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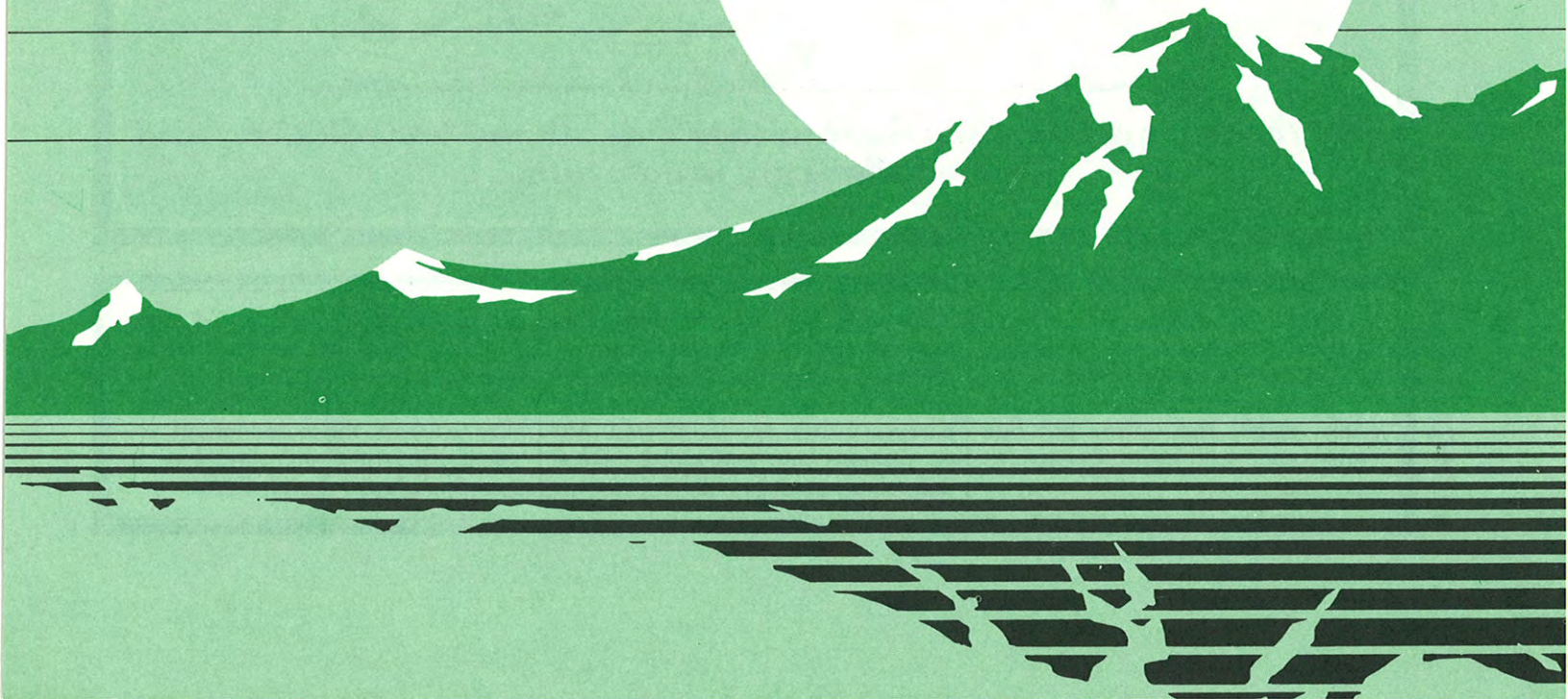


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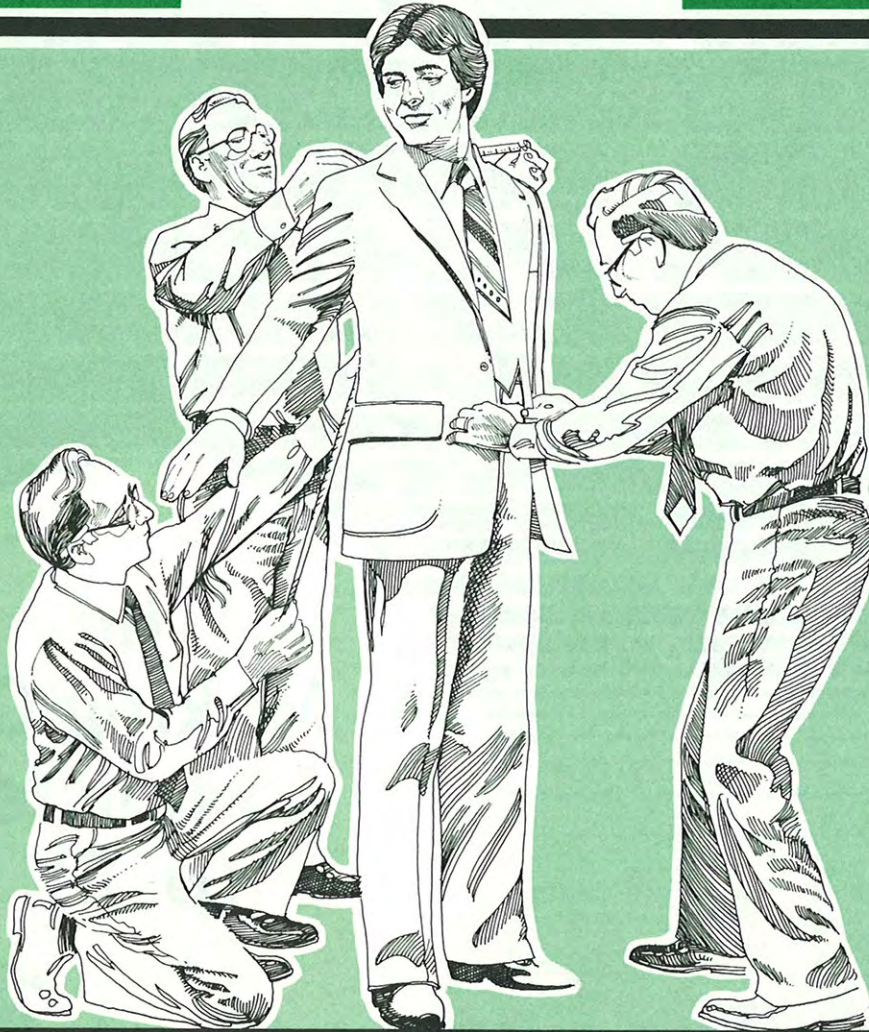
MARCH, 1983



**The
Making Of
A Minister
(p. 2)**



The Making Of A Minister



My tears were my diploma, another's death my benediction, and my failure my ordination.

I wish to memorialize Arthur Forte, dead the second year of my ministry, poor before he died, unkempt, obscene, sardonic, arrogant, old, old, lonely, black, and bitter—but one whose soul has never ceased to teach me.

From Arthur, from the things this man demanded of me, and from my restless probing of that experience, I grow. This is absolutely true. My pastoral hands are tenderized. My perceptions into age and pain are daily sharpened. My humility is kept

soft, unhardened. And by old, dead Arthur I remember the profounder meaning of my title, minister.

It is certainly time, now, to memorialize teachers, those undegreed, unasked, ungentle, unforgettable. In memoriam then: Arthur Forte.

By Walter Wangerin, Jr.

Arthur lived in a shotgun house, so-called because it was three rooms in a dead straight line, built narrowly on half a city lot.

More properly, Arthur lived in the front room of his house. Or rather, to speak the cold, disturbing truth, Arthur lived in a rotting stuffed chair in that room, from which he seldom stirred the last year of his life.

No one mourned his absence from church. The man had a walk and a manner like a toad, a high-backed slouch, and a burping contempt for his fellow parishioners. Arthur's mind, though uneducated, was excellent. He had written poetry in his day, both serious and sly, but now he used words to shiv Christians in their pews. No one felt moved to visit him when he became housebound.

Except me. I was the pastor, so sweetly young and dutiful. It was my job. And Arthur had phoned to remind me of that.

But to visit Arthur was grimly sacrificial.

After several months of chair sitting, both Arthur and his room were filthy. I do not exaggerate: roaches flowed from my step like puddles stomped in; they dropped casually from the walls. I stood very still. The TV flickered constantly. There were newspapers strewn all over the floor. There lay a damp film on every solid object in the room, from which arose a close, moldy odor as though it were alive. But the dampness was a blessing, because Arthur smoked.

He had a bottom lip like a shelf. Upon that shelf he placed lit cigarettes, and then he did not remove them until they had burned quite down, at which moment he blew them toward the television set. Burning, they hit the newspapers on the floor. But it's impossible to ignite a fine, moist mildew. Blessedly, they went out.

Then Arthur would increase the sacrifice of my visit by first motioning toward a moist sofa of uncertain color, and then speaking deadly words: "Have a seat, why don't you, Reverend?"

From the beginning, I did not like to visit Arthur Forte.

Nor did he make my job (my ministry! you cry. My service! My discipleship! No—just my job) any easier. He did not wish a quick psalm, a professional prayer, devotions. Rather, he wanted sharply to dispute a young clergyman's faith.

Seventy years a churchgoer, the old man narrowed his eye at me and argued the goodness of God. With incontrovertible proofs, he delivered shattering damnations of hospitals (at which he had worked), and doctors (for whom he had worked over the years): "Twenty dollars a strolling visit when they come to a patient's room," he said, "for what? Two minutes' time, that's what, and no particular news to the patient. They leave that sucker feeling low and worthless. God had listened to their heart, and didn't even tell them what he heard! Ho, ho!" said Arthur, "I'll never go to a hospital. Ho, ho!"

And somehow the failure of doctors he wove into his intense argument against the goodness of the Deity. When I left him, I was empty in my soul and close to tears, and testy, my own faith in God seeming most stale, flat, unprofitable at the moment. I didn't like to visit Arthur.

Then came the days when he asked for prayer, scripture, and Holy Communion, all three.

The man, by late summer, was failing. He did not remove himself from the chair to let me in (I entered an unlocked door), nor even to pass urine (which entered a chair impossibly foul). The August heat was unbearable. I had argued that Arthur go to the hospital. He had had a better idea. He took off all his clothes.

Naked, Arthur greeted me. Naked, finally, the old man asked my prayers. Naked, he opened his mouth to receive Communion. Naked. He'd raised the level of my sacrifice to anguish. I was mortified. And still he was not finished.

For in those latter days, the naked Arthur Forte asked me, his pastor, to come forward and put his slippers on him, his undershorts, and his pants. And I did. His feet had begun to swell, so it caused both him and me unutterable pain in those private moments when I took his hard heel in my hands and worked a splitbacked slipper round

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MINISTER (From Page 3)

it; when he stood groaning aloud, taking the clothing one leg at a time, when I bent groaning so deeply in my soul. I dressed him.

He leaned on me and I touched his nakedness to dress him, and we hurt, and his was sacrifice beyond my telling it. But in those moments I came to know a certain wordless affection for Arthur Forte.

(Now read me your words, "ministry," and "service," and "discipleship," for then I began to understand them: then, at the touching of Arthur's feet, when that and nothing else was what Arthur yearned for, one human being to touch him, physically to touch his old flesh, and not to judge. In the most dramatic terms available, the old man had said, "Love me.")

The last week of August, on my weekly visit, I found Arthur prone on the floor. He'd fallen out of his chair during the night, but his legs were too swollen and his arms too weak for climbing in again.

I said, "This, is it, Arthur. You're going to the hospital."

He was tired. He didn't argue any more, but let me call two other members of the congregation. While they came, I dressed him—and he groaned profoundly. He groaned when we carried him to the car. He groaned even during the transfer from cart to wheelchair; we'd brought him to emergency.

But there his groaning took on new meaning.

"I'm thirsty," he said.

"He's thirsty," I said to a nurse. "Would you get a drink of water?"

"No," she said.

"What?"

"No. He can ingest nothing until his doctor is contacted. No."

"But, water—?"

"Nothing."

"Would you contact his doctor, then?"

"That will be done by the unit nurse when he's in his room."

Arthur, slumped in his chair and hurting, said, "I'm thirsty."

I said, "Well, then, can I wheel him to his room?"

"I'm sorry, no," she said.

"Please," I said. "I'm his pastor. I'll take the responsibility for him."

"In this place he is our responsibility, not yours," she said. "Be patient. An

aide will get him up in good time."

O Arthur, forgive me for not getting you water at home. Forgive us 20 minutes' wait without a drink. Forgive us our rules, our irresponsibility.

Even in his room they took the time to wash him long before they brought him drink.

"Why?" I pleaded.

"We're about to change shifts. The next nurse will call his doctor. All in good time."

So Arthur, whose smell had triggered much discussion in the halls, finally did not stink. But Arthur still was thirsty. He said two things before I left.

He mumbled, "Bloody but unbowed." Poetry!

"Good, Arthur!" I praised him with all my might. Even malicious wit was better than lethargy; perhaps I could get him to shiv a nurse or two.

But he rolled an eye toward me for the first time since entering this place. "Bloody," he said, "and bowed."

He slept an hour. Then, suddenly, he started awake and stared about himself. "Where am I? Where am I?" he called. I answered, and he groaned painfully, "Why am I?" I have wept at the death of only one parishoner.

Since the hospital knew no relative for Arthur Forte, at 11 p.m. that same night they called me. Then I laid the telephone aside, and I cried as though it were my father dead. My father. Indeed, it was my father. Anguish, failure, the want of a simple glass of water: I sat in the kitchen and cried.

But that failure has since nurtured a certain calm success.

I do not suppose that Arthur consciously gave me the last year of his life, nor that he chose to teach me. Yet, by his mere being; by forcing me to take that life, real, unsweetened, bare-naked, hurting, and critical; by demanding that I serve him altogether unrewarded; by wringing from me first mere gestures of loving, and then the love itself—but a sacrificial love, a Christ-like love, being love for one so indisputably unlovable—he did prepare me for my ministry.

My tears were my diploma, his death my benediction, and failure my ordination. For the Lord did not say, "Blessed are you if you know" or "teach" or "preach these things." He

said, rather, "Blessed are you if you do them."

When, on the night before His crucifixion, Jesus had washed the disciples' feet, He sat and said, "If I then, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also ought to wash one another's feet. For I have given you an example, that you also should do as I have done to you. Truly, truly, I say to you, a servant is not greater than his master; nor is he who is sent greater than he who sent him. If you know these things," said Jesus, "blessed are you if you do them" (John 13:14-17).

Again and again the Lord expanded on this theme: "Drink to the stinking is drink to me!" One might have learned by reading it . . .

But it is a theme made real in experience alone, by doing it.

And the first flush of that experience is, generally, a sense of failure, for this sort of ministry severely diminishes the minister, makes him insignificant, makes him the merest *servant*, the least in the transaction! To feel so small is to feel somehow failing, weak, unable.

But there, right there, begins true servanthood, the disciple who has, despite himself, denied himself.

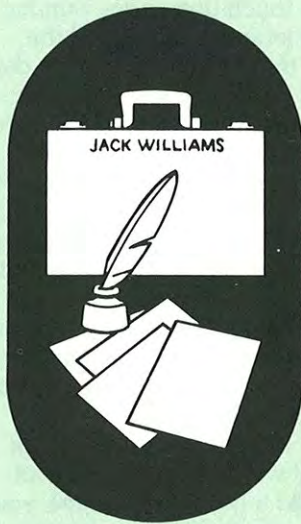
And then for perhaps the first time, one is loving not out of his own bowels, merit, ability, superiority, but out of Christ: for he has discovered himself to be nothing and Christ everything.

In the terrible, terrible *doing* of ministry the minister is born. And curiously, the best teachers of that nascent minister are sometimes the neediest people, foul to touch, unworthy, ungiving, unlovely, yet haughty in demanding (and then miraculously receiving) love.

Arthur, my father, my father! So seeming empty your death, it was not empty at all. There is no monument above your pauper's grave—but here: it is here in me and in my ministry. However could I make little of this godly wonder, that I love you? ▲

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Walter Wangerin, Jr., author of the award-winning *Book of the Dun Cow* (Harper and Row, 1978), pastors in Evansville, Indiana.



Everybody's Wrong But Me!

Five months ago a publisher sent me a review copy of *Pew Peeves*, a 24-carat collection of saintly giggles compiled by a fellow with a golden sense of humor.

Pew Peeves dredges up all those things that ever got your goat in the Lord's work, and you wished somebody would muster the gall to say something. Well, somebody named Thom Schultz finally did.

My favorite peeve is on page 46 where this wild-eyed character draped in a baggy T-shirt spreads his arms in a classic messiah pose and is explained by the vintage Schultz line: "People who think they have the gift of 'immaculate perception': the way they see things is surely the way God sees things."

The reason I like old baggy shirt so much is that he reminds me of me. And if you try hard, you may even admit to yourself that you, too, have the gift of immaculate perception.

The truth is that at times everybody displays immaculate perception symptoms. We really have to fight the impulse to write off anyone who disagrees with us, whether it be how to interpret Revelation 20, which version of the Bible to read, or what makes a good editorial.

Of course, we didn't corner the market on the immaculate perception problem in the late 20th century. The New Testament Pharisees had the curse. They knew enough Old Testament prophecies to figure out that the

Messiah would come as a King to lead Israel. They just couldn't handle it when He scooted into Jerusalem straddling a donkey!

The Pharisees also faced the same dilemma with John the Baptist who they said had a devil (Luke 7:33), but who Jesus said was both the Elijah of prophecy (Matthew 11:14) and the greatest man born of woman (11:11).

Now I take great comfort in the fact that men as close to the situation as those first century Pharisees completely misread it. At the same time, it is disconcerting to know that we can study and reason with all the professional skills at our disposal, and still so misjudge a great man that we paint horns where God hung a halo. Perhaps that's one of life's little woolly worms that we must learn to accept.

At least, if we know we are prone to speak first and get the facts later (and aren't we all), we can police ourselves to be a little less heavy-handed about issuing edicts and pronouncing decrees in the name of God.

But the hole in the road is the guy who's practically bed-ridden with immaculate perception and doesn't know he's got it! He runs data through his mental computer and announces results, confident that no thinking man could possibly disagree, sure in himself that God concurs with his flawed logic.

Most parents fall into the immaculate perception rut when it comes to music and TV programs. Those who swoon at the big band sound and discover their true identities through John Wayne reruns need a stiff sniff of ammonia when they learn that Junior prefers Barry Manilow and "Joanie Loves Chachi."

Pastors collide with the immaculate perception syndrome when Alice

Joybell insists on lavender carpet in the new sanctuary while Fred Workshoe prefers brown shag. Have you ever tried calmly discussing options with Alice who has "prayed and found the face of God in this matter" and Fred who just can't stand purple? Believe me, Fred hasn't got a prayer.

No matter what you say, there will be enough good people who have given the issue just as much effort, analysis, and prayer as you, and yet reached such unbelievably different conclusions, that it'll make you wonder if sitting down to negotiate a compromise is nearly as bad as you first thought.

On those things that truly matter, we already have God's opinion clearly spelled out—the deity of Christ, salvation by faith, inspiration of scripture, the death, burial and resurrection of Jesus, the second coming, and other foundation doctrines.

But there is enough variety built into God's plans on every level that it's a waste of our time haggling over the *only way* to do a thing or the *first priority*, or some other will-o-the-wisp idea.

It's kind of like trying to select the perfect bird. No fowl is bird enough to wear the title. A humming bird is a wonder of nature, but we also need buzzards. And the world's most perfect buzzard, while he is everything he ought to be, makes a lousy humming bird. Well, I'm sure you get the point.

If we can stop confusing personal preferences with divine absolutes, we just might be able to work together.

The worst we could do is listen to the other guy's opinion. That alone may so astound him with our maturity that he will do a backflip to learn what makes us so Christ-like. I think it's worth a try. ▲

“Wake up, Son!
Guess what today
is?” Roddy’s 3’8”,
48-pound body turned lazily and
stretched, his eyes refusing to open.
“Today we go to the Vandy game!”
Both eyes popped open. With

adrenalin pumping and a million
dollar smile on his face, my five and a
half year old namesake bounced out
of bed into my arms.

As my wife prepared breakfast,
Roddy and I rehearsed the events we
would follow in this well-planned day:
first, we would drive to the
automotive store and purchase items
for the car, then we would return
home and practice our football drills.

At 11:30 a.m., we would leave for
Dudley Field, home of the Vanderbilt
Commodores. At the game we would
eat hotdogs for lunch, cheer our
team to victory, buy a souvenir,
watch the band, use the binoculars,
listen to the play-by-play
announcer on the
radio, and sit close to
one another to stay
warm. After the
game, we would eat
at his favorite
restaurant.

Sidestepping papers waiting to be
graded, a concert program begging
to be typed, and, yes, even last-
minute touch-ups on my Sunday
School lesson, I thought of the
events that had led to this big day.

It all began five weeks earlier
when, after another responsibility at
the college where I teach had
claimed several evenings from my
family, I told my two children they
could each pick a day and Daddy
would take them to whatever activity
they would like to attend.

Karen, my seven-year-old, chose
to attend an all-day marching band
festival at a nearby university. Roddy
chose a football game.

I felt certain that he would be
content with a local high school
game (\$2 a ticket), or maybe, since
Daddy was an alumnus, a game at
nearby Middle Tennessee State
University (\$3 a ticket). Fat chance!
Daddy had bragged about Vanderbilt
University’s winning season so much
that Roddy couldn’t live with
anything less than a “Vandy” game
(\$11 a ticket!).

Three weeks before the
game, I bought the tickets and
showed them to old bright
eyes. At this point we

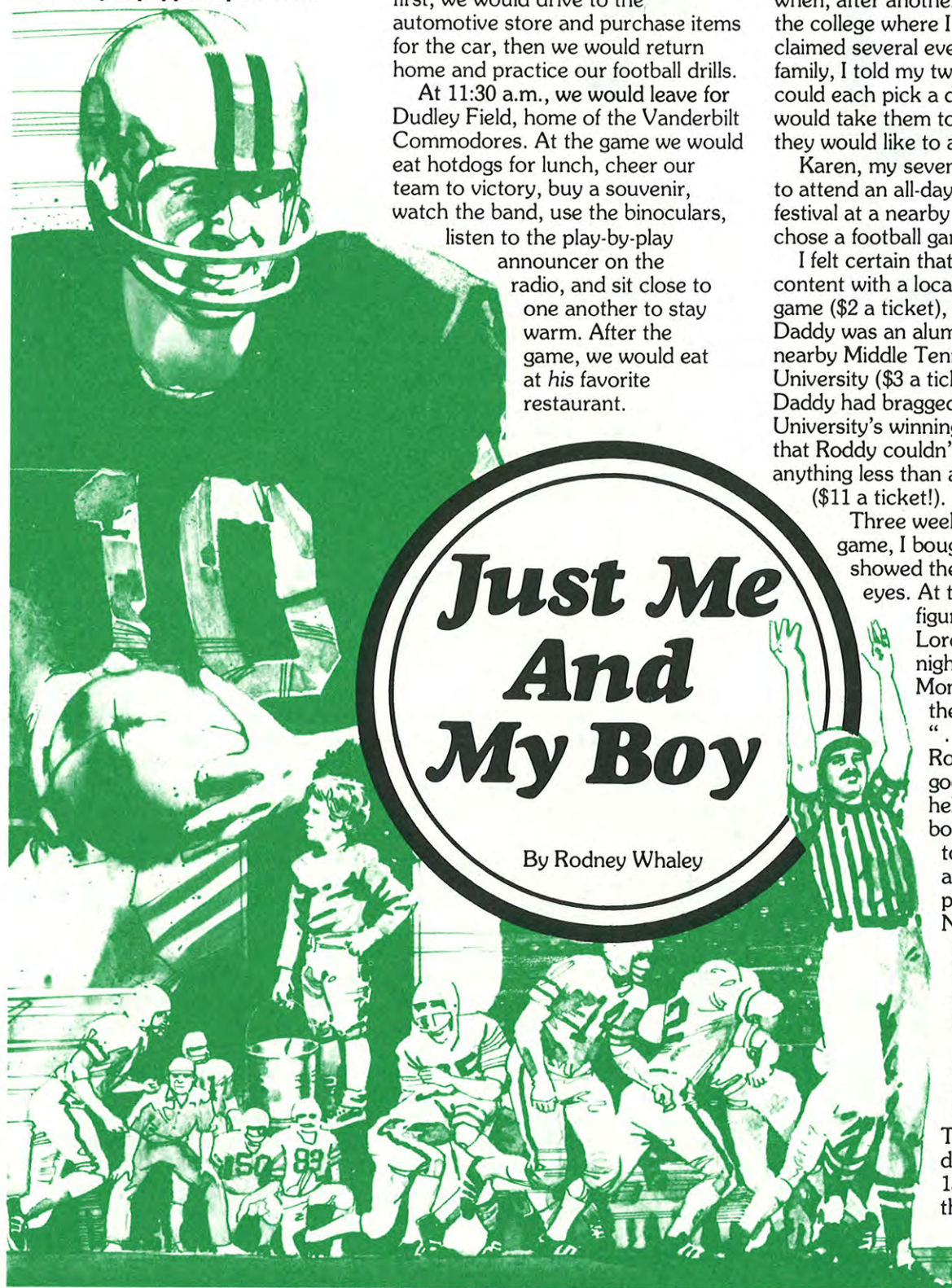
figured we needed the
Lord’s help, so every
night at bedtime when
Mommy prayed for
the usual,
“... take care of
Roddy, give him a
good night’s sleep,
help him be a good
boy at kindergarten
tomorrow,” Roddy
and Daddy were
praying, “Lord, on
November 13, help
us not to be sick,
help it not to be
too cold, and help
it not to rain!”

We began the
countdown—18
days till the
Vandy/Virginia
Tech game; 17
days till November
13; 16 days until
the big day.

Every afternoon
possible, I
came home

Just Me And My Boy

By Rodney Whaley



early so we could run our football drills in the back yard. We practiced passing, catching, hand offs, pitchouts, tackling, and sacking the quarterback (The short guy, that's Roddy, was always the sacker; the tall guy, that's me, was always the sackee!).

And, of course, we had to use the names of the Vandy football players: "Whit Taylor drops back to pass," or "Allama Matthews catches a pass in the end zone for a touchdown." Our drills usually ended in one-on-one scrimmages with Daddy tackling Roddy and tickling him until he fumbled the ball.

Recovering the fumble was never as rewarding as seeing my blonde-haired, red-faced boy laugh so hard his eyes squinted.

The day before the big day, we listened to the television weather report with great interest. Was God going to answer our prayers? The weatherman said it would be clear, but cold. Of course, by this time no "cold" would be "too cold."

That night at bedtime Roddy prayed, "Lord Jesus, let tomorrow be a great day for 'just me and Daddy'." Those words warmed my heart as I made final preparations for the day for "just me and my boy."

Strange, but being in the ministry and teaching at a Bible College seems to take so much of my time away from my family. Of course, it's always explained away as "the Lord's work." Like everybody else, I have plans for putting my family first, along with a lot of flowery lessons and sermons about it. But now that I was about to spend a day, *one whole day*, with my boy, it took on the significance of a national holiday.

I wondered if this shouldn't be the norm rather than the exception. Certainly I believed God's Word to be true when it said "train up a child in the way he should go and when he is old he will not depart from it."

And I preached sermons on "Fathers provoke not your children to wrath; but bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord."

To be quite honest, I made a special effort to discipline my kids properly so as to set a good example as a Christian father. Besides, it makes me look good when my children behave properly.

But could it be that control and behavior correction without proper times of "just me and my boy" could provoke my children to wrath? Could it be that fervor for my "ministry" could cause my own children to reject "the way they should go" and the Christ I so want them to serve?

Could it be that taking Roddy to a football game was indeed my ministry and "the Lord's work" he specifically gave to me and me alone?

As departure time for the game neared we began packing for the trip across town: pom poms, toboggans, gloves, binoculars, radio, a quilt, and, oh yes, the tickets. We parked some distance from the stadium. That didn't seem to matter. This day had suddenly taken on new meaning. *I was doing the Lord's work!*

As we entered the stadium, the expression on Roddy's face made the price of those tickets seem insignificant. He was amazed at the mammoth stadium, and thrilled at the "Go Vandy" toboggan given to him as a promotional item. How good it felt to be doing the *Lord's work!*

Before taking our seats some distance from the playing field, we walked down as close as we could to see the players as they hustled through pre-game warmups.

We had rehearsed those numbers time and again: #10—Quarterback Whit Taylor; #80—All SEC Receiver Allama Matthews; #34—Norman Jordan; #6—All-American Punter Jim Arnold. And of course, Coach George McIntyre.

Roddy's big blue eyes and broad smile followed the ball as the kickers booted it 50 or 60 yards through the uprights and into the seats.

Then we took our seats and settled back to cheer the Commodores to victory. It almost seemed that the Vanderbilt squad had a 12th man on the field playing "just for me and my boy," for Vandy led at halftime 24-0 against one of the country's top defenses.

I tell you, I fell overwhelmingly in love with that little five-year-old seated beside me. Every time the Commodores scored or made an important first down, I would hug Roddy and shake him up and down.

As he told his mother when we got home, "We didn't need our pom poms; I was Daddy's pom pom!"

Vanderbilt's players gave me plenty opportunities to make Roddy my pom pom by beating Virginia Tech, 45-0.

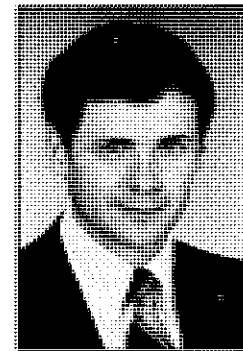
As we left the stadium, I felt a joy no other spectator had, for I had been actively engaged in the Lord's work, while developing a new love for my boy. I watched him as we walked, trying to make gestures like Dad, seeing teenage boys and looking at me as if to say, "Dad, I'm as big as they are!" We ate at his favorite restaurant, Captain D's; he chattered non-stop while I listened.

When we got home, he rehearsed every detail with Mommy—"They kicked the ball 10 miles high!" "I was Daddy's pom pom!" "Vandy smeared 'em!"

Several months have passed now; the Vanderbilt Commodores finished the season with an 8-3 record, and memories of my *whole day* with Roddy still linger around the house. He has his rowdy moments, and each day requires doses of parental correction for him, but I'm amazed how much more responsive he is.

Did it cost to spend that time with my son? Oh, yes! The school work still had to be done, and there was another child waiting at home who needed a *whole day* with Dad. My lovely wife and I needed special time together also.

The monetary costs were also high, at least for me they were. That one day of activity with my boy cost approximately \$35. But you know what? If I had to drop \$35 for any reason, I can't think of a better cause than "just me and my boy!" ▲



ABOUT THE WRITER: Rodney Whaley is a member of the music faculty at Free Will Baptist Bible College, Nashville, Tennessee.

By Raymond Riggs

The first attack that Satan made on the human race was on the home.

Today we live in a very complicated society. We also live in a very polluted society, and confusion is rampant throughout our land.

One of the reasons that our society is in such chaotic condition is because of the violation of the original law concerning marriage.

Divorce! Preachers today are faced with this problem in every church. Not only are they faced with it among their members, preachers are faced with the problem of divorce in the parsonage.

I would like to present what I think is God's standard, and what is my opinion regarding divorce today, particularly among preachers.

I shall divide the subject into three categories:

*The Scriptural Content
The Social Consequence
The Specific Conclusion*

The Scriptural Content Concerning Divorce

The Mosaic Law of Divorce

When a man hath taken a wife, and married her, and it come to pass that she find no favour in his eyes, because he hath found some uncleanness in her: then let him write her a bill of divorcement, and give it in her hand, and send her out of his house.

And when she is departed out of his house, she may go and be another man's wife.

And if the latter husband hate her, and write her a bill of divorcement, and giveth it in her hand, and sendeth her out of his house; or if the latter husband die, which took her to be his wife;

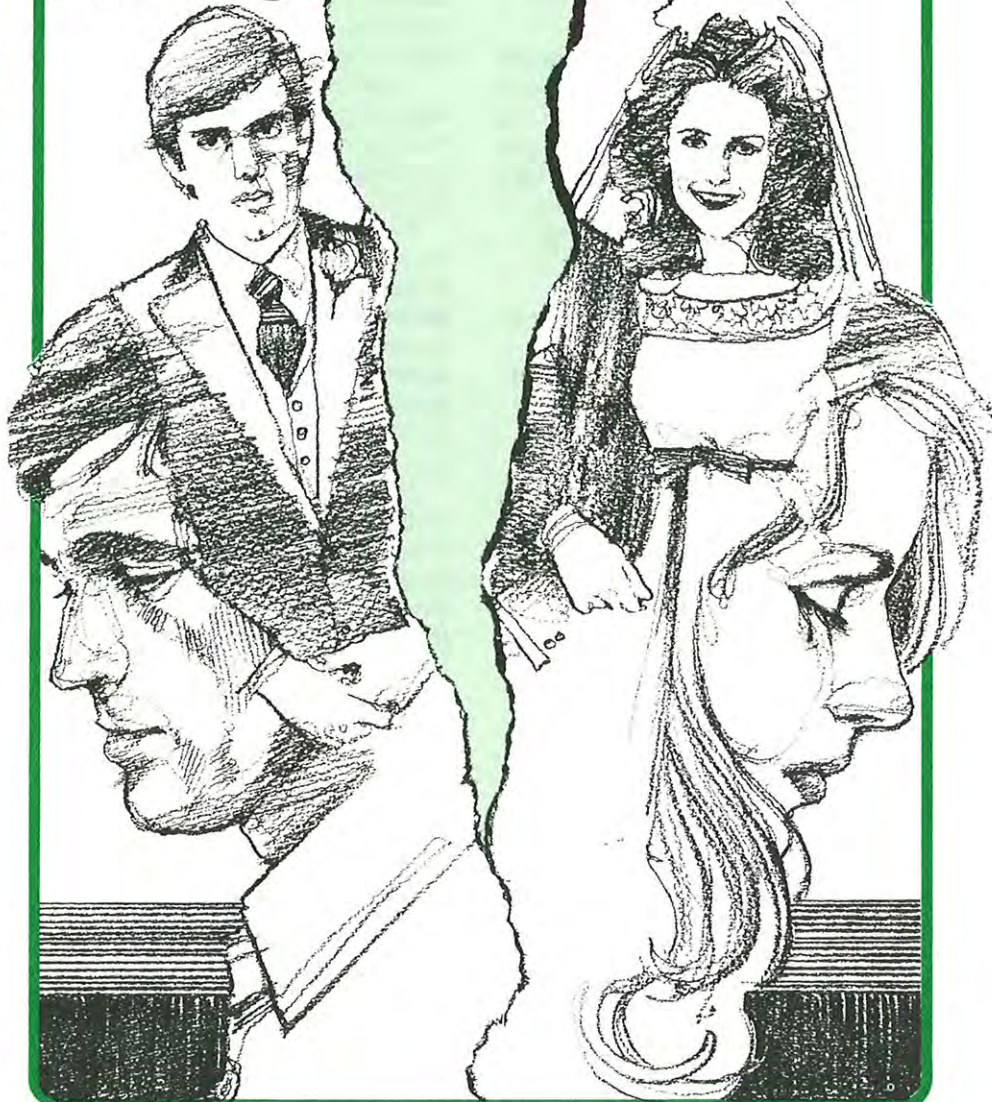
Her former husband, which sent her away, may not take her again to be his wife, after that she is defiled; for that is abomination before the Lord: and thou shalt not cause the land to sin, which the Lord thy God giveth thee for an inheritance (Deuteronomy 24:1-4).

The Law of Grace

It hath been said, Whosoever shall put away his wife, let him give her a writing of divorcement:

But I say unto you, That whosoever shall put away his wife, saving for the cause of fornication, causeth her to commit adultery: and whosoever shall marry her that is divorced committeth adultery. (Matthew 5:31-32)

Divorce in the Parsonage



The Pharisees also came unto him, tempting him, and saying unto him, Is it lawful for a man to put away his wife for every cause?

And he answered and said unto them, Have ye not read, that he which made them at the beginning made them male and female,

And said, For this cause shall a man leave father and mother, and shall cleave to his wife: and they twain shall be one flesh?

Wherefore they are no more twain, but one flesh. What therefore God hath joined together, let not man put asunder.

They say unto him, Why did Moses then command to give a writing of divorcement, and to put her away?

He saith unto them, Moses because of the hardness of your hearts suffered

you to put away your wives: but from the beginning it was not so.

And I say unto you, Whosoever shall put away his wife, except it be for fornication, and shall marry another, committeth adultery: and whoso marrieth her which is put away doth commit adultery.

(Matthew 19:3-9)

And the Pharisees came to him, and asked him, Is it lawful for a man to put away his wife? tempting him.

And he answered and said unto them, What did Moses command you?

And they said, Moses suffered to write a bill of divorcement, and to put her away.

And Jesus answered and said unto them, For the hardness of your heart he wrote you this precept.

But from the beginning of the creation

God made them male and female.

For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother, and cleave to his wife;

And they twain shall be one flesh: so then they are no more twain, but one flesh.

What therefore God hath joined together, let not man put asunder.

And in the house his disciples asked him again of the same matter.

And he saith unto them, Whosoever shall put away his wife, and marry another, committeth adultery against her.

And if a woman shall put away her husband, and be married to another, she committeth adultery.

(Mark 10:2-12)

Whosoever putteth away his wife, and marrieth another, committeth adultery: and whosoever marrieth her that is put away from her husband committeth adultery.

(Luke 16:18)

And unto the married I command, yet not I, but the Lord, Let not the wife depart from her husband:

But and if she depart, let her remain unmarried, or be reconciled to her husband: and let not the husband put away his wife.

But to the rest speak I, not the Lord: If any brother hath a wife that believeth not, and she be pleased to dwell with him, let him not put her away.

And the woman which hath an husband that believeth not, and if he be pleased to dwell with her, let her not leave him.

For the unbelieving husband is sanctified by the wife, and the unbelieving wife is sanctified by the husband: else were your children unclean; but now they are holy.

But if the unbelieving depart, let him depart. A brother or a sister is not under bondage in such cases: but God hath called us to peace.

For what knowest thou, O wife, whether thou shalt save thy husband? or knowest thou, O man, whether thou shalt save thy wife?

But as God hath distributed to every man, as the Lord hath called every one, so let him walk. And so ordain I in all churches.

(I Corinthians 7:10-17)

For the woman which hath an husband is bound by the law to her husband so long as he liveth; but if the husband be dead, she is loosed from the law of her husband.

(Romans 7:2)

The wife is bound by the law as long as her husband liveth; but if her husband be dead, she is at liberty to be married to whom she will; only in the Lord.

(I Corinthians 7:39)

The Social Consequence Of Divorce

The term *divorce*, of course, simply means to dissolve the marriage contract. If you have read these scriptures

honestly and sincerely, it is not difficult to come to the conclusion that from the beginning, God intended a man to have one wife and woman to have one husband as long as they lived.

However, we realize that today this principle is being violated constantly. We see the consequences of it on every hand. To dissolve a marriage contract is to indelibly imprint a scar upon one's life that will be carried to the grave.

We see the consequences in the lives of children whose parents are separated and divorced. Perhaps the mother will have the children during the week, and the father has the right to take them for the weekend.

Children usually love both parents, but they are torn between parents, and as a result, we see among young people today rebellion, confusion, and suicide. The truth is, we are told that the suicide rate is higher among teenagers in our nation than among any other age group.

Much of this is caused by the dissolving of the marriage relationship and divorce.

We also see the consequences of divorce in the *economic life* of our society. Usually (and justly so) the husband will have to provide child support or pay alimony if the divorce is granted.

Often this means the husband will, in reality, have to help support two families. In our economy this produces a hardship. It not only produces hardship on the divorced husband and the wife, but it means that funds which could be used to help propagate the gospel are often absorbed in the unnecessary expense of divorce.

We also see the consequence of divorce in *religious life*. Seldom will the husband and the wife who are divorced attend the same church.

And if and when they do, you can rest assured that there is an estranged feeling that often grieves the Holy Spirit. This somehow short-circuits the power of God in preaching the gospel and causes the church to be less influential in reaching the lost.

Each of you who reads these lines knows by your own experience and observation that there are sad consequences and unpleasant situations in every facet of our society because of divorce.

For this reason, we must return to

the teaching of scripture to our young people, of the sanctity of marriage, and for them to be sure before they choose a mate, that it is the one they will be willing to live with throughout their earthly life.

Unfortunately, many preachers are caught up in the divorce mania. If and when this happens, it usually means the end of that man's ministry. There may be exceptions to this rule (I Timothy 3:2), but in most cases, if the preacher is divorced (regardless of the cause), his ministry is in jeopardy and his usefulness minimized.

The Specific Conclusion

If you will read closely the scriptural content on the subject of divorce, you will discover that there are exceptions, and in my opinion, under certain circumstances, there are grounds for divorce and remarriage.

I see one such circumstance in Matthew 5:32. It seems to me that if the marriage vow is broken and infidelity is committed, that the spouse against whom the sin is committed has the prerogative to divorce his or her spouse and is free to marry again, if he or she so desires.

However, even if there has been infidelity between husband and wife, it is far better for them to be reconciled and forgive and forsake their sin and continue to live together in harmony and peace. This, not only in order to please the Lord and show His mercy, but especially for the benefit of the children.

Remember, adultery is not the unpardonable sin! On the other hand, if reconciliation cannot be reached and this sin is committed, it seems to me that scripture gives the liberty for divorce and possibly remarriage.

The Pharisees were trying to trap the Lord Jesus by asking Him this question. They wanted the privilege, it seems, to grant the divorce for every insignificant, trivial thing. This the Bible does not allow.

There seems to be another exception, and in my opinion, a right for divorce and perhaps remarriage in I Corinthians 7:13-15.



DIVORCE (From Page 9)

In this admonition from Paul, we reach the conclusion that at no time is a Christian authorized to put away a spouse, whether a believer or not, as long as that spouse, particularly the unbeliever, is willing to remain. But if the unbelieving spouse chooses to depart and does so, then, Paul says, a brother or sister is not under bondage in such cases.

I cannot find in God's Word where a believer is ever given the right to put away a companion, except for fornication. If infidelity is committed, if the marriage vow has been violated, and adultery is the sin, and reconciliation cannot be achieved, then in my opinion, the one who was sinned against, is as free as though they were dead.

Also, in my opinion, it seems the scripture concludes that if the unbelieving depart, after the believer has tried to live right and to be the kind of example that God expects, and then the unbeliever continues to resist, and leaves on their own volition, then the Christian is not under bondage. This would give the right to marry again, only in the Lord.

I have endeavored to make it clear that these statements are the opinion of the writer. I am sure that many would not agree whole-heartedly with my position.

I conclude that unless there are justifiable grounds, as so described in the scripture, that preachers should not unite people in marriage who have living spouses.

On the other hand, if we are convinced that infidelity has been committed, and reconciliation is impossible, and that they could not live in peace, or if the divorce was secured or initiated by the unbeliever, then the Christian is free, even to remarry, so long as he or she marries another Christian.

It appears that divorce, *per se*, does not necessarily mean immorality has been committed. It becomes adultery when the one who initiated the divorce remarries, unless the divorce was granted because of adultery or fornication. ▲

ABOUT THE WRITER: Reverend Raymond Riggs is promotional secretary for the Tennessee State Association of Free Will Baptists.

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... Through the Cooperative Channel

December, 1982

RECEIPTS:

State	Design.	Undesign.	Total	Dec. '81	Year to Date
Alabama	\$ 103.00	\$ 1,059.59	\$ 1,162.59	\$ 221.42	\$ 12,871.25
Arizona	.00	69.99	69.99	298.52	429.37
Arkansas	.00	3,905.69	3,905.69	3,125.34	42,675.02
California		1,250.88	1,250.88	870.79	12,873.53
Florida	106.11	2,932.70	3,038.81	33.33	18,504.44
Georgia	3,025.57	420.00	3,445.57	973.59	29,386.31
Hawaii	.00	.00	.00	.00	235.00
Idaho	.00	.00	.00	.00	444.12
Illinois	9,384.04	2,775.72	12,159.76	907.56	77,954.12
Indiana	.00	.00	.00	.00	275.00
Kansas	501.34	512.90	1,014.24	776.68	2,948.55
Kentucky	.00	416.78	416.78	32.00	923.78
Maryland	.00	.00	.00	130.00	460.00
Michigan	2,940.22	690.59	3,630.81	5,353.61	45,788.94
Mississippi	89.39	507.43	596.82	869.51	8,326.91
Missouri	11,303.89	.00	11,303.89	4,277.84	78,239.82
New Mexico	.00	.00	.00	.00	1,401.90
North Carolina	265.00	605.47	870.47	580.20	8,749.19
Ohio	800.00	.00	800.00	1,478.40	23,727.39
Oklahoma	16,772.92	7,888.79	24,661.71	29,717.97	329,105.99
South Carolina	.00	.00	.00	.00	25.00
Tennessee	167.90	614.10	782.00	1,416.47	15,932.24
Texas	2,464.32	685.61	3,149.93	2,888.82	45,851.65
Virginia	.00	.00	.00	.00	770.49
West Virginia	270.52	28.59	299.11	.00	1,194.20
Interest	.00	285.00	285.00	600.00	285.00
Totals	\$48,194.22	\$24,649.83	\$72,844.05	\$54,552.05	\$759,379.21

DISBURSEMENTS:

Executive	\$ 2,538.67	\$ 8,199.04	\$10,737.71	\$ 9,088.88	\$126,067.11
Foreign Missions	28,949.57	4,194.97	33,144.54	28,140.21	365,299.56
Bible College	3,990.77	4,194.97	8,185.74	5,537.61	87,154.58
Home Missions	11,259.07	3,125.66	14,384.73	7,298.61	125,577.25
Retirement & Insurance	805.96	3,043.38	3,849.34	2,754.98	34,401.73
Master's Men	202.42	1,645.09	1,847.51	1,467.51	16,543.81
Commission on Theological					
Liberalism	127.00	246.72	373.72	264.25	3,049.46
FWB Foundation	175.00	.00	175.00	.00	275.67
FWB Children's Home	36.39	.00	36.39	.00	36.39
WNAC	109.37	.00	109.37	.00	109.37
Convention	.00	.00	.00	.00	740.00
Hillsdale College	.00	.00	.00	.00	115.97
Historical Commission	.00	.00	.00	.00	8.31
Totals	\$48,194.22	\$24,649.83	\$72,844.05	\$54,552.05	\$759,379.21



Pastors... Men of God

By Gloria Keylon

We always hear it: Any Christian growth starts at home. I believe this to be true.

If we are not faithful in little things, we'll not be faithful in a greater work. The home front should be a haven of rest, peace, and quiet for any member of the family, especially for the minister of God.

The home is a busy place when there is a family. The phone rings; kids come and go. Children are a blessing from God, and basically busy little people. Dad needs quiet time to meditate on his day's happenings and to relax.

After this, the children start settling in for the evening. Dad listens to their experiences, talks with them, sometimes seriously and sometimes laughingly.

Finally, when the kids are off to bed and the house is quiet, Dad and Mom talk and make decisions.

As a wife, watching this routine day after day (and I'm sure I don't stand alone in this), I watch in amazement as my husband's energy is renewed for another day.

I ask myself "Why? What did God see in him to call him into such an important work? Where does the strength for this new task come from?"

Let me tell you about my husband, the minister of God.

First, he loves the Lord. If you ask him why, his answer is "Because He brought me out of the deep miry clay,

and His love and mercy will stand ever true. If He can do this for me, I can do something for others, namely leading them to the Kingdom of God."

Second, I believe the Lord chose my husband because of his dedication. Jesus Christ is first in his life. The eyes of the world, it seems, are on our husbands at one time or another, whether they are pastors or laymen, seeking to find fault. Always trying to trip them up with worldly stumbling blocks, to find out just how sincere they really are.

Through what he has learned in Matthew 5, his outreach to the community has become greater. He has grown in the Lord. He is sensitive to the needs of the people in and about the town, because of the love of God conveyed through him to them.

I, as this man's wife, am happy and glad to be at home when he gets there. Our children respect their father and look to him for guidance as a spokesman of God. His input to our home is equally as important as his input to the community.

I thank the Lord every day for my family at home and our family in Christ!

ABOUT THE WRITER: Mrs. Gloria Keylon is a member of Bethel Free Will Baptist Church, Allen, Oklahoma, where her husband, Tom, pastors.

Take Heart, Mom and Dad



By A Mother

A few days ago we learned that one of the girls in our church, daughter of a Christian mother and barely 16, is pregnant.

The headlines of our local paper recently announced that the son of one of our Christian acquaintances was arrested for selling marijuana.

About a year ago the daughter of

one of our pastor friends turned "hippie." Shortly before that, the son of one of the missionaries we know left his wife and two children to live with another woman.

A well-known evangelist's son of our acquaintance was jailed for shooting a man in an argument over a card game.

To come closer home, our own son was temporarily suspended from the

Christian high school he attended, for smoking. Later we learned that he was going to places we did not approve and drinking. It nearly broke my heart some time later to catch him with liquor on his breath.

Financial reverses, disloyalty of friends, illness, even death itself—none of these crush the Christian as much as the waywardness of his own children.

Christian parents today are literally "worrying themselves sick" over their children. "Where have we failed?" they ask themselves in anguish as they see their children turn their backs on God and His standards.

I am sure we can safely say we have all failed in one way or another. We have tried with God's help to bring up our children in His way. We have taken them to Sunday School and church, had family devotions in the home, tried to set a good example.

But sometimes we have failed, made devastating mistakes. Now we look back and ask, "Am I to blame for my child's waywardness?"

God, through Solomon, says, "Train up a child in the way he should go, and when he is old he will not depart from it" (Proverbs 22:6). Did He give this promise to perfect human beings who never fail or make mistakes? I think not.

He gave this reassurance to Christian parents who sincerely try, though often clumsily, to bring up their children in the nurture and admonition of the Lord.

What can we do for our erring children? We can't spank an 18-year-old and put him to bed without supper. We can deny him the use of the family car, but we can't deny him a certain amount of freedom.

We can't watch over him every minute to see that he doesn't do the things that he shouldn't. We can't force him to read God's Word or even listen to it when it is read.

For all practical purposes the training period is over. Now we must let him go and trust God to carry out His part of the bargain.

"We must commit Larry to the Lord," my husband often tells me when I lie awake wondering where our 20-year-old son is and what he is doing at two o'clock in the morning!

Often phrases from the Bible come to me in those long, weary hours,

rebukes to my unbelief: "Yet in this thing ye did not believe the Lord your God" (Deuteronomy 1:32); "... According to your faith be it unto you" (Matthew 9:29); "Why are ye so fearful? How is it that ye have no faith?" (Mark 4:40).

When we pray for our loved ones we want to see the answer immediately, but this is not always possible. God does not force anyone into His kingdom. It takes years, sometimes, and many adversities to bring some people to see their need of God.

Perhaps we are praying incorrectly, asking God to shield our children from hardship when hardship is exactly what they need.

One Christian couple prayed for an unsaved son for years with no evident results. Finally, in desperation, they asked God to bring anything into his life that would wake him up to see his need of Christ.

Things began to happen almost immediately. Through a series of circumstances the son lost his position and prosperity. In a short while he who had made his million found himself hopelessly in debt.

Although this man has not yet yielded to God, his young married daughter has, and his wife is seriously considering it. There is evidence that God is at work in this family in answer to the parents' prayer of desperation.

Of course we are concerned about our children, and rightly so, but are we worried? God has shown me that worry is disobedience to Him. It is unbelief—a sin.

Paul says, "In nothing be anxious, but in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known unto God" (Philippians 4:6). He promises God's peace to those who follow this simple formula.

"Lord, the next time I wake up at night with that panicky feeling (where is my boy and what is he doing?), help me to remember that You love him even more than I do. You are the only One who can really help him. And You have promised that You will in answer to my prayer of faith.

"Lord, instead of fretting, help me to thank You for what You are doing in his life even though I cannot see it. Help me to see that my part is not to nag and worry but to commit my loved one to You, then to trust and rejoice.

"Thank You, Lord, in advance, for what You are doing and are going to do. Thank You for taking this heavy burden and giving me peace. Amen."

Update: I wrote this article 12 years ago. Since that time nearly every wayward son or daughter I mentioned has come to Christ and is faithfully serving the Lord today, including the one who served time in prison, the ex-millionaire and his wife, and our own son. Take heart, Mom and Dad. God will do the same for your loved ones. ▲

ABOUT THE WRITER: This article was prepared by a free lance writer who prefers to be anonymous.

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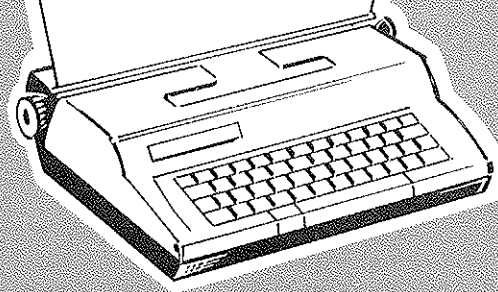
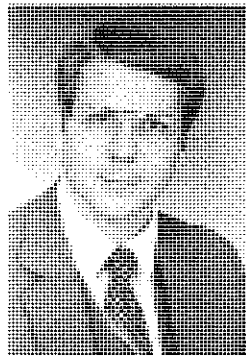
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The State Of Our Publications

By Frank Breeden



It's been nine months since your last state meeting. You're anxious to know how the new state mission project is doing, who's pastoring where, which Bible Bowl team won the competition, and the latest needs of your favorite missionary.

In just a few months you'll be back at the state association. Hopefully, you can catch up on the news there . . . if you get to go. Wouldn't it be nice to have a way of keeping up with all this news on a regular basis?

There is a way! If you subscribe to one of the 20 state papers published by Free Will Baptists, you're able to keep up with news from your state and the whole denomination.

Did you know that Free Will Baptist state publications have a combined 364 years of experience bringing the news to their people? Our states spend about \$83,000 a year to keep almost 56,000 subscribers informed. On a more personal level, that's an average of about \$1.48 a year per subscriber.

It is the duty of these editors to gather the news in its correct form, edit it, get it ready to be printed, run it through a press somewhere at a reasonable cost, and send it to their ranks before the news goes stale—some as often as 12 times a year. Most of them do it with no subscription charge.

Free Will Baptists have nothing to be ashamed of when it comes to the overall quality of our publications. Sure, the editors know their publications can be improved, and they're working on it.

However, to do the job they do year in and year out, with the funds and facilities they have to work with, it's a miracle we have the quality level we do.

Of the four women and 16 men who edit these publications, half are pastors, business people, and housewives who have to squeeze the task of printing a paper into their spare time.

The other half are employed full time as state promotional men who, more often than not, burn the midnight oil to crank out another issue just in time because of other pressing duties.

Were it not for dedicated spouses, secretaries, and volunteers who assist the editors on every issue, a state paper just might not be possible in some areas.

While it is not true in every case, the content of the publication a state produces is a pretty good barometer of that state's work. The areas where we have a large concentration of established and growing churches maintain a healthy state office which can produce a more costly and detailed publication. Such is the case with Arkansas, California, Georgia, Missouri, North Carolina, Ohio, South Carolina, and Tennessee.

On the other hand, it's amazing what states like Alabama, Florida, Kansas, Mississippi, and West Virginia, to name a few, can do without the benefit of a state office. Canada has one of the best looking publications and serves under 20 churches.

Many of these publications have distinctives which set them apart from the rest. For instance, Missouri has the oldest paper among us. *The Gem* has been telling Missouri's story for 53 years. Missouri and Ohio papers have the distinction of being printed by Randall House Publications in the same magazine format as *CONTACT*.

North Carolina has the largest circulation of all the papers. *The Witness* reaches 8,900 people every other month. More copies of Editor Tom Lilly's newspaper are distributed annually than any other paper we have—in excess of 53,000.

Alabama holds several distinctives. It is the only paper printed by a state mission board, and is the most expensive publication printed. *The Alabama Free Will Baptist Digest*, edited by Rev. Dennis Kizzire, spends about 69¢ per copy, or \$15,000 a year. It is also the youngest of all 20 publications.

Pastor and Bible Institute President Bob Shockey mails an attractive news-sheet which holds the record for being the most economical. *The Bethel Echoes* goes to approximately 3,300 people, 12 times a year, for only 6¢ per copy. It is funded by the Bethel Bible Institute and serves the Kentucky State Association.

The Ambassador, Ohio's magazine, edited by Alton Loveless, is the only publication which pays its bills partially with income from advertising. For \$20 per column inch, an ad can be viewed by the 5,200 Buckeyes and others who receive this paper every other month.

Although each paper takes a little different approach, they all are seeking to regularly inform their constituents

about the work Free Will Baptists are doing. Not only do they provide a constant source of news, they also prove to be an excellent resource in researching the past. Some of our most important history can be found by perusing a stack of old state publications.

What should you be getting from your state paper? Your state publication should give you something that you can't get anywhere else. So if all a state publication does is to reprint *CONTACT*, it is waste of paper, time, and money.

Even though a good recap of denominational news is needed, the majority of the paper should inform you about your state. If the editor is not free to travel the state and gather this news, the people should take it upon themselves to send important news to the editor, regularly.

Don't complain about your area of the state never getting any coverage in the state paper when you haven't sent in anything. The biggest need, most of our editors would tell you, is the need for more news items and articles from the people.

If you're doing something that works—building a new sanctuary, starting a Christian School, burning a mortgage, experiencing revival—tell somebody!

There are certain ingredients for which every Christian publication should strive: quality printing, clear pictures, correct spelling and grammar, good paper, and attractive layout and design, to name a few.

Besides this, there are other ingredients which can be built into a paper over the years to make it a well-rounded state publication. Here's a sampling of the ingredients now found in the 20 state publications now in circulation:

- Editorials
- State Board's reports
- Historical section
- Youth articles
- Financial reports
- Humor
- Ministerial changes
- Evangelism
- Youth Camp
- Obituaries
- State Missionaries



PUBLICATIONS (From Page 15)

Conference Reports
Special events
Master's Men
Sermons
National Association
Educational news
Pastors available
Advertising
CTS competition
Poetry
Children's Home
Church reports
Denominational news
Woman's Auxiliary
Missionary profiles
Reader's letters
Sunday School Campaigns
Churches available
State Association
Pastor helps
Itineraries

Many editors have definite plans for their publications. Alabama is considering cutting back on the size and possibly going to newsprint. David Joslin of Arkansas is attempting to enroll the remaining 37 percent of their churches who have yet to subscribe to *The Vision*.

The Illinois Newsletter, edited by David Shores, has plans to expand from a mimeographed sheet into a magazine format to allow for more material. Norwood Gibson has plans for *The Informer* of South Carolina to move to a monthly publication.

Tennessee's paper, *The Echo*, plans a 6,000 increase of the mailing list, according to Editor Raymond Riggs.

With all these improvements, and possibly the addition of some new state publications, the Free Will Baptist news network seems headed for a promotion. In spite of the billions the news industry will spend this year to inform the world, there will still be a need for the men and women who crank out nearly 500,000 copies of Free Will Baptist state publications each year to continue doing so.

Subscribe to your state paper. Support it with your papers and finances. Send in news items, articles, and even address corrections. Suggest ways that it can better serve your state. It's the best way we have of telling our story on the state level.

If we don't tell it, who will? ▲

ABOUT THE WRITER: Reverend Frank Breeden is public relations assistant at Free Will Baptist Bible College. He is a member of Donelson Free Will Baptist Church, Nashville, Tennessee.

STATE	PAPER	FREQUENCY	CIRCULATION
ALABAMA	ALABAMA FWB DIGEST	Bi-monthly	3,600
ARKANSAS	THE VISION	Monthly	4,200
CALIFORNIA	THE VOICE	Monthly	1,100
CANADA	THE GOSPEL STANDARD	Bi-monthly	550
FLORIDA	CO-ORDINATOR	Bi-monthly	1,500
GEORGIA	PROMOTIONAL BULLETIN	Monthly	2,020
ILLINOIS	ILLINOIS NEWSLETTER	Monthly	1,600
INDIANA	KEY	Bi-monthly	500
KANSAS	THE ARROW	Bi-monthly	300
KENTUCKY	BETHEL ECHOES	Monthly	3,300
MISSISSIPPI	MISSISSIPPI MESSENGER	Monthly	1,600
MISSOURI	FREE WILL BAPTIST GEM	Bi-monthly	2,000
NORTH CAROLINA	THE WITNESS	Bi-monthly	8,900
NORTHWEST ASSN.	THE NOR'WESTER	As Needed	
OHIO	THE AMBASSADOR	Bi-monthly	5,200
OKLAHOMA	THE PROMOTER	Bi-monthly	7,000
SOUTH CAROLINA	THE INFORMER	Bi-monthly	3,500
TENNESSEE	THE ECHO	Bi-monthly	4,000
TEXAS	THE TEXAS CHALLENGE	Bi-monthly	1,200
WEST VIRGINIA	WEST VIRGINIA FWB	Monthly	3,900

N	PRINT METHOD	YEARS OPERATED	ANNUAL COST	COPY DEADLINE	FUNDED BY	EDITOR
	Off-set	3	\$15,000	1st of Previous Month	State Mission Board	Dennis Kizzire P.O. Box 515 Vernon, AL 35592
	Off-set	27	7,000	20th of Previous Month	Subscription—\$1.25 Per Year, 2% of State CO-OP	David Joslin P.O. Box 1404 Conway, AR 72032
	Off-set	22	4,488	25th of Previous Month	Gifts	Paul Kennedy 940 Juanita Drive El Sobrante, CA 94803
	Off-set	20+	1,000	1st of Previous Month	Gifts and CO-OP	Mrs. Blanche Rideout RR #5 Hartland, N.B. EOJ 1NO
	Off-set	17	2,000	3rd Friday of Every Other Month—Jan.-Nov.	State Association	L. Gail J. Rhodes 1232 13th Street Holly Hill, FL 32017
	Off-set	34	3,314	15th of Previous Month	CO-OP Giving	Herbert Waid P.O. Box 1844 Moultrie, GA 31768
	Mimeograph	20	1,600	15th of Previous Month	CO-OP Individual Gifts	David Shores Rt. 1, Box 323 Bonnie, IL 62816
	Mimeograph	5	600		State Budget	Archie Ratliff 8132 Sycamore Spring Trail Indianapolis, IN 46239
	Off-set	5+	600	25th of Every Other Month—Jan.-Nov.	Church Assessments Based on Sunday School Attendance	Galen Dunbar 201 E. Prescott Avenue Salina, KS 67401
	Off-set	5	2,400	1st of Previous Month	Bethel Bible Institute	Bob Shockey Box 1226 Paintsville, KY 41240
	Off-set	12	4,600	Last Tuesday of Previous Month	State Association	Billy Tabb 107 Maple Ridgeland, MS 39157
	Off-set	53	6,245	15th of Every Other Month—Feb.-Dec.	Subscriptions and Promotional Department	Clarence Burton P.O. Box 991 Lebanon, MO 65536
	Off-set	20	6,000	25th of Every Other Month—Jan.-Nov.	North Carolina Churches	Tom Lilly P.O. Box 1687 Smithfield, NC 27577
	Mimeograph	5+		Anytime		Mrs. Joan Warren 3702 Parkway Place Yakima, WA 98902
	Off-set	24	7,200	10th of Previous Month	Free Will Offerings	Alton Loveless P.O. Box 07401 Columbus, OH 43207
	Off-set	25	8,000	1st of Each Month	Oklahoma CO-OP	Lonnie DeVault 1519 Hollow Oak Moore, OK 73160
	Off-set	14	2,500+	15th of Every Other Month—Feb.-Dec.	Individual and Church Gifts	Norwood Gibson 1221 Gregg Avenue Florence, SC 29501
	Off-set	10	3,000	1st of Every Other Month—Jan.-Nov.	State Office	Raymond Riggs P.O. Box 49334 Algood, TN 38501
	Off-set	7	800		Texas Executive Office	Allen A. Moore 1131 W. Owings Denison, TX 75020
	Off-set	36	6,500	20th of Each Month	Gifts and State Association	Miss Cathy Miller Box 157 Sophia, WV 25921

Latter-Day Jesus

What the Mormons

really think about Jesus.



By Frank T. Slaughter

Mormon doctrine and theology may be the most complicated arrangement of facts, distortions, and myth ever devised.

On the surface, the Mormon view of Christ seems no different than the orthodox Protestant view. The Latter-Day Saints go to great efforts to appear to be Christian.

But the fact is, an examination of their system will show that Mormons have an entirely different concept of Jesus Christ than do orthodox Christians.

Mormon Sources of Authority

Literary

The Mormon doctrine of Christ is not based on the Bible alone. They develop their teachings from five sources which they consider authoritative.

The Latter-Day Saints base their system on four books. *The Pearl of Great Price*, written by Joseph Smith contains their articles of faith. *Doctrines and Covenants* contains revelations given to Joseph Smith and a final revelation given to Brigham Young.

The *Book of Mormon* contains an alleged account of two waves of immigration to the American continents, as a result of the dispersion of peoples at the Tower of Babel.

The first group, the Jaredites, migrated to Central America. Because of internal wars the Jaredites were destroyed.

The second migration was that of a Jewish family, led by Lehi, which settled in South America and became two great nations. The Nephites were those who followed God's commandments. The Lamanites were those who rebelled against God.

In A.D. 34, Christ appeared to the Nephites, preached the gospel, instituted baptism and communion, along with the Priesthood and other ceremonies. After a period of 200 years, the Nephites and Lamanites became hostile toward one another. The Lamanites destroyed the Nephites.

The history of these people had been recorded by Mormon on golden plates and buried in the hill Cumorah.

In the final battle between the Lamanites and the Nephites, all the Nephites were killed except one, Moroni. Moroni, the son of Mormon, then added additional plates. Four hundred years later, in 1823-27, Moroni (now an angel) appears to Joseph Smith revealing the whereabouts of the plates.

Mormons claim that II Corinthians 13:1, "In the mouth of two or three witnesses every word shall be established" is substantiation that the *Book of Mormon* is a witness on the western continent, the Bible on the eastern.

The King James Version of the Bible is another authoritative source in the Mormon system. The Latter-Day Saints have a translation of the Bible known as the Inspired Version, but use the King James because the Inspired Version was never completed by Joseph Smith.

From their understanding of II Corinthians 13:1, then, the Bible and the *Book of Mormon* are witnesses of the same Christ. Even though they believe the Bible is subject to correct translation, the Latter-Day Saints stress that there is no conflict of authorities.

The facts show, however, that there are many glowing contradictions between the Bible and the *Book of Mormon*. By stating that the Bible must be correctly translated, Mormons have a way out when conflicts occur.

The President

Their President is the fifth source of authority for the Mormon church. The President is a "revelator."

Doctrines and Covenants contains revelations to Joseph Smith. The statement that the head of the church is a source of authority from God, known as the President, comes from a work by Joseph Smith.

Mormons accept that Joseph Smith, and subsequent heads of the church,

pass on to the church revelations direct from God. The authority of the President is firmly established because the Latter-Day Saints believe the President is "a seer, a revelator, a translator, and a prophet having all the gifts of God." What he says can become the doctrine of the church.

Consequently, their doctrines are never settled and can be added to.

Mormons do not accept any authority outside themselves. When considering the Bible, the Bible is accepted only as far as it is "correctly translated."

Neither the *Book of Mormon* nor any of their other sources carry that same stipulation. Therefore, when considering their view of Christ, be assured that it is theirs and not something they developed from other sources.

Jesus In Eternity Past

Orthodox Christianity professes that Jesus Christ is a member of the Godhead and as such is eternal. He had no beginning, He always was, and always will be.

Mormons believe that Christ is a spirit-child as are all of us. We all had spirits which existed prior to our bodies, begotten by God and later born into the eternal world.

Christ's relationship to us is simply that He was first; He is greater in degree, not in kind. We all existed as spirits; He was first to take a body upon this earth.

We might think that this brings Christ down to the level of man, but in the Mormon system it means that individuals are on the same level as Christ.

Christ and the Trinity

Mormon teaching concerning the Trinity is most confusing. Sometimes they teach what could be understood as an orthodox view, while at other times they teach there is only one God not a Trinity, and still again the plurality of gods.

In the *Book of Mormon* (II Nephi 32:21 and Alma 11:44), the Trinity is taught. From *Teachings of Joseph Smith* this is refuted and the plurality of gods is given.

Since Mormons believe that God reveals new truth through the President, their views can change. The current view is that of plurality of gods.

All Mormons are spirit-children of Elohim and will one day be as God is. They will be God themselves which must negate any concept of a Trinity as orthodox Christianity professes.

Jesus as Creator

The Latter-Day Saints attribute the creation of "this earth" to Jesus Christ. He was, however, helped by: Michael who was Adam, perhaps Noah and Enoch, Abraham, Moses, Peter, James and John, and possibly Joseph Smith.

This theory does away with Christ's omnipotence. It also implies that others (pre-existent spirit-children) had power to create.

However the Mormon idea of creation is different—they believe that nothing is created, but organized. All matter has always existed and was not created. Matter had no beginning and will have no end.

The word *create* is redefined as organize. So when it is said that Jesus created the world, they mean something else altogether.

Jesus On Earth

The orthodox Christian teachings about Christ becoming a man are taken from the Bible, which teaches that the virgin Mary was found pregnant without the aid of a man, that the Holy Spirit caused her to receive the seed of Jesus without physical union.

Mormons believe that the Father cohabited with Mary, a mortal, and she conceived in the normal manner. An immortal God cohabited with a mortal.

This gives Jesus a special place and rank because of His unique birth, not unlike myths of Greek and Roman literature.

Christ's Work

Instead of man being separated from God and unable to be reunited except through Christ, Mormon teaching is that God used Adam's fall to bring man to Him.

Christians believe that the atonement Christ offers is the only way to restore men to God; Mormons believe they can pay for reunion. Joseph Smith says that those who die without the knowledge of the gospel will have to pay for their transgressions. They also profess to believe that through the atonement of Christ all men may be saved.

Confusing, until one knows the Latter-Day Saints have two levels of salvation. Universal salvation is available to all because Christ died and, thereby, everyone will be resurrected. Individual salvation is to those who believe and obey.

If one does not believe and obey now, he will later. All their statements lead one to believe salvation can be attained before or after physical death.

Christians believe that people who do not accept the atonement of Christ at death will have no more opportunity to be saved. Their separation from God leaves them in Hell. The atonement loses its significance if it means that all men will have universal salvation. Man then has no need to be saved or to fear Hell.

One wonders what the significance of the atonement is to the average Mormon. The demands of justice require the atonement, but man is individually saved as he believes and obeys. The absence of the absolute necessity for Christ's atonement makes it difficult or maybe even impossible for an orthodox Christian to understand what Mormons mean when they say faith is necessary to salvation.

To complicate the issue even more, Mormons do believe in Hell for a small group of the worst sinners.

The atonement then became an act whereby all men are saved in a universal sense. Individual salvation then becomes what the Mormon is seeking. Since Christ's atonement is applied to all, individual salvation becomes the more significant aspect. Individual salvation involves being accepted into the Celestial Kingdom.

The Celestial Kingdom is where one may dwell in the presence of God. The Terrestrial Kingdom and Telestial Kingdom will be where those who are



LATTER-DAY (From Page 19)

not individually saved will live eternally. The Terrestrial for those who were morally clean or received the gospel after death, the Telestial for the unclean.

The work of Christ then only plays a part in salvation in the Mormon system, rather than being the most important point as in Christianity.

Christ and Baptism

Mormons believe that through repentance and faith and remission of sins by baptism one is saved. Baptism is essential.

Because the "restored gospel" was given to Joseph Smith in 1823, all who died before have no remission of sins. The Mormon belief in baptism for the dead is the result. By acting as a substitute, for the dead, one may be baptized for them, making them able to meet the requirements of salvation.

Baptism as a symbol of entrance into the family of God becomes a legalistic means of meeting a requirement.

Christ and Polygamy

Nowhere in the Bible is there any reference to Christ having been married. Mormon teaching, however, tells us a different story.

Brigham Young stated that Mary, Martha, and Mary Magdalene were Christ's wives. The marriage feast when Jesus turned water into wine was an occasion of one of His marriages.

The early Mormon church taught and practiced to some degree, polygamy. In later years the church discouraged the practice because of the conflict with the government. Although the law prohibited their practice of polygamy, their teachings have not changed.

The Bible does not teach that Christ was married, much less a polygamist. This is a clear example of a Mormon view being fabricated to satisfy the teaching of their system.

Conclusions

The Bible teaches that it is a complete and final source, yet Mormons ignore its teachings by insisting it is only correct as properly translated.

Christ was a spirit-child just as we all were; the difference being that He was first.

The Mormon doctrine of the Trinity is made up of a series of conflicting statements.

Their teachings destroy the omnipotence of Christ because He was helped in the creation of the earth by others.

The miraculous is taken out of the incarnation.

The work of Christ is obscure. A person does not need to be saved to avoid Hell; he can pay for his sins. All men are saved, but go to different places determined by how good and moral they were.

Baptism is not a symbol of dying to self and being born anew in Christ, but is an act whereby one assures his place in a higher Mormon heaven.

Christ was not single; He was married to at least three women, maybe more.

The god of the Mormons is not the God of the Bible; their christ is not the Christ of orthodox Christianity.

What of the Mormons? Heresy simple and straightforward! ▲

ABOUT THE WRITER: Frank T. Slaughter is a member of Horton Heights Free Will Baptist Church, Nashville, Tennessee, where he serves as a deacon and as Sunday School Superintendent. Mr. Slaughter is a 1972 graduate of Free Will Baptist Bible College.

DIRECTORY UPDATE

GEORGIA

Len Blanchard to Lyons Church, Lyons

Chester Rineer to First Church, Valdosta

NORTH CAROLINA

James Avery to Faith Church, Cary from Riverview Church, Bettendorf, IA

James L. Carrington to Mt. Olive Church, Plymouth

David Nobles to Meadow Brook Church, Black Mountain from Hearon Circle Church, Spartanburg, SC

Wade Parker to Tippetts Chapel Church, Clayton

Joseph Wallis to Five Points Church, Washington from Faith Church, Cary

OTHER PERSONNEL

R. Dean Stone to First Church, Ada, OK as associate pastor and youth minister from Wilson Church, Ada, OK

Lloyd Layman

THIS WEEK'S SPEAKER, MR. WATERS, WILL BRING US AN OBJECT LESSON BASED ON THE STORY OF "THE CROSSING OF THE RED SEA."



By Robert Picirilli

As you consider raising or giving money to Free Will Baptist Bible College, you naturally want to know how much the college really needs financial support at this time. That would always be true; add to that the fact that there has recently been serious misinformation distributed about our financial situation, and the need for specific facts is even greater than usual.

Fact #1: The excess of income over expenditures (general fund) last year was \$50,389.92 (not \$225,000 as wrongly reported from a mid-year figure).

Fact #2: The budget for the current year has a built-in deficit (excess of planned expenditures over anticipated normal income) of \$84,000.

We hoped to cover this deficit by last year's excess; but since last year's excess was just over \$50,000 (fact #1), we thus started this year with an expected \$34,000 deficit. (And this was known when Dr. Thigpen's appeal letter went out last spring.)

Furthermore, student income this year will be somewhat lower than was anticipated in this budget.

Fact #3: It was wrongly reported that the value of our general fund at the end of 1980-81 was \$354,000. Two serious errors were involved in that report.

First, someone apparently got this figure from the total "assets" reported and forgot to subtract the "liabilities" total on the next page. That error alone makes a \$150,000 difference!

Second, they must not have understood that included in those "assets" was a figure of \$249,000 owed to the general fund account from the building fund account—thus, money we do not have (and simply carried on the books as an asset in case the building fund can ever raise it and pay it to the general fund).

The truth, then, is at the close of 1980-81, after subtracting liabilities from assets, and not counting the amount owed to the general fund by the building fund, the actual "balance" was \$40,989.28 in the hole!

Eight Financial Facts You Need To Know About Free Will Baptist Bible College



Fact #4: The college does have combined annuity and endowment funds of a little over \$200,000, as reported. What was not reported was: (1) these funds cannot be expended for general fund operation; (2) they are much too low, as endowment funds should be, providing only \$10,000 to \$12,000 (in interest income) for general fund use each year.

Fact #5: The college does have a student loan fund of \$200,000 as reported: that, too: (1) cannot be used for general fund operation; (2) is very insufficient for needs.

It "revolves," of course, as some pay back and others borrow, but every year we have to send students to the bank to borrow at more expensive interest rates because our fund is not enough to cover all needed student loans.

Fact #6: If, as reported, we inherited an estate (as of last June, or any other date) of \$100,000 to \$150,000, we know nothing at all about it. We have no idea as to the source of such a rumor.

Fact #7: The women's dorm does not pay its own way (as incorrectly

reported), and has to be supplemented from general fund income.

Fact #8: All other buildings on campus are not "paid for." (1) The three new houses on Richland cost \$264,500, with mortgages assumed of \$125,000. (2) In addition to that, and the balance on the women's dormitory, the building fund now owes the general fund (see fact #3, above) \$483,773.82.

In Conclusion

We will be happy to show the books to anyone who desires to confirm this information for themselves. Meanwhile, there are two sides to the picture. On the one hand, the picture shows a serious and urgent need, as much as always and even more.

On the other hand, so long as our people continue to support generously, as always, we do not expect a financial crisis. You can give or encourage others to give, knowing that there is a real need. ▲

ABOUT THE WRITER: Dr. Robert Picirilli is the dean at Free Will Baptist Bible College, Nashville, Tennessee.



FREE WILL BAPTIST

newsfront

FWB PENSION BENEFITS TOP \$100,000

NASHVILLE, TN—The Free Will Baptist Retirement Pension Plan has paid out more than \$100,000 in benefits since its organization in 1969, according to Director Herman Hersey.

The \$100,000-mark was reached on December 31, 1982, Director Hersey confirmed.

Pension Plan benefits include disability, death and retirement income for ministers, lay employees, and ministers' widows.

Approximately 600 ministers, missionaries and church or denominational employees currently participate in three plans offered through the retirement program.

Pension funds now held in trust total \$1.9 million with an average daily increase of \$1,000.

MALCOLM FRY TO LEAVE RANDALL HOUSE



NASHVILLE, TN—Dr. Malcolm C. Fry, 54-year-old assistant director of the Sunday School and Church Training Department, announced that he will be leaving the department following the 1983 National Convention in Columbus, Ohio.

In notifying Director Roger Reeds and the Board of his decision, Dr. Fry, who will complete 12 years' service at the national level this July, said his plans were indefinite beyond the fact that he believed it to be God's will for him to return to the pastorate at this time.

Prior to leaving the pastorate in 1971 to accept a position with the Church Training Service Department, the Michigan native had pastored more

than 15 years in Arizona, Texas, Tennessee, and Louisiana.

Dr. Fry served as general director of the Church Training Service Department 1972-1978, at which time he, along with Sunday School Department Director Roger Reeds, led the two departments in merger proceedings.

Since the departments merged into the Sunday School and Church Training Department, Dr. Fry has had major responsibilities in the areas of conferences and curriculum. He directs the National Youth Convention and the annual Writer's Contest and Writers' Conference. He also organizes conferences on Developing Christian Leadership and exhibits for Randall House Publications at Sunday School and Christian education conferences and conventions.

In addition to conducting workshops and seminars, Dr. Fry oversees the editorial division of the Sunday School and Church Training Department.

Dr. Fry has written seven books. He is an accomplished vocalist and has made three albums. He earned the master of education degree from the University of Arizona, and the doctor of ministry from Luther Rice Seminary.

Malcolm and Mae Fry say they consider the past 12 years rewarding to both of them, especially in the areas of writing, training and youth.

NEW CHURCH DEDICATED IN OKLAHOMA

SAPULPA, OK—The Pilgrims-in-Faith Free Will Baptist Church conducted dedication services on November 7, 1982, commemorating completion of a 3,600-square foot sanctuary and educational area, according to Pastor Larry Tuttle.

The all-day services were attended by more than 150 members and guests. In less than one year, after beginning with 25 charter members and no place to meet, the group now averages 44 in Sunday School and 58 in morning worship.

Reverend Bill Ketchum preached the dedicatory message Sunday afternoon. Moderator Joel Kircher of the Central Area Quarterly Meeting gave

the prayer of dedication.

Memorials in the form of sanctuary furniture donated by individuals and families in memory of loved ones were dedicated in the service also.

A communion and feet washing service was held Sunday evening.

The church began in August 1981 as a seven-member group that met in a Kellyville home for prayer meeting. The group met in homes, an area restaurant and the Creek County Fairgrounds before completion of its permanent home on Highway 66.

The church purchased two acres in January 1982. The mortgage for the land was cleared in June, and the church celebrated with a "mortgage

burning" on June 6.

The next day, a construction loan was signed with American National Bank, and groundbreaking was held July 11.

The new building was constructed at a cost of \$11.11 per square foot. The congregation and others wired the building, insulated and painted the walls, installed the heating and air conditioning systems, and did the trim work.

"This church stands here as a tribute to the Living God and our Savior Jesus Christ and as a testimony to what the faith, prayers, desire to work, and sacrifice of a few of God's people can accomplish," said Pastor Tuttle.

MISSISSIPPI CHURCH BURNS NOTE

COLUMBUS, MS—First Free Will Baptist Church, Columbus, burned the note which frees all the church property from debt. The note was paid off 10 years in advance of its due date.

The church owns properties on Main Street as well as a house adjacent to the church on 19th Street and a parsonage in East Columbus. Additional properties have been acquired for parking on 18th Street and at its intersection with Main Street.

Total church properties are valued at one million dollars. Auditorium and educational space can accommodate over 600 people.

First FWB Church began in 1934 as the result of a tent revival with Rever-

end M. L. Hollis. The original building was completed in 1935 and the church was formally organized on July 6, 1936, by its first pastor, Brother Hollis.

In 1953 the first addition was completed under the ministry of Dr. J. D. O'Donnell. Added at that time were eight Sunday School rooms. In 1962, during the pastorate of Reverend Paul Kettelman, the fellowship hall was completed and the auditorium renovated.

The church had a fire in 1964 which damaged most of the building. Further renovation was done under the leadership of Reverend Randy Cox. Several years later, a massive building program was undertaken. A new auditorium, Sunday School rooms and church

offices were built on an adjacent lot. The old building received a face lift inside and out in order to provide for outside beauty and inside classroom use.

First Church has enjoyed a prominent place in its community for over 46 years. It served as the site for the 1942 National Association and was the place where Free Will Baptists decided to organize and build Free Will Baptist Bible College.

Over the years the church has seen many of its youth commit themselves to Christ, the church and the denomination. The present pastor, Reverend Milton Fields, is a product of the church.

CHURCH SETS ATTENDANCE RECORD

FLORENCE, AL—First Free Will Baptist Church, Florence, shattered their old attendance mark by 100 when 1,266 worshipers crowded into their facilities on October 31, 1982.

Officials reported that 616 came on buses, also breaking the previous bus high by 101, a record set one year earlier.

Pastor Tom Malone said the primary goal for the "Camp Meeting Sunday" was to catch the camp meeting spirit with fervent preaching and spiritual singing. The congregation had been praying for weeks for personal and church-wide revival.

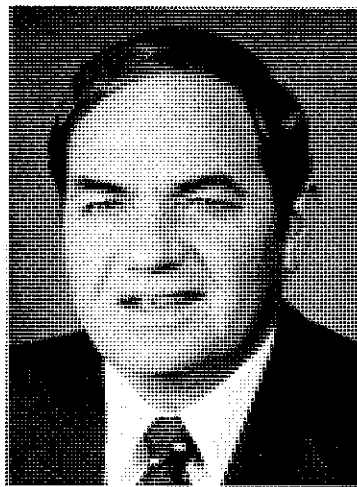
The secondary goal was to break all existing attendance records. Sunday School was called off that day to allow for a special combined service.

Home Missions Director Roy Thomas preached during the morning service, which resulted in numerous decisions, including 10 for salvation.

The group planned a special time of testimonies from members who remembered the camp meetings of years ago.

During Junior Church activities, some 30 boys and girls responded to the gospel invitation. There were 565 in Junior Church.

OKLAHOMA PASTOR TAPPED FOR EVANGELISM POST



NASHVILLE, TN—The Home Missions Department has named Reverend Connie Cariker, pastor of West Tulsa Free Will Baptist Church in Tulsa, Oklahoma, as the new director for its Division of Evangelism and Church Growth.

Reverend Cariker, well-known pastor and church builder, has preached in Free Will Baptist churches from coast to coast. He has been widely used in evangelism and church growth conferences, Bible conferences, revivals, and as a speaker at the National Association.

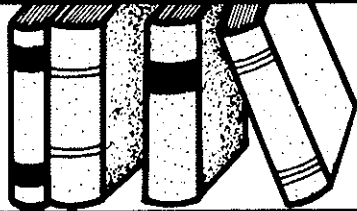
His only pastorate is his present one, where he has labored 21 years. During that time he led the congregation to an attendance high of 1,205 in Sunday School. He has distinguished himself by his genuineness in communicating to people, not only in his local church, but also on the state and national levels.

Brother Cariker has held numerous offices in the Oklahoma State Association. He is currently a member of both the Oklahoma State and the National Sunday School Boards.

He has been effective in communicating church growth methods to pastors, sharing practical ideas on how to build church attendance and develop soul winners.

Reverend Cariker and his wife, Glo, have two daughters, Tracy, who is a senior at Hillsdale Free Will Baptist College, and Jan, who is a sophomore at Free Will Baptist Bible College.

Top Shelf



Thomas Marberry



Goldie Bristol with Carol McGinnis, *When It's Hard to Forgive* (Wheaton: Victor Books, 1982, 167 pp., paperback, \$4.95).

This month I have the privilege of reviewing a book which is co-authored by a Free Will Baptist. The volume grows out of the personal experience of Goldie Bristol.

Mrs. Bristol's 21-year-old daughter, Diane, was brutally raped and murdered in 1970. Three years after Diane's death, her assailant was captured, convicted, and sentenced to life in prison.

This tragedy was, of course, a crushing blow to Goldie, her husband, and other family members. Because of their Christian commitment, Goldie and her husband did not become bitter and filled with hate. They were deeply hurt, but their lives were not consumed with hatred for the man who had done this terrible thing to their daughter.

After some months, they found that they were even able to pray for their daughter's murderer. Eventually, they met him face to face and expressed to him their forgiveness. They also shared with him the forgiveness of God which was available to him.

As a result of this experience, Goldie began a systematic study of the Christian concept of forgiveness. She spoke to a variety of Christian audiences concerning the importance of forgiveness in the Christian life. This book presents something of her conclusions.

In this book Goldie and Carol assert that forgiveness is essential to a well-rounded Christian life. The message of Christ is a message of forgiveness. The ministry of God is a ministry of forgiveness.

Forgiveness is not a natural human quality, but it is a command of God. It is a spirit and an attitude which a Christian can develop when he fully surrenders his life to Christ. Forgiveness is costly, and it means that the Christian must be willing to give up revenge.

Yet a Christian who does not develop the ability to forgive is headed for serious spiritual problems. Anger, hatred, bitterness, jealousy, and envy will grow and fester if there is no forgiveness. The inability to forgive may eventually separate a Christian from other people and from God.

These authors present a number of suggestions which can help Christians develop an attitude of forgiveness. They also point out that forgiveness does not mean an indifference to evil or that one condones that which is wrong.

Forgiveness is a powerful thing. It is so important to the Christian life that it cannot be overlooked. Perhaps the counsel of Goldie and Carol can help each of us to further our own Christian growth through forgiveness. ▲

newsfront

(continued)

'ALWAYS ABOUNDING', THEME FOR SPRING ENLARGEMENT CAMPAIGN

NASHVILLE, TN—The annual spring Sunday School enlargement campaign is designed to remind participants of the resurrection and second coming of the Lord.

The "Always Abounding" theme features the rising sun, and was adopted for two reasons, according to Sunday School and Church Training Department officials.

First, the context of the theme verse (I Corinthians 15:58) is the resurrection. The rising of the sun each morning speaks symbolically of the resurrection.

Second, the rising sun also speaks of the coming of the Son of Righteousness, the Lord Jesus Christ.

The spring campaign is four weeks in length, beginning March 6, 1983 and concluding on March 27.

The campaign will organize competition on the basis of average Sunday School attendance during the Fall quarter, 1982, 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.

CONTACT welcomes **The Maryland Newsletter**, publication of the Maryland State Association of Free Will Baptists. Lester Horton edits. The association reported five new churches which joined the fellowship in 1982.

The **Fairwood FWB Church, Fairfax Station, VA**, completed a new parsonage for Pastor and Mrs. **Lester Horton**. The pastor and his wife moved into the new home in November. A combination dedication/household shower was conducted on November 20.

Members at **Winfield FWB Church, Winfield, AL**, began "Operation Doorbell" in January with a three-month goal of making 500 contacts in January, 750 contacts in February, and 1,000 contacts in March. **Bud Hill** pastors.

This is somewhat belated, however the news is worthy of attention—**Victory FWB Church, Jackson, TN**, welcomed a special speaker one Wednesday evening. He was **Bob Ross** of Pasadena, TX, the man responsible for reprinting Charles Spurgeon's original sermon series *The Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit*. **Vernon Long** pastors.

Pastor **Joe Grimmett** of **First FWB Church, Tucson, AZ**, has baptized 11 since his arrival as pastor last summer. The church continues to increase in attendance with a steady growth.

The 9th annual **Ohio Ministers' Retreat** met February 1-3 at **Big Prairie, OH**. Ohio Pastor **Hobart Ashby** and FWB Executive Secretary **Melvin Worthington** addressed the ministers during the three-day conference.

First FWB Church, Moore, OK, voted to raise \$1,000 toward the construction of the State Executive Office Building which is to be located on the Hillsdale Free Will Baptist College campus. **Dan Farmer** pastors.

Seven Free Will Baptist churches in North Central Arkansas organized a new quarterly meeting last fall. All seven churches were members of the Old Mt. Zion Association and will continue operation as a quarterly meeting of the association. The seven churches are: Berryville, Eureka Springs, Green Forest, Harrison, Oak Grove, Pleasant Valley, and White Oak. **Harvey Butler** was elected as moderator.

The **Mt. Calvary FWB Church, Conway, AR**, reported its highest attendance in its five-year history on October 21, 1982, when 233 attended Sunday morning. City officials were present and were honored with plaques of appreciation. The bus ministry reported a high day of 75. Pastor **Mike Mutchler** said, "This month marked our second year in our new building and we were thrilled to exceed our goal of 200."

The **First FWB Church of Sikeston, MO**, announced a one-year increase of 179 percent in Sunday School according to Pastor **Wayne Hale**. First Church is a new work in the Sikeston area, and Pastor Hale concluded, "This shows there is a church which cares about the community. It shows that the church is here to stay and will not give up in the face of adversity." Rev. Hale completed one year as pastor at First Church in November 1982.

Pastor **Luther Sanders** was the recipient of a Pastor Appreciation Day at **Garner FWB Church, Garner, NC**. The occasion included a dinner in honor of the pastor and his wife, and a gift of \$141 from the various Sunday School departments and auxiliaries of the church.

White Oaks FWB Church, Macon, GA, observed its first annual College Day on December 5, 1982 according to Pastor **Billy Sharpston**. The church had set a goal of \$1,000 prior to the service. Guest speaker **Stanley Outlaw**, a professor at FWBBC, was informed that the College Day gifts totaled more than \$2,200!

Officer **Harry Larsen** received the Award of Merit from the *Orlando, Florida* Police Department. Officer Larsen was working an off-duty job in uniform when he responded to a fight between three bikers and an occupant of a sedan. He prevented serious injury to the innocent victim and also managed to save the lives of the attackers by his calm, professional manner. Officer Larsen moved to Florida from **Rocky Mount, NC**, where he was a member of the **Rocky Mount FWB Church** where **Glenn Hill** pastors.

However, on the other side of the ledger, thieves broke into the parsonage at **Spencer Road FWB Church, Spencer, OK**, and hauled off numerous items which belonged to Pastor **Waldo Young** and his family.

Fall **Welcome Days** at Free Will Baptist Bible College, Nashville, TN, attracted 188 visitors from 46 churches in 14 states, according to Registrar **Charles Hampton**. The biannual event was conducted December 2-4. Spring Welcome Days are scheduled for April 7-9.

The High Teen Class at **First FWB Church, McMinnville, TN**, led by Teacher **Edwin Fletcher** were encouraged to give \$100 to the account of Missionary Jerry Pinkerton. According to Pastor **Robert Bryant**, the group not only gave \$100 to the Pinkertons but also surprised the pastor with a \$100 Christmas gift.

Pastor **Tim Eaton** reports 48 new people enrolled in Bible study at **Victory FWB Church, Kansas City, MO**. The Bible study averages 75 in attendance, a 25 percent increase over last year.

The mission work at **Lancaster, CA**, has adopted a name at last, according to Pastor **Ron Young**. The name selected is

Central FWB Church.

The **Concord FWB Church, Concord, CA**, celebrated its 32nd anniversary in November 1982, according to Pastor **Ron Wood**.

Pastor **Cliff Mullins** reports 17 adults converted and added to the membership at **Lompoc FWB Church, Lompoc, CA**.

Sunday School and Church Training Director **Roger C. Reeds** was the principal speaker for dedication services at **Country Side FWB Church, Visalia, CA**, on November 7, 1982. Pastor **James Cox** welcomed a full house of guests and members to the afternoon dedication service. Guests included California Christian College President **John Smith** and California Executive Secretary **Paul Kennedy**.

Some 30 fruit baskets were distributed by the ladies of **Arnold View FWB Church, Creal Springs, IL**, during the Christmas season, according to Pastor **Ivan Ryan**.

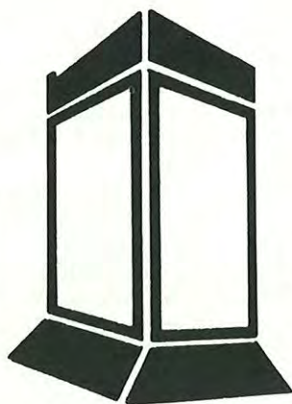
Pastor **Jerry McArthur** reports a first at **First FWB Church, Wichita, KS**. The group celebrated a "Bring Christmas Home" dinner, a time of fellowship and gathering together of friends and family to celebrate the Lord's birthday. Some 66 members and guests attended the special dinner.

Northview FWB Church, Statesville, NC, conducted a special "Grandparents Day," according to Pastor **Fred Curtin Jr.** Pastor Curtin recognized each senior citizen by having them stand before the church and give the congregation opportunity to express appreciation for years of service to the Lord and the local church.

The **West Calvary FWB Church, Smithfield, NC**, conducted a homecoming and bond burning ceremony on October 17, 1982, according to Pastor **Sam Truett**. The occasion helped commemorate the paying of all indebtedness on the new sanctuary which was constructed in 1979 at a cost of \$80,000.

Pastor **W. H. Calvert** celebrated 20 years at **First FWB Church, Gastonia, NC**, in December. Members were not satisfied to just say thank you to Pastor Calvert for his 20 years—they presented him with the keys to a new Mercury Marquis. Well done, First Church!

And this last one is for all those readers who can't memorize scripture—Deacon **Don Wilson** of **Sherwood Forest FWB Church, El Sobrante, CA**, quoted the Sermon on the Mount (in case you forgot, that means Matthew chapters 5, 6, 7) during the Sunday evening service on November 28. **Milburn Wilson** pastors. ▲



The Free Will Baptist Pulpit

Fred D. Hanson, Pastor

Upper Brighton Free Will Baptist Church, New Brunswick, Canada

The Farmer And The Four Fields

Scripture: Mark 4:1-20

INTRODUCTION

Usually regarded as the parable of the sower and the seed, this discourse might more readily be referred to as the story of the soils.

Deep spiritual truth emerges here as we focus on the soil's condition, comparison, and content. Fields and yields are of paramount importance and indicative of spiritual productivity.

We know by experience and observation there is a natural law of sowing and reaping. This, however, is not only an agricultural law, but most importantly, a law of spiritual life.

I. The SOWER (Mark 4:3)

- A. COMMITTED to the job.
- B. CONFIDENT in harvest laws.
- C. CONSISTENT in labor.
- D. COMPASSIONATE in attitude.

II. The SEED (Mark 4:14)

- A. CERTIFIED. The Word of God is always "good" seed.
- B. CAST. "Is the seed yet in the barn?"
- C. COVERED. The Word, given by witness, example, or teaching, may be hidden in the heart and later take root.
- D. CULTIVATED. We "break up the fallow ground" (Jer. 4:3) and by prayer and service we stimulate and encourage growth.

III. The SOILS. A variety of actions and qualities characterized the fields.

- A. SATAN STOLE the seed. He is the biggest "thief" in town. The soil was impenetrable.
- B. SELF STARVED the seed. This plot was stony and shallow, with a limited amount of top soil to receive the seed. The soil was superficial.
- C. SOCIETY STRANGLED the seed. This field may have been excellent in quality, but it was infested with weeds and thorns. The soil was preoccupied.
- D. SPIRIT SUSTAINED the seed. Plowing and fertilizing have readied the soil. The ground is impregnated, cultivated, and eventually joyfully and thankfully harvested. The soil was prepared.

CONCLUSION

Mark may be short on discourses and teachings, but he is long on action and service. Among the lessons to be learned are:

- 1. Harvest time shall come.
- 2. Much comes from little.
- 3. Fruitfulness comes through death (John 12:24).
- 4. Like comes from like (Galatians 6:7).
- 5. When we cease to grow, we begin to die.
- 6. The increase is most valuable when ripe, mature.
- 7. The tares and wheat all grow together.
- 8. Harvesting doesn't alter the product's character.
- 9. Harvest is followed by judgment.

In light of Mark 4:1-20 and Galatians 5:22-23, are you a Fearful, Fretful, Frightful, or Fruitful Christian?



Green Tree Bible Study

Robert E. Picirilli

John 17:20-26



Jesus' Prayer for the Church to Come

The last section of Jesus' great high priestly prayer, verses 20-26, is a prayer for the whole body of the disciples, present and future. Jesus was not content just to pray for those who heard Him on that original occasion. He broadened the prayer to incorporate all who would afterward believe through the original disciples' word: and that includes you and me. Jesus prayed for us.

Three petitions He prayed for the church of the entire new Testament age.

The first is, *that they may all be one* (vv. 20-23). This unity was obviously heavy on Jesus' heart. It has already been mentioned, in the previous section, in verse 11. Now Jesus returns to that petition for emphasis, saying it twice in verse 21, once in verse 22, and again in verse 23.

The *standard* for this oneness is expressed in verse 21 as the unity of the Father and the Son. In one sense, of course, the church's unity can never be exactly that, but in using this standard Jesus does not leave us free to talk

of a light or inconsequential oneness.

The *means* of this oneness is also seen in verse 21: "one in us." Our relationship to one another is a manifestation of our relationship to God. Note also verse 23: "I in them, and thou in me."

The *purpose* of this oneness is clear, too: "that the world may believe that thou hast sent me" (v. 21; also v. 23). Christian unity is a testimony to the world of the identity and power of Jesus Christ, as well as of God's love (v. 23).

The *glory* of this oneness is the point of verse 22. Glory (Greek, *doxa*) is a key word in this whole prayer: the Father's glory, the Son's glory, and ultimately the church's. The word means "honor": Christians are honored by being made one to reflect the glory, work, and love of God.

The second petition is, *that they may be with Christ where He is* (v. 24). Throughout the gospel of John, one of the themes is that Jesus was sent from God into the world and was going to go back to His Father. Now Jesus prays that His disciples will ultimately be with Him where He is in

glory and see His glory as beloved of the Father.

And that implies that the church, *seeing His glory and being with Him, will share in His glory* (v. 22, again)!

The third, and final, petition is, *that the love which the Father loved Him with may also be in them* (vv. 25, 26). That Jesus was loved by the Father (vv. 23, 26) is at least part of what is meant by the glory He had with the Father (v. 5). Thus, too, with us: we are glorified in being made objects of His love, and this is the greatest honor we can ever have.

That comes to pass only by Christ's being in us (v. 26); in ourselves, we could never be effectively loved by God. And underlying this is the truth that in Christ's work—by manifesting the Father's name/character and love—we have been made God's children, one in His family. ▲



ON LITTLE LANES

BY DONNA MAYO

A LOVE LETTER

Saturday morning at the Lane house always meant two things—pancakes and chores. Mrs. Lane placed the last stack of pancakes on the table and sat down with her family. “What’s on the agenda today, Honey?” asked Mr. Lane.

“I thought Megan and I would clean out the attic. Maybe we can find some things to donate to the bazaar at the Christian school,” she answered.

Marty chuckled, “Sounds like you’re going to have a fun time, Megan.”

“Oh, hush,” Megan answered. “You’re going to have to work too.”

“That’s right, Son,” said Mr. Lane. “I thought we menfolk would get started on the yard. Jeff, you can help pick up trash, sticks, and rocks and move them out of the way of the lawn mower. Marty can start mowing, and I’ll do the trimming.”

“Goody!” squealed three-year-old Jeff. “I wanna help.”

“Now that’s what I like to see,” smiled Mr. Lane, “a cheerful worker.”

Mrs. Lane looked at the twins and said, “You two could learn a lesson from your little brother.”

“Mom, we really don’t mind helping,” answered Megan.

“No,” added Marty, “but let’s get started so we can finish up in time for a little softball this afternoon.”

Mr. Lane and the boys headed outside while Mrs. Lane and Megan

climbed up the folding stairs to the attic. “Megan, why don’t you start going through those boxes,” said Mrs. Lane as she pointed to a stack of boxes containing old toys of Marty’s and Megan’s. “Anything that you don’t want we’ll box up for the bazaar.”

Megan began sorting toys while Mrs. Lane went through an old trunk. “Oh, look, Megan, can you believe you were that small?” she asked, holding up one of Megan’s baby dresses.

“That’s so cute,” shrieked Megan. “Did I really wear that?” she asked, joining her mother at the trunk.

“You certainly did,” answered Mrs. Lane. “And look, Marty had this little outfit to match.” Megan plunged into the trunk, and Mrs. Lane enjoyed recalling when each small outfit was worn.

“What’s this?” asked Megan, pulling out a bundle of envelopes tied with a faded blue satin ribbon.

“Oh, Honey, those are my love letters,” gasped Mrs. Lane as she took the bundle and eagerly began untying the ribbon. “I didn’t know they were in there.”

“Love letters?” questioned Megan. “Who from?”

“Your dad, of course,” answered Mrs. Lane. “Right after we were married your dad was sent to the war in Vietnam. I wrote him every day, and these are the letters he sent me. It was hard being apart—we had only been married three weeks when he left—but our letters kept us in touch and made things easier.”

“Oh, that’s sweet,” replied Megan wistfully. “I hope somebody writes me love letters some day. And just think,” said Megan eyeing the unusual stamp on the top letter, “these came from half way around the world.”

“In a way you’ve already received a love letter,” said Mrs. Lane mysteriously. “And from a lot farther away than Vietnam.”

“What are you talking about?” questioned Megan.

“I’m talking about the Bible,” replied Mrs. Lane as she drew a large family Bible from the box. “It’s a love letter all the way from heaven from God to man. From God to you.”

“I never really thought of the Bible as a love letter before,” said Megan with a trace of doubt in her voice.

“Oh, but it surely is,” added Mrs. Lane. “As much as your dad and I loved each other and tried to express it in these letters, they can’t compare with the love in the Bible. The greatest love story of all is God’s love for men. That’s what the Bible is all about—the love of God that sent His only Son to die for our sins.”

“Yeah,” agreed Megan, “that’s really love.”

“Sometimes,” continued Mrs. Lane, “I wondered if my letters would ever reach your dad so far away, but they always did. Even though we were thousands of miles apart we each knew what the other was doing and thinking because of the postal system.”

“That’s almost like a miracle when you stop and think about it,” answered Megan.

"Yes," agreed Mrs. Lane, "but the real miracle is that the Bible has reached us. Did you know that it took about 1600 years for 40 different men to write the Bible?"

"Wow," replied Megan, "that's a long time and a lot of writers for one book."

"But remember, there is just one author," added Mrs. Lane, "and that's God. He inspired each man with His special message, and it is all found right here in one book."

"Now that's a miracle," declared Megan.

"Oh, I remember how I used to long for the mailman to come and how excited I would be to receive a letter from your dad. I'd tear open the envelope and read it before I even got back to the house. Then I would reread it again and again to make sure I hadn't missed anything."

"You know," added Mrs. Lane seriously, "that's the way Christians ought to treat the Bible. But too often we leave our Bible on the shelf to collect dust. I would have never done that with one of my love letters."

Megan thought of the times when she knew she should have read her Bible but didn't. She felt a little guilty. "But I'll do better," she said to herself. "I didn't realize how special the Bible really is."

"Mom," Megan said aloud, "why did you keep all these letters for so long?"

"Well, Honey, I really can't explain it. They just meant so very much to me. Since I couldn't have your daddy here, they were the next best thing. It was like having a part of him here until he came home. And after he came home I couldn't bear to part with them. I treasured them too much."

"That's like the Bible too," concluded Megan. "We ought to treasure it."

"You're right. We ought to love God's Word," said Mrs. Lane. "And we should read it and reread it until He comes to take us home with Him. Just like a letter, the Bible keeps us in touch and makes things easier until that Day comes."

"Hey, Mom, I know one more way that your love letters and the Bible are alike," said Megan with a grin.

"How's that?" asked Mrs. Lane.

"You hide them," Megan answered. "You hid your letters up here in the attic—"

"But your aren't supposed to hide your Bible, Megan," interrupted Mrs. Lane thinking her daughter had missed the whole point of the discussion.

"Oh yes you are," replied Megan. "

'Thy word have I hid in my heart.'"

Mrs. Lane shook her head and groaned. "I think we better get back to work."

Megan giggled as she approached the boxes of toys with a new zeal and determination to read her "love letter."▲

Building True Fellowship

By Floyd Wolfenbarger

Every person in the congregation has a vital role in the ministry of true fellowship. The early church grew by combining the proclamation of the truth with the fellowship of the saints. That program still works today.

The need is for us to rediscover the fellowship of the saints. We have no problem as a denomination proclaiming the truth. The Word of God is our rule of faith and practice. There is no doubt about that.

However, modes of fellowship change as society changes. In the early years of our American heritage, fellowship was linked to survival. If a man didn't get help from neighbors, he might starve on the frontier. He in turn owed an unwritten debt to help his neighbors.

Times have changed. Gone are the days of barn raisings and all-night wakes. The agricultural engineer and the mortuary scientist have replaced the friend-in-need, friend-indeed.

Someone invented the word convenience and poisoned our interdependence. It's more convenient to buy

advertising than invite someone personally.

It's more convenient to hire a preacher to be a professional hand-shaker than to take the time to welcome visitors and risk burning the roast we have prepared exclusively for our family.

As a result, few visitors see anything but "Christianity on parade." Folks need to see Christianity lived out in our homes and at play.

We shouldn't confine fellowship to periods of time around church. Do fewer things alone. Take someone with you fishing or hunting.

For a cookout, invite another family. If you can't afford the extra steaks or hot dogs, tell them to bring their own. You can at least share the charcoal. Teach a friend to cross-stitch or macramé. It does not have to be devotional to be fellowship.

Every town needs a friendly church where folks find it easy to make friends. Why can't it be yours?▲

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

CONVENTION HOTELS

Look for Reservation Form in April CONTACT!



OUR READERS COMMENT

MISLED SHOULD MOVE ON

There is no such thing as an undenominational church.

If you speak in tongues, you can classify yourself in that group.

If you practice sprinkling, you identify with the Methodists.

If you believe in eternal security, you are of the Calvinistic persuasion.

So why bring division and split the church by trying to force your beliefs on our denomination? Nowhere in Free Will Baptist history (creed, covenant, treatise, etc.) has the tongues doctrine been taught.

By one Spirit we're baptized into the Body of Christ (I Corinthians 12:12, 13). Until this happens, one is not even a Christian. It's the individual who has the Son who also has life (John 5:12).

Some claim that a person gets saved, then later goes back to get the Holy Ghost, then speaks in tongues. However, I Corinthians 14:10 teaches that there are many voices (languages) in the world and that none of them is without signification. They will speak Chinese, Japanese, Spanish, etc. (By the way, in this same chapter on the tongues issue, the women are told to keep silence in the churches. See v. 34.)

Acts 18 and 19 tell of Apollos who was mighty in the Old Testament scriptures, but he only knew the baptism of John. After the crucifixion, resurrection, and ascension of Jesus, the Holy Spirit came to indwell believers. Apollos and the other believers had to be baptized by the Holy Spirit into the Body of Christ.

Now the Holy Spirit convicts us, regenerates us, baptizes us into the Body of Christ, and indwells us the moment of conversion.

Reverend Elmer Keener, Pastor
Victory Free Will Baptist Church
Canton, North Carolina

The article entitled "Accept One Another" in the November 1982 issue is another indication of the direction that many Free Will Baptists are beginning to take concerning issues of separation and standards of Christian conduct.

I realize that some churches and pastors have standards that others do not agree with completely. However, it seems that the writer and proponents of the article in question would accept those who have low, if any, standards, but refuse to accept those who have high standards.

In the article one paragraph mentions an unidentified Bible-preaching pastor and his pastoral preference for short hair on men and his church's standards for membership. It is evident that the writer who is exhorting us to accept one another does not accept this dear brother.

Although the pastor is unidentified, I dare say he probably is pastor of one of the larger and more fundamental churches in America. Thus,

in reality, the writer of the article is saying "if you are as modernistic or more so than I, then I will accept you."

I, for one, would rather have a pastor who dictates "World War II hair styles" and wins souls for Christ than to have a pastor who hobnobs with the world and lets souls die and go to Hell.

What bothers me is not the mention of the unidentified pastor, but the fact that our leaders would publish such an article that can only result in greater division among Free Will Baptists.

If we are truly seeking unity in our ranks, let us return to the Free Will Baptist Covenant that we all agreed to keep when we became a part of this great denomination.

Reverend James Avery, Pastor
Faith Free Will Baptist Church
Cary, North Carolina

PASTOR PRAISES WRITER'S SPUNK

Joyce Watson's letter to the editor, published in the January issue of CONTACT, under the title "Spirit of Articles Wrong", said it. She said it like it was, is and shall be among caring, committed, conscious Free Will Baptists.

Not many would be willing to gird up their intestinal fortitude and attack the "too bitter" or the "too sweet" of articles covered by Watson. Even though that is true, all with whom this writer has talked, agree that "the spirit" was wrong. They applaud Joyce for having the ability to write so clearly about the "bitter-sweet" of articles that show bias.

Prima donnas have no place in the parsonage, pew or parish. First Ladies are in the White House not Free Will Baptist churches. My nearly 40 years in the ministry have not revealed planned mistreatment of the pastor's wife.

More congregations have come under the wrath of the discontented "parsonage boss" than vice versa. Women expecting a "kind of worship" from the pastor's flock should examine their real purpose in the work.

Since God called a man's wife "helpmeet", every wife should learn biblically the true meaning. Some have interpreted that word to mean "helpmate", and that gives a false view of the wife's position.

All have heard "that for every good pastor there's a good wife behind him." That may be generally true, but is not necessarily so in every

instance. Among Free Will Baptists there are preachers who must carry on their ministry with "untoward" or "outright against" wives.

If a woman in the parsonage will keep her husband happy and ready to perform his pastoral duties, she should be content. She should share in his honor and successes but not seek singular honor.

One thing that has contributed to the mistaken view of some preacher's wives is the ill-thought statement, "Rev. and Mrs. Whohaveyou" are pastors at First Church in Podunk. A wife of the pastor is not a co-pastor in a Free Will Baptist Church. Such an expression should never be voiced. Pastors' wives have an honored position according to God's Word. To live within the biblical framework is to be richly rewarded.

Let there be no "hags, bags or brags" in the parsonage. Possibly, the aforesaid should be taken one step further in each case. Let there be no hags in the parsonage. No bags in the pew. No brags in the parish.

If a pastor's wife neglects her looks, sits unmoved in the service, and boasts among the parishioners, she can expect to be treated accordingly in all three areas.

Dr. Wade Jernigan, Pastor
Way of the Cross Free Will Baptist Church
Sallisaw, Oklahoma

READER LIKES 'IDEA BOOK' IMAGE

Several years ago, I completed a questionnaire concerning what articles I read in CONTACT Magazine. My answer was the entire magazine.

This still holds true even though many changes have been made over the years. Such changes can be found in the recent issue of which I consider an "Idea" book much like the family magazines that come into my home.

Such articles as, "What the Church can do at Christmas" and "Your Church and the Handi-

capped Community," are good examples of the idea image.

I also noticed that your readers comment with some ideas as to what you can do with your magazine. So, while others are giving their advice, I have some advice for those who disagree concerning the Free Will Baptist stand on modern day tongues.

I advise them to unite with those whom they are in agreement. We are accused of leaving out part of the Bible, when the truth is, that they are

adding to it with such terms as, "Slay in the Spirit," which has no Bible basis.

I appreciate CONTACT more today than I did in the past, and I recommend this Christian magazine to every Free Will Baptist home. The local church needs good ideas to reach their communities for Christ and to train its members in His way. Keep the ideas coming our way.

Mr. Ken Cade
Anderson, Indiana



THE SECRETARY SPEAKS

The Missions Mandate



By Melvin Worthington

Missionary zeal is lagging in many churches. One might expect minimal missionary interest among groups who do not believe the whole Bible, but when those who call themselves *Fundamentalists* downplay Christ's commission, we face a serious problem.

The missionary enterprise is not elective but essential, not optional but an obligation. Any claim to obedience which does not manifest itself in compliance with Christ's commission is a shaky transaction at best.

According to L. E. Maxwell, "The whole Bible, read aright, is a missionary book. Bible teaching, expounded aright, begets missionary going and missionary giving. The gospel message, proclaimed aright, produces outreach among all nations."

The Truth Asserted

Jesus left no doubt what He had in mind when he announced, "All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth." Power means authority.

The Scope of Christ's authority encompasses all that is heaven and in earth. His power is complete and His claim is universal.

The Source of Christ's authority is in the counsels of the eternal Trinity where Jesus, as Son of man, is appointed heir of all things—that He is the mediator between God and men, that the salvation of all who are saved is laid upon Him, and that He is the great fountain of mercy, grace, life, and peace.

The Sufficiency of Christ's power to redeem His people, gather His Church,

and defend His chosen is the encouragement needed by those engaged in the missionary enterprise.

The Task Assigned

Christ sets forth the task in which His followers are to be engaged.

The task assigned begins with *Evangelism*. All men must hear the gospel. Bishop Ryle was correct when he thundered, "It may be well questioned whether a man knows the value of the gospel himself, if he does not desire to make it known to all the world."

Caution should be exercised lest we get distracted from our assigned responsibility—to evangelize the world. Our main business must be proclaiming the gospel, telling the world that there is a balm in Gilead.

Few men have understood this truth more clearly than Joseph Parker, "Christianity starts men upon no little errands. Christianity has no merely short journeys for its propagandists to undertake. Every journey is a long one. There is no stopping place for Christian evangelists until the knowledge of the Lord spreads itself over the globe."

The task assigned continues in *Education*. Those who have been evangelized must be instructed and taught to observe all the commandments of Christ.

The Christian instructor has still fallen short of his task unless those he instructs learn what Christ's commandments are and learn to observe them.

The task assigned concludes in *Edification*. Those who have been evangelized and educated must grow in the grace and knowledge of Christ.

The Tender Assurance

The missions mandate not only includes the power and the program of Christ, but also the presence of Christ. Having announced His power and assigned His personnel, Christ then assures them of His presence.

He tenderly reminds them, "Lo, I am with you alway." There is no vagueness; it is a solid fact. By His spirit, His providence, His counsel and guidance, He would accompany them as they fulfilled the commission He assigned. He would strengthen, direct, and assist them in the work.

The tender assurance includes *The Promise*—"I am with you". This denotes certainty and is the speech of the One who is highly exalted. It covers all the dimensions of time from was, to is, to will be.

The tender assurance includes the *Presence*. More comforting words could not be given than, "I am with you." Though left alone like orphan children in a cold, unkind world, the disciples must not feel deserted, for their Master was with them. We must ever be mindful that Christ is with us.

We are unfaithful ambassadors if we fail to respond to Christ's commission while allowing those around the world to perish in their sins unwarned and never knowing the way of life.

What will you do about the missions mandate? ▲

The Secretary's Schedule

- March 7-10** Bible Conference, FWBBC, Nashville, TN
- March 12** Arizona State Association, First FWB Church, Phoenix, AZ
- March 13-18** Heritage FWB Church, Fredricksburg, VA
- March 21-27** First FWB Church, Farmington, MO

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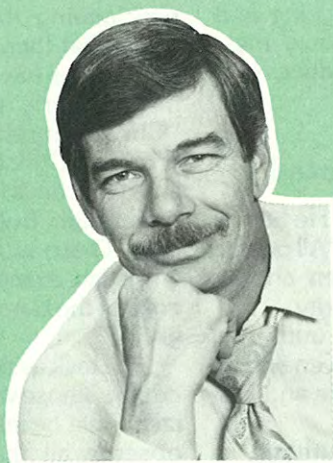
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