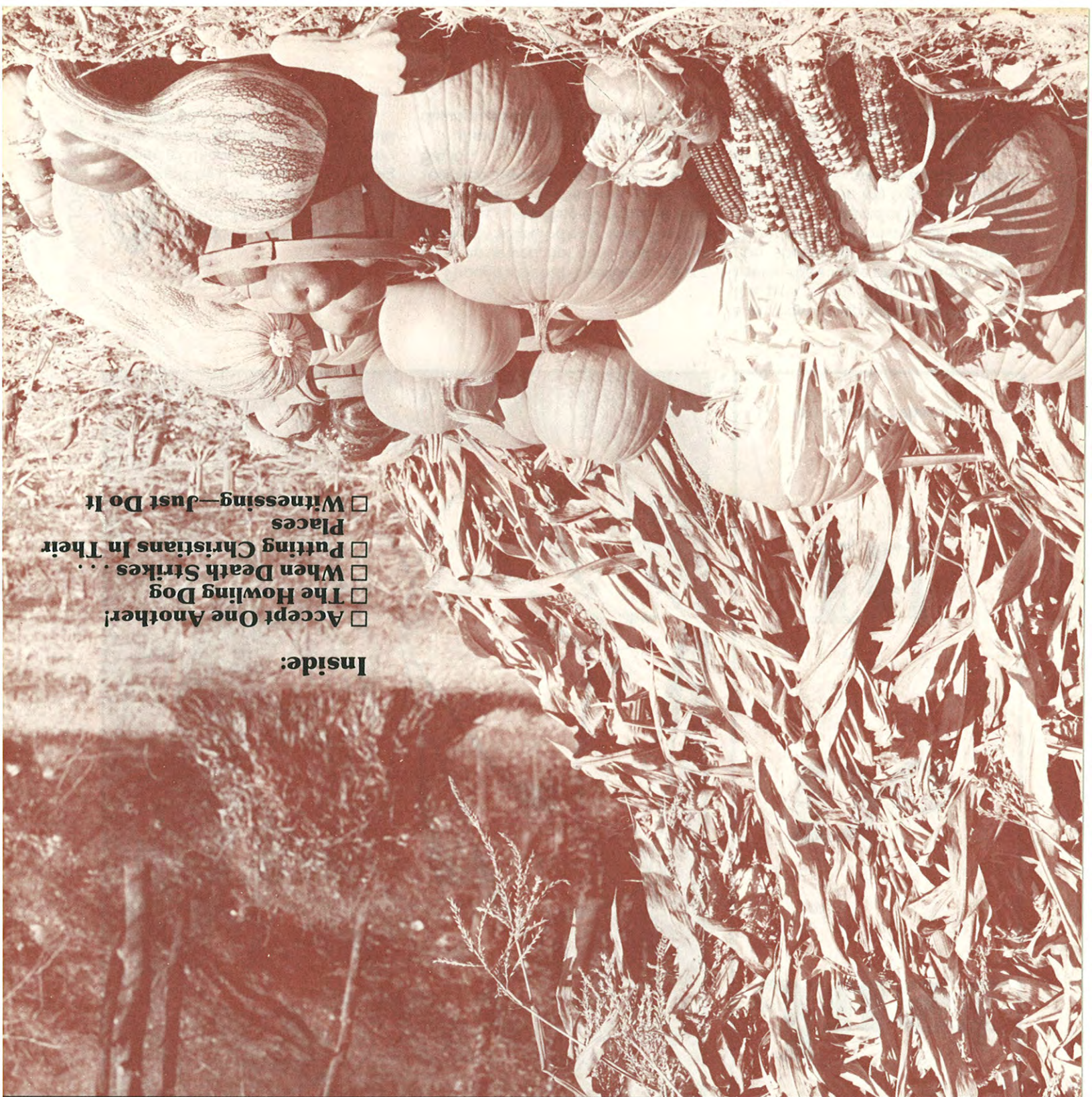


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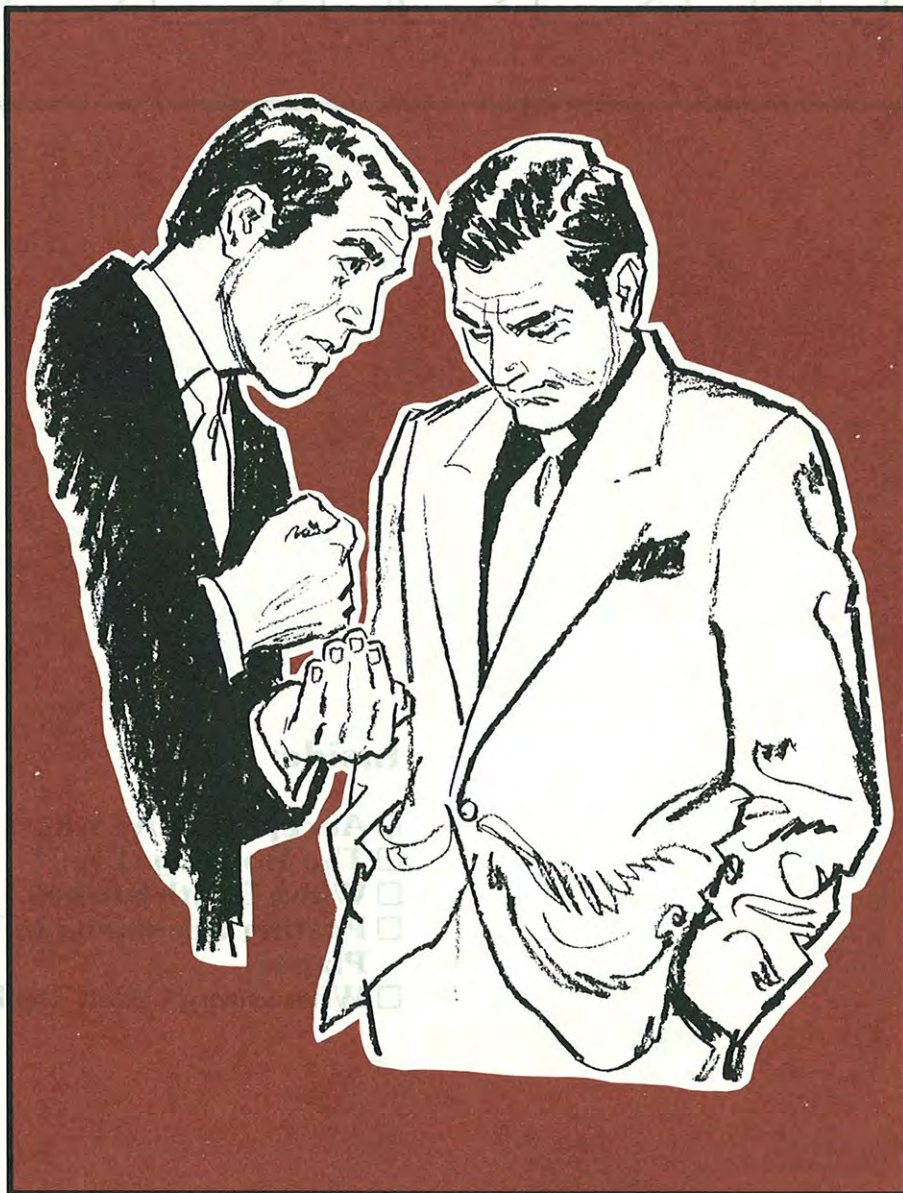
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OFFICIAL PUBLICATION OF THE NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF FREE WILL BAPTISTS

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 - ☐ The Howling Dog
 - ☐ When Death Strikes...
 - ☐ Putting Christians In Their Places
 - ☐ Witnessing—Just Do It



Witnessing—



Just Do It!

By Gordon Sebastian

2/CONTACT/Nov. '82

August 15, 1951, aboard the U.S.S. Mississippi, I was first confronted with the gospel. A shipmate by the name of Ted Young opened a Gideon New Testament and showed me in God's Word how I could be saved and know it.

Though a church member for years, I was not saved, nor had I been shown from the Bible God's wonderful plan of salvation. Less than 20 minutes after Ted began, I bowed my head and received Jesus Christ as my personal Savior.

A short time after my conversion it dawned on me that I could have died

and dropped straight into Hell from the pew of my church, never once having the simple plan of God's salvation shown to me. I asked myself, "Why didn't my pastor tell me about salvation—the kind of 'know-so' salvation set forth in the New Testament? Why didn't he preach about this kind of salvation?"

I couldn't stand not knowing any longer. I wrote Pastor Sutton giving

him my testimony of conversion and, then, asking him why he had never told me about this. His six-page reply was not a defense. It was a heart-broken apology.

Later that year when I was home on leave, I was able to confront him personally regarding this matter. In tears he asked me to forgive him for failing to preach the Bible those years I sat under his ministry. He confessed that years of church pressure and politics had taken its toll in concession and compromise in his ministry and message.

Most of the people we know—those who live around us, those we work or go to school with, those we see everyday in our stores and shopping centers, even those who attend our neighborhood churches—have never been taken verse-by-verse through the New Testament plan of salvation.

Most of the people we see everyday are lost, with absolutely no idea what it means to be saved, and, further, have never been asked one time in their lives about their souls and eternity. I am fifty years old and have been asked only one time in my entire life about my soul and salvation.

The Must of Witnessing

A few years ago in a revival service at the church I pastor, I called upon a visiting minister to lead the congregation in prayer. He very politely refused. He didn't have his prayer book and it was contrary to his policy to lead in public prayer without this aid.

Needless to say this provoked much displeasure among the laymen present, who felt betrayed by a man set forth as a spiritual leader. "Can you imagine a man being a minister who cannot pray in public?" someone asked. And that was a fair question.

Yet, that question is no more fair than the question, "Can you imagine any person being a Christian who never prays at all?" As any Bible student knows prayer is a necessary part of the Christian life. It's a command to be followed, a duty to be performed.

Prayer is not a special gift for only some. It's not a calling for just a few. It is something every professed follower of Jesus does, if he's truly saved.

But what about personal witnessing—confessing Jesus by mouth? Is this any different than prayer in the life of a Christian? Is witnessing a gift for some or a duty for all? Is it the special talent of a few or the responsibility of every believer? Does a professed Christian who never witnesses resemble a church member who never prays?

The answer to these questions is clearly set forth in your New Testament. The same Savior who commands all His followers to pray commands each to witness. The same New Testament that requires all Christians to pray requires all to confess Christ.

Passages such as Matthew 10:32-33; Romans 10:9-10; I John 2:23; I John 4:15; Mark 16:15 and Acts 1:8 make it imperative that every disciple of Jesus be a witness. If there is any doubt who the Early Church thought Jesus expected to witness, just examine the Book of Acts to discover that every member of the Church witnessed for Christ.

The Methods of Witnessing

"But," you say, "witnessing is not my responsibility. I've not been called to stand in the pulpit. I'm only to fill space in the pew and pray for the one on the platform."

How Satan delights over the silence of the majority of Christians who have never one time witnessed for their Lord. He knows that millions of sinners are stumbling into Hell over the disobedience of church members, who refuse to share Jesus with others.

In Dawson Trotman's booklet, "Born to Reproduce," the author makes the point that every born again person has been given by God in his new birth the capacity to reproduce himself, or, in other words, to win souls to Christ. You see, the fruit of a Christian is another Christian. We are commanded as "branches" in Christ to produce fruit for Christ.



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WITNESSING (From page 3)

By this time I can almost hear many Christians say, "Preacher, I know you're right, and I'd love to witness for Christ, but I honestly don't know how."

Ninety percent of all Christians have never led a person to Christ because they have not tried. The biggest reason they've never tried is that no one has urged them to begin at the lowest and simplest level.

You see, the Book of Acts describes three levels or three methods of witnessing. The first level is simple enough for a new convert to use; the second is a bit more advanced than the first, and the third is that which the experienced soul-winner would use.



The first method, the simplest, can be called the *spot commercial*. It is found in Acts 16 where Paul and Silas had obviously been "bragging on Jesus" in the presence of the Philippian jailor. Any Christian can do this.

The sister of a friend of mine used this method on me before I knew the Lord. That was over 30 years ago. Yet, I can still hear her sweet voice saying, "Gordon, Jesus is the best friend I have." That *spot commercial* was only one sentence in length, but it has lasted for over 30 years.



The second method is another one that almost any Christian can use—the *story method*. This is merely the story of a person's own conversion like that given by Paul in Acts 22 and 26. Evangelist John Gamble recommends this as an ideal way to witness,

pointing out that it is not difficult to arouse a person's interest, if you ask for a minute of his time for a story you want to tell them.

For nearly 30 years now I have been telling my story of getting saved on August 15, 1951 aboard a battleship. I've told it personally to hundreds of people. Any Christian who can recall his conversion experience should be able to use this method.



The third method, of course, is the more advanced one—the *sermon plan*. This is that used by Philip in witnessing to the Ethiopian as described in the eighth chapter of Acts. In this method the soul winner actually takes his Bible and shows the sinner God's plan of salvation verse by verse.

The Mastery of Witnessing

Now then, what is there that remains? You've once again been confronted with the clear commands in the Bible to witness. In addition you've discovered the three methods of witnessing set forth in the Book of Acts. There is but one thing left—just DO IT!

A few years ago I was involved in a two-day worker's conference in a local church. My lecture the first night was on the subject of witnessing. As I concluded I reviewed all the steps that I had recommended for going soul winning. Then, I stopped and said very distinctly, "And now for the last step." I paused and then yelled at the top of my voice, "DO IT!" And that is exactly what one startled listener by the name of Faye did.

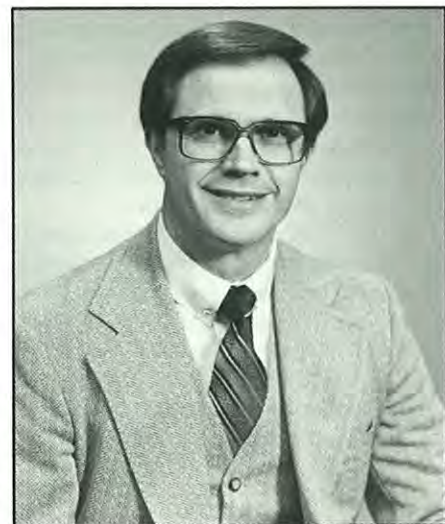
Faye did not wait for the next day. She understood me to mean do it now. So, even though it was after 9:00 p.m. when we dismissed she went straight to her landlord's residence, got him to the door and made two apologies. She apologized for visiting him so late and, after being invited in, she apologized for having never shared with him her

personal testimony of salvation. She then got his permission to show him God's plan of salvation in the Bible.

And just how did this landlord respond to Faye's very first attempt at witnessing? He got on his knees and asked God to save him.

The next night in our conference you can well imagine the joy that broke forth among the workers when Faye's story of witnessing was shared—a story that never would have been told if someone had not screamed, "DO IT!"

So, DO IT! ▲



Excerpts from this article were taken from the Teach 'N' Train Tape Cassette "Effective Personal Witnessing" by the author (produced by Randall House Publications).

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

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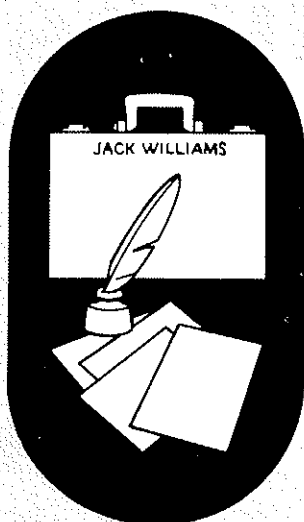


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Briefcase



What's the most improbable thing you can imagine? Try this—the man who champions home missions also subsidizes foreign missions and Christian education. It's true! The fellow with a church in his community is the first to want his neighbors in the next town or state to have one.

I think it's time we gave a standing ovation to the guy who supports starting new churches in the United States even though millions in Africa have never heard the gospel. His concern for the lost in Boise or Colorado Springs naturally extends to the lost in Ivory Coast.

You can bet your tithing record on it—if a man gives a dollar to start a church in Baton Rouge knowing there are 49 Southern Baptist congregations in town, he'll eventually use that same logic to send a missionary to Bondoukou despite the fact that a dozen mission societies field teams in the area.

You can't beat the attitude and outlook of the home missions partisan. He sees home missions as the barking dog to rouse our quiet spiritual neighborhoods. He's determined to let that howling cry for lost humanity run loose in the denominational streets until we do something about home missions or shoot the dog!

You can trust the man who's bullish on home missions. He knows that new churches don't slide off assembly lines

in Detroit. Somebody has to start them.

He's convinced that starting a new church in Poughkeepsie can be just as exotic as doing it in Paris or Rio. So what if it takes a long time, and it's expensive, and he has to start small and struggle like crazy to scratch a work out of nothing. So what if some balk because they prefer instant First Church status and are embarrassed with storefront beginnings.

"Who hath despised the day of small things?" Aren't you glad Jesus didn't hesitate to hack that grubby, 12-member home missions church out of the cultural rubble in Palestine 2,000 years ago?

Home missions work is done by a special brand of preacher. Ask around: it takes more than *tough* and *loud* to handle the stress of starting from zero after leaving friends who love and respect you. The home missionary knows that though his face may launch a thousand prayer cards and though little children send Vacation Bible School offerings to his account, there's somebody waiting to jerk the rug when he as an untried, untrusted stranger pulls a U-Haul through Dismal City, USA to unload his family and furniture.

He has to prove himself every time he opens his mouth. He walks into town with no credibility, no address, no pulpit, a dream nobody else sees, and a call he claims came from God. He knows that some in the new town suspect him as a cultist or other unsavory type, and that they will treat him that way until he gives them ample cause to think differently.

My hat comes off to any pastor. But I wave it around a little for the pastor/home missionary. Here's why—I know that I don't have what it takes to cut it as a church planter. Yet I never cease to be amazed by men with the gift to survive where most of us would wither and roll over in discouragement.

Yes sir, I think highly of the clear-eyed backer who pushes

home missions. Because the same fellow who turns up the light in America will want to string a power line to Mexico and Mozambique when he sees the dividends it pays.

The home missions booster doesn't whine about how much it costs to build a new church. He examines how expensive it is not to have a church in some community. He knows that pew for pew more top workers come from those home missions churches with storefront beginnings than from the antiseptic wards on Main and Broad.

The home missionary recognizes that when we're too hoity-toity to muss our hands in the rough and tumble mission churches, we're stepping away from the major thrust of Jesus' ministry and the evangelistic heartbeat of the New Testament.

He concedes that you don't have to be poor to attend a home missions church, but that you don't impress many doctors and lawyers when you invite them to Sunday service in the old shoe-repair store on Third Street. Jesus began with the poor, and in time the wealthy and powerful stood in line to hear Him.

The home missionary admits that if you gave him a million dollars, he could buy a fine building, but it wouldn't convert sinners nor grow a church. He knows firsthand there is no shortcut to conversion, that everyone is still routed through a narrow one-way street called Calvary where the traffic is slow and men must come to terms with God.

Want to know why we don't have a waiting list of home missions candidates? When you cut to the fine print where we haggle over what matters most, the average guy wants to fill a position, but the home missionary is just looking to do a job.

There aren't many vacant positions left, but there are jobs that need to be done in every city from San Diego to Hoboken. If a sweaty brow and calloused hands bring out the best in you, perhaps you could be one of the few to wear the title *home missionary*! ▲

Putting Christians In Their Places!



A Look At Church Membership

By Howard Bass

"Now, Mr. Doe, let me see if I understand what you are saying. You've lived here for 27 years, but you have never joined a local church because you thought you might only be here temporarily. You say your church membership is still at Tim Buck Two Free Will Baptist Church in the north-east corner of No Man's Land.

"Recently, you've been thinking of moving your membership to our church, but you've had second thoughts since you only have nine more years until retirement, and you are semi-definite that you will move back home then.

"Mr. Doe, are you sure that you would like to know my opinion about what you should do?"

The preceding story is true in principle. Only the name has been changed to indict others who are similarly guilty.

The following paragraphs are prayerfully offered in the hope that some Christian strays will be awakened from their limbo, others will be kept from the plight of Mr. Doe, and Christians in general will experience a renewed sense of appreciation for their local church membership.

Mr. Doe, there is simply **NO EXCUSE** for a baptized believer having his church membership anyplace other than in a Bible-believing church when one is available in his community! Within three months of transferring to our neighborhood you should have joined a church and had your former church notified. A Christian without a local church is like a bee without a local hive.

For 27 long years you have been an unnecessary burden to your former church and a question mark to the Christian community in which you live.

Transfer your membership with only nine years left until retirement? Indeed do not let another week pass. Send a letter of apology to your former church today.

At the next regular service of your local church, confess your negligence and offer yourself for membership.

Most of all seek God's forgiveness for your sin, and busy yourself in God's service through the ministry of your local church.

You see, Mr. Doe, church membership is the most exalted privilege that earth knows. The church is an institution that since its conception has been at the heart of the divine program for blessing the world. Your failure to unite yourself in Christian service with a local body of believers through church membership is tantamount to disapproving of God's plan for this age.

Scarcely can the need for church membership be overemphasized. It is the will of God that every Christian be a member of a Bible-believing church.

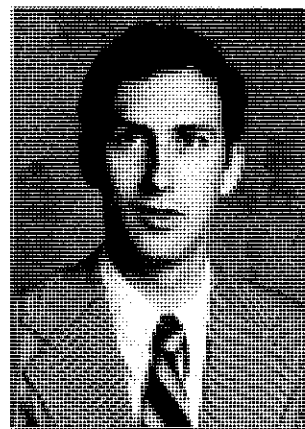
Church rolls across America are cluttered with the names of members who have neither been seen nor heard from for years. Many have worked out of town or out of state and left their church membership at a church hundreds of miles from where they now live.

Being involved in an attempt to update a membership roll can be both interesting and amusing, maybe even a little disgusting. "Does anyone know where Mr. Doe lives? Well, does anyone know who Mr. Doe is?"

While churches grapple with the problem of displaced members, pastors and Christian workers alike scratch their heads in bewilderment as they listen to yet another Mr. Doe attempt to explain the reason why his church membership is not in a local Bible-believing church. As he casually casts aspersions at all the local churches he has visited and heaps seemingly endless laurels on the church he formerly attended, one senses that somehow he feels justified in his decision not to move his membership to a local church.

This writer is convinced that all such jargon is simply an escape mechanism from responsibility. After all no one expects a non-member to teach, tithe, nor even attend church regularly. He can continue to shirk Christian obligations, ease his conscience by insisting that he is not a member, and in his mind minimize his disobedience to the will of God.

Dear Christian friend, if you are not a member of the church you regularly attend, join today. If you are a member of a local church, attend the church you have joined. ▲



ABOUT THE WRITER: Reverend Howard Bass is pastor of Wesconnett Free Will Baptist Church, Jacksonville, Florida, and principal of Wesconnett Christian Academy. He holds the Bachelor of Arts Degree from Free Will Baptist Bible College, has studied toward a Master's Degree at Pensacola Christian College, and taught two years at Randall Christian Academy in Memphis, Tennessee.

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Thanksgiving Trilogy

**"Be ye thankful"
(Colossians 3:15)**

fier of the spirit and soul. Comforter, Chastiser, Teacher and Guide to the Celestial City.

By William S. Deal

One of the outstanding graces found among Christians everywhere is *thankfulness*. The apostolic exhortation above, "be ye thankful," is in keeping with the whole line of Paul's thought on Christian responsibility to both God and fellowman.

Thankfulness in heart makes one a happier, radiant and better witnessing person. We have all seen the motto which says, "I complained because I had no shoes—until I saw a man who had no feet!"

There are a thousand things around us to awaken the spirit of thankfulness in hearts and start its happy tune quivering on our lips.

The following Trilogy is my way of saying this year and always, that I am thankful.

Thankful For God

I am thankful for God the Father, Creator of heaven and earth and of all men; Giver of all good gifts, Preserver and upholder of the universe and the human race.

I am thankful for His Son, Jesus Christ, our Lord and Savior, whose death on Calvary procured eternal redemption for all who believe.

I am thankful for the Holy Spirit, the blessed Agent of God, who with the Father and Son, applies salvation in all its gracious forms. He is the Convictor of sin, Regenerator of new life, Sancti-

Thankful For Self

I am thankful for my human body, with all its wonderful functions; its eyes to see, ears to hear, nose to smell, nervous sensations to feel.

I am thankful for my *bone structure*. Without this marvelous skeletal form I would be a ball of flesh, rolling around on the ground, unable to go anywhere or do anything! Without bones I would have no source to manufacture blood, for blood is manufactured by the marrow inside the bones.

I am thankful for my spirit, for without this part of my nature I would be only a beast, without any knowledge of God or myself. It is with my spirit that I can worship God, have understanding of life and of the things of man. "For what man knoweth the things of a man, save the spirit of man

which is in him?" (I Corinthians 2:11).

It is through my spirit that I understand another person and may have fellowship in Christ with him. It is in my spirit that all knowledge of God resides and my conscience operates and that all the finer things of life are stored, developed and strengthened.

I am thankful for my soul. It is the soul that feels, sees, touches, tastes and senses the beauty of flowers and rejoices in the color of the rainbow. It is the soul, with the spirit—for they are so interlocked and intertwined in man as to be inseparable—that makes the glory of music come alive for me and brings every sense of excitement to its fullest fruition.

Thankful For Creation

I am thankful for the good earth with its thousands of blessings; its radiant sunshine, food and fruit, growing fields and trees; its loving animals many of which provide us with milk, meat and even shoes and clothing to wear.

I am thankful for the world about us, though it seems at times so sinful, wicked and far from God. Yet, there are everywhere, even among the most pagan of peoples, those who will come to my aid and minister to my needs. I have found this in traveling all over the world, often among those whose language I did not understand.

Everywhere people have offered to help me when I was in any need. A smile toward others is almost always met with a returning smile; and a kind deed is met with another kind deed and often words of appreciation, though in a strange tongue. No man is so utterly sinful as to have no spark of goodness in him, that can be appealed to by goodness from another person.

I am thankful for the universe about us . . . its awesome size and grandeur, its mighty expanse in distances, and its almost infinity in complexities beyond the mind to comprehend, all speak to me of the great God who created and upholds it.

Besides, I feel far more comfortable in such a universe than I would if I knew that God only had this one little planet on which we live, and that there was nothing more in all the vastness of expanse surrounding us. The universe about us is a living testimony to God's goodness, to His faithfulness to all His

creation and to all His creatures, both terrestrial and celestial.

Thankful For The Church

I am thankful for the Church in the world today. Its presence in the world has a softening effect upon the hardness of men about it and its light goes far toward redeeming civilization, despite all the opposition against it.

I am thankful for the sweet fellowship of Christians everywhere. We have met them of all colors, races and social orders in many parts of the world. Their loving influence is the same in every land and clime. Although we often do not know their language, yet there is a kindred spirit, deeper than language barriers can bar.

This blessed fellowship is broader and binds far tighter than any other relationship on earth. It is the relationship of the "Family of God," and nothing can ever break it, or destroy its tightly binding power upon people universally.

I am thankful for the great body of Christian truths which we have in the Bible and its teachings. Here is the Gibraltar of the world. It is an "anchor in the time of storm," a "great rock in a weary land," and a "hiding place," safe and secure when the worst winds of adversity are blowing.

Thankful For Marriage

I am thankful for the institution of marriage and all its hallowed joys and blessings. The family was God's best thought for the human race—socially, morally and psychologically. In the family there is unity, strength and power, which can never be known apart from it.

I am thankful for the glories of procreation. Only a parent who has watched the sweet child grow from embryo to birth, and from childhood to maturity, knows the joys of such an experience.

Until we have looked upon our children in total adulthood, with all its strength, grandeur and beauty, and then experience the joys of our grandchildren, will we know the full meaning of parenthood and its glories.

I am thankful for the total maturity that only those who have achieved it in all its advanced powers, glories and accumulations can fully know. The

glory of young men is their strength, but the glory of old men is their wisdom and richness of the experiences of life.

Thankful For Life's Drama

I am thankful for the difficulties, illnesses and trials of life. I have had my share of these and would not wish them to recur, but would not want to have lived my life without the great helps they brought to me.

I know now what Solomon meant when he advised long ago, "Sorrow is better than laughter: for by the sadness of the countenance the heart is made better" (Ecclesiastes 7:3). So I have proved it to be in my life.

I am thankful for the wonderful friendships of life. Without these my life would have been infinitely poorer and weaker and I could never have accomplished anywhere near the good I have done. Friends, plus our own self-determination and development, make each of us what we are.

We have all had friends that have stuck "closer than a brother," (Proverbs 18:24), and known the joyous help coming from the "faithful wounds of a friend" (Proverbs 27:6).

Throughout life I have gained thousands of friends and lost only a few. Those I have lost have been some of my greatest losses, lost generally through my neglect of them, or some thoughtless act of which I was not then aware.

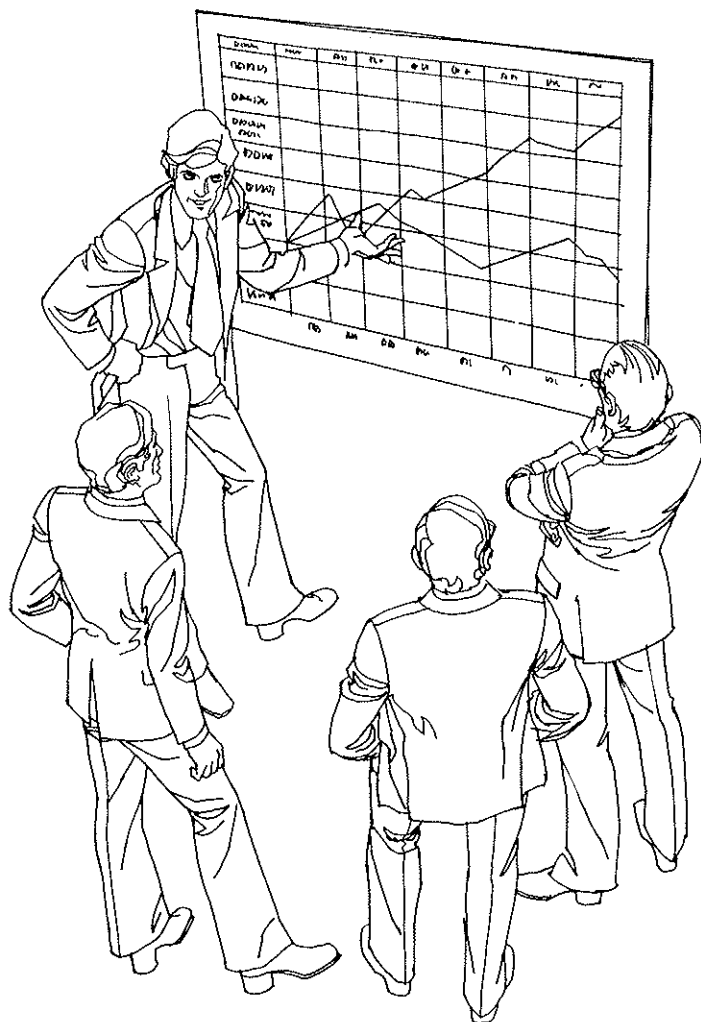
And finally, I am thankful for life's opportunities, mostly made possible again through friendships. Without such opportunities where would any of us be? Opportunities accepted make us; rejected, neglected or missed, they may break us.

Someone has well said, "Opportunity must be caught by the forelock, never by the ponytail." The difference between my success and failures in life have been mostly the matter of being awake, alert and being able to "catch life's opportunities while they were passing by."

For all these trilogies and many other things I am thankful as this Thanksgiving season comes to gladden our lives again. ▲

ABOUT THE WRITER: Dr. William S. Deal is an evangelist, author and family counselor who lives at El Monte, California.

Decade of Miracles:



The Home Missions Story

By Roy Thomas

The Home Missions Department of the National Association of Free Will Baptists has experienced steady, healthy growth for 10 years. It has been my privilege to observe that progress first hand.

Statistics are never the whole story, but they do say something. Take a look at the 1971-1981 figures:

	INCOME	MISSIONARY FAMILIES
1971	\$ 229,960.60	18
1972	277,387.34	21
1973	377,574.62	24
1974	477,852.65	29
1975	527,797.44	30
1976	571,240.05	32
1977	702,492.20	34
1978	748,417.21	37
1979	987,564.22	40
1980	1,022,245.40	44
1981	1,328,759.93	50

Several factors have contributed to the success the Home Missions Department has enjoyed.

Great Need

First, Home Missions and the need for planting Free Will Baptist churches in America's cities had never been presented to existing Free Will Baptist churches in such a way that they could see the great need that exists.

People will not pray for or support a work they see no need for. This need for starting churches in America had to be sold to the people so that they could understand the great need that was there.

My first month of employment by the National Home Missions Department was spent in preparing a map showing exactly where existing Free Will Baptist churches were located and pointing up the many cities and states without Free Will Baptist churches.

Our publications were used to make people aware of the vast mission field Free Will Baptists have in our own country. Although the surface has barely been scratched, more of our people do understand why we need to fill America with Free Will Baptist churches.

Disillusionment

The second problem that had to be tackled was that of disillusionment. Many people, since they saw little need for Home Missions, were disillusioned with the department and felt that it was not really doing anything worthwhile. Emergency action had to be taken to turn the eyes of the Free Will Baptist constituency to the Home Missions Department.

A price had to be paid in miles of travel and weeks away from home in services in Free Will Baptist churches. In these 10 years Home Missions missionaries and staff members have conducted thousands of revival meetings and evangelistic services as they have criss-crossed the denomination.

We have not gone into churches primarily to promote Home Missions support. We have gone first of all to see revival in the churches, provide help for the pastors, and seek to win

people to Christ. At the end of the meetings, people have been given an opportunity to respond to Home Missions needs.

Pastors and people have sensed the sincere desire on the part of the Home Missions Department to help them. At the same time the great need of Home Missions has been presented and they have responded.

Better Organization

A third area of need was that of organization. The missionaries had no direction either for raising support or doing their work on the field. Each missionary had just gone to what services he could get and when these ran out, he went to the field. It is impossible to have a strong missions program with a significant number of missionaries with that system.

We began to arrange the itinerates from the National Home Missions office. This took pressure off the missionaries and increased the effectiveness of the services. A goal was set for each missionary for cash and faith promise support and itinerates continued until the goals were reached. A system of processing the faith promise cards was developed. These steps greatly increased the income and made our program more appealing to missionary candidates.

An orientation program was launched to explain to each missionary the operation of the office, the procedure for itinerate, and a systematic process for them to follow for beginning their services and building the congregation into an indigenous church. This has helped to secure the kind of men necessary to begin churches and lead them to become self supporting.

Dedicated Personnel

A fourth area that has contributed to the success of the Home Missions Department has been that of its personnel. Both missionaries and staff members have demonstrated a love and loyalty for the department which has inspired others to look respectfully upon its work.

The present staff, the largest in the Home Missions Department's history is a highly skilled, dedicated group of

men and women who labor long and hard to contribute to the success of the missionaries and the department. They are building on the foundation of faithful people who directed the department in the past.

Each staff member works under a job description which allows the department to function smoothly and enables the operation to continue even though the directors are out of the office. This has made it possible for each man to travel extensively in services in our churches.

Home Missions, as the Evangelism Department, has emphasized evangelism and church growth. Soul winning materials and pastoral helps have been provided for our churches to assist them in reaching their communities for Christ. Conferences on evangelism have been conducted in many areas with pastors and laymen urged to attend. Services have been instructional and motivational. These have caused pastors to have a greater vision and their churches to increase in attendance. In turn, they have supported our missionaries.

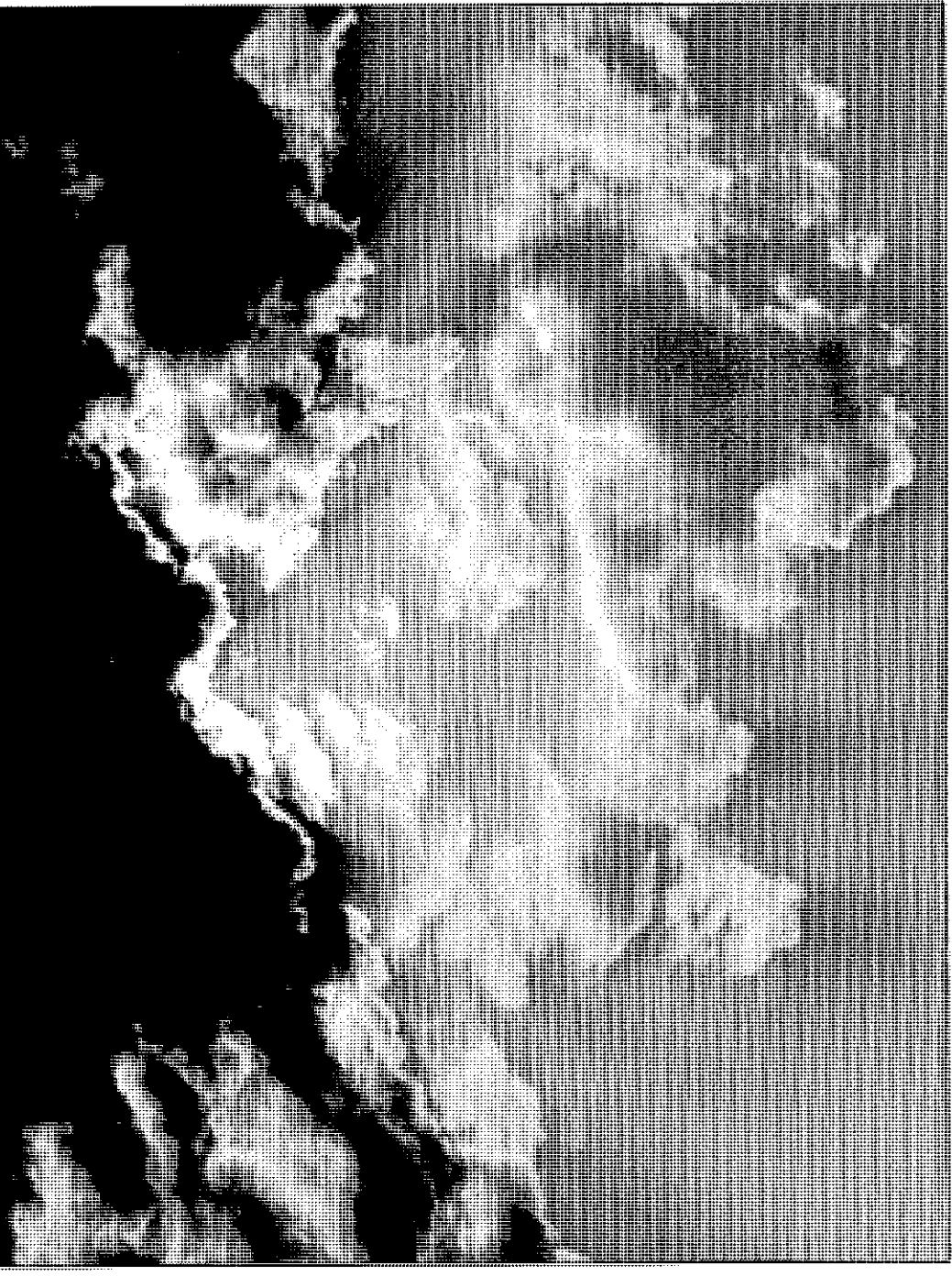
Home Missions has sought to be a "down to earth" hard working group of people who try in every way possible to help our churches succeed. At the same time the great need for placing a Bible-believing, Bible-preaching, Bible-practicing Free Will Baptist Church within the reach of every family in America has been presented.

The department's major success ingredient has been supplied by the missionaries. Operating under the indigenous church principle, an average of one new missionary per month has gone out to begin a new church in a needy city. Thousands of precious souls have been saved and scores of self-supporting churches have been established by these faithful and dedicated pioneers.

The challenge for future growth is greater than it was 10 years ago. But Free Will Baptist people are more aware of the need. Missionaries are better prepared and there are more helps available for them. Hopefully, if our Lord tarries, the next 10 years will see greater accomplishments as churches are established and lives are changed. ▲

ABOUT THE WRITER: Reverend Roy Thomas is General Director of the Home Missions Department.

I Walked Through The Valley Of Depression



By Matilda Nordtvedt

“You can go home today for good!”

What wonderful news that was after being confined four weeks to the psychiatric ward of our local hospital following a nervous breakdown. No more shock treatments, no more trial weekends at home. I could go home to my pastor-husband and teenage children and begin being a wife and mother again.

What I didn't know was that a long dark valley still lay ahead for me—a valley of depression.

It didn't make sense. I was supposed to be well again, but obviously I wasn't. The best part of the day was bedtime when I forgot everything in pill-induced oblivion.

Life didn't seem worth living even though I had every reason to be happy—a fine husband and family, a lovely home, many friends, and most of all an eternal hope in Christ.

Mornings were the worst. Even though the birds were singing and the sun was shining through my window, I hated to wake up and face a new day. When I went to the supermarket to shop, I looked at the other shoppers enviously, longing for their sense of well-being.

The psychiatrist had advised a trip, so our family took off for Washington and California. There were enjoyable moments, eating lunch beside our car in the beautiful Canadian Rockies, visiting family and friends, going to Disneyland—but in between these happy moments were hours of black depression.

I blamed my dark moods on the trip and begged my husband to take me home. I was sure that in my own home I would feel secure and happy. So we cut our vacation short and returned home.

To my dismay I found that my depression came right along with me. It hit me even harder in the daily routine of housekeeping.

Often I turned to Psalm 42 and asked with the psalmist, “Why art thou cast down, O my soul? And why art thou disquieted in me?” I read the answer hungrily: “Hope

thou in God; for I shall yet praise him for the help of his countenance.” Yet praise Him? I wondered if that day would ever come.

I tried to keep busy, invite friends over as I was able, clean shelves, get new things for the house, write. But everything was such an effort, and everything seemed so hopeless and without meaning. I just couldn't get interested in living.

I stopped going to the psychiatrist. He tried to help, but he had no understanding of my spiritual problems, and the cost was prohibitive!

My husband talked with me and counseled me for hours. Friends prayed. But in one sense I was alone in my dark valley. Yet not alone. The Lord was there with me. I was always sure of that.

I searched for help in my Bible and other good books. I worried about everything until I read Edmund Haggai's *How to Win Over Worry*. Through that book I saw that my worry was a sin.

There were some bright days, but the black ones came back with alarming persistency. Even during my bright moments I was never quite free from their shadows.

One day I was reading about “doubts” in Hannah Whitall Smith's book, *The Christian's Secret of a Happy Life*. She brought out that we doubt because we choose to, not because we have to. We get a morbid satisfaction from being miserable from our doubts and fears.

This struck me. Did I *have* to continue in my depression? Was I morbidly enjoying feeling sorry for myself? I thought of all the attention I was getting from my husband. I thought of my escape from responsibilities.

Nobody expected much from me any more. I could give up on any task I undertook and not be criticized. Did I really want to give up those privileges and face the challenges of life again?

“Yes, Lord, I *want* to be made well,” I decided. From that time on I began to refuse depression by an act of will and by faith. I wasn't always successful, but it was another step in the direction of deliverance.

Another “secret” from that book was the phrase, “See God in

everything.” I began to look at things from God's viewpoint.

Romans 8:28-29 took on new meaning: “And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God . . . for whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son . . .”

I realized that God permits even nervous breakdowns and times of depression to come to His children in order to teach them and to make them more like Christ. I began to see His hand in every part of my life. I was awed to think He cared that much about me! I began to be thankful and praise Him.

I had always thanked Him for the big things: forgiveness of sins, a Savior, eternal life, an eternal hope. Now I started thanking Him for the little things as well: clean sheets for my beds, the robin singing outside my window, the patch of sunlight on the kitchen floor, invigorating North Dakota air.

I became aware of blessings I had previously taken for granted: my eyesight, hearing, ability to walk, talk and think, the strength to clean my house and prepare food for my family. I started thanking Him for my family and friends.

Deliverance didn't come overnight. It took time, effort and faith. One day I was overjoyed to realize I hadn't been depressed for some time. I was out of the valley!

It was like the sun breaking through after days of rain. Life became worth living again. It was almost too good to be true. I appreciated everything, even the simplest things of life, as I never had before. I couldn't stop praising God for His deliverance.

As I look back at my dark valley I can't help but shudder a little. It was so dark, so lonely, so hopeless. I don't pretend to understand all the “whys” and “wherefores.” But I thank God for my journey through the valley.

I learned to know God a little better in the blackness, and I found some precious treasures there that I can share with other travelers in the valley of depression. ▲

ABOUT THE WRITER: Mrs. Matilda Nordtvedt is a free-lance writer. She resides in Everett, Washington.



Missionary Unaware

By Etta Crittenden

Every student in a Christian school is from a Christian home where all family members are Christians. Right? Wrong! This is the concept many people have when discussing Christian day schools.

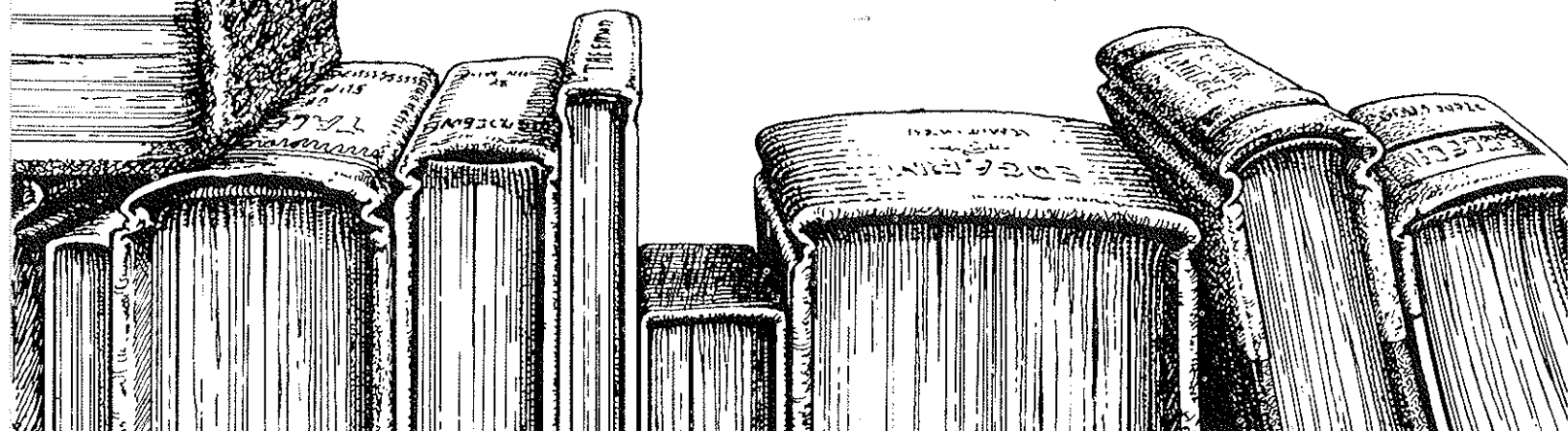
After completing my fourth year of teaching in a Christian school setting, let me assure you that a Christian teacher, whether in a Christian or public school, is definitely a missionary.

Perhaps this idea has been reinforced in my mind because of one boy I had in my class this past year.

During the first few days of school I became aware that my year's work was certainly cut out for me! My attention was drawn to this little lad in particular. His name is Lee.

At the beginning of the year Lee had difficulty learning to obey. It seemed that I was constantly reminding Lee not to do certain things, and to do others.

Even so, it wasn't long until it became apparent that Lee's favorite part



of our day was Bible time (next to recess, of course). He would sit motionless during the story, hands folded, eyes glued to the pictures on the flannelboard.

Many times after the lesson I would have to explain such terms as "baptism" or "deacon", as well as other words which were quite foreign to him. I was constantly amazed at the simple things to which Lee had never been exposed.

One day during lunch, Lee began to tell me in detail all about our Bible stories we had covered in class. I was sure he had heard them recently in Sunday School, or perhaps his parents had read them to him.

To my surprise, upon questioning Lee, the only time he had heard the stories was in my first grade Bible class. It was at that point I was again reminded of the responsibility I had to give the gospel to those children.

As the school year progressed, the Lord often reminded me through Lee's questions just how little Bible teaching is really occurring in the homes of our "Christian" nation.

Those of us from Christian homes tend to take for granted that everyone receives the same heritage. Unfortunately, that is not true.

Lee is only one example of the many children who are eager and ready to hear the gospel. Yes, Lee could attend any church he would so desire. Yes, he lives in a Christian nation, where the gospel is readily available. Yet, he is a "mission field".

You see, I failed to tell you earlier that Lee's parents have been in this country for 12 years. They still have difficulty with our language. They claim no church affiliation. So you see, in a real sense I've been a missionary to a Chinese family from Hong Kong while living and teaching in Nashville, Tennessee!

Whether you teach in a public school or Christian day school, as teachers we all have a field "white unto harvest" in our classrooms. There are many "Lees" in our world. Has the Lord placed one in YOUR class? ▲

ABOUT THE WRITER: Etta M. Crittenden teaches the first grade in Woodbine Christian Academy, Nashville, Tennessee. She is a member of the Cross Timbers Free Will Baptist Church, Nashville. Etta also serves as a dormitory supervisor at Free Will Baptist Bible College.

Thank You For Your Contributions...



... Through the Cooperative Channel

August, 1982

RECEIPTS:

State	Design.	Undesign.	Total August '81	Yr. to Date
Alabama	\$ 158.00	\$ 170.60	\$ 328.60	\$ 179.00
Arizona	.00	.00	.00	.00
Arkansas	.00	3,220.53	3,220.53	3,917.58
California	.00	1,048.38	1,048.38	1,264.94
Florida	.00	33.33	33.33	2,144.47
Georgia	3,180.29	505.00	3,685.29	790.91
Hawaii	.00	.00	.00	.00
Idaho	.00	.00	.00	99.83
Illinois	11,625.06	3,034.54	14,659.60	1,287.42
Indiana	.00	76.17	76.17	50.00
Kansas	.00	.00	.00	186.23
Kentucky	.00	.00	.00	.00
Maryland	.00	10.00	10.00	40.00
Michigan	2,903.41	60.64	2,964.05	2,888.93
Mississippi	340.98	148.05	489.03	1,061.42
Missouri	6,903.24	.00	6,903.24	5,679.92
New Mexico	59.50	19.67	79.17	.00
North Carolina	70.00	632.13	702.13	1,388.06
Ohio	73.00	1,653.00	1,726.00	1,322.74
Oklahoma	17,116.79	7,766.09	24,882.88	21,993.68
South Carolina	.00	.00	.00	.00
Tennessee	194.71	714.67	909.38	633.89
Texas	6,959.33	511.96	7,471.29	60.00
Virginia	.00	200.33	200.33	.00
West Virginia	.00	.00	.00	11.48
Totals	\$49,584.31	\$19,805.09	\$69,389.40	\$45,000.50

DISBURSEMENTS:

Executive	\$ 1,316.37	\$ 9,252.32	\$10,568.69	\$ 9,332.99	\$ 83,983.40
Foreign Missions	33,660.71	2,690.96	36,351.67	17,712.61	238,256.39
Bible College	5,853.81	2,690.96	8,544.77	5,639.55	59,823.69
Home Missions	8,182.04	2,005.03	10,187.07	8,043.43	76,963.85
Retirement & Insurance	450.73	1,952.26	2,402.99	2,716.54	22,437.70
Master's Men	67.60	1,055.28	1,122.88	1,322.60	10,803.10
Commission on					
Theological Liberalism	53.05	158.28	211.33	232.78	1,972.01
Convention	.00	.00	.00	.00	740.00
FWB Foundation	.00	.00	.00	.00	.67
Hillsdale College	.00	.00	.00	.00	100.00
Totals	\$49,584.31	\$19,805.09	\$69,389.40	\$45,000.50	\$495,080.81

When Death Strik

**...Will My I
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house
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H. Armstrong Roberts

By William Evans

When death strikes, will my house be in order? What will happen to my property? What financial impact will my death have on my family? Do I have a legal plan, that is, a will that expresses my love for my family and for my Lord?

Answering these questions is an imperative for thoughtful Christians. What happens to a Christian's property (everything he owns—land, houses, money, investments) and family if he dies without a will?

In 1949 Peter Marshall, Chaplain of the U.S. Senate died. He had no will. In the book *To Live Again*, his widow related how she had to appear in probate court and post an expensive bond in order to administer Peter's affairs. The court had absolute jurisdiction of all monies so that not even funeral expenses, doctor, or hospital bills, nor ordinary household expenses could be paid until the court passed on them. Finally, Mrs. Marshall had to reappear in probate court to be named her son's guardian. She then told how that she was required to give detailed financial accountings of her guardianship to the court each year, procedures which continued until her son became of age.

What The State Will Do . . .

If a Christian dies without a will, the state makes the following decisions for him:

1) *Who receives his assets?* Most people assume the surviving spouse receives all assets, though usually he/she receives only one-third or one half. Many state laws are complicated. In Tennessee for example, if a husband dies without a will, one-third of his real estate goes to his wife with the remainder divided among his children. All other assets are equally divided among wife and children. If the wife dies first, all the real estate goes to the husband, while all other assets are divided equally among the husband and her children. Laws in other states may vary.

2) *Who oversees the distribution of those assets?* The court often appoints the surviving spouse, but it is not legally required to do so. Whoever is appointed will be required to post a bond with the cost paid from the estate.

3) *Who serves as the guardian of minor children?* Again, the spouse will generally be appointed. But the judge may choose to appoint someone else. Regardless of who is appointed, annual reports must be made to the court by the guardian.

What You Can Do . . .

However, the Christian can make these decisions for himself by making a will. Every will should include the following:

1) *Name an executor/executrix.* It is important that he choose a person who understands his wishes and values to serve as executor/executrix or personal representative, as some states call him. If the executor is not to be bonded this should be clearly stated in the will. Also one or two alternates should be named. Often the spouse is named with a close friend who is familiar with business named as the alternate.

The executor will list the contents of the estate and their value, notify and pay creditors, manage and protect the assets, distribute personal property to the beneficiaries, file tax forms, and give a final accounting to the court.

2) *Name a guardian for minor children.* Here again it is very important to discuss one's wishes and reach an understanding with the person named. It is impossible to over-emphasize the importance of choosing the guardian.

3) *Outline the distribution of assets.* The will should carefully and clearly explain the disposition of property. How one distributes property reflects his interest and values. Christian stewards consider the Lord's work in their



DEATH (From page 17)

wills. The use of percentages rather than fixed amounts can compensate for the increase or decline of assets in an estate.

Why Wait Longer?

Laws are written to encourage transfer of estates with a view toward economy. Professional help can make this possible by using the law to conserve the estate for the family and the Lord's work. Why then does a Christian fail to make a will?

Procrastination is one of the more frequent excuses. "I am just too busy to do it now, besides I have plenty of time."

An unwillingness to face death often interferes. Some think to talk about death makes it more likely to occur.

One has the idea, "I don't have enough to make it necessary." "It costs too much," some say. In fact, it most often costs more to not have a will.

"I don't trust all those legal documents." "I simply cannot see that far ahead." It is important to review a will every few years.

A well planned will, properly executed, can be a source of tremendous satisfaction for the Christian steward. It removes the sense of guilt he might otherwise feel from the admonition of I Timothy 5:8 "But if any provide not for his own and specially for those of his

own house, he hath denied the faith, and is worse than an infidel."

Make a will. Review it regularly. Families change, needs change, and estates change. A will should be updated to reflect these changes. A new will is often not necessary since the addition of a codicil may adequately modify the present one.

If you are interested in making a will, revising an existing will, or including the Lord's work in your estate, contact the Free Will Baptist Foundation.

When death strikes, your house can be in order! ▲



ABOUT THE WRITER: Reverend William Evans pastors Second Free Will Baptist Church, Ashland, Kentucky. He also serves as director of planned giving for the Free Will Baptist Foundation.



FREE WILL BAPTIST

newsfront

FOUR JOIN FWBBC FACULTY

NASHVILLE, TN—Dean Robert Picirilli announced the addition of four new faculty members for the fall semester, 1982, at Free Will Baptist Bible College. The appointees are Rev. Bobby Aycock as missions teacher, Rev. Ray Lewis as business teacher, Mrs. Ann Pate in the Teacher Education Program and Rev. Garnett Reid in the area of Bible and Pastoral Training.

Rev. Aycock comes to the college with 21 years experience on the mission field. While teaching, he will pursue studies at Trinity Evangelical Divinity School.

Rev. Lewis hails from Tuscaloosa, Alabama, where he taught business at the Tennessee Valley Community College and pastored Eastside FWB Church. Rev. Lewis has a business degree from Pembroke University in North Carolina.

Mrs. Pate earned her Bachelor's and Master's Degrees at George Peabody College for Teachers and taught for six years in Nashville schools.

Rev. Reid resigned his pastorate at Cross Timbers FWB Church, Nashville, to direct the Christian Service Department and to teach in the areas of Bible and Pastoral Training.

Noting that all four teachers are alumni of the Bible College, President Charles Thigpen added, "We are pleased to have each of these on our faculty."

THE FREE WILL BAPTIST FOUNDATION

P.O. Box 1088
Nashville, Tennessee 37202

82-15-5

Phone: 615/361-1010

Please send:

- ☐ Making A Will: Option or Necessity?
- ☐ A will preparation work booklet
- ☐ Please have your representative call to discuss plans for giving to the Lord's work.

Name:

(Please print)

Address:

(Street, apartment number)

(City)

(State)

(Zip)

Telephone:

HILLSDALE NAMES NEW PRESIDENT, DEAN

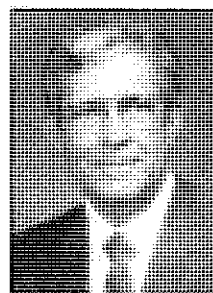
MOORE, OK—Rev. Edwin Wade, 53, was named as president of Hillsdale Free Will Baptist College by a unanimous vote of the Board of Trustees on September 9. Upon recommendation by the new president, the board approved Mr. Dan Arnold as the new academic dean, replacing Mr. Wade.

President Wade has been academic dean at Hillsdale for seven years. Prior to his tenure at the college, Wade pastored the Garden Grove FWB Church, Garden Grove, California (1967-75); First FWB Church, Wenatchee, Washington (1965-67); and First FWB Church, Vancouver, Washington (1964-65).

Mr. Wade has served in several denominational positions including General Board, Northwest Association (1966); chairman of California's West Coast Association Executive Board (1968-75); member of the California State General Board (1970-75); and member of the National Association's Commission on Theological Liberalism (1980—).

Mr. Wade holds the Bachelor of Arts and Master of Arts Degrees from Azusa Pacific College, Azusa, California.

Mr. Dan Arnold served as registrar at Hillsdale for eight years before being named to the academic dean's post.



Edwin Wade



Dan Arnold

The 44-year-old Wewoka, Oklahoma native is an alumnus of Free Will Baptist Bible College and North Texas State University, Denton, Texas. He holds a master's degree from the University of Oklahoma in Norman.

CHURCH DEDICATES 300-SEAT SANCTUARY

CANNONBURG, KY—More than 250 members and guests attended dedication services August 29 at Heritage Temple FWB Church, Cannonsburg, according to Pastor Bob Shockey.

The dedication activities climaxed a 16-month, \$150,000 building program which resulted in 13 Sunday School rooms and a 300-seat sanctuary on a 5.56 acre site one mile north of I-64 in the Cannonsburg/Ashland area.

Reverend Shockey said that attendance at the three-year-old church averages 135 in Sunday School and 150 for worship services.

Following morning worship services, members hoisted a 75-pound cornerstone into place bearing the inscription,

"Dedicated to the glory of God, August 29, 1982." Mrs. Nellie Griffith, who gave the 5.56 acres to the congregation in memory of her late husband, Deacon Ernest O. Griffith, wept as she scissored the red ribbon signifying completion of the building.

The new sanctuary includes a full basement where most of the Sunday School rooms are located. The blue and brown tweed carpeted sanctuary contains a complete sound system and booth designed by member Roy Barnhill who owns a local recording company. Powder blue padded sanctuary pews face the pulpit area, behind which is a baptistry. The 19 light fixtures in the low-ceiling sanctuary are studded with 54 crosses.

Heritage Temple Church started in a Thursday night prayer meeting July 5, 1979 with 36 present. First services began August 5, 1979 with 161 in attendance. Dedication services for the first sanctuary (now the fellowship hall) were conducted August 17, 1980.

Pastor Shockey says that the current property and buildings are appraised at a value in excess of \$250,000.

The church served lunch for more than 300 guests following dedication festivities. The afternoon activities included two-hour singing featuring the Harbormen quartet. CONTACT editor Jack Williams preached the dedication sermon Sunday morning.

JAMAICA BIBLE SCHOOLS REACH 1000

PEDRO, OH—Evangelistic Outreach Director Calvin Evans and a 15-member teaching team from three states enrolled more than 1000 Jamaican students in Bible Schools during August.

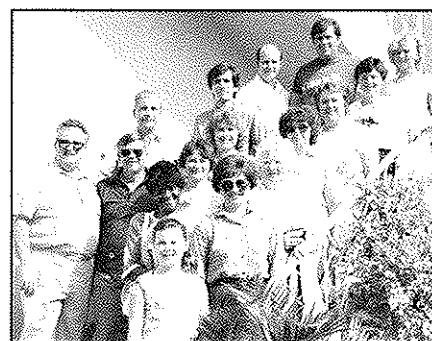
The series of Bible Schools were conducted at Baptist and United churches in rural areas near Montego Bay, according to Ohio Promotional Secretary Alton Loveless who served as general director.

The August activities were part of a follow-up program used by Evangelistic

Outreach to supplement its annual January-February Jamaican crusades.

Lesson material and handcraft kits valued at more than \$3,000 were donated to the special missionary project by Scripture Press of Wheaton, Illinois.

Daily attendance at the Bible Schools averaged in excess of 800. Teachers from Ohio, West Virginia, and Kentucky assisted Evangelist Calvin Evans and Bible School Director Loveless. Officials reported numerous professions of faith and written responses by the Jamaican students.



V.B.S. Team that taught in six schools in Jamaica

newsfront

(continued)

FWBBC ENROLLS 510; NINE REGISTER FOR GRADUATE SCHOOL

NASHVILLE, TN—Free Will Baptist Bible College enrolled 510 students from 32 states and six foreign countries for the fall semester, says Dr. Charles Hampton, registrar. The enrollment is 77 students below last fall's record 587. The college began its 41st year on August 23, with student registration following on August 24-25.

Of the states represented at FWBBC, North Carolina has the largest number, with 99, the same number as the state enrolled last fall.

In addition to the 510 who registered for Bible College classes, nine enrolled for classes in the new graduate school, which officially opened in August, according to Dr. Robert Picirilli, dean. Working with Dr. Picirilli in the school are Dr. Robert Woodard and Rev. Ralph Hampton. The Patton II property on the campus houses graduate school activities.

Of the 268 men attending the Bible College, 117 are preparing for the ministry. The registrar also reports that there are 74 missionary students in the present student body.

The following states and foreign countries are represented at the college for the fall semester:

Alabama	44
Arizona	1
Arkansas	14
California	4
Delaware	1
Florida	13
Georgia	29
Idaho	1
Illinois	20
Indiana	17
Kansas	4
Kentucky	12
Louisiana	1
Maryland	2
Michigan	25
Mississippi	11
Missouri	26

New Mexico	2
New York	1
North Carolina	99
Ohio	11
Oklahoma	6
Oregon	1
Rhode Island	1
South Carolina	21
Tennessee	71
Texas	8
Vermont	1
Virginia	31
Washington	9
West Virginia	9
Wisconsin	2
Foreign	12
Brazil	4
Canada	3
Haiti	1
Ivory Coast	2
Japan	1
Spain	1

HILLSDALE REGISTERS 168 FOR FALL SEMESTER, ANNOUNCES MISSIONARY CONFERENCE SPEAKERS

MOORE, OK—Hillsdale FWB College enrolled 168 students for the fall semester, according to Registrar Dan Arnold. This is an increase of three students over the 1981 fall semester.

The annual Hillsdale Missionary Conference is scheduled for November 1-3, according to Shirley Combs, director of missions.

Three native Oklahomans the Jerry Banks, Japan; the Earnie Deeds, Brazil; and the Eddie Paynes, Ivory Coast, will speak in chapel and evening services and lecture in classes.

High school students are invited to attend Fall On-Campus Days at Hillsdale, October 15-16.

REEDS SLATES SUNDAY SCHOOL REVIVALS

NASHVILLE, TN—The Sunday School and Church Training Department is scheduling weekend Sunday School revivals with Dr. Roger C. Reeds, general director as the preacher/teacher.

Subjects include "The Heritage of the Sunday School," "The Greatest Command in the Great Commission," "The Mandate To Witness," "Method of Teaching," "Leads on Leadership," etc. . . .

Meetings will be scheduled from Friday evenings to Sunday mornings with workshops conducted on Saturday and a special Sunday School class on Sunday mornings. Dr. Reeds' book, *Biblical Graphics* would be presented at this time.

Interested churches should call 1-800-251-5762 or 615-361-1221 or write Dr. Reeds at P.O. Box 17306, Nashville, Tennessee 37217.



Pastor **Jerry Presley** of **Hazel Dell FWB Church, Sesser, IL**, conducts a weekly radio program on Thursday evenings from 7:00 till 8:00 on radio station WXAN in Ava, IL.

The **Southern Oaks FWB Church** in **Oklahoma City, OK**, has a problem—but it's the kind of problem that most any pastor dreams of having. Attendance has surged forward to such an extent that the crowds cannot be accommodated in one service on Sunday morning. Rather than involve themselves in an expensive building program, the congregation opted to conduct an early morning worship service on Sunday beginning at 8:30. **James Puckett** pastors.

College Day at **Cofer's Chapel FWB Church, Nashville, TN**, resulted in more than \$2,100 in offerings for the Free Will Baptist Graduate School. **Gene Outland** pastors.

CONTACT welcomes **THE LIGHT-HOUSE**, publication of **Union Chapel FWB Church, Chocowinity, NC. E. E. McMillen** pastors.

Pastor **Jerry Dudley** said the **Choctaw FWB Church, Choctaw, OK**,

received 27 new members this summer. Prayer meeting attendance tripled over the same period of time.

First FWB Church, Pascagoula, MS, launched a kindergarten ministry according to Pastor **Charley Carmack**. The new kindergarten outreach enrolled 23 students.

The **Oak Park FWB Church, Pine Bluff, AR**, conducted a children's rally in August, according to Pastor **John Gilliland**. The three-night rally attracted attendance of 97, 120, and 138 respectively.

CONTACT welcomes the monthly newsletter of **Richland FWB Church, Nashville, TN**. The news letter is named **IT'S MY DESIRE**. **Roy Roach** pastors.

After five weeks of service, the **Good News FWB Church, Richmond, VA**, conducted grand opening services on August 15 with 40 persons present. Pastor **Steve Cannon** urges anyone who has friends or relatives in the South Richmond, Chesterfield County area to send names and addresses to him at 7740 J Belasco Drive, Richmond, VA, 23225.

Pastor **George Lee** of **Victory FWB Church, Goldsboro, NC**, says the church gave approximately one third of its total income for the church year to outside causes—that came to just over \$25,000.

Pastor **John Harris** of **Pleasant Hill FWB Church, Pleasant Hill, CA**, baptized 19 converts this summer.

Kim and Kathy Woodel of **Dema-ree FWB Church, Visalia, CA**, quoted the book of Philippians in the evening worship service June 13. They quoted two chapters each. **L. A. Yandell** pastors.

During a five-day revival meeting at **First FWB Church, Flat River, MO**, Pastor **Ron Edgil** reports 12 conversions and 18 rededications. Evangelist for the successful meeting was **J. D. Norris** from **Tallahassee, FL**.

A growing number of churches are providing tapes of worship services for sale across the denomination. The **First FWB Church, Russellville, AR**, has begun a tape ministry, but theirs is different from all the rest. According to Pastor **Floyd Wolfenbarger**, tapes of services at First Church are provided free to members! **Jay Griffin** oversees the recording project.

And for all the closet golfers who may need an uplift today—Pastor **Cecil Spurlock** of **Santa Paula FWB Church, Santa Paula, CA**, sends word that at 9:45 a.m. on Monday, August 23, on the sixth hole at the Mountain View Golf Course in Santa Paula, he clubbed a 168-yard hole-in-one. He says he has a witness. ▲

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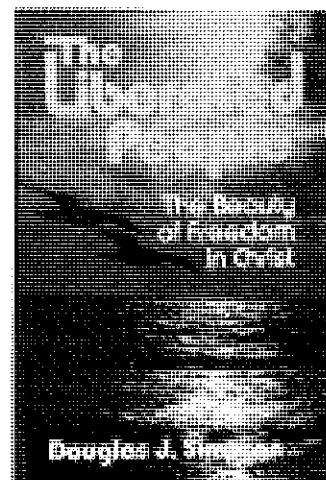
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Green Tree Bible Study

Robert E. Picirilli

A STUDY IN PHILIPPIANS

Rejoice In The Lord

One helpful kind of Bible study is the tracing of a theme in a portion of scripture.

Everybody agrees that joy is one of the key themes in Paul's letter to the Philippians—all the more remarkable, considering that Paul was in prison (1:13). He had evangelized Philippi on the second and third missionary journeys. Then he had gone to Jerusalem, been arrested, spent two years under arrest in Caesarea, appealed his case to Caesar, been transferred under guard to Rome, and spent the better portion of two years in prison there.

From Philippians we learn that after Paul was transferred to Rome, the Philippians heard and sent an offering by Epaphroditus (a minister there?), who fell seriously ill. News of his illness reached back to Philippi, occasioning deep concern, and news of that distress got back to Rome.

But now Epaphroditus has recov-

ered and is preparing for the trip home. With him will go this little letter of appreciation from Paul (60/61 A.D.). You can't read it without sensing the special fellowship that existed between Paul and this group of believers.

There are 19 references to joy/rejoicing/gladness in the four chapters of Philippians. All but three are either the noun "joy" (*chara* in Greek) or its related verb "rejoice" (*chairō*): 1:14, 18 (twice), 25; 2:2, 17 (twice), 28, 29; 3:1; 4:1, 4 (twice), 10.

The other three, translated the same in the King James, represent a similar, but different, noun-verb pair (*kaucha* and *kauchaomai*) which usually means "exult, boast, glory": 1:26; 2:16; 3:3.

Space won't allow a complete analysis of all these references, but here are five major things Paul's own joy can be related to.

First, Paul's joy is not dependent on his circumstances. He is imprisoned, has been for most of four

years (read 1:12-18); even so, he rejoices (1:18). Indeed, even if he should be offered up as a sacrifice for his ministry, he would still rejoice (2:17, 18). Paul had learned, in whatever condition, to be content (4:11). All too often, we let changing circumstances rob us of our joy. Circumstances possess that power only if we let them.

Second, Paul's joy was related to the calling he had, to preach the gospel. He was always conscious that this was a gift of grace ("my grace," 1:7) and that was the reason he could rejoice in spite of his chains: Christ was being preached (1:12-18). The name of Jesus was getting the attention it deserved, and that's what mattered to Paul.

When our joy lies in fulfilling our calling, what others say and do won't make much difference.

Third, Paul's joy related to his converts. His life, his sense of well being was always tied to the success in the faith of those he ministered to.

Notice 4:1: he calls the Philippians "my joy and crown," and exhorts them to stand fast.

Especially read 1:27-2:18, where he urges "Fulfill ye my joy" (2:2) and indicates just how they can do that. If they will, he will be able to rejoice that his labors with them have not been in vain (2:16). Self-centered people don't have that kind of feeling for others. Neither do they have much joy.

Fourth, Paul's joy related to his communion with others. The King James word is "communication" (4:14, 15), meant in the sense of "fellowship." The Greek word (*koinonia*) literally

means "having in common." Note 1:3-7: Paul's joy is for their fellowship (1:4, 5) with him in the gospel, and this included the specific manifestation of their support of his ministry (4:14, 15) that made them partakers/partners in the exercise of his "grace" (1:7).

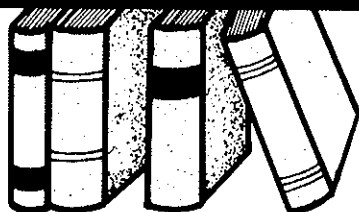
Paul's joy—and that of the Philippians—was related to the bond that joined them (2:17, 18). We don't pay enough attention to that these days: there should be great joy in our oneness, our fellowship, our common bond in Christ.

Fifth, Paul's joy was most directly related to Christ. As he puts it in

3:3, "We . . . rejoice in Christ Jesus." That is the explanation of all else that has been said: circumstances do not deny him joy because his joy is in Christ and in Christ being preached and in the success and common bond of his converts in Christ. Then it is Christ that is his boasting and joy: Christ is his confidence and righteousness, and nothing matters but knowing and winning Him (3:3-14).

That is the secret—when the Lord Himself is our joy (cf. Psalm 73:25) nothing can take it away. Then "Rejoice in the Lord always: and again I say, Rejoice" (4:4). ▲

Top Shelf



Thomas Marberry



Tell It To The Church by Lynn R. Buzzard and Laurence Eck (Elgin, Illinois: David C. Cook Publishing Co., 1982, 154 pp., hardback, \$9.95)

Lawsuits have become a way of life in the United States. It means that everyone is either suing, or being sued, or both. As a result of this, court dockets are overloaded and years may pass before a case is finally settled. Also, the litigation process is extremely expensive; the cost is so great that many simply cannot afford it.

Unfortunately, Christians are often involved in lawsuits with non-Christians and even with other Christians. This brings disrepute upon the cause of

Christ just as it did when Paul advised the Corinthian Christians not to turn to pagan courts to settle their differences.

The authors of this volume suggest a procedure for settling personal and civil disputes between Christians which is based upon the counsel of Paul in I Corinthians and of Christ in Matthew. When two Christians have a dispute, they should first attempt to resolve it between themselves. If this is approached with Christian concern, often a mutually acceptable solution can be reached.

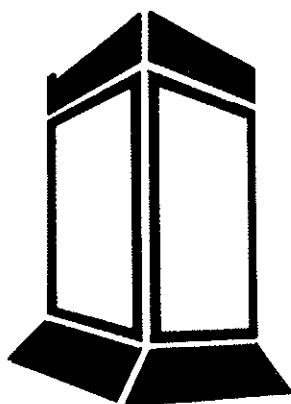
If this private contact cannot bring about a resolution of the dispute, then other Christians are brought in to help bring about a solution. Buzzard and Eck suggest that Christians can make use of this type of Bible-based approach in settling a variety of civil controversies.

State laws generally provide that civil disputes can be settled by arbitration with the consent of both parties. Such arbitration agreements, if properly reached, are legally binding upon both parties. If this procedure is fol-

lowed, a dispute can be settled without the time, expense, and emotional strain which usually accompany a court suit.

Christians can take advantage of this provision of state laws by inviting competent Christians to serve as arbitrators. Christian lawyers, pastors, and other concerned Christians can be asked to serve in this capacity. One of the authors of this volume has joined with other Christian lawyers to form the Christian Conciliation Service. These Christian lawyers offer their services to help resolve disputes between Christians.

Courts are necessary in our society for handling criminal cases and protecting constitutional rights. It is most unfortunate, however, when Christians turn to secular courts to settle civil controversies between themselves. The kind of procedure which these authors present should be prayerfully considered. Also, concerned Christian mediators can do something which no secular judge can do. They can help to heal the wounds which have been suffered and bring about a real reconciliation. ▲



The Free Will Baptist Pulpit

Irvin Hyman, Pastor

Colquitt Free Will Baptist Church, Colquitt, Georgia

The Secret of Victory Over Worry

Scripture—Philippians 4:6-9

Introduction

The Bible says, "Be careful for nothing." In other words, don't worry about anything.

Worry! What is worry? The Greek word translated *careful* in Philippians 4:6 means "to be pulled in different directions." Our hopes pull us in one direction; our fears pull us in the opposite direction; and we are pulled apart!

The Old English root from which we get our word *worry* means "to strangle." If you have ever really worried, then you know that it does strangle a person. In fact, worry has definite physical consequences: headaches, neck pains, ulcers, even back pains. Worry affects our thinking, our digestion, and even our coordination.

From the spiritual point of view, worry is wrong thinking and wrong feeling about circumstances, people, and things. It is, without a doubt, the greatest thief of joy. But here is good news: The Lord has a cure for this sin of anxious care—this sin of worry. It is right praying, right thinking, and right living.

I. There Must Be Right Praying (4:6, 7).

Paul uses three different words to describe "right praying": prayer, supplication, and thanksgiving. "Right praying" involves all three.

- A. "Prayer"—The word *prayer* is the general word for making requests known to God. When you find yourself worrying, go to God in prayer without hesitation.
1. Tell Him about your needs and problems. He is very interested (Jer. 33:3).
 2. Acknowledge that He is able and willing to handle your problems, regardless of their nature. According to Dr. Walter Cavert, 92 percent of things we worry about never happen. Only eight percent are legitimate matters of concern.

B. "Supplication"—This is an earnest sharing of our needs and problems with the Lord.

1. Half-hearted, insincere praying is unacceptable to an all-wise God. We must approach Him with unquestionable earnestness.
2. Such praying is a matter of spiritual intensity, and not a matter of carnal energy (Rom. 15:30; Col. 4:12).

C. "Thanksgiving"—Giving thanks to God for His blessings. Appreciation for the goodness of the Lord (Eph. 5:20; Ps. 100:4).

We are eager to ask but slow to appreciate, it seems. May God help us to have thankful hearts!

1. We should be grateful for spiritual blessings (Eph. 1:3). Salvation, eternal life, justification, adoption, peace with God, forgiveness, etc.
2. We should be grateful for physical blessings (Ps. 103:3b). Thank the Lord for our health. Things could be much worse with us.
3. We should be grateful for material and financial blessings (Duet. 2:7; Ps. 37:25).

II. There Must Be Right Thinking (4:8).

Real peace involves the heart and the mind. "Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on Thee: because he trusteth in Thee" (Is. 26:3). Wrong thinking leads to wrong feeling, and before long the heart and mind are pulled apart and we are strangled by worry. We need to realize that thoughts are real and powerful, even though they cannot be seen, weighed, or measured.

Sow a thought, reap an action.
Sow an action, reap a habit.
Sow a habit, reap a character.
Sow a character, reap a destiny!

Paul spells out in detail the things we should think about in verse eight.

- A. Things that are "true" (v. 8).
 1. The truth about yourself. You are somebody through Christ. You are important to Christ and His Cause (John 15:16a).
 2. The truth about other Christians. They are a part of God's family, too. We should love them, speak well of them, and be a friend to them (Eph. 4:32a).
- B. Things that are "honest" (v. 8).
 1. Honest with God (tithes) (Mal. 3:10; Lev. 27:30).
 2. Honest with the business world. Pay your bills. Pay them on time. If this is not possible, offer a good explanation.
- C. Things that are "just" (v. 8).
 1. Deal fairly and squarely with others. Cruel treatment does not become a Christian.
 2. Do right regardless of circumstances. Circumstances should not enter the picture when doing right is involved. "Do right if the stars fall"—Dr. Bob Jones, Sr.
- D. The things that are "pure" (v. 8). Thoughts, motives, and acts. This will involve the courage to say "no" to some things.
 1. "No" to certain TV programs, magazines, music.
 2. "No" to certain social activities, profanity, strong drink.
- E. Things that are "lovely" (v. 8).
 1. Be gracious in the presence of others.
 2. Develop a pleasing personality.
- F. Things of "good report" (v. 8).
 1. Guard your reputation. Protect it. Be cautious about the company you keep and the places you patronize.
 2. Guard the reputation of others. Refuse to become involved in malicious gossip about other Christians.

- 3. Report good things about your church. Speak well of it.
- G. Things of "virtue" (v. 8).
 1. Of moral excellence.
 2. Of moral integrity, character.
- H. Things of "praise" (v. 8).
 1. Praise other Christians for their good works, their successes.
 2. Praise God for His love, mercy, and grace.
 3. Praise Him for His daily presence in your life.

III. There Must Be Right Living (4:9).

Paul says that we are to live according to what is taught in the Bible. Live biblically!

- A. Positive things are included in living for God.
 1. Strong faith in God (Mark 11:22; Heb. 11:6).
 2. Stedfast determination (Luke 9:51). Jesus moved toward Jerusalem with an "iron will."
 3. Great courage (Joshua 1:6, 7). Moses was a man of great courage (Red Sea). So was Joshua (Jordan River) and David (Goliath).
- B. Negative things are involved in Christian living.
 1. Separation from sin (I Cor. 15:34; I John 2:1).
 2. Separation from the world (Rom. 12:2; I John 2:15-17).
 3. Separation from false doctrine and false teachers (II John 9-11).

Conclusion

Right praying, right thinking, and right living: these are the conditions for experiencing real victory over worry in this world!

▲

DIRECTORY UPDATE

GEORGIA

Ernie Ross to Bellview Church, Colquitt from Freedom Church, Anoka, MN
Victor Neuenschwander to Ozias Church, Pearson

MISSISSIPPI

Charley Carmack to First Church, Pascagoula from Covenant Church, Southside, TN

NORTH CAROLINA

Earl Sutton to First Church, Beaufort from First Church, Washington

OKLAHOMA

Stanley K. Konopinski to Shady Nook Church, Oklahoma City from Trinity Church, Oklahoma City as associate pastor

TENNESSEE

Randy Riggs to Good Springs Church, Pleasant View from Grace Church, Greenville, NC
Jim Turnbough to Bethlehem Church, Ashland City from First Church, Dothan, AL

TEXAS

Mike Mize to Bright Light Church, College Station

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Dennis Wiggs to Heritage Church, Williamsburg from First Church, Beaufort, NC
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How Soon We Forget

By William F. Davidson

It might be good to begin with a disclaimer. *History Corner* was not designed as a public voice for the writer's personal viewpoints. Therefore, it should be mentioned that this particular article is not an attempt to denounce or defend secret societies. That task is left to articles of another nature.

The denomination's response to such societies in the latter part of the 19th century serves as a good illustration for this article. This is not a cop-out, but rather an agreement to abide by the guidelines for the column.

Introduction

Maybe it is just part of being human, but we tend to forget things we need to remember while we constantly remember things God tells us to forget. How often we hear, "I can forgive him, but I can't forget what he's done." When we say we have forgotten an unkindness, our relationships are colored by inability to complete the act of forgiveness by fully removing the hurt from our minds.

But some things need to be remembered—vows we made the Lord when we accepted Him as Savior, the decision to separate ourselves from temptations to besetting sin, the promise to submit ourselves daily to the Spirit's leadership. God forbid that we should forget!

A Lesson From the Past

Church History reminds us that human nature has not changed and

that earlier generations made the same mistakes. One clear example was recorded April 16, 1874 in *The Free Will Baptist Advocate*. In his editorial, "Secret Societies," E. R. Ellis responded to accusations by other denominations that Free Will Baptists hated secret societies.

An Old Issue Revived

The accusations opened an old sore by reminding the public that the denomination had split earlier over the question of the societies. The fact that Ellis flatly denied the earlier split raises some interesting questions.

Was the editor ignorant of the denomination's recent history or did he simply choose to ignore it? The split occurred barely 30 years before and was well documented in conference records.

In fact, since Ellis lived in the immediate area of the split and was now old enough to be editor of a denominational periodical, he may well have been eye witness to events leading to the founding of the new pro-secret society conference of Free Will Baptists. In any case, it is difficult to imagine that the editor of this type periodical could be ignorant of the newer group's existence.

An Appeal for Unity

The editor argued that accusations were an attempt by other denominations to disrupt the peace of the Free Will Baptists by pitting the pro-society faction against the anti-societies.

Ellis' strong support of the societies in the editorial indicates two rather amazing developments: (1) concern

for unity now outweighed earlier argument against the societies, and (2) the small minority that had lost the battle and left the denomination in the early 1840's, had won the war and had gained respectability for the societies within the denomination. Ellis argued:

It is true that some of our ministers don't belong to any secret societies, but at the same time, they have nothing to say against them. Other ministers are Masons and Odd Fellows, and are firm supporters of their respective orders. No person can say that we, as a denomination, oppose them; and in proof of this assertion, we state without any fear of contradiction, that there are as many ministers of the Free Will Baptist Church, that are Masons and Odd Fellows, as there are in any other Christian denomination in Eastern North Carolina, in proportion to their number.

The editor closed his plea with a reference to Psalm 133 as a standard for unity. It seems evident that questions of policy and practice (basically the question of a church's right to make it's own decisions concerning secret societies) which split the group 30 years before now seemed insignificant amidst the new struggle for denominational unity.

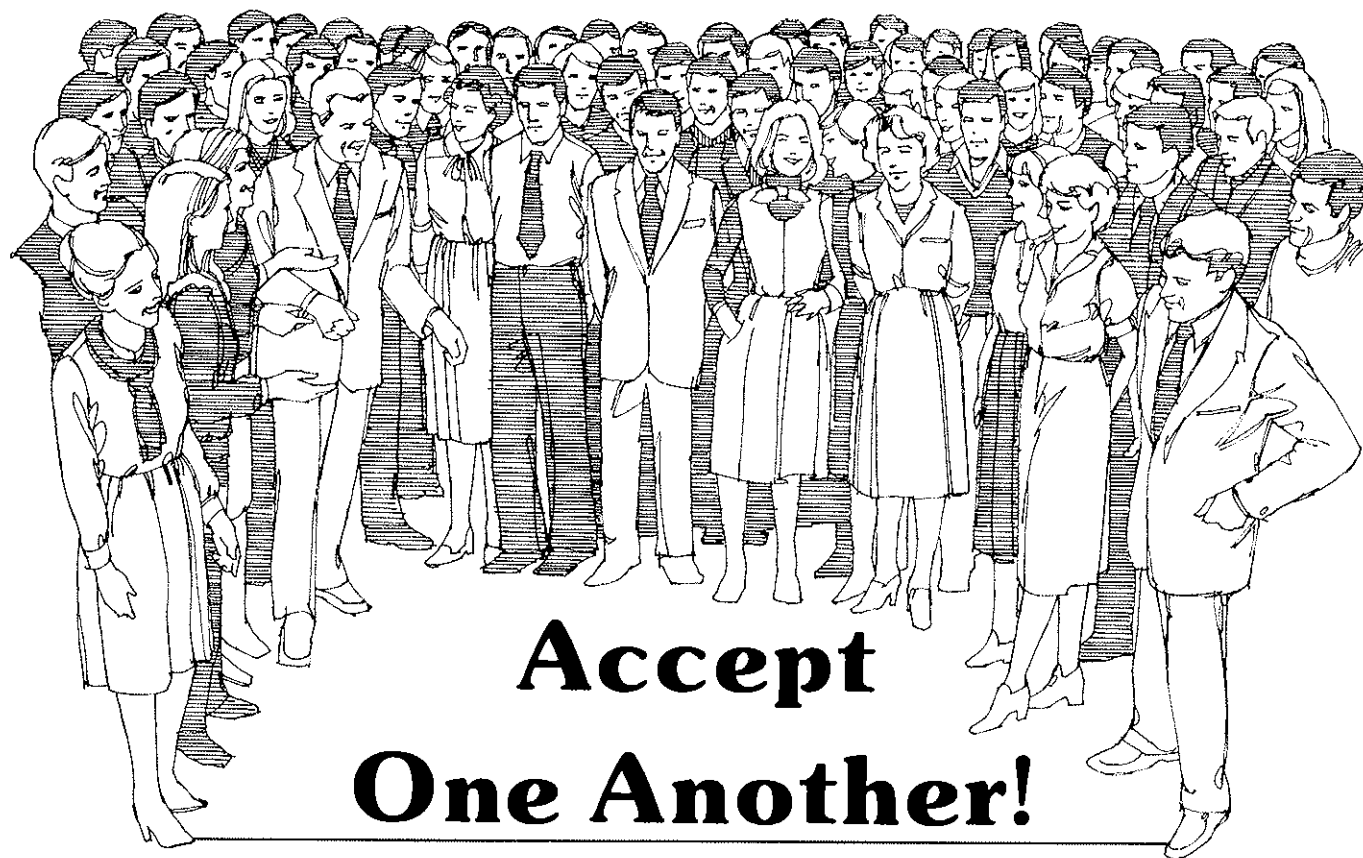
An advertisement in the same issue of *The Advocate* seemed to add a seal of approval to the editor's conclusions. The ad announced the grand opening of a new chapter of the Odd Fellows in the local township.

Conclusion

If church history serves no other purpose, it reminds us of earlier mistakes and successes and gives us direction for both present and future denominational development. With a clear and thorough knowledge of our heritage, we profit from our mistakes, make the proper adjustments and get on about the business of the Great Commission.

When we learn to remember the decisions that have hindered and to forget the things that have no place in our ministry, we find ourselves ready for growth and effective ministry. ▲

P.S. The writer needs a good, clear copy of *The Free Will Baptist Advocate* from June 18, 1874. The paper was published in Fremont, North Carolina. If you have a copy, please write to Jack Williams, editor of *CONTACT*. Thanks for your help.



By Gene Getz

I grew up in a church where "acceptance" by others depended primarily on what you did or did not do. And, as you might guess, the list of "do's and don'ts" certainly did not comprise a biblical list. Rather, it consisted of extra-spiritual activities, most of which were cultural.

What I'm describing, of course, is 20th century legalism. And nothing shatters true unity among Christians more thoroughly than extra-biblical rules and regulations which are used to evaluate a person's relationship with Jesus Christ.

When acceptance or rejection of others is based on a legalistic mind-set, it leads rapidly to judgmental behavior and pseudo-spirituality. It also creates false guilt, destroys personal freedom to really be what God wants a Christian to be, and often leads to a violation of the true biblical standards for Christian behavior.

A lot of wonderful people attended the church in which I grew up, and there was a certain loyalty within the

group, yet little spiritual unity or in-depth spirituality was exhibited. Those who became part of the group were accepted only as they fulfilled a predetermined set of behavior expectations. This legalism caused a great deal of false guilt, a problem I personally faced for years, till I understood what true spirituality is.

This is a sad commentary on what Christianity has come to be in many situations. The Bible does lay down behavioral expectations for Christians, but it also condemns acceptance or rejection based on external patterns that go beyond specific scriptural statements.

Paul deals with this subject clearly in his letter to the Romans. In fact, he presents acceptance of fellow Christians as a basic key to unity. Note the context of this injunction:

May the God who gives endurance and encouragements give you a spirit of unity among yourselves as you follow Christ Jesus, so that with one heart and mouth you may glorify the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. Accept one another, then, just as Christ accepted you (Romans 15:5-7).

In at least two areas Christians have historically violated the injunction "ac-

cept one another" by judging one another (legalism) and in showing partiality (prejudice). Interestingly, these problems go all the way back to New Testament churches. And the Bible speaks forcefully to both issues, condemning each as sin.

Judging One Another

To sit in false judgment on other Christians is a violation of Paul's exhortation to accept one another. Interestingly, he uses the two concepts concurrently to make his point in his Roman letter. Thus he wrote: "Accept him whose faith is weak, without passing judgment on disputable matters" (Romans 14:1).

In this particular New Testament church (and others like it) some Christians had personal problems even while engaging in certain legitimate activities. Others, however, were free from this very real, but false guilt.

In both the Roman and Corinthian churches, one of these activities involved eating meat that had been offered to idols. Paul, in his inimitable way, brought the problem into clear

ACCEPT (From page 27)

focus, particularly in his Corinthian letter:

So then, about eating meat sacrificed to idols: We know that an idol is nothing at all in the world, that there is no God but one . . . But not everyone knows this. Some people are still so accustomed to idols that when they eat such meat, they think of it as having been sacrificed to an idol, and since their conscience is weak, it is defiled. But food does not bring us near to God; we are no worse if we do not eat, and no better if we do (I Corinthians 8:4, 7-8; see also Romans 14:14).

How did Paul deal with this problem? First, he spoke to both the weak and the strong: "The man who *eats everything* must not look down on him who does not, and the man who does not eat everything must not condemn the man who does, *for God has accepted him*" (Romans 14:3).

In other words, we are not to judge each other in areas that are not specified as sin. "Each one," said Paul, "should be fully convinced in his own mind" (Romans 14:5).

Second, Paul directed his comments primarily to the strong in faith—to those who could eat meat offered to idols without sinning.

All food is clean, but it is wrong for a man to eat anything that causes someone else to stumble. It is better not to eat meat or drink wine or to do anything else that will cause your brother to fall . . . *We who are strong* ought to bear with the failings of the weak, and not to please ourselves (Romans 14:20-21; 15:1).

After exhorting both the immature and mature Christians not to judge one another, Paul then laid a heavy burden on mature Christians. If we are truly mature, we will be sensitive toward our brothers and sisters in Christ who are not strong as we are. We will be careful to do nothing that would cause them to stumble and fall into sin.

If these two attitudes are working concurrently in a local body of believers, unity will inevitably emerge. Those who are weak will soon become strong, and those who are strong will become even more mature.

Showing Partiality

Paul introduced this barrier to unity in his Roman letter even before dealing with legalism. "Live in harmony with

one another," he wrote. "Don't be proud, but be willing to associate with people of low position. Don't be conceited" (Romans 12:16).

James, of all the New Testament writers, dealt with this problem most extensively. And like Paul, he allowed no room for misinterpretation about the sin prejudice.

"My brother," he wrote, "as believers in our glorious Lord Jesus Christ, *don't show favoritism*" (James 2:1).

In the churches to which James was writing, Christians had difficulty accepting everyone in the same way. Their particular problem involved the rich and the poor. When a man came into their assembly well dressed and obviously rich, they immediately gave him the best seat. But when a poor man came in, dressed in shabby clothes, they ushered him to a seat less prominent.

When you do this, queried James, "have you not discriminated among yourselves and become judges of evil

**It is startling
how some Bible-
believing
churches over
the years have
justified
prejudice.**

thoughts?" (James 2:4). To make sure they really got his point, James spelled out the answer to his own questions in unequivocal terms: "*If you show favoritism, you sin*" (James 2:9).

Prejudice, favoritism, and discrimination in the body of Christ violate the law of God. Furthermore, they violate the very nature of the functioning

body of Christ. We are *all* one. Every member is important—rich or poor, young or old, black or white, weak or strong! If we show favoritism, we also destroy the unity, harmony, and oneness in the body of Christ which Christ and Paul both prayed for and commanded.

It is startling how some evangelical, Bible-believing churches over the years have justified prejudice. Of course, we can make the Bible teach anything we want—and this is exactly what we're doing when we bar any sincere and practicing Christian from participating in a local church. We are sinning against both God and man when we do this.

An example of this: A certain Bible-preaching pastor has always preached against long hair for men. His personal style is that of the World War II GI. This is his *cultural* standard for evaluating the length of "long" (see I Corinthians 11:14). While insisting that "long" hair is strictly a mark of rebellion against authority, he is making the generalization that an attitude present when the trend began is still present.

"Long" hair has become, however, an acceptable hairstyle to most people, just as it was in the days of the Pilgrim Fathers. This pastor will not allow any long-haired men to sing in his choir . . . nor will he welcome any such men into church membership. Long-haired men must first visit a barber shop. Then they'll be considered spiritual enough to participate.

Note: The Bible *does* teach that Christians are to break fellowship with other Christians who continually live in sin, but only after following a definite biblical procedure. Make sure, however, that the "sin" can be definitely defined in the Bible: immorality, lying, stealing, gossip, etc.

In these cases, Christians are to take at least three steps to solve the problem. First, we are to exhort in love the persons involved considering ourselves lest we also be tempted.

Second, if they don't respond to loving exhortation and continue sinning, then we are to ask them to discontinue fellowship with other Christians in the church for a period of time.

Finally, if they still do not respond, we are to have nothing to do with them, actually treating them as if they were unbelievers.

My experience has been that when a proper biblical approach is taken to disciplining others in the church, you seldom have to go beyond the first step. Most people who know Jesus Christ personally respond to loving exhortation.

Just making him "feel bad" is not causing him to stumble. In fact, some immature Christians "feel bad" because of selfishness.

There is yet another misinterpretation and misapplication of Paul's teaching in Romans 14. Ironically, some

qualifications listed by Paul in I Timothy 3 and Titus 1.)

Step Three

Evaluate your attitude toward other Christians concerning prejudice and favoritism. Can you truly accept all other believers as brothers and sisters in Christ? Is this actually happening in your church?

Note: The greatest sin committed by many American Christians is racial prejudice. In many white churches, black Christians have not been welcome. If they are, they are discriminated against as lower-class Christians.

There is no other word for this behavior than James' word—he called it sin! Paul also used a couple of other words to describe it—pride and conceit (Romans 12:16).

Step Four

Follow this three-point plan for overcoming any problem in your life that reflects legalism and prejudice:

1. Acknowledge it as sin (I John 1:9).

2. Pinpoint the areas of your life where you need to change. Ask God to help you overcome your sins. Pray *specifically* about *specific* problems.

3. Take an action step. For a starter, select another member of Christ's body you have had difficulty accepting. Do something for that person that reflects true Christian love. For example, you might invite that person to your home for dinner.

Warning: Don't wait until you "feel" like changing or doing something about your sin. If you do, the feelings may never come. Christian love acts on what is the right thing to do.

Suggestion: If your church is permeated with legalistic behavior and/or prejudice, ask your pastor or some other leader in your church to read this and give you his opinion as to whether or not it is scriptural. If his reactions are negative, then graciously ask him to give you biblical reasons for his conclusion. ▲

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Christians set up extra-biblical standards for themselves and then require that all others measure up to those same standards in order to be spiritual.

Step One

It's important, first of all, to make sure you (and other Christians in your church) really understand what Paul was teaching in Romans 14. This passage is woefully misinterpreted and misapplied.

First, Paul was teaching that neither the weak nor the strong are to judge one another. This is a two-way responsibility.

In many 20th century churches, the strong are expected to bear full responsibility. This, of course, is a violation of Paul's teaching.

Second, the strong Christian is to be careful not to cause a weaker brother or sister to fall into sin.

Here is where many of today's Christians terribly misunderstand and violate Paul's teaching. "Offense" or "stumbling" is defined by some, especially immature Christians, as making them "feel bad" if another Christian does something they don't like.

This is *not* what Paul meant by causing "distress" or "grief" or making someone stumble. Rather, he made it clear that this is judging and should not be. What Paul meant by "causing someone to stumble" is to cause a fellow Christian to actually do something he cannot do with a clear conscience, thus causing him to sin against himself and the Lord.

Christians set up extra-biblical standards for themselves and then require that all other Christians measure up to those same standards in order to be spiritual. This, of course, is also judging others and is not accepting others as we should.

Step Two

Evaluate your own attitudes and actions. Are you "accepting" or "rejecting" people upon your own standards—standards you have set up or accepted because of your own weak conscience? If you are, you are "judging" your brother. This Paul forbids in Romans 14.

Note: I believe a Christian organization can set up certain "institutional" standards that are extra-biblical, and yet not violate the teaching of scripture. But the moment we begin to evaluate other Christians' spirituality on the basis of these standards, and begin to promote these standards as marks of Christian maturity, we violate the teaching of scripture. We are using a false criterion for measuring spirituality.

Challenge: If we teach and practice the true biblical criteria for spirituality, we will usually find it unnecessary to set up standards in addition to scripture. (For an interesting study of a profile of Christian maturity, see the



NEWS OF THE RELIGIOUS COMMUNITY

EX-JEHOVAH'S WITNESSES CALL WATCHTOWER SOCIETY "BRAINWASHING CULT"

DALLAS (EP)—The Watchtower Society of Jehovah's Witnesses was denounced as a brainwashing cult that had changed the Bible to fit its own doctrines at the International Convention of Ex-Jehovah's Witnesses for Jesus in Dallas July 2-4.

A Hebrew scholar said the Watchtower's New World Translation of the Holy Scriptures' Old Testament was clumsily translated by people who "knowingly changed" Scripture to fit their doctrine that denies the deity of Jesus Christ. Dr. Ken Matthews, professor of Old Testament and semitics at Criswell Center for Biblical studies in Dallas, said the work was "not a translation," and "not Scripture." It should not be called a Bible, but rather, "The Book of Jehovah's Witnesses." A Greek scholar called the Watchtower's New Testament translation "intellectual harlotry." Dr. Randolph O. Yeager of Woodbridge, Virginia, said the Watchtower had changed the New Testament to fit its own doctrines which differ greatly from orthodox Christianity, especially that regarding the deity of Jesus Christ.

Joe Hewitt, Director of the convention, who was a third-generation Jehovah's Witness, said the Watchtower Society brainwashes its converts to the point they cannot think for themselves. "They become non-thinking religious robots," Hewitt said.

While the Ex-Jehovah's Witnesses convention was being held at the Colonial Baptist Church at 6459 Scyene Road in Dallas, a Watchtower Convention was being held at the State Fair Coliseum in the same city. A group of 30 from the Ex-Jehovah's Witnesses convention went to the Watchtower convention, passed out tracts and "witnessed" to the Witnesses.

The Ex-JW's displayed signs which read, "Armageddon did not come in 1914; Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob were not resurrected in 1925; Armageddon did not come in 1975;" and "The Watchtower is a False Prophet, Deut. 18:20-22."

"When the Watchtower officials saw us with our signs and tracts, they 'shooed' their people inside as if they were chickens. 'Don't take that material. These people are evil slaves,' they said. And most of the Jehovah's Witnesses obediently refused to accept our tracts. One lady accepted a tract from me, and one of the Watchtower officials who shadowed me all the time I was there took it away from her," said Hewitt.

ANTI-DEFAMATION LEAGUE CHALLENGES JONES U. PRACTICE

NEW YORK (EP)—The Anti-Defamation League of B'nai B'rith asked the U.S. Supreme Court to uphold the denial of tax exempt status for colleges that practice racial discrimination. In an amicus curiae (friend of the court) brief, the League challenged the right of tax exemption for Bob Jones University of Greenville, SC, and Goldsboro Christian Schools of Goldsboro, NC.

The case grew out of a suit filed by Bob Jones and Goldsboro contesting the right of the Internal Revenue Service to deny them tax exempt status. Their position was upheld by the Justice Department in January of this year when the Reagan Administration—reversing an 11-year-old Federal policy—announced, on the basis of its interpretation of existing law, that it would no longer deny tax exemptions to more than 100 schools which practice racially discriminatory policies.

Seymour D. Reich, chairman of the League's national Civil Rights Committee, who announced the filing of the brief, said the IRS was well within its authority to deny tax exemptions to both schools since it was carrying out a clear mandate, as repeatedly expressed by Congress, to withhold aid to institutions which go counter to the public interest. Mr. Reich pointed out that Bob Jones University did not admit blacks until 1971, but it stipulated that they must be married. Only in 1975 were single blacks admitted, he added, but on the condition that they could not date or marry whites. Goldsboro excludes blacks altogether.

"Racial discrimination in education," the ADL brief concluded, "violates one of the most important policies of this nation. The determination of the Commissioner of Internal Revenue—that private schools practicing racial discrimination—are not entitled to tax exemptions—was well within his discretion."

CHRISTIAN COUPLE GUILTY OF VIOLATING SCHOOL ATTENDANCE LAWS

FERGUS FALLS, MN (EP)—In a decision filed August 23 in Otter Tail County Court here, a judge has ruled that Donald and Kathleen Budke are guilty of violating Minnesota's school attendance laws. The rural couple, who last October removed their children from the public school and taught them at home through the school years, was scheduled to appear for sentencing on September 23. The offense is a misdemeanor, punishable by up to 90 days in jail and a fine of up to \$500.

Opposition to "secular humanism"—seen in textbooks and in classroom teaching at the Battle Lake Public School—was given in Kathleen Budke's testimony as the reason for taking their children out of the public school. She taught Karen, 12, John, 11, and Patrick, 8 in daily classes using textbooks obtained from Christian Liberty Academy, Prospect Heights, Illinois. The Budkes are members of the Roman Catholic Church.

PREACHER DIES AFTER SNAKE BITES HIM DURING SERVICES

MULLENSVILLE, WV (EP)—A preacher who handled poisonous snakes in his bare hands to demonstrate his faith was bitten by a rattlesnake and died after refusing medical treatment, authorities said August 24.

The Rev. John Lee Holbrook, 38, of Oceana was bitten during August 22 services at the Lord Jesus Church in Jesus' Name, according to Wyoming County Coroner Ned C. Rogers, and was pronounced dead at Oceana Medical Center August 23.

Mr. Holbrook's right arm, from wrist to shoulder, had turned black and there were indications of internal bleeding, the coroner said.

A woman who identified herself as a church member said Mr. Holbrook had routinely handled snakes as a demonstration of faith. "We do it because the Bible tells us so," said the woman, who asked not to be identified.

She said the basis for serpent handling is found in Mark 16:18, which says: "They shall take up serpents; and if they drink any deadly thing, it shall not hurt them; they shall lay hands on the sick, and they shall recover."

Mr. Rogers said he was told that Mr. Holbrook had been bitten by snakes before, and that usually such persons develop an immunity to the venom. He said it appeared that Mr. Holbrook suffered an allergic reaction this time that accentuated the effect of the poison.

Snake handling has been a fixture for decades at a few small, rural churches scattered throughout Appalachia. Some states have outlawed the practice. In 1975, the U.S. Supreme Court upheld a Tennessee law prohibiting snake handling. It rejected arguments that the ban violated the constitutional right to freedom of religion. West Virginia law does not address the issue. At least six deaths in West Virginia have been attributed to religious snake handling since 1961.

KGB AGENTS REPORTEDLY POSING AS BIBLE SMUGGLERS

GUMMERSBACH, Germany (EP)—Undercover agents of the Soviet secret service (KGB) have begun to gain access to the homes of Christian families in the Soviet Union by posing as Bible smugglers. According to publications of the "Friedensstimme" mission in Gummersbach, the KGB agents usually claim to be transporting literature on behalf of Christianin, the underground publishing house of Russian Christians.

In most cases the supposed "colporteurs" said their vehicle had been attacked, that they had a break-down or that they were being watched, and asked for financial help and a "safe address of a Christian where they could hide and store the literature".

Friedensstimme, a mission founded by German Baptist repatriates from the Soviet Union, warned that many well-meaning Christians had lost their savings in this way and that house searches had been conducted immediately at the addresses disclosed on such occasions, according to reports from the German Evangelical Alliance.



Thanksgiving Truths



THE NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF
Free Will Baptists

THE SECRETARY SPEAKS

By Melvin Worthington

Thanksgiving is the day when Americans pause to reflect, remember, and respect the abundant blessings which God has bestowed upon this great country.

Millions will use this special day which has been appointed as Thanksgiving Day as a day of indulgence, intemperance, and ingratitude respecting neither their Creator, conscience, nor country.

Thanksgiving is the *act* of rendering praise and thanksgiving; this praise and thanksgiving may take the form of private prayer or public proclamation as one articulates his appreciation for the blessings he enjoys.

Thanksgiving is a *disposition* which all Christians should display. It is the attitude which should daily characterize those who are disciplined and devoted disciples of Christ.

Christians ought to thank God for His *goodness*, since God's goodness leads men to repentance (Romans 2:4). Thankfulness for God's goodness is always in order. The Psalms abound with references to God's goodness.

Christians ought to praise the Lord for His *greatness*. David declared God's greatness when he said, "Great is the Lord, and greatly to be praised in

the city of our God, in the mountain of his holiness" (Psalm 48:1). In Psalm 145:3 God's greatness is described by the words "Great is the Lord, and greatly to be praised; and his greatness is unsearchable." Psalm 147:5 declares "Great is our Lord, and of great power: his understanding is infinite." The greatness of God's person, power and provisions should bring praise and thanksgiving from the heart of the Christian.

Christians ought to be thankful for God's *grace*, God's unmerited favor. Grace cannot be earned, but it can be experienced and enjoyed. Christians live by God's grace, learn by God's grace, labor by God's grace, look for His coming by grace and manifest loyalty by God's grace. Believers are saved, schooled, sanctified, secure and satisfied by God's grace. The truth of God's grace should cause praise and thanksgiving.

Christians ought to praise God for His *gospel*. The gospel is God's good news regarding the salvation provided for sinful people. Paul acknowledged preaching the gospel. He was assured of the gospel's power. The gospel which brings the news of salvation for fallen mankind should provoke thankfulness and praise from every Christian.

Christians ought to praise God for His *guidance*. The writer of Proverbs declares "Trust in the Lord with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding. In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct thy paths" (Proverbs 3:5-6). David declared "the steps of a good man are

ordered by the Lord: and he delighteth in his way" (Psalm 37:23). The Christian can be assured of the Lord's personal, practical, positive and providential guidance.

Christians ought to praise the Lord for His *government*. The providence and sovereignty of God in the affairs of men are comforting truths. We can be assured . . . "that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose" (Romans 8:28). The entire book of Daniel suggests that God's hand superintends the affairs of men. The grand pillars of God's providence which govern the universe should provoke thanksgiving and praise.

Christians ought to praise God for His *gifts*. The Lord has given us salvation. He gave His Son to pay our sin debt. He has given us His Spirit. He has given us the gifts of the Spirit. The gifts which God has bestowed on His children are cause for thanksgiving and praise.

Thanksgiving truths commence with God, continue with God, and consummate in God. ▲

The Secretary's Schedule

- November 8-10** TN State Association
Cookeville FWB Church
Cookeville, TN
- November 11-13** AL State Association
Forestdale FWB Church
Birmingham, AL
- November 14-17** First FWB Church
Rittman, OH
- November 18-20** GA State Association
White Oaks FWB Church
Macon, GA

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

Observe November 21 Home Missions Sunday



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