

MARCH, 1982

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The Minister



H. Armstrong Roberts

And His Taxes

By Clarence Lewis

2/CONTACT/March '82

Do ministers pay taxes? Not according to a member of the Tennessee State Legislature. It wasn't hard for him to understand why ministers prefer to raise taxes for added state revenue instead of favoring legislation to legalize paramutual gambling, a certain percentage of which would go for state funds, since in his opinion ministers do not pay taxes anyway.

What taxes does a minister pay? Federal Income Tax? Social Security Tax? State Sales Tax? Local Sales Tax? State Income Tax? Gasoline Tax? Unemployment Tax? Property Tax?

A minister pays the same local or state sales tax as any other individual. He pumps his gasoline out of the same self-service gas pumps as everybody else, therefore paying the same gasoline tax. The minister who owns his home pays the same property tax rate as his neighbor.

We all, ministers as well, use Forms 1040 or 1040A to figure our Federal Income Tax. The minister uses the

same tax tables to find his Federal Income Tax as does the mechanic. The minister pays more Social Security Tax (9.35 percent) than those of us who are not self-employed. We pay only 6.7 percent.

We all want to pay as little taxes as possible, especially Federal Income Tax. That is why each year when time comes to file our Federal Income Tax forms, we search for deductions to further reduce the amount of tax we owe. We are interested in taking every advantage we can to save on our taxes.

How often have we neglected to list a tax deduction that we knew we were

entitled to take? Why then would we not allow the minister to take every tax advantage the law allows him to take.

Tax laws give the minister certain tax advantages that other individuals do not have. The minister has a special relationship with IRS concerning Federal Unemployment Tax (FUT), Federal Income Tax (FIT), and Social Security Tax or Federal Insurance Contributions Act (FICA).

The minister by law is not required to pay FUT. This at first seems to be an advantage to the minister, but it should also be pointed out that the minister cannot draw Federal Unemployment Compensation.

The minister has a dual status relationship with IRS concerning FIT and FICA tax. For tax years before 1980, the IRS ignored this dual status relationship. At that time the IRS considered the minister self-employed for both Federal Income Tax reporting and Social Security Tax reporting.

For tax years ending on or after January 1, 1980, the IRS considers the minister self-employed for FICA tax purposes and as an employee (not self-employed) for FIT purposes.

There have been no changes in the tax laws, only a change in the reporting of the minister's income and expenses. These changes may or may not affect the amount of taxes the minister owes each year.

Before 1980 IRS allowed ministers to use Schedule C to report income and expenses, thus actually ignoring the dual status relationship. This dual status relationship has always been a part of the law, only now the IRS wants the minister's tax return to reflect that law.

Because the IRS now considers the churches employers and the minister or other salaried personnel (youth director, secretary, bus director, choir director, etc.) as employees, churches should now file quarterly report forms (Form 941) and W-2 forms with the IRS. Beginning in 1982 there are penalties for not filing these returns with the IRS.

If your church does not file these returns (Form 941 and W-2s), an official, preferably the church treasurer, should contact the local or regional IRS office for further details. The only information on these returns is total salary paid and total taxes withheld

and paid to IRS.

This is the same information IRS receives each year when we all file our Federal Income Tax returns, only now IRS requires each non-profit organization to file the reports as any profit organization does. For those churches and non-profit organizations that now file these reports, no change is necessary.

Because of these changes the minister should discontinue use of Schedule C for reporting the salary he receives from his local church and his expenses related to this salary. The minister should receive from his church a W-2 showing the amount of salary paid.

This amount should be entered on his tax return where all W-2s are entered (not on Schedule C). All travel and automobile expenses should be entered on Form 2106, Employee Business Expense. All other expenses related to his salary from his local church (books, periodicals, entertainment, office, etc.) should be itemized on Schedule A, Itemized Deductions.

The minister who does not itemize his deductions will lose these expenses. The minister who is able to itemize his deductions will not pay any more tax than before this change took place.

Those who did not receive a W-2 for 1981 should enter income from their local church in the same place as if they had received a W-2, and should attach a note to the return explaining the amounts listed. Expenses should be listed as mentioned above, Form 2106 and Schedule A.

A minister will also receive other income such as fees for performing weddings, funerals, speaking engagements, revivals, etc. These types of income are not classed as salary but are types of income related to the minister's profession.

This professional income should be entered on Schedule C along with all expenses, except travel and automobile, that are directly related to this type of income. All travel and automobile expenses are to be entered on Form 2106.

One particular advantage a minister has with IRS is a parsonage, housing or rental allowance. An ordained minister does not pay FIT on such an

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TAXES (From page 3)

allowance. However, he does pay Social Security taxes on this allowance. Publication 517 from the Department of the Treasury, IRS says,

If you receive a rental allowance as part of your pay, you may exclude it from your gross income to the extent that:

- (1) You use the rental allowance to rent or provide a home, and
- (2) The rental allowance is not more than reasonable compensation for the services you performed.

If you are an ordained minister of the gospel who owns your own home and you receive as part of your pay a rental allowance, you may exclude from gross income the lowest of the following amount:

- (1) The amount actually used to provide a home
- (2) The amount actually designated as a rental allowance, or
- (3) The fair rental value of the home, including furnishings, utilities, garage, etc.

Any rental allowance that is more than reasonable compensation or the fair rental value of the home plus utilities must be included in gross income.

This is a substantial tax savings to the minister. A housing, rental, or parsonage allowance is the only allowance that gives the minister a tax advantage. All other allowances such as gasoline, car, clothing, social security, etc., are to be included in gross income.

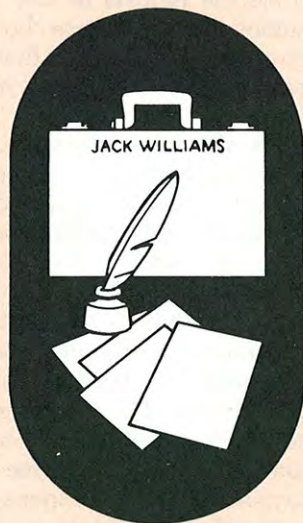
Even though changes have been made for the minister and the reporting of his income and expenses, the minister is still considered self-employed for FICA tax purposes. His FICA taxes are figured the same as always on Schedule SE.

Ministers' tax returns have become more complicated in the past few years. Several advantages have been given to ministers and some taken from him.

Yes, your minister pays taxes just like you do. We all should be willing to provide the minister with the pay package that will give him less taxes to pay. After all, don't we take advantage of tax breaks available to us?

(Continued on page 30)

Briefcase



The Stupid Samaritan

They stepped into my office unannounced and without an appointment. It was 10:30 Friday morning, just five days after I'd preached my splashy sermon about brotherly responsibility.

I soon discovered that it was easier to preach brotherly responsibility than practice it. At times it gets frightening and it always seems to cost more than you first thought.

Let's call him Bret and her Ellen. He bristled with a day-old barbed wire beard. He looked strong as an ox. She seemed a half step slow mentally with a child-like confidence in him.

Bret and Ellen had both lost their jobs and hadn't eaten in two days. They spent the last two nights sleeping in their car and looked it. They needed food and a place to stay until Monday, when their last checks would supposedly arrive from Memphis. They planned to cash the checks and head south for a little town outside Atlanta on the promise of a job.

He was 39, she 26. This was his third marriage since mustering out of the army eight years ago where he drove trucks.

So I'm a soft touch. I handed them a \$20 bill. That was the first unattached \$20 bill I'd had in weeks; it was hard to turn it loose. They left to eat and came back in an hour.

I took Bret and Ellen to my house and left them there to sleep. I wrote a note for the children about "weekend guests" so that when they got home from school, they'd know why two strangers were sleeping in Daddy's bed.

My wife's reaction? She said, "You're always bringing home strays, but it only took five minutes for me to know that they were not Free Will Baptists and only met you today."

As it turned out, there was more to it than a place to sleep and a hot meal. Bret's teeth needed a dentist; his back was bad: he didn't like to read news-

papers—some house guest. While they stopped on the freeway, somebody stole all their clothes except for one suitcase. He had two shirts and wore sneakers. She wore jeans.

Their car needed a front end stabilizer. Somebody had stolen his CB radio. They kept a cat (kind of pretty, if you like cats) in the car along with a big bag of cat food.

At 6:00 p.m. Friday evening, my family and I drove to church for a missionary conference. Bret and Ellen stayed home to rest. They needed it. We moved them from our bedroom to our daughter's bedroom, who moved her brother out of his room, who got the couch—again.

But it was a restless night for me. What about the man in the next room? Why was I suspicious of a hungry man? Why did I feel taken? Why did I feel not like a good samaritan, but a stupid samaritan?

Saturday morning Bret left to get a thermostat for his car. I knew it was too good to be true. He came back in five minutes, walking. Out of gas. I handed him a gallon can of gasoline from the utility shed. We washed their clothes. Ellen wore some of my wife's clothes. Unfortunately, he was too big to wear mine.

I became painfully aware that Bret and Ellen had needs that I could not meet financially and socially. And yet they both seemed to be waiting for me to do so. Does everybody feel that way when trying to help somebody in need?

I didn't have some things to give this wayfaring couple, but I felt I was sharing the most precious things on earth with these strangers—my family, my time, my faith, even my finances (which I felt I couldn't afford to do). I hope they appreciated it.

I kept seeing myself as a martyr or an unwilling samaritan. It was absolute agony feeling guilty about bringing this couple home. And then I felt guilty about feeling guilty. And I felt like a sucker. I kept asking myself, "What would Jesus do?"

All I could think of was the Good Samaritan. But I wonder, did he struggle with his good deed too? Were there times when he wished he hadn't stopped?

Had I endangered my family? I hate to admit that the question crossed my mind. But were we not all Christians? Did we not all

belong to Jesus? So in that sense, I don't suppose it mattered a great deal.

Oh, wretched emotions. Surely what was churning inside me was not compassion. If compassion hurt so much and made a fellow feel so badly, no wonder there wasn't a great deal of it around.

I remembered that Peter had no gold, but he healed a lame man. That Jesus had no silver, but he opened Bartimaeus' eyes. Yet, somehow I felt that I had betrayed the name of both in trying to help with so little to offer.

We went to church again Saturday night, another missionary service. Bret and Ellen stayed home again. They promised to attend church on the Lord's day. I became aware that sermons about love don't mean much to people who are hungry and have no clothes.

As we talked, I realized that this couple lived in an introverted world. They had nothing to hold onto except the cat and the car. Survival reduces life to the essentials. It cuts to the bottom line—can I eat it? Can I wear it? Can I keep it? Can I sell it? Can I use it?

Sunday morning came, and Bret and Ellen didn't seem to question that they were going to church and Sunday School with us. In fact, they sat in my class while I taught from Proverbs 30.

Why did I feel safer speaking as a teacher of a class than sitting across the table from Bret in my kitchen? Why was I less threatened? I knew the answer and I didn't like it.

That day the visiting missionary speaker and his family came to our house for lunch. Naturally, we had Bret and Ellen at the same table. Bret's back began hurting him soon after lunch and he had to lie down. But Ellen seemed to really like it all.

That night we went back to church. The National Home Missions Director preached a stirring sermon. And to my surprise, our house guests loved his preaching. In fact, they made the comment that when they got to Georgia, they wanted to attend a Free Will Baptist Church, if they were all like the one we attended and the preaching was like what they heard in our church.

Somehow Bret and Ellen seemed more like real people once they had gone to church with us. There's something beautiful about worshiping with

people; they cease to be strangers.

Then came the Monday morning that Bret and Ellen were supposed to leave. My whole family got up early and left the house by 6:30. The kids to school, my wife and I to work.

I wondered if Bret and Ellen would really leave? What if he claimed his back hurt and refused to move on? I despised myself for being suspicious. I also despised my fear that I was going to be hit for another financial contribution.

By 5:00 p.m. Monday, my family was all home again—alone. Bret and Ellen had left. I wondered if they would come back and say the job didn't pan out and ask to stay some more with us.

On Tuesday I found myself strangely wanting to hear from Bret and Ellen again. I was glad they left and the pressure was off, but sorry (a little) that they could get along without me. I am still amazed at how open and tender they became after they watched us read the scripture. Watched us pray. And worshiped with us.

Maybe they were as afraid of us as we were of them. Perhaps it took a special courage to walk off the street and ask for assistance.

I was very proud of my children for being helpful and mature and openly eager to share themselves, their home, even their faith. And by the way, I was more than a little surprised at how well they did it. Children are better at this samaritan business than adults.

We weren't nearly as impressed with our Christian home and our local church and the Lord's bounty to us until Bret and Ellen spent three days in our home. They had nothing; we were rich beyond imagination.

Within a week after Bret and Ellen left, I ceased feeling like a stupid samaritan and began feeling a little like a good samaritan.

In the past five months since Bret and Ellen, there have been others like them who came down the same road. No, I didn't take them all home with me, but neither did I lock my office door.

Because men journeying from Jerusalem to Jericho always seem to fall among thieves unannounced and with no appointments, it's inconvenient being a part-time samaritan. But then, I don't suppose it has to be convenient to be biblical. ▲



How Can I Find God's Will?

By Matilda Nordtvedt

Some Christians make their plans, then ask God to bless those plans. God has not promised to bless our selfish choices. He has a plan for every one of His children, one that glorifies Him.

This matter of finding God's will often baffles us, however. If only we could see with our physical eyes the pillar of cloud and pillar of fire leading us as the Israelites of long ago did, we would gladly follow. But much of the time we are uncertain as to which direction to take.

George Muller, who was used of God to care for hundreds of orphans during his lifetime, learned to closely follow the Lord's guidance in all his affairs. But he did not learn how to do this in a day.

You may be surprised to learn that this great man of faith, when a new Christian, resorted to casting lots to determine God's will. Should

he not apply to a certain missionary society? If he won a prize in the lottery, he would take that to mean God wanted him to apply. He won a prize, applied and was turned down by the missionary society.

George Muller realized through this experience that casting lots was not the way to determine God's will in a matter. He learned that there was only one way to determine God's will—through waiting upon Him in Bible reading and believing prayer.

He came to the conclusion that if he felt any uncertainty whatever as to a course of action, he should continue to wait until he was sure.

Sometimes we cannot determine God's will for us because we are already set on our own will. We imagine we want God's will, but are really only seeking God's approval of our own plans.

The people of Judah who remained in the land after Nebuchadnezzar carried most of the nation away captive, asked the prophet Jeremiah to pray to the Lord for guidance for them. Should they remain in their land or go to Egypt where they would feel safer from Nebuchadnezzar's forces?

They told the prophet that they would do whatever the Lord showed him was His will for them. But when Jeremiah told them the Lord wanted them to stay in the land and that He would bless them if they did, they accused him of speaking falsely!

The truth of the matter was that they had already made up their minds what they wanted to do—go to Egypt. When God's will conflicted with theirs, they insisted it was not God's will at all (Jeremiah 42 and 43).

Some years ago I had an urge to write a letter of censure to a loved one, criticising him for a certain course of action. I prayed about it, asking God if I should or should not write the letter.

I should have realized that the uneasiness and uncertainty in my heart was God's way of telling me I should not write the letter, but I wanted to, so went ahead anyway. The letter did no good, only produced hurt feelings and misunderstanding. How I regretted sending it!

I learned the hard way not to do my own will under guise of God's guidance, but to wait for His leading.

At one time in George Muller's life he felt led to take a prolonged trip to

Germany for the dual purpose of strengthening the Christians there and publishing his "Narrative" (story of his life) in the German language. Five obstacles stood in his way: three regarding finances and two regarding personnel to take his place at the orphanages during his absence.

As Muller prayed, the situation worsened instead of getting better, but he was not daunted. If it was the Lord's will, which he believed it was, God would remove the obstacles.

He writes: "I had a secret satisfaction in the greatness of the difficulties which were in the way. So far from being cast down on account of them, they delighted my soul; for I only desired to do the will of the Lord in this matter."

After 40 days of praying, the Lord sent George Muller a large check which removed three of the obstacles. A few weeks later the others were also removed and the Mullers were able to leave for their mission in Germany.

The Psalmist tells us: "The meek will he guide in judgment; and the meek will he teach his way" (Psalm 25:9).

Mr. A. T. Pierson, George Muller's biographer, comments: "One sure sign of this meekness is the entire restfulness with which apparent obstacles to any proposed plan of action are regarded. When waiting and wishing only to know and do God's will, hindrances will give no anxiety, but a sort of pleasure, as affording a new opportunity for divine interposition."

This is the opposite of scheming or taking matters into our own hands. I have tried both, to my sorrow and confusion. When I leave matters with the Lord, however, He works everything out to the minutest detail.

Yes, divine guidance is for every Christian. It is possible to know God's will as surely as we know Him, if we wait and allow Him to lead. But our hearts must be willing to do His will, to want His will and nothing else. When our own will gets out of the way, the Lord is able to lead us as surely as He did the Israelites in the wilderness. ▲

ABOUT THE WRITER: Matilda Nordvedt is a free lance writer who resides in Everett, Washington.



Thank You For Your Contributions Through the Cooperative Channel...

December, 1981

RECEIPTS:

State	Design.	Undesign.	Total	Dec. '80	Yr. to Date
Alabama	\$ 166.00	\$ 55.42	\$ 221.42	\$ 31.00	\$ 5,849.60
Arizona	.00	298.52	298.52	287.60	694.82
Arkansas	.00	3,125.34	3,125.34	1,638.69	39,824.06
California	.00	870.79	870.79	1,016.90	13,720.60
Florida	.00	33.33	33.33	821.45	14,903.21
Georgia	54.59	919.00	973.59	550.00	12,378.25
Idaho	.00	.00	.00	.00	389.18
Illinois	.00	907.56	907.56	1,134.65	12,681.25
Indiana	.00	.00	.00	.00	200.00
Kansas	333.99	442.69	776.68	148.44	2,693.23
Kentucky	.00	32.00	32.00	.00	402.00
Maryland	.00	130.00	130.00	40.00	570.00
Michigan	4,658.61	695.00	5,353.61	.00	38,775.83
Mississippi	425.90	443.61	869.51	135.45	6,007.37
Missouri	4,277.84	.00	4,277.84	5,126.99	68,876.18
New Mexico	.00	.00	.00	.00	225.24
North Carolina	61.50	518.70	580.20	519.33	7,199.54
Ohio	.00	1,478.40	1,478.40	903.20	13,114.98
Oklahoma	20,940.27	8,777.70	29,717.97	6,823.17	186,687.57
Tennessee	90.00	1,326.47	1,416.47	518.56	11,388.51
Texas	2,629.95	258.87	2,888.82	215.00	26,131.13
Virgin Islands	.00	.00	.00	219.55	1,058.42
Virginia	.00	.00	.00	77.37	7,010.90
West Virginia	.00	.00	.00	9.48	110.20
Interest	.00	600.00	600.00	480.00	600.00
Totals	\$33,638.65	\$20,913.40	\$54,552.05	\$20,696.83	\$471,492.07

Disbursements:

Executive	\$ 1,039.18	\$ 8,049.70	\$ 9,088.88	\$ 8,222.99	\$109,406.39
Foreign Missions	24,859.99	3,280.22	28,140.21	4,211.44	191,273.12
Bible College	2,257.39	3,280.22	5,537.61	2,856.81	59,664.75
Home Missions	4,854.47	2,444.14	7,298.61	2,780.75	66,922.57
Ret. & Ins.	375.22	2,379.76	2,754.98	1,603.27	27,810.67
Master's Men	181.12	1,286.39	1,467.51	854.98	13,803.48
Comm. on Theo. Liberalism	71.28	192.97	264.25	166.59	2,611.09
Totals	\$33,638.65	\$20,913.40	\$54,552.05	\$20,696.83	\$471,492.07

Be Ready To Speak



By Trula Cronk

A bird can go nine days without food, some say, while a man can go 12 days and a dog 20. Turtles can go 500 days without eating. A snake can survive an 800-day fast. A fish can survive for 1000 days on water alone, and certain insects will still be alive after 1200 days without food.

I have often wondered how long the spiritual man survives when denied his ordinary food, the Word of God. Job said, "I have esteemed the words of his mouth more than my necessary food."

Our Lord said, "Man doth not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of the Lord doth man live." To our spiritual lives the WORD is bread and meat to eat, milk to drink and honey for desert.

Although the Lord Jesus is the Living Word, in His flesh He lived and died and rose again "according to the scriptures." When He spoke, His reference point was the written Word, "It is written." "Have ye not read?" "What saith the scriptures?"

Just as He found in the written Word the plan for His own earthly life, He leaves in the written Word the picture of what He wants our lives to be.

The Bible is not simply our only rule book, it is our necessary food. Neglect it and we either die in our spirits or remain forever stunted Christians without glow, joy or bounce. The word pictures in the Bible of what the redeemed life should be makes me hungry for more and more.

The Word of God is power packed. When stored in the heart it energizes the total life. Daily Bible study under the direction of the Holy Spirit and

with the help of competent study guides is essential to Christian growth. But the extra vitamin which adds the vivacity to life comes from memorizing the Word.

When my husband

Dan and I first went to India as missionaries, we didn't know the language well enough to lead anybody to the Lord, but the Lord sent to us two teenaged boys. We knew there were only two ways we could help them. One was that we should ourselves be living epistles displaying the Word in our behavior. The other was to put God's Word into their hearts and minds in their own language.

We persuaded them to memorize Bible verses in Bengali. We chose 100 verses, and as an incentive promised them a trip to Darjeeling when they were all memorized. They set their minds to the task and in a very short time could say all hundred verses at one sitting.

We gave them their week in the jewel of the Himalayas where people from all over the world come to look at Mount Everest. But the pearl of great price became theirs when each boy came to believe in the Lord and accept Him as Savior as the Holy Spirit revealed Him to them through their own language memorized from God's Word.

Throughout our years in India we gave scripture memorizing a foremost place as we tried to teach new Christians to live by the Word. For those who couldn't read, it was the only way they could be sure of having spiritual food when there was no one around to read to them.

For those who could read, the memorized verses gave them a sure word of testimony which they could share, even though their own words might be shy and stammering.

How about you? Do you have enough Word stored in your heart to direct a person in the way of salvation and to give him the assurance afterward that a transaction has actually taken place?

While most of us, no doubt, keep a Bible at hand, there is always a chance that today may give place to an emergency in which someone will desperately need to find the way home and the words you can give him from your heart will be his only hope. Can you

give out of your own storehouse all he would need to believe and be saved?

Is there enough Word in your heart and mind to keep you sensitive to sin in all its wily forms and to cause you to seek immediate cleansing? There is nothing that keeps me more aware of the right way and more heartbroken over sin than the frequent repeating of Galatians 5:19-25.

What a vivid contrast between the works of my sinful flesh and the Work of the Holy Spirit bearing fruit through me, between the awful warning that he who does the works of the flesh shall not inherit the kingdom and the promise that "He that soweth to the Spirit shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting."

A young Indian came weeping to prayer meeting one morning. He had been convicted of sin from reading I Timothy 2:8. "It means," he said, "that I must not lift up my unclean hands to the Lord."

Later in the morning Dan found him still weeping, but now he was confessing his sin and begging for cleansing so he could join in the day of prayer. He had learned early that "If I regard iniquity in my heart the Lord will not hear me."

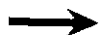
When the heart is filled with the Word, the Holy Spirit will take that Word and draw us back to fellowship unmarred by unforgiven sin.

Is there enough peace-giving Word in your heart to keep you from the ravages of fear and to help you speak words of assurance to others who are afraid? The biggest stressor of our time is the spirit of fear. It is an evil spirit and destroys our joy, but it can be cast out by the Word.

When I went to India, I was filled with the fear of strangeness, snakes, plagues and leprosy, to name a few. The Lord gave me a promise which I memorized and the Holy Spirit used to save me from fear. "There shall no evil befall thee, neither shall any plague come nigh thy dwelling."

In time I felt safer in India than in any other place and actually came to the place where I could watch a cobra go slithering down the garden row and go on picking peas.

Often alone at night in an area where international bandits found refuge, I easily went to sleep with this



SPEAK (From page 9)

promise, "I will both lay me down in peace and sleep for thou, Lord, only makest me dwell in safety." The words of peace were always ready in my mind when needed.

When I am hurt by friends or by enemies, the words of Joseph come to my mind, "Ye thought evil against me, but God meant it unto good." I can claim this because I know that nothing comes to a child of God which does not first pass muster before the Lord Jesus Christ.

I was almost paralyzed by fear once when an invading army was poised on our border just five miles from our house. I could go up to the roof and see battle fires at night as villages burned.

The Lord gave me peace by bringing to my mind, "And ye shall hear of wars and rumors of wars: see that ye be not troubled: for all these things must come to pass but the end is not yet." One can tolerate great stress when the heart is rested in the Word.

When grief comes or loss, are there words of hope banked in your inner man against which you may draw to comfort yourself and to encourage others? The Word is the Holy Spirit's instrument and He uses what he finds already there.

A few days ago a man called me at work and said, "I want to thank you for talking with my wife. It made all the difference." It was a few choice promises from God's Word that had made the difference.

One day in India I was called to the next small town to try to help the police identify a European man who had been picked up by the railroad track. He had been robbed, beaten, stripped and thrown off the train.

Even had I known him before, I could not have recognized him, but I did what I would want someone to do should such a tragedy ever happen to a loved one of mine. I went with him to a government hospital about 50 miles away and stood by his bed and fanned flies and mosquitos away.

He was in a deep coma and was giving no responses at all. As I held his hand I began to quote scripture verses in English and Bengali. He began to squeeze my hand ever so slightly when I would quote a verse. Although the pressure on my hand was slight I was

convinced that he was a Christian missionary.

I went to a phone and didn't stop calling until I had identified him and arranged for his own mission to pick him up by chartered plane and get him out to proper medical attention. Three days later the local police still had not identified him. His response to the Word probably saved his life.

Can you from the Word stored in your heart take advantage of daily opportunities to instill biblical values in the hearts of your children?

Formal teaching of the Bible to our children is a most solemn obligation, but the casual situations of daily living provide the opportunities for making the Bible live for them. This is also a painless way of storing a significant amount of scripture in a child's heart.

At every separation from my son I always said, "The Lord watch between me and thee while we are absent one from another." As soon as he could talk he could join me in saying it, so often had he heard it.

It was our benediction when he left each year to go a thousand miles away to boarding school. To this day the same benediction finds its way around the world when he calls us from Bangkok, Hong Kong or New Delhi.

When it was time to get up, I headed off the grumps by saying, "This is the day which the Lord hath made, we will rejoice and be glad in it." As he took his vitamins I'd say, "A merry heart doeth good like a medicine." Or I'd ask, "What does good like a medicine?" and let him answer.

As he got his bath, I'd say the 23rd Psalm. By two and a half he could say all six verses without a pause. Once in church in Kotagiri, the whole congregation was delighted by the shrill high voice of a three-year-old saying the Lord's prayer without missing a word.

How many times I used, "For whom the Lord loveth, he correcteth, even as a father the son in whom he delights." I settled many verbal fights among playmates with, "A soft answer turneth away wrath, but grievous words stir up anger."

I used also "Pleasant words are as an honeycomb, sweet to the soul and health to the bones," and "The words of a talebearer are as wounds and they go down into the innermost parts of the belly."

We'd play "Church." He would pre-

side at the make believe organ. For a sermon I'd say the 10 commandments, the Apostles Creed or the Beautitudes. As he learned the verses, we'd change roles.

Space won't allow me to give more examples, but the day is filled with unique opportunities to share the Word from the heart. Bedtime is a marvelous opportunity to sit by a child and quote scripture. The mother's voice is a comfort to him, and he falls asleep hearing God's Word.

Scripture memorization does not need to be painful for anyone. With a little imagination and a willingness to stay with it, you can store the Word in your child's heart, if you have first stored it in yours.

We live in an age like the time of Amos when there is a famine of the Word in our land. Even among Christians who are well informed on a wide range of subjects, there is often almost illiteracy of the Word.

We are always just one generation from paganism. Unless we teach the Word to our children, they will not know it and they will be pagan, with neither the will nor the knowledge to pass on our Christian heritage to their children.

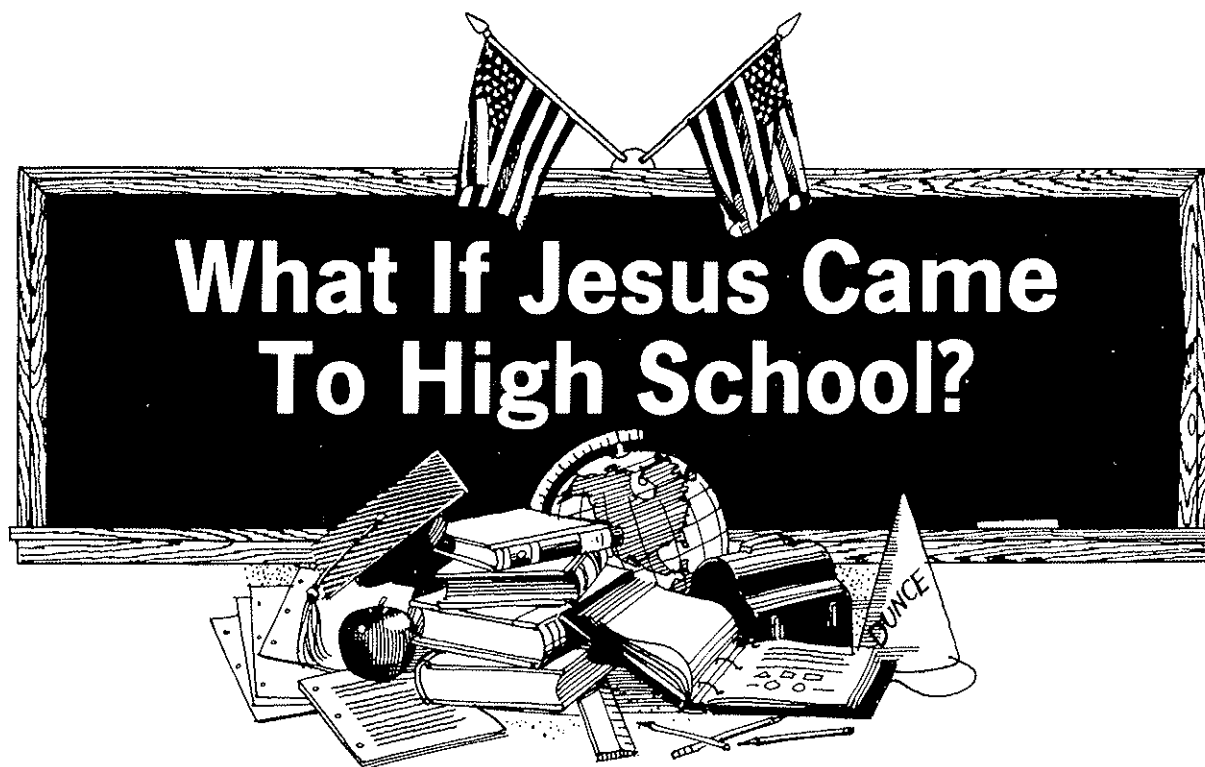
Reading and studying the Word nurtures the total Christian life, and memorizing the Word refines the thought life so that all our decisions are influenced by biblical values.

The Word stored in our hearts keeps us always ready to speak for our Lord and provides for meditation when there is time to fill during a sleepless night or while waiting in a hospital room or while sitting by the window watching the birds at the feeder.

We will not see revival in our time unless we give ourselves to study and memorizing the Word. The Holy Spirit can use the Word to cleanse our hearts of all unnecessary clutter so that there is room for the full life of the Spirit within us. ▲

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

A Modern Parable



What If Jesus Came To High School?

By Craig Fry

Appearing as a boy of 16, Jesus Christ attended Ben Nixon's High School to see what he would find and how people would treat him.

The Bus Stop

It was a normal school day. Ben walked slowly to the bus stop. There waiting for him was a new kid. Ben introduced himself and the stranger returned the gesture. "My name is Jesus," he said, "I'm a foreign exchange student from Nazareth."

"What a weird name," Ben thought to himself. Right off Ben noticed something different about this kid . . . it was his eyes; they seemed to look right through him.

The Bus Ride

Jesus sat next to Ben on the bus. He started asking deep, personal questions. He asked about Ben's family and friends and beliefs. Instead of telling Jesus to mind his own business, Ben opened up to him.

For some unexplained reason he felt that he could trust his new acquaintance. When Ben got to the parts he wasn't really proud of, Jesus didn't look shocked or judgemental, he just listened.

Second Period Class

Jesus had the same second period class as Ben, so he took the seat next to him. Ben asked him to share something about himself. Jesus said he felt a deep love for all people, so deep in fact, that he would gladly die in order to prove that love for others. Ben considered this a bit extreme.

Jesus then said that it was always his father's dream that he come to this school. He talked about eternal life and abundant living and some other things that Ben didn't quite understand.

Jesus got in trouble for talking in class. The teacher told him he had to stand out in the hall to get "licks." Ben felt really bad about this, but Jesus just turned to him and said he was faithful and just to forgive.

The Cafeteria

Ben jokingly asked Jesus about the food. He mentioned something about living water and the bread of life. None of this made any sense to Ben, but he just shrugged it off as being some kind of foreign language.

As he thought about what Jesus was saying, something struck a familiar chord in Ben's mind. He remembered an old story he had heard as a kid in Sunday School. The teacher had talked of living water and the eternal life and . . . and a man named Jesus of Nazareth. Could this be the same guy?

Jesus didn't pause and went on to explain his plan for the school. He acted like he didn't notice Ben's open mouth or startled eyes. Jesus said he had a three-part plan:



HIGH SCHOOL (From page 11)

- 1) To show people that life without God is empty.
- 2) To love each and every person in such a way that they would follow him unashamedly.
- 3) To give an abundant life to all those who love him.

Ben decided to put his trust in Jesus and his plan. At once he felt joy and peace and a desire to tell everyone about his new friend.

Next Day

Ben heard about a group of people who claimed to be godly, so he took Jesus to meet them. They had formed an exclusive club and called themselves The Clique.

Jesus wasn't impressed. He pointed out that even though they were active in school government and leaders in church functions, they acted like everyone else in school. He said they were as bad as those who didn't claim to know God.

The club president told Jesus that his methods were too radical and that he was totally uncool. In fact, they refused to accept him as a member. This angered Jesus.

He said that their club would keep others from tasting abundant life, and he called them hypocrites. He sat down in study hall and wrote an article for the school newspaper about this experience.

Later in the Week

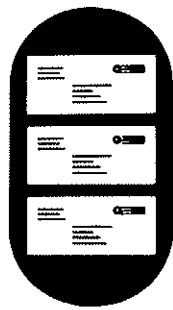
The school was buzzing. Rumor had it that Jesus was expelled from school. Ben asked around and found out that the members of The Clique had engineered the whole thing.

An announcement was made in homeroom that Jesus Christ was expelled for being a nonconformist and a trouble maker.

Note:

As it turned out, Jesus was not expelled but merely suspended for three days. I believe his father was able to get him back in school. ▲

ABOUT THE WRITER: Craig Fry (23) graduated from Belmont College, Nashville, Tennessee in December, 1981. He plans to pursue a master's degree at Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary in Fort Worth, Texas.



OUR READERS COMMENT

TIME WE STOOD UP

I just had to sit right down and write and let you know how much I enjoyed and appreciated "Dear Charismatic Friend . . ." I think it is long overdue.

You spoke the sentiments of my heart and, I believe, the heart of every honest, Bible-believing Free Will Baptist.

It's time we stood up against those who preach a "super spiritual" doctrine and cause discord. I think most of us have had to deal with these proselyters and know the hurt they can cause both the individual and the local church.

Thanks again for this exceptional and timely article. I hope it will help us pastors to stand up for what we believe.

Rev. Kenneth W. Kirby, Pastor
Victory Free Will Baptist Church
McMinnville, Tennessee

HOAXES MEAN RESPONSIBILITY

Great editorial! Your December 1981 briefcase on Hoaxes gets right to the heart of a very big problem.

Just because we Free Will Baptists believe "... The Truth shall set you free . . ." does not relieve us of the responsibility to check out facts. This responsibility becomes paramount when one views this drama from the perspective of the lowly snipe.

Mike Trest
St. Paul, Minnesota

GOOD ENOUGH FOR THE COURTROOM

January's editorial, "Dear Charismatic Friend . . .," is by far your best journalistic effort. No true Free Will Baptist will offer any disagreement.

It was good to read your treatment of the expression, "If you only experienced what I experienced."

Your observation of their "bed fellows" is a point so often overlooked by those who would study this error. No major cult, be it a so-called "Christian Cult" or a non-Christian cult is without its tongues speaking. Heathen cults all over the world advocate tongue speaking.

Charismatics not only make the mistake of making tongues the initial evidence of the Holy Ghost, but add to the error by making it the common denominator in fellowship.

If you were the prosecutor in court on this case, the judge could not help but concur on your charges.

Dr. Wade Jernigan, Pastor
Way Of The Cross Free Will Baptist Church
Sallisaw, Oklahoma

GIANT STEP IN RIGHT DIRECTION

Thank you for January Briefcase entitled "Dear Charismatic Friend . . ."

The ever-growing popularity and acceptance of the Charismatic Movement has many Free Will Baptists concerned, of whom I am one. I am especially concerned when this dangerous doctrine infiltrates our own ranks. It is even more alarming when it is condoned and accepted in our ranks.

It is high time that the errors and inconsistencies of this doctrine be exposed. You have taken a giant step in the right direction by publishing this article.

Rev. Ray Conner, Pastor
Friendship Free Will Baptist Church
Wilmington, North Carolina

DIRECTORY UPDATE

FLORIDA

Mirchael Jones to Shiloh Church, Atmore, AL from Jefferson Road Church, Sumter, SC

GEORGIA

Duane Cassida to Pine Level Church, Alma

ILLINOIS

Mike Russell to Mascoutah Church, Mascoutah

SOUTH CAROLINA

Jimmy Bell to Mill Branch Church, Johnsonville

David Anders to New Life Church, Lancaster from Converse Church, Cowpens

Phil Ange to Jefferson Road Church, Sumter from First Church, Columbus, MS

OTHER PERSONNEL

Mark Thomas to Gateway Church, Virginia Beach, VA as Visitation and Military Minister

We Escaped From

HELL

By Dee Kingsmill

I was born in New York just after World War II in November of 1945. My father had been a pilot in the war, my mother a WAC. By the time I was four, my father was a commercial airline pilot, my mother a housewife with two children under five years old.

Mother had bouts with paralysis and blindness, and twice attempted suicide. The second time she tried gas in our home in New York. Father came in smoking one of his cigars and smelled the gas just in time to toss out the cigar. My brother and I were in the house at the time.

Because of this episode, Father felt he should be home more, so he moved the family to California and began selling printer's ink.

By my sixth birthday, I had a new stepmother and was going to a Methodist Sunday School. When I was five years old my father took my brother and me to Sunday School, but he did not stay.

When I was nine, our family started attending a Unitarian Church. Father taught Sunday School even though he drank heavily. He started drinking in the Air Force and had gradually gotten worse through the years.

He stayed out evenings and ran around with women. He told my mother that any real man needed more than one woman. They soon divorced.

It wasn't long before Mother was wandering in and out of mental institutions, and diagnosed as having Multiple Schlerosis. She also married and divorced two more times.

The Unitarian Church we attended encouraged people to believe whatever they wanted to, and for the most part that's exactly what we did. I don't remember anyone mentioning sin or what was wrong, except what could get you arrested.

During Sunday School in my junior high years, they carried us to 10 or 12 other denominational services and told us we should choose that which was best for us.

At this time, I thought Jesus was another good man, and that God was someone people dreamed up to blame their problems on.

Occasionally when I made my father angry, he beat me with a 2 x 4. He beat me one night just after my 17th birthday, and I ran away from

home to a friend's house.

Her parents turned me over to the police, and from there I ended up at the county orphanage. I lived at the orphanage six months. Father lost custody of me, and I became a ward of the state.

I was then sent to a psychiatrist, apparently because the authorities thought I had something against men. Father was a member of the Rotary Club in our town. It embarrassed him to have me at the county orphanage, so he arranged for me to be sent to a special school in Baja, California.

I worked at the school more as a cook and surrogate mother for the other children. After five months of this, I returned to the United States to renew my visa. The man heading up the special school where I had been was then sued for misleading people about the institution.

The Army and Beyond

Soon after that incident, I decided to join the Army and did on my 18th birthday.

I didn't know God but He knew me. While I was in service, I survived an auto accident that should have killed me out right. I came away without a scratch.



ESCAPED (From page 13)

The Army soon shipped me off to 91C20 School (nursing) where I met a young man and married him six months later. It was a disaster. He got his orders for Vietnam four months after we married and returned a year later—a man without a conscience, addicted to drugs.

He beat me several times, so I got a divorce. While I was in the divorce process, I met Tommy, who is now my husband. Here God was at work again; I didn't know that Tommy was what I needed.

Tommy was not religious and not saved when I met him, but he was from Nashville, Tennessee, a city in the Bible Belt. He asked me to marry him.

Tommy said we would never make it if we stayed in fun-loving California. There were too many opportunities to get into trouble, and no one cared if you did. I was not close to my family or anyone else, so I moved to Nashville with him.

After we married, he spent more time with "the boys" playing cards, shooting pool and drinking beer than he did with me. We had two children. He worked on and off, and I worked as a nurse.

A Knock On Our Door

We lived in a dozen places in four years. I was to the point that I didn't know what to do. I knew our lives had to change, but nothing I did seemed to make any difference.

Then one Saturday as we were moving into a house in Donelson (a Nashville suburb), two ladies came to our door.

They were working with the bus ministry at Donelson Free Will Baptist Church. My little girl, Fifi, was two and a half, but they said that was fine, they wanted to take her to church.

The next morning I rode with her on the bus and had Tommy pick me up. I did not stay and attend services. I will always have a special place in my heart for those two bus workers, Eileen Lee and Darleen Helton. They started us down the right road.

The next Saturday another Donelson Church worker, David

Lee, came and visited with Fifi. On Sunday I walked her up to the end of our driveway and let her ride the bus alone. The next six Sundays she didn't want me to walk her up the driveway—she could go by herself.

Fifi brought home cards with Bible stories on one side and pictures on the other, and she wanted them all on her wall. So I got a bulletin board for her. She called me to her room over and over, wanting me to read her the Bible stories she brought home.

In my own reading, I had come across the idea that if you want something or someone else to change, you must first change yourself. Not long after I read that, Donelson Pastor George Lee came to visit us and led me to the Lord.

Tommy's Travail

My husband Tommy was born in 1946 in Nashville, Tennessee. His father had been a sailor. His mother had five children and a hysterectomy by the time she was 21. Tommy was the only boy, followed by four sisters.

Tommy's dad worked a series of odd jobs, owned a restaurant and beer joint till it burned down, then got into hauling trash. His mother worked as a waitress, then in a hospital kitchen, later went to school and is now a certified dietician.

His dad had a drinking problem for years. When he drank he turned mean and violent.

Tommy's only exposure to religion came at age eight when he was left at his grandmother's for the weekend once or twice a month. His grandmother would walk two miles to Sunday School and church every Sunday. And when she had the children, she took them with her.

That church closed its doors when Tommy was nine. It was too far for Tommy's grandmother to walk to the next church, and she didn't have transportation. She died when Tommy was 12.

He started working in a beer tavern helping his daddy when he was 13. Expelled from school in the eighth grade, Tommy looked old enough to get into bars at the age of 16 without showing an ID card. He was night manager of a drive-in market at 17, and prided himself at

being able to drink a half pint of liquor without getting drunk.

At age 18, Tommy married a woman who was previously married and had a year-old daughter. The Army drafted him in December. He was 19. Three months and 10 days after induction, he landed in Vietnam as a cook, then an M.P. Within six months, he made the rank of E-4.

While Tommy was stationed in Vietnam, his wife cheated on him and blew the \$3,300 he sent home—money he had made gambling and a \$100 savings bond a month.

Tommy didn't own a car when he got out of service. But his wife's boyfriend did, because she bought him one with Tommy's money. When Tommy found out, he almost killed her with his bare hands.

They were divorced. She continued to receive his savings bonds and cash them illegally.

The End Of The Line

Tommy was discharged from the Army in December, 1967 and returned to Nashville. We were married in 1969. I was saved in 1972 (November), and 18 months later Tommy was saved on May 2, 1974.

That year and a half when I was saved and Tommy wasn't, was a miserable time. The closer I got to the Lord and the more active I tried to become in church and the more the Lord worked on Tommy, the more he dug in his heels and defied God.

He would leave the house, drink and stay out till all hours before coming home commode-hugging drunk. Sometimes he did not return till the next day. I didn't know where he was half the time. His drinking was making him sick and he didn't work some days because of it.

The last straw broke when I went to work and left the children at the babysitter's. Tommy was to pick them up at 7:00 p.m., and then come get me after 11:00 p.m. At 11:30 p.m. I had to ask my supervisor to drive me to the babysitter's and then home.

I had no idea where Tommy was. He came in about 1:00 in the morning roaring drunk, sick and telling lies.

I told him that his behavior was

affecting the children and that he needed to talk to somebody. He finally agreed and talked with then Donelson Pastor Milton Worthington, who led Tommy to the Lord.

Tommy has not drunk any since, and I know where he is 95 percent of the time. Our home is an entirely different place.

In 1979 we joined the Fellowship Free Will Baptist Church where Tommy has become active in the church.

Special Children/ Special Love

When I was 16, having children, was something I was never going to do. When I was 19, I knew there were many children who needed help. I thought I might adopt some if I changed my mind about having children.

After Tommy and I were saved, it really came home to me how rich we were through the grace of God. We had two healthy children, Fifi and Sean, and a loving marriage.

The Donelson FWB Church had a Sunday School program for mentally handicapped children. I saw them, but didn't think much about it.

The children were brought on Sundays from Clover Bottom, a local facility equipped to deal with their special problems. At some point, a program started to move those children who could function away from Clover Bottom and into homes in the community.

I was working for United Parcel Service at night and had been for 18 months, but I wasn't sleeping well during the day. I prayed about a job change. I felt needed at home when

Fifi and Sean returned from school every afternoon.

About the middle of December, 1977, I was approached at church by a friend who asked if I knew anyone who would be interested in parenting a home with four handicapped children. I told her that sounded like a full-time job, but if I thought of someone, I would let her know.

She wouldn't let me go and kept on talking. Then it dawned on me that she was talking about Tommy and me. A little flustered and a whole lot surprised, I took the phone number from her.

The next day I called and set up an interview. Tommy and I had talked about it, but had not made any decision. We were just going to see what it was all about. After the interview, we were still interested.

I wanted the Lord's leading, but I didn't know what to expect. I now know what it is to have a burden grow on you, getting heavier and heavier.

Fifi and Sean, ages seven and five, had a part in our decision. They have always liked a lot going on, and voted to share their parents, their rooms, their toys, and their lives with some people who were not as fortunate as they.

We all visited another foster home and then told the agency that we would like to have some children.

My work at the United Parcel Service came down to a minor crisis. I felt I was needed elsewhere, so I quit, trusting that where God guides, He provides.

We didn't have any commitment from the agency, but within 24 hours we were in an empty house feeding a home cooked meal to four children who were beginning their fourth

living arrangement in a year.

The Lord has truly been our shelter in the midst of a gentling storm.

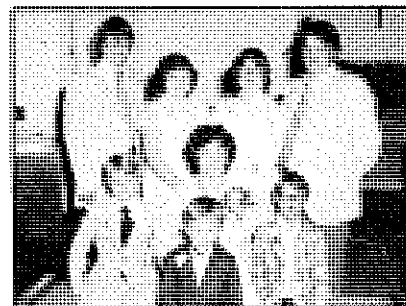
Those first months with the children were chaotic. They didn't know us; we didn't know them. We were an eight-headed monster going in as many directions.

Now, four years later, we still have two of the original four children, along with two new ones. We have become a family, making allowances for the idiosyncrasies of those we love. The road goes both ways.

Our burden now is light, even though some days are hectic and frustrating. But the love and learning continue.

Tommy and I escaped our private hells because one day some of God's people cared enough to knock on our hostile door with a message of hope. What they gave us, we want to give others. ▲

ABOUT THE WRITER: Mrs. Dee Kingsmill is a member of Fellowship Free Will Baptist Church, Antioch, Tennessee.



Standing (L) Jeff, 20; Fifi, 11; Denise, 18; Tommy. Sitting (L) Sean, 9; Dee; Danny, 11; Johnny, 6.

CONVENTION HOTELS

Look for Reservation Form in April CONTACT!

Life In The Home

By Sherri Bryan

Home . . . home sweet home . . . a place to rest and let oneself unwind, a refuge from life's problems, an answer to those uncertain questions, and a firm hand of discipline with understanding guidance. Where else can you hear the familiar buzz of Mom's vacuum cleaner, the pounding noise of your kid brother dribbling his basketball along the sidewalk, or your little sister singing "Jesus Loves Me" as she plays?

No one can overemphasize the importance of a family and the home. This single unit is the institution set up by God as the molding force of lives. It builds character and instills moral values and virtue. The Lord places the responsibility of lives in the hands of parents to prepare them for His future service. With the Lord as the focal point of family life, His plan may best be fulfilled.

Nothing can replace the parental input of Christian standards and principles in a teen's life. They provide the mark by which one bases his lifestyle and priorities. Teens are looking to their parents for stability, for consoling and for reassurance. Yet they also seek freedom and individuality. It takes a balance to provide success in a teen's homelife—an understanding, yet firm hand of guidance.

So many problems face one in his teen years: peer pressure, dating, marriage, college and career.

Parental advice is vital in these questions because the fate of so many lives is marked by decisions made as a teenager. It is nice to know that a loving mom or dad will just always listen. No problem is quite as bad when you have someone with whom to share it.

The home in a teenager's life is a place to share in the lives of family members and also grow as an individual. It provides conflicts and conquests for personal achievement and maturity. It fulfills the needs one encounters in growing up and struggling for independence.

In view of family life and the home, a major thought on the minds of Christian teens is simply "thanks"—thanks to God for His leadership and love, thanks to parents for their influence and tolerating love, and thanks to brothers and sisters for their thoughts and opinions. Without the mixture of all these ingredients the family would not be quite complete.

This is an old cliché, but it says it best, ". . . there's just no place like home." ▲



ABOUT THE WRITER: Sherri Bryan, 17, is a junior at Bethel Christian Academy in Kinston, North Carolina. She is a member of the National Honor Society and is active in school athletics. She enjoys music, particularly classic keyboard. Sherri plans to enroll at Free Will Baptist Bible College when she graduates from high school.

Teenagers

Life In The School

By Becky Williams

When a school session begins, you can be sure the questions and decisions aren't lagging too far behind. My teachers, after discovering I am a Christian, expect more from me than they do from the unsaved students regarding grades as well as lifestyle.

School has always been a challenge for me. It becomes even more of one as peers constantly question my values and puzzle over the decisions I make during the course of the school year.

Instead of being a burden, however, the probings of my friends are a great joy. To me, it means that the differences between Christian ideals and their own ideals are being noticed and weighed in the classroom. Even more importantly their inquiries are natural opportunities to witness for the Lord.

Attending public school 12 years has been an eye-opening, learning experience for me. But while obtaining the essentials of education with which to build a life, I also grew spiritually. My faith and trust in the Lord has grown stronger these past years. I discovered that even the small hills I was climbing had too steep an incline if the Lord wasn't holding me up. ▲



ABOUT THE WRITER: Seventeen-year-old Becky Williams is a senior at Antioch High School, Antioch, Tennessee. She is a member of Fellowship Free Will Baptist Church, Antioch, and plans to enroll at Free Will Baptist Bible College this fall.

Speak Out!

Life In The Church

By David Hall

Life in the church is a vital and influential part of a young person's whole life and future. Being a minister's son, just about my entire life has been in the church. There are many aspects of my life which revolve around the church.

My social life is mainly one which consists of youth activities and church functions other than the regularly scheduled services. An active youth group can have a large impact on a young person. The good times enjoyed with other Christian youth help the teenager to lose his taste for secular, worldly activities. Also, the spiritual training received from youth ministers and youth directors encourages the young person to grow in his Christian life.

My family life revolves around the church because, being a pastor's son, church is brought home many times. Prayers of thanks for fruit bearing and prayers over church problems have been part of the late evenings in our home. Seeing my father's concern over church members has impressed me a lot. Ministers do not just preach at church time and come home. If they are all like my father, they bear each burden of their members. This has made quite an impression on my life.

Any young person who takes church for granted or thinks that church life is not important is really mistaken. Our youth should be urged to attend all church functions. Who knows? Maybe they will enjoy it. I do! ▲



ABOUT THE WRITER: David Hall, 17, is a junior at Hillwood High School in Nashville, Tennessee. He is the son of Reverend Fred Hall, who pastors Horton Heights Free Will Baptist Church in Nashville. David plans a career in the military after graduation.

Life In The World

By John Blakely, Jr.

Life in today's world is not easy! It wasn't easy for Jesus either when He was on earth. Jesus faced more problems than we do as He walked among the unsaved thousands of His day. But as time progressed, Jesus called 12 men to His team. Together their goal was to preach and teach the gospel to all the lands. That's still our job today as Christians, to pick up where Christ and His disciples left off.

Often during our everyday lives, we run into trials, tribulations, and many discouraging situations. It is said that discouragement is Satan's best weapon. Many Christian teenagers fail to recognize this and fall into his trap. In today's world, we *must* be drawing closer to Jesus. He said, "Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest." If people would stop and think about this statement, they *would not* be in half as much trouble as they are now.

During my earlier years as a Christian, I had to make many adjustments. The main one was adjusting to people. I don't drink alcoholic beverages, smoke cigarettes, "hang out with the crowd," or participate in any activities contrary to the teachings of the Bible—so that makes me sort of an "off-ball." But really I'm not. In nature, the unusual is often beautiful. This is also true of Christianity. Being unusual in the sight of Jesus Christ is fun!

Life in the world as a military dependent (My father is a 20-year Air Force veteran, stationed at Wright-Patterson Air Force Base, Dayton, Ohio.) is also unusual in several respects. I have lived at six different military locations in my 15 years. And it has not always been easy for me. The unusual circumstance is moving around the country and meeting different people. Some are Christians and some are not. I think the most exciting thing about moving is meeting Christian people, in particular, Christian children.

Finding a comfortable Christian church is also a task for my parents. I can remember the times when my parents would visit several churches in a city before deciding on a particular church that actually taught and preached according to the teachings of the Bible. This tended to make life in the world difficult for us as a family and for me, as an individual.

In summary, I would say that life in the world can be as easy or difficult as one lets it be. I feel that a Christian can lead a joyful life, because I know God will take care of His children and their needs. When Christians turn their lives over to God, the battle is over; God *will* provide for his people. ▲

ABOUT THE WRITER: John E. Blakely, Jr., attends First Free Will Baptist Church, Dayton, Ohio. He is 15 and a sophomore at Park Hill High School. His collegiate plans point to music or medicine.

Final installment of a three part series about the church and the media.

By Larry Hampton

Go Forth And Broadcast

Starting in the predawn hours each Sunday morning, the largest religious gathering in America takes place, drawing almost 130 million people to their radio and television sets.¹

The estimates of some broadcasters listening audiences have given new meaning to the phrase *evangelistically speaking*.²

Three out of 10 unchurched people hear or watch a religious program, generally a worship or crusade service, each month.³

According to a Gallup survey, fewer than five percent of the 61 million Americans not affiliated with any church could recall ever having watched a television preacher other than Oral Roberts (12 percent) or Billy Graham (11 percent).⁴

There is clear evidence that the electric church acts as a recruiting service for the local churches.⁵

The electronic church would substitute a cathode-ray tube and a phantom, non-people church for the church of real people with real needs and a gospel to share in the midst of real lives.⁶

Religious broadcasting is here to stay. Many religious leaders are outspoken critics of the electric church. However, there appears to be an equally vocal group of proponents of religious broadcasting.

As the preceding quotations demonstrate, there are those who extol its virtues, and there are those who expose its flaws. Who do you believe? Which side is shooting straight? In short, which side is the good guys in white hats?

Who Wears the White Hat?

Truth is on the side of both parties involved in this debate. There is no doubt that some broadcasters overstate the size of their audience. Whether intentionally or ignorantly, who can say.



On the other side of the coin, there is little reason to doubt that numbers of unchurched people do watch religious programs from time to time. The problem arises when one tries to attach a definite figure to this group of viewers. It is equally hard to specify the regularity with which the unchurched tune in to religious programs.

In two recent articles in the January and February issue of CONTACT, I urged Free Will Baptists to launch a radio/TV ministry. Perhaps you are wondering, in light of the controversy surrounding the electric church, if this would be wise.

There are obstacles confronting such a ministry. However, I do not believe them insurmountable. Let's look at some of the problems and some of the possible solutions.

The Problems Are Very Real.

The first hurdle is selecting a Radio/TV Commission. This group would be charged with securing a speaker for the broadcast. Together they would formulate the format of the program.

There is no room for the luxury of taking pot shots at the selected speaker. We must all rally to the cause, not around a personality. We must lay aside jealousy and personal ambition if we are to be successful in this venture (or for that matter in any venture whether it be building a Bible College or developing a local church). Such an outreach is a team effort. A few Diotrefes would derail any effort.

None of this need imply that there is no place for constructive criticism. No person or program should be considered sacrosanct. Human beings are fallible.

It is imperative that we constantly monitor the motives and methods of religious broadcasters as well as religious journalists, Christian day school personnel, pastors—in short everyone who is involved in any ministry.

Make no mistake—this is a plea for eternal vigilance, not a license to tear a brother limb from limb. All of us can learn from others. One need not be a communications expert to see flaws in the electric church fabric. We must learn to offer constructive criticism lovingly, to receive it graciously.

It is important to understand that

no medium can replace face to face confrontation with the lost. Radio is a very intimate medium. Television has the advantage of sight added to sound. Still, both are largely impersonal.

There is no immediate opportunity for two-way communication. Phone counselors and mail follow-up help lessen this problem. Frankly, it's easier to preach to a crowd of 200 from the safety of a pulpit than it is to approach one lost person face to face. The mass media are even safer.

churches," it must engage in follow-up. Let me share an example of how this can be accomplished.

The Lutherans have aired several specials that generated a great deal of mail. The name of each letter writer was passed along to a Lutheran pastor in the community where he lived. That pastor contacted each person in his community who wrote in response to the special. By this means TV truly served as an extension of the local church.

“ . . . no medium can replace face to face confrontation with the lost.”

It is easy to become entangled with the medium itself. A smooth production easily becomes the end rather than a means to an end. Unless one exercises care, he can easily become better known for his showmanship than his saintliness.

The Audience Must Be Respected.

TV is primarily an entertainment medium. It has been called “bubble gum of the mind.” People watch it to keep from thinking. Sinners don't watch religious programs for the same reason they don't attend local church services. They're not interested.

Surveys reveal that religious broadcasting has many viewers or listeners that are church people. The already initiated tend to tune in. Religious programs serve as reinforcement for their beliefs. There is nothing wrong with that. We simply need to be aware of it.

Radio and television are excellent tools for building awareness of the gospel. But there is an on-going need for follow-up. The personal touch is essential.

If the electric church is to be “a recruiting service for the local

Unfortunately even religious broadcasters must be concerned with their ratings. It's a bit more subtle (“when you write be sure to include the call letters of the station you hear us on”), but financially strapped broadcasters must frequently dump stations because they are not paying their way.

Ideally, support for a program aired in Topeka comes from Topeka. Truthfully, each broadcast is competing with other broadcasts for the same audience, and dollars necessary to “maintain their ministry” (stay on the air).

We Can Afford It, If We Want It.

Radio and television can be used effectively to raise money (common estimates place the money raised by all ministries at \$500 million). At times the cost of air time produces the need for new markets to help sustain a burgeoning ministry. (It takes money to make money.)

It requires air time to gain supporters. It requires supporters to purchase more air time. And the beat goes on. There is a danger that raising money can become the end of a program



BROADCAST (From page 19)

rather than the means to keep the gospel air borne.

If Free Will Baptists are to present a national program, all of us must support the ministry. Churches must not decide all money allocated for media ministry will be used locally.

Radio and TV time is expensive. Ideally no funds should be solicited on the air. Lest this seem to be a pipe dream, I'll give you an example of one well-known ministry that adheres to this policy.

The Radio Bible Class is distributed to nearly 1000 independent stations all over the world. Day of Discovery, the TV outreach of this ministry, is aired on more than 500 stations in the United States, Canada, Australia, the Philippines, and the Caribbean.

This organization emphasizes to all stations "The need for funds is not mentioned over the air nor through the direct mail followup. Names are never added to the mailing list except by specific request of the individual."

All Radio Bible Class publications are distributed on a "by request" basis only. Nonetheless, they send out in excess of three million copies of *Our Daily Bread*, a devotional guide, each month.

This approach lessens the complaints about so much air time being given over to fundraising. It also weak-

ens the case made against the electric church for stealing funds from the local church.

Let's Do It!

Perhaps the greatest danger facing the electric church is that folks become members of a "phantom, non-people church."

Church is not a spectator sport. Watching the services without participating in them fosters a spectator mentality. Watching an event is not the same as actively participating in it.

Someone expressed this truth in graphic terms: "Watching a state dinner doesn't give you the right to say you were a dinner guest of the President." As William F. Fore has stated "the local church, the community of believers, is central to Christian faith and life."

Mark Tuttle has written "Technology and the media are touching every aspect of our lives—we cannot run from this reality. But, we can seek to understand the demands which the given media make upon our message and recognize that the media are to be used as a servant. Developments in technology and new media forms should be taken as new opportunities . . ."

May Free Will Baptists make the most of these God-given opportunities to share the gospel with all men everywhere. ▲

FOOTNOTES

¹The Electric Church by Ben Armstrong, Thomas Nelson Publishers, Inc., 1979 p. 7.

²"The Birth of a Media Myth" by William Martin in *The Atlantic*, June 1981, Volume 247, Number 6, p. 10.

³"Does The Electric Church Hurt the Local Church?" by Ben Armstrong in *Religious Broadcasting*, June/July 1979, p. 19.

⁴Martin, p. 16.

⁵Armstrong, "Does The Electric Church Hurt the Local Church?" p. 20.

⁶"There Is No Such Thing As A TV Pastor" by William F. Fore in *TV Guide*, July 19, 1980, p. 16.



ABOUT THE WRITER: Reverend Larry Hampton is manager of the editorial division at the Sunday School and Church Training Department. He is a graduate of Free Will Baptist Bible College, Covenant Theological Seminary, and Wheaton Graduate School.



"But Dad, my refusal to get a haircut is not an act of rebellion."



"It's just that you and I don't share the same conviction about hairlength, and I'm merely declaring my spiritual autonomy."



"Well if you don't get your hair cut, you can't borrow the car Friday night; that's just a moral imperative called keys for locks and I'm merely asserting your paternal dependence!"





FREE WILL BAPTIST

newsfront

OKLAHOMA CHURCH WAREHOUSES FOOD FOR POLAND

TULSA, OK—Within two weeks after martial law closed Poland's borders last December 12, the Madison Avenue Free Will Baptist Church in Tulsa, led by Pastor Robert D. Hidde, began collecting money and food items for the people of Poland.

The actions of Rev. Hidde and the Madison Avenue Church drew praise in a December 27 story in a local newspaper, the *Tulsa World*.

Hidde said that most of the donations he collects will be funnelled through the National Association of Evangelicals or other similar agencies. The Madison Avenue Church Woman's Auxiliary has adopted the Poland project.

According to Rev. Hidde, community response to the project has been favorable with radio stations giving out the church office number and urging community cooperation.

There has been some criticism of the church's activities. Rev. Hidde reported, "The worst response I have had was from a 'Christian' who called me a dirty communist, and swore that he would blow my brains out some Sunday morning as I preached."

Pastor Hidde said that although he was saddened at the lack of response from Free Will Baptists at the national level, "I plan to work for the establishment of a permanent agency at a national level to respond to needs such as the one in Poland."



NAE Executive Director, Dr. Billy A. Melvin, with Bishop Ting.

BILLY MELVIN AMONG EVANGELICAL LEADERS TO VISIT CHINA

WHEATON, IL—Ten evangelical church leaders from the United States, including former Free Will Baptist Executive Secretary Billy Melvin, visited Bishop K. H. Ting, chairman of the Three-Self Protestant movement and the newly-formed Chinese Christian Council, in Nanjing, China on November 19, 1981. The contact was initiated by the National Association of Evangelicals (NAE), an interchurch agency of evangelical denominations and churches.

Following an extended visit with Bishop Ting in which he shared the conditions and development of the Church in China, Dr. Billy A. Melvin, NAE Executive Director and leader of the group stated: "This initial contact was significant in building bridges of understanding between the Church in China and the evangelical churches of America."

The group shared with Bishop Ting the growth of U.S. evangelical churches during the past 30 years, and expressed a desire for open dialogue and communication with the Church in China for the purpose of mutual understanding and informed prayer support.

An NAE statement regarding the Churches of China was shared with Bishop Ting which, in part, said: "We

affirm our sincere love for all the Chinese people. We wish them well as they seek the progress and development of their homeland. We pray for China's Christians as we ask them to pray for us."

Bishop Ting expressed appreciation for the group's visit and the prayers of Christians in America. He said that 200 churches had been re-opened in China since the end of the Cultural Revolution in 1976 and that there were more than one million Christians, approximately 80 percent of whom worship in house meetings.

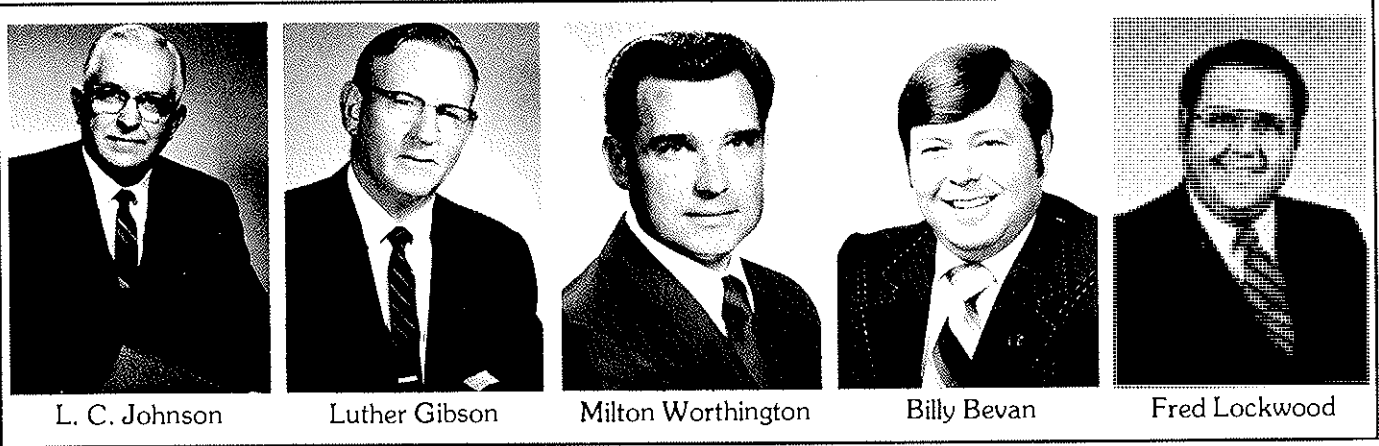
A magazine with a circulation of 30,000 is published monthly to provide help and guidance for leaders in the Three-Self Churches and those churches meeting in houses. In 1980, 50,000 copies of the New Testament and 85,000 copies of the entire Bible were published by Chinese Christians for use in the churches. The number of Bibles published doubled in 1981.

MAGAZINES HAVE A MINISTRY . . .



newsfront

(continued)



TUPELO CELEBRATES 50TH ANNIVERSARY WEEK

TUPELO, MS—More than 360 attended the 50th-year celebration week October 4-11, 1981 at Tupelo Free Will Baptist Church, Tupelo, including four former pastors and the Free Will Baptist Executive Secretary.

Pastor Fred Lockwood and a team of Tupelo Church members prepared a 20-page church history for distribution to those who shared in the week-long event.

Former Pastors L. C. Johnson, Luther Gibson, Milton Worthington and Billy Bevan appeared with Pastor Lockwood on the Wednesday 6:00

a.m. "Mornin' Show" at a local television station.

A Tuesday Bible Conference featured the preaching of Tupelo Church's former pastors. In addition to the one-day Bible Conference, two preaching services were conducted each evening.

Missionary to France Joe Haas and Executive Secretary Melvin Worthington shared the pulpit with the former pastors.

Dr. L. C. Johnson preached the 50th anniversary message on Sunday morning. The congregation regrouped at 2:00 p.m. to hear Dr. Melvin

Worthington deliver the dedication message for the newly renovated church sanctuary.

Just prior to the 50th anniversary week, members completed the five-month renovation project, at a cost of \$115,000.

Pastor Lockwood noted, "At the end of the construction, the builders agreed that \$200,000 of value had been added to the church property."

Tupelo Church was organized in 1931 by Rev. M. L. Hollis at the close of a revival meeting that had 54 converts ready for baptism.

CHRISTMAS PROJECT NETS FWBBC OVER \$50,000

NASHVILLE, TN—Students and employees raised more than \$50,000 for Free Will Baptist Bible College during Christmas holidays, according to Public Relations Director Paul Ketteman.

The funds were turned in at a special Chapel service on January 7. With funds still arriving for the Christmas Project, Ketteman felt that the total would exceed the \$53,749.45 raised in the drive last year.

Even if the drive does not eventually top the previously set goal of \$58,000, Ketteman feels it is a success. He cites the fact that the funds were raised through student effort, costing the college virtually nothing to raise. Except for about \$4,500, all the money is in gifts, signed checkbooks, and matching gifts from corporations.

The entire college family was challenged before the holidays to contact people and hold special Bible College services. Each person was supplied with a packet containing monthly gift checkbooks and instructions on how to use them. The Public Relations Department also contacted pastors to ask for their cooperation.

For the second consecutive year, Brian Peters, a junior from Newport News, VA, brought in the largest gift. Several other students brought in gifts amounting to \$2,000 or more, Ketteman said.

The Christmas Project will substantially boost this year's efforts to raise \$580,000 to meet the general fund gift budget by the end of the fiscal year, May 31, 1982.

NATIONAL BOARD NAMES OKLAHOMA PASTOR REGIONAL REP

NASHVILLE, TN—Rev. Ernest Harrison, Sr. of Henryetta, Oklahoma has been named a Regional Representative of the Board of Retirement and Insurance, according to Director Herman Hersey.

Rev. Harrison will visit district and quarterly associations in Oklahoma, Texas, Kansas and Arkansas. He pastors First Free Will Baptist Church in Henryetta.

Director Hersey says, "Brother Harrison is well qualified for the position. He has an intense interest in this ministry, having served on the Board of Retirement for 12 years."

Mr. Harrison may be contacted at: Box 91, Henryetta, Oklahoma, 74437, (918) 652-7324 for further information.

NATIONAL CONVENTION MUSIC

—Make A Joyful Noise—

ATTENTION: All Musicians, Pastors, Missionaries, Church Choir Members!

A fully developed musical program is planned for the 1982 National Convention which meets in Fort Worth, Texas, July 18-22.

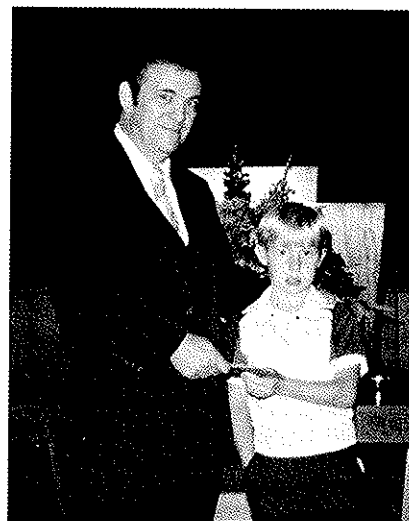
The past several years have witnessed development of musical ministry at the National Convention. In addition to congregational singing, several special ministering groups have been organized.

A two-fold purpose has guided the development of these groups: First, opportunity for Free Will Baptists from

across the nation and around the world to blend voice and heart in producing good music; second, opportunity for developmental music ministry to those who attend the convention worship services.

You are invited to become part of the National Convention ministry in Fort Worth.

Watch for announcements in CONTACT magazine and Free Will Baptist state papers regarding musical opportunities which will be available to all Free Will Baptists who attend the 1982 National Convention.



Chris Stevens hands Pastor Bud Hill his 50th missionary quarter folder.

10-YEAR-OLD BOOSTS FWB MISSIONS

WINFIELD, AL—Ten-year-old Chris Stevens began filling \$5.00 quarter folders for Free Will Baptist Missions last March, according to his pastor, Bud Hill of First FWB Church, Winfield.

By October 25, Chris, a student at Liberty Christian Academy in Guin, AL, had completed his 50th quarter folder for missions.

He accumulated the \$250 in quarters to fill the folders by "working at odd jobs and asking people for money."

ALABAMA QUINTET SAILS TO TOURNEY WIN

NASHVILLE, TN—The Florence Christian Academy Saints, Florence, Alabama, won the third annual High School Basketball Tournament hosted by Free Will Baptist Bible College, January 7-9, according to Mark Johnson, the college athletic director.

The Saints, coached by Bobby Montgomery, were undefeated in five games. The school is affiliated with First FWB Church of Florence, pastored by Rev. Tom Malone.

Second place went to the Heritage Temple Hawks from Columbus, Ohio. The Farmington (Missouri) Christian Academy Warriors took third place. A Christian Testimony Team trophy was awarded to the Miracles from Van Buren (Arkansas) Christian Academy, who made their first appearance in the tournament this year.

Randy Capps, a junior guard from Florence was selected as the tournament's Most Valuable Player. Seven other players joined Capps on the All Tournament Team:

Kirk Addison, Liberty Christian School, Durham, NC

Ricky Bivins, Liberty Christian School, Durham, NC

Rod Hutcherson, Heritage Temple Christian School, Columbus, OH

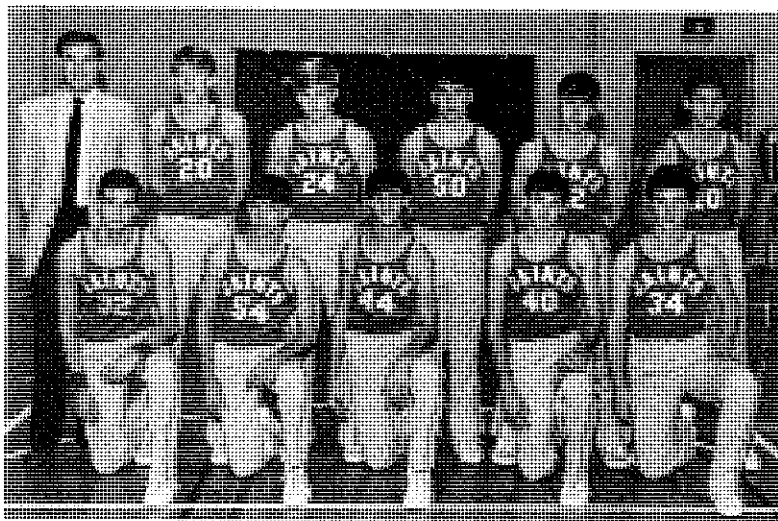
Dale Kopp, Heritage Temple Christian School, Columbus, OH

Mark Lancaster, Randall Christian Academy, Memphis, TN

Joe McFarland, Farmington Christian Academy, Farmington, MO

David Miller, Peninsula Christian School, Newport News, VA

This year's competition brought together nearly 200 players, cheerleaders and sponsors from eight Free Will Baptist high schools in seven states. Next year's tournament is scheduled January 6-8, 1983.



Coach Bobby Montgomery and the tournament winning Florence Christian Academy Saints.

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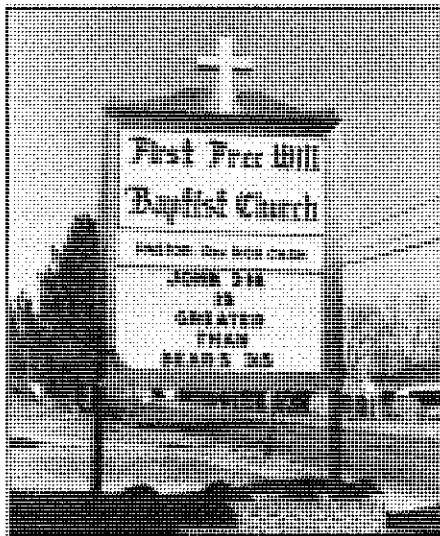
CHURCH MESSAGE BIGGER THAN THE 'BEAR'

FAYETTE, AL—When the University of Alabama football team was pushing to make Coach Paul "Bear" Bryant the all-time winningest coach last December, a timely message appeared on the sign at First Free Will Baptist Church in Fayette, Alabama.

The sign's message read: "John 3:16 is greater than Bear's 315."

Church Treasurer Reedus Wheat said, "It received more comments from the public than any of our previous advertising. It puts Bear Bryant's recent big win in proper perspective."

The pastor at First Church is Rick Cash.



CHURCH OBSERVES GROUNDBREAKING FOR NEW WING

SANFORD, NC—Groundbreaking ceremonies for an educational wing at Kendale Acres Free Will Baptist Church, Sanford, were conducted December 6, 1981, according to Pastor Richard Barnes.

The new educational wing will provide additional classrooms as well as a

fellowship hall for the church. Kendale Acres Church operates under the direction of the North Carolina Home Mission Board.

The organizational meeting for the church was held in June of 1980, after the church was reopened in 1978. Membership stands at 178.

The **Fellowship FWB Church, Kingsport, TN** gave \$3,600 to the account of Missionary **Joe Haas** during a Christmas drive. **Winston Sweeney** pastors.

CONTACT welcomes the **LITTLE BROWN INFORMER**, publication of **Little Brown Creek FWB Church, New Site, MS.** **Gene Gilbert** pastors.

In order to reach out and bring more people to Sunday School and church, the congregation at **First FWB Church, North Little Rock, AR** purchased a new 15-passenger Dodge van according to Pastor **Ben Scott**.

Pastor **Roy Roach** of **Richland FWB Church, Nashville, TN** says the congregation had a 64 percent increase in Sunday School attendance during 1981, surging from a 78 average in 1980 to a 123 average in 1981. The group also began a Master's Men Chapter and a monthly church newsletter.

The Master's Men Chapter at **Bethany FWB Church, Tulsa, OK** presented a check for just over \$10,000 to **Hillsdale FWB College** President, **Don Elkins**, during the Oklahoma State Master's Men meeting. The check was given for the Hillsdale Endowment Fund according to Chapter President **Bob Sharpe**. By the way, are you wondering how one Master's Men Chapter managed to come up with \$10,000? Here's how—the group built a house, sold it, and gave the profit to Hillsdale College. **Ray Gwartney** pastors.

**Teenagers
Speak Out!**

page 16

Several **California** FWB businessmen have urged California Executive Secretary **Paul Kennedy** to assist them in organizing a statewide FWB Businessmen's Fellowshipship.

January 10 was **Connie Cariker Day** at **West Tulsa FWB Church, Tulsa, OK**. That day marked the 25th anniversary of Brother Cariker as pastor of the Oklahoma congregation.

Double Branch FWB Church, Hawkinsville, GA completed a 180-seat sanctuary and educational wing. The educational wing includes eight classrooms, a pastor's study, social hall and kitchen complex. **Willie Martin** pastors.

Liberty FWB Church, Waycross, GA opened the pre-secondary program in the Liberty school system in January. The program includes pre-care through five-year-old kindergarten ages for youngsters who attend. **Bill Lewis** pastors.

According to church statistics, **Farmington FWB Church, Farmington, MO** averaged 672 in Sunday School during 1981. The congregation baptized 177 converts and logged a record attendance of 1,093 on October 25. **Jim McAllister** pastors.

Deacon **Nelson Markham** of **Demaree FWB Church, Visalia, CA** was on his way to work in a dense fog on November 20, 1981, when a blood-curdling scream pierced the morning fog. A thief had sprayed an aerosol irritant in a woman's face and snatched her purse. However, Markham and other passersby managed to get the woman's purse back even though the assailant escaped. Markham was commended by the local newspaper, *The Visalia Times* and by his employer, The Tulare County Department of Public Social Services.

Pastor **George Lee** of **Victory FWB Church, Goldsboro, NC** says he has ten copies of early FWB books available for sale if FWB history connoisseurs are interested.

Jess Greer, 86, received a 29-year faithful service plaque from **Keystone FWB Church, Johnson City, TN** where he serves as trustee. **W. L. Kell** pastors.

The **Carterville FWB Church of Carl Junction, MO** established a permanent endowment with the **FWB Foundation**. The church disbanded, sold their property and gave the mortgage note of \$10,000 plus interest at 10 percent to the

Foundation to fund the endowment, according to Foundation Executive Secretary **Herman Hersey**. The earnings from the endowment will be divided equally between the Board of Foreign Missions of the National Association; the FWB Home for Children, Greeneville, TN; and Hillsdale FWB College, Moore, OK.

In its first ever "College Day," **Parkers Chapel FWB Church, Greenville, NC** raised \$16,000 for Free Will Baptist Bible College, according to Pastor **Jim Nason**. The pastor had led his people to designate \$5,000 for the college from the church treasury and then encouraged members to match that amount in offerings. The people responded with offerings that more than doubled what he asked them to do. According to **FWBBC** President **Charles Thigpen**, this was the largest gift ever raised by a local FWB Church on its first college day.

CONTACT welcomes **SERENDIPITY**, a new publication sponsored by **Horton Heights FWB Church, Nashville, TN**. **Paul F. Hall** pastors. **SERENDIPITY** is a publication of the young ambassadors at the church. It features an editorial and also provides church youth with an opportunity to express themselves in printed form.

Farmington, MO based evangelist **Ken Dodson** reports 216 people saved in revival campaigns during February-November, 1981. Dodson has worked extensively in **First FWB Church, Farmington**.

Members of **Spencer Road FWB Church, Spencer, OK** believe that it pays to advertise. According to Pastor **Waldo Young**, the church has invested more than \$4,000 in commercially painted signs which are strategically posted to inform passersby where the church is located.

Here's a good idea. The **Donelson FWB Church, Nashville, TN** provides a three panel brochure informing members and visitors about the church nursery. Nursery director **Charlie Mai Bowman** compiled the information in the attractively designed public relations piece. It includes a welcome to the nursery, a summary of services offered, and suggestions on preparing to bring children to the church nursery.

And finally—since his name has been in the news a great deal here of late, you will

be delighted to learn that Prince Charles has enrolled as a student at **California Christian College, Fresno, CA**. His name is really **Prince Nelson Charles of Sierra Leone, South Africa**, who arrived at the college in November to prepare for a ministry in South Africa. ▲

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Green Tree Bible Study



Robert E. Picirilli

I Thessalonians 2:17—3:13

The Preacher And His People

The heartbeat of Paul—that's what you see in this passage. You can summarize it in the words of 3:8: Now we live, if you stand fast in the Lord.

Paul's own sense of being alive was tied in with the success of his converts. Let that idea get hold of you, and you won't be the same.

So far, Paul has been reviewing his ministry at Thessalonica. That ministry was cut short and Paul and his co-workers were forced to leave the city (see Acts 17:1-9). But with Paul, out of sight was *not* out of mind (2:17). He had labored to give spiritual birth to the Thessalonian believers, and he had no intention of abandoning them. So his ministry to them continued.

First, he attempted to return to Thessalonica (2:17-20). At least twice ("once and again," v. 18) he made specific plans that fell through.

Satan was at work—the very name means "adversary." How Satan hindered we are not told; he has a thousand ways. But get this biblical doctrine down: even Satan's roadblocks can come only as God permits (compare II Corinthians 12:7; Job 1:6—2:8).

It was God's will that Paul continue to be interested in the Thessalonians' spiritual welfare and make plans to return. It was also God's will to allow Satan to stop him. Paul didn't waste time in frustration and bitterness. He went on to the next alternative.

Therefore, he sent Timothy to them (3:1-5).

Notice the cost: being left alone in Athens (v. 1). That emotion was outweighed by another, repeated twice: "I could no longer forbear" (vv. 1, 5). Paul couldn't stand not knowing how the Thessalonian believers were doing.

Notice, also, Paul's three objectives in sending Timothy: to establish the Thessalonians (v. 2), to encourage them in the face of the afflictions they were experiencing (vv. 2-4), and to inform himself about their spiritual progress (v. 5). Timothy could be trusted on such a mission: note the three-fold description of him (v. 2).

You can't miss the point: Paul was *anxious* ("affliction and distress" v. 7) about the spiritual lives of the Thessalonians.

His fear is spelled out in verse 5: lest somehow the tempter have tempted you and our labor be in vain. Apparently he had considered it a real possibility that their faith could fail and his work go down the drain. Out of that agony of uncertainty he sent Timothy.

Consequently, he received Timothy's report with joy (3:6-10).

Timothy's return brought good news ("glad tidings," v. 6, is the same word that often means the "gospel"). You don't have to strain to see the effect it had on Paul: encouragement (v. 7), thanksgiving (v. 9), rejoicing (v. 9), and renewed prayers for the Thessalonians (v. 10).

Verse 8 summarizes it best: the news that the Thessalonian converts were standing fast in the faith was like a new lease on life for Paul. He didn't "live" unless his people prospered. Look back at 2:19, 20 and you see that even clearer.

Paul's glory and joy were in those he won to Christ and nurtured in the faith. His crown would be mature

disciples to present to Jesus at His return (compare Colossians 1:28, 29). His whole life was tied up in his converts.

Finally, he continued to pray for the Thessalonians (3:11-13). We have already seen (v. 10) that Timothy's report renewed Paul's prayers.

Now Paul includes in this letter the essence of his "night and day" prayer

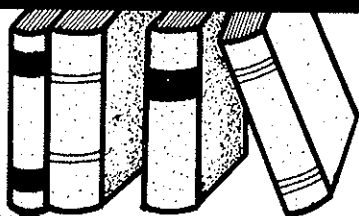
for them, and there are three main petitions: for another opportunity to visit them (v. 11; compare v. 10); for their abundant increase in Christian love (v. 12); and for their establishment in holy living (v. 13). That, too, has standing before Christ as its motive.

The lesson of this passage is powerful. When God's servant is committed to the spiritual welfare of those he

ministers to, he will not spare himself. Like Paul, he will be open to the pain of caring thus for others. His own sense of well being will depend on how they do.

But the greater the possibilities for agony, the greater the potential for joy. And what we invest of ourselves in making and nurturing converts will not go unnoticed when the Lord comes. ▲

Top Shelf



Thomas Marberry



Till Armageddon, by Billy Graham (Word Books, 1981, 224 pp., hard cover, \$8.95).

This is not a book about eschatology. It deals with something which is an inevitable part of life on this planet, suffering.

Suffering is a fact of life. It touches rich and poor, learned and ignorant, saint and sinner. Throughout history, Christians have been called upon from time to time to suffer for their faith.

Yet, suffering is not the exclusive possession of the Christian. It touches everyone to one extent or another.

This book is designed to bring comfort and understanding to the Christian who is suffering because of illness, persecution, or some other difficulty. It can also be of value to ministers and others who attempt to comfort those who are suffering.

This volume can also point out to the non-Christian something of the hope and comfort which are available to him in Christ.

In this work, Dr. Graham answers some difficult questions. For example, he answers the question, "Why doesn't

God remove all suffering from the world?" Certainly He has the power to do it.

Graham suggests two answers. First, if God were to destroy all evil, He would have to destroy all evil men. This God does not do because He would rather transform evil men than destroy them.

Second, if all evil were removed from the world, man would have nothing but good to choose. That would destroy man's freedom of choice; he would become nothing but a robot.

Dr. Graham presents the important place which suffering occupied in the ministry of Jesus. He points out that it is through the blood of Christ that the sinner is justified and cleansed. In shedding His blood, Christ suffered, and suffered greatly.

Since Christ suffered so much, the Christian should not expect to be protected from suffering. Many times in the scriptures, we are warned that suffering is a portion of the Christian's lot in life.

This book also speaks of the things which the Christian can do to prepare for suffering and then to endure it when it does come.

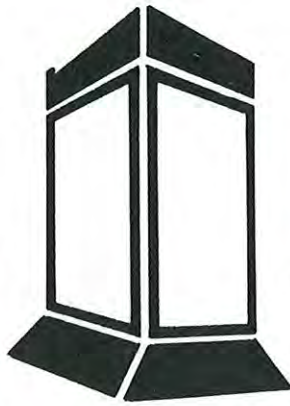
First, the Christian can make sure of his relationship with God. Second, he can learn to walk with God in daily life. Third, he can strengthen himself with the Word of God. Fourth, he can fortify himself with prayer. Fifth, he can realize the nearness of God at all times.

These things will not protect the Christian from suffering, but they can make him able to deal with it much more effectively.

One very helpful section points out how the Christian can bring help and comfort to those who are suffering. Another valuable portion deals with the subject of death and how the Christian can better understand it.

This is a book that many Free Will Baptists should find helpful. It can be valuable for those who are themselves suffering. It can perhaps be even more valuable to pastors, relatives, friends, and others who deal with one who is suffering.

This book is a little sobering. It points out that suffering is not just an illusion; it is real, very real. Yet the author reminds us that, "The will of God will never take us where the grace of God cannot sustain us." ▲



The Free Will Baptist Pulpit

Carroll Alexander, Pastor

Columbia Free Will Baptist Church, Columbia, South Carolina

Heavenly Places in Christ

Scripture—Ephesians 1

Introduction

Ephesians is a book of conflict and victory in the Christian life (6:10-18). It has been called "The Joshua of the New Testament" because of the parallel between the Israelites entering the promised land to possess their possessions and Christians living the life of victory.

In order to prepare us for the battle, the Holy Spirit wants us to know the resources we have in the Lord. Note several characteristics of our position in Christ:

I. The Place of Heavenly Quality (vv. 1-3)

A. The emphasis is not on the place "Heaven" (noun), but the quality "heavenly" (adjective) of our earthly walk.

B. The present possession is not something we get when we get to Heaven. Note v. 3, "hath blessed us."

Application: We sing, "The Sweet By and By," but we should also possess the sweet now and now. We sing, "It Will Be Worth It All" when it is already worth it all.

We sing, "And I Won't Have to Worry Anymore." All of these are good songs, but we should also realize even now that "I don't have to worry anymore" (Phil. 4:6; Isa. 26:3, 4; 1 Peter 5:7).

II. The Place Of God's Choosing (v. 4)

A. Often neglected—remember that all scripture is inspired and profitable (II Tim. 3:16), and we believe all of it.

B. Should be understood—God chose to save a group. Man chooses whether or not he will be in that group (Rom. 10:13, John 5:40).

Application: It should be a comfort for the battle to know that salvation was planned by God before the foundation of the world and not something that just happened by the way.

III. The Place Of God's Predestination (v. 5)

A. God does not predetermine a person's salvation (II Peter 3:9, Rev. 22:17).

B. He does predetermine certain events (prophecy, etc.), and to those who choose to be "accepted in the beloved" (v. 6), He does predetermine certain things: Our adoption (v. 5), acceptance (v. 6), redemption (v. 7), inheritance (vv. 8-11), and conformity to the image of His Son (Rom. 8:29).

Application: It should encourage us in the battle to know that God has laid down before hand a path of victory. He does not cause all things to happen, but He overrules the evil for His glory and our good (v. 11).

IV. The Place Of Highest Goal (v. 12)

"To the praise of His glory"—that's what life is all about (Rev. 4:11, Col. 1:16, 18).

V. The Place Of Security (vv. 13, 14)

A. "Sealed by the Holy Spirit"—not as being sealed up in a container as taught by proponents of unconditional security.

B. "Sealed by the Holy Spirit"—as a mark of ownership.

Application: The realization that we belong to God should give strength for the battle.

VI. The Place Of Power (vv. 15-20a)

Paul prays that we may have wisdom, knowledge and understanding:

A. To know God's power which He manifested in the resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ.

B. To know that this power can be ours—"to usward."

Conclusion

The Lord we serve is Lord over all. Through Him we can possess our possessions in the victorious Christian life (vv. 20b-23). ▲



How To Treat Your Pastor— 1849 Style

By William F. Davidson

In 1855, William Foss collected a number of recently written books and tracts and published them in a series of volumes entitled *The Free-will Baptist Library*.

Most of the articles were written by Free Will Baptist authors, but one group was published in England. The instruction was so near to Free Will Baptist policy that it was included as

advice for the churches within the denomination.

Dr. Jabez Burns, author of the English articles, was evidently aligned with the American denomination theologically and respected for his advice. His articles included in the *Library* touched on theology, morality, and daily Christian living.

While his thoughts on predestination, apostasy, and general atonement were clear and accurate, his practical articles were exciting and enlightening, giving a clear picture of the difficulties of the day and the wisdom with which they were solved.

In his tract, *Hints to Church Members: Duties and Responsibilities Arising from Christian Fellowship* (1849), Dr. Burns left little to the imagination. His instruction runs the full gamut from personal piety to development and exercise of individual spiritual gifts within the body.

His most compelling advice related to the church member's responsibility to his pastor, and the advice is ageless. Except for the stilted language peculiar to the mid-nineteenth century, the problems and advice could easily be part of the historical scene in 1982.

Love Him

We are amazed to find that pastors are human and that they struggle with human frailties. Not all are eloquent preachers or sensitive to needs or omniscient. Some cannot sing or have dandruff or fall short of the image set by the pastor of the church across town.

But all are loving and caring and faithful to the task of the gospel. And all need the encouragement of being loved by their people. In fact, a little



HISTORY (From page 29)

love often obscures the rough edges and allows the good to show through.

Support His Ministry

Because we pay his salary, we tend to expect the pastor to do it all—the planning, the preaching, the evangelism, the visitation, the public relations. We expect him to constantly have new and fresh ideas and to execute them—alone. If we become involved at all, it is in criticism—“we never did it that way.”

But the work of the church was designed as a partnership. The pastor builds up the saints and then, together, they carry out the task of the great commission. With that kind of cooperation and the constant support of prayer and service, any preacher can become a great man of God.

Support Him Financially

We often say in jest that we keep our pastor humble by controlling his salary. But, unfortunately, in many churches the joke is far from funny.

The pastor is expected to dress appropriately, drive a serviceable car that will not shame the church, entertain his parishioners, and take care of his family—all on a salary far below the average of the church members.

While it is true that some denominations go to the other extreme and pay excessive staff salaries, it seems that there should be a healthy balance that allows a pastor to live comfortably, care for his family, and do his job well.

It is easy to imagine that this problem is totally contemporary, but Dr. Burns had good advice for the church more than a hundred years ago. In essence, he says, leave the problem of humility to the pastor's relationship to the Lord. It is God's responsibility and He is fully capable. About the pastor, he says:

If he is the man of your choice and faithful in his work, you need not fear giving him an ample remuneration . . . let him have sufficient means to live comfortably and honestly. To be able to live without anxiety as to how he shall meet his daily necessities.

Let him have the means of hospitality to brethren who visit him; and enable him to have a good library and the means of constantly renewing it: . . . the law of equity demands this.

He studies, preaches, and labors . . . He gives up secular pursuits for your spiritual benefit. As he ministers to you in holy things, ought he not to expect to be free from anxiety in respect to temporal things?

Some Final Practical Advice

Dr. Burns closes with a list of practical suggestions: Presume not on his kindness; teach your children to love him; give him a hearty welcome to your homes; do not expect special displays of attention from him; do not draw too largely on his time; do not expect him to be omniscient.

The final suggestion was added by this writer, but was drawn from the next statement in the list offered by Dr. Burns. How often we expect the pastor to know everything that is happening within the church family and we are disappointed or even angry when he fails to respond to specific needs.

Dr. Burns speaks not only to our relationship to the pastor but to our responsibility toward him as well. “If in anxiety or sick, request his counsel, and visits, and prayers; but if he is ignorant of these, do not blame him for not calling on you.”

Conclusion

In I Thessalonians 5, Paul encourages us to know those who labor among us, but he seems to have in mind more than a personal friendship that welcomes the pastor to our table or to our homes.

He is rather concerned with the sacrifice, the long hours, the pressures, the time away from home, the burdens of an entire congregation that are part of every pastor's ministry.

When we have that kind of knowledge, the advice of Dr. Burns becomes easy to follow. We will solve a great many of the problems of the local church when we recognize our responsibility and accept and encourage the partnership that God has established between a pastor and his people. ▲

TAXES (From page 4)

Tips on Tax Savings

Medical Insurance Premiums—if paid by church are not taxable to minister.

Housing Allowance—not taxable to minister as discussed above.

Income Averaging—averages income over past 5 years; certain qualifications.

Investment Tax Credit—a dollar for dollar tax savings for depreciable property bought by the minister during tax year; certain qualifications.

Child Care Credit—percentage of child care credited to your taxes if each spouse has earned income; certain qualifications.

Earned Income Credit—income has to be under \$10,000 and must have at least one child; see income tax booklet.

For further information, contact your IRS office and ask for Publication 517 and Tax News 1981-11, dated February 6, 1981.

Books: *Income Tax Law for Minister and Religious Workers* by B. J. Worth—Send \$3.95 to RHP (postage and handling included) for your copy.

▲
ABOUT THE WRITER: Mr. Clarence Lewis is manager of the Bookkeeping Division at Randall House Publications, Nashville, Tennessee.

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Pushing Priorities



THE NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF
Free Will Baptists

THE SECRETARY SPEAKS

By Melvin Worthington

Christians often feel there's not enough time to get everything done. The pace, problems and pressures of today's complex and corrupt society cause us to misplace our priorities. We get involved in lists of good and worthwhile projects, yet somehow manage to neglect the most important time and the most important things.

What is the order of priorities for the Christian? If we don't get the priorities right, we'll be choked with non-essentials and marginal involvement.

The Christian's first priority is his *relationship to his Heavenly Father*. This relationship, born at the conversion experience, continues through earnest communion and will climax in exalted coronation.

Three things are essential to maintain this relationship—stillness before Him, submission to Him, and supping with Him. Whatever good we may engage in, we dare not neglect our personal relationship to God.

Devoted worship, dependent waiting and deliberating on His Word help us strengthen this lifeline between His bounty and our weakness.

The Christian's second priority is his *role within his human family*. This relationship includes the husband, the help and the heritage.

Husbands must maintain a right relationship with their wives. They must love them with a love that is unselfish, unhurried, understanding and untiring. They must live with them according to knowledge. They must labor for and provide for them. They must lead them. They must listen to them.

Wives, whose husbands love them in the fashion described above, find it no great difficulty to submit to, support, share, and satisfy their own husbands.

Children whose parents are biblical role models are more inclined to obey their parents in the Lord. When children leave home and direct parental authority, they still respect their parents.

Christianity must work in the home before it is put on display in the community. Understanding relationships, undertaking responsibility and unselfish readjustments are helpful in oiling the proper family relationships.

The third priority of the Christian is his *responsibility to his honored function*.

The Christian must function within the *Church*. All Christians are members of the Lord's Church, the living organism, the body of Christ by virtue of conversion. Christians belong to local congregations by voluntarily uniting with them. The Christian should honor his relationship to that local church. He should fulfill his responsibility and should give of his resources to the church. The local church is

God's channel through which He is doing His work.

The Christian must function within the *community*. He must discover the role he can have and then expedite his responsibility to that community in which he resides.

The Christian must function within the *country*. The Bible radiates with reminders that the Christian as a citizen of his country is to be an asset, salt in the soup and light for the dark nights.

Supplication for leaders, submission to the laws, and sanctified lives are just duties for one who is both a Christian and a citizen. Patriotism is neither unbiblical nor unspiritual.

Our country and communities are but reflections of what the people are. Neglecting community responsibility and responsibility to our country has contributed to the state which now exists.

Honest, humble, holy living is the great antidote against moral evil. Intercession, instruction and involvement are effective ways to make our communities and country better places in which to live.

When a man's priorities are correct, he always seems to find time to do the right thing at the right time. ▲

THE SECRETARY'S SCHEDULE

- March 5-15** Arizona Churches
- March 18, 23, 25** Denominational Seminar Class, FWBBC, Nashville, TN
- March 26-27** Illinois State Association, Camp Hope, Ewing, IL

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