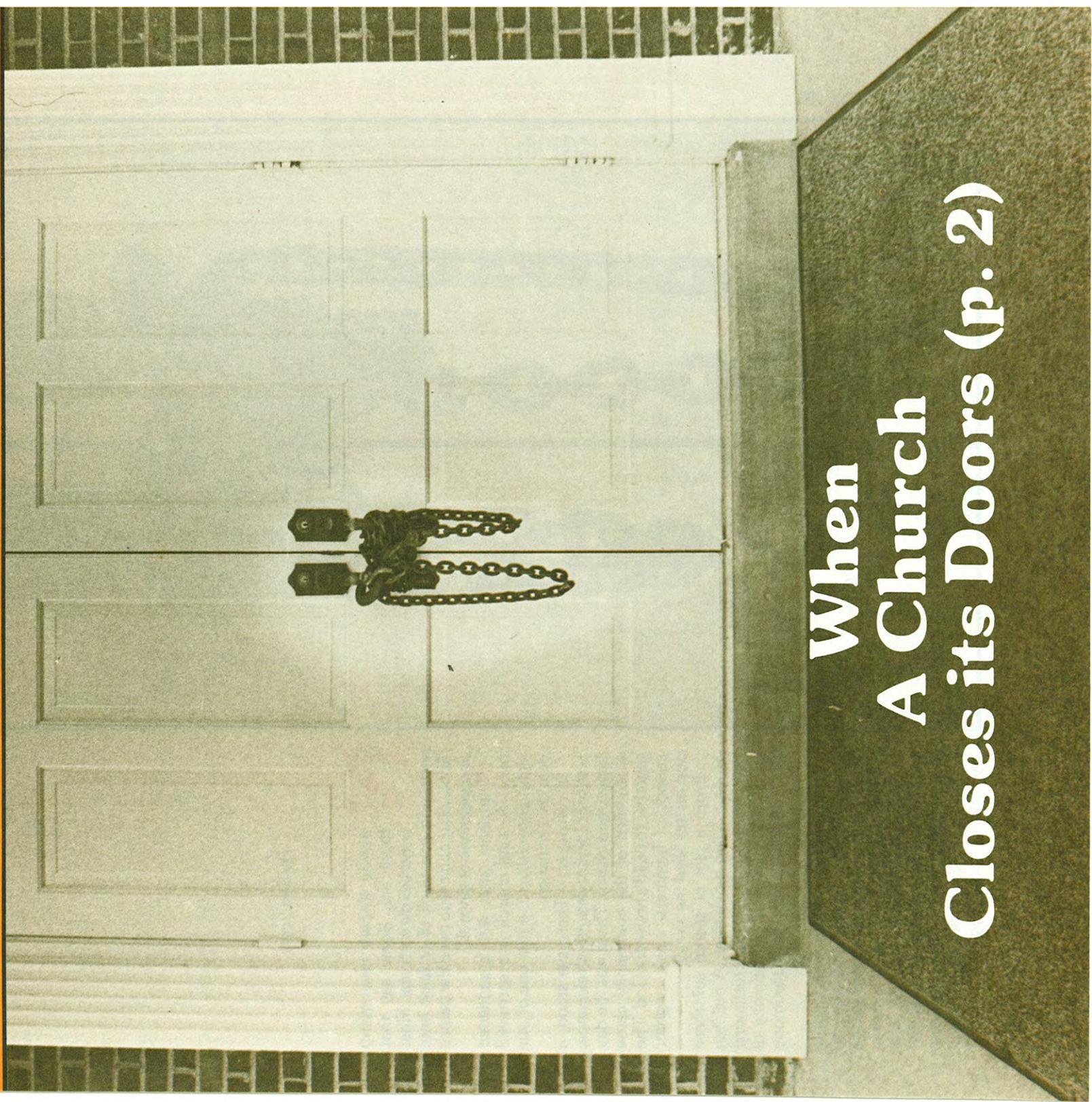


NOVEMBER, 1981

CONTACT



OFFICIAL PUBLICATION OF THE NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF FREE WILL BAPTISTS



**When
A Church
Closes its Doors (p. 2)**

When A Church Closes its Doors



By Ben Scott

Nobody knows how many there are. Some say that hundreds die each year. Most everyone can think of at least one. Some of us can call to mind the names and locations of several.

The heart beats with a saddened pace. A dead church is a sorrowful sight; especially so, if it is one of our own denomination.

In retrospect—There she stood, a building of simple design with elegance, beauty and charm. There was the day when men of the community came together to build a house for God. The sounds of hammers, saws, laughter and banter filled the air.

From a plot of sacred soil there arose a living monument. A building was completed. It gave silent testimony to all who passed by, a testimony of God's love for all men and a testimony of some men's love for God.

Her doors opened. The people came. Prayers of dedication were offered, sermons delivered. Songs of Zion rang through the rafters of a newly erected edifice. Saints rejoiced. Women wept. And even grown men sometimes wiped a tear with a red bandana. A community landmark—an old "country church" had its beginning.

Revival meetings were conducted. Conviction fell and mourners prayed at one of the front benches. There were baptizings in the community creek.

Youth meetings (League Rallies, they called them in earlier days) were held. Poems were recited. Plays were presented. Songs—quartets, trios, solos and duets were sung.

And as the meeting came to its close, an aged saint endowed with a spirit of exhortation would give a tearful, soul-wrenching admonition—"Children, come on." And the children went on. They went on to become men and women for God.

Sunday after Sunday found the friendly folks meeting for Sunday School. Many a child learned his first spiritual lesson as a member of the "Card" class. The pictures told the story—"Behold a Sower went forth to sow." Deeper theological subjects were discussed and probed by the adults.

Young people met, fell in love, courted and were married. Sometimes little girls giggled, little boys talked or fell asleep during the long sermons.

And the old church also knew her days of sorrow. A daddy died, and a mother. A little boy's funeral moved the whole congregation to deep sorrow. Somehow, Heaven had to be real. No tears—no death—pure waters of life—streets of gold. For tired, weary pilgrims the church provided a sanctuary—comfort, strength.

When did the glory go? When did the lights and the life go out?

And how did "Ichabod" appear—not in letters of Hebrew, Greek or English—but in peeling paint, broken windows, woodpecker holes, bolted doors?

If the erection of a new church building brings a thrill of excitement, gladness, joy—then the desertion and forsaking of the church brings a feeling of sorrow, heartache, emptiness.

If rising spires, fresh paint, open doors give testimony to God's grace and glory, then a church that's closed, whose building is in disrepair gives testimony to the power of Satan, to the weaknesses and failures of men.

Churches weren't built to die. Something must have gone wrong.

Postmortem:—How did it happen? When? Why? The decline of some congregations can be explained in

three words. Spats, Splits, and Splinters.

Revival meeting shouts of praise somehow turned into business meeting shouts of anger. Songs of joy and salvation were replaced with dispositions of jealousy and stubbornness.

Some who once embraced as brothers and sisters found themselves merely glancing as rivals; members of the same family, but parties to division and faction. Over such a congregation the Holy Spirit solemnly, sorrowfully writes *Ichabod*—the glory is gone.

The decline of others may be explained in less dramatic terms. It's hard to tell when it all started or when it happened. The congregation never decided to disband; it just dwindled. A few of the faithful kept on "keeping on" for a time. Then one Sunday no one came.

No songs were sung, no sermon was preached, no service was conducted. Revival fires that once had flamed no longer even flickered. Church members had become dying embers.

A mixture of Old Testament, Israelite backsliding with New Testament Laodicean lukewarmness brought her low. Board her windows; consign her belfry to the bats.

While the demise of some churches may be explained by a population shift, a changing economy, or some other prevailing or passing tide of time, the fact still remains that churches are composed of people.

If the people are dead or dying, so is the church. If the people are alive and abounding, the church will be living and thriving.

Psalm 40:2-3 tells the thrilling account of a soul being brought from the depths of despair to the heights of heavenly glory. "He brought me up also out of an horrible pit, out of the miry clay, and set my feet upon a rock, and established my goings. And he hath put a new song in my mouth, even praise, unto our God; many shall see it, and fear, and shall trust in the Lord."

That's the account of a dramatic religious experience. As someone has put it, "out of the mire and into the choir," Backsliding, or losing it, is not that dramatic. But if we reverse the sequence, we will see how it happened.



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CLOSES DOORS (From page 3)

Praise is replaced with peevishness. The song goes and is replaced with a sigh. Unsteady, unfaithful feet stray from the Rock, and instead of established goings, there's wandering waywardness. And from the joy of the choir, it's back to the mire.

It happens to individuals; it can happen to preachers, deacons, teachers and other church workers. Likewise, it happens to entire church congregations. Vision becomes dim. Zeal diminishes. The fires of enthusiasm smolder and another church dies.

It didn't intend to do it. It never voted in a business meeting to do it. It just died.

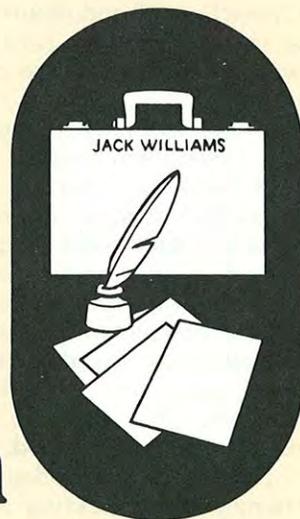
Can these dead church bones live again? Some of them can. But God will have to find a preacher who, like Ezekiel, will "Stand up on your feet."

And He will have to find some hardened church member clay that will yield again to the will of the Potter.

May the Breath of God—Holy Spirit power—breathe upon every local church congregation so that the church in our day may go forth—"An Exceeding Great Army!" ▲

ABOUT THE WRITER: Rev. Ben Scott pastors First Free Will Baptist Church, North Little Rock, Arkansas.

Briefcase



Do We Have A Church At Jackrabbit Junction?

Know someone who deserves a journalism scholarship?

The Evangelical Press Association, a non-profit corporation composed of some 275 Christian periodicals, is vitally interested in the future of religious journalism.

The Association annually provides at least two \$500 scholarships to deserving college students committed to a career in Christian communications. Applicants must have completed their second year of college.

Further details and application forms are available. (Forms must be completed and returned by April 1.)

Write now to:
Executive Secretary
Evangelical Press Association
P.O. Box 4550
Overland Park, Kansas 66204



When I was in the fifth grade a century or so ago, boys had names like James, Harold, Billy, Glenn or Larry. We hated our names and would've gladly exchanged them for something tough sounding like Buck, Rocky or Lash.

I've often wondered if church buildings could talk, whether they might wish to change their names also. Probably not many would, even if they had the chance, since all the dissatisfied boys in my fifth grade class still get their mail addressed to James, Harold and Billy.

The 1981 Free Will Baptist Church Directory lists some 2,500 churches and pastors. Many of the church names are colorful. Some reflect local geography, some Bible geography, others

theology and doctrine, some chronological order, people, trees, animals and others. Every name is important and pregnant with meaning to the local assembly.

For instance, in case you ever need to know, we're pretty big on church names which start with directions. We have 29 churches named East, 19 Wests, 23 Norths and 25 Souths. Now for a fellow who's not sure on which side of the world the sun rises, directions to the East, West, North, South churches could be a real help.

Let's try theology and doctrine. There are four dozen churches named Faith. That ought to say something about our distinctiveness. We have one church in Ohio that is Divine. We've scattered 24 Trinities around the country, 2 Houses of Prayer, and 12 Victories.

Pressing doctrine and theology again, we discover 20 Graces, 3 Charitys,

6 Peaces and 15 Emmanuels—11 of which begin with an E and 4 with an I. These are topped only by the 25 Libertys. Well, so much for doctrine and theology.

Let's talk Bible geography. It's obvious that our people are familiar with the scriptures. You can hardly mention any Bible city or mountain but what there's a Free Will Baptist church by that name.

We built 25 Bethels, 20 Calvarys, 11 Bethlehems, 8 Bethanys, 10 Mt. Olives, 11 Zions, 18 Macedonias, a Mt. Ararat, some Gileads, 2 Pisgahs and even an Egypt. We also have a Goshen, thank you.

Then we unwrap a Carmel, a Canaan, 3 Damascuses (What's the plural of Damascus?), 2 Ebenezers, 5 Corinthians, and 3 Little Bethels. We sport one Hand of God and a Hebrew—neither of which fits in this Bible geography section, but I'm running out of categories.

We like trees, our favorite being Oak. There are 27 churches with the name Oak something. Fourteen of those 27 are Oak Groves. And then it's a buyer's market from Oak Grove to Oak Park to Oakman and a matched set of Oaklands.

Pushing deeper into the forest, we boast 6 Hickorys, 3 Evergreens, some Maples, a Pecan, 13 Cedars, 22 Pines, a Walnut and one Lemon.

Some church names reflect people. Now as you can tell by reading church signs, Baptists as a group don't cotton to Saint churches. But we did squeeze in nine. You'll be delighted to know that St. John beat St. James, St. Luke and St. Mark by a five to one margin.

And don't forget the ladies. We have Ruth's Chapel, Mary's Chapel, Martha's Chapel, a Myrtle, a Mary Emily and an Alice Brooks among others.

You like animals? We got 'em. We keep a Lamb Church in Arkansas. We erected a Cow Creek and a Cow Pen, both in Kentucky. A Horse Branch in South Carolina and a Horse Creek in Tennessee.

The boys from the fifth grade would have loved our frontier names like Bear, Wolf, Elk, Raccoon or Antlers—picturesque names that reflect a rich heritage from early settlement days. We also snared a Pigeon for all you birders.

Let's speak about local geography.

Three of my favorite churches linked together are Low-ground, Midway, and Milehigh. Low-ground is in Missouri, Milehigh in Colorado (where else?) and there are eight different Midways, so take your choice.

As long as we're on local geography, what about War Ridge Church in West Virginia and Waterloo in Indiana? Or Deep Creek Church in Georgia. If you're a history buff, consider what's behind the Tomahawk Church in Kentucky. Bet you've not been to the 10 Mile or the 15 Mile Church in Michigan.

Try Soul's Harbor in Alabama. Sugarloaf in Oklahoma. Turkey Creek—we have two. Surprise! Surprise Church, that is, in Arizona. By the way, there's an Upper Room in Tennessee.

For the record we do have two bonafide, certified Friendly churches. One in North Carolina, one in Ohio. There's a Flat Fork and a Lower Flat Fork—both in Kentucky. Speaking of our feet washing doctrine, there's a Basin Church in West Virginia. And a Ben Hur in Arkansas.

Did you ever want to be a voice crying in the Wilderness? Go to Missouri. You'll find Wilderness FWB Church there.

Our group believes in getting together and staying together. We've accumulated 19 Friendships, 26 Unions, 5 Uniteds, and 5 Unitys. Couple that with our 12 Harmonys, 13 Fellowships, 37 Pleasant something churches and the 7 Happys, and you get a pretty good idea that we believe in cooperation in Free Will Baptist ranks.

If you're on a tight schedule, we make available four Airport churches, one Hurryville, and a Hurricane Chapel. We blend one Abraham among our nine Antiochs.

We adore color. Name the color and there's a Free Will Baptist Church to match it. We have 12 Greens, in addition to 9 Whites, some Grays, 3 Reds, 3 Blues, and a few Blacks.

One of my favorites is the Brights. We have two Bright Lights, a Bright Star, a Brighter Hope, and a Brilliant, Alabama!

Do you sing Alto? We built a church there in Texas. You've always wanted to pluck the Lily of the Valley? You'll

find it in West Virginia. Should you lose your way, we've got three Light-houses.

There's a church in Tennessee called Y. That's right, Y, as in the alphabet. And then there's John 3:16 Church in North Carolina.

We even have a Calvin Free Will Baptist Church. Wonder how he got in there with all us Arminians? And then there's a Charley Church in Kentucky.

Alas, we only have one Noble Church; it's in Oklahoma. Not too far away is the Non Church, also in Oklahoma. Old Glory flies in West Virginia. Eggville rolls in Mississippi. And Lovely Church beautifies Kentucky.

But here come the biggies. There are no less than 70 Free Will Baptist churches that incorporate the term *New*, among which are 8 New Homes, 18 New Hopes, and one New Horseshoe. If you don't think you can wait for the New Jerusalem, take I-64 to West Virginia for a fore-taste.

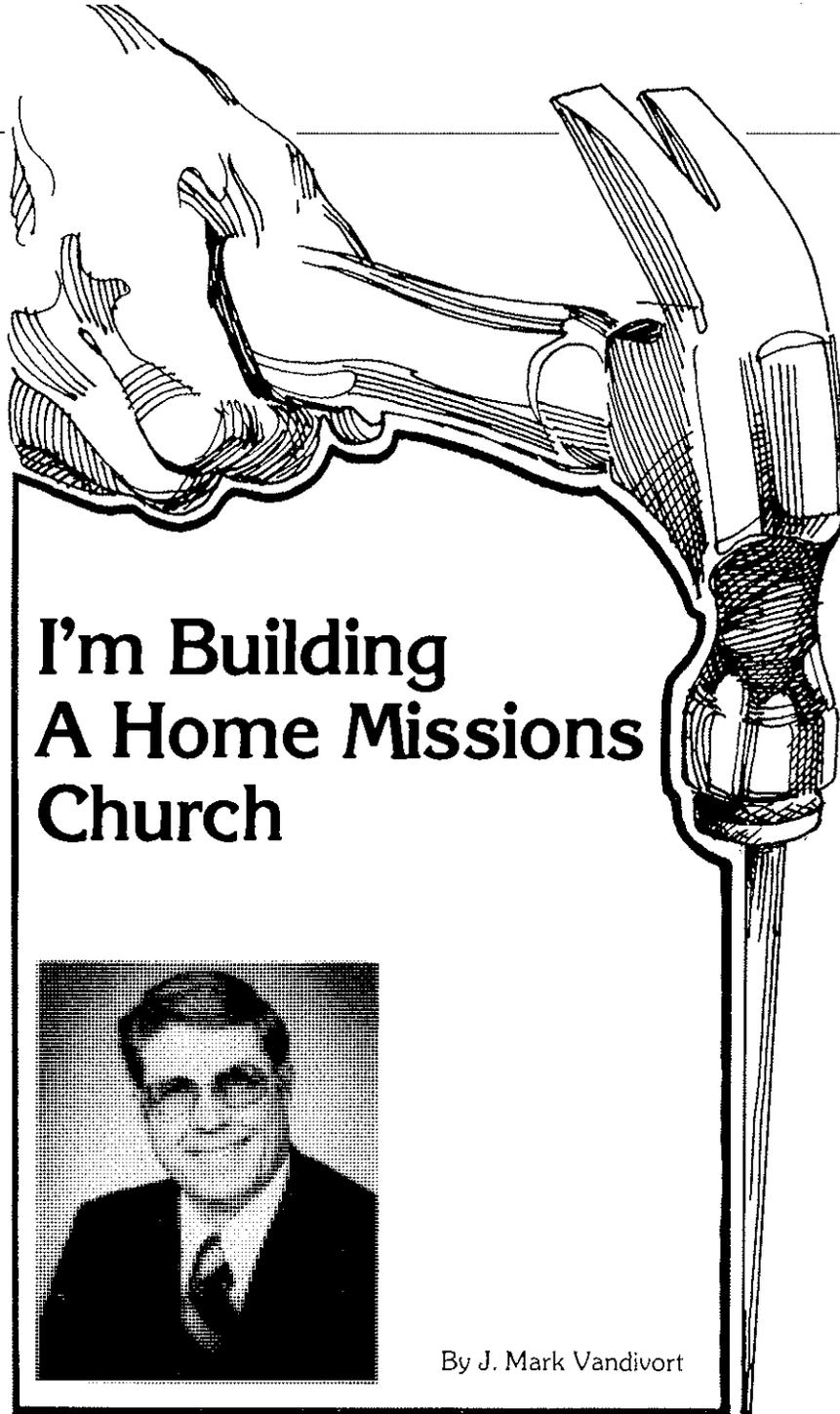
What about the Cross? We have Near Calvary, Near the Cross, and Old Rugged Cross in North Carolina, and Way of the Cross in Oklahoma. There will probably be other cross churches and a growing number of cross readers, if I don't bring this to a halt soon.

But the granddaddy of all Free Will Baptist names goes to the First churches. Before we quit, we had counted 316 First churches flourishing in as many cities. Thirty-seven of those First churches collect tithes in Oklahoma.

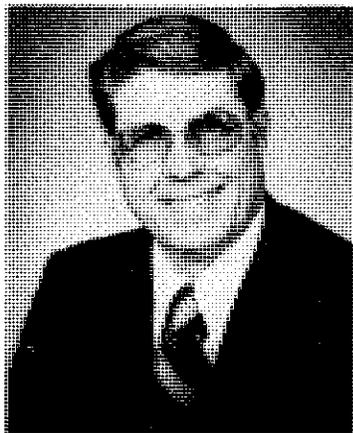
There aren't many Second and Third churches. However we do have a Number One Church in Missouri. But the unchallenged champion in the high numeral category is Rudy, Arkansas, home of both the 81 and 88 churches.

Next time you change a church name or start a new church, remember that whatever you paint on the sign out front reflects your location, theology, local history, chronology, Bible geography or persons.

I like the variety in the names of our churches such as Parsley Bottom, Pretty Water, Big Jenny and Bonanza. Personally, I'll be elated when some enterprising young minister digs the footing for the First FWB Church, in Big Ugly, West Virginia! ▲



I'm Building A Home Missions Church



By J. Mark Vandivort

Capturing The Vision

When my Dad was a boy, the road to church by horse and wagon was about an hour's ride along Hamilton Creek, crossing the creek several times where the stream would meander against a rock bluff.

Dad tells about Grandfather putting hay in the wagon in the winter. During church services the horses were tied to the wagon so they could eat the hay. Later the Vandivort brothers, sisters and parents rode home on the bare wagon bed.

Grandfather and other Christians saw the need for a church in their local community. Two evangelists were called to preach a revival in the Oak Grove schoolhouse. One of them, Rev. George W. Scott, was later to be my maternal Grandfather.

At age nine, I was saved in the Oak Grove schoolhouse. Soon afterward, I saw a neat, white church built. That church has supported our ministry through the years.

As a University of Missouri senior, I answered the call to preach while attending a growing church in Columbia. While enjoying good services, fine facilities and many functions of the church, I was reminded by the pastor and church leaders of those people of faith who started the church in a remodeled barn after World War II.

I have warm memories of seeing a group within that church dedicate themselves to starting a mission.

Why Start Another Church?

My call to become a home missionary started in 1959 in the thatched roof chapel at the Cedars of Lebanon Mission Station, Pinar Del Rio, Cuba, where I was visiting.

Each morning the late Rev. Thomas H. Willey called everyone to prayer at 6:00. During one of those meetings I told the Lord that I would go wherever He directed.

Some months later God spoke to me through a prayer request at men's prayer band at Free Will Baptist Bible College. Home Missionary Mack Owens of Littleton, New Hampshire had sent a prayer request for a city-wide revival in St. Johnsbury, Vermont.

My heart was gripped with interest for that area. My wife Louise acknowledged that she too had been thinking about New England. This led to the decision to load our possessions into our 1954 Ford and head for New Hampshire where we opened the closed church at Twin Mountain.

During this time, one option available was to pastor an established church. But we knew that God's will for us was a home missions ministry.

The call for others is equally as urgent to maintain our established churches. Being sensitive and obedient to the leadership of the Holy Spirit will direct us to His place of service.

When I accepted God's call to Flagstaff, Arizona, I knew no one in that city. But God had given me the conviction that there were people there He wanted me to reach personally, and a soulwinning task for our church in its beginning.

In the New Testament, Philip may not have known anyone in Gaza (Acts 8:26), but God knew there was a man in Gaza who would listen to the gospel and be saved.

Special Demands On The Home Missions Family

The work of the home missionary is much easier when he has the emotional support of his wife and children. I am

thankful for the faithful help and spiritual support of each member of my family. We continue to see results of their witness.

Uprooting children calls for much prayer for each individual child. Friends are greatly missed, and sometimes the distance from loving grandparents and other relatives is tremendously increased. Favorite pets may have to be left behind. Ask Steve about "Eloise," his beagle. Or ask Bethany about "Donald," her duck.

In Missouri, Andy had looked forward to attending the new high school which had excellent darkroom facilities, where he could improve his photography skills.

For Phil, leaving his friends was an agonizing experience. Even five-year-old Debbie had her own special set of friends.

Changing cultures brings challenges. While my wife was trying to cope with her own emotions, get settled in a strange house and make new friends, the children began having potlucks at school for various occasions.

Without much thought, Louise would quickly whip up an old Missouri stand-by recipe such as macaroni and cheese. A few potlucks later it dawned on her that the children were bringing the food home hardly touched.

Steve informed his mother that all the other kids' mothers were sending Mexican dishes. "But I don't know how to cook Mexican food!" she protested.

Out of desperation, Bethany came home one day and said, "Mom, I volunteered for you to bring jello." And wouldn't you know, her teacher (a man) forgot to refrigerate the jello.

After that experience, Louise sought the help of a neighbor in Mexican cooking.

Perhaps other home missions families besides our own have experienced the stress of financial strain. In our 21 years of home missions ministry, I cannot say that there was ever a whole year without some financial burden or crisis.

Sickness, accidents, dental work, braces, routine eye exams, as well as glasses for six of the seven of us—not to mention the rising cost of living—are things we cope with from day to day (a home missions salary does not exclude faith).

Our faith has been put to the test many times, and Louise and I came through these crises stronger. I cannot say that living by faith has always been easy for our children.

Mistakes A Home Missionary Can Make

A home missionary can . . .

- experience worry and frustration because his record is not keeping pace with someone else.
- waste time thinking, "If I had the financial help, good location, kind of talent that some other person has, I could . . ."
- entertain the idea, "If I left, someone could come here and really make things go."
- be too busy to give individual attention to his wife and children.
- fail to place the proper value on planned periods of rest and vacation.
- hesitate to go through open doors of opportunity while spending time and effort on some other worthwhile endeavor until the opportunity passes.
- give up when victory is just around the corner.

Being Faithful To A Few

I have driven home from a Bible study around a family's kitchen table feeling exhilaration at having shared the gospel even with a few.

For several months our Sunday evening congregation in Flagstaff consisted of our family and two or three other people.

I remember the Sunday when one of the children asked, "Daddy, why don't we just have Sunday evening service at home rather than the school gym?"

I answered that if we kept going to the gym, kept praying and sharing the gospel with friends and neighbors, that God would give us a Sunday evening congregation. He did.

Meanwhile, I realized that I must be faithful to minister to the congregation that I had. In such cases one must



HOME MISSIONS (From page 7)

trust God to compensate for many aspects of a well developed church program such as choir and youth that might be experienced elsewhere.

It is not unusual for families to visit and leave because they are not willing to wait for these programs to develop.

Several years ago while driving through a city, I dropped a dime in a phone to call a friend who had led a mission church to an admirable stage of development. I asked him his key to success.

He replied, "Prayer, praise, and patience." These applied principles continue to bear fruit.

Denominational Potential

I believe the financial needs of a mission church could be supplied sooner and more efficiently with the potential resources available among Free Will Baptists.

For example, in 1968 when we began our home missions church in Columbia, Missouri, a church of another denomination was also starting. During their first year, they borrowed land and building funds from their denomination's investment program.

We continued having services in a remodeled garage with Sunday School

classes in our living room, kitchen, dining room and children's bedroom for five years, while turning over every stone looking for building finance. God eventually opened the door through an individual.

Soon after our arrival in Flagstaff, another small Bible-believing church borrowed building funds from their denomination's credit union.

If our national Church Extension Loan Fund had the equivalent operating capital of 10 strong Free Will Baptist churches, it would have a good start toward supplying *low interest loans* to home missions churches. I urge support of Project CELF.

I believe there is the potential within our ranks for many churches and individuals to sponsor land and first unit building loans for mission churches. Some organizations look ahead and make real estate investments in developing communities.

The time comes when a mission church must take steps of faith for land, building, pastor's salary, and other financial obligations. I believe God usually leads within the framework of a group's available resources.

Like a fisherman reeling in a fish, you obtain best results with the right amount of tension. If you put too great a strain on the line it may break. I believe

some financial and spiritual tragedies could have been avoided if too much load had not been placed on the people.

However, always leave room for a miracle. We rejoice when mission churches receive generous gifts of land and/or money.

I minister with the conviction that a faithful, soul-winning ministry will result in winning men, women and children to Christ who will maintain the local church. In stewardship, our goal is to give back into denominational ministries beyond the amount contributed to establish our church.

Our gratefulness has deepened through the years for each person who has shared with us in planting a church, whether they shared by giving dollars, driving nails, praying prayers or offering words of encouragement. ▲

ABOUT THE WRITER: Mark Vandivort is a home missionary to Flagstaff, Arizona, where he has worked since 1977. Rev. Vandivort led two other home missions works in New Hampshire (1960-63) and Missouri (1968-76). He served as Field Secretary for the Home Missions Department (1963-67) and as Mission Grams editor (1967-68).

SORRY ABOUT THAT!

The October, 1981, issue of CONTACT carried an article on pages 18-21 by Lorraine Layne titled "The Gift."

We inadvertently omitted acknowledgement that "The Gift" won first place in the 1981 Writers' Contest sponsored by the Sunday School and Church Training Department.

We regret the earlier omission and thank the Writers' Contest sponsors for their understanding.

MAGAZINES HAVE A MINISTRY . . .



DIRECTORY UPDATE

FLORIDA

Keith Cole to Pleasant Hill Church, Bonifay from College Lakes Church, Fayetteville, NC as assistant pastor

James Roebuck to Harmony Church, Lake Butler from Memorial Church, Surrency, GA

ILLINOIS

Daryl Ellis to Bethel Church, South Roxanna

William Howard to Bear Point Church, Sesser

Edward Maynard to Liberty Church, Hammond, IN

NORTH CAROLINA

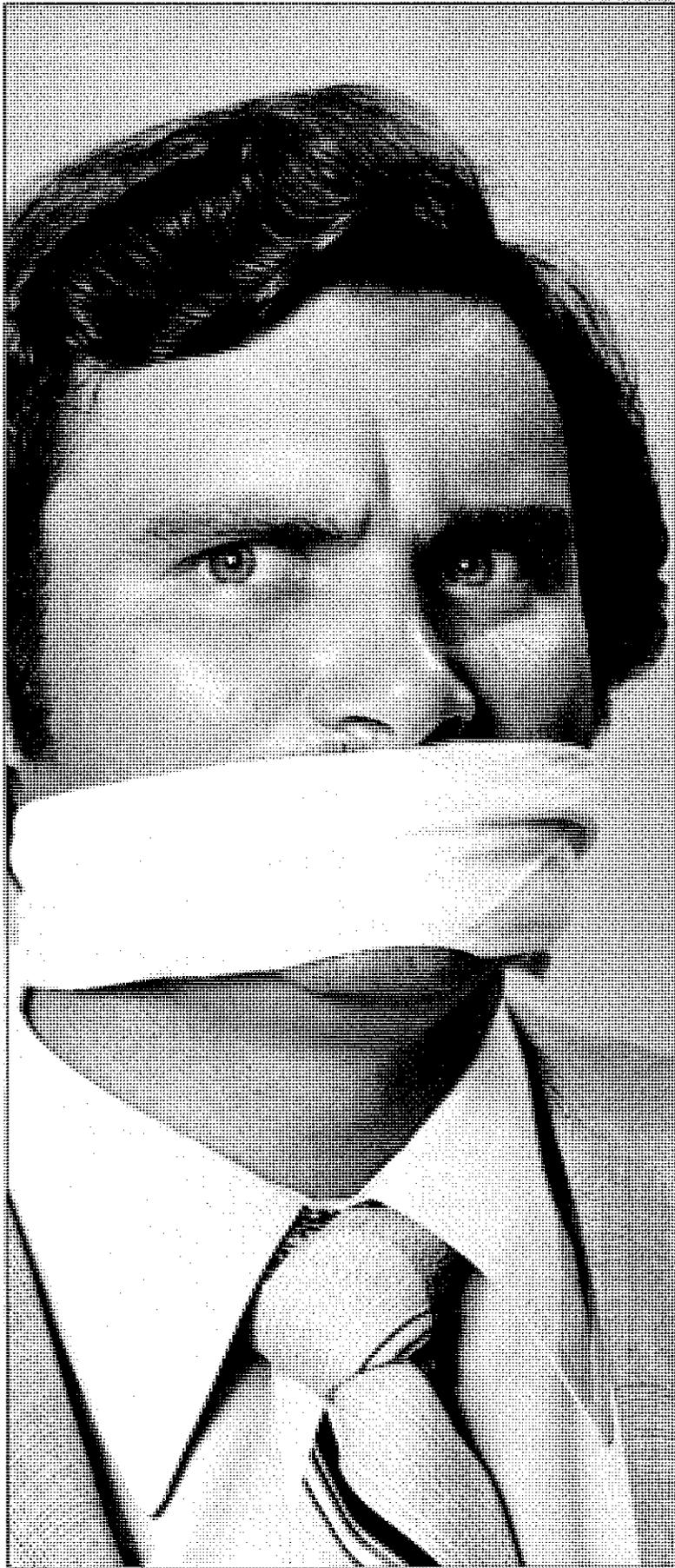
Billy Buchanan to Hope Church, Plymouth from Lockhart Church, Lockhart, SC

OKLAHOMA

Larry Tuttle to FWB Mission, Kellyville from North Heights Church, Sapulpa

OTHER PERSONNEL

Curt Gwartney to Lawnwood Church, Tulsa as associate minister



Tying The Loose End

By Delilah Scott

“Let me charge you to make right and holy use of the tongue. It is loose at one end and can swing either way, but it is fastened at the other end to your mouth, and that makes you responsible for the way it wags.”

This statement was made by that irascible 19th century evangelist Thomas Dewitt Talmage, who simply informs his listeners that they are responsible for tying off their loose tongues.

There has been and continues to be a skepticism among unbelievers about the genuineness of Christians. “Are they what they say they are?” is their inquiry. Perhaps more than anything else, loose tongues contribute to this skeptical attitude.

With every stroke, the tongue paints a vivid self-portrait. Words mirror our



LOOSE END (from page 9)

image to others and they soon get a clear picture of us. Our words are a dead giveaway.

We are not always what we say we are, but we are always what we say!

Jesus taught that our words are fruit that reveal what type tree we are, good or evil, and that we are condemned or justified by our own words.

A minister handed a dandelion to a woman and asked her to take it and scatter the seeds over the field. She did this and returned.

"Now," demanded the minister, "gather up all the seeds." She said, "I can't." "Yes!" he responded, "I know you can't; neither can you gather up the evil words you spoke about your neighbors."

Our words, once carelessly thrown to the wind can never be recovered. Whether they fall in the form of lies, obscenity, quarrels, harsh rebukes, or off-color remarks, we can never retract them.

The harm is done, the hurt inflicted, and the Christian testimony weakened. Our vocal seeds inevitably take root and grow.

Small, But Deadly

Why is so much emphasis placed on such a small matter? James answered this when he, while posting it with danger, warning and poison signs, compared the tongue to a *roaring fire* (See James 3).

Just as a tiny spark can blacken a great forest, so a few ill spoken words leave in their wake bitter memories, ugly scars, and ruined reputations.

The loose tongue is a *venomous serpent*. Only a small amount of venom injected into the blood stream can paralyze and kill its victim. And no one can estimate the crippling, often deadening effects caused by an acid mouth.

James compares the tongue to an *untamed beast* because even the wildest of creatures can be tamed by man, but not that small, slippery tongue which rebels and escapes its confines. The tongue defies the most rigid, self-discipline and lashes out at will.

James reminds us that size is no indicator of strength or ability. The rudder is small when compared to the ship, but with it, as with bits in a

horse's mouth, man controls and guides it.

In comparison the tongue, small member of the body, exercises such a harmful influence "that it defileth the whole body," and "boasteth great things." Every area of a person's life is affected by the way he talks.

The tongue is small, but deadly. The serpent's enticing tongue brought death into the world—man's death (Genesis 3:1-6).

The tongue of mockery and irreverence against a minister of God brought death to a crowd of youth (II Kings 2:22-24).

A lying tongue was listed as the cause of the sudden death of a married couple in Acts 5:1-10.

Loosely passing judgment and making false accusations harm the innocent, and in the most extreme and bazar case of all resulted in the death of Christ.

The war rages on. The self-righteous tongue has administered fatal blows to many a good name.

Multipurpose Member

The striking contrast of the tongue is seen not only in its size, but in its dual abilities. The tongue is man's most remarkable multipurpose member.

At one moment it utters praises to God, and the next instant curses His creation. One morning it sings in adoration and the next throws a temper tantrum, accusing and blaming the whole world for turning against it.

One hour it quotes the scriptures, but the next squirms its way out of a tight spot with a "little white lie." On Sunday morning it sings "Holy, Holy is His name," and on Sunday afternoon carelessly uses that name as a byword to show exclamation.

What an abomination! This ought not to be. Even in nature there is no such contradiction found. A spring does not bring forth both sweet and bitter water. A fruit tree does not bear apples one year and oranges the next.

The Transplant

We see then the loose end, the dangerously loose tongue, capable of both praising and cursing, completely out of control, beyond training.

Is there hope? Can we restrain it? Can we subdue it? Yes, here's how.

By rendering it harmless through an organ transplant—a heart transplant—"for out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh" (Luke 6:45, Matthew 12:34).

The tongue does not invent or create evil; it only communicates it. Something deeper in man is responsible for what surfaces to the lips.

Our innermost desires and thoughts will sooner or later be verbalized. That is why the heart must be the first point of concern.

Only God can give a heart of love and peace to replace the old hardened and harsh heart of hate (See Ezekiel 36:26).

When a man walks away from God with a new heart, there is no poison in his tongue. With the Adamic nature still alive, however, be sure that the old serpent will produce more poison.

Just when we think we have our enemy behind a double barrier of teeth and lips, he breaks out and fastens his fangs upon his prey.

We must go to the Word of God continually, subjecting ourselves to the Holy Spirit, allowing Him to extract the venom from our lives daily.

The King's Language

When the Holy Spirit plants in us His divine nature, the words of our lips will indicate it. Those who belong to the King will speak the King's language.

With David we will say, "my tongue is the pen of a ready writer," and I will "speak of the things . . . touching the King" (Psalm 45:1).

We teach our children to honor their parents "for this is the first commandment with a promise," but have we taught them the importance of watching what they say?

Teach them of Psalm 34:12-13 where God promised long life and good days to those who keep their tongues from evil. Teach them that with the tongue we praise God our creator. We should reverence His name as the third commandment teaches.

When the Dead Sea Scrolls were written, a blank space was left where the name of God was to be penned. Later a scribe filled it in using a writing instrument designated for that word alone.

How much more should we who

stand in the shadow of the cross honor His name. His name should only be uttered in prayer, in praise, or in the teaching of His word and way, and only in a manner that will spark awe and humility.

Bywords which are simply a shortened form of the Holy name of Jesus or God should sound repulsive to a Christian. Our children should be taught to respect the mere mention or thought of His name, and taught not to use it carelessly.

As Christians we must set a guard on the doors of our lips. Our tongues should utter only one language—the King's language. Pray with David—"Let the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart be acceptable in thy sight O Lord" (Psalm 19:14).

Conclusion

Every Christian then has a small but deadly member as destructive as a raging fire, as uncontrollable as a wild beast, and as deadly as an asp.

We have neither the power nor the patience to tame this unruly member, the tongue. By nature we have no mouth brakes. In our own strength we cannot turn the tiger behind our teeth into a harmless kitten.

This requires an act of God—a heart transplant and a daily cleansing. Only the Holy Spirit can conquer and subdue the tongue—giving us a new heart, putting the King's language upon our lips, and tying up that loose end! ▲



ABOUT THE WRITER: Mrs. Delilah Scott and her husband Ron are Free Will Baptist home missionaries in Wheeling, West Virginia. She is an alumna of California Christian College, Fresno, California.



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

COOPERATIVE PLAN OF SUPPORT August, 1981

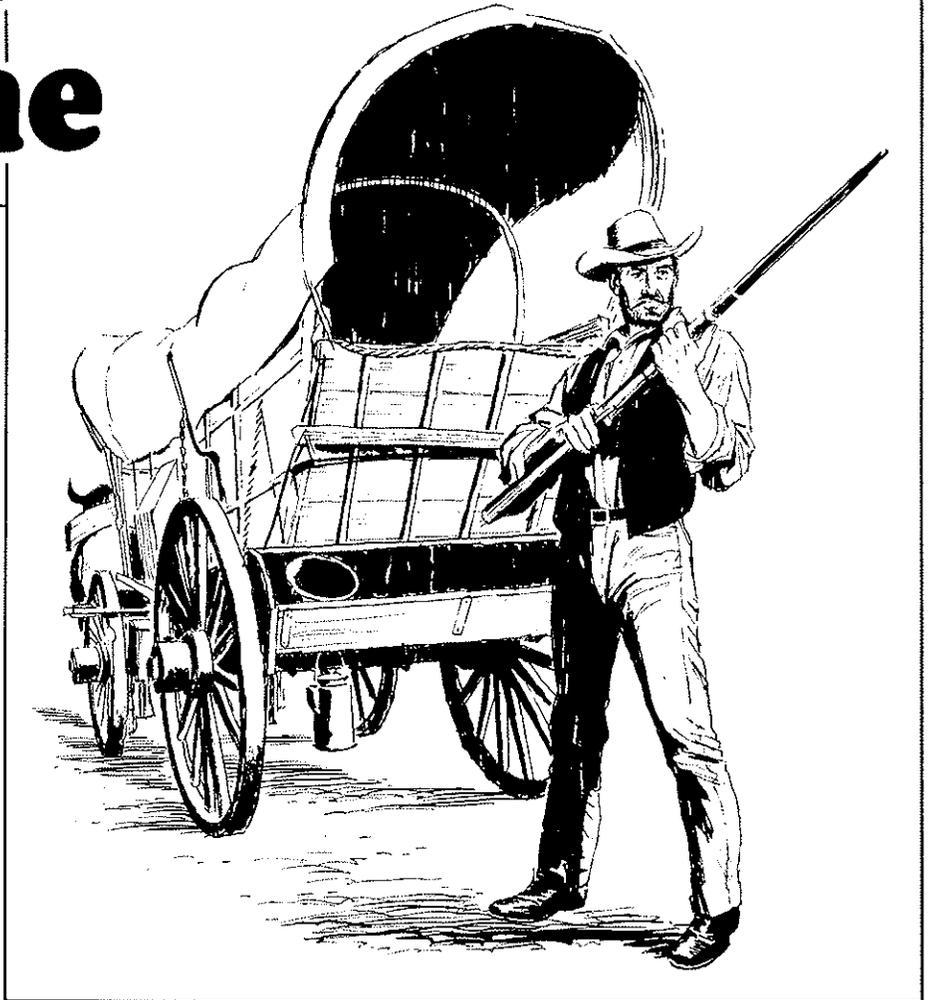
RECEIPTS:

State	Aug. '81		Aug. '80	Yr. to Date
	Coop	Design.		
Alabama	\$ 179.00	(179.00)	\$...	\$ 3,283.64
Arizona	...	...	...	396.30
Arkansas	3,917.58	...	3,970.40	26,587.09
California	1,264.94	...	949.49	9,456.88
Florida	2,144.47	...	2,773.53	10,479.26
Georgia	790.91	(12.00)	1,190.45	8,368.13
Idaho	99.83	...	117.69	300.65
Illinois	1,287.42	...	1,553.20	8,108.38
Indiana	50.00	...	50.00	150.00
Kansas	186.23	...	250.02	1,642.92
Kentucky	...	...	...	25.00
Maryland	40.00	...	40.00	320.00
Michigan	2,888.93	(2,826.00)	502.35	21,546.94
Mississippi	1,061.42	(416.94)	100.01	3,578.50
Missouri	5,679.92	(5,679.92)	5,550.00	47,050.92
New Mexico	...	...	...	225.24
North Carolina	1,388.06	(1,029.35)	516.32	4,518.85
Ohio	1,322.74	...	1,290.00	8,198.78
Oklahoma	21,993.68	(14,882.85)	7,907.78	76,184.50
Tennessee	633.89	...	1,343.36	6,708.56
Texas	60.00	...	60.00	7,576.78
Virgin Islands	...	...	193.16	1,058.42
Virginia	...	...	63.39	6,773.10
West Virginia	11.48	...	9.73	75.70
TOTALS	<u>\$45,000.50</u>		<u>\$28,430.88</u>	<u>\$252,614.54</u>

Disbursements:

Executive	\$ 9,332.99	(1,949.55)	\$ 8,627.73	\$ 73,439.18
Foreign Missions	17,712.61	(14,501.91)	6,440.28	81,885.81
Bible College	5,639.55	(2,428.85)	4,575.58	35,700.74
Home Missions	8,043.43	(5,651.13)	4,251.06	35,394.92
Retirement & Ins.	2,716.54	(387.21)	2,818.17	16,479.89
Master's Men	1,322.60	(63.49)	1,465.24	8,104.13
Commission on Theological Lib.	232.78	(43.92)	252.82	1,609.87
TOTALS	<u>\$45,000.50</u>		<u>\$28,430.88</u>	<u>\$252,614.54</u>

Guard Your Name



By Lester B. Cahoon

William Shakespeare asked, "What's in a name? That which we call a rose, by any other name would smell as sweet."

In keeping with Shakespeare's philosophy, many give little or no consideration to what name or label they wear.

This is not, however, the view Solomon took. He considered a good name of more value than silver and gold (Proverbs 22:1) and precious ointment (Ecclesiastes 7:1).

Why then do so few make the effort to build a good name? Have they unwittingly chosen to follow Shakespeare rather than Solomon?

Solomon's words speak not only to our personal character, but also to our corporate image. We are identified by the label we wear and accept.

When a customer enters a store, he must decide which of many products he will buy. How does he do that? Sometimes by the opinions he forms from reading labels.

Likewise, as we deliver a message to a lost world, you can be sure that the "shoppers" are conscious of our labels. The labels we manufacture for ourselves may very well determine our effectiveness as witnesses for Christ.

I Am a Christian

The primary label for a child of God is that of a Christian. This may be the most abused and misused word in the English language.

The origin of the term is found in Acts 11:26, "And the disciples were

called Christians first in Antioch."

God promised that He would supply a new name for His people in Isaiah 62:2. Why did He feel that was necessary? Was it because of the changed emphases between the Old and New Testament?

But to place the whole blame there would be to ignore the fact that God cast off Israel, "until the fulness of the gentiles be come in" (Romans 11:5 cf. vs. 1, 7, 15). The new name was given to a new people, of a new race, and in a new place.

A study of Acts 11 shows the gospel

extended to the Greeks (v. 20). The following verses describe many who believed and made reputations for themselves that even reached Jerusalem.

The Jerusalem Church sent Barnabas to examine these Greek believers. There were so many converts that Saul of Tarsus was brought in to help.

After a whole year's teaching by Barnabas and Saul, the people were called Christians at Antioch.

Before any of us claim the label of Christian or bestow it on others, we ought to examine ourselves in light of the Word.

Have we, as they did, believed and turned to the Lord (v. 21)? Do our actions produce news that carries far (v. 22)? When people look at us, do they see the grace of God (v. 23)? Without these characteristics no one deserves the name of Christ.

Paul would later write that, "if any man be in Christ he is a new creature" and that "now then we are ambassadors for Christ." Only new creations and representatives of Christ should be called by the name "Christian."

I Am a Free Will Baptist

Another name that should be dear to us is the name "Free Will Baptist." Now in the eyes of many, even in our denomination, such loyalty is labeled fanaticism.

But if they, like I, had been taught Roman Catholicism, and had floundered for years upon a sea of theological confusion, then they could understand why others feel a deep love for this denomination.

There is both advantage and disadvantage to being a homegrown Free Will Baptist. Those so blessed never fought the dilemma of confusion between truth and loyalty to church tradition. They sometimes fail to recognize and appreciate that which they have not earned.

Like ancient Israel in Deuteronomy 6, they live in houses they did not build, drink from wells they did not dig, and eat from vineyards they did not plant.

What does the name Free Will Baptist represent? There are as many diverse answers as there are personalities to respond.

Without being sidetracked into the negative perceptions some outsiders have of us, it would be fair to generalize and say we have not always been careful to present a clear picture of our character.

Many of our people are reluctant to use the title "Free Will," and call themselves Baptists. We have a great heritage. We follow a correct doctrine. Why, if we are in the right, do we fear saying so?

It seems obvious that as the term *Christian* has lost its exclusiveness, and therefore its meaning, the term *Free Will Baptist* is too exclusive, and too meaningful for many to wear.

Jesus warned us to beware of wolves in sheep's clothing (Matthew 7:15). Perhaps the labels we wear can help distinguish friend from foe.

I Am a Fundamentalist

Many are confused by all the theological designations. What are Evangelicals? How do they differ from New-Orthodox, Liberals and Modernists? Why do we refer to ourselves as Fundamentalists?

The clearest place to start unraveling such terms is with definitions. Although my definitions may be simplistic, they are understandable.

Evangelicals believe men are lost and in need of the Saviour. That separates them clearly from the Liberals and Modernists who believe man is innately good, but hindered by a poor environment.

Fundamentalists are evangelical, but also hold other doctrines as being fundamental or necessary. Fundamentalists insist on such doctrines as

the infallibility of the scriptures, the Virgin Birth, separated or sanctified Christian living, and accept the Bible as the only rule of faith and practice. Admittedly there are other essential doctrines, but these are the most distinctive from some of the evangelical movements.

There are Evangelicals who are not Fundamentalists. If they discard just one of those or other essential doctrines, they cease to be Fundamentalists. In this wide and varied area, we find the majority of modern Christianity.

When we receive advertisements for Christian literature written by authors we do not know, how can we determine if they will benefit us? The only way is by their labels.

If they call themselves Evangelicals, in most cases they are not Fundamentalists. Like the term *Christian*, the term *Evangelical* has lost its exclusiveness, thus its meaning.

Because of wolves wearing sheep's clothing, new labels must be formed to distinguish between the true, sincere disciples of Christ and the formalistic, ritual of religion.

Would a rose by any other name really smell as sweet? That may work in botany, but in theology it's dangerous. For in theology, a good name is vitally important.

We must protect and preserve our distinctiveness and separation. Let us proclaim our stand despite the consequences. ▲

ABOUT THE WRITER: Reverend Lester B. Cahoon pastors McGregor Chapel Free Will Baptist Church, Pontotoc, Mississippi. He graduated from Free Will Baptist Bible College in 1978.

"Enter into His gates with thanksgiving, and into His courts with praise: be thankful unto Him, and bless His name."

Psalm 100:4



Danny's Prayer

By Rebecca Purkey

“**A**ll Christians can be healed!” The preacher was emphatic. “It’s not God’s will that any of His children be sick,” he continued.

“If you have prayed and not seen a miraculous answer, then there must be unconfessed sin or a lack of faith in your life! God will heal anyone that believes!”

I smiled to myself and silently prayed, “Father, why is there such a trend to make Christians believe that God always heals? Even Paul’s thorn in the flesh was not removed and I know his faith was enough.

“Lord, I thank you for the lesson I learned from Danny. Even though his handicap causes him pain and discomfort, he has shown me faith that can move mountains.

“And so many lives have been touched, not because you healed Danny, for that has not happened. But we have been touched by his constant love for you that shines through the trials he faces . . . that is the real meaning of faith.”

This article won second place in the 1981 Writer's Contest sponsored by the Sunday School and Church Training Department.

My mind retraced the years as I thought of my nephew, Danny. I remember the night he was born. My parents were at the hospital to be near my sister and her husband as they were having their second child.

As the night passed, I kept hoping and praying that the baby would be a boy. It had not occurred to me that anything could possibly be wrong . . . not until my father opened the front door and I saw tears trickling down his cheeks. My sister was fine, the baby, the boy I had prayed for, had a birth defect.

An opening at the base of his spine left the spinal cord unprotected, causing the loss of spinal fluid. If the baby lived, he would have many physical problems including paralysis from the waist down.

Tears welled up in my eyes. The questions began filling my heart. Why did this happen? I knew that my sister and her husband trusted in God. Had He turned His back on them? Had He made a mistake?

Being raised in a Christian home, I was taught not to question God. He never makes mistakes, they had said. Even though I believed in God, my weak faith began producing doubts of God's love in our lives.

If God truly loved us, how could He allow the suffering this baby boy would have to endure? Surely God would give my sister a miracle and heal this innocent child.

In the months following his birth, Danny faced more surgery and pain than most people go through in their entire lives. As my heart overflowed with love for Danny, it was more difficult not to ask God for His reasons.

When Danny was only four, tragedy struck the family again. His father left the house one Saturday morning to help collect used furniture for a church auction. He never came home. He fell off the back of a truck, striking his head, and never regained consciousness. Three days later his heart stopped and he was gone.

Danny and his sister would now go through life without the strength and guidance of their loving father. My heartbroken sister courageously held onto her faith and told me that God would help her raise the children.

Why couldn't I accept it that way? My heart cried out to God as I tried to understand how He could allow so

much suffering, if He really loved us.

My doubts grew through the years as I witnessed the pain of Danny's handicap. I remember rejoicing when I heard that Danny, through the guidance of a loving Christian mother, had given his life to Jesus.

Maybe now God would heal him. I knew that God could heal Danny if it was His will. Even if my faith was not enough, I knew that others who were praying really believed in a God of miracles. Yet, Danny struggled . . . everyday.

When Danny was 14, he taught me a beautiful lesson. Danny has a tube, called a shunt, that was surgically implanted as a baby, to help regulate the amount of fluid going into his head.

This special surgery is done on many children with Spina Bifida, as the defect is called. Occasionally, this shunt has to be changed if it malfunctions or if the connecting tubes become too small as the child grows. Danny had been having some problems so he was hospitalized again.

However, the tests run on Danny produced a severe headache that lasted three days and nights. The doctors had blown small puffs of air into his brain as they studied the shunt to see if he needed a new one.

Little did I know the lesson I was about to learn from my brave, uncomplaining nephew. Through the years, he had developed into a mentally alert, intelligent boy who loved life and always had a joke to share with anyone who would listen.

I had watched his faith in God blossom as he faced each physical obstacle that came along. But what happened that week in the hospital had a tremendous impact on my life.

My sister relayed the story how Danny reacted to the three days of pain. Doctors were unable to give pain medications as they were continuing other important tests. She never left his side.

The pain became so excruciating that she could hardly stand to see the suffering of her son. Days seemed so long, the pain relentless. Between praying to God in Danny's behalf and comforting her son as only a mother can do, she carefully wiped the tears from his eyes.

The third night my sister laid her head on the side of the bed in utter exhaustion. Her eyes had been closed

for several minutes when she heard Danny talking out loud. When she realized he was praying, she listened intently.

To her surprise, she heard her son saying, "Thank you, God! Oh, thank you, God!" Thinking the pain must finally be lessened, she continued to listen. Then Danny said, "God, I thank you so much for the pain!"

At this my sister quickly interrupted Danny's prayer, asking how he could possibly thank God for the terrible pain he was enduring. With a special faith in his heart that surpasses my comprehension, Danny said, "It's easy, Mom! God said to thank Him for everything! I know He loves me, so there must be a reason for this pain!"

The next day the pain had stopped and Danny was his usual happy self, telling the nurses his funny stories. He may not even remember that simple prayer, but I shall never forget those precious words.

God did not promise that we would have no sickness and pain, but He did promise to be with us. We don't have to understand the reason people suffer. All we need to know is that He does love us, all of us, no matter who we are or what our mental or physical capabilities. And I accept that love, with no questions asked . . . this I have learned from Danny.

Danny is now 16 and faces surgery again. He won't be out playing ball or swimming like other teenage boys. But he will be happy and thankful for all things, even the pain!

"And God, I thank you for Danny, just like he is!" ▲

ABOUT THE WRITER: Rebecca Purkey is a member of First Free Will Baptist Church, Chesterfield, Indiana.

By Sheila D. Scarborough

I am the mother of two daughters, Shawna (7) and Crystal (5). Shawna is mentally retarded.

Both girls are very special to their father and I in their own respective ways. We have been fortunate in having a church home that is supportive and loving.

But being involved in all aspects of special education with other parents of handicapped children, I have seen what a ministry there could be.

Many people feel inadequate in the presence of both a handicapped individual and the family of a handicapped individual.

It is a situation they do not know how to cope with. You can imagine how hard it is for the parents.

Our daughter has been accepted and loved by our friends and church family, but I wonder about other families that need the church's support and, because of one reason or other, find it is not there.

The church needs to give particular interest to the emotional and spiritual needs of the families of handicapped persons. These families' needs are as important as the needs of their handicapped members, possibly more important.

The difficulties many families face focus on the emotional reactions they themselves have to confront upon the arrival of a handicapped child in the home.

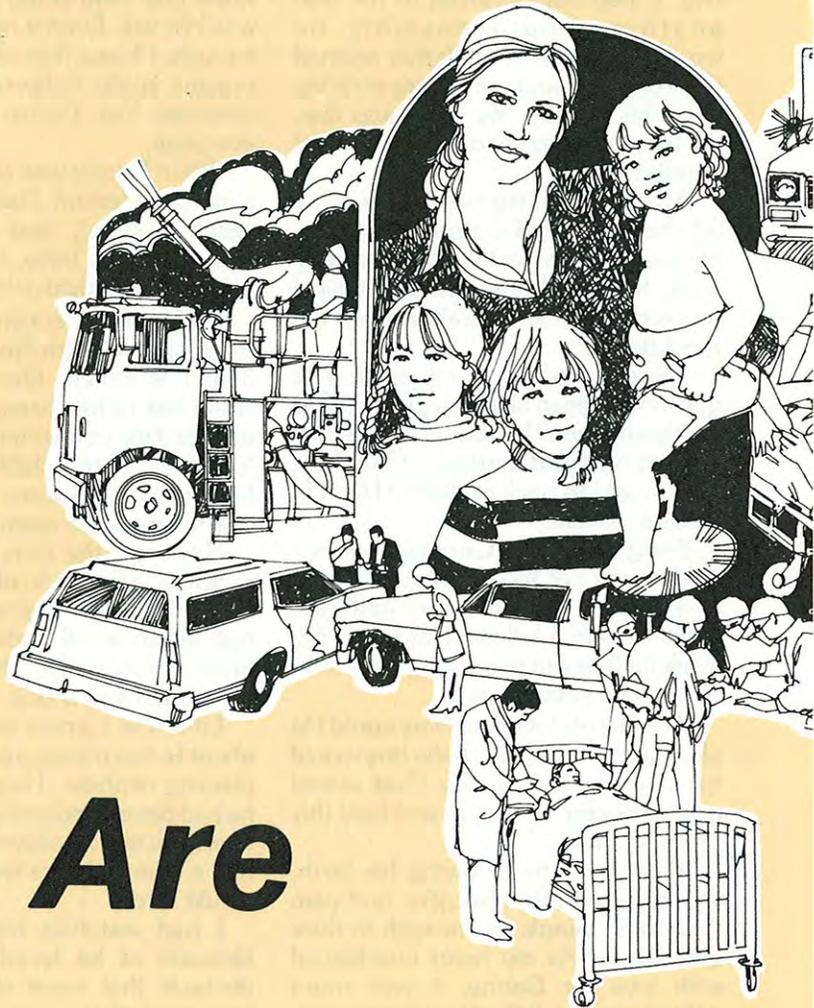
Regardless of whether the child's condition is mild or involved, the family faces some very strong feelings. Everyone within the church must recognize these feelings as natural and be willing to minister to them.

Speaking as a parent of a multiply-handicapped child, parents go through many feelings once their child is born. These feelings of sorrow, guilt, denial, searching for a reason as well as a cure, at first come like torrential rain pouring down upon you.

Then after awhile, you face them more slowly, one at a time. And finally, if you are lucky, total acceptance.

Special Children Have Special

But . . .



Are

Our

Responsibility

al Problems



They lity?

Some parents never reach total acceptance because they get bogged down on one of the other feelings. At these times the church must show their love and acceptance.

Criticism, fault finding or acting as though they aren't around is damaging to the spiritual well-being of the family member. The church needs to fully accept the family and help them come to grips and cope with the addition to their family.

Many families totally withdraw from contact with the church. Some, because of the additional hardship a handicapped person brings on the family.

But some withdraw because they feel their handicapped member will not be accepted by the church family. Others feel it is too much of a burden to ask the church to accept.

Should the church continue to reach out to these homes? Are they our responsibility?

Some parents are deeply burdened with guilt. This is one of the hardest feelings for a parent to deal with and may be the most applicable to the Christian community.

Perhaps they blame God and feel that He could have prevented the handicap. Or they may fear that the church secretly blames them for a less than perfect child—one that doesn't fit their ideals.

And his disciples asked him, saying, Master, who did sin, this man, or his parents that he was born blind? Jesus answered, Neither hath this man sinned, nor his parents: but that the works of God should be manifest in him (John 9:2-3).

Some handicaps could be prevented, but placing blame on the child or the parents is unfair. They need to know that their addition can be the richest blessing from God that they have ever experienced.

The church can be a haven for families of handicapped individuals by helping parents face the realities of what has happened and cope with them.

The church can help families maintain hope. Miracles do happen, although they aren't likely. But families never need to lose faith and hope. They need to be continually filled with love and hope.

There must be concessions and maturation, or the problems a handicapped member brings into a home can destroy it. And there must be support. Regardless of the support, every person experiences things in different ways and at different times.

As families mature, old feelings periodically emerge. This is when the church's support can be a vital link.

The church's support helps families reach the plateau of total acceptance. Acceptance can never be reached without support from others.

Families must accept the handicapped member and realize that their lives can not only be enriched by this individual, but that this individual is worthy of a place in our society and in our churches, however small that place may be.

And that in spite of their handicaps, these individuals can add a real contribution to the ministry and growth of the local church.

At the same time, we, as part of the local body, must look past the handicapping condition to the depth of the individuals and make them feel accepted. When the families of handicapped individuals as well as the individuals themselves feel accepted, the church has gained.

Many problems confront families with handicapped individuals—strain on family members and the marriage, additional unexpected expenses, limitation of family activities. Families need added help and sometime wonder why the church supports other areas and fails them.

Are we responsible? Unless the church ventures out and makes these families a part of their ministry, they probably will not look to the church for help.

Where is the family to find relief from a continuous 24-hour duty? How can a husband and wife find needed time together and the family get involved in the normal activities of life? Again, are we responsible?

If the family feels the handicapped member will not be accepted by others, the natural instinct is to overprotect this individual. This can be very damaging for the handicapped member, because



OUR RESPONSIBILITY (From page 17)

overprotection and setting the handicapped member apart only handicaps further.

What is the church's responsibility to assist families with handicapped individuals?

The church needs to help the family adjust to and accept the individual. The church can do this by accepting the individual and accepting the family also.

The church needs to support the family from beginning to end in whatever problems arise whether financial, assistance in child-care, accepting and including brothers and sisters, adapting classes and activities to include the handicapped individual, or just through love and Christian support.

By these actions, the church proves their acceptance of the

handicapped individual and, by accepting the handicapped member, accepts the family.

ABOUT THE WRITER: Mrs. Sheila D. Scarborough is a member of Cofer's Chapel Free Will Baptist Church, Nashville, Tennessee. She graduated from Free Will Baptist Bible College in 1970.



The Scarborough Family—Shawna (L), Sheila, James, Crystal



OUR READERS COMMENT

PLEASED WITH CONTENT FOR A CHANGE

I received my September CONTACT yesterday. I must say that for a change I was pleased with the content. Without going into detail about my former complaints, I will comment on why I enjoyed this issue.

The editorial "Let's Give the Christian Schools A Chance" was superb. The articles by Richard Cordell and Dennis Wiggs were excellent and in good taste.

It is thrilling to see our national paper praise good preaching, dare to praise churches who dare to do a little more than the usual (example: have a Christian school, bus ministry, etc.) and encourage a scriptural basis for criticism of a brother with whom we may not agree.

Thanks again for the September, 1981 issue.

Rev. Willie Justice, Pastor
First Free Will Baptist Church
Florence, South Carolina

MAGAZINE COMMENDED FOR SCHOOL ARTICLES

I wish to commend CONTACT on publishing the articles "The Case For Christian Schools" and "We Operate A Christian School." They clearly state the ministry of the church day school.

It is refreshing to see articles in our national publication that commend the church day school movement. This is a ministry area of urgent importance, I believe.

Rev. Randy Cox, Pastor
First Free Will Baptist Church
Raleigh, North Carolina

PASTOR CALLS PUBLICATION TIMELY

I appreciate our CONTACT more with every issue. It is reaching out with not only news from and about Free Will Baptists, but it is informing, challenging and illuminating with timely articles.

Thanks from a non-letter writing reader. I usually just read, enjoy and think that some day I will see you and tell you that it is appreciated but this time, I want it to be said in a special way, "Thanks."

Rev. Jerry Dudley, Pastor
Choctaw Free Will Baptist Church
Choctaw, Oklahoma

ANOTHER NOTE OF PRAISE

Regardless of the repercussions over the March issue, it's high time that some praise be given where it is due.

It's sad when a clear, scholarly article like A. B. Brown's "King James Fever" receives such adverse denunciations.

The fact that people are more prone to knock than to praise may be some cause for consolation here.

I commend the editor and the author for their boldness to print this much needed study on Bible Translations.

As a pastor I do not hesitate to use and recommend to our people some good translations. Two of my favorites are *The Amplified Bible* and the *New King James Bible*.

This letter is likely to create some criticism toward me, but I am more interested in acknowledging the commendable work of our brothers than to remain in the shadows of obscurity with the silent majority.

I close by earnestly pleading with my fellow pastors, those of like precious faith—let's cease arguing and fussing about translations and preach Christ, the theme of the Bible, out of a heart of devotion for Him.

Rev. Jackie W. Edwards, Pastor
Bible Way Free Will Baptist Church
Cameron, Oklahoma



FREE WILL BAPTIST

newsfront

REVIVAL CONFERENCE SLATED FOR OKC

OKLAHOMA CITY, OK—The 1981 Greater Oklahoma City Revival Conference is slated for November 23-25 at Northwest Free Will Baptist Church, according to spokesman Jerry Dudley.

The conference will feature 10 revival-centered messages developing the theme "Wilt Thou Not Revive Us Again," and six Tuesday afternoon workshops geared to meeting needs in local churches and Christian schools.

Home Missions General Director Roy Thomas and Associate Director Trymon Messer will preach two sermons each and lead workshop sessions on pastoral helps and local church outreach.

Joining Thomas and Messer with the preaching assignments are Oklahoma ministers Charles Murphy, Frank Giles, J. B. Chism, Bailey Thompson, Richard Presnell, and Missouri Pastor Lynn Wood.

During each session, a Hillsdale Free Will Baptist College student will lead a "Bible Time." The conference begins Monday, November 23, with a prayer luncheon, then moves into the first of two double-header evenings of preaching at 7:00 p.m.

The three-day conference concludes Wednesday evening with a time of thanksgiving highlighted by all participating churches bringing their thanksgiving offering for home missions.



Hillsdale students confer with faculty.

HILLSDALE REGISTERS 162 FOR FALL SEMESTER

MOORE, OK—Enrollment for the fall semester, 1981, at Hillsdale Free Will Baptist College was 162 students, according to Director of Promotion and Public Relations N. R. Smith.

Students came from nine states and three foreign countries. The enrollment includes 79 freshmen, 33 sophomores, 23 juniors, 18 seniors and 9

special students.

"We have a fine spirit on campus among the students," said Dr. Smith. "We are working on certification for teachers in Christian schools."

The 162 registration count is up from the same time period in 1980 when 150 students enrolled during the fall semester.

NEW STAFFERS BOLSTER FWBBC ROSTER

NASHVILLE, TN—Free Will Baptist Bible College has added a new teacher and eight staff workers to serve the newly-arrived students, according to a report from President Charles A. Thigpen's office.

Mr. Johnny Carter, the newest member of the FWBBC faculty, is a 1973 graduate of the college who has returned to teach in the Teacher Education Department. He has been a Christian day school teacher and administrator for seven years, earned an M.Ed. degree at Middle Tennessee State University and an M.S. degree at Pensacola Christian College.

The staff workers include additions in the area of student supervisors and secretarial services. The new staff workers are:

- Lynda Barker, Student Supervisor
- Nell Carr, Receptionist
- Martha Carter, Secretary, Financial Aid Office

—Duane Cassida, Student Supervisor

—Karen Owen, Secretary to Student Deans

—Tom Rolen, Resident Director, Goen Hall

—Marsha Rolen, Weekend Student Supervisor

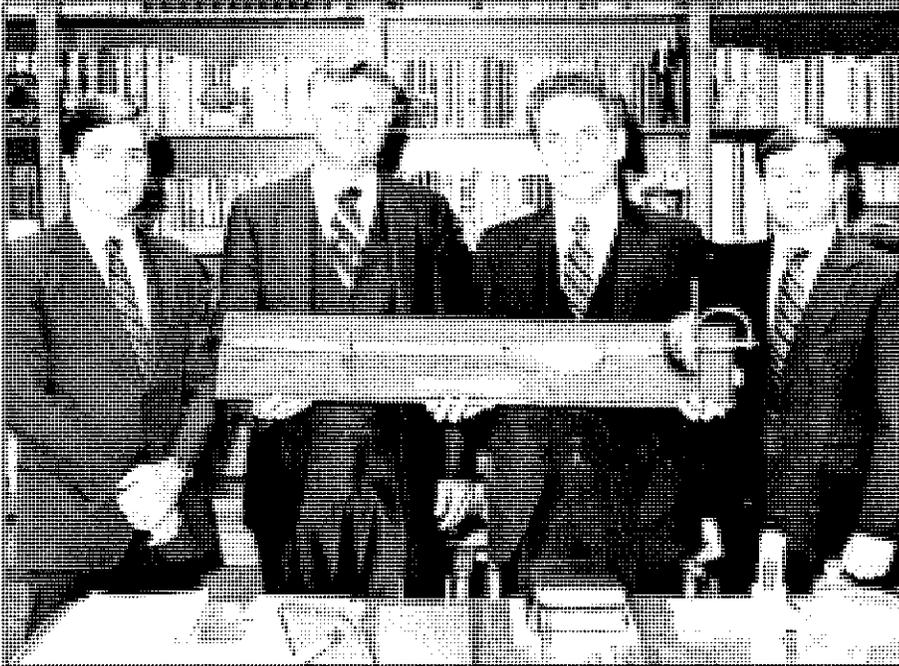
—Tenie Sizemore, Resident Director, Ennis Hall

Other new FWBBC personnel added this summer but announced previously are Rev. & Mrs. Larry Hughes and Mr. Richard McDonald. Rev. Hughes is an assistant in the Public Relations Office. Mrs. Hughes is in charge of Student Health Services. Mr. McDonald is teaching piano in the Music Department.



newsfront

(continued)



Mike Cordell (L.), G. Surratt, Richard Cordell, Walter Stuart.
(Progress Photo)

GUIN PASTOR RECEIVES NATIONAL HONOR

GUIN, AL—In a special presentation, Rev. Richard Cordell, pastor of Guin Free Will Baptist Church and Liberty Christian Academy, was awarded the Sword of the Spirit Award, according to Lewis Bridges, vice-president of Accelerated Christian Education, Inc.

In a letter to Cordell, Bridges said, "Because of your faithfulness in the ministry and your contribution to the lives of young people through Christian education, you have been chosen to receive the Sword of the Spirit Award for the 1980-81 school year."

Area Coordinator for A.C.E., Rev. Gayle Surratt, made the presentation. Recipients of A.C.E.'s highest award were recognized in a rally at the A.C.E. International Student Convention held at Rutgers University in New Brunswick, New Jersey. There were over 4,000 young people and sponsors present at the rally.

Five Sword of the Spirit Awards were presented during the 1981 Convention. Along with Pastor Cordell from Guin, Dr. Jerry Falwell, Lynchburg, Virginia, received the national honor.

FWBBC LOGS RECORD 40TH YEAR ENROLLMENT

NASHVILLE, TN—A record 584 students enrolled at Free Will Baptist Bible College for the fall 1981 semester as the college began its 40th year, according to Registrar Charles Hampton.

"The college's previous record fall enrollment was set in 1977 when 562 students registered," he said. Compared to last year's 513, this semester's enrollment is up by 14 percent. New students number 224.

The new record does not include five students who enrolled for a class being offered for credit toward the Graduate School, which does not officially open until August, 1982. The five are Free Will Baptist ministers in the Nashville area and all are FWBBC graduates.

This semester's student body comes from 34 states and six foreign countries. Four Canadian students have enrolled. Three of these are from the newly-admitted Atlantic Canada Association of Free Will Baptists, which joined the National Association of Free Will Baptists in Louisville last July.

By classes, this semester's student body contains 219 freshmen, 157 sophomores, 93 juniors, 73 seniors and 42 special students. Further breakdowns show that 421 students are single and 163 are married; 311 are men and 273 are women.

As students announce during the school year that God has called them to specific ministries, the numbers of ministerial and missionary students increase. At registration, 152 indicated that they were studying for the pastoral ministry and 81 that they were preparing for the mission field.

The five states with the greatest number of students in this semester's student body are—North Carolina (99), Tennessee (86), Alabama (56), Virginia (49), and Illinois (31).

CHRISTIAN SCHOOL HOSTS AREA WIDE REVIVAL

PLEASANT VIEW, TN—The Pleasant View Christian School hosted an area wide revival October 4-9, sponsored by the 24 Free Will Baptist churches of the Cumberland Association's Northern Quarterly Meeting.

Evangelist Don R. Pegram, director of church growth and evangelism with

the Home Missions Department, preached the six-day meeting.

The three-year-old Pleasant View Christian School is operated by area Free Will Baptist Churches. The October revival was conducted in the school's new gymnasium.

Cooperating area churches dis-

missed Sunday evening services and brought their congregations to Pleasant View for the revival.

Free Will Baptist Bible College Music Professor Vernon Whaley directed the music, including a volunteer mass choir.

HILLSDALE SLATES MISSIONS CONFERENCE

MOORE, OK—Hillsdale Free Will Baptist College will conduct its annual Missionary Conference on campus November 2-4, according to President Don Elkins.

Both the National Home and Foreign

Missions Departments will participate in developing the conference theme, "That All May Hear."

Bill Fulcher, newly-appointed missionary to Hispanic-speaking people, will represent the Home Missions De-

partment.

Missionaries Charolette Tallent (France), Patrick Dickens (Ivory Coast), Ron Callaway (Spain), and R. Eugene Waddell, associate director, will represent the Foreign Missions Department.

RANDALL HOUSE RELEASES 'CHRISTIAN STANDARDS' PUBLICATION

NASHVILLE, TN—Randall House announced its latest publishing effort, *Christian Standards and Convictions Without Legalism* by Leroy Forlines.

This new booklet contains 15 essays written during 1978 and 1979 and published in CONTACT magazine.

Rev. Forlines charts an orderly course for the Christian by which he

may avoid both license and legalism as he makes decisions on matters where the Bible is silent and acts upon them.

Guiding principles for such decision-making and action are set forth forcefully and with clarity. None need ever wonder where the author stands on such issues.

Christian Standards and Convic-

tions Without Legalism is a welcome contribution to the field of sparse material available on the subject of Christian liberty. The tentative price has been set at \$1.95.

The author is professor of Bible and Theology at Free Will Baptist Bible College, Nashville, Tennessee.

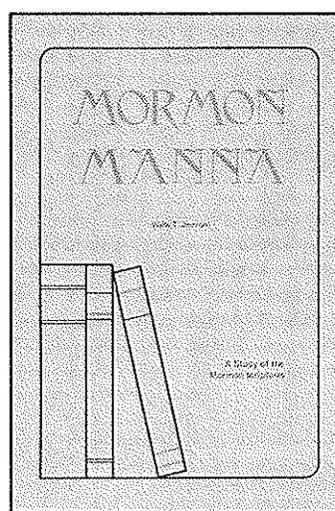
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What does a church do when it needs \$46,000 in cash? That was the situation facing **Sherwood Forest FWB Church, El Sobrante, CA** this summer. Pastor **Milburn Wilson** called on each working person in the church to give an entire paycheck on August 30. The "Give it all Sunday" was arranged to complete one building project and repair existing structures.

Victory FWB Church, Goldsboro, NC voted an annual budget of \$74,448, according to Pastor **George C. Lee**. The church gave widely to denominational enterprises including more than \$13,000 to Foreign Missions and \$3,100 to Free Will Baptist Bible College.

A woman and three children showed up at **College Lakes FWB Church, Fayetteville, NC** in need of food and assistance. Pastor **Bobby Glenn Smith** and the church responded with what assistance they could and helped the family on their way to California. Not long afterwards money arrived from California to reimburse the church. It was sent by the mother of the woman the church befriended. There are some people who still appreciate it when you help.

It's good to hear a pastor talking positively about the visitation program of his local church. "It's the best I know anywhere," says Pastor **Richard Cordell** of **Guin FWB Church, Guin, AL**. The church averages between 20-35 each week for visitation. Cordell observes, "That is not only good, that is great. One of the things that makes it great is the consistency of the program."

Liberty FWB Church, Hammond, IN, elected **Edward Maynard** as pastor. What made the event significant is that within a month after the new pastor's arrival, attendance surged from 9 to an average of 42. That's almost 500 percent.

Pastor **Howard Flota** and the congregation at **Waltonville FWB Church, Waltonville, IL** experienced a summer jump in Sunday School attendance. The group averaged 105 during July compared to 86 for the same period a year ago. They

also built a new parking lot across the street from the church.

The men at **First FWB Church, Poteau, OK** quit shaving just after this issue of CONTACT went to press. According to Pastor **Richard Gallant** the men quit shaving the first Sunday in September and pledged that no razor would touch their faces until Sunday School attendance reached 300. They targeted October 18 as the great day. Smiled Pastor Gallant, "We can't miss that goal or beards will become the style at First Church."

CONTACT welcomes the **FAITHMESSENGER**, publication of **Faith FWB Church, Goldsboro, NC**. **Dann Patrick** pastors. The pastor has begun a weekly television program on Monday evenings from 6:00 until 7:00 on local channel 13. During this time, Rev. Patrick plays music, preaches a message from God's Word and shares news of interest to the Christian community.

Pastor **Charles Bigger** entered his 10th year as pastor of **First FWB Church, Checotah, OK** this past August.

During the first eight months of 1981, members at **First FWB Church, Ada, OK** reduced the church indebtedness by over \$14,000 and at the same time accumulated a sizeable amount for their planned new sanctuary. **David Sutton** pastors.

Every preacher would rather preach than eat as a general rule. But something happened at **Fellowship FWB Church, Kingsport, TN** that was a little out of the ordinary, according to Pastor **Winston Sweeney**. One Sunday night in August, Pastor Sweeney felt impressed to extend an altar call before the evening message, thinking two or three might respond. Nearly 100 responded to the invitation before the preacher ever got to the pulpit.

The **Kaw Valley FWB Church, Kansas City, KS** officially organized on August 9. Pastor **Elwin Clifton** and members were rejoicing that concerned friends donated 11 pews and a pulpit to the new congregation. The church then purchased 50 FWB hymnals.

CONTACT extends a welcome to the **OUTREACH**, publication of **Rocky Mount FWB Church, Rocky Mount, NC**. **Glenn Hill** pastors.

The first service to be conducted at **Way Of The Cross FWB Church, Sallisaw, OK** attracted 58 for morning services and 167 for an afternoon fellowship singing. That first service concluded with four decisions—three for salvation and one rededication. The first offering was \$800. **Wade Jernigan** pastors.

A new mission was started in **Merced, CA** by **Trumon Huddleston** and **Wesley Nelson**. The mission conducted its first services in July with 21 present.

And here's another welcome. This one goes to the **STANDARD**, publication of **First FWB Church, Inman, SC**. **Earl Hendrix** pastors. The group has just purchased a new van to use on Sunday School bus routes.

Here's another church that has taken things into its own hands with regards to finance. A year ago the **Eggville FWB Church, Tupelo, MS** was \$15,000 in debt. According to Pastor **Charles Davis**, the group buckled down and paid off the entire indebtedness in less than a year's time.

First FWB Church, Sparta, TN named **Gary McBride** as Layman of the Year. **Carson Whiteaker** pastors.

There's a group interested in starting a new FWB Church in the **Giddings-LaGrange, TX** area. Anyone having friends or relatives in the area is welcome to send their names and addresses to Mrs. Clyde McDonald, P.O. Box 870, LaGrange, TX 78945. Telephone number (713) 968-8111.

There's a new Master's Men chapter in **AL**. It's at **First FWB Church in Dothan**. The group organized on July 15, according to **James Pickett**, president of the new chapter.

The second annual missionary conference at **Victory FWB Church, Jackson, TN** raised more than \$2,690, according to Pastor **Vernon Long**.

Pastor **Larry Tuttle** resigned from **North Heights FWB Church, Sapulpa, OK** and moved down the road to start a new church in a fast growing community 10 miles west of Sapulpa. The group has rented the Creek County Fairgrounds complex for Sunday services which began September 19. They will be operating under the watchcare of Oklahoma's First Mission Association.

There was a big party in the home of **Melvin and Sherry Martin** a few weeks back. The Martins live in **North Little Rock, AR**. Their party is distinctive in that it was a book party. **Lewis Campbell** was in charge of the "Come and Get Some Good Books" party. Maybe someone else should try this kind of party in other neighborhoods.

Grace FWB Church, Greenville, NC celebrated its 28th anniversary in August by remembering their first meeting in the American Legion building with Pastor **Rashie Kennedy** and tracing the history of the work through the years. **Randall Riggs** pastors. ▲



The Denomination Grows Up

By William F. Davidson

Over the past few months, the "History Corner" has pointed with some degree of pride to the long and distinguished heritage of the Free Will Baptist denomination. No longer do we have to accept the accusation of larger denominations that we "must be some new fly-by-night split off the Baptists."

History has revealed that Baptists of our persuasion have been present since the first Baptist Church was established in America in Providence, Rhode Island, in 1639.

The first Baptists in England were General Baptists (accepted a general atonement) and would become the forefathers of the present Free Will

Baptist denomination. We have been around a long, long time.

In spite of accumulating age, however, the denomination has found it difficult to attain maturity. Though the New England segment of the denomination did gain some degree of maturity, they merged with the Northern Baptists in 1911 leaving the tiny remnants in the South and the Middle West much like they had been for their nearly 200 years of existence.

Like their predecessors, the Free Will Baptists of the early 20th Century were characterized by a rural orientation, lack of interest in education and missions (few ministers were educated and the entire denominational mission enterprise had been lost in the merger of 1911), small congregations, loosely organized local conferences, and a traditional ministry to the lower classes.

It was clearly evident that growing up was far more difficult than growing

older. But as difficult as it was, maturity was to come and with it the elements that make up adulthood—both the good and the not-so-good.

From Sect to Church

It has been suggested that most churches in America began as a sect and then evolved rather quickly into a formal church. "Sect" here is not to be considered a derogatory term.

Rather, it points to the childhood of a Christian group characterized by informality, extemporaneous preaching, limited organization, an uneducated clergy, requirement for a conversion experience, and a voluntary membership.

Ruth Bordin in an article entitled, "The Sect to Denomination Process in America: The Freewill Baptist Experience," in 1965, suggested that the



HISTORY CORNER (From page 23)

evolution came quite early for Freewill Baptists in New England.

By the middle of the 19th Century, they had established seminaries, sent missionaries overseas, and developed carefully organized yearly meetings. The same changes would come in other areas, but it would come slowly and, indeed, in some sense seems to have been feared and postponed.

Some elements of maturity can be harmful. We have watched with sadness as many denominations moved away from the requirement of an evident conversion experience for church membership to an easy believism that

demands little more than signing an agreement to support the church.

The shift from extemporaneous preaching to a more formal presentation also bears the danger of formalism and manipulation of the Spirit. But this does not have to be.

Maturity can be an asset to the church and to the Kingdom. In fact, it has been good for Free Will Baptists. Education for the clergy, expository messages, and the National Association have been positive gains found in the maturing process.

From the Country to the City

As late as the 1940's, the denomination continued to cling to its rural character. The average congregation seldom had more than 100 members and was found in farmlands outside more populated areas or in small towns that catered to the farmers that gave them support.

Few large Free Will Baptist churches were to be found. Many doubted that the denomination could successfully minister to the needs of the city.

The first steps toward maturity came on the mission field, especially in South America where Free Will Baptists began to establish churches in the larger cities and then spread their influence to the outlying areas.

By 1965, American cities began to feel the impact of the denomination's witness. Large city churches began to appear in Tidewater, Virginia, and in Michigan.

While most churches still would be limited to congregations of less than 300, the denomination no longer feared the city.

From the City to the Suburb

Just as the denomination grudgingly gave up its rural character, it also held tenaciously to its social status. Like other smaller groups, its ministry tended to be limited to the working man of low or average income and again, the hesitancy coming from fear rather than from a lack of desire to minister to a broader segment of the community.

When Horton Heights Church moved from the old headquarters build-

ing to a rather affluent neighborhood in Nashville, a number of good people suggested that it could not work—Free Will Baptists had never ministered in such an environment. But it did work—in Nashville and elsewhere.

The Gospel is for all men and if preached faithfully will meet the needs of the doctor as well as the farmer. The denomination had to learn that it did not serve a "little" God.

From the Pastor's Study to the Classroom

When this writer was growing up, his local conference required two years of training for ordination and few of his spiritual advisors had formal Bible training at all.

The Bible College in Nashville was considered to be a nice place for a few years of study, but most preachers considered four years of intensive training a waste of time. Well, times have changed.

Our young people are encouraged to prepare themselves for ministry, new colleges have been founded, preachers faithfully and skillfully expound the Word, and God's people are growing up.

From the Conference to the National

National organization also comes slowly. The denomination continued to limit itself to the district conference level even though the Northern group had modeled a Yearly Meeting pattern years earlier.

But in 1935, this "sect" characteristic also fell to the march of progress. On Tuesday evening, November 5, 1935, in Cofer's Chapel Church, Nashville, Tennessee, the National Association met in its first session.

A denomination was born, duly organized and drew together conferences from North Carolina, Alabama, Georgia, Mississippi, Oklahoma, Missouri, Nebraska, Kentucky, Tennessee, Texas, and Arkansas into one national body.

Growth followed quickly and statistics presented in the Fourth Associational meeting in 1940 listed 1,047 churches, 132,270 members, and 1,066 ordained ministers.

While statistics are always sketchy

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and difficult to obtain, the 1980 Minutes of the National Association give some evidence of the Lord's blessings. These statistics indicate 190 local associations, 2,452 churches, 227,888 members, and 4,215 ordained ministers.

An interesting and exciting statistic in the yet unpublished 1981 minutes reveals that baptisms (indicating first time decisions for Christ) increased by 1,347 over the 1980 total.

From Nashville to Kotagiri and Beyond

By 1834, the Freewill Baptists in New England had organized both a Foreign and a Home Mission Board and by 1835, two couples had arrived in Orissa, India, to aid General Baptist missionaries already at work.

Mission efforts grew dramatically over the years, but the entire enterprise was lost to the Northern Baptists.

It took the remaining denomination exactly 100 years to recover. But in 1935, Miss Laura Belle Barnard returned to that first field of effort with headquarters in Kotagiri, India.

In 1939, Miss Bessie Yeley was recommended for work in Venezuela and Mr. and Mrs. Tom Willey moved from Panama to Nicaragua under denominational sanction.

From that small beginning, the denomination began to exercise its commitment to reach the world for Christ. Every year has shown some degree of growth and in 1981, Free Will Baptists support 100 missionaries on eight foreign fields.

Conclusion

Maturity has come slowly, and quite often the old ways have been difficult to give up. But it is evident that the growing process was necessary and that God has blessed our progress.

Maybe we have succeeded in accepting the good in growing up without being tainted by the bad. We have gained in growth, in education, in missions, in organization, but we still preach the same gospel.

Maturity without compromise is a blessing that demands our praise and our thanksgiving. ▲

The Unseen Guest



By Mala Susann Moody

It was the summer of 1980. I was confined to a hospital bed in Jacksonville, North Carolina.

My husband, Dennis, had completed one semester at Free Will Baptist Bible College and then interned during the summer at a church in North Carolina. (A summer intern is a student preacher who assists a pastor and his church.) Sixty days earlier, we had joyfully discovered that I was pregnant.

"Are you sure the Lord wants us in North Carolina, Dennis?" I asked. "Since we've been in Tennessee, I feel out of touch with God. Sometimes I wonder if He even hears when I pray."

"I know what you mean," he replied. "Maybe in North Carolina, we'll find His presence again."

But a month in North Carolina brought God no closer than He had been in Tennessee. The fact that the church was unable to pay us and Dennis couldn't find a job probably pushed God away in our minds. We were literally living by faith.

Then I developed complications carrying the baby and was admitted to the hospital.

From my hospital bed, I watched the clear liquid rhythmically dripping from the intravenous bag to the needle in my arm. I thought of our three-year-old daughter and her excitement about the new baby.

I rehearsed the plans that Dennis and I had for our second child. It was only a few short weeks ago . . .



UNSEEN GUEST (From page 25)

"I'm so glad you're pregnant, Susann," Dennis murmured, as he put his arms around me.

"Me too. I don't want Charity to grow up without a brother or sister. I think this baby will be a boy. How do you like the name 'David Andrew'?" I smiled.

"It's all right, but 'Dennis Jr.' sounds better," he teased. "December fifth is a long time to wait for a son."

On the other hand, Charity took a little more convincing about this new baby. She seemed puzzled and hesitant at first.

"Yes, honey, we'll have a new baby at Christmas time! Do you want a brother or a sister?" I asked her.

"No," she whined. "I love you, Mommy," as if the baby would shadow my love for her.

"But, Charity, you can be my helper. You can feed the baby and help me dress it. Won't that be fun?"

That did it for Charity. She rushed to tell Dennis about her plans for holding and feeding the baby.

My mind focused again on the intravenous needle and the hospital bed. Dennis had spent the night slumped in a chair next to my bed. Before long, a doctor making his rounds stopped to examine my chart.

"You're bleeding too much," Dr. Barnes frowned. "I've already gotten a second opinion from Dr. Williams. We agree that the symptoms are clear. The fetus is undoubtedly, uh . . . well, it's unable to cope with life."

"How can we know that for sure?" Dennis quizzed.

I was relieved he could talk with the doctor, because my throat had a baseball-size lump in it. I blinked back the tears. My darkest fears had become reality.

The doctor said that he would wait one more day to see what would happen. After he left, Dennis and I sat in silence, our hands clasped together.

"Stop it!" I screamed silently at my oncoming tears. "I don't want Dennis worrying about me."

"No matter what happens, Susann," Dennis consoled, "it's the Lord's will. He knows what's best."

That's when the dam broke. I could hold my tears no longer. Nor could I reply.

A few hours later, Dennis went home to get some rest. I was alone in my room, or so I thought. I later realized that the "Unseen Guest" had been there all the time. Suddenly, I felt stubborn and angry.

"Where are You, God?" I demanded. "Why are You allowing this to happen? We traveled 600 miles to help one of Your churches. Why are You doing this?"

Anger washed over me, receding as I crumbled beneath the load. "I need you, Lord. Let me feel your presence once again—it has been so long."

Finally, as my emotions brushed the bottom of my pit of depression, my inner feelings leaped out to Him. "Lord, I don't want to miscarry. Will Dennis and I ever have any more children? Am I so bad a mother to Charity that you won't trust me with another child?"

"I'm afraid, God. Afraid that I'll never hold another baby of my own—I'll never hear its soft, rapid breathing when I hold it close. Afraid I'll never again feel the mysterious movements of life within my abdomen."

"Even though I did complain about it with Charity, I really don't mind changing dirty diapers or potty training."

"What about this hospital bill? Dennis hasn't found a job, and we've only got \$10 to our name. What are we going to do? I'm so afraid. Help me to trust You, Lord."

My thoughts were jumbled, my heart broken. I half-heartedly picked up my Bible on the table next to me. It popped open at I John 4:18.

There is no fear in love; but perfect love casteth out fear: because fear hath torment. He that feareth is not made perfect in love.

My Unseen Guest saw to it that my Bible opened to that verse, because I don't recall ever reading it before. I read the verse again and again.

"Fill me with Your love, Jesus. Make me fearless in life's trials. I know fear has torment. I know that I can't love, but You can love through me. I dedicate this baby's life to you. Whatever happens, I'll accept it."

I continued weeping, eventually crying myself to sleep. But I had soul peace. I had been in the unmistakable presence of God.

The following night, I began having cramps that felt like labor pains. I

phoned Dennis. He came immediately. On June 22, our son was stillborn. One day we will see our little David in Heaven.

Looking back, I now know first hand "that all things work together for good . . ." Dennis and I both will be able to comfort others who experience similar situations. The ordeal brought us closer to God and strengthened our faith.

Not long after we lost David, we discovered that finances were available for me to attend Bible College with Dennis through VA benefits.

Before my heart-to-heart talk with the Unseen Guest, I fretted over the hospital bill. He took my fear and worries away, and provided the money for the bill. God is not the author of fear.

The experience of losing our baby still hurts deeply at times. But I can now praise the Lord for what happened. I know that He is in control of every problem, even though we may not realize it at the time.

Soon now, if it is in the will of God, Dennis and I would like to have another child.

We never got to know David—we never even saw him, but we found again our Unseen Guest. ▲

ABOUT THE WRITER: Mrs. Mala Susann Moody, 25, is a member of Horton Heights Free Will Baptist Church, Nashville, Tennessee, where she and husband Dennis are co-youth directors.

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Victor Emmett found a hypocrite at Norton Christian Academy. Her name was Lisa. She was a teacher.

To Sing With Joy!

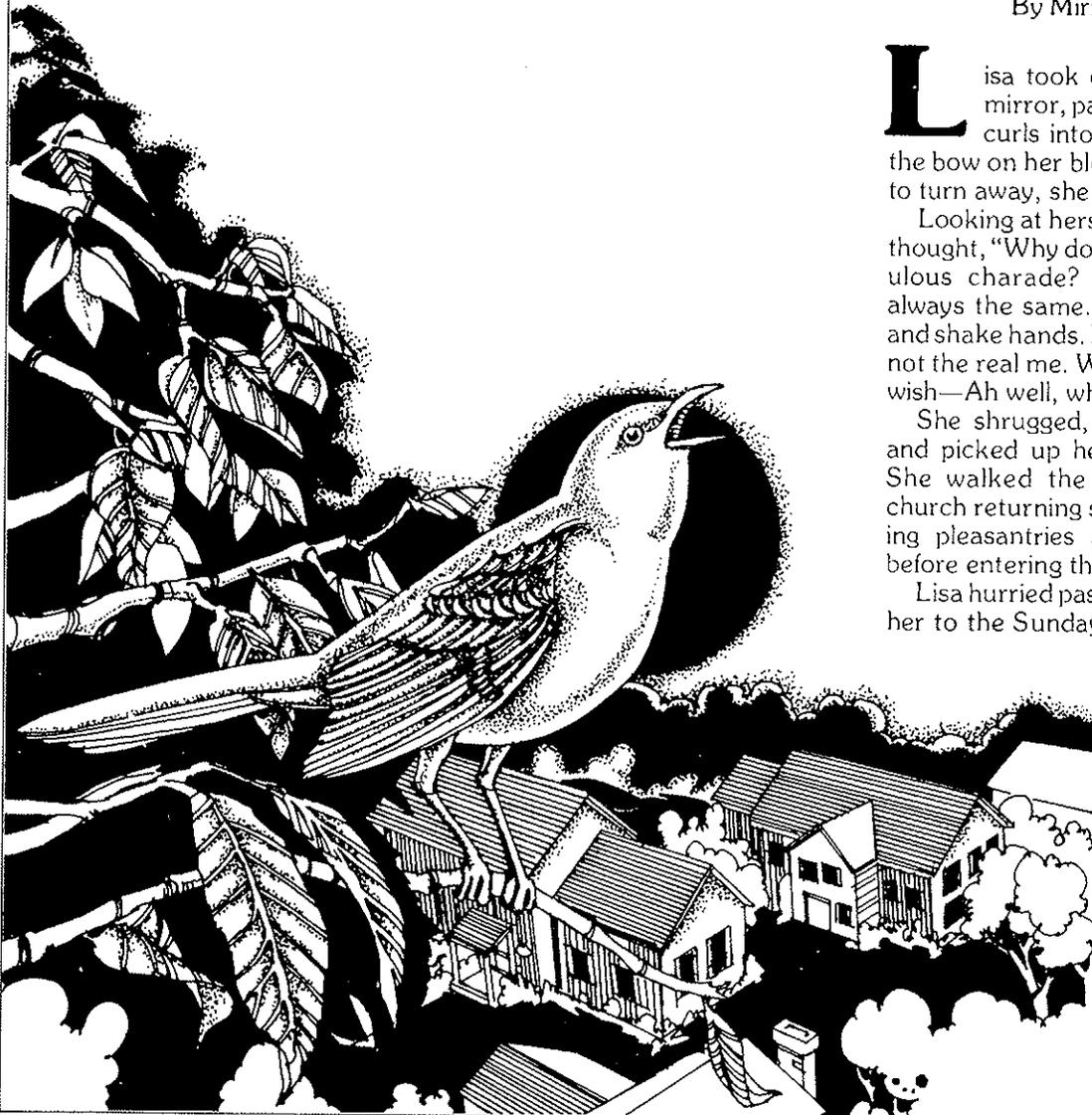
By Mirial Gainer

Lisa took one last look in the mirror, patted her short black curls into place and adjusted the bow on her blouse. Then, starting to turn away, she stopped.

Looking at herself more closely she thought, "Why do I continue this ridiculous charade? Every Sunday it's always the same. I go, I sing, I smile and shake hands. But inside I know it's not the real me. What I want—What I wish—Ah well, what's the use!"

She shrugged, adjusted her smile and picked up her Bible and purse. She walked the short distance to church returning smiles and exchanging pleasantries about the weather before entering the cool sanctuary.

Lisa hurried past those who greeted her to the Sunday School classroom



TO SING (from page 27)

where the young singles' class met. She was surprised to find several people she didn't know.

"Ah, Lisa, come join the intros!" quipped her friend Martha, a petite blonde, who, like herself, taught in the upper grades of Norton Christian Academy, an outreach of their church. Still smiling, Lisa joined her.

"Lisa Pittman, Victor Emmett. He went to school with our Assistant Pastor."

"So nice to meet you. Will you be here long?" Before he could answer, Martha hurriedly introduced her to the other visitors. Then class started.

"As some of you have noticed," Dan Dray, Assistant Pastor and class leader, began, "we have a number of visitors in class today. We're happy to have each of you. We hope you will join us often."

"Among our visitors is one of my old school buddies. Not only will he be with us today, but he'll be here the rest of the month. And as a treat for all, including myself—or should I say especially myself—he'll be speaking to us each Sunday. I'm sure he will have much of interest to share with us. Vic, I turn it all over to you."

Vic Emmett stood before them for a moment. He was ruggedly handsome but seemed friendly and humble. He had been speaking several minutes when the force of his convictions and warmth of his concern for others began to touch the class. Lisa listened closely.

"The point is, often we're so overwhelmed by the expectations of others that we despair of being ourselves—or of trying even to find out who God created us to be. We know we aren't really able to live up to all that others require of us, and yet we are unhappy with how we view ourselves as well."

"That leads us to a deadly adversary of Christianity—hypocrisy. We put on a mask; we assume a role. In essence, we appear to be what others expect us to be. But underneath we know it's all a lie. Frustration is but the beginning. Here, let me illustrate what I mean."

He turned to the chalk board and drew two wheels, labeling one DO and the other BE. As he talked, he filled in the spokes of each.

Lisa made a copy for her notes, nervously wondering how this man could know about her life so well. For

he had described it perfectly!

She concentrated on copying the wheels on her paper. As spokes for the DO wheel, she wrote: Pressure, Guilt, Frustration, Tension, More Guilt, Pretense. For BE she noted: Freedom, Joy, Relaxation, Peace, More Freedom, Renewal, Authenticity.

to God? For the next few weeks, let's frankly look at both gifts. Perhaps you will come to view both in a different light. Our basis for study will be Matthew 5:1-12. Please study it before next week. And now, let's close in prayer."

In another minute the surge of

***We put on a mask;
we assume a role. We
appear to be what
others expect us to be.***

Each wheel was a continuum, an endless cycle. The more she listened, the more intrigued she became, and she began to feel a flicker of—hope.

"How can one change from the DO and its hypocrisy to the BE and its honesty?" he continued. "Easier said than done? Well, it isn't easy to break a habit, is it? And in this case the habit is failure."

Again, he wrote on the board. This time it was an acrostic that formed the word FAILURE: Frustration, Aggression, Insecurity, Loneliness, Uncertainty, Resentment, Emptiness.

"Each of these is progressively worse. But the end result is still failure—failure where victory should be."

"As with any habit, the basic strategy for breaking it is willingness. Perhaps you've said to yourself many times: 'I'm willing' but without any real result. In our study together, I'd like to share with you a definite plan to help you break that cycle."

"Before we do that, though, let's consider this in Psalm 139:14a: 'I will praise Thee; for I am fearfully and wonderfully made.' And in John 10:10b Christ says: 'I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly.'

"It has been said that what you are is God's gift to you and what you become is your gift to God. Do you like His gift to you? Can you accept it and rejoice in it? What about your gift

friendly voices filled the room and hallway. Lisa regained her mask of composure during prayer, and with Martha, left the classroom for the choir.

She always enjoyed music. What she lacked in warmth or conviction she compensated for by her skill and perfection of delivery. As the main choir soloist, she had ample opportunity to demonstrate her ability. She thought about her singing now as she donned her robe.

"What happened to the joy I once felt? Just another expectation of others mechanically fulfilled? What would Mr. Emmett say about that, I wonder," she mused. Her reverie was cut short by the signal for the choir, marking the beginning of the worship service.

During the days that followed, Lisa found herself thinking more about the Sunday School lesson. Sometimes she felt reluctance toward attending the following Sundays. Other times she experienced flashes of hope that her life could actually change as Mr. Emmett had said.

Certainly she was a Christian. But she felt defeated, not victorious, in her Christian life. At times she considered talking to her pastor about it, but each time she finally decided not to.

Everyone seemed to think she was a strong Christian—expected her to be. As a teacher she was supposed to help others with problems, not be plagued with problems herself. So she

had struggled on alone.

And what Mr. Emmett said would happen *had* happened. Her life was filled with pretense and the guilt kept building up.

As Sunday approached Lisa felt tension mounting. All the excuses she could think of for not attending she finally rejected. Too flimsy. Sunday morning found her in class as usual. Greetings over, Vic Emmett once again took the floor.

"I spoke last week about change and willingness being the key. Let's be more specific. What *exactly* do you want to change? What attitude is out of line with Christ's leading? Yes, attitude. For our attitudes are really the problems in our lives, since they govern our actions.

"Think over your attitudes. Choose one you would like to work on this month, and let's put into practice what we learn as we go along."

Then, as he quoted Matthew 5:1-9, he wrote an equation for change on the board.

v. 3 Aware	+ v. 6	Desire
v. 4 Admit	= v. 6/7	Help/Helper
v. 5 Relax	+ v. 8	Honest Motives
	= v. 9	Peacemakers (Children of God)

He explained his equation. Lisa was struck by the absolute simplicity of it. Why hadn't she seen that before? Certainly, she had been aware of many things in her life that needed change, and even admitted some of them to herself. But then she struggled to change those things through her own strength. There was one source of failure.

Instead, she should have trusted in God's strength and relaxed in the knowledge that He would do all He promised. That was it! His strength, not her own. Trust, not fear. Then desire.

What had Mr. Emmett said? Oh, yes, desire was a matter of will. God has strength and help for us, but we must make the move toward Him.

As a teacher, Lisa certainly knew the next part of the equation was true. To learn the most, teach others. To grow and change the fastest, help others. Make positive contributions to the community.

But to really help, one's motives must be pure and honest. In that way

God can show through. The more she thought, the more excited she became. Could it be possible that God would really work in her life in this way? Could pretense and that whole cycle be stopped and changed?

Then she considered the last point. Could she become a real peacemaker? What had he said? First practice reconciliation ourselves. Then minister to others to help them become reconciled. Help break down walls and build bridges. And finally, the word of reconciliation, LOVE, would be manifested by behavior and speech.

At home later, she reviewed her notes from the last two Sunday School classes. Then she studied Philippians in preparation for the next Sunday.

"How does that all fit together?" she wondered. Through the week she tried to put into practice what she had learned. And this time, she never once thought of *not* attending the class. It seemed so important now to find out as much as possible.

The next Sunday afternoon, as she re-read her hurriedly written notes, she was again amazed at how clear and logical it all seemed, and made note cards of key points as reminders.

The six cards read: Philippians 1:6—Be confident that God is able to do something. Philippians 1:21—Be directed by God. Philippians 2:5—Be like Jesus; have His attitude. Philippians 3:7—Build HIM up. Philippians 3:13-14—Experience daily newness. And relax: Philippians 4:4—Rejoice, 11—Be content, 13—Be strong, 19—Be supplied.

Lisa arranged the cards in the kitchen where she could see them several times a day.

That evening Martha came over for dinner. As they ate, they discussed Mr. Emmett's startling ideas.

"I've read that passage in Matthew many times," Martha said, "but it never seemed to apply to me before."

"I know what you mean. What do you think about this whole concept of attitude change?"

"Well, I've already begun to try it in my own life—"

"Me, too!" Lisa broke in. "Have you imagined what could happen if we tried it at school, too?"

"Sure have. Maybe Mr. Emmett will have more ideas next week to help in that area. Christian schools are great, but they're not without problems."

"Isn't that the truth! You know, I really want to change many things in myself, and I'd like to help my students, too. Some of them seem so negative and really—depressed or something. I think Mr. Emmett has the right idea."

Martha thought for a moment. "You know, I really feel different now. My own self-acceptance has come a long way. I used to envy your musical ability and felt really small and insignificant comparing myself with you and others."

"I never knew you felt that way!" Lisa exclaimed in amazement. "Funny, I've often compared myself with others, too. It sure was a lift to realize that God made us individuals, and because of it there's no reason to compare."

"No reason to compare ourselves to each other. That's so true. After class, I took a good, long look at myself: what I liked; what I disliked. My strengths, weaknesses. And I was surprised at what I found. I had never thought of myself as creative, I guess. But I realized there are many ways I really am creative."

"What do you mean?" Lisa was excited by her friend's confession. It was so similar to what she had been thinking the past few weeks.

"Well, you know I like to cook." At Lisa's nod she continued. "I'm always trying new things in old recipes, and I experiment with recipes of my own. That's being creative. I design and make rugs and wall hangings. Even my teaching is an outlet for creativity."

"And—well, I could go on, but you see what I mean, don't you? God gave me my own gifts and abilities. He made me—ME. So I don't have to worry about what others can do or what I *can't* do."

"Actually, what I've learned is to compare myself with God's standards—not the standards of others. That sounds so obvious, I know, but I'd never really taken it to heart before."

Lisa sighed. "Oh Martha, it's helped me so much to hear you say that. I've been doing the same thing. I've been so frustrated because I was always comparing myself to others or tried to measure up to what others thought I should be. I never seemed to be content with what I *could* do."

"Really?"

"Yes, and I was so ashamed and guilty about it. I never knew any of you



TO SING (from page 29)

had the same problem. Mr. Emmett has certainly been speaking to me in that class."

Martha smiled and nodded. "Well, I'm really thankful God sent him at this time. I'm looking forward to the next lesson."

On that note, the two turned to other topics. Lisa felt a closer friendship to Martha than ever before. When she was alone again, Lisa took pen and paper and made her own evaluation. The list of good things about herself was surprising. She also made a list of attitudes she thought should be changed.

"Well, I'll sure have enough to keep me busy, if I work on all these," she said wryly. From the list she settled on several that needed immediate attention. She began to use the equation to work on them.

Lisa and Martha continued their times of sharing, finding encouragement in them. It seemed somehow easier to fight Satan together. Talking about things helped clarify them in their minds, too.

Walking down the hall after school one day, Martha frowned, "What did you do about those attitude activity statements?"

"Those what?"

"You know, Mr. Emmett gave us that list of statements to help direct our attitudes. I think there were 30 of them. He said he chose one a week for special emphasis in his own life. One was 'Be honest with yourself—Be realistic.'"

"Oh, I remember. I wrote each statement on a card. I even made another set of cards for school. I keep them in class and each student chooses one for the week to give special thought to. Got a minute? I'll show you."

Together they went back to Lisa's classroom. She spread the colorful squares of poster board on a table.

"Here's one that's made a big change in students' attitudes so far." It read: Believe in yourself.

Martha smiled. "Yes, I can imagine. These cards really look sharp. Did you do them yourself?"

"Not completely. Some of the students illustrated and decorated them. Here are some John Morgan did."

Martha held the five cards in her hands. "Don't just exist—LIVE. Don't

just look—SEE. Don't just hear—LISTEN. Don't just think—PONDER. Don't just talk—ACT. Finally, she said, "He really has caught the feeling of it, hasn't he?"

Together they read through the other cards: Be kind—Kindness costs nothing. Live one day at a time. Keep the faith—People may betray you, but don't quit trusting. Look up to someone—Admire a true winner in life. Never give up. *Always* rejoice.

Handle criticism and you can handle success. Get involved. Get excited about what you're learning today. Take a risk—Philippians 4:13. Keep on learning—Never feel that you've arrived. Do something for someone else. Learn to be patient—Philippians 4:19. Don't be afraid of affection.

Set high standards for yourself, but be realistic. See yourself as successful. Set goals for yourself. Remember: Practice makes perfect. Always do a little more than expected. Be grateful. Forget: "I can't." Trust God. Try your hardest.

Lisa laughed at the last one. "Do you remember what Mr. Emmett said about that one? 'If you don't have time to do it right, when will you have time to do it over?'"

Giggling, Martha retorted, "I thought, 'Isn't that the truth!'"

"My students like it, too. They say it's one way to cut down on homework time."

They straightened the set of cards, laughing, and returned them to the decorated container. As they walked down the hall once more, Lisa suddenly realized that one attitude had already changed.

Her attitude of defeat had been replaced by one of joyful hope. Not all the battles had been fought, nor all of them won. But the courage and determination to go forth in the power of the Lord was there. Happiness at this realization bubbled up from her heart, finding expression in song.

Martha joined in. And as they sang, another change took place in Lisa. For suddenly, all the warmth that was lacking in her music earlier was there. ▲

ABOUT THE WRITER: Mirial Gainer is a Free Will Baptist Missionary to Japan. She is a member of Free Will Baptist Bible Church in Florence, South Carolina. Miss Gainer attended FWBBC, earned her B.A. degree from Winthrop College, Rock Hill, South Carolina in 1969, and received her Master's degree from the University of South Carolina in Columbia.



THE SECRETARY SPEAKS

By Melvin Worthington

The Apostle Paul begins most of his epistles with thanksgiving. Thanksgiving was one of the characteristics of his life. Thanksgiving results in thanksgiving.

Christians ought to be characterized by generosity, gentleness, graciousness, goodness, gratitude and gladness rather than malice, murmuring and moodiness.

Thanksgiving is mandated by the scriptures. Christians are exhorted to "Enter into his gates with thanksgiving, and into his courts with praise: be thankful unto him, and bless his name" (Psalm 100:4). The Psalms emphatically set forth the obligation to exhibit the spirit of thanksgiving.

Free Will Baptists need to give heed to the scriptural mandate to be thankful. We need to be thankful for our past achievements, present accomplishments and projected advancement. Gratitude rather than grumbling enables and ennobles the work of the Lord.

Tried, Tested and Thankful



THE NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF
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Thanksgiving is manifested by the saints. Daniel gave thanks to his God (Daniel 6:10). A careful reading of the context reveals that while others were bowing down and presenting their petitions to the earthly ruler acclaimed a god, Daniel knelt before his God, the true God and gave thanks.

Paul spontaneously expressed thanksgiving in Romans 1:8, I Corinthians 1:4, Ephesians 1:16, Philippians 1:3, Colossians 1:3-5, and I Thessalonians.

Christians ought to be thankful for the *brethren*. Free Will Baptists need to be thankful for the entire Free Will Baptist family.

There are no unimportant, unneeded or unwanted Free Will Baptists. Our appreciation must extend to the entire Free Will Baptist family.

Christians ought to be thankful in their *buffetings*. God's grace is sufficient to see us through times of testing, trials and temptations. Regardless of our circumstances and conflicts, we may rest assured that God is using our buffeting to conform us to the image of Christ.

Christians ought to be thankful for the *beloved*. Paul expresses it this way, "thanks be unto God for His unspeakable gift" (II Corinthians 9:15). Thanksgiving should spring from our hearts when we think of what God has provided for us through the gift of His beloved Son.

Christians ought to be thankful for the *blessings* which God has bestowed. Ephesians 1:3 indicates that Christians have been blessed with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ Jesus. How thankful we should be in light of God's bounty which He so abundantly bestows upon us.

Thanksgiving is seldom spontaneous unless time is given to reviewing and rehearsing one's Christian experience. Silent mouths may be the result of a short memory.

When God's people remember what He has done for them, recognize what He is doing for them and reflect on what He will do for them, they will resound in song for the goodness and grace of God.

Christians should be thankful for the *burdens* which they are called upon to bear as they remember that God's grace is sufficient to enable them to bear them. Throughout the course of time, Christians have been sorely tested and tried by inescapable burdens, but God enables them to bear them with victory.

Thanksgiving is meaningful to society. When Christians manifest the spirit of thanksgiving, they are distinctively different from those around them.

Thanksgiving indicates a *personal relationship* with the Sovereign. It affords the Christian an opportunity to witness the source of his/her praise, purity and peace.

Thanksgiving indicates a *personal reliance* on the Sovereign. In spite of the chaos, confusion and corruption of society, the thankful Christian is able to express his confidence in the Sovereign hand of his God who rules and reigns in the affairs of men.

Thanksgiving indicates a *personal reverence* for the Sovereign. Sunday services are occasions of praise and thanksgiving. On the Lord's day we meet together to commemorate the triumphant work of our Savior. We are conscious of the great facts of redemption. When we lose sight of what God has done for mankind our services become dull and dead.

Let's try thanksgiving. Not just one day, a year or one day a week, but continually. Every day ought to be a day of thanksgiving for the Christian as he remembers what God has done for him.

Thanksgiving is more than a formula. It is the spontaneous outburst of praise to God for what He has done for us, to us, in us and through us. ▲

The Secretary's Schedule

- Nov. 5-7** Alabama State Association, First FWB Church, Dothan
- Nov. 9-11** Tennessee State Association, First FWB Church, Oak Ridge
- Nov. 12-14** Georgia State Association, Corinth FWB Church, Iron City
- Nov. 15** First FWB Church, Poteau, OK
- Nov. 16-18** Preaching Conference, First FWB Church, Fort Smith, AR
- Nov. 19-22** Cavanaugh FWB Church, Fort Smith, AR

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The National Association has designated November as National Home Missions Month. Free Will Baptists are encouraged to give gifts and offerings to support the 52 missionary families serving under the auspices of the National Home Missions Board.

The September/October, 1981, issue of Mission Grams carries pictures of all National Home Missionaries.