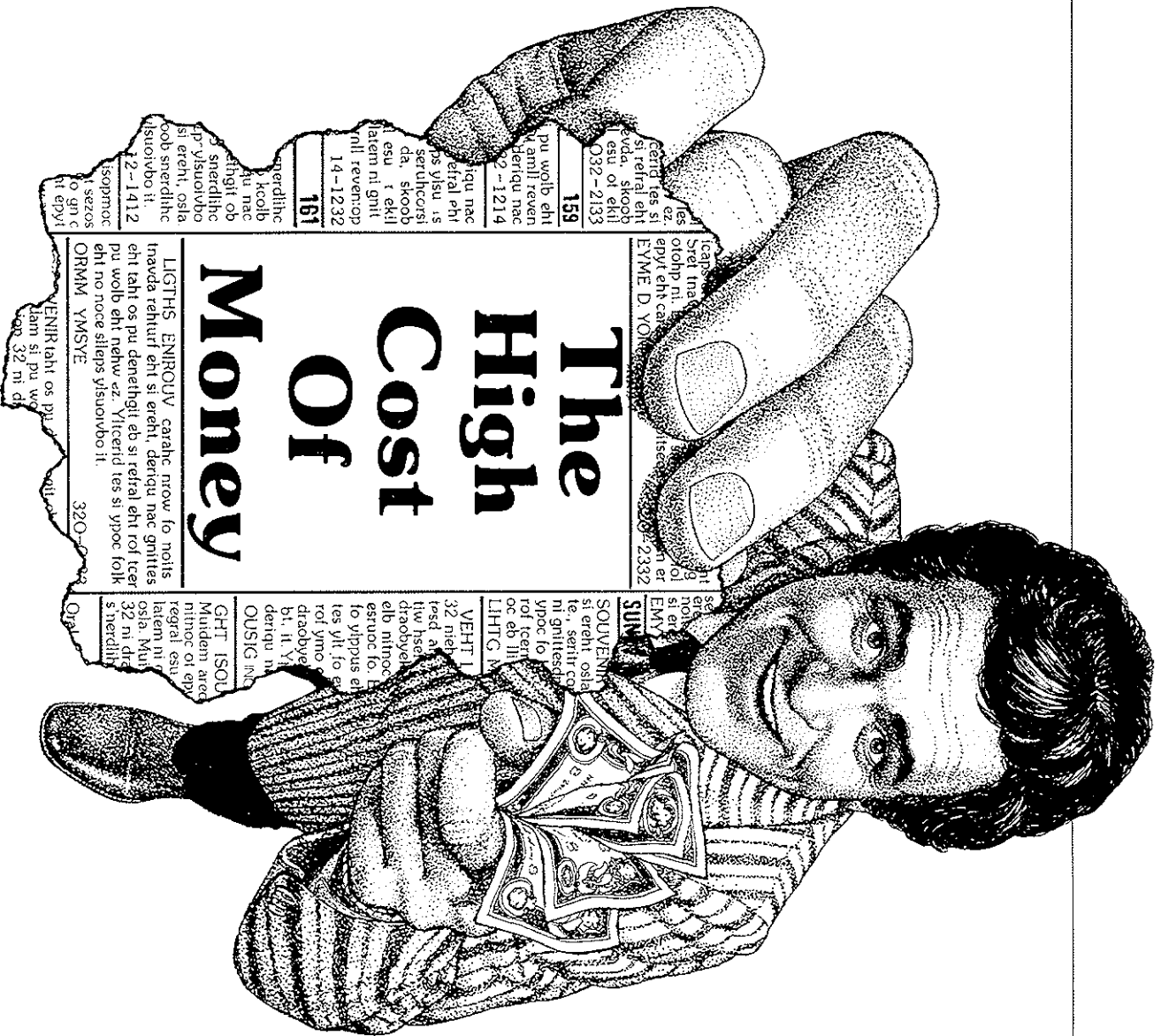
Spare us further predictions and lead us to drink at the refreshing fountain of promise. The church needs no headlines to give them assurance of His return. They are content that He said, "Behold, I come quickly."

Preach it simply again, and the church will shout "Even so come Lord Jesus!"

Maranatha! ▲

ABOUT THE WRITER: Rev. Floyd Wolfenbarger pastors Newark Free Will Baptist Church, Newark, Ohio. He is Ohio's General Board member and serves on the National Convention's Executive Committee.





By Thurmon Murphy

**F**ree Will Baptists have built some beautiful churches out on Main Street in recent years.

Our church rolls now include members who are numbered among the eminently successful in their fields—attorneys, doctors, industrialists, educators, businessmen, builders.

Here and there are scattered a few millionaires and others well on their way. There are some who, though not millionaires, are in a very comfortable financial position.

Many sermons imply that there is something evil about financial success and that believers should have no desire for such attainment. It is true

that the Bible often criticizes the rich, but in such passages the context shows that it speaks about men who make riches and power the most important things in their lives.

The Bible clearly indicates that a man can be a devout believer, right with God, and be wealthy at the same time. We should remember the words of Moses to the Israelites prior to their entrance into the Promised Land, "But thou shalt remember the Lord thy God: for it is he that giveth thee power to get wealth . . ." (Deuteronomy 8:18).

## Bible Millionaires

The Bible circles some notable ex-



amples of men who were both rich and righteous. Job is a good example.

"His possessions also were 7,000 sheep, 3,000 camels, 500 yoke of oxen, 500 female donkeys, and very many servants; and that man was the greatest of all the men of the east" (Job 1:3 N.A.S.B.).

After the successful trial of his faith, his possessions were doubled (42:12).

Look at Abraham, "And Abram was very rich in cattle, in silver, and in gold" (Genesis 13:2).

Consider Isaac, "and the man became rich, and continued to grow richer until he became very wealthy" (Genesis 26:13 N.A.S.B.).

Don't forget Jacob (and his not so righteous brother, Esau), "For their riches were more than that they might dwell together; and the land wherein they were strangers could not bear them because of their cattle" (Genesis 36:7).

Joseph, exalted politically in Egypt, was also in a position of great wealth (Genesis 41:40-43). Joseph is one of the most remarkable Bible characters, an outstanding example of moral purity.

David, the greatest of all Israel's kings, was a wealthy man, "And he died in a good old age, full of days, riches, and honour . . ." (I Chronicles 29:28).

But King Solomon takes first place as the undisputed richest man in the Bible in terms of wealth, "So King Solomon exceeded all the kings of the earth for riches and for wisdom (I Kings 10:23).

Jehoshaphat (II Chronicles 17:5) and Hezekiah (II Chronicles 32:27), two good kings of Judah, were men of great wealth.

The New Testament identifies Joseph of Arimathaea as a man of wealth, "When the even was come, there came a rich man of Arimathaea, named Joseph, who also himself was Jesus' disciple" (Matthew 27:57).

Luke describes the kind of man Joseph was, "And behold, a man named Joseph, who was a member of the Council, a good and righteous man" (23:50 N.A.S.B.).

## **Inescapable Responsibility**

So we see that being wealthy is not a sure sign that a man's not right with God. We also learn that having more

money than the average person places one in a position of heavy responsibility.

Paul instructed Timothy to pass on some good advice to those who were rich, "Instruct them to do good, to be rich in good works, to be generous and ready to share" (I Timothy 6:18 N.A.S.B.).

Those blessed with an abundance of money are responsible to do something good with that money, simply because they have the means to do so. On top of that, a responsibility is created by the need for something to be done. Gratitude for God's blessings should motivate people of means to put their money to good use.

This is not to imply or infer that the less fortunate are free from a responsibility to support worthwhile causes.

Paul reminded the Corinthians how the poor Macedonians gave generously to the offering for famine-stricken Christians in Jerusalem, "How that in a great trial of affliction the abundance of their joy and their deep poverty abounded unto the riches of their liberality" (II Corinthians 8:2).

We all tend to fantasize and say, "If I had a million dollars I'd give \$100,000 to our new Graduate School," or "If I had it to give, I'd give \$10,000 to missions."

Paul reminds us to give from what we have, not from what we don't have, "For if the readiness is present, it is acceptable according to what a man has, not according to what he does not have" (II Corinthians 8:12 N.A.S.B.).

It has been, and continues to be, the faithful giving of small amounts by a large number of people that enables us to build aggressive missions programs and educational institutions.

## **Unique Opportunity**

But the fact remains that he who has more money than the average man has a heavy responsibility, as well as a unique opportunity, to do something great for some very special causes.

A fine Christian businessman whose oil field equipment manufacturing company is thriving well in the oil fields of West Texas, sat in my living room contemplating a burden he felt God had placed on his heart.

He sensed an obligation to do something for society, to help those who

were less fortunate. He had made three concerted attempts to hire the handicapped to work in his plant. But each attempt ended in failure, because they just could not perform the work.

The businessman still felt that there was something special he needed to do, some way to put the money which God had blessed him with to work for others.

If you were in a position to invest a large sum of money in a worthy cause, what would you choose?

There are two possible avenues you might take. You could try to do something for society in general, such as creating new jobs, helping erase illiteracy, helping build a new wing on the hospital, library or museum—all deserving of consideration.

On the other hand you could choose to invest in what we tend to call religious causes—a new educational wing for your church, missions, Bible College, etc.

One thing to consider, there are many agencies, philanthropists and charitable organizations who help the underprivileged, handicapped, the less fortunate, and contribute heavily to our service institutions.

But there are not nearly so many sources of sizeable contributions for worthwhile religious causes. Therefore, a Christian who has the means should invest in those causes that are directly related to the Lord's work in this world.

Most of us are interested in improving the world around us. But Christian people with wealth who want to make the greatest impact on society should invest their money in planting churches, worldwide missions and training institutions for our ministers, missionaries and lay workers. Contributions made in these areas will have eternal results.

## **Common Sense**

There are some cautions to consider in making contributions to various religious organizations outside your local church. For instance, if you give to missions, make sure the money you give is actually used for missions.

If you give through our Free Will Baptist ministries, you can always have





## MONEY (From page 11)

a full accounting of how the money was used. Be hesitant to make contributions, of any size, to men who are building large monuments to themselves. Do not make contributions to radio and television preachers who are of questionable doctrine and ethics.

Do not send money off to a so-called "television pastor" when your own pastor is suffering financially. It will be your local pastor who will help you when you have a need.

Just try to get a television pastor to meet you at the city jail at 2:00 a.m. when your son is in trouble. See if he will visit you in the hospital when you are ill, or perform a wedding for your daughter, or a funeral for a loved one. See if he will come at midnight to help keep your marriage from breaking up. He won't be there!

But your local pastor will, and he is the man you should support.

### Four Bible Warnings

The Bible addresses a number of warnings to those who are wealthy or would like to be. In Matthew 19:24 Jesus made a startling statement, "It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle, than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of God."

It is, of course, not impossible for a rich man to go to heaven, but it is difficult. Why is this so? The chief reason is perhaps that they feel little need for God since they, seemingly, have everything. They trust their wealth rather than God.

David makes this reference, "Lo, this is the man that made not God his strength; but trusted in the abundance of his riches . . ." (Psalm 52:7).

Paul urged Timothy to pass on to the rich a warning to trust God, not their riches, "Charge them that are rich in this world, that they be not highminded, nor trust in uncertain riches, but in the living God, who giveth us richly all things to enjoy" (I Timothy 6:17).

A second warning is directed more at those who want to become rich. It is a warning that excessive love for money can lead to involvement in many sins.

This warning is given in I Timothy 6:9, "People who want to get rich fall into temptation and a trap and into

many foolish and harmful desires that plunge men into ruin and destruction" (N.I.V.).

Paul's interesting, and often misunderstood, statement in the following verse continues his warning about excessive love for money, "For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil. Some people, eager for money, have wandered from the faith and pierced themselves with many griefs" (I Timothy 6:10 N.I.V.).

We used to hear people say, "Money is the root of all evil" and we recognized that as a misquotation. Paul certainly did not say that money is the root of all evil. Neither did he say that the love of money is the root of all evil. Paul's actual statement is more correctly translated, "For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil . . ."

There are many evils not rooted in the love of money. For example, pride, lust, hatred and laziness are not necessarily motivated by a love for money. But what Paul said is certainly true, a love for money leads some men into all sort of sins such as cheating, lying, robbery, embezzlement, murder, *ad infinitum*.

Some men love money so much that they will do anything to get it. It is this excessive love for money which Paul warns against.

A third Bible warning relative to wealth is that riches cannot satisfy. In Matthew 13:22 Jesus spoke of "the deceitfulness of riches." Riches promise everything, and we sometimes think that if we were wealthy we would be happy.

In our relatively wealthy society we need to realize the truthfulness of this statement, "a man's life consisteth not in the abundance of the things which he possesseth" (Luke 12:15).

We have often heard it said that money cannot buy happiness. While that is true, it is also true that poverty cannot buy happiness.

The fact is that our happiness and personal well being must be established on grounds other than possession, or lack of possession, of material wealth.

Finally, the Bible warns that riches can vanish quickly. Solomon trumpets, ". . . for riches certainly make themselves wings; they fly away as an eagle toward heaven" (Proverbs 23:5).

A little more than one generation ago, the story was told of a pastor of a metropolitan church who met one of

his members on a downtown street.

The man said, "Pastor, come with me for a minute; I have something I want to show you."

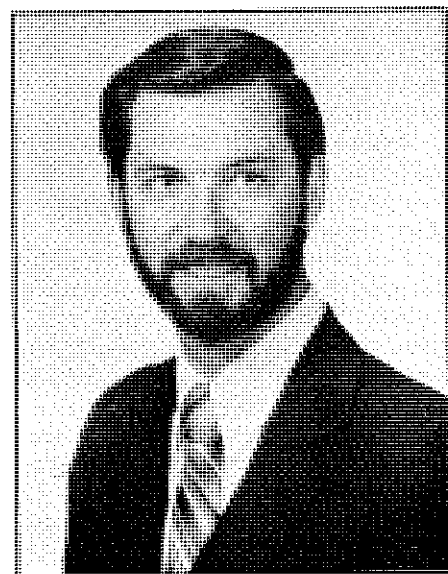
He then led his minister into a nearby bank where the two walked into the inner recesses of the vaults.

Pointing to a numbered safety-deposit box, the man said, "Pastor, look at that little box. Remember how the Gospels talk about treasure which is eaten up by moths, or rust, or which can be carried away by thieves? Well, I've solved that one. That box right there holds stock certificates worth more than \$50,000.

"They won't rust or get moth eaten: they are in a place where no thief can break in and steal them. And if someone stole them, he couldn't negotiate them. What do you think of that?"

The pastor's answer at that moment was not recorded, but the sequel to the story is. Within two months, for it was in the year 1929, the stock market crashed, and the value represented by those stocks plunged to almost nothing.

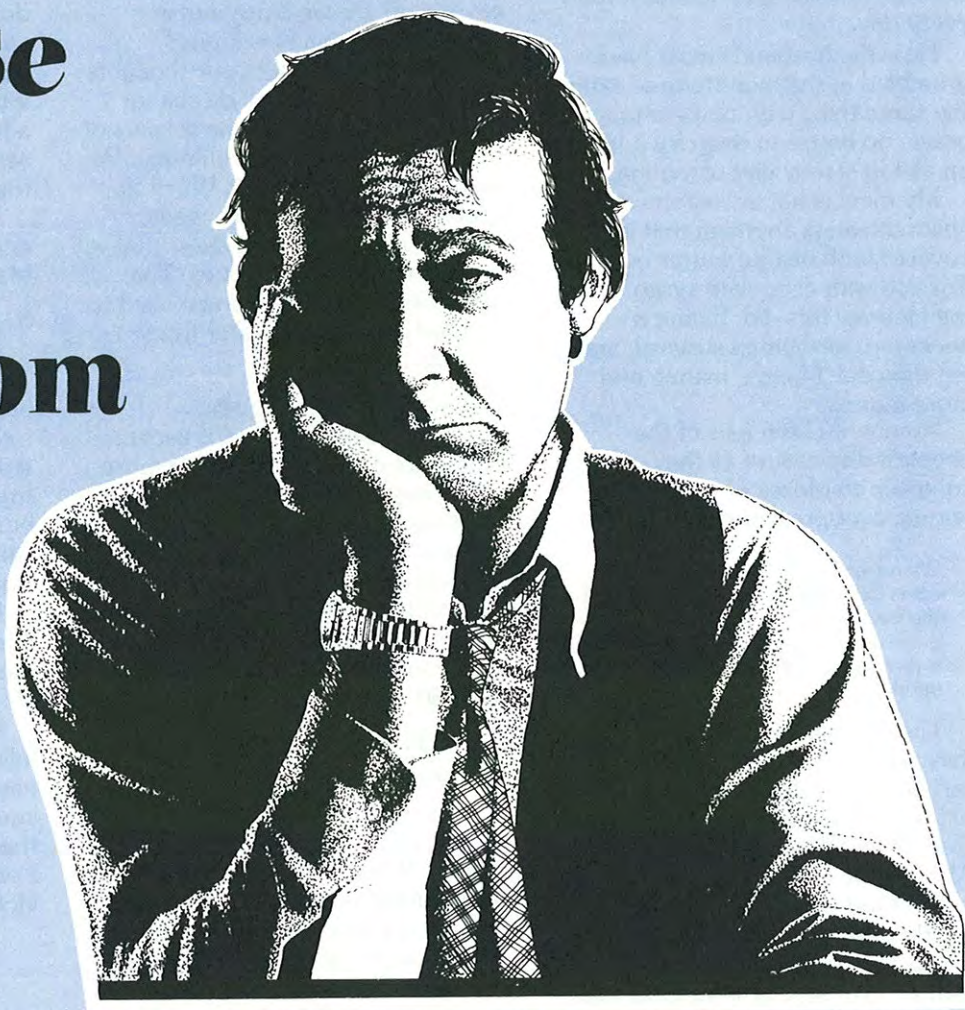
Yes, it really costs to have money. It puts one in a position of responsibility to do something with that money and it puts one under responsibility to guard against being corrupted by that money. ▲



**ABOUT THE WRITER:** Thurmon Murphy pastors First Free Will Baptist Church, Wichita Falls, Texas. The 1964 Free Will Baptist Bible College graduate began preaching more than 20 years ago. He chairs the Texas Board of Christian Education.



# In Defense Of Boredom



By Debbie Cavitt

**I**t creeps in softly, unannounced like a fog before sunrise, clouding and blurring the vision. Eyes stare intently at the haze for a glimpse of something unique, something different. Yet all around is a sameness that lingers.

Familiarity, predictability, repetition, monotony—when thrown together in a melting pot routine, they overwhelm us in the fog we call boredom.

Boredom is a problem with which we are all acquainted to some

degree. We've all said it, "I am so bored!"

To some, boredom is nothing more than minor irritation which vanishes as quickly as it appears. It is often no more bothersome than an occasional runny nose.

But to others, boredom arrives as frequently as the morning paper and as bold as disaster headlines, a frustration to be combated daily and wrestled over long periods of time.

We often mistakenly think that being bored is a problem born only out of loneliness or solitude. While loneliness is a contributing factor, it is not the sole cause.

Many surround themselves with busy families, hectic schedules, constant deadlines and still have to cope with the very same frustrations. Boredom conforms to no set pattern. Its symptoms are often as subtle as fatigue or pessimism, deflated ego or self-pity and grumbling.

With a little imagination and a sympathetic yet discerning eye, we can learn a great lesson from the wandering Hebrew children as they too struggle with the emotions of boredom.





## BOREDOM (From page 13)

And the children of Israel did eat manna for forty years . . . (Exodus 16:35a).

Forty years! Can you imagine 14,600 successive days of manna? How tired the women must have become of dishing up identical food every day.

How the husbands must have grumbled at the monotony of eating the same thing with no ketchup, no gravy, no batter to deep fry it in, just an all-too-steady diet of manna.

My mind is not accustomed to children eating anything that is not covered with peanut butter or drizzled with chocolate syrup. But the Hebrew tots did. Eating is necessary for human survival, and eat they did. Manna, manna and more manna.

Numbers 11:5-6 tells of the people's displeasure as they complain to Moses of the now boring, ever-present diet of manna.

We remember the fish, which we did eat in Egypt freely; the cucumbers and the melons, and the leeks, and the onions and the garlic: But now our soul is dried away: there is nothing at all beside this manna, before our eyes.

They complained, they grumbled, they wept as their boredom verbalized in utter desperation. Their self-pity crescendoed in anger toward God. "Why?" "Why the manna?" "Why every day?" "Why us?"

Did God wish to see just how utterly miserable these poor people would become with the constant manna? No, here is what God told Moses—

I will rain bread from heaven . . . that I may prove (test) them . . . (Exodus 16:35).

Ah! The testing of the saints. Do you think it ever occurred to them that this was a time of intense testing? Is it possible that we stumble and collapse in the clutches with boredom when God wants to use it as a tool to test, teach and refine us?

There is patience to be learned, faithfulness to be practiced and contentment to be gained through simply accepting the providence of God. These traits that seem to come so easily during "the good days" can also be acquired through the longest, dreariest, most boring times of life.

A bad case of boredom is not sin. But it is often the forerunner to deeper, more intense feelings. It is these feelings that sometimes sweep us toward sinful territory.

Are we angry at the Lord for our miserable feelings? Are we jealous of others who seem to enjoy a brighter existence? Do we lapse into a destructive coma of self-pity?

Anything that alters our thoughts and causes us to dwell on self for prolonged periods of time robs us of our Christian joy and testimony. Be wise; allow God and His Word to speak to your emotional needs.

Here are five biblical steps that will help when boredom strikes. The same principles may also be used to counsel others who suffer from chronic boredom.

### 1. Claim God's Love.

God is constant. God is secure. God is love. There is nothing more satisfying than the knowledge that God loves you. He loves you when you are strong. He loves you when you are weak.

God loves us when the world has labeled us failures and thinks we have surely met defeat (See Romans 8:38-39).

### 2. Realize that this is temporary.

This world is temporary and subject to change. So are our moods. What brings a smile one day goes unnoticed the next. Knowing that we are in a constant state of change as we grow toward being more like Jesus helps us accept the present and look forward to what a new and different day may bring (See Psalm 62:5).

### 3. Cultivate a positive attitude.

Some folks seem to be born with optimism just as surely as they were born with blue eyes and curly hair. What an asset! The rest of us must learn the trait. This requires conscientious, deliberate effort to sift through the negative and dwell on the positive regardless of present mood and circumstance.

When a pessimist looks at rain clouds, he runs to hide from the storm. When an optimist looks at rain clouds, he searches the sky for the rainbow. Let's learn to hunt rainbows (See Philippians 4:8).

### 4. Learn to be alone.

Spiritually, we are never alone, for God is always present. But physically we are often alone, completely separated from others. Learn to value this time and use it wisely.

Many things are accomplished in quiet times alone that could never be done in the bustle of a crowd. This can be a time to sort out thoughts and speak to God without interruption. It can be a time to enjoy a hobby and be creative, a time of service towards others (a letter to a friend, a card to one who is ill).

We can learn to cope with solitude and yet never be lonely (See Matthew 14:23).

### 5. Seek out a friend.

God knows we all need friends. They make life interesting; they brighten dull days.

How good it is to share a funny story with a friend and laugh together. How refreshing to share a burden with a friend, not having to carefully choose words, but speaking from the heart.

Friendship is valuable and to be cherished. Seek it out. It is one of God's gifts to you (See Psalm 55:13-14).

At times it is easy to fall into the lulling blahs and remain there, but easy is not always best. "Best" is to square our shoulders, recognize that the sun will shine again and, with the Lord's help, we will emerge victoriously refreshed. ▲



ABOUT THE WRITER: Mrs. Debbie Cavitt is a member of Airport Free Will Baptist Church, Tulsa, Oklahoma. She teaches the Junior High Girls Sunday School Class and also the Pre-School Children's Church. She is married to Johnny Cavitt. The Cavitts have three children—Amy (10), Greg (7), and Tate (4).



# BEHOLD



## How We Differ!

By Damon C. Dodd

**F**ree Will Baptists, like all true Americans, believe in freedom of worship. This freedom of worship embraces

the right of assembly, the order and accoutrements of the service, the mode of expression as we respond in worship, and the manner of dress in which we attend the service.

Let it be noted here that these observations are not intended as a critique, but rather as an analysis of

our various types of worship services from which we may draw conclusions and make evaluations.

**Some Free Will Baptist** congregations prefer action and





## DIFFER (From page 15)

excitement in their public services. Their music will be faster in tempo and accompanied by numerous musical instruments, including guitars, violins, basses and drums.

The song leader urges everyone to sing loudly and clap hands in time to the music. Sometimes, music is given such precedence in the service that the minister has very little time to deliver his message.

In this type service, public prayer is generally in concert, with all participants praying aloud, even though some individual has been designated to lead the prayer. As the unison prayer continues, some voices rise above others until one or two predominate. When these voices are lowered as the prayer draws to an end, other voices are lowered in volume until finally someone says "Amen", signalling the end of the prayer.

This is usually followed by specials, at which time there may be three to six or eight special musical numbers by members of the congregation.

**On the other hand**, there are Free Will Baptist congregations who prefer quiet, orderly type services. A church bulletin distributed to worshipers contains the printed order of service.

Proceedings begin with an organ prelude. As the prelude draws to a close, the robed choir files into the choir loft and sings a call to worship, after which the minister offers the opening prayer.

Appropriate hymn selections follow, interspersed by scripture reading, public prayer, the receiving of a worship offering, and presentation of special music. Then the minister stands forth and presents his message.

Even though the people sit quietly in the pews, they are vitally into the service. Their singing is hearty and joyful, their attention riveted to the speaker. Now and then a head nods in the affirmative or a tear slips down a cheek as the Holy Spirit moves in the hearts of the worshipers.

### **But some like it cold.**

The congregation that sits quietly with never a show of involvement,

emotion or interest exhibits another type of Free Will Baptist worship service.

In such services, the choir does all the singing, while the preacher does all the planning, praying and preaching. No one else is actively involved because they don't want to participate.



DAMON DODD

"Let the choir do the singing; that's their job. Let the preacher do the planning, praying, and preaching; that's what he's getting paid to do. We'll furnish the money."

**The "hit or miss"** type service is popular with some Free Will Baptist congregations. Nothing is planned and no preparation made beforehand. The service begins when everyone gets there, usually 10 or 15 minutes late.

The song leader calls for a selection from the congregation and after a great turning through the hymnal, someone comes up with "how about page?" This procedure is repeated for every hymn selection.

After two or three hymns, the song leader designates some person to lead in prayer. During the song service children run in and out, young people carry on their visitation at the back of the room, and some of the older people exchange bits of gossip.

Eventually the pastor calls for two deacons to "lift the offering." This ritual closes when the brethren return the plates to the table up front, take out their wallets, select a bill and toss it in the plate. Then one of them empties the contents of his

plate into the other one and covers the combined offering by inverting his offering plate on top as a lid.

Following this, special music is called for, which stirs a round of requests and refusals. When at last a group consents to sing, they discover that they left their books in the car and must have them brought in to

Some congregations plan nothing, prepare nothing and never start services until everybody gets there, usually 10 or 15 minutes late . . . .

them. Two or three minutes of confusion follow as a messenger scurries outside to get the music.

The group reluctantly goes to the front, gathers around the piano, and whispers instructions to one another and the accompanist. Following the format, "We've all got colds but we'll do our best. Don't listen to our singing; listen to the words," they give forth.

During their presentation the minister has been leafing through his Bible. When he stands, it is with this solemn announcement, "I couldn't get the leadership of the Spirit about what to preach on until I got up here and heard this beautiful singing. Just a few minutes ago He spoke and told me where to find my text." And with this declaration he launches into the message with no prior preparation.

### **These are but four**

examples of the many types of services one finds in our churches. Many of our people shy away from what they loosely term "formality" in the service. By this term they refer to a stiff, rigid, proscribed order of worship.

However the generalized definition of "formality" is: the following or observing of prescribed customs,



rules or order. This means that so-called informality becomes formality in that it is following a prescribed custom or order of doing things.

Thus informality in the conduct of a worship practiced as a regular procedure is in reality a formal service. Informality becomes formalized.

Our procedure in the conduct of our services reveals a basic difference in our approach to and development of these services. Some of us worship. Some of us celebrate. There is a vast difference here.

**In Isaiah 6:1-13**, four elements of worship are set out. They are:

**Adoration** (6:1-4) Isaiah saw the Lord "sitting upon a throne, high and lifted up." The seraphims worshiped Him. "Holy, holy, holy, is the Lord of hosts . . . ."

**Confession** (6:5-7) Seeing God, Isaiah saw himself. He recognized and acknowledged his uncleanness and confessed it: "Woe is me! for I am undone . . . ."

**Proclamation** (6:8a; 9-13) True worship triggers a sense of responsibility. One must get into action and be about the business of Him whom he worships. "Here am I; send me."

**Dedication** (6:9-13) "And he said, Go tell this people . . . ." Even though they will refuse to act on God's offer favorably, we are obligated to go and tell them of

God's love. The act of worship rekindles a spirit of gratitude, obligation and determination in the child of God to surrender himself anew to his Lord and Master.

Any type of worship service that produces these reactions in the worshiper is acceptable in God's sight. If these elements are missing, there has been no true service of worship.

### **A service of celebration**

is one in which the event is more important than the person.

True worship recognizes the Person of Christ as its object. He is the only one to be worshiped for He alone qualifies to be worshiped (Revelation 5:8-10; 7:17).

In the process of worship we remember the events which qualified the person as the object of worship, but adoration and praise are directed to the person.

We celebrate July 4 as Independence Day. Parades, fireworks, excitement, feasts, noise are hallmarks of the celebration.

George Washington's birthday is marked by quiet, well-planned gatherings in which we do honor to the father of our country.

Matthew 21 gives the account of Jesus' triumphal entry into Jerusalem. Great multitudes lined the streets. People lifted their voices loudly as they hailed the Son of David (21:6-9). But after He had passed by, the question on every lip

was "Who is this?" (21:10). No worship here; just a rousing celebration.

So we conclude that excitement and noise in the service are not necessarily right or necessarily wrong. If in the celebration of the service, the Person of Christ stands forth as the One worshiped, then excitement and noise are acceptable.

But if the object of all the cacophony is to satisfy the flesh and release pent-up emotions by taking them out of the Holy Spirit's control, there has been no worship.

**We are different**, in our services, in our style of preaching, in our mode of dress, in our music and in our sanctuaries.

These things are relatively unimportant as long as we remember the words of Jesus in John 4:23-24, "But the hour cometh, and now is, when the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth; for the Father seeketh such to worship him. God is a spirit: and they that worship Him must worship him in spirit and in truth."

So long as we follow this pattern, we will be alike in spite of our differences. ▲

**ABOUT THE WRITER:** Reverend Damon C. Dodd pastors New Home Free Will Baptist Church, Colquitt, Georgia. He is the author of two books on denominational history—**The Free Will Baptist Story** and **Marching Through Georgia**. He is the moderator of the Georgia State Association.







# The Gift

By Lorraine Layne

**M**other was furious! Arms akimbo, she glared at me, her black eyes narrowing into scissored slits.

"Lorraine," she raged breathlessly, "I don't know what I am going to do with you! As your mother and your Sunday School teacher, I am forever appalled at your behavior. You are, without a doubt, the most selfish, spoiled child I ever brought into this world!"

That verbal flogging followed an altercation between me and the daughter of Mother's oldest and dearest friend. The little girl, visiting for the first time and totally unaware of house rules, had innocently

removed one of my "sacred" dolls from its assigned position on the dresser.

In my anger, I had slapped her, but something in Mother's voice told me I had gone much too far.

Three decades later, I still remember the punishment that summer afternoon when I was seven. What hurt most was knowing I deserved both the whipping and the tongue-lashing. Still, I couldn't seem to help the way I was and I didn't know how to change.

Coming from totally antithetical backgrounds, my mother and I possessed incongruous personalities. That twist of fate created extraordinary conflicts in our daily lives. Nevertheless, we had always agreed upon one thing: we loved each other, flaws and all.

My grandmother died when Mother was only eight months old, leaving her to care for a six-year-old brother and a carpenter father who had to be away all day and was sometimes gone for weeks.

As a child, Mother's main concern was food. Her father prepared a hot breakfast before leaving in the morning. The rest of the day, the children were on their own.

Often, Mother connived to be near a friend's home at lunch hour. Just as often, she was not invited to share the noonday meal.

There were no toys in Mother's childhood to be squabbled over. Only once did a store-bought doll come up the Big Sandy River on the mail train, arriving just in time for Christmas, from a faceless aunt far away.



Later, clothes were a problem. At one point, Mother owned exactly two dresses. They were identical, navy-blue cotton. One was always on her back, the other in the laundry tub.

I, on the other hand, blessed with doting parents and a cornucopian abundance of every necessity, understood nothing of my mother's generous nature. I certainly felt no inborn need to share my belongings, especially my dolls.

Even at that young age, I had accumulated an enviable doll collection, the best of which were tied up with ribbons and displayed on my bedroom walls. When I got tired of their costumes, I simply marched to my father's country store and acquired new ones, from the boxes of real baby clothes on the shelf.

My "babies" never looked shabby or outmoded. I tended them with a love that bordered on idolatry. Furthermore, to all hands but mine, they were untouchable.

Most of my playmates understood and accepted that edict, but it infuriated Mother. To appease her, I sagaciously chose one, virtually indestructible doll, which I left lying on the bed to play with.

**F**or me, life was simple and easy. I had never known it to be otherwise. I lived in a storybook world and took my lifestyle for granted . . . until Christmas, 1949.

I shall never forget that miserable, warm December, which brought rain, rain and more rain. Despite my desperate prayers, no snow fell on Christmas Eve, just more rain.

To make matters worse, rapidly rising creeks prevented my married sister and family coming home for the holidays. On top of everything else, I was to be deprived of "company" for Christmas.

I cried myself to sleep, but no one heard because of the rain, drumming on the tin roof.

When I awoke Christmas morning, the world seemed deathly still. Sitting up in bed, I realized the dreadful rain had stopped, but that wasn't all. Something else was very wrong at our house.

I jumped out of bed and tiptoed through the living room, eyeing with dismay the vacant spaces beneath our sparkling cedar tree. There were no bulging stockings on the mantel.

Bursting into the kitchen, I discovered my two brothers—one older than I, one younger—staring at each other across an empty breakfast table. My father stood at the stove, quietly stirring gravy.

I smelled warm bread and the tantalizing aroma of bacon, but my mother was nowhere to be seen. Surmising that something gross had happened to her, I let out a terrified wail.

"Where is my Mommy?" I demanded, "Why isn't she here? Why is there no Christmas?"

**D**addy abandoned cooking and rushed to my side. Kneeling and gathering me into his arms, he whispered, reassuringly. "Nothing's wrong with your mommy, Honey. She had to go out late last night, that's all. There's been an emergency, and we don't want to start Christmas without her, do we?"

"E . . . mer . . . gency?" I stammered, wiping my nose on my pajama sleeve. What kind of emergency? Is Sister sick?"

My old-fashioned father seemed uncomfortable as he explained. "Do you remember the farmer, Trapper Watkins? Do you remember going there with me last summer, to take feed and hay?"

I nodded.

"Well," Daddy continued, "It seems that the Watkin's were supposed to get a new baby for Christmas, but they hadn't told anyone. You know Mona Watkins . . . she never comes out of that house for anything.

"Anyway, the baby decided to arrive on Christmas Eve, but Mona couldn't get to the hospital because of the backwater and the doctor couldn't get to Mona for the same reason, so Trapper's brother came running for Mommy, long after you had gone to bed."

Daddy was smiling and waiting for my response, but I was remembering Trapper Watkins' house, and I could not conceive of my mother's going

there!

"Is that the truth?" I pumped, not convinced.

Daddy squeezed me tightly. "Of course, it's the truth. Why would I lie to you? Besides, you know your mother has done this numerous times."

Hot tears scalded my cheeks as I replied, broken-heartedly, "Yes, but never on Christmas. My Mommy has never left me alone on Christmas!"

Tearing myself from his arms, I raced back to my bed and pulled the covers over my head. I had never been so lonely in my life.

**A**n hour later, I sneaked out of the house and furtively picked my way along the rutted, rain-gorged country road headed for Trapper Watkins' place. A half-mile from home, I turned up a narrow, winding hollow.

Even at mid-morning, the road was dark because of the towering mountains on either side. When the wind blew, tall trees cast ominous shadows across my path. I felt trapped. Like the victim of an unending nightmare, I expected at any moment not to be able to lift my feet or to make a sound or to breathe.

My heart pounded. My head throbbed. I prayed I wouldn't meet a crazy person, or a wild dog.

After a time, I rounded a curve and spied the Watkins' tarpaper-covered house, sitting on a slick bank, across a creek.

Children of various sizes eyed me somberly as I crept across a wet walklog, then slipped and slid across their yard, which was a combination of mud, coal dust and clay.

Unslowing, I headed for the open back door, never suspecting that nothing I had ever experienced would prepare me for what lay ahead.

I found myself standing in a crude, dark kitchen. There was a stove and a table, but not much of anything else. In a primitive attempt at insulation, layer upon layer of soot-saturated newspapers lined the walls and ceiling.



**GIFT** (From page 19)

Above my head, soot tatters dangled spookily striking me in the face. The room, heated by a blistering-hot, coal stove, was a firetrap, but the worst part was the stench!

Human and animal excretions littered the ragged linoleum, providing no safe place to set my foot. As I stood, pondering my dilemma, someone touched my arm. I thought I would die.

**I**t was Trapper Watkins who smiled at me shyly, exposing short, rotted teeth, and emitting a malodorous breath. He seemed oddly sad as he inquired, "Are you looking for your mommy, little girl?"

I could only nod in reply. I was shaking uncontrollably.

"She's in the front room," he directed, "Go back around the house and through the door on the front porch."

I was happy to obey, and thankful to God I had found another way to get to my mother besides going through that awful room.

I raced around the house and stood at the front entrance, quietly opening the screen door and peering into the unlighted room, I saw a bed in a corner near a curtainless window.

A woman, white as death, lay propped on the pillows, her long, black hair spread out around her. My mother sat in a chair beside the bed, meticulously cleaning the woman's fingernails with a sharpened ice cream stick. Moving closer, I recognized Mona Watkins.

She had been bathed, her hair freshly shampooed. She was wearing one of her husband's flannel shirts and, I was sure, my mother's cologne. The sweet smell of it floated out to me over all the unpleasant odors.

Seeing my mother so close, smelling her perfume, filled me with unspeakable joy, but at the same time, I was experiencing the new and deeper emotions of maternal respect and compassionate love.

I felt I had never seen Mother so degraded, yet she nursed her strange

patient as if she had been born to that moment. Following her example, I reached deeply within myself, summoning up all the courage I could find. Immediately, I felt new strength in my legs.

"Mommy . . ." I blurted out, nervously.

**M**other's head jerked toward me as she jumped to her feet, stunned: "Lorraine! What are you doing here, Honey? Does your daddy know where you are? Oh Baby, why did you follow me? You've never done that before."

She started toward me, but I met her half-way. We embraced and clung to each other tightly. Out of sheer relief, I sobbed, "Please don't be mad. I just wanted to see if you were really alright, and I wanted us to be together for Christmas. Can you go home now?"

In response, Mother stiffened and became very quiet. Before she had a chance to answer, one of the rowdy Watkins brood burst in. Nodding toward me, he asked Mother: "Does she wanna see the baby?"

The baby! I had completely forgotten the baby. I *did* want to see it. Loosing myself from Mother's bear hug, I turned, just in time to see the little boy walk over to an ancient bureau and lay a grimy hand on a miniature box sitting there.

It was a lovely little box, covered in pink and white cut-velvet, but the top was on so tightly, I was sure it couldn't be good for the baby.

As I watched in slow-motion horror, the tow-headed four-year-old ripped the lid off the casket and I beheld the baby's cold, dead body, wrapped in an old towel.

Mother reacted quickly, but not fast enough. My eyes were full of that mind-blowing scene . . . and would never be rid of it.

**W**hen I had finally stopped screaming, Mother explained that the baby girl had been still-born and had not suffered in any way. Still, I cried, remembering the sweet, dark-haired infant in the box. I didn't understand how God could be so cruel,

especially on His own Son's birthday.

Ushering me out to the front porch, Mother gripped my shoulders and shook me hard. The pale light from the overcast sky illuminated her large, dark eyes as she attempted to explain to me God's infallible wisdom and compassion. She addressed me as if I were much older than my years.

"Lorraine, I don't want you to go on so about this," she began. "Until you came, the parents had accepted it very well. I'm sure your hysterics have been very unsettling to them. That's one reason you should remain calm."

"Secondly, I feel this would be a good time for you to learn to accept God's will in all things. He makes no mistakes. I have learned this from many years of trusting Him."

She turned to face me and took both my hands in hers before she continued: "Do you remember the little brother I told you about, the one you never knew?"

I nodded, blinking back fresh tears.

"Well," she said, "When God took him, right before his third birthday, I wanted to die so badly. I begged God to kill me and let me be buried with my baby. When He wouldn't do it, I decided in a grief-stricken stupor, that there was no God."

"But all the time, I *knew* there was. I railed and rebelled. I did everything I could think of to force Him to speak to me, personally, even if His voice had to come through a thunder bolt or a shaft of lightning."

Mother stopped talking. She was remembering all those years of pain and suffering.

"And *did* lightning strike you, Mommy?" I had to know.

She smiled into my eyes, seeing there mirror-images of her own.

"In a way, Baby," she replied, "But the lightning struck my heart . . . which had turned to stone."

"What happened then?"

Now it was Mother's face that was wet with tears, "Oh Lorraine, if only I could tell you and make you understand. It was that 'peace that passeth understanding' that we are always hearing about in church."

"It flowed through me like a river . . . no, like an ocean, till at last there



were no jagged pieces of my old heart left standing. Since that day, I have trusted Him completely and unquestioningly. I want you to learn to do that, too, while you are young and tender, so that you don't have to suffer the spiritual agonies I endured."

**T**he conversation ended, Mother stood and began speaking to me in her everyday voice again. "Lorraine, I want you to go back inside with me. There's something else I must show you."

Reluctantly, I followed her into the third room of the shack, a cramped, dark cubicle, wedged between Mona Watkins' bedroom and the kitchen. I recoiled at the smelly mattresses, lined up on the floor, but Mother pointed to a wall, which supported a number of makeshift shelves.

"Look at that!" Mother commanded, waving her hand to include the whole section of shelves. I saw that the boards were sagging beneath the weight of hundreds of jars of baby food, but the situation appeared innocent to me. Seeing I didn't understand, she clarified.

"Trapper Watkins collected this food from the city dump! It's contaminated," she whispered, her eyes incredulous.

"Contaminated?" I echoed the unfamiliar word.

"Yes," Mother went on, "Last week, when we had all the rain, there was light flooding all over town. Drains backed up in many of the stores, forcing the grocers to discard much of their inventory. This was part of it. If the baby had lived, she would have been fed this food in a few weeks."

Mother stooped to look me straight in the eye. "Lorraine, have I gotten through to you at all? Knowing what I have just told you, can't you feel just a little happy that the beautiful baby has returned to Heaven, to be with the Lord Jesus?"

She dabbed at her eyes, then at mine, and held me tightly. I stared into space, without answering, unable to grasp how the baby's soul could be in Heaven when I had just seen her flesh and blood body in the coffin.

But I wanted to believe it. I needed, with all my heart, to know it was true. And I knew I was going to have to get away from that place, to think clearly.

"Mommy, I want to go home," I begged. "Please come with me."

"You'll have to go alone," Mother stated, matter-of-factly. "I must wait here for the baby's uncles. They've gone to take the coroner back to the city in their truck. They were here earlier and brought the little casket."

"When they return, we'll need a prayer and a song before they take the baby up on the hillside to bury it. Some men are up there now, digging the grave."

I couldn't bear the thought of such a tiny baby, being buried in the cold, yellow clay of that hilltop cemetery. I had seen that same, ugly earth open up and swallow my grandfather, and he had never come back. I covered my ears with my hands and closed my eyes.

**M**other pushed me from her. "You go home, Honey," she ordered, lovingly. "Go home and tell Daddy to let you have the box I left for you, under my bed. It is Christmas, after all. Perhaps you can salvage one good memory from this day."

I kissed her and ran from the putrid house, out of the hollow and down the muddy road, not stopping until I reached home.

Once inside, I turned on all the lamps for warmth. Taking a blanket from my bed, I snuggled into its cozy depths, letting its softness touch my skin and the sweet smell of it fill my nostrils.

Jumping up, I ran to the kitchen and flung open the refrigerator, just to make sure there was still plenty of cold milk and fresh food at our house. I felt both happy and sad. I didn't know what was happening to me.

When I had stopped shaking, I went to my mother's bed. Reaching underneath, I pulled out a stunning red box, tied with green ribbons. Tenderly, I removed the paper, careful not to tear it. Feeling strangely fearful, I lifted the lid.

The gorgeous doll inside left me breathless! She had soft, blond curls,

cherry-red lips, and blue, glass eyes, fringed in black lashes. The best part was that someone had already dressed her in a brand-new outfit from Daddy's store. She wore a warm, pink sweater-suit, white leather shoes, and pink and white anklets.

I held my new baby for a long time, crooning and whispering to her, then, while putting her to bed, I kissed her. Her cheek, though rouged, was cold and wooden. It reminded me of the "real" baby . . . the cold, dead baby . . . in the box . . . in the hollow . . . wrapped in a dingy towel.

**I**n that moment, I awakened, spiritually. For the first time in my life, I felt the presence of my Creator. I even felt a kinship with the tiny being who had gone back to Him for Christmas. No one had to tell me that my life-long preoccupation with my inanimate dolls was sin. I felt the guilt of it, tightening in my chest.

With that knowledge came a flood of Bible verses Mother had forced me to memorize, again and again. They blazed before my eyes: "For I was an hungered, and ye gave me meat: I was thirsty, and ye gave me drink: I was a stranger and ye took me in: Naked, and ye clothed me . . . Verily, I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me" (Matthew 25:35, 36, 40).

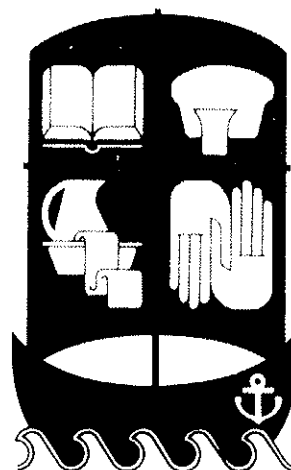
Suddenly, my fingers couldn't move fast enough, as I undid the buttons on my new doll's sweater. I yanked off her shoes, ties intact, and collected the anklets simultaneously.

Throwing the beautiful clothes into a brown bag, I sped up the muddy road, for the second time in one day. Through my tears, I kept seeing another baby, wrapped in swaddling clothes, lying in a crude manger, full of moldy hay.

I prayed as I ran: "Oh Baby Jesus, I understand now. I understand all of it, and I believe. I really do. Please don't let me be too late to do something for *this* baby. Please don't let me be too late." ▲

*ABOUT THE WRITER:* Lorraine Layne is a member of Boldman Free Will Baptist Church, Harold, Kentucky.

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FREE WILL BAPTIST

## newsfront

### NORTH CAROLINA CHURCH TOPS \$24,000 FOR FWBBC

NASHVILLE, TN—The Canton (NC) FWB Church raised \$24,319.93 for Free Will Baptist Bible College in a weekend walk-a-thon and college day drive held June 13-14, according to Pastor Larry Hughes.

This marked the eighth consecutive year that Canton Church held a special College campaign. Gifts over the eight-year period from the church exceed \$80,000.

Forty individuals, including the pastor, took part in the 10-mile walk-a-thon. Participants ranged in age from five to 65. Shannon Cope, age nine, raised the most money in this year's walk-a-thon, with a total of \$1,283. Sherri Hughes, the pastor's 12-year-old daughter, raised \$1,269.

Nearly half the total raised—\$10,278.70—came from 25 employees of Champion International Paper Company, Canton plant. Champion matches gifts made by its employees to qualifying colleges and universities. Total gifts to the college from Champion and its employees were \$20,557.40.

Public Relations Director Paul J. Kettelman says that the drive resulted in the largest single church gift the college has received.

The walk-a-thon/college day climaxed Rev. Hughes' ministry at Canton Church, since he has resigned as pastor to join the college's public relations staff.

### SANDERS, PROCTOR JOIN HILLSDALE STAFF

MOORE, OK—President Don Elkins announced the addition of two new staff members for the fall semester, 1981, at Hillsdale Free Will Baptist College. The appointees are Rev. Cecil Sanders as Dean of Men, and Mrs. Deborah Proctor as Dean of Women.

Rev. Sanders comes to Hillsdale from Arkansas where he pastored 27 years. His latest pastorate was Macedonia FWB Church, New Edinburg. For 16 years he taught social studies at Warren High School, Warren, Arkansas.

Sanders graduated from Free Will

Baptist Bible College in 1959 with a Bachelor of Science Degree. He earned a second bachelor's degree in history and education from Arkansas Tech University (1964). He is pursuing graduate studies.

Mrs. Deborah Proctor, Hillsdale's new Dean of Women, is a 1973 alumnus of the school (A.A. Degree). She was awarded the Bachelor of Science Degree in 1975 from the University of Oklahoma.

Mrs. Proctor taught four years in public high school in Sand Springs and Owasso, Oklahoma.

### ARKANSAS HONORS FORMER MODERATOR, RALPH STATEN

CONWAY, AR—Delegates to the 84th annual session of the Arkansas State Association paid tribute to Rev. Ralph Staten, former state moderator (1940-49) who led the group to affiliate with the National Association, according to Promotional Director David Joslin.

A standing ovation on Wednesday morning of the meeting accompanied the salute to Rev. Staten. Officials presented Elder Staten with a moderator's gavel and an engraved plaque of appreciation.

In other business, Arkansas became the first state association to endorse the \$10 per church representation fee voted by the National Association last July.

Delegates voted their approval of the Creation-Science bill being discussed by Arkansas legislators, and instructed state leaders to inform the media and government officials of their action.

Keith Johnson, pastor of Eastvale FWB Church, Blytheville, was named manager of the Christian Supply Store in Conway.

The Western Arkansas Association, composed of three churches, was received into the fellowship.

Registration personnel reported 430 registrants for the August 11-13 meeting at newly air conditioned Camp Beaverfork, including 89 ministers.

Four speakers developed the state preaching theme "Knowing the Time." The speakers included FWBBC Director of Religious Activities Joe Ange, and Arkansas Pastors Steve Trail (Rose Hill Church, Monticello), Keith Johnson (Eastvale Church, Blytheville), and Ron Parker (First Church, Pocahontas).

Promotional Director David Joslin assessed the gathering as "outstanding, a time of renewed interest and rejoicing."

Joslin told delegates that Arkansas gave \$703,000 to denominational causes in the past year, with \$552,000 coming through the state office. State cooperative plan gifts leaped 15 percent, topping \$118,000.

Moderator Carl Cheshier, pastor of Cavanaugh FWB Church, Fort Smith, was re-elected for 1982.

The Arkansas state Woman's Auxiliary and Master's Men met August 11 and 12. Missionary to Africa Patrick Dickens spoke to the men. Mrs. Mabel Willey addressed the 28th annual auxiliary session.

The state association received an offering of \$1,075 for Missionary Patrick Dickens.



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## newsfront

(continued)

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### TOM MALONE TO CONDUCT COLLEGE REVIVAL

NASHVILLE, TN—The Reverend Tom Malone, pastor of the Florence Free Will Baptist Church, Florence, AL, and a trustee of Free Will Baptist Bible College, will conduct the school's campus revival October 7-11, according to Director of Religious Activities Joe Ange.

This will be the second time that Malone, a 1963 graduate of the College, has been guest preacher for the campus meeting.

In addition to his 10-year pastorate of the Florence Church, Rev. Malone has pastored the Ina (IL) FWB Church and the Fellowship FWB Church of Flat River, MO. He served two years

as the College's Assistant Director of Development, 1969-71.

The campus revival includes 11 morning and evening services. The Saturday morning breakfast shared by the evangelist and the men of the faculty and student body has been one of the highlights of past campus revivals. The meeting is sponsored by Ministerial Fellowship, an organization of students preparing for the ministry.

Dr. Ange expects the revival to be one of the College's greatest, "With the campus flooded with new and returning students, we are expecting a mighty moving of God's blessed Spirit among us."

### CTS ANNOUNCES FALL ENLARGEMENT THEME

NASHVILLE, TN—"CTS Is The Family Place" is the theme for the Fall Enlargement Campaign for Church Training Service groups in Free Will Baptist Churches.

This annual event has been the source of renewed vigor and growth in local CTS groups throughout the denomination. The family emphasis is appropriate as a tool for spiritual reinforcement of the basic unity of society.

Ten CTS winners will be named. The basis for judgment will be the percentage of increase in average attendance of April, May, and June of this year. Appropriate awards will be given the winners, and state and national publications will be informed of their achievements.

The campaign is scheduled to run through the first four weeks of November. The deadline for entry is October 30.

Promotional materials and instructions for an effective campaign are available from the Sunday School and Church Training Department, P.O. Box 17306, Nashville, TN 37217.

Orders may be placed by calling the toll-free WATS line 1-800-251-5762.

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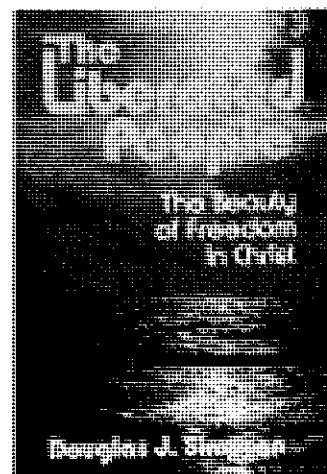
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Pastor **Jerry Dudley** of **Choctaw FWB Church, Choctaw, OK**, couldn't wait to get out the good news concerning his spring attendance surge. A year ago this spring the Choctaw Church averaged 64 in attendance. In 1981 the average shot upward to 90.

Students who arrived for the fall semester at **Hillsdale FWB College, Moore, OK**, were welcomed by smooth streets and parking areas. During the summer the college invested \$54,000 in asphalt to surface the heavily traveled areas at the college.

Campers at Texas' West Fork Youth Camp heard a series of lessons on creation and evolution by Pastor **Thurmon Murphy** of **First FWB Church, Wichita Falls**. Murphy used an overhead projector and professionally prepared transparencies as well as displaying fossils of mastadons and mammoths when discussing the fossil record as it related to evolution. Murphy said the lectures prompted animated discussion regarding different dating methods used by evolutionary scientists. If you'd like to have this type material presented at your youth camp, contact Thurmon Murphy at 3615 Arthur, Wichita Falls, TX 76308.

**Eastside FWB Church, Tuscaloosa, AL**, sponsored their first Bible club for primaries. Pastor **Ray Lewis** said the first club meeting attracted 13 participants. The group met on Tuesday mornings during the summer.

**CONTACT** welcomes the monthly **MESSENGER**, publication of **Grace FWB Church, Greenville, NC**. **Randall Riggs** pastors.

The **California Christian College** Alumni Association met in June at Fresno, CA, and elected **Dennis Pettyjohn** president. The group then promptly voted to raise \$1,000 to help finish the "Bold Venture" building reconstruction project on the CCC campus.

Some 32 men from the local carpenters union donated their labor to sheetrock the new educational building at **Sherwood Forest FWB Church, El Sobrante, CA**, according to Pastor **Milburn Wilson**.

**First FWB Church, Walnut Ridge, AR**, hosted a two-day Bible Conference in conjunction with their fall revival, August 3-4. Speakers for the conference

were FWBBC Dean **Robert Picirilli** and Pastor **Carl Cheshier** of Cavanaugh FWB Church, Fort Smith, AR. **Terry Forrest** pastors.

Pastor **Clifford Ball** of **Chillicothe FWB Church, Chillicothe, OH**, reports a revival in the church with 16 saved. **Paul Kettelman**, Director of Public Relations for Free Will Baptist Bible College, did the preaching. According to Pastor Ball, during the revival a man and his ex-wife were saved (they had been divorced a month earlier). Shortly after the revival Pastor Ball reunited the couple in marriage much to the joy of their three small children.

The **Ohio Bible Institute** has made available correspondence courses for credit toward a diploma in Biblical Studies and Christian Education according to Ohio Promotional Officer **Alton Loveless**. The Institute also establishes satellites in local churches throughout Ohio.

After a record ending fiscal year concluded on June 30, the **First FWB Church, Pocahontas, AR**, adopted an all-time budget of almost \$70,000 according to Pastor **Ron Parker**. The budget does not include expenses for the Pocahontas Christian Academy which opened for the first time this fall.

The **Grant Avenue FWB Church, Springfield, MO**, adopted a budget of \$83,000 for the coming year, according to Pastor **Ted Wilbanks**.

**First FWB Church, Fayetteville, AR**, celebrated their 25th anniversary this year. During the celebration activities, **Virginia Johnson** was honored for 20 years faithful service as church clerk and presented an engraved plaque by the church. **Daniel Phillips** pastors.

There will be a new sound at **Calvary FWB Church, Springdale, AR**, according to Pastor **Cecil Garrison**. The church recently installed a new steeple, a new bell and a new public address system.

Oklahoma Executive Secretary **Lonnie DaVoult** says the 1980-81 fiscal year was the largest the state has ever had. According to DaVoult "something over \$695,000 came through our office to be sent into the world-wide causes for Christ." Of that amount, some \$225,000 was sent through the state cooperative program.

The state of **Arkansas** has one of the most active Master's Men groups in America. According to Editor **Wendell Leckbee** (THE COMMUNICATOR), Arkansas Master's Men spear-headed massive paving projects at Camp Beaver Fork, including paving at the camp as well as the road leading to the camp and the basketball court. The group also purchased a tractor for camp use.

Congratulations to Pastor **James McAllister** and members of **Farmington FWB Church, Farmington, MO**. According to church statistics, 82 people from the Farmington Church attended the national convention which met in Louisville, KY, July 19-23. That may not be a record attendance from one church, but it surely is a healthy representation.

We have a new name. They used to be called First FWB Church in Jackson, TN, but now the group calls themselves **Victory FWB Church**, according to Pastor **Vernon Long**. By the way, Pastor Long just completed a series of 44 sermons from the Sermon on the Mount. ▲

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# Searching For Denominational Roots

By William F. Davidson

**T**raditionally, Free Will Baptists have not been keen on reading or writing history. In fact, this seems to be an identifiable characteristic of most evangelicals.

There is a tendency to feel that since we are right, everybody else has to be wrong and since that is true, we simply call ourselves a New Testament church and overlook all the activity of God's people from the first century until now.

It could be that we are just short on interest, but it is more likely that our attitude is a product of the old liberal-fundamentalist battles at the end of the 19th century.

When the liberals adopted education as a cornerstone for their theology (or lack of it), the fundamentalists backed off from all serious study for fear that education would contaminate. The resulting anti-intellectualism is well illustrated in our own denomination's coolness toward its heritage.

Except for a few popular histories—Wheeler's, *History of Parker's Meeting House* and Hearn's, *History of the Free Will Baptists*—written by eyewitnesses to a brief period of time in the middle-19th century, the denomination never has produced a fully documented history.

A few authors in the North did continue to write, but their histories touched only on the New England element of the denomination. There have been few attempts to write a scholarly, readable, well-documented history of the denomination. It is time we began to appreciate the glorious heritage that God has given to us.

## Early Theories New Testament Churches

In the 19th century, when conservative denominations began to feel the impact of a growing and popular liberalism, they either ignored history—the anti-intellectualism mentioned earlier—or they attempted to trace their heritage back through the centuries to the New Testament.

In either case, it was an attempt to defend their church as a “true” church as opposed to the liberal congregations around them. Free Will Baptists were not to be left behind.

Thad Harrison and J. M. Barfield made a noble attempt at a documented denominational history in 1898 in their two-volume work, *History of the Free Will Baptists of North Carolina*. In fact, their second volume was a review of the minutes of the General Conference in North Carolina up until 1897.

In their work, Harrison and Barfield

yielded to the excitement and the atmosphere of the times and made a valiant attempt to trace the Free Will Baptists back to the early church. They were in good company.

The Landmark Baptists and others were involved in the same adventure. It was remarkable how many “true” and “only” New Testament churches emerged from the studies.

The only problem with such an endeavor is that it becomes necessary to accept some strange companions as bedfellows in order to find a common line of ancestors back to the New Testament. It also demands that you shut your eyes to some rather long breaks in history when no such group emerges in the documents.

Harrison and Barfield chose old British Christianity as their major line of descent, suggesting that Claudia, a Welsh princess converted by Paul, established Christianity in Britain in 63 A.D.

This group, they contend, flourished apart from the later Roman Catholic Church and were noted for their rejection of infant baptism.

When Augustine, the Catholic missionary, brought Catholicism to England and set up his headquarters at Canterbury, the old British Christians supposedly rejected the new church and remained true to the “Baptist” cause.



The authors added two 11th and 12th century groups that were rejected and persecuted by the Roman Catholic Church—the Albigenses (Cathari—Pure Ones) and the Waldensians—as further support for their argument for a continuing church based on “believer’s baptism.”

### *Problems With the Theory*

As mentioned earlier, there are some major problems with such a theory—specifically the huge gaps that must be accounted for and the heresy that has to be ignored.

While it is true that old British Christianity resisted Roman Catholicism for a number of years, most of them joined forces with Canterbury at the Synod of Whitby in 631 A.D. By the time of King Henry VIII in 1532, there was little opposition to the established Catholic church.

The few Separatists who did oppose were thoroughly and regularly persecuted.

There were other problems with the theory as well. While the Waldensians might could be tolerated by the 20th century Free Will Baptists, the Albigenses have continually been accused of dualism—the belief in an evil god of the Old Testament and a second, loving God of the New Testament.

It is true that most of our information comes from medieval Catholic scholars and could be biased, but there has been no evidence to the contrary.

### *Anabaptist Kinship*

Most scholars have rejected the idea of a “true” Baptist church that could be traced back to the New Testament, and up until about 1953 generally agreed that the Baptists grew out of the Anabaptist wing of the Protestant Reformation.

The theory was a natural one. The Baptists and Anabaptists were much alike, especially in their defense of believer’s baptism, justification by faith, separation of church and state, and religious liberty. Spiritual kinship was evident.

### **Recent Research**

Since the Baptists and Anabaptists were so much alike and since Anabaptist history had not been a popular

area of study, most scholars simply felt that Baptists were one of the few good things to come out of the Anabaptists—the more radical phase of the Reformation.

Since 1953, however, the Anabaptists have gained new respect, and hundreds of articles and books have been published praising the radicals as men of the Bible who were concerned about the restoration of a New Testament church.

One of the most exciting finds that emerged out of the new research was the discovery that Baptists came not from Anabaptism but from the Church of England.

John Smyth, a preacher who had been Anglican, Puritan, and then a Separatist from the Church of England, finally denounced his old church and took a stand for believer’s baptism.

In 1609, after much persecution, he took his whole congregation and fled to Holland in search of religious liberty. By this time, he was firmly committed to the Baptist principles. He did have one problem, however.

Because he had started a new movement based on believer’s baptism, he had no one to baptize him. He finally baptized himself and then the rest of the members of his congregation.

While he never came to doubt his new doctrine, he did doubt that his self-baptism was valid.

For the next few years, Smyth courted the Mennonites in Holland seeking a merger that would establish validity for his own baptism and for his church. The Mennonites, however, were skeptical and Smyth died before an agreement for merger was reached.

Two of Smyth’s followers, Thomas Helwys and John Murton, had opposed Smyth’s defection to the Mennonites from the first. As soon as possible, they took the small group still faithful to Baptist principles and returned to England.

In 1612, they founded the first Baptist church on English soil in Spitalfield, just outside the London city limits.

These first Baptists were “General” or Arminian Baptists, teaching that Christ died for all men and that all men could be saved if they accepted Christ as Savior. It was from this background that Free Will Baptists later would spring.

In 1633, another English group left the Independent Congregational

Church (still part of the Church of England) of Pastor Henry Jacob to establish a second type of Baptist movement. The split was a friendly parting of the ways.

Henry Jacob remained with the Congregational Church and John Spilsbury and others separated themselves to found a “Particular” Baptist Church.

The new church was based on Baptist principles and boasted the same believer’s baptism, separation of church and state, religious liberty, and Lordship of Christ as did their General Baptist brothers—but their theology was purely Calvinistic.

As Particular Baptists, they believed that Christ had died for the particular few—the elect.

### **Conclusion**

And so the Baptists were born. The name “Free willers” was introduced as a synonym for the General Baptists by 1659, and a few years later was assigned to a number of groups that were Baptist in policy and Arminian in theology.

Maybe we cannot be traced through 2,000 years as the “true” church of Christ, but we have a goodly heritage for which we should be grateful. We have reason to be proud to be Free Will Baptists. ▲

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prayer  
is effective  
prayer**

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# DIRECTORY UPDATE

## ARKANSAS

Richard Brown to Corbin Ferry Church, Lake Providence, LA, from Liberty Hill Church, Rose Bud

Jim Bundy to Elnora Church, Walnut Ridge, from Old Reyno Church, Reyno

Paul Hopson to Victory Church, Springdale

Kevin Jewell to Hatfield Church, Hatfield, from Elnora Church, Walnut Ridge

Raymond Patrick to Mt. Bethel Church, Rose Bud

Bobby Shepherd to First Church, Batesville, from Victory Church, Springdale

D. Smith to Greenland Memorial Church, Greenland

Jerry Smith to Lodi Church, Glenwood

## OHIO

Emil Cartee to Mt. Calvary Church, Pedro, from Tick Ridge Church, Wheelersburg

Tim Crabtree to Faith Church, West Logan

Tillson Greene to Wakefield Church, Wakefield, from Bethlehem Church, Lucasville

## MISSOURI

Fidel Bridges to Stockton Mission, Stockton, from Bethel Church, El Dorado Springs

Gordon Butler to Cuba Church, Cuba

John England to First Church, West Plains

Leland Horton to First Church, Kirksville

Glen Murray to United Church, West Plains, from First Church, Batesville, AR

Steve Reeves to First Church, Neosho, from Waynesville Church, Waynesville

Robert Sharry to O'Fallon Church, O'Fallon

J. L. Tilson to Oak Hill Church, St. Clair

## OTHER PERSONNEL

John Humphries to Oak Park Church, Pine Bluff, AR as associate minister and minister of youth

Kevin Lauthern to Mt. Calvary Church, Hookerton, NC as minister of youth

Tim Rabon to First Church, Raleigh, NC as minister of evangelism



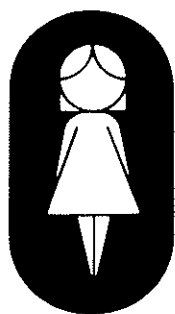
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## COOPERATIVE PLAN OF SUPPORT July, 1981

### RECEIPTS:

State	July, '81		July '80	Yr. to Date
	Coop	Design.		
Alabama	\$ 896.52	\$ (198.00)	\$ 600.53	\$ 3,104.64
Arizona	...	...	...	396.30
Arkansas	2,850.51	...	1,642.57	22,669.51
California	1,416.94	(44.73)	469.79	8,191.94
Florida	750.88	(22.95)	18.33	8,334.79
Georgia	822.00	(10.00)	511.00	7,577.22
Idaho	...	...	...	200.82
Illinois	1,071.98	...	1,349.80	6,820.96
Indiana	...	...	...	100.00
Kansas	202.13	...	128.00	1,456.69
Kentucky	...	...	...	25.00
Maryland	70.00	...	40.00	280.00
Michigan	2,550.85	(2,050.85)	...	18,658.01
Mississippi	551.08	(411.57)	...	2,517.08
Missouri	6,297.25	(6,297.25)	4,613.31	41,371.00
New Mexico	...	...	...	225.24
North Carolina	429.72	...	308.00	3,130.79
Ohio	1,172.00	...	736.80	6,876.04
Oklahoma	16,431.35	(12,189.12)	5,058.29	54,190.82
South Carolina	...	...	37.87	...
Tennessee	383.05	(111.98)	801.30	6,074.67
Texas	4,437.34	(4,262.49)	168.87	7,516.78
Virgin Islands	...	...	234.77	1,058.42
Virginia	2,223.99	...	99.73	6,773.10
West Virginia	11.11	...	7.74	64.22
<b>Totals</b>	<u>\$42,568.70</u>		<u>\$16,826.70</u>	<u>\$207,614.04</u>
<b>Disbursements:</b>				
Executive	\$ 8,983.50	(1,282.96)	\$ 8,568.87	\$ 64,106.19
Foreign Missions	17,909.37	(15,545.72)	2,920.75	64,173.20
Bible College	5,385.75	(3,022.10)	1,878.78	30,061.19
Home Missions	7,000.26	(5,238.90)	1,867.94	27,351.49
Retirement & Ins.	2,105.89	(391.11)	983.66	13,763.35
Master's Men	996.27	(69.33)	505.67	6,781.53
Commission on				
Theological Lib.	187.86	(48.82)	101.03	1,377.09
<b>TOTALS</b>	<u>\$42,568.70</u>		<u>\$16,826.70</u>	<u>\$207,614.04</u>





# A Grand Lady

By Theresa Hensley

**I**s this your picture of a lady missionary? Someone who wears below-the-knee black skirts, long sleeved white blouses, and keeps her hair in a roll on the back of her head.

Maybe some used to be that way, but the days of stereotyping missionaries should be over. Especially concerning the ladies. After all, just how is a missionary supposed to dress, behave and feel?

The missionary I know is a grand lady. She dresses conservatively, yet never seems unstylish. While her outward appearance is lovely, her actions and personality are what make her grand.

She rises every morning at 6 o'clock. She cooks breakfast, sweeps the house, teaches the children, whips lunch together, cans vegetables and fruits, conducts afternoon Bible study, writes letters, shops daily (sometimes an open market), creates a luscious dinner, spends more time with the children, gets the children ready for bed, takes time out for devotions, and if time permits, relaxes for awhile before retiring for the day.

This is her routine day. Some days get hectic!

Unexpected guests arrive, someone needs a favor, the inevitable goes

wrong. Special times of attending church, preparing for youth camp and stuffing barrels for furlough bring joy to her.

And yet, through all this, she finds time for her Lord, husband, children, others and maybe even herself!

Free Will Baptist women of this caliber staff our mission fields. For example, Mrs. Trula Cronk served 24 years in India alongside her husband, Dan. She maintained a variety of responsibilities and also experienced the frustration of sending her only child, Randy, off to boarding school.

Mrs. Mabel Willey, not only served beside her husband, Pop, for many years, but continued a progressive ministry with the Panamanians long after his death.

Miss Laura Barnard, trudged alone through toilsome days and hours to introduce our first work in India. What grand ladies indeed!

Don't just gaze at her outward appearance and decide whether or not "she looks like a missionary." Beautiful qualities of a lady missionary surface when you take the time to know her.

She is a lady called by God to get a job done, or to assist her husband in a field of service, who finds herself undertaking numerous jobs. ▲

*ABOUT THE WRITER: Miss Theresa Hensley is a member of Bethel Free Will Baptist Church, Marion, North Carolina. She is a 1980 graduate of Free Will Baptist Bible College.*



## OUR READERS COMMENT

### APPALLED BY EDITORIAL

I must say I am appalled that anyone would think an article like "Before You Leave" (April) was needed in our denomination.

The comments bordered on being snide remarks about some prominent Independent Baptists. That definitely is not a Christian attribute.

I hope we are not so proud as to think we are the perfect people of God and the only group with paid tickets for the Glory Express.

Anyone who builds a Sunday School to over 5,000 weekly and preaches high standards and clean living has to be blessed of God, because the average person does not want to hear that type preaching.

A battle faces our denomination if we don't get off our high horse and get back into the Bible. Liberalism is already creeping into our group. Like honeysuckle starting on a fence, it will soon hide us from the world and our light will be lost. This minor issue is just the cover Satan needs to complete his destruction.

Let us not become as the Pharisees—straining at the gnat and swallowing the camel. Rather, let us preach and teach the standards of the Bible.

I stand firm on our belief in the possibility of apostasy, and for that reason I believe backsliding is dangerous, but I also believe in the "eternal security" of the persevering believer.

Let us preach and teach the Bible, and all this criticism, backbiting and bickering will cease.

George Efurd  
Hot Springs, Arkansas

### SUGGESTS EDITOR RETURN TO PULPIT

Regarding "Before You Leave" in April, 1981, CONTACT—why not another article telling our National Association not to have any more speakers outside our denomination, no more teachers in our College and Christian schools from other denominations?

Do not accept anyone who has degrees from schools that are not Free Will Baptist. Take all the books off the shelves in the Free Will Baptist Book Store that are not written by Free Will Baptists.

I believe you can be a better pastor than editor. Why did you leave the pulpit to be editor? Is there more honor there or is it less work? Think on these things.

Rev. Paul R. Davis  
Pell City, Alabama

### MORE ON BIBLE TRANSLATIONS

Today the Bible is appearing in a great variety of translations. Some Christians look with utter dismay on this endless stream. Others welcome them, however, and claim that more people are likely to read the scriptures.

The debate has divided many believers, and it has left in its wake suspicion, negative feelings, and broken fellowship. Accuracy in translation is crucial, but I would like to point out that it must be translated into life.

James clarifies the central issue for all who would be loyal to God's Word in the first chapter of his book. He said that it must be applied.

Mark Twain once remarked that he was not bothered by the Bible's few obscure passages, but it was the many verses that were all too clear that gave him his greatest trouble.

We must be alert to all error. But we must also be careful lest in our zeal to preserve the Bible's purity, we forget that the best translation is to be doers of God's Word and not hearers only.

Rev. Arnold Woodlief  
Marianna, Florida

### LEARN BY MISTAKES

The recent articles and letters concerning the King James Version should leave an indelible impression upon our denomination.

Intricate theological issues must be taught verbally to laymen and unschooled clergies or left alone, unless heresy might develop from the status quo.

Bobby Glenn Smith, Pastor  
College Lakes Free Will Baptist Church  
Fayetteville, North Carolina



### THE SECRETARY SPEAKS

By Melvin Worthington

**S**piritual immaturity dwarfs the work of God in our generation. While it is normal to enter God's family as an infant (with all the childlike characteristics), it is a tragedy to remain a spiritual infant manifesting the marks of immaturity throughout one's Christian experience.

### The Problem

Paul clashes with the problem of spiritual immaturity in I Corinthians 3. Their spiritual immaturity limited what Paul could speak to them. They were feeble in understanding and unable to comprehend the more difficult things of God. He could not feed them with the meat of the word, for they could not digest it.

Spiritual immaturity is like being poor—it's unpopular and nobody likes it, but there's an awful lot of it around.

Shallowness, superficiality, selfishness and stubbornness diaper those who refuse to come to terms with Christian growth.

### The Portrait

Paul's portrait of spiritual immaturity in I Corinthians 3 is stark, but convincing.

MAGAZINES HAVE A MINISTRY . . .





# Identifying Immaturity



*Inability* characterizes spiritual immaturity. Paul's readers were unable to digest nourishment other than baby food. The minister who preaches effectively to his congregation must present messages in light of the congregation's capacities. Neither members nor ministers are immune to immaturity's peril. Inability to convey and comprehend the truth is an all too common problem.

*Impulsiveness* usually accompanies inability. Children are impulsive; they don't think very far ahead. They are given to immediate action without weighing long term consequences.

Those characterized by impulsiveness snatch at novelties and passing fads without serious consideration for their consequences.

*Insensitiveness* characterizes spiritual immaturity. Children tend to be cruel without meaning to. They often make fun of those who are different or disadvantaged.

Not everyone who loves the Lord holds the same concepts or convictions. But the insensitive, immature individual forgets this and thinks only of his hopes and happiness with no regard for the feelings and faith of fellow believers.

*Impatience* also evidences spiritual immaturity. Children want everything done right now. The ability to wait on God to do His work indicates spiritual growth.

Another characteristic of spiritual immaturity is *Insecurity*. Many children

are insecure. Nothing is more tragic than the individual who is constantly afraid and anxious. Many go through life never sure of anything.

The individual who develops as a Christian learns to lean on the Lord, to trust Him, to rest in Him. He will be sure of what he believes, satisfied with what he believes and strong in what he believes.

If others agree with him, well, but regardless, he is secure in his faith.

*Ingratitude* denotes spiritual immaturity. Infants do not always appreciate what parents do for them. They have short memories. Their concern is not what you did for me yesterday, but what are you doing for me today. The past is meaningless and so is the future. They live for the present.

Those who are mature are deeply appreciative of those who labored in the past. They recognize those who labor during the present and provide for those who will be laboring in the future.

We need each other. The spiritually mature recognize this fact and focus on their responsibility for the well-being of others.

*Ignorance* curses the spiritually immature. By ignorance is meant an incomplete understanding of things. No one person has all the light. In fact some have more light than others.

As children are not born with all knowledge—they acquire it as they develop—so with the Christian. In the early years of my Christian experience

I did some things I do not do now, but I was ignorant of the fact that they were wrong. As I received light on certain practices, I ceased to do them.

## The Peril

Paul talks of the peril of spiritual immaturity. Spiritual immaturity results in envy, strife, division and false loyalties. Immature Christians walk guided by the principles which govern men rather than by the Spirit of God.

When spiritual immaturity becomes the norm there will be division, dissension and disputation. Spiritual maturity manifests itself in holiness, harmony and happiness.

It is time we grew up. May God give us a spirit of patience, perception and perseverance as we seek to become what the Lord intended us to be. ▲

## THE SECRETARY'S SCHEDULE

<b>Sept. 28-Oct. 4</b>	First FWB Church, Lebanon, MO
<b>Oct. 5-11</b>	Tupelo FWB Church, Tupelo, MS
<b>Oct. 12-15</b>	Oklahoma State Association, Tulsa
<b>Oct. 15-16</b>	Inspect Tulsa Convention Facilities
<b>Oct. 19-25</b>	West Calvary FWB Church, Smithfield, NC
<b>Oct. 28-30</b>	Florida State Association, First FWB Church, Melbourne
<b>Oct. 30-31</b>	Mississippi State Association, Faith FWB Church, Jackson



# NOVEMBER IS NATIONAL HOME MISSIONS MONTH



**Roy Thomas**  
General Director



**Trymon Messer**  
Associate Director



**John Gibbs**  
Director of  
Development



**Don Pegram**  
Director of  
Evangelism

## YOUR GIFTS:

- Build Home Missions Churches.
- Conduct Evangelism Conferences.
- Support 52 preachers, their wives and children.
- Maintain Chaplaincy program.

"We challenge your church to give a generous offering on National Home Missions Sunday, and challenge you as individuals to give sacrificially! These offerings will help build Free Will Baptist churches across America."

- Print soul winning and follow up literature.
- Underwrite Spanish American Ministry.
- Undergird evangelism ministry in local churches.

## Observe November 22 National Home Missions Sunday

Home Missions



Chaplaincy

Church Extension

Evangelism

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