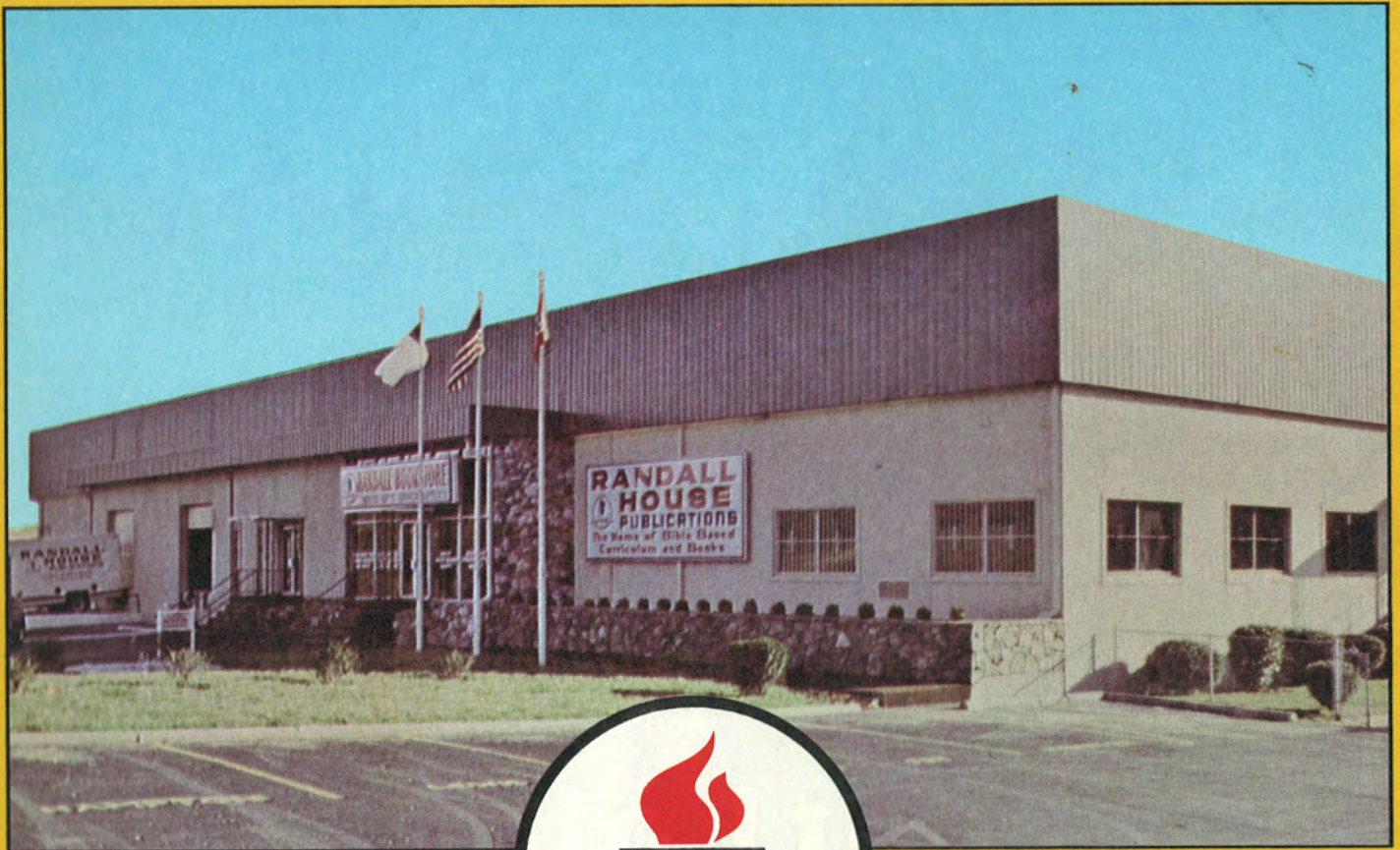


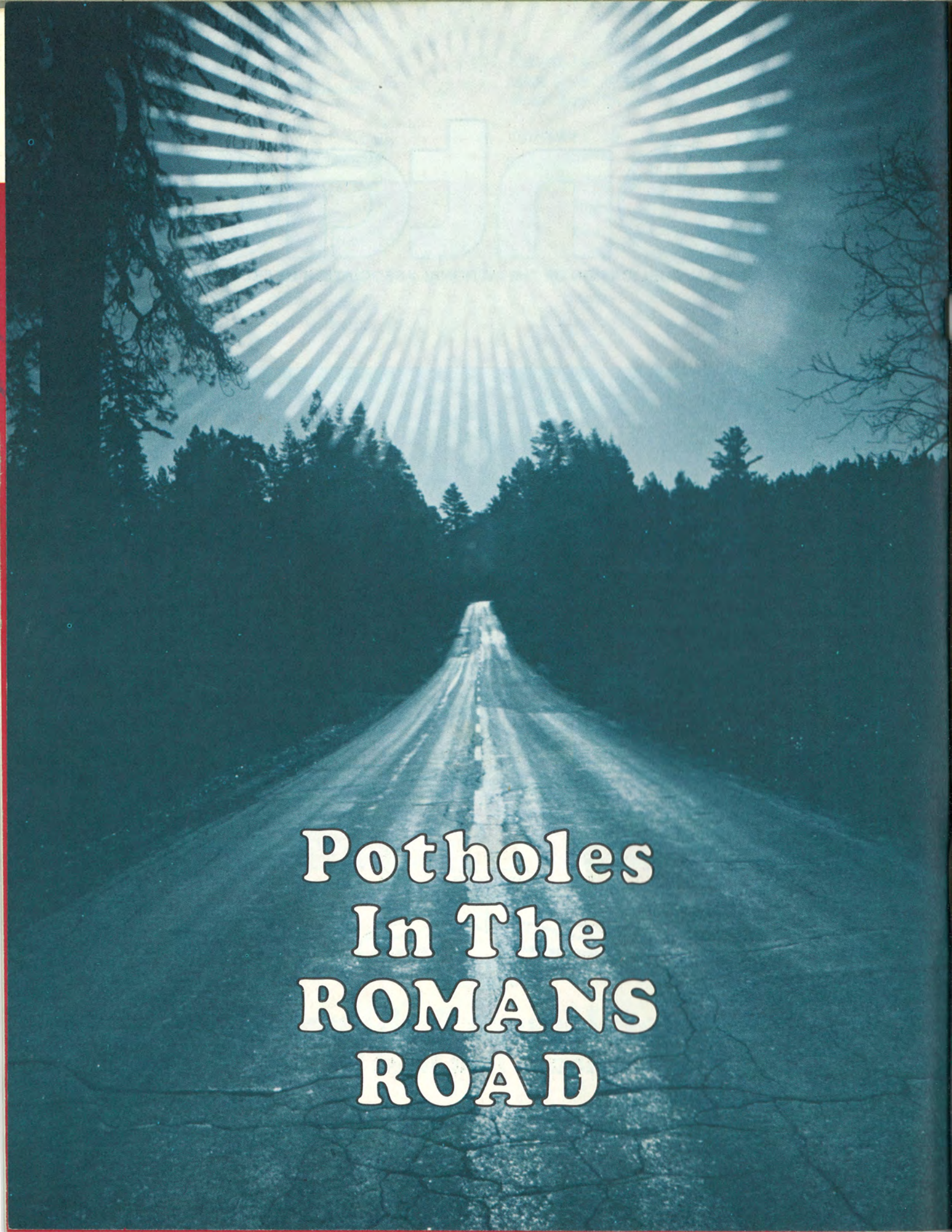
JANUARY, 1983

Contact

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**Potholes
In The
ROMANS
ROAD**

children, I'm very good in Basic Toddler.

Ronnie and I read books, patted cakes and played with his toys . . . all of them . . . at least the ones in the den. I guess Ronnie figured I was his playmate, intellectual equal or something. The others didn't seem to miss us so I turned my attention to him and enjoyed myself. Still smiling, he ran upstairs.

I was about to join the adults in conversation when a blood-curdling scream crashed down the staircase. Ronnie announced his re-entry with a large metal truck which I caught with my stomach. I tried to disguise my "Umph!" as a throat-clearing so as not to disturb Ron and Laura. That was needless because by this time they were engrossed with my husband. How they missed the scream was beyond me. Maybe they had hearing difficulties.

Ronnie and I played trucks, all over my feet and hose. He exited and returned toting his mother's jewelry box. "Should you have that?" I asked loudly, hoping his mother would notice and intercede. She didn't. As Ronnie scattered the jewelry, I hesitated to correct him thinking surely they would see the mess. Finally, assuming they had visual problems as well, I took over my little charge and began the clean-up brigade.

Disposal Dilemma

By now I was feeling quite at home. My short friend and I visited quietly, charming one another. Once again he dashed unexpectedly from the room and bounced back carrying a diaper. Still grinning, he handed it to me and then I asked a very stupid question. "What's the diaper for, Honey?"

No sooner had the words left my mouth than the scent answered my ludicrous inquiry. Of course no one else in the room smelled it but me. Nasal problems, too, I suppose. So I did the obvious. I'd certainly been there before.

This presented me with a new dilemma—how to dispose of the other diaper. I found my way to the

By Kathy Tippett Henderson

If you expect to survive as a door-to-door soul winner, you gotta be nimble on your feet and flexible at the bottom line. Let me tell you what happened one night when my husband and I tried to lead a young couple to Christ in their home.

Caution: Canines

A very territorial German shepherd gave ominous overtones to our evening when he stopped us in the front yard with a cold-eyed stare. I'm no dog lover in the first place and German shepherds, especially big ones, come way down on my list of preferences.

An attractive couple met us at the door and welcomed us into their home. Blonde-haired Laura, mother of a one-year-old, was expecting her second child. Her moustachioed husband, Ron, had a perpetual smile. We exchanged greetings, declined refreshments, were seated in the den, and officially introduced to their pet poodle.

He seemed harmless enough when he curled up in my lap. Harmless? I stand corrected. Puppies are supposed to be warm and cuddly, but this one turned out to be warm and *puddly*. No one noticed my wet lap—except me. How do you mention this delicate problem to your hostess? I opted not to and did the best I could with tissues from my purse.

Just then a cherub-faced toddler named Ronnie motored into the room, reflecting his daddy's smile. I gladly traded the dog in my lap for the child. He never spoke, but through a series of grunts and gestures communicated his wishes to me. Being the mother of three

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POTHoles (From Page 3)

restroom, my little buddy at my heels. When I came back to the den I had a ready explanation on my lips, but no one asked where we had been.

The phone next to me rang . . . and rang . . . and rang. At last Laura broke away from the conversation to ask me, "Would you mind getting that, please?" It seemed the natural thing to do. It was a business call for Ron, but when I announced the caller's name, Ron said, "Take his number and tell him I'll call him back later." I obediently scrounged around until I found a pencil and paper.

All Things To All Men

Almost two hours had passed as we said goodbye. I was exhausted. As we left, salty tears traced my cheeks. Oh, no! Not weary tears . . .

tears of joy! You see, I had just been soul winning and helped win two precious souls to the Lord.

It was Thursday night visitation, and while I commandeered their home and child, my husband, a pastor, had been showing Ron and Laura the Romans Road and praying with them. Their problems were neither audio nor visual. They had heart problems and we had just witnessed their healing that night.

Today Ron and Laura serve faithfully with their two sons in our church and we're still growing. She's expecting their third! (I've been there, too.)

Jesus sent us out two by two for a reason. Being nanny, maid and secretary was my part and it was not a menial part . . . it was glorious!

"I have planted, Apollos watered; but God gave the increase" (I Corinthians 3:6).

(The preceding is a true composite story. The names have been changed to protect the justified.) ▲



ABOUT THE WRITER: Mrs. Kathy Tippet Henderson is a member of First Free Will Baptist Church, Raleigh, North Carolina, where her husband, Doug, is associate pastor. Kathy, mother of three, is a 1969 graduate of Free Will Baptist Bible College.

You Need The Church!

By Floyd Wolfenbarger

You Need the Church! Sometimes when pleas are made for folks to put their shoulder to the wheel, one hears "The church needs you . . . No one is unimportant." There's certainly nothing wrong with that statement, except perhaps its emphasis. You see, a more important consideration is this—you need the church!

Somehow a very humanistic attitude

has pervaded our age which suggests that religion is so personal, salvation is so individual, and worship is so intimate, that we have arrived at custom-made Christianity.

We have our own select set of options. We choose to pray or not, to give or not, to witness or not, and to worship corporately or not. In extreme cases, some stay at home and customize their Christianity with two parts political fundamentalism (e.g. Falwell and Robertson) mixed with one part gleeful optimist (e.g. Schuller); and this tailor-made religion is concocted without leaving your living room.

The Bible knows nothing of the isolated Christian. The Christian is seen as part of the body of which Christ is the head. A Christian who is

detached from the body is not responding to the head—occasional convulsions notwithstanding. My big toe can't even wiggle right unless it's joined to my body.

In the New Testament, great works of the Holy Spirit were not really done by "great men standing alone" but by "saved men in one accord."

The church rolls today are filled with names of amputated members. They are on the books, but not in the body. That the body suffers without the member is true, but the member without the body dies. Stay in the assembly—you need the church. ▲

ABOUT THE WRITER: Reverend Floyd Wolfenbarger pastors First Free Will Baptist Church, Russellville, Arkansas.



I'll Take Tomorrow

The turn of every century draws theological crazies out of the woodwork just as routinely as a full moon attracts ding-a-lings to Hollywood and Vine.

For instance, a few months ago I received three threatening letters from the Holy Ghost who stamped his return address as a post office box in Portland, Maine.

Last summer a 20-page notebook landed on my desk with documented evidence that Richard M. Nixon is the "Son of God and the King of the Jews." A lady from Pennsylvania shared her new vision of how to raise \$912 million to feed the poor by attaching religious labels to one-pound coffee cans and urging folks to have a cup on Jesus.

I won't bother to tell you about the 8½ x 11 inch picture that Christ sent me which shows him posing in coveralls and gripping a short-barrelled .32 automatic in his right hand.

As a denomination, we'll have to stay alert to avoid being victimized by such end-of-century flimflams.

But what lies ahead for Free Will Baptists in the next 20 years? With your permission, let's acknowledge that we can't eliminate the rank and file seasonal flareups over peripheral issues. That happens in the best of families.

Which gets before us the \$64 question—what distinctive contribution can Free Will Baptists make in the next

two decades? Are plans being mapped out by state and national leaders to steer us into the 21st century with well-defined goals? What opportunities does the future hold that we alone can fulfill—opportunities which, if we don't grasp, will be forever lost to the cause of Christ?

Where is the denomination headed? The doomsayers among us swear that we will betray Fundamentalism, if not Christ, before the turn of the century. I for one don't buy their one-note refrain. I suggest that our gloom 'n' doom prophets come up for a breath of fresh air; they've been breathing the stale aroma of pessimism too long.

But let's face reality. We all know that some Free Will Baptists are going to wind up with dirty faces before the year 2000. Yet every face won't have dirt on it, and grace still puts a shine where there once was sin.

At the same time, don't get the idea that turmoil is the private garden of Free Will Baptists while other groups are immune to it. We've pulled some pretty dumb stunts, but so far as I know we don't have anybody who demands the new birth *plus* circumcision for salvation. If you recall, the early Church almost went to blows over that one (Acts 15).

Did you know that one of the Apostles committed suicide? That another one cursed Jesus in public? And one of them even went so far as to deny Jesus' resurrection?

But that was no reason to write off either the Church or its leaders. Pentecost will forever stand as God's opinion that the early Church was worthwhile, warts and all.

I think it's time Free Will Baptist leaders got together and did something more weighty than pass July resolutions that are forgotten before they make it to print in September. It's time we sought the face of

God about the future and the role of this denomination for tomorrow.

Some continue to cry, "We're not what we used to be." They're right, of course. And we never were—at least not how they selectively remember the past.

We're no longer an adolescent denomination stalking the frontier searching for our destiny. It's time we started giving God a higher return on His investment.

Future world leaders sit wide-eyed in our teen classes today. Potentially world-gripping movements lie at our doorsteps asking for direction.

Free Will Baptists have driven to the one-yard line of greatness more often than any other religious group in American history. And we've fumbled so often with issues in scoring position that we resemble a wishbone quarterback with pig grease on his fingertips.

But tomorrow can be better. We're in the best position we've been in for 50 years to make a real difference in this nation and our world.

We can make a difference, perhaps *the difference*, in the closing years before the 20th century collides with a new era.

I admit that Free Will Baptists may not be everybody's cup of tea. But I know one thing—when I was growing up, the local FWB Church was the answer to everything that was wrong in my community!

Which brings us full circle. We have something to offer that nobody else has. What resources can the denomination tap, what energies can we harness to sprint this bell lap of the 20th century for Christ?

We had better make our plans well and implement them immediately, or else we will spend the next 20 years reacting to and correcting the wacko ideas of fruitcake religionists. ▲

All Together . . .



For Denominational Loyalty

Adapted from a workshop presented at the 1981 Free Will Baptist Leadership Conference.

By Leroy Forlines

There is no such thing as a fault-free group on earth. We have our share of faults and problems, but in spite of this I am glad to be a Free Will Baptist. Without mental reservation, I am and believe I can be in the future faithful to the denomination.

According to Webster, a denomination is, "A class, or society of individ-

uals, called by the same name."

The churches and individuals who have entered into that relationship known as the National Association of Free Will Baptists make up such a class, society or group. We constitute the Free Will Baptist denomination.

Denominational loyalty requires us to be faithful and true, not only to a set of beliefs, but also to the group, the people who make up the group, and the joint endeavors of the group.

A local church member has an individual relationship to God but does not restrict it to a private relationship. His relationship to God is lived out in the context of a group of fellow Christians of like faith and embraces a desire for fellowship with and a concern for the welfare of others in the church.

Similarly, a faithful member of the denomination extends his relationship with God beyond the people who are affiliated with his local church to include a genuine concern for the entire movement.

I.

Denominational Loyalty Requires Us To Know Who We Are.

Knowing who we are means more than knowing our beliefs as stated in *A Treatise of the Faith and Practices of the Original Free Will Baptists*, more than knowing numerical strength and geographical distribution. It requires an understanding of our heritage by an

acquaintance with our historical roots.

Baptist groups owe their origin more to the English Reformation than to the Protestant Reformation. The English Reformation began when King Henry VIII of England broke with the Roman Catholic Church.

Developments occurred in Queen Elizabeth's reign (1558-1603) that are significant in understanding the roots of our heritage. Many felt that the Church of England reformation had not gone far enough, that it still had too many similarities with the Roman Catholic Church. These people wanted a pure church based on the authority of the Bible. This group came to be known as Puritans.

Two groups of Puritans emerged—those who believed that the Church of England could be reformed from within, and the separatists. The separatist Puritans lost hope that the Church of England could be reformed from within, opting to pull out and start new churches.

The concern of separatist Puritans was with doctrinal and ethical purity, form of worship, and form of a church government. Separatists were agreed in their rejection of the episcopal form of church government. Some chose the presbyterian form of government while others insisted that congregational church government was the form taught in scripture.

Baptists had their beginning in the Puritan separatist movement. Their concern was for a church that submitted itself to the authority of the Bible.

The first Baptist churches were: (1) orthodox in doctrine, (2) separatists, (3) practiced believer's baptism rather than infant baptism, (4) committed to congregational church government, (5) committed to Puritan ethics, and (6) Arminian rather than Calvinistic.

The first Calvinistic Baptist church was organized about 30 years after the first Arminian or General Baptist church.

The origin, growth, and development of Free Will Baptists in America has given us a heritage committing us to the six major points that concerned the first Baptists in England.

Our heritage has been separation. We may need to be stronger in our commitment that it is not our practice to enter into religious cooperation with those who are unorthodox in

their theology.

Free Will Baptists are Fundamentalists, although we were not a part of the Fundamentalist-Liberal controversy fought mainly between groups in the Northern Presbyterian and Northern Baptist denominations. While not being a part of the controversy, our sentiments were clearly with the Fundamentalists. We have had a greater affinity for those who pulled out of liberal denominations than those who hoped to reform them from within.

We are not simply Fundamentalists as distinguished from liberalism. We are Fundamentalists as distinguished from New-Evangelicals who do not take the separatist position. Any broad reading of the literature written about Fundamentalists and New-Evangelicals (they use the name Evangelical) clearly reveals that we would be considered Fundamentalists.

While Fundamentalists are united on major doctrines and on the general principle of separatism, there are a variety of opinions that create tension and division among Fundamentalists. As a whole Free Will Baptists are Moderate-Fundamentalists rather than extreme or Hyper-Fundamentalists.

While most Fundamentalists owe their present existence to separation from a denomination that was corrupted with liberalism, such is *not the case* with Free Will Baptists. We probably have the distinction of being the oldest Fundamentalist denomination in America.

Based on this brief look at our heritage, I would conclude that:

1. We are orthodox in doctrine.
2. We practice theological separation.
3. We are a Baptist group which means:
 - a) We practice believer's baptism.
 - b) We practice baptism by immersion.
 - c) We are committed to congregational church government.
 - d) We believe in the priesthood of the believer.
4. Our belief in moral separation causes us to take moral convictions more seriously than most Christian groups.
5. We are an Arminian group which means:
 - a) Our belief in unlimited atonement and conditional election commits us to aggressive worldwide evangelism.
 - b) Our belief in the possibility of apostasy helps us be less inclined toward cheap-easy believism than those who hold the popular concept of once saved always saved.

6. We are a denomination as distinguished from those who are not affiliated with any type of fellowship or association of churches.

I believe our heritage is that of a biblically-based group that has been built on God-honored principles. It deserves our deepest loyalty and most faithful support.

II.

Denominational Loyalty Requires An Alert Concern That We Continue To Be Faithful To Our Time-Honored Commitments.

The Church has had its problems in every period of history. It has had to deal with error not only from without, but also from within. There will never be a time before the return of Christ that the Church will be free from concern about error within.

Denominational loyalty requires us to be concerned not only for our local church, but for the welfare of the whole denomination. This means that when occasions call for it we will speak out on issues and engage in criticism of that which, as we perceive it, threatens our basic commitments as a denomination.

While we must engage in criticism, it is important to keep in mind that criticism, if not conducted properly, can have devastating results. I know of nothing that underlines the weaknesses and inconsistencies of good men more than controversy. Yet, we do not want to be without controversy.

We must subject our methods and approach in controversy to the authority of the scriptures. Those who engage in controversy must be mature in their Christian experience, strong in their commitment to ethical principles, and men of good reputation.

It is a mistake for the young and immature to play major roles in controversy. They can seriously hurt themselves and other people in the process.

There are some marks of maturity that help maximize the good results in dealing with issues and minimize the negative results.

One of these marks is found in the words of our Church Covenant: "We



LOYALTY (From Page 7)

agree to accept Christian admonition and reproof with meekness”

Some people plan to be aggressively involved in controversy—to tell, but never ask; to give, but not receive. In confronting rank liberalism, such an approach might be understandable, but it is not justifiable in dealing with the type problems that usually occur among us.

It is tragic when a good man is unable to receive admonition, reproof, or any suggestion of modification without accusing or holding in suspect the person who approaches him. It is also tragic when a person's friends fear to tell him something he needs to know lest they run the risk of marring their friendship or becoming the object of his wrath.

But may I say—God give us men who will run such risks when a brother produces results that may be harmful both to himself and to others.

Another mark of maturity is doing one's homework and getting the facts straight. It is sinful to draw hasty conclusions and take a path of action which, if untrue, could bring serious hurt to another person, church, department, or institution.

The Bible is quite clear about having a properly established case before taking punitive action. In Deuteronomy 13:12-15, God said through Moses:

If thou shalt hear say in one of thy cities, which the LORD thy God hath given thee to dwell there, saying, Certain men, the children of Belial, are gone out from among you, and have withdrawn the inhabitants of their city, saying, Let us go and serve other gods, which ye have not known; Then shalt thou inquire, and make search, and ask diligently; and, behold, if it be truth, and the thing certain, that such abomination is wrought among you; Thou shalt surely smite the inhabitants of that city with the edge of the sword, destroying it utterly, and all that is therein, and the cattle thereof, with the edge of the sword.

Even though idolatry was serious, it was also a serious matter that guilt be established by proper inquiry and evidence, not on the basis of hearsay or rumor. The same principle that applied to a city in Deuteronomy 13:12-15 is applied to an individual in Deuteronomy 17:2-7.

God was not only interested in

keeping idolatry out of the land, but also in highly ethical procedures in determining guilt or innocence.

The New Testament manifests this same concern in I Timothy 5:19, “Against an elder receive not an accusation, but before two or three witnesses.”

There are two categories of errors that must be dealt with: (1) Errors that would destroy Christianity, and (2) Errors that would affect the health of Christianity.

The most severe action is reserved for those involved in the destruction of Christianity. Idolatry, referred to earlier in Deuteronomy, represents the error that destroys. In cases where ex-communication is recommended in the New Testament (Matthew 18:15-17 and I Corinthians 5:1-13), the nature of the cases implies that those involved were not saved. Yet, the Bible requires diligent search for evidence and the highest standards of proof before action is taken against those guilty of serious offenses.

Paul refers to a lesser type error in II Thessalonians 3:14-15,

And if any man obey not our word by this epistle, note that man and have no company with him that he may be ashamed. Yet count him not as an enemy, but admonish him as a brother.

The action in this case is less than ex-communication, and the guilty person is still considered a Christian. We must refrain from any association that would imply endorsement of his error, but we are not to isolate ourselves from him. The intent in such a case is not to write off the person, but to try to help him.

Taking into account what the New Testament says about exhorting, admonishing, reproof, and rebuking fellow Christians, and how it tells us to go about this, it is obvious that we are not instructed to take drastic action in dealing with this type problem.

It is also obvious that whatever approach we take must have the best interest of the person in mind. The administration of judgment on a person without a concern for redeeming him from his error is contrary to scripture.

According to Titus 3:10, even a heretic was supposed to have two attempts made to help him before he was rejected. How much more should this be true of an erring brother! We

owe our Christian brothers to treat them in a Christian way. This will not tie our hands when action is needed, but it will call for patience. We will have to discern the nature of the case as well as give adequate attention to getting a correct understanding of matters.

In our Church Covenant, we have promised “to be careful of one another's happiness and reputation.” If we live up to this promise, we will not engage in spreading rumors that would destroy a person's reputation. To rob a brother of his reputation is to destroy his influence. When we hear a damaging rumor about a person, we should check it out or refuse to spread it.

The sad fact is that the person himself is usually one of the last to know about a rumor that would be detrimental to him. No person's case should be aired for public consumption until his side of the story has been heard. Many things appear a certain way when they are not. Such matters can usually be cleared up if they are checked. If it is not worth checking out, it is not worth spreading.

Let me mention one of the mistakes of hasty investigation. It is a mistake to take a statement out of context. We must guard against becoming experts on a person's error by only knowing it through a few short quotations. Frequently, these quotations without the context imply a considerably different meaning than was intended by the person who made the statements.

There is one more mark of maturity that we need—that which keeps us from getting in a state of panic every time there is a sign of danger.

Several years ago I thought that prior to each National Convention the denomination would blow up and fall apart at the Convention. After a few years I ceased to have such fears. I am concerned and will continue to be so, but I am not afraid.

The Free Will Baptist ship is seaworthy. It has sailed the rough seas before, and, in my opinion, will still be sailing when the prophets of doom have gone on to their heavenly reward.

Denominational loyalty requires us to be alert and speak out about things that would weaken us or lead us away from commitments we have historically believed and that we believe to be biblically based. At the same time we must go about such matters in keeping

with the principles of scripture and our Church Covenant.

III.

Denominational Loyalty Requires Us To Know The Difference Between Ourselves And Those With Whom We May Associate Outside Our Denomination.

We want to protect our identity and stay true to our heritage, but it is impossible to live in isolation. The moment we associate with others we bring ourselves under the influence of ideas that are different from ours.

I do not suggest that we isolate ourselves. However, if we are around a person who is conservative but not a separatist, we must realize that we are separatists and not be influenced by his non-separatist position.

If we company with those who do not have standards as high as we do, we need to be careful not to be influenced by their weaknesses. We need to remember the words of our Church Covenant.

We promise by His grace, to love and obey Him in all things, to avoid all appearance of evil, to abstain from all sinful amusements and unholy conformity to the world, from all sanction of the use and sale of intoxicating beverages, and to provide things honest in the sight of all men.

Our ethical roots are unquestionably in the Puritan tradition.

When we get outside our denomination we probably have more affinity (and also more difficulty) with groups like the Baptist Bible Fellowship and the Independent Baptists than with any other well known group or groups.

At the same time there are some important differences and we need to know what they are lest our own historic and biblically-based commitments become weakened or corrupted.

All Baptist groups have been historically committed to congregational church government, which means that the authority of the church rests in the congregation. I am not as informed as I want to be on church government among Independent Baptists.

However, based on what I have learned, it seems that from a practical viewpoint the functional authority of

the congregation in many, if not most, of these churches is not adequate to be referred to as congregational church government.

This is a cause of deep concern because, historically, to speak of baptistic church government and to speak of congregational church government was to say the same thing.

The role model of the Independent Baptist is far more of an authoritarian model than is justified by scripture. In fact, the Bible clearly condemns the authoritarian model (Matthew 20:25, 26 and I Peter 5:3). The biblical model is that of the shepherd-flock model.

In the January, 1980-April, 1981 series of articles, "The Pastor and His People", published in CONTACT, I made a thorough study of everything the New Testament says on pastoral authority. The Bible calls for strong pastoral leadership, but it grows out of caring for the people, gaining their respect, and out of the power of persuasion rather than one whose word is law. This is in keeping with what is said in our *Treatise* concerning the pastor:

The Pastor, who preaches the Word of God, ministers to the needs of the members, and exercises general leadership within the congregation.

In our association with Independent Baptists, let's be sure that we are not influenced to change our biblically-based view of church government and pastoral authority.

We also do not accept the Independent Baptist concept that there is something inherent about a denomination which guarantees that some day it will go liberal. We are *not* where some denominations were before the Fundamentalists-Liberal controversy.

They had liberals in their pulpits, their classrooms, and on the mission fields. Such is not the case with us. There has never been a time in our history when there were more men among us who, if necessary, would go to the wall to see that our denomination does not go astray.

We must not let those who have little knowledge of our denomination upset us and cause us to push the panic button.

Because of their belief in once saved always saved, the Independent Baptists believe that if a person makes a profession of faith he is saved and cannot be

lost even though he manifests no evidence of salvation. It is hard to compete numerically with people who take such an approach—an approach that I call cheap easy-believism. I am aware of the fact that they try to get people to live better, but at the same time they are willing to take such to be valid conversions.

When we hear the Independents speak, read their literature, and listen to their tapes, we need to understand how these important differences between us and them affect their methodology. If we do not, the end product will be the weakening of our own commitments.

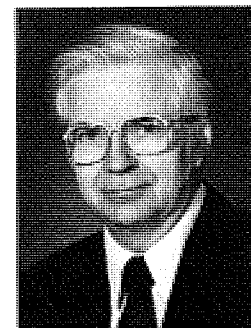
I am not opposed to having some contacts with outsiders, but when some among us become intimidated about the name *Free Will Baptist*, when it is a touchy issue to preach in some of our pulpits on our view of perseverance, I think we have a right to be concerned. I am sure that only a few such cases exist among us, but even a few are too many.

IV.

Denominational Loyalty Requires Us To Support Denominational Enterprises.

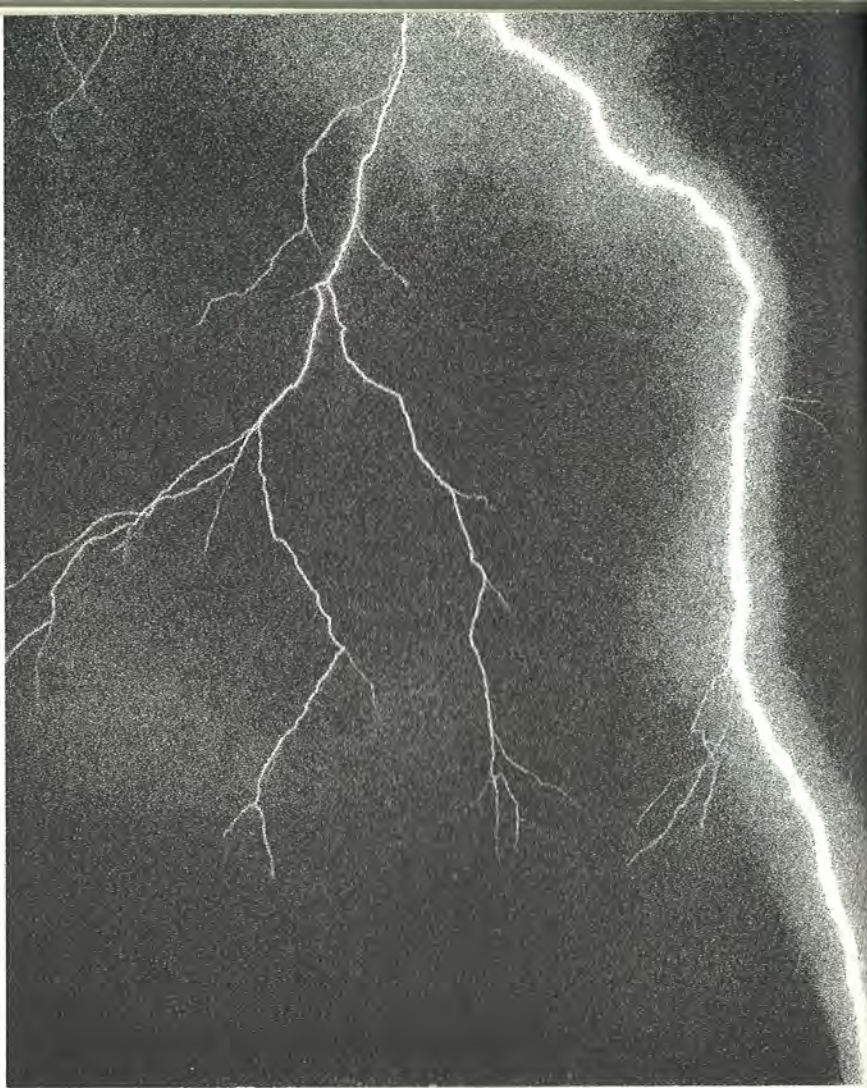
I realize that a person has a right, if he thinks a department or institution is in serious error, to not support it. We should begin on the premise that we will support denominational enterprises. We should depart from that premise only if we have serious reasons.

To support does not mean that we cannot criticize. Regardless of how many improvements I may think may be needed, I do not know of a department or institution among us that is not worthy of support. ▲



ABOUT THE WRITER: Reverend Leroy Forlines teaches theology at Free Will Baptist Bible College, Nashville, Tennessee.

Big Possums Walk Just Before Daylight



By Lawnie B. Coffman

While serving as president of the Optimist Club in Searcy, Arkansas, I made this statement at one of the meetings, "Big possums walk just before daylight."

A professor who was at the meeting, asked, "Lawnie, what does that have to do with anything?" I explained to the club what it meant to me.

As a boy during the depression in the early 1930's, I grew up on the hillside farms in the foothills of the Ozark Mountains of North Arkansas. There I learned some valuable lessons that helped me in my more than 30 years as a full-time pastor and as an infantry sergeant during World War II.

I learned the value of *teamwork* and

that a mule cannot *kick* and *pull* at the same time. The greatest lesson that I learned, however, was *PERSEVERANCE*.

On our small farm, some men worked for 50 cents a day plus room, board and their washing. Others lived in their own homes and worked from daylight to dark for 75 cents per day. A dollar was hard to get during the depression.

One thing that helped us through the lean years was selling furs. All the neighbors would have their lanterns and carbide lights ready when the hunting season opened the first of December.

We would race to get to the best spots first. Soon after dark, the dogs would begin to tree possums and skunks. The young, small possums would set out for their favorite persimmon trees. The dogs would pick up their trails and the young possums would be dropped into the hunters' sacks.

Now these little fellows only brought from 10 to 30 cents each when dried and ready to sell. Most hunters were back home in bed before midnight, but not the Coffman boys. We knew the big possums walked just before daylight and that they would bring two or three dollars each.

This was equivalent to about four days' work in the field at hard labor. After all the noise was gone, the big possums would begin to walk and old Tip and Lead (our dogs) would make us proud of them as we saw those big three-dollar possums sitting on a limb grinning at us. This made us very glad we persevered and climbed over one more hill.

This gave me determination as an infantry sergeant as I led my men against the enemy in France. To persevere just a little longer meant the difference between life and death.

Near Metz, France, I saw all but three of my unit marched off as prisoners with their hands behind their heads.

They were later machine-gunned and killed by the Germans.

One other sergeant and I determined to fight a little longer and were rescued by some American tanks. Two days later we were given replacements and continued our drive into the heartland of Germany, only to discover the bodies of our comrades who did not persevere 30 minutes longer.

The Lord always seems to know when we need help. We only need to be faithful, like Paul who instructed the ship crew to stay in the boat in Acts 27:31. It was midnight and very dark, but the big possum was about ready to walk for them.

Consider the incident with the disciples in Matthew 14:22-27. Jesus told them to get into a ship and cross to the other side. The night was dark and the wind contrary about 2:00 a.m. They were where the Lord told them to be, doing what He told them to do.

Their responsibility was to keep their boat headed in the right direction and keep paddling. Then came Jesus walking on the water and the wind ceased. The big possum walked for them in their darkest hour.

What of the horrible story of famine in II Kings 6-7 and the siege by the Syrian army? The night had gotten so dark that the people were eating their children to stay alive. In 7:5, at "twilight," four lepers discovered that the big possum had walked for them just before daylight. The Syrians had fled for their lives and left plenty of food for everybody.

I believe many pastors and soul-winners give up too easily. A farmer would never make a crop if he quit when he hit the first stump. A war would never be won if the soldiers quit when they lost a fight. We cannot win them all. I like this soldier's prayer:

Lord, as I enter this furious battle
Help me win every fight that I can.
But when I must feel the enemies steel
Lord help me to be a man.

So, friends, when you are discouraged and feel that everything you touch turns to dust, it may be that across one more valley and over one more hill, the big possum could be waiting for you. ▲

ABOUT THE WRITER: Reverend Lawnie B. Coffman pastors Yorktown Free Will Baptist Church, Star City, Arkansas.

Thank You For Your Contributions...



... Through the Cooperative Channel

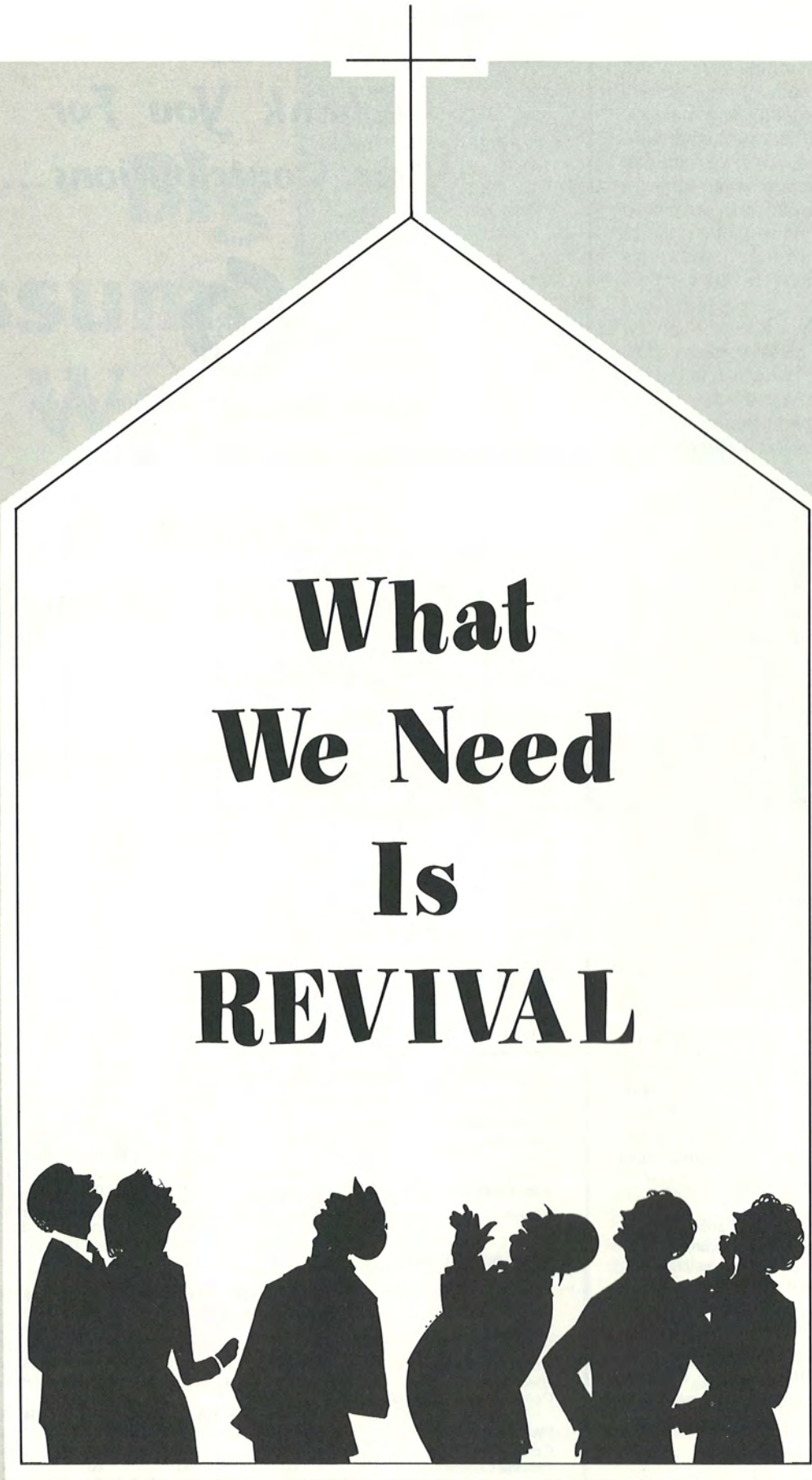
October, 1982

RECEIPTS:

State	Design.	Undesign.	Total	Oct. '81	Year to Date
Alabama	\$ 154.00	\$ 245.35	\$ 399.35	\$ 610.12	\$ 11,397.66
Arizona	.00	.00	.00	.00	359.38
Arkansas	.00	3,319.64	3,319.64	3,173.64	35,434.74
California	.00	1,067.37	1,067.37	1,228.93	10,765.95
Florida	35.00	1,095.02	1,130.02	33.34	15,432.30
Georgia	2,563.56	405.00	2,968.56	1,007.45	21,893.89
Hawaii	.00	.00	.00	.00	125.00
Idaho	.00	.00	.00	.00	218.78
Illinois	12,310.03	3,411.44	15,721.47	1,235.87	65,794.36
Indiana	.00	.00	.00	.00	206.79
Kansas	.00	.00	.00	65.98	1,934.31
Kentucky	.00	.00	.00	75.00	357.00
Maryland	.00	60.00	60.00	40.00	370.00
Michigan	.00	.00	.00	2,847.14	35,513.68
Mississippi	.00	114.45	114.45	450.87	6,722.74
Missouri	6,239.40	.00	6,239.40	5,495.86	60,298.86
New Mexico	.00	.00	.00	.00	1,226.06
North Carolina	60.00	400.00	460.00	576.80	7,453.72
Ohio	77.00	1,705.00	1,782.00	904.40	20,169.42
Oklahoma	21,184.69	7,245.32	28,430.01	53,677.71	272,630.38
South Carolina	.00	.00	.00	.00	25.00
Tennessee	104.62	2,329.89	2,434.51	1,498.84	12,812.87
Texas	3,983.06	330.94	4,314.00	4,247.47	35,036.54
Virginia	.00	.00	.00	51.15	676.90
West Virginia	197.00	.00	197.00	11.50	393.95
Totals	\$46,908.36	\$21,729.42	\$68,637.78	\$77,232.07	\$617,250.28

DISBURSEMENTS:

Executive	\$ 1,185.77	\$ 9,439.63	\$10,625.40	\$ 9,087.54	\$104,812.95
Foreign Missions	28,055.50	3,133.91	31,189.41	41,107.34	294,834.70
FWBBC	2,748.87	3,133.91	5,882.78	7,694.87	71,609.82
Home Missions	14,407.32	2,335.04	16,742.36	12,869.80	101,446.95
Retirement & Insurance	395.64	2,273.62	2,669.26	4,037.65	27,797.61
Master's Men	66.27	1,228.97	1,295.24	2,091.47	13,373.03
Commission on Theological					
Liberalism	48.99	184.34	233.33	343.40	2,434.55
FWB Foundation	.00	.00	.00	.00	100.67
Convention	.00	.00	.00	.00	740.00
Hillsdale College	.00	.00	.00	.00	100.00
Totals	\$46,908.36	\$21,729.42	\$68,637.78	\$77,232.07	\$617,250.28



**What
We Need
Is
REVIVAL**



By L. Joe Miller

Here is a tragic but true story. Once upon a time there was a beautiful little church in a tiny village. In that church were seven Sunday School classes—two adult groups in sanctuary pews, teenagers up front in the choir loft, another adult section in the overflow room, and three children's classes in the basement.

With dedicated leadership and special day crowds, their Sunday School averaged around 70; morning worship between 60 and 80 (depending on the pastor at the time). About 35 attended evening worship regularly; and 16 "faithful" dutifully came to Wednesday "prayer and Bible study."

This church had a tough problem. It did not grow! Low attendance limited income and forced them to share a pastor with another congregation. Worship services were conducted only on alternate Sundays, hindering spiritual development and commitment to Christ and the family of God. They were a "part-time" church in the truest sense.

"What we need," said the concerned leaders of the church, "is a revival!" They meant that persons not attending church should be led to accept Christ as Savior so they would attend church. This would provide more leadership and greater income. Then they could pay a "full-time" pastor. "Yes sir; what we need is a revival."

New young pastors followed old retiring pastors to begin their ministries in the little village church. Most of them recognized the need for important changes. "We need more Sunday School rooms," they pleaded. "There is not room for expansion."

"No; we need people. Then we will build an addition. What we need is revival!" responded the leadership of the church.

"Why don't we partition some new rooms in the basement," suggested one new pastor. "There is too much noise from so many classes in the

sanctuary. We should be able to sit in chairs in fellowship circles during Sunday School. And, our teenagers need a room for themselves."

"It costs too much money. And besides it has been good enough in the past. What we need is revival," came the reply.

"We need to improve our teaching methods and understand more about how Sunday Schools work. Let's pay our teachers' way to Christian education conferences and have leadership training courses here in our church. And, why don't we have monthly staff meetings?" asked the next pastor.

"We should have a Board of Christian Education to study the needs of Sunday School and plan for growth," urged another. "Sunday Schools grow at the rate of 10 persons for every class. We need to add new class cells in order to multiply."

"That's for larger churches. We don't need that; we only have 70 people. What we need is more people," they said. "You ought to make more calls, pastor. What we need is revival!"

One by one discouraged young pastors answered calls to other congregations. "Well, they have done it to us again. That big 'money' church has stolen our fine young pastor!" complained the people of the little village church. "If only we could have a great revival that would make us grow until we could hold a pastor."

Time went by and the world changed. But the little village church remained the same. So did its attendance. New babies were born into the cradle roll and passed through the children's classes. A large percentage of the teenagers elected not to move into that conspicuous choir loft classroom and dropped out. Most of the remainder graduated from church as they graduated from high school.

The few staying with the congregation merely filled vacancies left by dear brothers and sisters promoted to eternal life with the Lord. And the Sunday School with seven classes averaged about 70; the morning worship between 60 and 80 (depending on the pastor at the time). How God's people yearned for revival!

And God heard the prayers of His people. A certain evangelist came for special services. Young husbands (and some not so young) came to hear the message of salvation. The Holy Spirit

did His work; many received Christ.

New families came into the church. Attendance soared. From 70, to 80, to 95! Everybody was overjoyed. Sunday School classes were running over!

In fact, the little church was actually crowded, sometimes even uncomfortably so. That many people made it even more difficult to hear in the classes that met in the sanctuary pews.

About three boisterous months passed. "Say, it seems evident that we could use more room for our Sunday School," said the leadership of the church. "But, we don't have the money." (They had never started a building fund.) "We don't have enough land." (No planning committee had ever been appointed to consider such needs.)

For three months more the church board debated the need for more space. Finally, they appointed a committee to develop plans for a new educational facility.

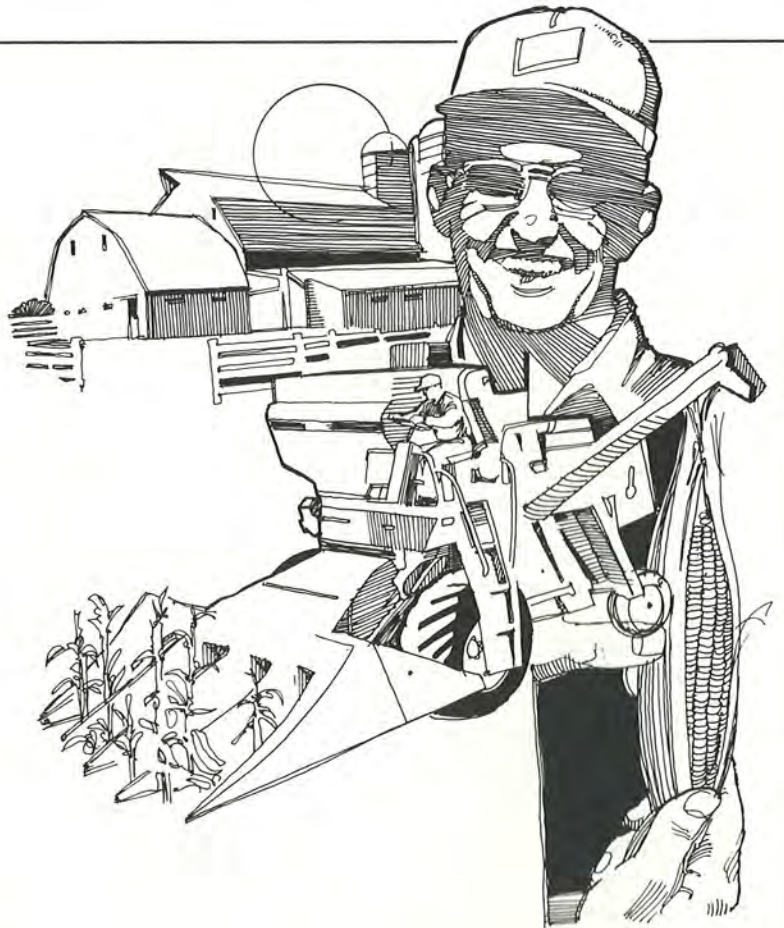
"First," said the chairman, "I think we should survey the need." A careful study of the Sunday School was launched. To their amazement, a terrible truth was discovered.

They had seven Sunday School classes in their church—two adult groups in sanctuary pews, teenagers up front in the choir loft, another adult section in the overflow room, and three children's classes in the basement. With dedicated leadership and special day crowds, their Sunday School presently averaged about 70.

"Why," they exclaimed in amazed relief, "we don't need more Sunday School rooms. *What we need is a revival!*" ▲

ABOUT THE WRITER: Mr. L. Joe Miller resides in Findlay, Ohio. In addition to his free lance writing, Mr. Miller is a Christian education consultant and edits Sunday School curriculum. The Zondervan Publishing Company published his Study Guide for the Art of Understanding Yourself.

The Worth of Sam West



... and be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you with meekness and fear" (1 Peter 3:15).

By Barbara Joyce Watson

Sam Washington West was his full name, but everyone who knew him called him Wash. He and his daughter, Ruby, owned a farm; and, since there were just the two of them, they stayed busy from daylight till dark. Sam and Ruby usually were up before dawn, then they would be in bed by good dark.

They raised their own beef and pork as well as a huge garden every year. Our freezer stayed full because of their sharing. Not only did they give us vegetables, but most of the time Ruby would help me freeze or can them.

Some of my best memories are of the times spent with Wash and Ruby. The delicious meals that she prepared, watching them enjoy my three children, and just enjoying their company. Their way of life was so different! There was

such peace and contentment in their home.

I remember stopping the car in front of their house and seeing Wash sitting in his rocker on the front porch reading his Bible. During the winter he'd sit by the wood heater, and he would always have his Bible in his hands. He could tell you just about anything you'd want to know. Sometimes I wondered how many times he must have read it through.

For years I just assumed that Wash was a Christian. I'd never heard him say an unkind word about anyone. He always had a smile for everyone, and his patience with children amazed me.

He would play "checks" as long as anyone would play with him. I think that he allowed the kids to win every now and then. He would take them outside, give them a hammer and nails, and let them build things. My kids thought he was the greatest.

Each time we'd get ready to leave, Wash would say, "Be content now—

you don't have to leave this soon." Seems as though he always hated to see us leave. Whenever the kids would run over to kiss him good-bye, he'd act a little embarrassed and say, "Ah, go on now." He had been around them all their lives so his shyness at their expressions of love puzzled me at times.

Ruby talked to me about Wash getting old and how she hoped he would make things right. I know that she talked to him about his soul quite often. But until the day she expressed her concern for him, I honestly thought he'd been saved.

After that, there were lots of times that I wanted to talk to him, but I just couldn't seem to get the words out. I thought to myself, "Maybe the preacher or someone from the church they attend will reach Wash. Brother Keefer visited them occasionally and talked with him. Maybe he would be the one."

On February 20, 1979, Wash left with a couple of other men to get some

feed at the feed mill. He never came back home. He suffered a massive heart attack and died before they reached the hospital.

Ruby, my husband and I, and our children were in a state of shock. It just didn't seem possible that Wash wouldn't be here anymore. As I looked down at his body in the coffin, I kept wondering, "Wash, where are you now? Oh, if I only knew where you are! If I knew that you were with the Lord, I could feel better about this. I don't mean that the sorrow would be gone, but you've worked so hard—at last, you're at rest—if only I knew where you'll spend eternity."

Four years have passed since that day. Ruby and I have talked a lot about Wash. Things that the man said who was with Wash when he died indicate to me that he was ready to die. Also, Brother Keefer felt that Wash had made a change.

I said something to Ruby one day about the way Wash acted when the kids kissed and hugged him. She said, "You know, Wash never felt that he was worth very much."

I guess he felt that he wasn't worthy of our love. Well, he was worth so much—he was worth a testimony I failed to share with him. Had I told him what Christ had done for me and how he had worked in my life, he may have wanted Christ in his life earlier. I was so close to him—why didn't I tell him? I guess I thought there would be a better time—but always, not right then. Or maybe someone else would do it. I just wasn't ready.

I have to believe that Wash is with the Lord. There are people who are quiet about spiritual matters. I feel that Wash was this type person. I wish he could have known how worthy of our love he was. He deserved so much more out of life than he received. But, you know, Wash never wanted anything other than the simple, quiet life that he had. He was happier, perhaps, than most people.

But Wash, I wish you knew how much you were loved and how very much you are missed. There'll always be that empty spot that came when you left us and you'll always remain in my heart. ▲

ABOUT THE WRITER: Mrs. Joyce Watson is a member of First Free Will Baptist Church, Murfreesboro, Tennessee.

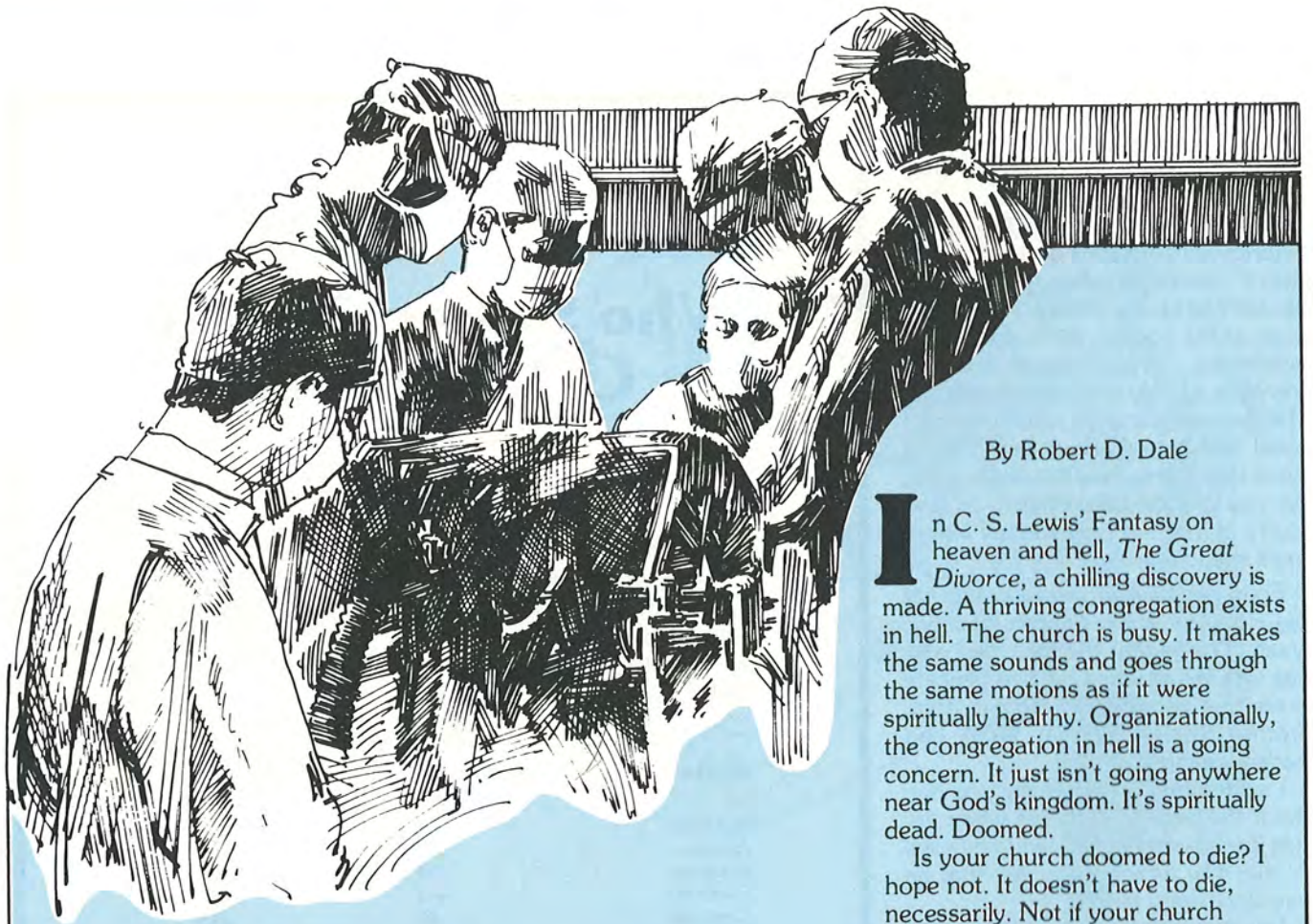
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CONTACT subscribers live in all 50 states. The following list shows how many people in each state receive CONTACT, as well as how many Free Will Baptists live in each state.

Are you included as a CONTACT subscriber in your state?

State	CONTACT Subscribers	Number FWB in State
Alabama	366	21,180
Arizona	15	263
Arkansas	759	26,532
California	443	4,323
Colorado	46	241
Florida	276	5,261
Georgia	291	10,587
Hawaii	12	44
Idaho	6	141
Illinois	466	2,239
Indiana	178	2,124
Iowa	4	130
Kansas	139	576
Kentucky	262	15,613
Maryland	11	1,710
Michigan	109	3,969
Minnesota	7	12
Mississippi	153	4,599
Missouri	900	16,129
Montana	1	28
New Mexico	29	201
North Carolina	460	27,924
Northeast	36	55
Northwest	66	296
Ohio	240	10,495
Oklahoma	752	28,852
Pennsylvania	6	134
South Carolina	434	9,510
Tennessee	936	23,328
Texas	434	6,650
Virginia	259	10,111
West Virginia	79	10,839
TOTALS	8,175	244,096



By Robert D. Dale

In C. S. Lewis' Fantasy on heaven and hell, *The Great Divorce*, a chilling discovery is made. A thriving congregation exists in hell. The church is busy. It makes the same sounds and goes through the same motions as if it were spiritually healthy. Organizationally, the congregation in hell is a going concern. It just isn't going anywhere near God's kingdom. It's spiritually dead. Doomed.

Is your church doomed to die? I hope not. It doesn't have to die, necessarily. Not if your church commits itself to spiritual health.

Imagine you're driving down Church Street in your town or in another familiar setting. As you drive, read the signs in front of a variety of church buildings. Pay special attention to congregations with a likelihood of spiritual disease, churches on a so-called endangered species list.

The list of unhealthy churches below is admittedly overstated at points. But let your imagination work to help you relate these quietly deteriorating congregations to other churches you've known. When you and I can recognize diseased churches, then we are better able to build healthy ones.

Good Old Days Church

These congregations fear they're past their prime. They resist change. "Stop the world. I want to get off" is their motto. The golden ages of

Is Your Church Doomed To Die?

yesterday are preferred over the uncertainties of today and tomorrow. These churches may forget there's no faith possible when risks are impossible.

The church on the rural-urban fringe also finds itself in a double bind. The past was simple. There was a defined church field, an entrenched power structure, and a simple program. Now the character of the church is being challenged. Will we reach out to the engulfing suburbs? Will we adjust our ministries to newcomer's needs? Can we make room in the elected structure for new leaders?

Stillborn Church

This church was probably birthed out of hate or competition. One example of stillbirth is the church begun as a result of a split or schism.

The climate of a stillborn church may remain negative and make the congregation clearer about what it's against than what it's for. Two neighboring pastors, leaders of congregations split out of each other, discovered a sure way to motivate their members. All they had to do was make a comparison of their church to the nearby "enemy" congregation. A "Catch Calvary" campaign or an "Eradicate Emmanuel" effort was guaranteed to ignite the old rivalries.

A negative beginning for congregations may tilt their motivations and ministries in negative directions for the long term.

Family Chapel Church

The center aisle in a family chapel serves as more than a back-door-to-the-pulpit passageway; it divides the house into opposing sides, into "us" and "them." When the family chapel is made up of two extended clans, blood ties may be thicker than Spirit. Kinship may decide votes. Old battles, some decades old, may undermine the family chapel's ministry.

Occasionally, the family cemetery does more to insure the congregation's existence than anything else. If you doubt how crucial the cemetery is to some family chapels, consider this

experiment. Announce two work days, one a general spring cleaning for the church building and the other a let's-get-the-cemetery-ready-for-Memorial-Day effort. Which work day would get the most support?

Dip 'n' Drop Church

Some congregations experience boom growth. They baptize lots of folks. But, overall, the congregations may grow very little. In these churches, people are saved, but they don't grow.

When instant maturity is expected to follow instant birth automatically, immaturity results. Any church with a dip 'em and drop 'em approach to evangelism eventually suffers from the liabilities of immaturity: childish fusses, majoring on minor issues, susceptibility to false doctrines, and marginal appreciation for ethics and applied Christianity.

When salvation is seen only as a point in time rather than a process through time, folks are apt to be evangelized and then not nurtured.

Doctrinal Specialty Church

Every congregation needs to know what it believes and practices. But when a church's complete confession of faith can be summed up literally on its church sign, it isn't taking advantage of the richness of the gospel.

A balanced doctrinal diet means all preaching and teaching emphasis isn't focused on one pet belief, even if it's an important tenet of faith. For example, if only the Holy Spirit is stressed, where are the Father and Son left?

Going to seed on a favorite doctrine creates a lopsidedness which makes balanced growth difficult.

Serve-Us Church

Some congregations act as if they exist for themselves alone. They have the same attitude as the self-centered prayer:

Bless me and my wife,
My son, John, and his wife,
We four,
No more!

Serve-us congregations have a convenience store mentality; they serve up fast faith like fast food. Service, ministry beyond the local membership, is virtually ignored. The serve-us church often keeps most of its receipts inside the congregation for members' use. Missions and outreach aren't stressed.

No Growth Church

This style congregation takes some pride in stressing fellowship to the virtual neglect of evangelism. I was recently asked to consider leading an evangelism workshop in a we-don't-grow church. The pastor said, "You'll have to talk about 'sharing' faith. 'Witnessing' is too strong a word for our church."

Some religious groups assume an anti-evangelism stance. One sect went so far as to outlaw both evangelism and marriage. After one generation they realized what's always true for Christendom: we're only one generation away from extinction.

Widow Making Church

In the days of the sailing ships, some vessels gained a reputation as jinxed. After the dangerous image of these ships spread, crews became almost impossible to find. When the owners had received their investment, the "widow makers" were deliberately wrecked. These ships were viewed as too dangerous to man.

Some congregations get the reputation as widow makers too. They fire or abuse pastor after pastor. That's not to say all pastoral firings are the congregation's fault. But when a church has fired four or five consecutive pastors, isn't it a widow maker?

Terrorist Tactics Church

Some congregations stay intimidated by terrorizing members. Church terrorists start rumors, are outspoken debaters, and play politics. These power brokers filter every decision and create a fuss



DOOMED (From Page 17)

whenever some action they dislike is under consideration.

Blackmail in its various guises—money given to or withheld from the church budget, designating gifts to pet projects, job security threatened by community employers who are also church leaders, or neurotic needs for recognition or power—is a favorite ploy of religious terrorists.

Power and decision making in the church are important issues. In a national deacon training conference, I asked a hundred deacons if their congregations had deacon rotation plans. Most did. A few reported deacon rotation had been resisted because some deacons feared they'd lose status. One man's answer startled me. His statement had overtones of terrorism: "We don't rotate deacons. We rotate pastors."

Superstar Church

This church revolves around a central person, usually the pastor. The direction of the member's attention is so finely focused that a personality cult often results.

The superstar church may be "on." On television. On the freeway. On the I-visited-there-on-last-summer's-vacation circuit. People may join these congregations to draw their identity from a distant relationship with the superstar.

The superstar church gets a lot of denominational ink. It provides a model for others to imitate. Unfortunately, when the superstar leaves, the church may lose its momentum. Does the superstar assume so much spotlight and responsibility that the members may remain passive and untrained?

Smorgasbord Church

Many churches attempt to provide something for everyone. They try to be all things to all persons, whether they have the resources and opportunities or not. These churches play follow-the-leader with their programs. If another area church develops a program, the Smorgasbord Church feels duty bound to begin that program too. "Keeping up with the Joneses" is the Smorgasbord Church's style.

Congregations can adopt a "franchised faith" approach. That is, just like every McDonalds restaurant or Ford dealership are essentially alike, these churches are obviously Baptist (or Methodist or Presbyterian) franchises.

Two results are likely. First, a one-size-fits-all attitude to ministry will miss at least as many folks as it reaches. Second, trying to provide too wide a range of programs may stretch people's resources so thinly that little is done well.

Bermuda Triangle Church

People disappear in the Bermuda Triangle, or so the superstition claims. Some church members disappear into the innards of their congregation never to be seen again. They become inactive church membership lists, but their heart loyalties apparently lie elsewhere.

Many churches have an evident affinity to disappearances into the Bermuda Triangle. In Southern Baptist ranks, for instance, more than one in every four churchmen are considered inactive. That's a lot of unincorporated or misplaced manpower.

This problem covers the whole spectrum from the highly mobile military or university church to the Old First or changing neighborhood congregation. When new members aren't assimilated and longtime members aren't encouraged, inactivity is a likely result. Inactives can be counted for bragging purposes, but they can't be counted on for daily ministry to others.

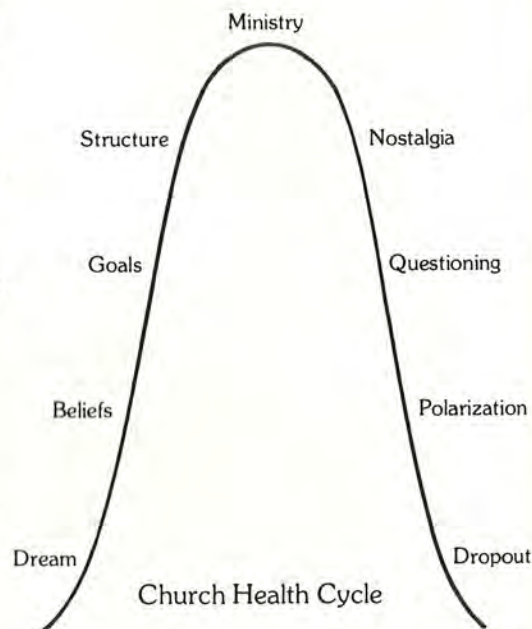
Our quick tour down Church Street identifies some unhealthy churches. These congregations have atmospheres marked by *narrowness* (family chapel, stillborn, good old days, dip 'n' drop, and doctrinal speciality), *self-interest* (serve-us and no growth), *intimidation* (widow maker and terrorist tactics), and *elitism* (superstar, smorgasbord, and Bermuda triangle). Attitudes of "only us" or "us first" or "us-versus-them" or "us above all others" crowds out Christian concern for serving others.

From Health To Disease

What are the specific contrasts between healthy and unhealthy

congregations? I've developed a simple model to picture the "health cycle" of a church. This approach is spelled out in my book, *To Dream Again* (Broadman, 1981).

The health cycle moves, like the human life cycle, from birth to death. The model looks like this:



A predictable sequence connects the stages.

- *A dream* gives birth to a church.

- *Beliefs*, a doctrine agreement for the congregation, grow out of the dream.

- *Church goals* grow directly out of the shared dream and beliefs.

- *Structure* organizes the congregation for reaching its goals and advancing its dream.

- *Ministry* refers to the variety of ways a church reaches out, develops members, and lives out its dream in Christian love.

- *Nostalgia* describes a longing for the days when the dream was clear, focused, and widely supported.

- *Questioning* is a point of no return on the health cycle. Either a church returns to its dream and is revived by it, or the congregation risks spiritual and organizational decline and perhaps death.

- *Polarization* is a tragic sign of declining health. At this stage church members mistake each other for the

enemy. Destructive conflict is common when polarization occurs.

•*Drop outs* result from a loss of the dream and ongoing feuds within the church family.

A church doesn't have to move through the entire cycle from health to disease. In fact, the point of the health cycle is to help congregations find out where they are and revitalize themselves by redefining God's will for them as a corporate body.

Churches aren't doomed to die if they seek, find, and do what God's kingdom requires of them. Health, not disease, is God's general intention for congregations.

Healthy congregations plan off their dream and live on the up-side of the model. By contrast, deteriorating congregations are problem-solvers and find themselves sliding down the back side of the curve.

Marks Of A Healthy Church

Several marks describe the healthy church. Here are eight qualities characteristic of church health.

•Healthy congregations *focus on a specific dream* of their ministry. Effective groups use a mutual vision to glue them together. In churches, the dream centers on redemption. After all, salvation is the one-word summary of the Bible.

The fundamental dream, for me, centers on Jesus' preaching of the kingdom of God. He spoke of it and its redemptive power more often than any other issue in his ministry. To be like Jesus, then, means to take God's kingdom seriously. And the kingdom of God is as basic and applicable for congregations as it is for individual Christians.

Since every local congregation has a unique personality, all churches don't look or act exactly alike. Their dreams, while similar in general ways, take on specific, personalized qualities as the dream is lived out in their local settings. The important issue is: can your church answer directly when asked, "What does God want from our church here and now?" The congregation needs to respond to this question as a group.

In other words, the answer given by the pastor or a small cluster of

members isn't necessarily a dream for that congregation.

•Healthy congregations *develop a doctrinal agreement* around their dream. Theological consensus provides a solid foundation for ministry.

My guess is that Baptist churches sing their theology more than they talk about it. A clue to congregational belief is the hymns and songs sung repeatedly, with feeling, and largely from memory. More than doctrinal debate or Bible verses quoted, the natural and enjoyable sharing of musical praise provides a corporate consensus about theology for many congregations.

•Healthy congregations *are goal-oriented*. Church goals furnish a method for implementing their dream.

Good goals grow out of the dreaming, talking, listening, and decision-making processes of a congregation. Broad participation in goal-setting is essential for one practical reason: folks work for the goals they help shape.

•Healthy congregations *organize themselves to carry out their dream*. Organizational structure supplies the muscle and sinew for activating the dream.

Baptists have a mission vision, so we've organized mission boards. As a denomination, we've stressed the Bible and structured our churches into all-age Sunday Schools to teach the Bible. If your church has organizational units supporting no portion of your dream, your congregation is overorganized. Your church is underorganized if it has aspects of its dream which are unsupported by organizational structure.

•Healthy congregations *live out their dream in active ministry*. Ministry is the proof of the dream. Ministry links hearing and doing: it incarnates our vision into enacted faith. A balanced mix of dreamers and doers are needed to make a congregation both visionary and active.

•Healthy congregations *use nostalgia as an early warning signal*. An overt longing for the Golden Age of the past is a reminder that the congregation is losing touch with its

dream. Nostalgia tells church leaders it's time to renew the dream.

•Healthy congregations *fight fair*. The only place without conflict is the cemetery. Otherwise, groups with ideas, vitality, and goals experience conflict from time to time.

Healthy churches find constructive ways to deal with their differences. They stay up-to-date with their disagreements and deal with them before they grow out of proportion. They look for solutions which advance the dream.

Dissenters are valued in healthy churches. In fact, diversity is necessary *koinonia*, or fellowship. The New Testament Church was made up of a wide range of folks—Jews and Greeks, free and slave, male and female, young and old. Diversity makes for disagreement; disagreement makes for better goals and a sharper dream—if conflict is constructively channeled.

•Healthy congregations *periodically redream their dream and plan off of it*. Organizations age and drift away from their dream as time passes.

Periodically, it's essential for congregations to redefine their dream. Planning, based on their redemptive vision, turns dreams into deeds. Dreaming provides the biblical vision of the kingdom of God for a church; planning is the organizational health skill which puts hands and feet to the dream.

Doom or Dream

No church is forced to face its death passively. It can define its kingdom dream rather than die. The road to church health is to dream again. Christ's kingdom hasn't changed. Our churches have only to dream it again. ▲

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Dr. Robert D. Dale is professor of pastoral leadership and church ministries at Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary, Wake Forest, North Carolina. This article is adapted from his book To Dream Again.

Note: Dr. Dale's book, To Dream Again, is reviewed this month by Tom Marberry. See "Top Shelf" for Dr. Marberry's comments and analysis.



FREE WILL BAPTIST

newsfront

FLORIDA INVITES 1989 NATIONAL CONVENTION

JACKSONVILLE, FL—Delegates to Florida's 39th annual state association which met November 3-5, 1982 at Immanuel Free Will Baptist Church in Jacksonville voted to invite the 1989 National Convention to Tampa.

The National Convention last met in Florida sixteen years ago at Jacksonville (1967). A vote on the 1989 convention site is not scheduled until 1985, but Executive Secretary Melvin Worthington indicated that the National Convention may opt to take the vote sooner based on the strong Florida invitation.

In other action, the 159 registered delegates instructed State Clerk Larry Montgomery to write Executive Secretary Worthington and the 1983 National Convention Nominating Committee expressing concern over national board member distribution. Florida has no members on any major national board, other than the one General Board member.

Delegates also approved a \$60,000 Cooperative Plan budget for 1983.

Dr. Charles Thigpen, president of Free Will Baptist Bible College, spoke three times during the association. He preached on "Developing the Local Church—Leadership, Unity, Missions."

Moderator Gene Helton was re-elected. The 1983 state association will meet November 2-4 with the Marvin Chapel FWB Church in Marianna.

20/CONTACT/Jan. '83



Southeastern FWB College will use spacious facilities at Gateway FWB Church, Virginia Beach, Virginia.

SOUTHEASTERN COLLEGE SLATES FALL '83 OPENING

NASHVILLE, TN—President Randy Cox and the Board of Directors announced the opening of Southeastern Free Will Baptist College for 1983 fall semester classes. The new college will be temporarily housed in facilities at Gateway Free Will Baptist Church in Virginia Beach, Virginia. Dormitories will be provided for single students on the 26-acre campus with additional area housing available for married students.

Southeastern Free Will Baptist College is a Christian liberal arts school. Initially, degrees in Bible and teacher education will be offered as well as courses in missions. Officials expect to add other programs of study as the school grows.

Southeastern plans to combine high academics with a thoroughgoing practicality and relate both dimensions to a strong local church philosophy.

The curriculum will be taught by men and women who have "done the job". Programs of study will include current expertise of guest lecturers

periodically brought on campus to teach and challenge the students. The intent is to prepare students to make immediate contributions to the work of God upon completion of their course of study.

President Randy Cox, who serves as pastor of First Free Will Baptist Church, Raleigh, North Carolina, will continue in his pastoral duties and give on-campus administrative direction to the school three to four days each month. Daily oversight of the college will be the responsibility of the resident dean.

The Cooperating Board, which is composed of supporting churches and pastors, plans a spring Bible Conference with details regarding the dates and place of the meeting to be announced later. Individuals wishing to make contributions and/or requests for information should write to:

Southeastern Free Will Baptist College
P.O. Box 4919
Florence, South Carolina 29501

CO-OP FOUNDATION ENDOWMENTS ESTABLISHED

NASHVILLE, TN—Two endowments have been established with the Free Will Baptist Foundation according to Herman L. Hersey, executive secretary-treasurer.

The family of Dr. and Mrs. Melvin Worthington, Nashville, established an endowment for the Cooperative Plan of Support, September 30, 1982.

Other members of the family include Mr. and Mrs. Wilbur L. Worthington, Ayden, North Carolina, and Rev. & Mrs. Milton Worthington, Royal Oak, Michigan. Income from the endow-

ment will be dispersed annually according to the Cooperative Plan formula adopted by the National Association.

The Herman L. Hersey family, Nashville, Tennessee, established an endowment for the Foundation, June 1, 1982. Income will be used for operating expenses of the Foundation office.

Members of the family include Mrs. Ruth Hersey, Nashville, Tennessee, and Rev. and Mrs. Fred Hersey, Japan.

Both endowments are open-ended. Anyone may make additional tax-deductible contributions.

ALABAMA ADOPTS COOPERATIVE PLAN

BIRMINGHAM, AL—The Alabama State Association in its 63rd session voted to recommend the Cooperative Plan of support to member churches as the means to underwrite state and national outreach ministries. The vote came during its November 11-13, 1982 meeting at Forestdale Free Will Baptist Church in Birmingham following a year-long study by a five-man committee appointed in 1982.

Funds channeled through the Alabama Cooperative Plan will be distributed according to the following formula: 65 percent to remain in the state work, 35 percent to be forwarded for the national Cooperative Plan. State funds will be allocated to the following agencies: State Home Missions (15%), Pastors and Workers Conference (15%), Children's Home (10%), General Fund (10%), State Retirement and Insurance Board (10%), and the Christian Education Board (5%).

More than 100 ministers were among the 403 registrants when the state association endorsed Southeastern

FWB College as a Free Will Baptist institution worthy of financial support and as a school to train students.

Delegates reaffirmed previous action to invite the 1987 National Convention to Birmingham.

The State Executive Committee concluded its one-year study regarding the future of the Alabama Children's Home and recommended that the Home continue operation.

In other business, delegates requested that Executive Secretary Melvin Worthington make arrangements for a meeting involving all concerned persons and denominational leaders to be held in Nashville regarding denominational difficulties, and that the express purpose of such a meeting be to resolve differences and avoid falling victim to Satan.

The Association passed a resolution affirming Alabama's stand that Jesus neither made nor drank alcoholic wine and "respectfully requesting that the FWBCC faculty and staff not advocate" any other position. Copies of the reso-

lution were forwarded to the FWBCC President and Board Chairman as well as national department directors.

Moderator John Edwards was re-elected for a seventh term and Clerk Ray Ritch for his 19th term. According to Clerk Ritch, all state funds will now be channeled through the newly created state treasurer's office. Walter Jagers of Decatur was elected as treasurer.

Seven sermons, a Master's Men Breakfast, and a Woman's Auxiliary Banquet completed the state agenda. Missionary Pastor Mickey Kirkland (Montgomery) preached the keynote message.

The Ministers and Deacons Meeting on November 11 spotlighted sermons on the theme, "Essentials to a Living Church." Pastors Bud Hill, William Atkinson, and James Walden developed the theme. Joining Reverend Kirkland with State Association preaching assignments were Pastors Mike Harrell, Duane Taylor, and Gene Hales.

200 ATTEND MISSISSIPPI STATE ASSOCIATION

IUKA, MS—Officials reported that 200 delegates and visitors attended the 1982 Mississippi State Association which met November 5-6 at First FWB Church in Iuka.

Moderator Luther Gibson said the Mississippi churches committed themselves to give more assistance to the new home mission work in Gulfport. Missionary Pastor Ralph Hester, who heads up the Gulfport project, estimated that between \$60,000-\$70,000 would be needed to stabilize their building needs.

Delegates appointed a two-man

board to advise and assist Editor Billy Tabb in preparing and gathering articles for the monthly state paper, *The Mississippi Messenger*.

Home Missionary Hughes Ellis preached the state association's keynote address Friday evening. Mississippi Pastor Al Hamm (Victory FWB Church, Columbus) delivered the Saturday morning address.

A one-day Bible Conference featuring sermons by four Mississippi pastors preceded the state meeting. The Bible Conference speakers included Robert Hesselmeyer (Beech Springs Church,

Mrs. Eunice Edwards, former WNAC Executive Secretary, spoke at the State Woman's Auxiliary Banquet on the subject "Woman With A Vision." Mission Pastor Ralph Hester addressed the Master's Men Prayer Breakfast.

The 1983 State Association meets November 4-5 at First FWB Church, Tupelo.

Salttillo), Malcolm Garrett (Community Church, Corinth), J. L. Gore (Faith Church, Jackson), and Milton Fields (First Church, Columbus).

TENNESSEE ADOPTS \$714,000 BUDGET

COOKEVILLE, TN—For the first time in its history, Tennessee Free Will Baptists adopted a state budget, according to Clerk Garnett Reid. Delegates to the 45th annual state association endorsed budgets topping \$714,000 for 1983, which included quotas from state and national departments as well as anticipated state Cooperative Plan receipts.

In other business, delegates authorized a four-person Historical Commission to prepare a Tennessee state history for the 1985 Jubilee National Convention. The publication will in-

clude the state association history as well as histories of the Children's Home in Greeneville and local associations.

Nearly 300 people registered for the November 8-10, 1982 session which met at Cookeville FWB Church in Cookeville. That registration total reflected 85 ministers.

Delegates were informed that a new state home missions project for Paris, Tennessee has been approved with Missionary Hughes Ellis.

Three ministers preached messages on the state association theme, "All Sufficiency in All Things." Keynoter

Stanley Outlaw, FWBCC professor, spoke Monday evening. Pastors Jim Walker (Woodbine FWB Church, Nashville) and Danny Dwyer (Sylvan Park FWB Church, Nashville) addressed the state association on Tuesday and Wednesday.

The Tuesday Bible Conference featured Pastors W. L. Kell (Keensburg FWB Church, Elizabethton) and Guy Owens (Randall Memorial FWB Church, Memphis). Oak Ridge Pastor Jim Dunlap spoke during the Master's Men Breakfast.



newsfront

(continued)

FWBBC TO HOST FEBRUARY PRINCIPALS CONFERENCE

NASHVILLE, TN—Dr. Roy Lowrie, president of the Association of Christian Schools International (ACSI), will be guest lecturer when Free Will Baptist Bible College hosts a conference for Christian school principals February 21-23, according to Dr. Kenneth Riggs, chairman of the Teacher Education Department.

Fourteen other Christian educators, including Mrs. Roy Lowrie, highlight the program which will address practical problems encountered in Christian schools. Four of the speakers are on the college faculty/staff, while others are principals and teachers in Free Will Baptist schools.

A variety of seminars will be offered each hour on subjects of interest and use to administrators and teachers. Sessions are planned on athletics, the library, and buildings. Other topics are faculty unity, chapel ideas, and fund-raising plans.

Times have been scheduled for Christian school administrators to interview prospective teachers who are now studying at Free Will Baptist Bible College.

The conference begins at 7:00 p.m. on February 21 and concludes at noon on February 23.



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22/CONTACT/Jan. '83

DEPARTMENT SETS 1983 WRITERS CONTEST

NASHVILLE, TN—The sixth annual Writers Contest, sponsored by the Sunday School and Church Training Department, will accept entries until March 15, according to General Director Roger C. Reeds.

The contest includes seven categories. The two-fold purpose of the contest is: (1) to give an opportunity for expression and recognition of creative writing skills, and (2) to develop and/or discover latent and/or new talent within the denomination.

Deadline for entries is March 15, 1983. Entries and a registration fee of \$10 per entry should be sent to: Dr. Malcolm C. Fry, Writers Contest Director, P.O. Box 17306, Nashville, Tennessee 37217. Make all checks payable to Randall House Publications.

Contestants in the Writers Contest may attend the Writers Conference scheduled May 13-14, 1983 on the campus of Free Will Baptist Bible College, free of charge, except for meals and lodging.

RULES OF ENTRY

1. Any member of a church in the National Association of Free Will Baptists may enter.
2. Each entry must be religious in nature and the original, unpublished work of the contestant.
3. Entries must be typewritten; otherwise, they will not be considered. Each typewritten page should have 25 double-spaced lines of type. Each line should be approximately 70 spaces in length. The writer's name, address, and category of entry (Short Story, Poetry, etc.), as well as the approximate total number of words in the entry, are to be placed in the upper right-hand corner of the first page. Please adhere to the requirements listed under "CATEGORIES" as to the length of each entry in the seven categories.
4. Entries must be postmarked no later than March 15, 1983. Those postmarked after March 15, 1983, will not be considered.
5. A contestant may submit one entry each in no more than two categories (the \$10 entry fee is required for each entry); however, he/she is eligible for first place in only one category. (Please do not send more than one entry in any one category and no more than two entries total.) All entries become the property of the Free Will Baptist Sunday School and Church Training Department (doing business as Randall House Publications.)
6. Winners will be announced in press releases to editors of Free Will Baptist state papers, where applicable, and in *Contact Magazine* and *Scope*.
7. Winner entries may be published in *Scope Magazine*, space, time, and priorities permitting.

CATEGORIES

1. *Exegesis/Sermon*. Each exegesis should develop a brief passage of scripture, not to exceed 15 verses in length. Each entry should be at least 10 pages in length but not

- more than 14 pages. Sermon text and subject are left to the discretion of the writer. Outlining is suggested, but not mandatory.
2. *Short Story*. A short story should not exceed 25 pages in length.
3. *Poetry*. Poetry entries should consist of rhymed or unrhymed verses of not more than 100 lines which develop a central theme or image.
4. *Tract*. Gospel tracts on special spiritual subjects are acceptable. These should be short enough to be published in the usual tract format; not more than six pages.
5. *Play/Skits*. Not to exceed 14 pages in length, plays or skits should contain plot, theme, dialogue, characterization, setting, suggested set design, and stage directions.
6. *Book*. A book entry may be of any nature as long as it serves a religious purpose. Suggestions include devotional guides, novels, commentaries, guides to practical Christian living, etc. Length should not exceed 50,000 words.
7. *Art/Visuals*. In this category, any one of the following would be acceptable: a photo, painting, drawing, poster, or slides adhering to the main principles of element and design. Each entry must be a minimum of 8" X 10".

CRITERIA

Entries will be judged on creativity, composition techniques, originality, expertise of the literary or art form selected, impact, and theme content.

AWARDS

In each of the seven categories the awards are:

- First place—\$25
- Second place—\$15
- Third place—\$10

SUNDAY SCHOOL SPRING ENLARGEMENT CAMPAIGN SET

NASHVILLE, TN—The Sunday School and Church Training Department announced its March 6-27, 1983 Spring Enlargement Campaign, "Always Abounding."

Churches, for purposes of friendly competition, are grouped in different divisions based upon their average Sunday School attendance for the months of September, October and November, 1982. New works established since November will be listed in a separate category, Division I. These churches should use the attendance

on the first day of Sunday School as their average.

Sunday Schools attaining the greatest percentage of increase over the base figure will be named first and second place winners respectively and awarded appropriate plaques. Present size of a Sunday School does not prevent opportunity to win in any division. The divisions are as follows:

- Division A over 500 average
- Division B 400-500 average
- Division C 300-399 average
- Division D 200-299 average

- Division E 150-199 average
- Division F 100-149 average
- Division G 50-99 average
- Division H under 49 average
- Division I—Newly Established

The present size of your Sunday School does not prevent you from being eligible to win in your division. Campaign materials are available from the Sunday School and Church Training Department. Entry blanks must be postmarked no later than March 4, 1983.

RANDALL HOUSE INTRODUCES NEW BOOKLETS

NASHVILLE, TN—Seven new booklets by two Free Will Baptist authors were released November 15, 1982, according to Randall House Marketing Manager Fred Green.

The booklets, written by Evangelist Don Pegram and WNAC Executive Secretary Cleo Pursell, sell for \$1.00 each and address a number of timely subjects.

Triumph Over Suffering and *Facing Death and Dying* were written by Mrs. Cleo Pursell. *Triumph Over Suffering* discusses the reasons for suffering, the response to suffering, and, the triumph over suffering.

"Explaining Death to a Child" and "Preparing for Your Own Death" are but two of the practical sections in the

booklet *Facing Death and Dying*. This booklet will also be helpful to anyone working with terminally-ill persons.

The remaining five booklets were prepared by Reverend Pegram. The titles are:

- America: Christian or Pagan*
- Sinning Against The Holy Spirit*
- Why We Do Not Speak In Tongues*
- Sheep Among Wolves*
- Great Churches: Today's Essential*

The booklets by Pegram are sermon oriented, but would be beneficial to ministers and laymen alike.

All the materials may be ordered from Randall House, Box 17306, Nashville, TN 37217.

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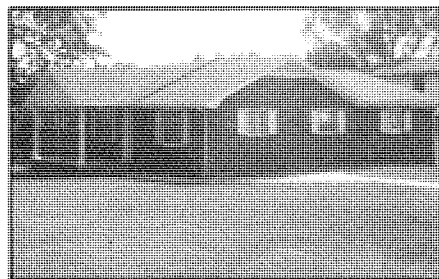
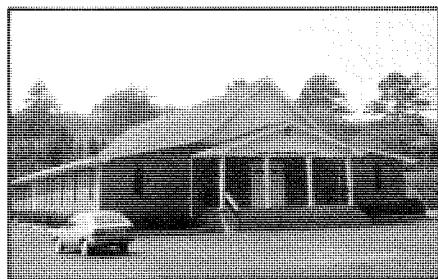
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The Valley View Free Will Baptist Church (L), Loudon, TN, has remodeled the church parsonage at a cost of \$35,000. Allen Presley pastors.

Pastor **Larry Montgomery** of **Hollywood FWB Church, Hollywood, FL**, writes that after four years congregational attendance has increased 25 percent, in spite of the fact that more than half of the members who were there when he came as pastor have moved. Giving has increased 50 percent. The group built a substantial addition to the chapel as well as upgrading and remodeling other facilities.

Deacon **Pascal Yerby**, member of **First FWB Church, Vernon, AL**, has not missed attending church on Sunday in 33 years. For 25 years, Brother Yerby served as chairman of the deacon board. He was also Sunday School superintendent for 19 years. The active laymen still teaches the men's Adult Sunday School Class and serves as a member of the board of trustees for the Alabama Children's Home.

Thirty-two members of **Shiloh FWB Church, Bristol, VA**, logged perfect attendance records in Sunday School, according to Pastor **Walter L. Statzer**. That number includes perfect attendance ranging from one year to 22 years. The three with the most years of perfect attendance are **Cindy Simonds** (22 years), **Norma Malcom** (16 years), and **Garland Helebert** (15 years).

First FWB Church, Flat River, MO, voted to begin a day care program and enrolled 18 students after three weeks of operation. The day care program includes infants to five-year-olds. **Ron Edgill** pastors.

The **First FWB Church, Billings, MT**, built a new baptistry early last year and then promptly began putting it to use. Pastor **Gary Terrell** says that although employment called eight families away from the Billings area, Sunday School attendance still averaged in the 30's this fall.

During the past 20 months, more than \$100,000 above regular tithes and offerings have been given toward the building program at **Farmington FWB Church, Farmington, MO**. **Jim McAllister** pastors.

Pastor **Randy Cox** of **First FWB Church, Raleigh, NC**, concluded nine years of service in 1982. During that time, the church progressed from one full-time worker (the pastor) to 31 full and part-time workers. Associate Pastor **Doug Henderson** has completed eight years with the church.

Pastor **Ed Hutchinson** of **Route 60 FWB Church, Catlettsburg, KY**, reports 15 conversions. The church conducted baptismal services on two consecutive Wednesday nights in Big Sandy River.

President **John Smith** of **California Christian College, Fresno, CA**, says more than 150 guests were on campus for the October 22, 1982 Fall Banquet. Friends of the college donated \$50 per plate to the college at the banquet.

The **Elmwood FWB Church, Stockton, CA**, burned two years ago. However, according to Pastor **Fred Humphreys**, the church started rebuilding last fall. Brother Humphreys celebrates his first anniversary at the church this month.

Seven **California FWB Churches** have begun Christian Schools. State Executive Secretary **Paul Kennedy** reported a total of 422 students enrolled in the schools. Six of the institutions use the ACE curriculum, one uses the A Beka curriculum. The schools are located in the cities of Bakersfield, Baldwin Park, El Sobrante, Ontario, Oxnard, Santa Paula, and Shafter.

Members of **Double Branch FWB Church, Hawkinsville, GA**, did something a little unusual in prayer meeting one Wednesday evening. After the customary singing of hymns and prayer requests, Pastor **Willie Martin** encouraged interested individuals to write personal letters to several FWB missionaries on different fields. At least 10 letters were written.

Pastor **Ron Parker** of **First FWB Church, Pocahontas, AR**, reports that an anonymous gift of \$1,000 was given to the **Pocahontas Christian Academy**.

Pastor Parker says this is the largest single gift the school has received since it opened in the fall of 1981.

The **Old Mount Zion Association** in Arkansas began a radio broadcast on station KBRS in **Springdale** in August, 1950. **Tommy Day** was the first radio pastor and served until 1956. The program has continued uninterrupted since that time with Pastors **Cecil Garrison**, **Bobby Shepherd**, and **Loy Counts** subsequently preaching on the broadcast. The Association reported that Rev. Tommy Day has returned as radio pastor after an absence of more than 25 years.

And just so you will not get discouraged—sometimes when things go wrong, they don't always stay wrong. Pastor **Luther Sanders** of **Garner FWB Church, Garner, NC**, borrowed a projector to show a film to his congregation. Naturally, there were problems. The following week Pastor Sanders tried it again with another projector, which promptly proceeded to self-destruct. The Ladies Sunshine Class was so concerned about the pastor's frustration that they raised more than \$260 to purchase a new projector. They were joined in their fund raising by **Tom Hughes** who gave another \$600 towards the purchase. ▲

Layman of the Year

ATTENTION PASTORS



In a few days you will be receiving details of the annual "Layman of the Year" Award sponsored by the Master's Men Department.

We encourage you to take advantage of this opportunity to recognize one of your outstanding laymen.

A reminder that you DO NOT have to be a member of Master's Men in order to participate.



ON LITTLE LANES

BY DONNA MAYO

The Biggest Debt of All

“Mom, we’re home!” yelled Marty and Megan as they raced through the back door and headed for their rooms.

“Can we play softball at Mrs. Douglas’ field?” Marty asked. Without waiting for an answer he changed into play clothes and grabbed his bat, ball, and glove.

At last it was spring, and the Lane twins were eager to play outdoors. The neighborhood kids usually gathered at “Mrs. Douglas’ field” each day after school for a softball game. (Mrs. Douglas didn’t really have a softball field; she just had the biggest yard. In fact, the entire subdivision where the Lanes lived had been part of the Douglas farm.)

“Yes, you may go out and play, but be back in time to get your homework before supper. Remember, tonight is Wednesday.” On Wednesdays the Lanes always went to church.

“We will, Mom,” Megan assured her as she tied her tennis shoes.

“Me go too!” Marty and Megan looked down the hall at Jeff, their three-year-old brother with one shoe on and one in his hand. “Me go too,” he repeated emphatically.

Mrs. Lane swept her youngest child into her arms and smiled, “Not today, Little Man, it’s time for your nap.” She tucked him back into bed and watched through the window while Marty and Megan disappeared down the street.

The twins soon arrived at Mrs. Douglas’ field where the usual crowd had gathered. There were Rob and Mike Johnson, who lived next door to the Lanes, and Katie Hall, Megan’s

best friend, who lived across the street. Sally and Jenny Thomas, who lived on the next block were also there and anxious to get started. “Hey, we can’t start without Tony,” Marty said.

“Yeah, where’s Tony?” asked Mike looking around.

“Here I am,” yelled Tony as he ran toward the other children. He was waving his glove and trying to catch his breath so he could tell them all his good news. “Guess what? Mom said I could try out for Little League this year if I raise half the money myself for the uniform.”

“That’s great!” exclaimed Megan on behalf of all the kids. Tony Phillips was the best softball player in the group, and they all knew he would make the team if his mother let him try out. It wasn’t that Mrs. Phillip’s didn’t



Introducing . . .

On Little Lanes: For all you CONTACT readers who wrote and requested that we start a children’s column, this is it! “On Little Lanes” focuses on the Lane twins, Marty and Megan, as they wade through life with muddy sneakers and freckled faces.

Mrs. Donna Mayo, writer, is a member of First Free Will Baptist Church, Oak Ridge, Tennessee. Donna will guide our young readers and the Lane twins through a monthly romp across the pages of CONTACT. She is a graduate of Free Will Baptist Bible College (B.A.) and Tennessee State University (M.A.).

ON LITTLE LANES (From Page 25)

want Tony to play ball; it was the money.

The uniform cost \$20, and money had been scarce around the Phillips' home since Tony's father died a year ago. Mr. Phillips had been a truck driver, and he was killed during a snowstorm when his truck hit a patch of ice and slid over an embankment.

"Will you be able to raise the money?" questioned Katie with concern.

"I think so," answered Tony with bright eyes. "Grandma gave me five dollars for my birthday, and now that spring is here, I'm pretty sure Mrs. Douglas will need me to mow her yard."

"Yeah," Rob replied, "it won't be long before it's time to mow our yard."

"I hope it's soon," Tony answered. "I have to turn in my money for the uniform in two weeks."

"Maybe we'll have lots of rain," Sally said hopefully.

"Anyway," added Jenny, "let's get started with this ballgame. Who wants to be captain?"

Captains were appointed, teams chosen, and the first softball game of the season was underway. The afternoon seemed to fly by, and all too soon it was time for Marty and Megan to head for home.

"Hey, Tony, want to eat supper with us and then go to church?" Marty offered. Tony's mother had to work nights at the restaurant where she was a waitress, and Tony was frequently invited to the Lane home.

"Sure," answered Tony. "Thanks."

Marty, Megan and Tony, still full of energy and excited about their softball performance, started down the street. "Hey, look at this," Tony yelled. "Here goes a home run!" And with that, Tony pitched his ball into the air, swung his bat, and sent the ball crashing through the windshield of a parked car.

"Oh, no!" shrieked Megan. "Look what you've done!" The children stopped in their tracks, and with open mouths, looked at the damage.

"What's going on out here?" barked a very angry man as he ran out his front door and down the sidewalk. "Look at my car! Who is responsible for this?"

The children looked at each other, and Tony stammered, "I . . . I am, Sir."

"It was an accident," Marty added.

"He didn't mean it," interrupted Megan through tears.

"I'm really sorry, Mister," Tony said.

The children were all talking at once, and the man, whose name was Mr. Finley, held up his hand. "OK, OK, calm down a little. Now suppose you tell me what happened," he said a little more gently as he looked at Tony.

Tony explained the incident and apologized once more. "I know you're sorry," answered Mr. Finley. "But that doesn't replace my windshield. Someone will have to pay for this."

Marty, almost afraid to ask, said, "About, uh, how much do you think it will cost?"

"Well, the car is old," replied Mr. Finley. "And if I could find a second-hand windshield at a junkyard, it shouldn't be much more than \$20."

"Twenty dollars," moaned Tony. The figure obviously touched a nerve. "There goes Little League."

"What did you say?" asked Mr. Finley. "Did I hear something about Little League?"

The children explained how tight money was around the Phillips' home and what a good softball player Tony was. "I thought I was going to be able to raise half the money for the uniform," Tony answered sadly. "But now the money will have to go for your new windshield."

"Well, now, I sure don't want to keep a good player off the team. I bet you kids didn't know that I coach the Little League team in this community."

"No," they answered in surprise.

"Coach Finley—I've heard the other guys on the team talk about you, but I didn't know it was you," exclaimed Tony.

"Tony, I'll tell you what. You use your money for your uniform, and I'll pay for the windshield."

"Wow, thanks, Coach Finley, thanks a lot. You won't be sorry either. I'll practice real hard, and I'll be the best player I can be."

"OK," answered the coach. "Now don't you think it's time you kids were getting home?"

The children raced down the street

eager to tell Mr. and Mrs. Lane about the day's events. They entered the back door to find Mrs. Lane cooking supper and Jeff sitting on the floor at her feet playing with building blocks.

"How was the game?" Mrs. Lane asked. Then seeing Tony she added, "Tony, I hope you can stay for supper. I meant to tell the twins to invite . . ."

"Mom, guess what?" Megan interrupted. The children excitedly related what had happened—Tony's "home run" through the windshield and Mr. Finley's generous offer.

"Isn't that neat?" finished Marty.

"Isn't what neat, Son?" In walked Mr. Lane just as Marty was finishing the story, so the children went through the details once more.

"Isn't Mr. Finley nice, Daddy?" Megan concluded.

"Yes, kids, he sounds like a very kind man. And you know what? Your story reminds me of how God treats us."

"What do you mean?" questioned Marty.

"Well," began Mr. Lane, "we all sin against God. That's like Tony breaking Mr. Finley's windshield. And just like Tony, we can't pay our debt to God to make up for all our sin. So you know what God does? He pays it for us."

"Like Mr. Finley is paying for his own windshield, God pays for our sins. He did that by sending Christ to die on the cross. Christ took the punishment that we really deserve. That's grace."

"Now I know what my Sunday School teacher meant when she said 'G.R.A.C.E.—God's riches at Christ's expense,'" added Megan.

"That's exactly right," said Mrs. Lane. "Now does anybody have any homework to do before supper? We're having spaghetti, and I don't think anyone wants to miss it."

The children scampered to their rooms to study. "You know what?" asked Marty as he and Tony opened their math books. "Sometimes I think I learn more after school than in school." ▲



Green Tree Bible Study



Robert E. Picirilli

John 17:1-5

Jesus' Prayer in His Hour

John 17 really is "the Lord's prayer." He prayed often (on at least 25 different occasions mentioned in the gospels), but this is the only lengthy prayer recorded. We sometimes call it His high priestly prayer.

It was prayed on the eve of Christ's crucifixion, the upper room or between there and Gethsemane. Apparently, it was prayed out loud, with the disciples hearing.

Often in His ministry Jesus had said that His "hour" had not come. This prayer begins: "Father, the hour is come." When you read it, read it in the shadow of the cross.

The prayer can be divided into three main parts. The first part is verses 1-5, and the petition is "Glorify your son." The second part is verses 6-19, a prayer for the disciples present. The third part is verses 20-26, a prayer

for the whole body of disciples, including future believers. In this first study, we look, at the first part.

The central petition of the section is: "Glorify your son, that the Son may glorify You" (v. 1). Notice the repeating of this relationship, in reverse order, at the end of this part: "I glorified You upon the earth . . . and now glorify me" (vv. 4, 5). The glorification of the Lord Jesus and the glorification of the Father go hand in hand.

Verse 2 gives us our first indication of what glorifies each. In the Father's giving to the Son "power (Greek: *exousia*, authority) over all flesh," He glorified Him. In one sense, God had already determined to give this to Him. In another, the transaction was not finished until Jesus' death and resurrection: *then* He could say, "All authority (same Greek word) is given to me in heaven and earth" (Matthew 28:18).

Verse 5 expands on this: the glorification of the Son includes returning Him to the honored position He had with the Father (literally, "at the Father's side") before the world existed.

That is the position of authority the Father willed to give Him at the completion of His work, and it culminated in the resurrection and ascension.

Back to verse 2. In Jesus' giving eternal life to believers, He glorified the Father. And how did He accomplish this? Verse 4 answers: "I glorified You in finishing the work which You have given me to do." That "finished work" of our Lord was completed in His atoning death and bodily resurrection. As Jesus prayed this, that work was as good as done: He saw it clearly and had made His commitment. And in that finished work is the means of giving us eternal life.

So verses 1, 2, and 4, 5 speak of the glorification of the Son and of the Father—of the Son by giving Him all authority, restoring him to the position of honor at the Father's side; of the Father by finishing the work assigned, and thereby providing eternal life for the disciples.

And right in the middle (v. 3) we learn what "eternal life" is: *knowing*



GREEN TREE (From Page 27)

the Father and the Son. It is not a chronological duration, then, so much as a relationship. Everything Jesus did was to make it possible for us to know the only true God as the One known in knowing the Son; and, in that knowing,

to be alive forever.

What application is there for us? We, too, can glorify God—and in at least two ways. First, in doing—in finishing—His work. As the Son honored the Father by doing that, so can we, even though our work is different. Indeed, all obedience to God is involved in this: the way to glorify God is to obey Him.

Second, we glorify God when we value knowing Him more than anything else. Jesus said, in so many words, that the meaning of everything the Father gave Him was found in providing eternal life for others, and that this life consisted in knowing God. Then we, too, ought to count knowing God as the most important thing, both for ourselves and for others. ▲

Top Shelf



Thomas Marberry



Robert D. Dale, *To Dream Again* (Nashville: Broadman Press, 1981, 154 pp., paperback, \$4.95).

This book has a lot to say to pastors. It points out that the pastor must learn to "read" his congregation. He must be able to analyze the strengths and weaknesses of his church and motivate his church toward the realization of its goal.

The author cites the characteristics of both healthy and unhealthy congregations. Dale's insights in these areas should help a pastor to understand his congregation better.

One dramatic difference between a healthy congregation and an unhealthy one is the way in which it resolves

conflicts. Few congregations are able to avoid conflict completely. In healthy congregations, members understand that Christians will not always agree on everything. Divergent views are respected, and these differing ideas contribute to a healthy church. In unhealthy congregations, conflict is repressed until it finally explodes and great damage is done to the ministry of the church.

Every church needs a dream to be successful. It needs a vision of where it is going and where it can go in service to Christ. This dream differs from church to church and from situation to situation. According to Robert Dale, it is unlikely that a church will reach its full potential unless the pastor and members understand this dream. The pastor plays a key role in helping the church define and explain its dream.

Yet, the church cannot be content with just a dream, but must translate that dream into goals which are within reach of the particular congregation. The church must then develop an organization to assist it in accomplishing these goals.

The church must be aware that many things can happen which may

sidetrack its ministry. The goals and the organization must be continually revised to insure that they are still leading the church toward its dream. Sometimes even the dream itself must be revised as the church develops.

If the church is to prosper, its dream must be kept alive and become a vital, living entity which guides the church in its work and worship. The dream must be known and understood by the members of the congregation. The dream must focus on bringing men to Christ because that is the basic task of the church. If the church has lost its dream, that dream must be recaptured before the church can be restored to vitality.

This volume presents helpful insights for both pastors and churches. A pastor should develop the ability to analyze the strengths and weaknesses of his congregation. Only then can he help guide the congregation toward growth and increased service to Christ.

The pastor must help his congregation develop a dream and then put that dream into action. As he does this, the pastor must be conscious of the Holy Spirit's leadership in his own life and in the members of the congregation. ▲



The Free Will Baptist Pulpit

Wade Jernigan, Pastor

Way of the Cross Free Will Baptist Church, Sallisaw, Oklahoma

The Choice Is Yours

“ . . . choose you this day whom ye will serve . . . ”
Joshua 24:15

INTRODUCTION:

Relate the circumstances that existed at this time.

I. The Service of God is a Matter of Choice—“Choose You”

- A. God Calls (Proverbs 1:24)
- B. He Commands (Luke 17:10)
- C. He Commissions (Matthew 28:19-20)
- D. He Charges (Matthew 17:9)
- E. He Challenges (Matthew 5:16)

II. The Choice of God is a Matter of Service—“Choose . . . whom ye will serve.”

- A. Willing Service (I Chronicles 29:5)
- B. Reasonable Service (Romans 12:1)
- C. Continual Service (Revelation 2:10)
- D. Dedicated Service (Romans 1:15)
- E. Loyal Service (II Timothy 2:3-4)

III. There is No Neutral Ground—“Whom ye will serve”

- A. A Child of God or a Child of the Devil (John 1:12; 8:44)
- B. Can't Serve Two Masters (Matthew 6:24)
- C. Servant to Whom You Yield (Romans 6:16)
- D. Servant of Sin Free From Righteousness (Romans 6:20)
- E. Servant of God Free From Sin (Romans 6:22)

IV. No Room For Delay—“This Day”

- A. Come Now (Isaiah 1:18)
- B. Boast Not Tomorrow (Proverbs 27:1)
- C. Now Is The Day of Salvation (II Corinthians 6:2)
- D. Today If Ye Will Hear His Voice (Hebrews 3:15)
- E. No “More Convenient” Season (Acts 24:25)

CONCLUSION:

“If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me” (Matthew 16:24). ▲

DIRECTORY UPDATE

ALABAMA

Randy Corn to Howard Grove Church, Cottonwood
Dwight Fletcher to First Church, Northport from Fellowship Church, Rich-
ton, MS

ARKANSAS

Dennis Artman to Mt. Harmony Church, Saffell from Mt. Zion Church, Hindsville
Eldon Bagwell to Hope Church, Fayetteville
Fred Hatcher to White Oak Church, Huntsville
Ray Henry to Durham Church, Durham

Tommy Jones to Pleasant Valley Church, Berryville
James Sisco to Clifty Chapel Church, Huntsville
David Watson to Mt. Zion Church, Hindsville

CALIFORNIA

Shelby Farmer to South Union Church, Bakersfield
Robert Gulden to Hawaiian Gardens Church, Hawaiian Gardens
Terry Lewis to Lindsay Church, Lindsay
Ken Mathis to Corcoran Church, Corcoran
Robert Riddle to Taft Church, Taft from Baldwin Park Church, Baldwin Park

FLORIDA

Mickey Broadway to St. Johns Church, Bonifay

GEORGIA

Steve Hasty to First Church, Albany from Heads Church, Cedar Hill, TN

KENTUCKY

Tim Hall to First Church, Glasgow from First Church, Owensboro

NORTH CAROLINA

Jerry Johnson to Sandy Acres Church, Columbia
Harold Brown to Fellowship Church, Micro



OUR READERS COMMENT

DIRECTOR 'HOWLS' OVER DOG EDITORIAL

I am writing to express appreciation for the coverage you gave Home Missions in the October issue of *Contact*. I commend you on "The Howling Dog." You have a way of saying things that catches attention and speaks to people as no one else I know.

Thanks again for being a good friend and all the help you have given us.

Reverend Roy Thomas
General Director
National Home Missions Department

SPIRIT OF ARTICLES WRONG

About a year ago, one of our denominational publications published an article entitled, "How to Run Off A Pastor." The writer (a pastor's wife) gave instructions on how to get rid of your pastor by attacking his wife. What was evident from this article was an attitude of resentment and hostility caused by people she had served.

When I first read the article, I wanted to write to the publisher and demand equal time on behalf of the members of the congregation. Instead I managed to put it in the back of my mind.

The August, 1982 *CONTACT* published a poem entitled "I'd Rather Be A Pastor." The writer tells how the pastor's wife gets no credit or praise from the members of her husband's congregation. How could anyone overlook the fact that she is the force behind this man. She evidently does his praying, writes his sermons, and solves his problems. All this leaves me wondering if she does all this, what does her pastor-husband do?

Last week when I went to work (I work as janitor at a Baptist church), I glanced at a magazine lying on the secretary's desk. What do you think was printed on the very front page? That poem, "I'd Rather Be A Pastor", reprinted by permission from *CONTACT*. I had just as soon they had left off that bit of information because it made me feel ashamed. This publication claims to reach 250,000 churches with a readership of 56 million.

I would like to believe that all 56 million who read this publication are Christians. We as Christians are instructed by our Lord to love one another. What happens when, instead of

this love, those about us see an unloving spirit? Do you think they want to be like us then? I've concluded that the unsaved (at least some of them) have a better attitude toward others than some professed Christians.

Whatever role we have in this life—whether it be teacher, mother, pastor, pastor's wife, or janitor—you have to know that you are where He wants you to be. If you're not receiving at least some blessings and joy in your work, then maybe you need to be somewhere else.

To the lady who felt she should give instructions on running off a pastor—evidently there are no rewards in your work. If there are, they must seem insignificant to you. You failed to mention them. If the blessings in your life aren't worth writing about, then why take the time to share your resentment?

To the one who shared the poem with us—with all the potential that this wife obviously possesses, it's possible that she needs to establish her own identity instead of remaining in the shadow of her husband.

To the publishers—if you're running out of good materials to print, I suggest you talk to some of our missionaries. Their lives are far from easy and there are times when discouragement comes. Still they are more than willing to share their blessings with those who want to listen. And I would consider it quite refreshing to read the positive view of the Christian life for a change.

Joyce Watson
Murfreesboro, Tennessee

Lloyd Layman



...THEN GOD TELLS MOSES AND HIS WIFE TO BUILD AN ARK... AFTER THAT THEY LANDED IN JERICO BECAUSE THE WALLS FELL FROM WHEN SAMSON STOLE THE GATES. THEN THEY MAKE THEMSELVES A COAT OF MANY COLORS AFTER THEY CROSS THE JORDAN RIVER!!





THE SECRETARY SPEAKS

By Melvin Worthington

The Believer's Badge



The one most distinctive characteristic of the children of God is love. While Christians may be identified by other qualities, none is more effective than love.

Jesus said it so clearly on the night before the crucifixion that 20 centuries later no one has ever misunderstood what He meant: "By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another" (John 13:35).

The Bible categorically rejects any who would play fast and loose with Jesus' command: "If a man say, I love God, and hateth his brother, he is a liar: for he that loveth not his brother whom he hath seen, how can he love God whom he hath not seen? And this commandment have we from him, that he who loveth God love his brother also" (1 John 4:20-21).

He who is born again loves all members of the family of God—rich or poor, educated or illiterate, young or old, irrespective of race. How do we measure up in this matter of love for the brethren?

The Source

The Source of this love comes from God imparted by the blessed Holy Spirit. Albert Barnes explains, "All true love has its origin in God . . . Real love shows that we have his Spirit, and that we belong to him . . . Hatred, envy, wrath, malice, all have their source in something else than God. He neither originates them, commends them, nor approves them."

Those who do not love have no true acquaintance with God, for God is love.

MacLaren thunders this truth, "Every Christian man is under the obligation to recognize his kindred with every other Christian man—his kindred in the deep foundations of his spiritual being, which are far deeper, and ought to be far more operative in drawing together, than the superficial difference of culture or opinion or the like, which may part us. The bond that holds Christian men together is their common relation to the one Lord, and that ought to influence their attitude to one another."

The Sample

In commanding the disciples to love one another, Jesus spoke of a "new commandment" (John 13:34). Not new in the sense it had never been given but because it was to be more honored, to occupy a higher position and to be backed by a higher example than ever before.

Jesus commands the disciples to love one another as He had loved them—His love was unselfish, universal, untiring, undeserved and unique.

The Sign

And what is the Sign of this love? Believers' love one for the other is the decisive evidence that they are disciples of Christ. It is that which identifies them as followers of Christ.

Christians are not noted foremost because of their peculiar rites or habits, or by a particular form of dress or manner of speech, or by peculiar aus-

terities and customs like the Pharisees, the Essenes or the Scribes, but rather by deep, genuine and tender affection one toward another.

This love "one for another" eminently characterized the early Christians and had a profound effect on the pagans who surrounded them.

Bishop Ryle strikes a blow for God when he writes, "Let us note how far from satisfactory is the state of those who are content with sound doctrinal opinions, and orthodox correct views of the Gospel, while in their daily life they give way to ill temper, ill nature, malice, envy, quarrelling, squabbling, bickering, surliness, passion, snappish language, and crossness of word and manner.

"Such persons, whether they know it or not, are daily proclaiming that they are not Christ's disciples. It is nonsense to talk about justification, and regeneration, and election, and conversion, and the uselessness of works unless people can see in us practical Christian love."

There is nothing that the world understands and values more than true love. The very men who cannot comprehend doctrine, and know nothing of theology, can appreciate love. It arrests their attention, and makes them think. For the world's sake, if for no other cause, let us follow after love more and more. ▲

The Secretary's Schedule

December 29- Bible Lands Tour

January 6

January 11-15 Site Inspection Trip
Columbus, OH

January 26-29 RCMA Convention
Indianapolis, IN

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