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Contact

OFFICIAL PUBLICATION OF THE NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF FREE WILL BAPTISTS

The Bride and The Bayonet



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The Tiff Covington Chronicle

By Thurmon Murphy

One of the best known men in North Central Texas is a Free Will Baptist preacher—Tiff Covington. He has, in fact, been called “a real living legend.” The appellation is well deserved.

Few are the ministers of any denomination who have been so widely known, touched the lives of so many people and ministered for so many years as Tiff Covington.

Tiff was 13 when he and his family arrived in Henrietta, Texas, on September 3, 1908, after a three-day trip by train from Panola, Kentucky. The family moved west due to his father's health and because they thought there would be greater economic opportunity. They settled in the Buffalo Springs community and worked the fields on the rolling prairies.

In August of 1916 Brother J. W. Schultz preached a revival at the Pleasant Valley Church, about three miles south of Buffalo Springs. Tiff came in from the harvest fields and attended the meeting which had two services a day, morning and evening. He went to the altar to pray several times during the course of the meeting.

Finally, on Saturday morning he prayed at the altar, “Lord, you can let me go and let me go to hell, or you can save me.” That was when he

surrendered to the Lord and was saved.

The revival meeting changed Tiff's life in more ways than one. The man who had preached the revival, J. W. Schultz, had a daughter named Carrye Dell. Tiff and Carrye began dating and were married on July 29, 1917, less than a month before Tiff's 23rd birthday. Their first home was a 10' x 12' tent with a dirt floor. Their furnishings consisted of a bed, cookstove, cabinet and a trunk.

From the time of his conversion he took an active part in church. He served several years as a deacon but felt there was more he should be doing for the Lord. He sensed that God was calling him into the ministry.

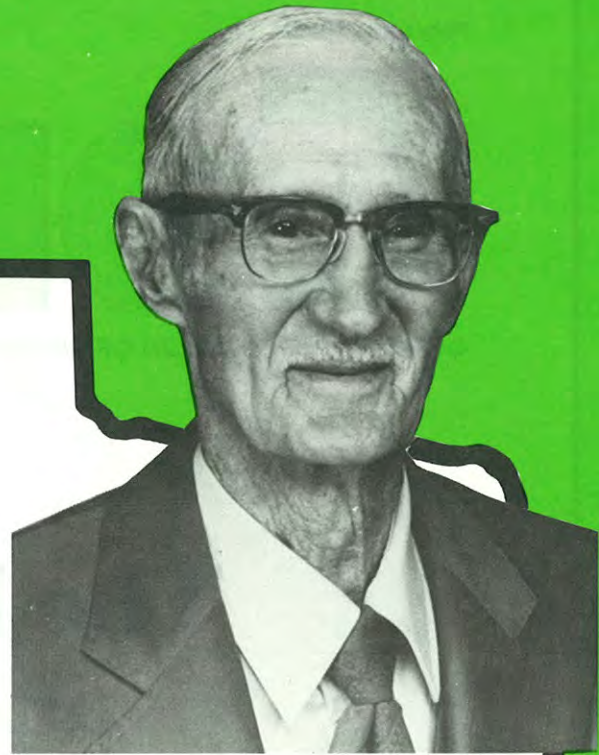
One day when he was recovering from tuberculosis he opened his

Bible, laid it on the bed, laid his face in the open Bible and said, “Lord, I'll do it. I'll preach Your Word as long as I live.”

Tiff was 33 when he preached his first sermon at a quarterly meeting which met at New Salem FWB Church three miles south of Decatur. His first text was, “What shall I do then with Jesus which is called the Christ?” (Matthew 27:22).

As he preached the sermon he was extremely nervous. His body trembled, his knees shook and he held onto the pulpit with both hands. It wasn't that he feared the people; he was afraid that he would fail God.

That afternoon the deacons of the New Salem Church called him aside and asked him to pastor the church. He told them that he couldn't do it, that when they had



seen him preach that morning they had seen all the experience he had as a minister. But the deacons prevailed. The church called him as pastor and he accepted.

One unusual thing about Tiff Covington's ministry is that his almost 60 years were spent entirely in the West Fork Association. He pastored four churches—New Salem FWB Church near Decatur, First FWB Church in Bowie, First FWB Church in Wichita Falls, and Pleasant Mound FWB Church in Buffalo Springs.

Always a fervent soul winner, Brother Tiff led a great many people to the Lord in his pastoral ministry and in evangelistic meetings. In 1936 there was an outstanding revival meeting conducted in Buffalo Springs. M. L. Sutton began the meeting and preached for two weeks.

Then for one week Tiff and a Methodist minister continued the meeting, taking turns preaching morning and evening. Tiff finished out the meeting by himself. The revival lasted 31 days with 82 conversions and rededications.

Another notable revival meeting occurred in Buffalo Springs when Tiff and John Brooks, Sr. preached under a brush arbor which had been built in a pasture. There were 66 conversions during the meeting and Tiff baptized 49 of the converts in a stock tank.

Perhaps Tiff's greatest claim to fame is his funeral ministry. He preached thousands of funerals, most of them in a four county area in North Central Texas. One February he conducted 14 funerals in the 28 days.

On one of those days he preached a funeral in the morning in a nearby city, another in the afternoon in the same city, but burial in another town. That evening he drove 80 miles to conduct a revival meeting in which he was preaching. At the time he was 77 years old!

Brother Tiff retired from the pastorate in May of 1980, shortly before his 85th birthday. He continued an active ministry until 1984 when his 89 years and a series of physical problems made it necessary for him to reside

in a nursing home in Wichita Falls. Though his body was frail and weak, his mind was amazingly sharp and he maintained his wit and humor.

The effect of Brother Tiff's ministry will be fully known only when God balances His books in eternity. But many of the results of his long, faithful ministry are visible. He comforted thousands through his funeral ministry. He united hundreds of couples in marriage. He won many to Christ through his soul winning efforts. Several men entered the ministry under him, including H. Z. Cox who has pastored Dallas' First FWB Church for nearly 40 years.

Brother Tiff only had a seventh grade education. But by faithful study and experience he prepared himself for a thorough ministry of the Word. When he preached he showed acquaintance with profound theological concepts and revealed a comprehensive knowledge of scripture. He advised young ministers, "Get all the education you can get, and then ask God to give you the wisdom to use it."

Tiff was honored on many occasions. The West Fork Association honored him when he completed 50 years of ministry in the association. That same association plans to build a new dining hall-lodge facility at their associational youth camp and name it "Covington Hall" in his honor. Several newspapers and magazines have carried feature articles about his life and ministry. He was, in fact, "a real living legend."



ABOUT THE WRITER: Reverend Thurmon Murphy pastors First Free Will Baptist Church, Wichita Falls, Texas.

EDITOR'S NOTE: As God in His providence would have it, on the morning this manuscript arrived in the office, Thurmon

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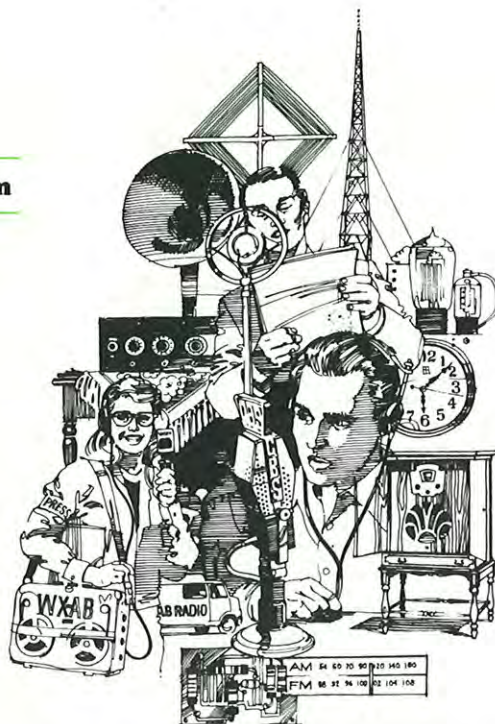
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Move That Molehill!



By Steven R. Hasty

On impulse I drove from the four-lane highway into the parking lot of radio station WGKR in Perry, Florida. "This is foreign territory," I thought apprehensively. Planning to stay just a minute, I walked into the office and was greeted by a secretary.

I asked for a pricing schedule and program guide, assuming if that wasn't correct terminology she would know what I meant. She referred me to the station owner. Hmmm. Two simple questions, and now I was going to meet the owner. Weren't things getting a little out of hand?

Not at all. This was a routine Monday with the owner-manager replacing the crew on their day off. My apprehension vanished like morning mist. One minor difficulty confronted me, however. What do you talk about with a radio manager when you know nothing about radio?

As it turned out, one disc-jockey was my next door neighbor and another who formerly worked at the station was a member of our church. So, interspersed with knobs and switches, commercials and country music, news and notes about community events, I learned a little about radio and rates.

But that wasn't all. The owner-manager delivered his home-run pitch.

Would our church be interested in a prime-time Sunday morning half-hour slot that had just come open?

The 8:30 to 9:00 o'clock time was ideal so I told him about the Free Will Baptist weekly national program, "Victorious Faith." He was interested and even more so after he listened to the high-quality pilot program I had picked up at the National Convention last summer.

The door of opportunity stood wide open. What I considered a future possibility was an immediate reality. Questions began to fill my mind. Was it God's will? Could we—would we—take advantage of the occasion?

I was convinced of two things; first, that for every opportunity, God provides enablement; second, that God provides showers of opportunities rather than an occasional sprinkle.

Yet, instead of recognizing the deluge all around us, we usually hold up thimble-sized rain gauges, catch a few drops and shout, "Look what God did!" Indeed. But how much more would He like to do?

Our church financial committee met and decided to fund the initial one-time \$39 deposit to the Radio and Television Commission (this is refunded whenever the church ceases participating). We distributed cassette copies to church members who promised to listen to it.

A week later we challenged them to help fund the air time over and above their regular giving at \$5 per person each week until the church could adopt it into the budget. We discussed ways the program would be a blessing to the community as well as benefit the church. The response was both positive and immediate.

Our national radio program began in early 1985 with six radio stations. Couldn't it be 60? Is 600 impossible?

I remember some fatherly advice from childhood. "Son, don't make a mountain out of a molehill."

It's the little things which make a big difference that God wants us to do. However, we must be careful to not let our worried imaginations run away with us, for little tasks can seem like colossal impossibilities.

Molehill moving is our job. Mountains are up to God. ▲

COVINGTON (from page 3)

Murphy called from Texas with the news that Reverend Andrew Tifton "Tiff" Covington had died.

Brother Covington died Saturday, November 3, 1984, at a hospital in Wichita Falls, Texas. The 89-year-old Free Will Baptist minister was survived by four sisters, two daughters, two sons, a step-son, 10 grandchildren, 19 great-grandchildren and many, many friends.

Funeral services were conducted November 5 at Pleasant Mound Free Will Baptist Church south of Buffalo Springs. Rev. Larry Cox, who followed Rev. Covington as pastor of the church, officiated. Honorary pallbearers were the Free Will Baptist ministers of the West Fork District Association.

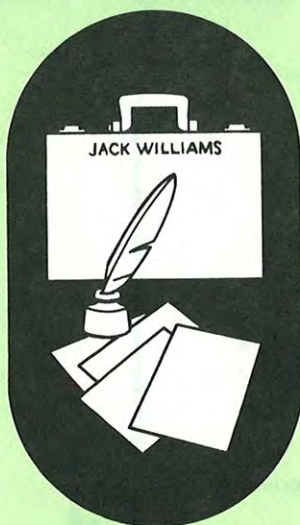
I met Tiff Covington one Sunday morning two years ago when I preached in Wichita Falls. He was 87 then, and he came to First Free Will Baptist Church to worship with us. That was my first and only time to meet a giant who stood just over five feet tall and probably didn't weight 110 pounds.

The only thing small about Tiff Covington was his physical size. He cast a tall shadow across the Texas prairie he loved. When I met him, Tiff was locked in an aging body but he had the flashing eyes of a desert hawk. He influenced men who influenced tens of thousands.

If you want to know who Jesus was talking about when He said, "Whosoever will be great among you, let him be your minister"—He was describing Tiff Covington. ▲

ABOUT THE WRITER: Reverend Steven Hasty pastors St. Johns Free Will Baptist Church, Perry, Florida.

Briefcase



The Case for Church Growth

Growth is not some new idea among our people. We've heard growth talk for years. But we've used so much energy recently fighting among ourselves that we haven't had time to reach out to the lost, the hurting, the hopeless like we could.

Of course God will forgive us. But as we all know, forgiveness for past sins and failures doesn't build one more church or win one more soul to Christ. The forgiven, the ex-failures must get it all together and do the winning and building. It takes more than admitting error to correct it.

The denominational Task Force, composed of one person from each national agency, has worked behind the scenes for two years—praying, surveying, studying, asking hard questions, seeking God's will about church growth.

Later this year, probably in July at the National Convention, we're going to be challenged as a denomination to build at least 100 new churches and increase by 50,000 members in five years.

You're right, that isn't much for a group our size in five years. But it's about 100 percent more than we did the last five years. And that's hard to swallow! Our growth the last five years just about replaced the dead, the transfers and the backslidden in our ranks.

I know we can do better. You know we can do better. It appears that we're all ready to get on with the task of adding citizens to the kingdom.

By the way, don't be offended when we discuss lack of growth. Maybe your church was the exception and doubled

or tripled in the last five years. But most of our churches did not. Those that grew must grow more. Those that held their own or lost members must reverse the process.

Church growth is not a magic potion. To the contrary, local church growth is the normal pattern for God's people. But that doesn't change the fact that there are still plans to be made and promoted, goals to set and attitudes to be baptized. We must encourage one another and avoid unnecessary criticism.

However, rock-bottom church growth means reaching our next door neighbors, the fellow down the street, the check-out clerk at the supermarket—nothing exotic—just plain, simple loving people enough to talk with them about Jesus. World-wide outreach starts with a hand extended across the back fence.

The growing season is well known to the farming community. There's a time to plant, a time to wait, a time to weed, a time to harvest. When you talk about growing, it all runs together.

We've had a long season of weeding and waiting. Finally, we're all looking in the same direction, talking the same talk, singing the same song—it's time to grow again.

God has been gracious to us. God has been patient with us. The door is still open.

When we do what we should, you can be sure that it will be said in our churches, "And the Lord added to the church daily . . ." Let's do it again! Let's start today! ▲

We have a chance to do something as a denomination in 1985 that we haven't done in two decades. For the first time in a long time, we're hearing a grass-roots cry for revival and church growth from every hamlet and village. Our people want to grow.

The most worthy project we could adopt during our jubilee celebration is to start the next 50 years committed to growing churches and winning new converts.

There's a sweet spirit of concern for growth moving through our churches. A lot of good people are disturbed over lack of consistent growth. This growth concern is *not* to glorify the Free Will Baptist movement. Naturally, we're glad to be what we are. But the greater concern is that men everywhere are lost and headed for hell without Jesus.

We can do something about it. We *must* do something about it. And if in the doing, we grow more Free Will Baptist churches, the Lord be praised. In fact, I'm convinced that the best way we can help the lost in Brazil, the hungry in Ethiopia, the unsaved in France is to build new churches and win more converts.



Real Love

By Malcolm Fry

“Seeing ye have purified your souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit unto unfeigned love of the brethren, see that ye love one another with a pure heart fervently” (I Peter 1:22).

This verse could border on perplexity as Peter uses the word “love” twice. The first occurrence seems to be a commendation while the second appears to be a command. There is no pat answer; however, it may be enjoyable to speculate.

February and Valentine’s Day make us reflect on the idea of loving. Loving special things or a special person. So, what is love? If you were asked to define love, how would you respond?

We could agree that love is an abstract word most difficult to define or articulate. But perhaps not as abstract as the fellow who wrote that love is “a feeling you feel when you feel that what you feel is a feeling you never felt before.”

We often use the word with reckless abandon: “I love your dress.” “I love your house.” “I just love this pie.” What a misuse of a beautiful word when we say that we love things.

Love is being understood and understanding. Love is being paid attention to and paying attention. It is holding and being held. It’s taking the initiative and having someone respond by doing the same. In other words,

love is the interaction we purposefully have with each other.

Love for others is not acquired automatically. It’s not easy to become concerned about the welfare of people we do not know. A practicing Christian must develop this sense of love and awareness. It requires a great amount of interaction and intra-action.

How absurd are statements like, “I just love everybody.” “God loves you and so do we.” We cannot love someone until we *know* them. The speaker on a television program doesn’t *know* each and every viewer. No one individual knows “everybody” in the world. How, then, can there be “love” without knowledge? Love has to be acquired!

The Greeks had several words to describe love. The word “Eros” is a conditional type of love. I love you if you will do something for me or because you are something—it is dependent upon some action on your part.

Then there are the words “Philos” and “Agape,” and Peter used both of these words in I Peter 1:22. Peter was not confused when he commended them for loving on the one hand and commanded them to love on the other. The answer is in the word used for love.

The Commendation (Phileo)

The first “love” speaks of a friendly affection, a common-bond type of love.

This mutual attraction results in a mutual love awakened by the sense of pleasure one finds in the company of another. These saints loved each other with a mutual and reciprocal type of love because of the pleasure each had in the other's fellowship. This kind of love is a perfectly proper and legitimate type of love.

However, it does not include the element of self-sacrifice and it could degenerate into something selfish and self-centered. What starts out as a mutual and friendly type of love, could become a selfish and self-centered thing. Consequently, Peter is implying that such a "love" is not enough. It is good, but it is not enough.

He desires something deeper, so he moves from the *Phileo* type of love (the friendly plateau of love) to a much higher plane of the kind of love that God had in giving His only begotten Son not only for the "good", but for the "bad." "... God commendeth (proved) His love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us" (Romans 5:8). That is the "Agape" type of love.

The Command (Agape)

God provides a counter-balance in the second use of the word "love." This is God's love which says, "I love you unconditionally. I love you with no strings attached. I love you, and the rib cage of my life is pulled back, and I am vulnerable and open for hurt, but I love you!"

It is a love which springs from the soul's sense of the value and preciousness of its object, and is the response of the heart to the recognized worth of the object loved. This second kind of love is a love of self-sacrifice based upon the preciousness of the object loved.

A classic example is found in the oft-quoted John 3:16, "For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life."

God exhorts the saints who have the friendly type of love to fuse it with the love of self-sacrifice. Without it, the fellowship of the saints with one another becomes a selfish and unsatisfactory thing. Usefulness to others is the true test of love.

Peter Marshall said, "The measure

of a life is not its DURATION, but its DONATION!" Love grows by active exercise. Prove your love by your actions is what Peter commands.

The Characteristics

The characteristics of this "Agape" type of love are tucked away in this verse 22. First, he says it is "unfeigned." The word "feign" means "hypocrite." Thus, the word "unfeigned" means non-hypocritical. It was the word the Greeks used to mean a mask, as in a drama when an actor would wear a mask to play the part of another person. It was a cover-up and unreal.

Peter says that our love is to be without hypocrisy. At one time these Christians were guilty of feigning love for certain brothers in Christ. They had put a mask of feigned love their usual countenances when associating with certain others of their brethren.

Peter says be for real. Put another's well-being before your own, not because it is pleasant to do it, but because it is right.

Second, Peter says our love is to be "pure." The mutual love of Christians must be pure, arising from such causes as are pure and spiritual, from the sense of our Savior's command and of His example: "A new commandment I give unto you, That ye love one another; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another" (John 13:34). As the Christian's love is pure in its cause, so is it in its effect and exercise.

Third, Peter says our love is to be "fervent." That word conveys the idea of constancy or "love at all times." No change of circumstances, especially to the worse, should affect it except to increase it.

Let your love be an active love, intense within you, and extending itself in doing good to the souls and bodies of your brethren as they need and you are able. Let it be as a fire within, consuming any selfishness which is natural to man but contrary to God's love.

The Cause

The cause of this unfeigned, pure and fervent love, according to Peter, is three-fold. First, by the influence of "the truth." "Sanctify them through Thy truth," the Bible says. The Word's tendency is to purify the heart.

Second, not only is this a result of the influence of the truth, but by the influence of the "Spirit." "Seeing ye have purified your souls in obeying the truth THROUGH THE SPIRIT..." That is how it is possible to love regardless of the circumstances.

Third, by the influence of obedience. "Seeing ye have purified your souls in OBEYING the truth..." We must know the truth and we must also obey the truth. As we obey the truth, we shall be purified by it. Jesus said, "I am... the TRUTH..." (John 14:6); that is how we come to salvation. Then as Christians, we cleanse our way by taking heed to the Word according to Psalm 119:9.

There is no unfeigned love of the brethren but from the purified soul. When they started to obey the Word again, their souls were purified, and they came to have that fondness and affection for their Christian brethren which is the normal condition among saints who are living lives of obedience to God's Word. The love which they showed toward other believers came from the heart. May such be said of us today.

The secret of the fullness of God's divine love is in the fullness of the Holy Spirit. "But the fruit of the spirit is LOVE..." (Galatians 5:22). This is why God exhorts saints who are already loving one another to be loving one another.

What kind of love do you possess and exhibit? That of friendship only? Heed the admonition of the Apostle Peter and rise to the higher plateau of Agape love which is unfeigned, pure and fervent. Love that flows freely from your heart, regardless of what others do or do not do for you or to you. Yea, even love for the unlovely!



ABOUT THE WRITER: Dr. Malcolm C. Fry pastors Unity Free Will Baptist Church, Smithfield, North Carolina.



This article won first place in the 1984 Writers Contest sponsored by Randall House Publications.



The Bride and The Bayonet

By Kathy Tippet Henderson

"Do you take this woman . . ." the Cuban official quoted in a gruff, icy voice.

Bill, in crisp, white Navy uniform nodded slightly. His lanky frame and boyish face masked his near 40 years. "I do," his voice broke. The two green-fatigued militia soldiers, bayonets at their sides, flustered him. Such sights were not uncommon in Guantanamo Bay Naval Base, "Gitmo," during the late 50's.

Blue water lapped at the dock where we stood. This marked "The Line" between Cuba and us. Bill gazed at his Cuban bride, Gabriella Molino, almost his "Gaby" (as we affectionately called her) Burnette now. He glanced at the two marines nearby. Their presence offered some comfort.

"I do," Gaby whispered and smiled at Bill. He remembered that serene smile from their first meeting, when she visited the base chapel on a one-day pass. She and her church school children sang as Bill played the organ. Mesmerized by that smile, he missed a few notes that day.

Pride welled up in Daddy as he watched the nervous groom on the

dock. Bill was like the son he so missed away at college. Bill longed for his family back in America too. Loneliness caused us to linger after church Sunday evenings. In time, our



family flung open its heart, adopted Bill and helped fill both voids.

"I now pronounce you man and wife," the bearded official snapped

brusquely. "Back in boat! Time to go back Caimanera!" he ordered the new bride.

Bill clasped her hand. His knuckles whitened. He mustered his courage for the test. "No, she's my wife now. She stays here."

What if Castro's men try to pull her into the boat? Will our marines resist them? Bill swallowed hard. He felt his knees shake.

A lone gull screeched and pierced the silence. No one flinched.

Finally the Cuban official mumbled in Spanish to his soldiers. Then he commanded them, "Vamanos Caimanera!" The three men climbed into the boat. They never looked back.

"Oh, Beel!" Gaby squealed. She fell into his arms, still smiling.

"Beeeee!" he teased her, in mock soprano. The tension shattered.

He loved her accent. He loved her fair skin, her auburn hair. She adored his comic ways, his silly giggle. Their love for the Lord and music had drawn them together. Two preachers' kids, with masters degrees in music—pieces of a puzzle, bridging two heritages, two countries.

The drab civil ceremony required by Cuba and miraculously granted met the legal requirement. There on the dock, Gaby defected, with only the clothes she wore and her purse. She and Bill scheduled "the real wedding" (church ceremony on base) for two weeks later. That was her dream.

Behind . . . her father, her church and school in Guantanamo City, now run by Communists. But now . . . she belonged to Bill.

Behind . . . her family, her home, her country. But now . . . she tasted freedom.

My Mama could spot beauty in Dismal Swamp. She needed that quality when Uncle Sam stationed Daddy in the Caribbean for a two-year stint.

Gitmo was a land of contrasts. From the dock a crimson sun splashed its colors over the gorgeous ocean, silhouetting Cuban guards beyond the fence that surrounded the base. Life for us was slow-paced, easy, with a speed limit of 25 mph, yet jets, ever on alert, peppered airstrips.

Fresh salt air breezed over us continually, while occasional whiffs of gun powder rose from wargame maneuvers. Everyone shopped at the same—the only—place and basked in the personal peace, while aware of governmental unrest between Cuba and stateside.

News from the U.S. traveled slowly. Radio, TV, newspapers faded from our lives. Castro sometimes cut off our water supply. We lived vaguely expectant, but not in fear.

Gaby moved into our home for the two weeks prior to their church wedding. As a spindly 12-year-old, I claimed her as my model, heroine and ideal.

Bill and Gaby's romance unfolded before my wide eyes. Bill remained in the barracks for the two weeks, although we often found him at our doorstep, toting chocolates and flowers. I helped Gaby gobble the candy, since I barely had "a figure to watch" anyway. I shadowed them. Their need for privacy never crossed my adolescent mind.

Bill teased me in kid-sister fashion. Gaby divulged the secrets of

Christian womanhood to me. Poised on the path to maturity, I gulped down her wisdom.

"Kathy, I'm so happy. I'm in my late thirties. I never dream, since a little girl, I marry and leave Cuba. Then God send me Beel! Never rush God," she advised. She was my



personal Barbie doll long before other girls had one.

Her trained fingers glided over our piano keys while my awkward, bony ones stumbled over scales. Her lyric, soprano voice filled our home with hymns and classical music. My squeaky tones . . . well, never mind.

Bill and Gaby often gave impromptu, four-hand concerts at our keyboard. Gaby had studied in Florida when a missionary teacher from her father's school took her there.

One evening, as she frolicked on the "high end" of our piano, she suddenly pivoted off the bench leaving a startled, two-handed Bill to play alone. She spun around the room and sang her part in "la, la, la's!" Bill's youthful giggle at her never betrayed his bachelor age.

Due to limited shopping, one day I pined out loud, "I sure wish I had a red purse like Gaby's." Everyone on base wore the same blouses and received duplicate birthday cards. Men just smiled at

church when they met their favorite necktie—whatever the latest shipment brought.

Bill's job sometimes meant overnight trips to the states. He returned from one such jaunt and lugged an oversized box into our living room. Oversized—like his heart and sense of humor.

For Gaby, I thought.

"For you," he grinned . . . at me!

I tore into the treasure and found the most beautiful red purse ever made.

"There's more," he grinned.

I dug deeper and ripped tissue paper from a second red pocketbook . . . then a third . . . a fourth . . .

Six red purses dotted our floor. Bill blushed and shrugged, "Couldn't make up my mind."

Every girl in our youth group got a new, red purse. And each one was different! That was our "Beel!"

The wedding day I thought would never arrive finally did.

I wobbled in my blue-dyed spike heels and matching taffeta dress, sent from America. I dobed make-up over my nose, freckled by ceaseless summer, just the way Gaby covered her laugh lines.

Today I was a bridesmaid! My first wedding. Gaby's family was due from Havana. Christian Navy friends began to gather. We waited for her family's call to pick them up at the gate.

An hour before the wedding we left for the chapel. "Don't worry, Gaby," I consoled, "they'll come straight to church. They're just running late."

"Kathy, if they don't make it, will you please be my maid of honor?" she asked in calm resignation.

"Oh, no, Gaby! They *will* be here! They *have* to be here. Your sister will be your matron of honor, just like you dreamed."

A wedding without family? No father to give her away? No mother to cry? No groomsmen to decorate the car?

The clock ticked relentlessly. Whispered tones altered plans, "Just two attendants . . . Kathy and Bill's buddy . . . he'll be best man . . ."



BRIDE (From page 9)

Where are they? What kind of fairy tale ends like this? I thought.

Strains of "The Wedding March" cued us. I held my flowers just so, pasted on a smile and started down the aisle. The front left pews stood ribboned and empty. I cried some tears, choked back others. American friends filled the rest of the church—not a dry eye among them.

The music ushered in Gaby. Her lace gown and fresh flowers faded compared to her smile—that same, serene smile Bill loved.

The joy of the Lord is her strength! No family . . . no home . . . no country . . . yet joy unspeakable.

Blurred by tears, but ever so clearly, we saw bravery on parade that day. Sacrificial joy.

Later at the reception, a phone rang. A shout, "They're at the gate! Your family's here, Gaby!" Three cars raced to meet them.

They poured from the cars in a flurry of staccato Spanish, hugs and kisses. Latin hands gestured in every direction. Someone interpreted, "They've been in jail! The guards at the gate kept them until they knew the wedding was over!"

I searched their faces. There it was again. Serenity . . . smiles . . . on all of them! Perfect peace, long bred.

Gaby's sister handed her a fork and knife, hidden beneath her skirt. Her mother pulled spoons from her blouse. Piece by piece, each family member presented her with her silver. Fragments of a heritage, smuggled from her abandoned hope chest.

Cloth diapers, a scarce luxury to Cubans, were given to Gaby's sister for her new baby. She rubbed them in dirt and wrinkled them into wads. Stuffed into paper bags, as rags, the guards might not confiscate them at the gate.

Sticky icing from the wedding cake clung to my fingers. I licked them clean, taffeta dress and shed spikes forgotten. The lady served more cake and laughed, "Here, Honey, take another piece to put under your pillow tonight. You'll dream of your Prince Charming!"

The Bay of Pigs invasion soon followed. It marked Cuba's first, futile grasp at freedom. Then she rolled over and died in Russian arms.

As tensions mounted, American dependants evacuated Gitmo overnight. Back to the states. Home to freedom.

That was more than 20 years ago. God and love for music led me to my husband also. Our wedding included my father, mother and brothers. I dreamed good dreams, like Gaby. Mine came true in America.

Robert Winthrop, our forefather, said, "Men, in a word, must necessarily be controlled by a power within them or by a power without them; either by the Bible or by the bayonet."

I hope America, with her earthy heartbeat and hunger for freedom, will claim her God-given right to live holy and justly. The Bible or the bayonet—that choice confronts every generation. ▲

ABOUT THE WRITER: Kathy Tippet Henderson is a free-lance writer who resides in Raleigh, North Carolina. She is a member of First Free Will Baptist Church in Raleigh.

Where Am I Leading?

By Floyd Wolfenbarger

Someone once told me, "Pastor, I'm confident that you're God's man and you seem to know what you're doing, but I'm not sure I know where you are leading the church."

At first I asked myself if there was some veiled threat to my leadership and authority. However, I came to see that if I was to truly lead the church, it should be no secret where I am headed. Forced to examine my own direction, I rediscovered an "old map" in Ephesians 4:13 with our goal clearly marked.

I'm leading with a view of *Christian unity* in sight. "Till we all come in the unity of the faith . . ." Paul was wise enough to put this first.

A divided and quarrelsome church can hardly glorify Christ. We must beckon Jew and Gentile, wise and unwise, bond and free, to leave their isolated and selfish lives to become "all one in Christ Jesus".

Further, I'm leading with a view toward *Christian maturity*. "Unto a perfect man . . ." means to be enabled to exercise a *mature faith*. To be able to trust God in the face of suffering is maturity of faith.

It also means a *mature knowledge*. The church is to provide a living and learning encounter with the Word of

God. In commanding folks to put off the old man and live transformed lives we seek to cultivate *maturity of character*.

Finally, I'm leading with a view of *genuine Christ-likeness in our lives*. To send Christians who bear the stamp or image of the Savior out into society is our goal.

What power could be unleashed against the strongholds of Satan in our town if we *really* represented 200 or more "faithful witnesses." To hate sin as He does, to seek out the lost as He does, to make intercession as He does, to love sincerely as He does, that's where we should be heading . . . "unto the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ." ▲



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

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Support for struggling Churches

By Clarence Burton

“Why does our church always seem to struggle just to say alive?” a teenager asked his father. His father replied, “It may be that we have bitten off more than we can chew.”

That may sound a little crude, but could that be the answer? Perhaps not in every situation, but it happens to some churches.

Is it possible for a group of Christians to commit themselves to a full-time work and falter? Or commit themselves to a building program and have problems making the payments? The answer to both of these questions is obvious because we know of real-life situations where this has happened.

A small group of zealous Christians started a mission church in a midwestern town. The enthusiasm was high and their labors met with immediate success. It looked as if it were going to be another phenomenal church.

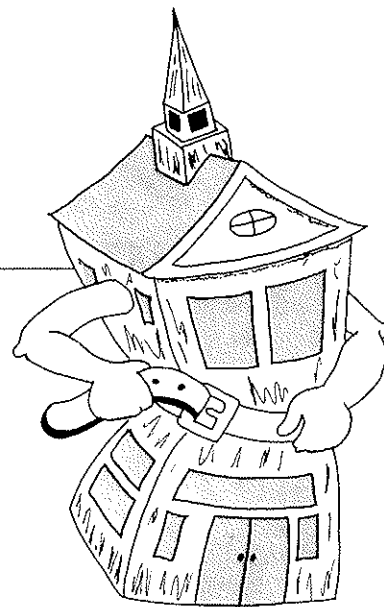
Six months later they organized a church. Some wanted to call a full-time pastor. Others felt it would be wise to continue on a part-time basis. The “full-time” group prevailed and a pastor was called.

Before the year ended, the church lost momentum. They had building program problems; two strong church families transferred to another state because of employment, and trivial things began to cause disunity. This church became a “struggling church.”

Let me cite another example, a church located in a rural community. At one time it was one of the leading churches in the area. Attendance was comparable to other churches in that location. It had a strong youth program. The financial status was compatible with the size of the church.

But, as happens sometimes, the local economy turned. A small business closed, the farm picture changed, and, as a result, several people moved to other areas. This church, that at one time had been a growing church, in a matter of months became a “struggling church.”

What can be done to help the struggling church? Is it possible and feasible for the District Association to help? If so, how, and how much? Or, is it possible and perhaps more feasible for the State Home Missions Board or



the National Home Missions Board to help? Again, how and how much?

The solution may appear simple in some situations. But in others, it may be rather complex. I do not want to amplify the “others”, but I suspect there are more “others” than the easy, simple solutions.

The New Church

Let's look at the first example—the new church. Do the leadership and members of this struggling church want help from the District Association? If so, how much assistance will the church allow the District Association to give? Is it willing to receive financial assistance only?



CHURCH (From page 11)

Suppose the District Association believes there's a leadership problem in the church. Will the church be receptive to this kind of help from the assisting body? The answers to these questions will help with the solution, but they are not easily answered.

Normally, a local church wants to maintain authority to function as it chooses, but the assisting Association may believe it should be allowed some leadership, especially when it supplies financial aid.

In this situation, then, help for the struggling church can be obtained if some kind of appropriate agreement can be worked out between the two groups. If wisdom was used in starting the new work, perhaps the setback is temporary and the church can and will be self-sustaining again.

The Established Church

The second example may have an easier solution. If a church goes from a thriving church to a struggling church because of a change in the economic picture, it would appear this church will need some long-range or extended help.

Three Options

When a church cannot afford the cost of a full-time pastor, it has some options. I will mention three. It can (1) call a minister who has another source of income, (2) call a minister who is semi-retired, or (3) if the church is near a Christian college, it can call a student pastor.

These men have been called to preach, therefore this can be an effective ministry for them and certainly satisfying and rewarding for the church they serve. Did not the Apostle Paul supplement his income when necessary from sources outside the church offerings?

I may leave myself open for some criticism in this regard, but it's absurd to take the position that a minister is not the genuine article unless he's serving a full-time pastorate.

In my first pastorate after graduating from Free Will Baptist Bible College, I taught in a public school and served as pastor of a local church. The church experienced some growth and

I terminated my work at the school. But at the time it was beneficial for me, and I do not think it was detrimental to the church. In fact, it seemed to help establish my labor in the community.

For the church located in a community that has experienced an economic crunch, adjustments can be made in the budget that will allow the church to stay alive and vibrant.

Let me mention three things that will help the struggling church.

Honesty

The leadership of the church should take an honest, genuine, sincere look at itself and the church as a whole. Has it lost its first love? Is it insensitive, indifferent and indolent?

Vance Havener said some churches don't grow because they are "pickled, preserved and petrified". If the church has lost its concern for the lost and its care for the sheep, the only thing that will help is a heaven-sent, spirit-filled revival.

Sense of Direction

The church should have a proper sense of divine direction. It's important that the pastor and church leaders develop a philosophy that defines why the church is in that community and what is its purpose.

Perhaps every church should do some eliminating and concentrating. Decide what is important and what is unimportant. That which is important should be strengthened and that which clutters and confuses should be pared away.

This short story illustrates the lack of direction some people and some churches have.—A pilot's voice came over the public address system of the airliner. "I have good news and bad news. The good news is that we have a strong tail wind and it's saving a lot of fuel. The bad news is that our compass is broken and we don't know where we're going."

Goals

The church should establish goals. Goals are used in sports and business, why not the church?

Set a goal for Sunday School attendance. The goal for the total Sun-

day School should be passed on to each class and department whereby each class has an individual challenge. (The goal should also be passed on to bus captains if the church has a bus ministry.) Most larger Sunday Schools would not be large today if they had not used this type challenge and motivation.

Set a goal for conversions. I read sometime ago, and I concur with the statement, that "If a church does not evangelize it will fossilize; if it does not win it will waste; if it does not save it will stagnate."

Our motivation to win souls should be because the love of Christ constrains us. However, a challenge to reach a goal may sharpen that desire. Let the church set a goal for conversions and work to accomplish it.

Set a goal for church growth. The reason the super-aggressive church has a large attendance in Sunday School is because it has a super-aggressive plan for church growth. It doesn't have many "backdoor revivals" and it makes a strong and determined effort to disciple every convert. That convert is implemented into the church family and taught how to win other converts.

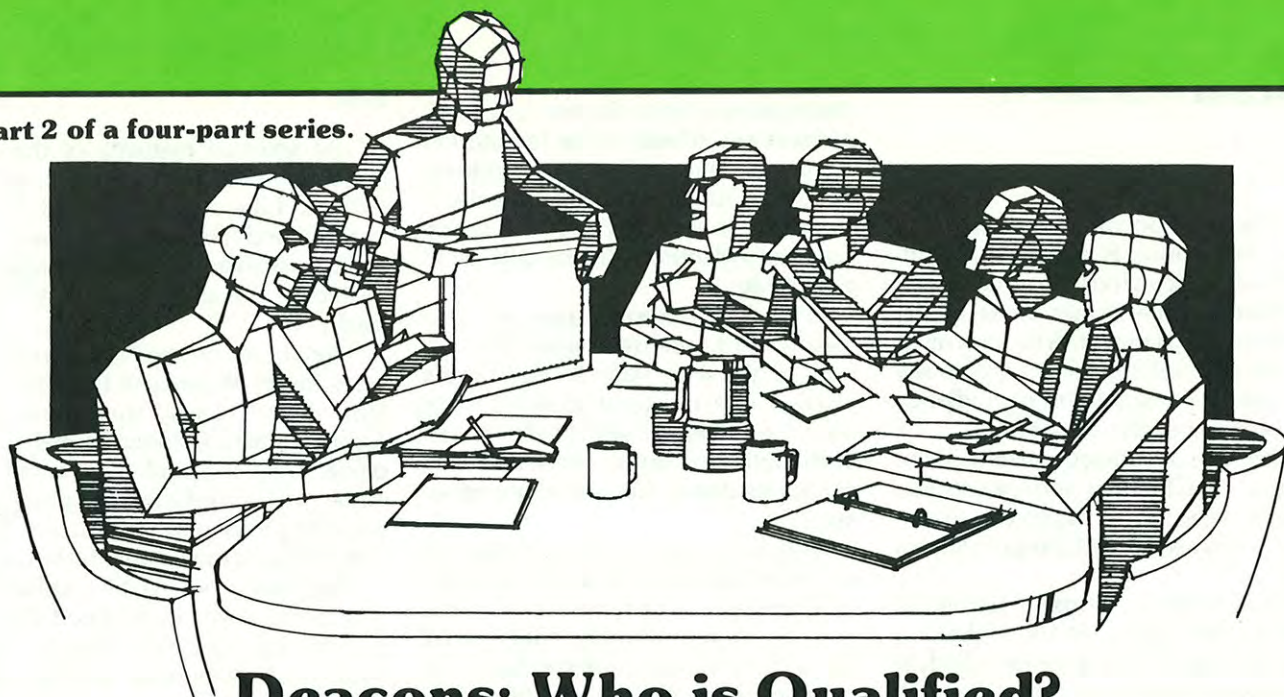
An outstanding church leader stated, "The most important thing that can help a struggling church is a New Testament revival. Revival is God's gift to the church."

A heaven-sent, Holy Ghost, sin-killing revival will do more for the struggling church than all the plans and programs that can be advised. It will result in separation, dedication and edification.

Let us pray that revival will come and that every struggling church will become a strong church, and every struggling Christian will become a strong, stalwart witness for the Lord.▲



ABOUT THE WRITER: Reverend Clarence Burton is executive secretary of the Missouri State Association of Free Will Baptists.



Deacons: Who is Qualified?

By Wendell Walley

Only a few men in the average church meet the biblical qualifications for the office of deacon. Those who do should be humbled rather than flattered into thinking they are charter members of a holy club for the spiritually elite.

Free Will Baptists traditionally claim that deacons must meet all qualifications of scripture before holding that office. However, I struggle with a nagging uneasiness that we fall woefully short of the ideal.

Otherwise, how do we explain how men ordained today are frequently judged inadequate only a short time later? Is the Bible that muddy regarding deacons' qualifications or are we that inadequate in our attempts to determine whether an individual is qualified?

It's not difficult to examine a potential candidate's marital status or whether he's a teetotaler. But assessment of spiritual maturity requires the test of time.

Perhaps part of our problem relates to the frequent misconception that spiritual gifts and spirituality are the same. Such an erroneous view, like social standards, places high premium on performance capabilities. Congregations look for talented men rather than spiritual ones.

A man may be blessed with a dazzling assortment of spiritual gifts and

natural abilities, yet be spiritually immature. *The primary qualification for a deacon is not spiritual gifts but spiritual maturity.* In fact, not a single spiritual gift appears in the entire list of their qualifications.

Serious

"Gravity" tops the inspired list of personal qualifications set forth in I Timothy 3:8-11. A deacon must be an honorable and respected man of dignity. His character and reputation must be unimpeachable.

The same word is translated *honesty* in I Timothy 2:2 where it combines with godliness. Honesty or gravity focuses on the manward side of Christianity while godliness brings the godward side into view.

Deacons must be honorable men whose consistent Christian conduct commands the respect of others. Their attitude toward life should be characterized by seriousness though not gloominess.

Tongue

Having dealt with this essential and attractive quality, Paul lists three negative qualities which should be noticeably absent. Deacons are not to be "doubletongued." In spite of the fact

DEACONS (From page 13)

that this word occurs only once in the Bible, its meaning is beyond question.

The American Indians' reference to a forked tongue comes close to describing what is meant. A deacon must be able to resist any temptation to say one thing to one person or audience and something else to another.

Although diplomacy is useful in the context of Christian service, double speech designed to deceive is downright dishonesty. Leadership builds on trust.

Deacons who espouse one point of view to the pastor or board behind closed doors, but another to individual members of the congregation, disqualify themselves for the office. They must be steadfast in their convictions and responsible in their speech.

Wine

"Not given to wine" is the second negative. Free Will Baptists along with other fundamentalists have long held that deacons, like pastors, should abstain from all use and sale of alcoholic beverages.

The scourge of alcohol in our country along with the clear warnings of scripture elsewhere justify such a position even had it not been addressed in this list. Those who attempt to defend its use in moderation ignore both the warning of scripture and the findings of modern science.

The principle emerging from this statement obviously prohibits the use of any substance which threatens self-control. Discipline is the bottom line throughout this passage.

Money

A deacon's attitude toward material gain is of primary importance, providing the basis for the third negative "not greedy of filthy lucre" or ill-gotten gain. The same word is applied to ministers in Titus 1:7. One must not be obsessed by possessions.

Positively stated the emphasis would be on generosity as opposed to covetousness. That is understandable when it's remembered that deacons were responsible for the collection and

distribution of aid to the needy. Covetousness could lead to the temptation of turning their office into personal gain. Also, an attitude of generosity is important in working with the needy lest they feel intimidated by gifts given grudgingly.

How do you know a person's attitude toward material things? His pattern of giving to support the Lord's work is one indicator. Failure to at least tithe suggests selfishness or lack of discipline or both, and either one carries its deadly influence into other areas.

Watch how an individual responds to opportunities to work on Sunday for overtime pay or how he reacts to a promotion opportunity that would cause him to compromise his commitment to his church and family responsibilities.

A tight-fisted deacon will fail to show proper concern for the needs of the pastor and his family and might well stand in the way of budget-related matters.

Commitment

But Paul was not content with outward blamelessness alone. He insisted that deacons possess a vital inner spiritual character, "holding the mystery of the faith in a pure conscience." A deacon must demonstrate doctrinal soundness along with a personal commitment to it. Those who commend the gospel to others must themselves exemplify it in daily conduct.

Marriage

A deacon's domestic life must also be able to stand equal scrutiny. He must be the "husband of one wife." Some interpret this to mean he must be married, while others think it refers to one wife at a time or only one as opposed to more than one.

The most natural interpretation is that it forbids the ordination of any man whose marriage has been marred by divorce. This is consistent with God's ideal for marriage elsewhere in scripture. Although a divorcee might serve effectively in some matters, the Bible forbids his ordination as a deacon. Nothing in the deacon's life should prohibit him from ministering to the spiritual needs of everyone.

Wife

The spiritual maturity of the deacon's wife is as important as his qualifications. Like him, she must be respected and honorable or grave. The ability to lead and influence for good is limited to the esteem attributed to a leader.

They must not be "slanderers"—a word found 38 times in the New Testament and usually translated *devil*. Confidentiality is foundational to the office. Deacons and their wives become privy to information potentially damaging to people's character. Such a sacred trust must never be betrayed.

They are also to be "sober" or temperate, a word translated *discreet* in Titus 2:2. The idea here seems to refer to a critical spirit or faultfinding attitude. The damage done by allowing themselves to be party to malicious spreading of innuendos and criticisms is not hard to imagine.

In summary, a deacon's wife must be "faithful" or stable, reliable and trustworthy in all things. Only in this way is she worthy of the church's confidence.

Children

Children likewise are an important consideration in determining an individual's qualification as a deacon. The home depicts, more than anything else, the real character of a man. If he cannot lead, influence and administer his own home, he will not be an effective leader at church.

Deacons demonstrate their leadership ability, not by their skill in administering a large corporation, but by "ruling their children and their own house well." The church is a spiritual body of volunteers, not a business.

Spirit-Controlled

There is a close parallel between the qualifications outlined here and the more general guidelines of Acts 6, where the office is believed to have originated.

For example, "look out" among you seven men implies a careful search. The same word is translated *visit* in James 1:27 regarding the care of widows which required careful investigation. This compares favorably with Paul's injunction that deacons first be "proved."

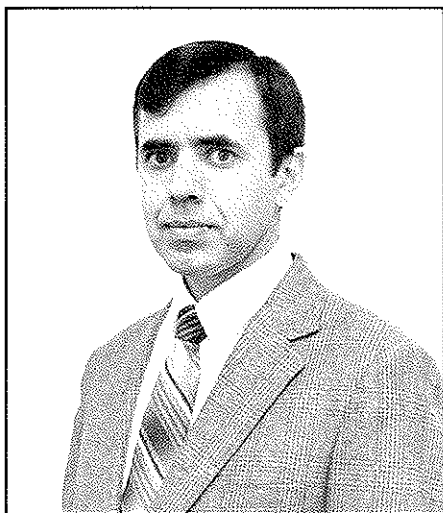
They were also to be "full of the Holy Ghost and wisdom," men whose lives were characteristically governed or controlled by the Spirit. Such could hardly be "doubletongued, given to wine or greedy of filthy lucre." To the contrary, they would steadfastly hold "the mystery of the faith in a pure conscience" and maintain well-ordered domestic lives.

Such men had already demonstrated their capability and trustworthiness when they were appointed over the business of collecting and distributing relief among the needy. Being men of honest report their gravity or reputation as honorable men was a matter of public knowledge.

Those alone are worthy of ordination whose lives have proven through the test of time to measure up to the demands of scripture. Like metal, deacons must prove their genuineness and be found blameless before being stamped "approved!"

Such proving suggested by Paul probably refers to the general judgment formed by the Christian community over a period of time, rather than a formal probationary period as often practiced.

Men who are ordained but unqualified should graciously turn in their credentials. Men not qualified should stubbornly refuse ordination. The many qualified deacons and wives who faithfully serve should renew their commitment to continuous spiritual growth and development of character. ▲



ABOUT THE WRITER: Reverend Wendell Walley pastors East Nashville Free Will Baptist Church, Nashville, Tennessee.

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Arkansas	10.00	5,638.65	5,648.65	3,955.41	42,895.53
Canada	10.00	.00	10.00	.00	10.00
California	760.10	862.55	1,622.65	937.07	11,921.38
Florida	.00	1,279.58	1,279.58	1,268.00	15,527.89
Georgia	3,973.97	5.00	3,978.97	3,647.25	34,447.63
Idaho	.00	170.19	170.19	202.08	346.15
Illinois	4,352.06	1,046.38	5,398.44	.00	80,660.94
Indiana	486.88	101.89	588.77	.00	6,055.33
Kansas	.00	.00	.00	85.78	1,768.22
Kentucky	100.00	96.00	196.00	529.00	3,248.14
Maryland	.00	.00	.00	190.00	360.00
Michigan	2,862.76	210.12	3,072.88	2,922.65	52,334.98
Mississippi	.00	609.17	609.17	233.36	6,772.08
Missouri	1,428.74	8,461.10	9,889.84	6,159.24	77,563.92
New Mexico	46.81	23.41	70.22	.00	981.78
North Carolina	305.50	672.75	978.25	550.00	9,444.84
Northwest Association	.00	.00	.00	.00	53.11
Ohio	409.50	2,616.00	3,025.50	454.60	29,940.85
Oklahoma	24,673.07	7,328.41	32,001.48	30,870.11	347,913.34
South Carolina	.00	.00	.00	.00	909.89
Tennessee	239.85	1,024.14	1,263.99	1,109.27	18,076.22
Texas	4,476.62	687.39	5,164.01	740.87	55,680.91
Virginia	.00	164.08	164.08	87.02	5,471.59
West Virginia	4,295.76	373.36	4,669.12	2,189.62	47,047.12
Interest	.00	.00	.00	.00	988.07
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Other	21.93	.00	21.93	113.35	1,280.42
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1984 LEADERSHIP CONFERENCE

LEADERS RALLY TO CHURCH GROWTH

Robert Picirilli leads discussion.

NASHVILLE, TN—More than 100 Free Will Baptist leaders from 21 states and Canada agreed that what the movement needs most is a denomination-wide surge to win new converts and build new churches. The call for commitment to church growth dominated the annual Leadership Conference December 5-7 in Nashville.

The state moderators, promotional men and other officers picked up the challenge for growth presented by denominational Task Force Spokesman Robert Picirilli. Dr. Picirilli spoke three times and called for verbal and written commitment to build 100 new churches and add a 50,000-member net increase in the next five years.

The Task Force, composed of representatives from each of the national agencies, will present a five-year growth plan to the National Convention in July and ask that the program be adopted, monitored, promoted, reported on and analyzed through 1990.

The 1984 theme, "Guidelines For Growth," featured 11 workshops and a two-hour open discussion on the potential and plans for church growth. Four pastors and a college professor presented growth ideas.

FWBBC Dean Robert Picirilli told participants that the denomination has

had little or no growth in recent years, and called the present non-growth state "sin which must be repented of" and corrected. He discussed various growth models and said that the denomination would have to do more than announce the need for growth in order for it to happen.

Missouri pastor James McAllister spoke three hours Thursday morning on strategies for growth. McAllister, who talked for 20 minutes in the dark when a winter snow storm caused a power blackout, hammered away that "non-growth is sin" and showed how to plan church growth to meet the need where a community hurts.

Several state editors met with the FWB Press Association Thursday afternoon preceding the two-hour discussion time when growth ideas were exchanged and evaluated. Conferees acknowledged past failures when growth ideas were presented to the denomination, and called for a unified front to lay aside differences and grow for the cause of Christ and the sake of the lost.



Larry Russell (L.), W. C. Combs



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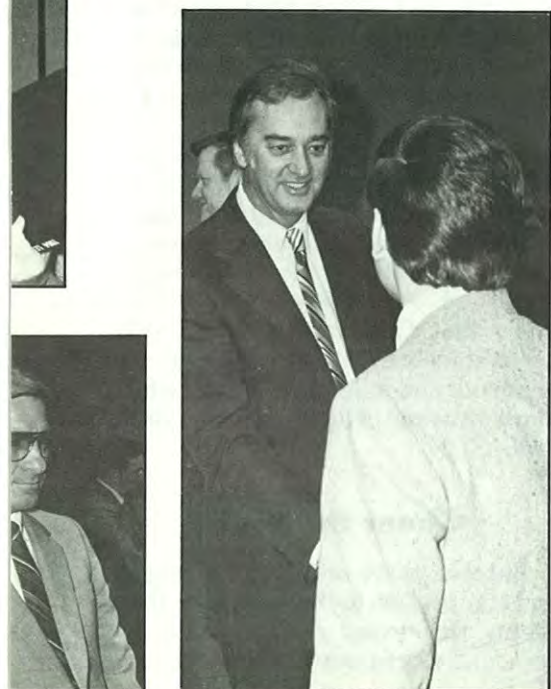
GROWTH CHALLENGE



Tom Lilly (L.), Robert Durham



James McAllister



Herbert Waid (L.), Mike Johnston

Sutton



Bob Shockey (L.), Carl Vallance



Bill Gardner (L.), M. & M. Worthington, George Johnson

Former Oklahoma Moderator David Sutton presented a detailed local church outreach program to involve every member in some aspect of church and personal growth. He called for church growth revivals for the church members, just like the usual evangelistic revivals in most churches. Sutton agreed with other speakers that "growth consciousness" among members must be promoted.

Friday morning North Carolina pastor Randy Cox and South Carolina pastor Earl Hendrix closed the Leadership Conference.

Pastor Cox spoke about the urgent need for each church to recognize its potential for growth and how to recruit personnel to assist in the community growth process. Cox was adamant that it takes longer than six weeks to train soul winners. He suggested a five-month trainer-trainee program to prepare workers who stay with the job.

Reverend Hendrix warned the men that "pride grows like ill weeds" in church growth. He cautioned against workers measuring themselves by themselves regarding success or failure in growth patterns. Hendrix urged that all church growth methods be examined and that room be given for those who preferred one method over another.

Each Leadership Conference participant received a 95-page notebook which included workshop outlines, various reports, as well as 1985 listings for state meetings, state officers, state papers, Christian schools, Bible institutes and board members.

Robert E. Picirilli

1984 Leadership Conference Tapes \$3/per tape \$25/complete set \$2/postage & handling

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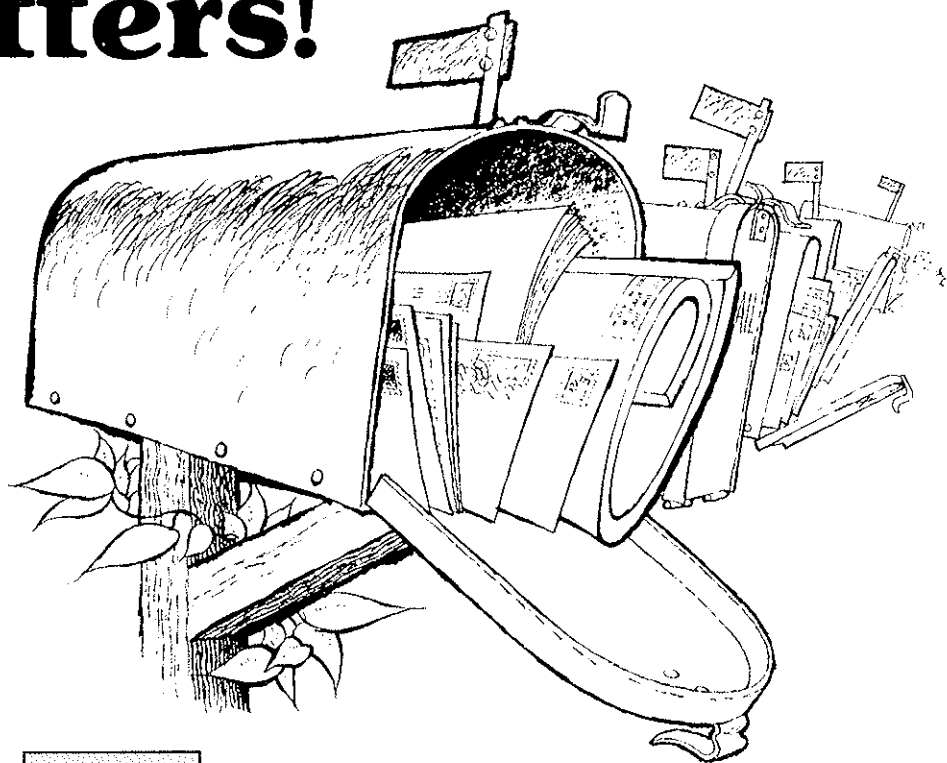
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A Ministry for You? Letters!



By Noveline Burgess

A recent survey shows that something interests more people than watching television, eating or sleeping. That something is going to the mail box or post office to check the day's mail!

That moment of excitement when anxious fingers sort through the bills, magazines, junk mail and letters is hard to duplicate. The letters are usually opened first; a hidden treasure could be waiting just inside.

For many years, I've had the privilege of writing personal notes and letters to church families. Some letters to those who have lost a loved one, others to those ill and in hospitals, while others were for happier occasions such as an anniversary, birthday or graduation.

By chance, I became the church letter writer. At first, what I lacked in experience, I made up in sincerity and love. Even though I may not have "walked in my brother's moccasins for two moons", I am sensitive to others and can share their pain or joy as the occasion demands.

I'd like to share some of my experiences in this oft-neglected act of Christian service. I encourage others to explore the riches of such a ministry. Letters can be as beautiful as colors in the rainbow when they are touched by the Master's hand.

When Death Strikes

First, let's look at the more serious nature of a note or a letter to a bereaved family or person. Remember that above all this letter needs to be personal and caring. The individual or family has just been deprived of someone dear to them. Even though they may have hope in Christ, there is still a

devastating sense of loss.

Never make the mistake of writing a note which says, "I know how you feel." No one except God can truly know how that person feels. Instead, it is much better to write, "I know that you are hurting and I want you to know that I care."

There's something healing about the knowledge that another person cares that we are suffering and heart-broken. It spreads through a grieving soul, comparable to the biblical balm of Gilead. A bereaved friend may know that God cares, but he still needs someone with skin and bones to reach out and touch him. Be there for him with a note or letter, anointed with love.

Cheer the Sick

Second, there are letters of cheer and compassion to those who are ill. It seems that every day we learn of someone else in our family or church

family who is hurting.

We often ask ourselves, "What can I do that would make this time of illness easier for this person?" Visit, if possible. But even better, sit down and write a cheery note or letter to brighten his day and lift his spirits.

Warm his heart with the sunshine of your friendship and love. Understand that for a period of time, his life will be in the shadows of illness, but help him to look beyond the shadows to the light.

For those who are terminally ill, pray for guidance in selecting the right words to convey your message of compassion. I found this note of comfort written in an old Bible: "Life is eternal and love is immortal. Lift us up that we may see further, cleanse our eyes that we may see more clearly." We often fail to minister to those who are seriously ill, because we're unsure just what would be a kind, appropriate direction.

In his letter to the Hebrews, the writer exhorts his people "To do good, and communicate, forget not." The key word here is *communicate*. As we fulfill this obligation, we will be obeying the other. As we let God direct our thoughts, we will be able to act, to write that letter of compassion so as to comfort and succor.

Many of us can express our love and tenderness for a member of our family or a friend in a letter while we may not be able to do so in person.

I remember a precious letter I received years ago while confined to a

hospital. It was written by a Christian friend I had known for a long time, yet I had not known that she loved me in such a compassionate way. I treasure the letter, reading it when my self-esteem is at a low point and I need a lift.

Everyone needs an assurance of self-worth occasionally, whether we are ill or well. I'm persuaded that God uses our ability to communicate with those who are in need, as a special love letter from Him.

The Happy Letter

Then there are those happy occasions such as anniversaries, birthdays, and graduations when we have a wonderful opportunity to witness through a note or letter. While congratulating an anniversary couple, we have the joy of noting "God has blessed you with many years of unity. As you are one with Him, may you continue to love each other as He has loved you."

Or, "God has been so gracious in allowing you to enjoy this special bond of love that you share today. Give Him the glory and honor that He so richly deserves."

Birthdays are so special, not only to the celebrant, but also to those nearest to him. Just as we celebrate our Savior's birthday, we rejoice with family and friends when they reach another milestone in their lives.

Birthdays were observed among the ancients as feast days. Add another delicacy to the table of your loved one by giving him a special gift of love, a letter. A suitable ending for such an occasion could be, "God has blessed me in permitting me to have known you. You have enriched my life in many ways. I pray that God will continue to bless you with a long and fruitful life."

Graduates are a special joy to minister to through the opportunity of letter writing. We need to let them know that we rejoice with them at this particular phase of their education. We can remind them that God is the source of all wisdom and they would do well to trust Him for knowledge of what is true, right and just.

There are many avenues open to you in this ministry. When we look around, we see scores of people who perform services for us every day.

What an opportunity to let them know that we appreciate them.

As we pursue the ministry of letter writing, we need to remember three important things—be sincere, be compassionate, and be uplifting. The rewards are numerous, the effect on people's lives, everlasting. Through the service to others, we write love's message from God. ▲

ABOUT THE WRITER: Mrs. Noveline Burgess is a member of Antlers Free Will Baptist Church, Antlers, Oklahoma. The wife, mother of four and grandmother of seven teaches a teen Sunday School class and a Bible class for elderly nursing home residents. She is a P.K. (preacher's kid) and the wife of a deacon.

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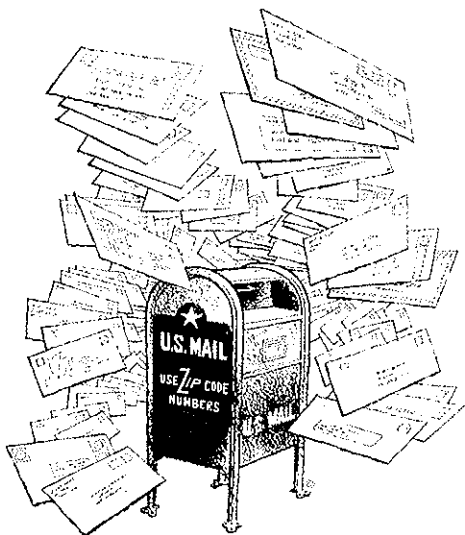
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Spotlight On Indiana



By W. H. Patterson

Indiana, the crossroad of America, has a picturesque past. Old Vincennes, which grew up around a fort built in 1732, was the nerve center for the French occupation of the Midwest and later became part of the Northwest Territory.

In 1800 the Indiana Territory was organized and included Illinois and Michigan. By 1809 Indiana was reduced to its present size and Corydon was made its first capital. Indiana was admitted to statehood in 1816. Indianapolis is the present capital city.

From the Great Sand Dunes along the shore of Lake Michigan, down the winding Wabash and White Rivers, to the bluffs overlooking the Ohio River, Indiana has a Hoosier tang and individuality of its own.

Some of her distinguished citizens include President William Henry

Harrison, George Rogers Clark, James Whitcomb Riley, Gene Stratton Porter, Henry Ward Beecher, Booth Tarkington and Lew Wallace. Abraham Lincoln spent his boyhood on her soil and the grave of Nancy Hanks, Lincoln's mother, is monumented in Lincoln State Park.

The Hoosier State

Indiana's wealth is in her mines and quarries, auto manufacturing, steel mills, Eli Lilly Laboratories, mobile homes and recreational vehicles. Indiana limestone is the finest in the world. It supplies over two-thirds of all stone construction in the United States.

Indiana is also a great agricultural state, producing an abundance of corn, soybeans, wheat, rye, vegetables and fruits. Dairy and beef cattle, pork, poultry and eggs are in abundance.

Many state parks, forest reserves, resorts, lakes and historical Indian relics and burial mounds are scattered throughout the state. Brown County State Park is nature's most beautiful scenery in the fall.

Fort Benjamin Harrison is located in Indianapolis. It is from here that all military personnel receive their paychecks. The state's most noted annual event is the 500-mile Memorial Day auto race at the Indianapolis Motor Speedway.

Indiana is the home of the internationally famous Winona Lake conference grounds. It was once the center of worldwide religious meetings. Many of God's great servants have blessed its grounds.

It is here that Billy Sunday made his home. Here the renown "Billy Sunday Tabernacle" still stands. It is awesome to walk down the sawdust aisles and

stand behind the same pulpit where so many of God's great men thundered forth the message. Billy Sunday's home and museum are nearby.

FWB Growth

There is evidence of many Free Will Baptist churches connected with the Randall Movement around the beginning of the century. These were swallowed up in the merger with the Northern Baptists in 1910-11.

Home Prayer Meeting

The present day movement had its beginning in 1952 with prayer meetings in the home of Rev. Melvin Staggs. The group later organized as Packer-ton Free Will Baptist Church and affiliated with the Floyd County Association in Kentucky.

Rev. Staggs was also instrumental in organizing the next two Free Will Baptist churches at Wabash in 1952, and Columbia City in 1953. Anderson First Free Will Baptist Church was organized also in 1953.

There were several churches organized between 1953 and 1961. In 1961 they met together and formed the Wabash Valley Association. The first officers were Randall Goble, moderator; Charles Bailey, assistant moderator; Richard Cordell, clerk; Bobby Whitaker, treasurer.

In the 1962 five churches met together and formed the White River Association. In 1971 the Wabash River Association was organized, followed by the LaPorte Association in 1981, and Calvary Association in 1983.

Current State Work

There are at present 26 churches in the Indiana State Association. There are other Free Will Baptist churches in the state not affiliated with the National Association.

The average attendance of the churches is 86, which is 11 over the national average. The largest church in the state is Emmanuel FWB Church at Wabash, averaging over 400 each Sunday. Brian Atwood is the pastor.

Denominational Interest

Indiana has had three mission churches. One is on mission status

presently and soon will be self-supporting. The Mission Board is searching for other areas to establish new works or help an existing church become established. Indiana's gifts to home missions in 1983 totaled \$11,006.

The state has been active in Foreign Missions with yearly missionary meetings and conferences. Giving to Foreign Missions in 1983 amounted to \$20,543, an increase of 40 percent in four years. We plan to adopt a missionary family and provide their support in the near future.

Indiana has supported Free Will Baptist Bible College since it became a State Association. Gifts to the school amounted to \$5,100 in 1982-83. We thrilled at the response of our youth toward the Bible College. Indiana ranked fourth in enrollment in 1983-84 with 32 students.

Indiana has an active Woman's Auxiliary. The enrollment last year was 106, with eight auxiliaries and three districts reporting. Total gifts to missions were \$2,161.91 and of this amount \$1,786 went to foreign missions.

The state has four Master's Men chapters with approximately 75 enrolled. Gifts to the national program totaled \$98.37.

Outstanding Youth Program

Indiana has a great youth program under the direction of full-time State Youth Coordinator Gregory Hanson. We may not be the largest in numbers but we believe we are the best in quality. T.A.C. (Teens in Action for Christ) meets in youth rallies quarterly. These meetings are highlighted by evangelistic services, Christian films, counseling, recreational activities and great fellowship.

Summer camp has been one of the most successful programs to reach our youth. With fun, frolic and fellowship—all centered around an evangelistic atmosphere and program—many come to know the Lord. Camp has been the one event that has brought our people together in fellowship.

The youth have a spring weekend retreat which is a prom substitute. This is a program to give our older teens a spiritual event in contrast to the corrupt high school proms. They also have a winter retreat each year

between Christmas and New Year's Day.

Good News Mission Adventure involves mission trips for teenagers and sponsors. Two trips have been made to San Andros Island in the Bahamas to conduct Bible School, visitation, witnessing and evangelistic services in a completely black culture. Sixty-two youth and sponsors made the trip in 1983 which resulted in 92 conversions, and, according to the local pastor on the island, most of the converts remain active in the church.

The state is in the process of developing 188 acres into a full-time camp. A lake has been constructed, the kitchen-dining hall is soon to be completed, and work is progressing on building summer and winter cabins.

The general state budget receives its funds from assessments on associations based on number of churches in the associations, and gifts from church budgets. The present officers of the State Association are Archie Ratliff, moderator; Brian Atwood, clerk; and Don Arms, promotional secretary.

Indiana has asked to host the National Association in 1992.

We are not the largest Free Will Baptist state, but we are laboring to be effective for the Lord. We are not as small as we used to be, neither are we as large as we will be. We will not be satisfied to stand still. ▲



ABOUT THE WRITER: Reverend W. H. (Henry) Patterson was ordained as a minister 44 years ago. Brother Patterson, 68, has served eight years as Indiana's General Board Member to the National Association of Free Will Baptists. He recently resigned at Chesterfield First Free Will Baptist Church, Chesterfield, Indiana, where he served 24 years. He now resides in Daleville, Indiana.



FREE WILL BAPTIST

newsfront

FOREIGN MISSIONS BOARD ISSUES STATEMENT

NASHVILLE, TN—Since many people have inquired regarding the missionary status of Lonnie Palmer, the Board of Foreign Missions has issued the following statement:

Mr. Palmer is not now nor has he been affiliated with Free Will Baptist Foreign Missions since July of 1977, and he has not applied for reinstatement.

GEORGIA CONFRONTS SHORT-TERM PASTORATES

NORMAN PARK, GA—Members of a five-man Pastor Tenure Study Committee presented a 16-page study to the 48th annual Georgia State Association, November 15-17 calling for something besides a "quick-fix" solution to recurring problems caused by short-term pastorates.

Committee Chairman Leroy Lowery said the study resulted in seven recommendations including the elimination of an annual call, better collegiate preparation for ministerial students, increase in pastoral salaries and benefits, and a better informed laity. The committee was retained after its year-long study and instructed to report in 1985 regarding financial relationships between churches and pastors.

In other action, delegates approved plans to establish a Georgia FWB Historical Society. Officials will prepare a constitution for the society and submit it to the State Association. Delegates also endorsed a proposal for a Georgia-wide special day for state missions beginning in 1985. Details regarding naming the special day were incomplete but were expected to be finalized in a few weeks.

More than 200 met at Norman Baptist Assembly for the three-day session which included Woman's Auxiliary and Master's Men programs. Moderator William Morris gaveled delegates through extended business meetings where they adopted a

\$350,000 budget for state and national ministries.

Six ministers preached messages on the State Association theme "Building His Church"—I. Bennie Turner, Curtis Alligood, Roger Russell, Charles Clark, Ken Murphy and Home Missions official Connie Cariker.

The first annual Georgia Bible Conference met Thursday with three pastors preaching messages—Rex Lynn, Harris Nix and Len Blanchard. CONTACT Editor Jack Williams spoke at the Pastor's Dinner Friday afternoon.

Delegates passed three resolutions Saturday morning. Resolution #1 instructed state agencies to cease requiring applicants for any office or board position to take personality analysis tests.

Resolution #2 authorized establishing a commission to keep the constituency informed regarding legal decisions which affect them. Resolution #3 encouraged community involvement to combat pornography.

Delegates also voted the North Georgia Association with five churches into the State Association. Reverend Luther Barns was commissioned as a Georgia home missionary to the south Atlanta area during the Friday evening missionary service.

The 1985 State Association meets November 14-16 at Norman Park Baptist Assembly in Norman Park, Georgia.

ARKANSAS LAYMAN NAMED OUTSTANDING REGIONAL DIRECTOR

LITTLE ROCK, AR—Wendell M. Leckbee, a deacon and Sunday School teacher at First FWB Church in North Little Rock, was named the Outstanding Regional Director for 1984 at the Standard Life Marketing Conference in Honolulu.

Standard Life President Gene Elder presented a plaque to Mr. Leckbee naming him as the first recipient of the honor. The award will now become an annual presentation at the company's national marketing conference.

Leckbee has been with Standard Life three years. He is a past member of the Central Arkansas Life Under-

writers Board of Directors and holds the designation of FLMI (Fellow of the Life Management Institute).

Eight factors were used to determine the company's Outstanding Regional Director award including new business ratio and regional improvement.

Wendell Leckbee is moderator of Arkansas' Central District Association, clerk of the Arkansas State Association and a member of the National Master's Men Board. He served as hospitality chairman for the 1984 National Convention which met in Little Rock.



BRAZILIAN WRITER WINS JOURNALISM SCHOLARSHIP

NASHVILLE, TN—Mr. Maurilio Amorim Jr., a junior at Free Will Baptist Bible College, was awarded a \$250 Journalism Scholarship by the Free Will Baptist Press Association in December.

Mr. Amorim, a citizen of Brazil, plans to complete a master's degree in English and journalism. He wants to return to Brazil where he will teach and practice the craft of writing.

Amorim, 20, published an article in the November 1984 issue of *CONTACT*, "I'll Give Him Away."

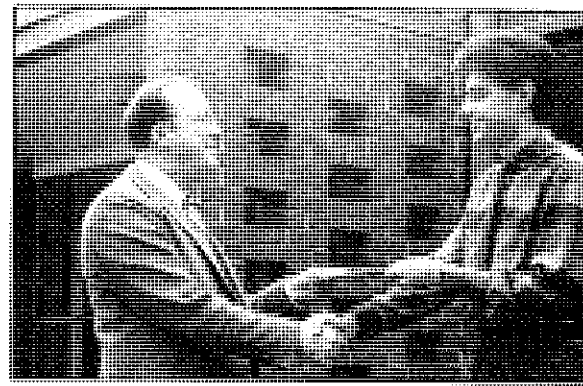
FWBBC officials praised Maurilio's mastery of English. He is currently studying Shakespeare as well as taking classes in editing and publications. Bert Tippet, FWBBC's director of

publications said, "Maurilio is dedicated and sensitive to the will of God. He is deeply burdened for the people of Brazil."

The FWB Press Association encouraged Mr. Amorim to further develop his journalistic skills by pursuing professional training with the scholarship funds.

The FWB Press Association Journalism Scholarship is awarded annually to a Free Will Baptist writer to stimulate excellence in the field of journalism.

The Press Association began meeting informally in February 1978 as the "Publications Committee," and organized as the FWB Press Association in May 1981. The group consists of staff



Bert Tippet presents check to Maurilio Amorim Jr.

personnel from FWB national publications and literature-related areas, but recently voted to expand membership privileges to editors of Free Will Baptist state papers.

VIRGINIA GROUP PURCHASES MOUNTAIN CAMP

CLINTWOOD, VA—Free Will Baptists in southwest Virginia's Dickenson and Wise Counties purchased a 198-acre camp in the Cumberland Mountains adjoining Jefferson National Forest, according to new camp director Jim Cox.

Reverend Cox said that the camp is located six miles from the Kentucky state line between Clintwood and Pound. The facilities include a 13-acre clear water lake, a 400-seat capacity lodge, 30 frontier-style cabins that sleep 12 persons each, two cinder block bath houses, a horse barn, a 50,000-gallon capacity water tower and other features.

Cox said the camp kitchen has top-of-the-line deluxe hotel stainless equipment valued in excess of \$150,000.

The camp went on the market in 1980 for \$750,000. Owner, Grady

Baker, was saved in the spring of 1983. After his conversion, Mr. Baker decided that he wanted Free Will Baptists to have the camp to use for the Lord. He sold it to Free Will Baptists for \$100,000, less than one-seventh of the market price. Director Cox said the camp name was changed from Camp Zarahemla to Camp Jacob after it was purchased.

The Board of Directors hired Rev. Jim Cox to be the camp director. Brother Cox has pastored First FWB Church of Roanoke since its inception 14 years ago. Cox assumed his responsibilities last October. Rev. James Kilgore assumed responsibilities as assistant director in January. Rev. Kilgore was pastor of Victory FWB Church in Jonesville.

APPRECIATION DAY DEDICATED TO REV. O. T. DIXON

LEXINGTON, OK—The First Free Will Baptist Church of Lexington held a celebration day last November in behalf of the pastor, Rev. O. T. Dixon.

Dixon, 64, completed his fourth year as pastor of the church October 1 and the membership prepared activities which lasted throughout the day including guest speakers and special services.

Talmadge Barr, a Christian businessman from Oklahoma City; Ron Angelon, warden with the Department of Corrections of Oklahoma; J. R. Dixon, superintendent of Public Schools, Haskell; and Rev. Edwin Wade, president of Hillsdale FWB College, Moore, were Rev. Dixon taught for several years, were special speakers during the day.

The church presented Margaret Dixon, the pastor's wife, with a plaque which read, "Given in appreciation for outstanding and dedicated services." Also, the pastor was presented a large plaque inscribed with, "In appreciation to O. T. Dixon for outstanding gospel preaching," from the official Church Board.

The day's activities concluded with a baptismal service.

Sign erected on Hwy. 77 by Purcell FWB Church member, Coy Hinkle, near Slaughterville, Okla.



South Carolina Promotional Director **Norwood Gibson** said the office leased new facilities last October at 1705 South Irby Street in Florence. The building, though structurally sound, was completely renovated and sub-leases granted to two other occupants—a gift shop and a photography studio. Each tenant was responsible for renovating their area of occupancy. The promotional office space includes the State Bookstore.

Pastor **E. R. Mayo** requested a leave of absence from **Eastside FWB Church, Houston, TX**, in order to assist Home Missionary **Paul Thompson** in construction of a new church in **Gilbert, AZ**. In the pastor's absence, **Dr. J. D. O'Donnell** will shoulder pastoral responsibilities.

Pastor **Gene Adams** and members at **Community Chapel FWB Church, Florence, SC**, raised more than \$1500 for the South Carolina state promotional office to begin a tape lending library.

Capitol FWB Church, Sacramento, CA, doubled attendance in the past year with a high of 357. The church averages more than 300 in attendance on Sunday mornings, 200 Sunday nights and 200 for prayer meeting. The congregation just paid \$11,000 for a parking lot. Pastor **Larry Condit** has served 13 years in the Sacramento area.

The Woman's Auxiliary at **Horse Branch FWB Church, Turbeville, SC**, honored their pastor's wife, **Mrs. Velma Brown** with \$210 in cash and a number of gifts and cards. **Talmadge Brown** pastors.

CONTACT welcomes the newsletter of **First FWB Church, Ypsilanti, MI**. **David Kirby** pastors.

Tabernacle FWB Church, Coward, SC, began a \$25,000 building project last fall. The 2100-square-foot concrete block construction building will be used for fellowship purposes, according to pastor **Harry Cooper**. Construction will progress as funds to raise the building are available.

First FWB Church, Farmington, MO, conducted dedication services for their remodeled and enlarged sanctuary with Missouri Executive Secretary **Clarence Burton** delivering the dedicatory message. The major remodeling effort includes an enlarged balcony, additional Sunday School rooms and an enlarged foyer. The auditorium will now seat 700. Pastor **Jim McAllister** said the

exterior of the building was also renovated to include two expanded entrances and a ramp.

Pastor **J. B. Smith** of **First FWB Church, Chester, SC**, said the church has dedicated a new auditorium. The auditorium has a seating capacity of 350. The pastor's brother, Rev. **Ansel Smith**, preached the dedication message. Pastor Smith said the old auditorium has been converted into office space and additional classrooms. Smith has pastored First Church for 20 years.

Pastor **Dale Cochran** called it a "homecoming and a step of faith service." What he described was the occasion last fall when **First FWB Church, Rolla, MO**, took the major step from a mission work to a self-supporting church. State Home Missions Board Chairman **Cliff Bowman** preached the morning message. State Moderator **Millard Sasser** delivered the afternoon message.

Pastor **Tommy Martin** thinks **Unity FWB Church, Johnsonville, SC**, has a unique homecoming each year. Most churches conduct their homecomings on Sundays with special services in the afternoon. Not so at Unity Church. Their annual homecomings are all-day Saturday affairs. Sounds like a pretty good idea.

Missionary Pastor **Denver Robinson** reports two conversions and an average attendance of 27 at the new **Antioch Association Mission** near **Russellville, AR**. The Antioch Mission Board financed the land and auditorium. Auditorium construction was done mostly by donated labor.

Eleven years ago Pastor **Robert Edwards** assumed duties at **First FWB Church, Darlington, SC**. The church recently gave a pastor appreciation night for Brother Edwards. The service closed with members presenting Pastor and Mrs. Edwards with an all-expense paid trip to the Holy Land.

Pastor **Billy Baker** said **White Savannah FWB Church, Conway, SC**, held groundbreaking services in preparation for construction of a new auditorium. The new building, which is expected to be completed in October, will accommodate 400 and includes baptistry, nursery and two offices. Officials expect the project to cost \$100,000.

Director **Jim Cox** said **Camp Caleb** near **Paintsville, KY**, plans construction of a \$60,000 Administration Building. The building will be made of logs. Camp Caleb expects to entertain more than 500

campers during 1985, plus three weeks of canoeing.

Samantha FWB Church, Leesburg, OH, baptized 10 and added 12 new members, according to Pastor **Wylie Perkins**.

Members of **Dailyville FWB Church, Dailyville, OH**, celebrated the church's 100th birthday last fall with a four-day tent revival, says Pastor **Carl Dunn**. Brother Dunn said that part of the festivities included the Master's Men chapter of the church digging a pit and roasting a 200-pound beef for the church goers. Former Pastor **William Chadwick** preached the Sunday afternoon homecoming message.

Mansfield FWB Church, Mansfield, OH, broke the Sunday School record with an attendance of 450. Pastor **Fred Dutton**, who has been with the church for 10 years, said a 72-year-old man was also converted.

Hillsboro FWB Church, Hillsboro, OH, reports 8 conversions, 12 baptisms, and 21 new members. **Keith Perkins** pastors.

Church news releases sometimes add a special touch of personal warmth. The November-December 1984 issue of **Ambassador Magazine** (Publication of Ohio Free Will Baptists) included a monthly report from **Mount Hope FWB Church, Wheelersburg, OH**. There was something special about this news release—Church Reporter **Edith Rollins** began the report with these words: "My husband, Raymond Collins, was baptized on September 16." **Jack Henry** pastors.

Deacon **Bob Vandivort** of **Garden Grove FWB Church, Garden Grove, CA**, is known for his hospitality. However, even Deacon Vandivort thought it was a bit much when a runaway car crossed his front yard and crashed into a bedroom in his home. No one was injured.

Pastor **Jonathan Yandell** of **Tulare FWB Church, Tulare, CA**, has joined the ranks of desperate writers who attempt to beat the deadline every month! Pastor Yandell writes a column in the **California State Paper** titled "The Voice of Youth." His perceptive column is slanted toward meeting needs of California Free Will Baptist young people.

Members began three new ministries at **Bethel FWB Church, South Roxana, IL**. The new ministries are the phone ministry, the nursing home ministry and the prayer group ministry. **Daryl Ellis** pastors. ▲

TEEN Scene

Local Scene

ALABAMA

There is life in a couple of youth groups in the southern states. James Dunbar, minister of youth and music, reports that life for youth at Sulligent FWB Church in Alabama means Living It For Eternity.

Mid-week LIFE is a Wednesday evening service just for youth, involving both junior and senior high school students. The youth provide their own music which consists of choruses. Also, the youth feature their own talents in the special music portion of the service. Involvement is accomplished through role playing which allows the youth to learn principles through acting it out themselves.

Brother Dunbar then leads in a positive message time. A time of testimonies by the youth takes place often, but not at every service. LIFE gives this youth group a chance to worship in a casual setting, in a meaningful service of their own.

MISSISSIPPI

Jeff Halliburton, minister of youth and music, says there is New Life in Tupelo FWB Church in Mississippi. New life is the name for three different groups of teens who minister in the church.

The New Life Singers are a teen ensemble of 8-10 voices who minister in song once a month in regular worship services. The New Life brass utilize their instrumental talents at least once a month in regular worship services, as well as learning several Christmas numbers.

The children of the church really enjoy the New Life Puppet Team. This team helps in children's church as well as once a month appearing in the evening worship service. New Life is giving the youth in Tupelo a chance to use their talents for Christ and for their church.

National Scene

The Youth Ministries Division of Randall House Publications publishes a bi-monthly resource guide called **YOUTHLINE**. This publication is provided at no cost to the local youth worker. Eight main areas of the youth ministry are covered in each edition. The following is a list of topics and subtopics:

Activities—social events, recreational activities, special group outings

Evangelism—soulwinning, tract ministry, follow-up, revivals, counseling, discipleship

Outreach—community service ministries, local church service ministries (visitation, bus ministry), foreign and home missions education and involvement

Juniors—development of total youth ministry to the pre-teens

Leadership Tips—organization and development of the youth ministry, personal growth of the youth worker

Conference Ministries—rallies, banquets, retreats, camping, conferences, seminars

National Youth Conference—information concerning the scheduling and planning of activities of the National Youth Conference

Etcetera, Etcetera—any additional areas not covered in the other topics

A page of youth-related art is also included in the packet each issue. Bonus pages and resource materials are also sent when available.

Attractive three-ring notebook binders with **YOUTHLINE** imprinted on front and spine are available, at no cost, to anyone who sends items of interest or articles that can be printed in **YOUTHLINE**.

YOUTHLINE is for Free Will Baptist youth workers, with materials provided from the wealth of experience from our own Free Will Baptist youth workers. The only way this can happen is for you to share what has and is happening in your youth ministry. It does not have to be some spectacular event or activity; we are more interested in practical ways to reach, win and disciple young people.

Share with the denomination what is happening in your area and the Youth Ministries Division will send the free notebook binder to you. ▲



OUR READERS COMMENT

'LITTLE LANES' BEDTIME STORIES

Thank you for the articles "On Little Lanes" by Donna Mayo. I really enjoy them. My mom reads them to me at bedtime.

Angela Thrasher
Manchester, Tennessee

WORTH PRINTING AGAIN

I was re-reading some old editions of *Contact* and found your article on "The Worm Who Would Be God" in the April 1983 edition. I'm not sure if I missed it the first time or just skimmed by it, but when I read it this time it really spoke to my heart.

Put a note by this one so you can re-use it sometime when you need to rest for a month.

I enjoy your work and appreciate your effort for the denomination through *Contact*.

Mike Jones, Pastor
Shiloh Free Will Baptist Church
Bratt, Florida

CHEERS 'LITTLE LANES'

Our 9-year-old daughter really enjoys "On Little Lanes" by Donna Mayo. Thank you for seeing the need to publish it.

We want to send *Contact* to a relative as a Christmas gift.

Reverend Roger Bennett
Ashford, Alabama



ON LITTLE LANES

BY DONNA MAYO

Father Really Does Know Best

“Marty, Megan, time for bed,” called Mrs. Lane from the kitchen. The twins kept playing Combat on their Atari. A few minutes later their mother appeared in the doorway.

“You two are supposed to be getting ready for bed,” she said.

“In a minute,” mumbled Marty, his eyes glued to the TV screen.

“We’re almost finished with this game,” added Megan.

“I’ll give you five minutes,” said their mother returning to the kitchen. Mrs. Lane kept her eyes on the clock as she finished stirring up banana bread for tomorrow’s breakfast. When five minutes were up, she went back to the den.

“Time’s up, kids. Now hit the hay,” said Mrs. Lane.

“Aw, Mom,” groaned Marty, “just one more game.”

“I’m afraid not, Honey, It’s getting late, and tomorrow’s a school day.”

“But Mom,” pleaded Megan. “It won’t take long. Besides, we’re not even tired.”

“You may not be tired right now,” Mrs. Lane explained, “but you’ll be tired all day tomorrow if you don’t get enough sleep.”

“No we won’t,” said Megan.

“Please let us stay up a little while longer,” begged Marty.

“We go through this every night,” replied Mrs. Lane. “Why can’t you go to bed without complaining?”

Mr. Lane had been listening to their conversation and now put down his newspaper. The twins, expecting a scolding, jumped up, ready

to obey. But he said, “I think the twins are right, Laura. Why go to bed if you aren’t tired? You two may go to bed when you get ready.”

Mrs. Lane was shocked. The twins were shocked. Had they heard right? Was their daddy really taking their side?

“Yippee!” shouted Marty.

“Let’s play some more,” said Megan excitedly. “I bet I win this time.” The twins sat down in front of the TV and once again attacked each other—this time with new energy.

“Why Peter Lane, I can’t believe...” began Mrs. Lane in disbelief.

Mr. Lane ushered his wife into the kitchen and said, “Need a little help with that banana bread?”

“I most certainly do not,” said Mrs. Lane angrily. “I can’t believe you’re letting them stay up. I can’t believe you took their side against me.”

“Now, Honey, simmer down. I know Marty and Megan need their sleep. And you know they need their sleep. But they won’t listen. I think the thing to do is let them find it out on their own. Maybe after missing a few nights’ rest, they’ll see that we’re right,” said Mr. Lane with a sneaky grin.

“I hope you know what you’re doing,” said Mrs. Lane.

“You wait and see,” said Mr. Lane confidently. “In a few days they’ll be going to bed without even being told.”

Mr. and Mrs. Lane went to bed and left the twins playing Atari. Marty and Megan played on, unaware of the time until they heard the big grandfather clock in the hall strike 12 times.

“Can you believe this?” said Megan. “Mom doesn’t even let us stay up this late on weekends.”

“I guess they’ve finally realized that we’re big enough to take care of ourselves,” said Marty proudly.

Marty and Megan grew tired of Atari, so they went to the kitchen to look for a snack. Then they settled down in front of the TV with cookies and milk.

When Mr. and Mrs. Lane awoke the next morning, the TV and lights were still on and Marty and Megan were asleep on the couch.

“No telling what time they finally conked out,” said Mrs. Lane.

“Marty, Megan, wake up. Wake up,” said Mr. Lane gently rousing the children from their deep sleep.

When Marty and Megan woke up and realized that they had slept in front of the TV and not in their beds, they once again expected a scolding. Instead, Mr. Lane said, “Sleep good? You know, I think this is a great idea. From now on you two can go to bed whenever you like.”

The twins didn’t know what had gotten into their daddy. But they didn’t care. They quickly dressed and ate breakfast. Then they hurried to school, eager to tell their friends about their new freedom.

“Guess what?” called Megan when she caught sight of Sally and Katie. “Marty and I can stay up as late as we want to from now on. Last night we stayed up ‘til after midnight!”

The girls couldn’t believe their ears. “You lucky duck!” they said.

The twins made it through school that day fairly well—only a few yawns now and then. That night Marty read comic books and played with his race

track while Megan played with dolls. At 1:30 they finally went to bed.

The next day at school, Marty was beginning to feel the results of his late hours. He had to stay in from recess for falling asleep during math class.

"You didn't miss anything anyway," consoled Megan on the way home from school. "Most everybody played kickball. But I didn't feel like it."

On the third night, Marty put a model airplane together, and Megan did some paint by numbers. Then they played Uno until 1:00. Next they studied their spelling words.

At school the next day, Megan missed two words on her spelling test. She was almost in tears. "But I knew how to spell those words," she cried. "How could I make such dumb mistakes."

But when bedtime rolled around that evening, the twins were still not convinced that rest was what they needed. So they stayed up until 2:00 playing games and listening to records.

On day four the twins were really looking tired. They had big black circles under their eyes.

Tony Phillips, Marty's best friend, said "You look awful, Marty. I hope you can run better than you look. Today's the day our relay team runs against Brian Kennedy's team."

"Don't worry," said Marty. "I can run faster than Brian any day."

Marty ran as fast as he could, but Brian won easily, causing his team to win and Marty's to lose. Marty was stunned. He had always been one of the fastest runners in the class.

And when it was time for Megan's solo at choir practice, she couldn't stop yawning long enough to get the notes out.

At supper that night the twins finally admitted that their parents had known best all along.

"I didn't know how important sleep was," said Megan yawning.

"Next time we'll listen to you, Mom," said Marty.

Mrs. Lane breathed a sigh of relief. It had been a tiring week!

And Mr. Lane said, "You may not always understand why your mother and I tell you to do some things, but

you can always know for sure that we love you, and we're only trying our best to do what's best for you."

"Next time," added Mrs. Lane, "maybe you'll just take our word for it—without having to prove it for yourselves. We really do know best."

"Next time," said Marty, "we'll be too tired to argue. Won't we, Megan? Megan?"

Everybody looked at Megan. Her eyes had closed and her head was nodding. Then it fell over right in her plate of spaghetti! ▲

Top Shelf



Thomas Marberry



John Eidsmore, *The Christian Legal Advisor* (Milford, Michigan: Mott Media, Inc., 1984, 578 pp., hardback, \$21.95).

This book is big, but don't let the size frighten you. Christians in America are involved with the law whether we want to be or not. Every Christian needs a basic understanding of his rights and responsibilities under the law.

Our lives are affected by court decisions (both state and federal) and by laws enacted by Congress, state legislatures and various local governing bodies. In recent months, men have been jailed for sending their children to a private school operated by a local church in defiance of state authorities.

The first amendment forbids the establishment of religion but protects the free exercise of religion. Eidsmore examines the amendment and how it has been interpreted by courts over the years. While many Christians are not pleased with every court decision, it must be noted that this amendment guarantees a degree of religious freedom which is virtually unknown in any other country of the world.

Laws and court decisions touch many areas of great interest to Chris-

tians such as public schools, private schools, home schools, the media, abortion, etc. The author examines these issues from the standpoint of one who is both a Christian and an experienced attorney.

In the final section, the author gives helpful advice on selecting and working with an attorney. He discusses the lawyer-client relationship, cost of legal services, a minister's right to silence, and handling church property. The volume contains information about wills, estate planning, tax planning, copyright laws and clergy malpractice. Some attention is given to the operation of adult criminal courts and juvenile courts.

The first part of the book makes for rather tedious reading. It could be reduced with no loss of content or continuity. The second and third parts are better reading. The author discusses numerous court cases and presents conclusions which can be drawn from them. This is a book for every pastor. It helps remove some of the mystery connected with our modern judicial system. ▲



Green Tree Bible Study

Robert E. Picirilli

Colossians 2:1-7

Christ, The Treasure-house of All Wisdom

Earlier articles mentioned the theological heresy at Colosse. Some of the false teaching has been countered earlier in this epistle, especially the misconception of Christ's person (1:15-19).

Beginning at 2:1, Paul will speak directly about the errors, warning the Colossians against any teachings or emphasis that would lead them astray. These first seven verses we may call a *warning against persuasive words that do not find in Christ the treasure of wisdom*. The false teachers at Colosse took pride in a human wisdom that did not center in the Lord Jesus.

Paul's *Desire for His Readers* is expressed, in 2:1-3, with great emotion. He experiences "conflict" (Greek *agon*, the athletic struggle, whence our word "agony") for the believers in Colosse and nearby Laodicea, even though he has not personally met many of them (v. 1).

His desire for them relates both to their experience of Christian life and to their focus on Christ Himself (vv. 2, 3). He is *praying* these desires.

He would see them encouraged, their hearts knit together in unity. He would also see them grasp "the mystery of God"—that "mystery" is Christ. Paul generally uses mystery (Greek *mysterion*) to refer to a spiritual knowledge that requires supernatural revelation rather than human effort.

Knowing Christ is knowing the greatest "mystery" (in this sense) of all. False teachers gloried in secret knowledge they said they had gained and would share only with those initiated into their fellowship. Paul tears into that in the most positive way possible.

The real treasures of knowledge are in Christ: knowing Him is enough. If

there is any "hidden" wisdom, it is hidden in Christ and therefore "accessible to all alike who seek him" (Light-foot). As McDonald expresses it, "They are hidden in him to be revealed through him."

A *Warning about Dangerous Words* is expressed in 2:4-5. Paul's fear (v. 4) is that heretics will use persuasive words that deceive his readers. Error is often enticingly presented, and people are often more influenced by the wrappings of a package than by its contents.

Paul's identification with his readers is so strong that, even though physically absent, he is present in spirit (v. 5). And what gives him joy is to see them in spiritual order.

This serves as a gentle exhortation to them, to manifest an "orderly formation and the firm front which (their) faith in Christ presents" (Moule). These are military metaphors. Paul is like a general "standing before his troops and reviewing the battlelines" (Lohmeyer).

An *Exhortation to Steadfastness* is linked, in 2:6, 7, with the warning. To guard against the danger of verse 4, they must (1) go on walking in the apostolic teaching by which they received Christ as Lord and were commanded to live under that Lordship; (2) being rooted and planted in this way, go on being built up and confirmed in the faith as they were taught, abounding in thanksgiving. These words use the metaphors of a plant well rooted and of a building with a sure foundation. Being in Christ provides such a sound basis to build and grow from.

The Colossians were being tempted to forsake the Christ of the gospel for a human imagination that promised

something new, something special, something wise and great. But Christ is the truly special, the treasured wisdom all men seek without knowing it. To forsake Him is not to advance or grow, but to be deluded by empty words. ▲

DIRECTORY UPDATE

ALABAMA

Fred Hawkins to Winfield Church, Winfield from First Church, Newport, AR

ARKANSAS

Darwin Kelton to Hatfield Church, Hatfield
Dale Pitts to First Church, Warren
Lonnie Wages to Pleasant Grove Church, New Hope
Bill Wheeler to Liberty Hill Church, Rose Bud
Wayne Williams to Old Reyno Church, Reyno

CALIFORNIA

David Fox to Antioch Church, Antioch
Jim Isaak to Lamont Church, Lamont

GEORGIA

Walter C. (Chuck) Scarborough to Bay Church, Hartsfield

IDAHO

James O'Donnell to Airport Road Church, Twin Falls from California Christian College, Fresno, CA

ILLINOIS

Kent Dunford to Oak Grove Church, Scheller

KENTUCKY

Frank Davenport to Grayson Church, Grayson from Emmanuel Church, Sharpsburg, NC

OHIO

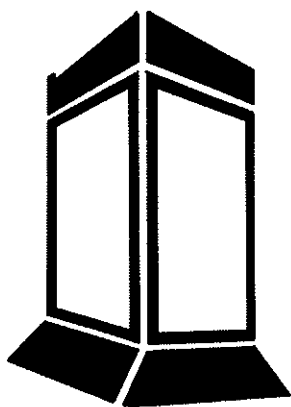
Delmar Marks to Espyville Church, Marion

SOUTH CAROLINA

Charles Brown to Sandhill Church, Coward, SC

OTHER PERSONNEL

Curt Gwartney to Fellowship Church, Flat River, MO as music and youth pastor



The Free Will Baptist Pulpit

Larry D. Hampton, Pastor

First Free Will Baptist Church, Murfreesboro, Tennessee

What Is Man?

Psalm 8

INTRODUCTION

What is man? Depends on who you ask. Evolutionists tell us that he is an animal. Communists happily explain that man is a pawn of the state. Christians maintain that man is God's highest creation.

Who's right? Does it really matter? You decide. If man is merely an animal, abortion doesn't appear as repulsive. A non-human glob seems less important if being human is only to be a highly developed animal.

If man's only value is found in his contribution to the state, violations of human rights aren't nearly as serious. After all, what's good for the state is good for its citizens.

If on the other hand man is a unique creation of God, abortion is a heinous crime against man and sin against God. If man was indeed created by God, any abridgement of his rights is reprehensible.

What is man? The only reliable source for an answer to this crucial question is God's Word.

- I. Man Was Created By God (Psalm 8:5—"For thou has made him . . ."; Genesis 2:7).
 - A. Man was created in God's Image (Genesis 1:26, 27). Though man is finite, he (like God) is a thinking, feeling, creating being.
 - B. Man has been given dominion over the earth (Psalm 8:6—"Thou madest him to have dominion over the works of thy hands . . ."; Genesis 1:28).
- II. Man is a Sinful Being (Romans 3:10-12).
 - A. Man is born in depravity as a result of Adam's sin (Romans 5:12).
 - B. Man is guilty because of his own sin (Romans 3:23).

III. Man is a Mortal, Judgment-Bound Being (Hebrews 9:27).

- A. Man has a relatively short lifespan (Psalm 90:10).
- B. Man, like animals, dies (Ecclesiastes 3:19).
- C. Man will be judged by God (Ecclesiastes 12:13-14; Acts 17:31).

IV. Man Can Be Forgiven of Sins and Receive Everlasting Life (John 3:16).

- A. Man can be saved (John 3:16—"should not perish, but have everlasting life").
- B. Man has the freedom to accept or reject God's offer of salvation (John 3:16—"whosoever believeth"; John 1:11-12).

CONCLUSION

What is man? Far too many share the perspective of a writer who said, "We have a sense of ourselves as print-outs on a computerroom floor: very disposable objects."

We must affirm the Bible's understanding of man. Man is a being created by God Himself. As such, he bears the image of his Creator. He is a mortal being destined for judgment. Because he is the object of God's love, he can be forgiven of his sins and receive everlasting life. However, no man is forced to accept God's offer of salvation.

It remains true that "The most unbelievable fact about being created in His image is that you are free to reject Him." ▲



NEWS OF THE RELIGIOUS COMMUNITY

SURVEY EXAMINES FIRED MINISTERS

NASHVILLE, TN (EP)—Small groups of discontent members and factions in the congregations are the two most common causes leading to termination of a minister, according to a survey conducted by the church administration department of the Southern Baptist Sunday School Board.

The survey on forced termination used a sample of 400 ministers, from which 246 usable responses were obtained. Two-thirds of the terminated pastors cited a small but powerful minority of members, while about 40 percent cited factions in the congregation. Other frequently mentioned factors included different leadership styles, inability to get along with members, and not spending enough time on the job.

One of the most surprising findings of the survey was that most respondents (62 percent) were between the ages of 35 and 54, the ages usually thought of as best for a minister's career. This finding dispels the notion that most terminated ministers are either old and unyielding or young and inexperienced.

According to the survey, 44 percent of terminated ministers were fired suddenly, and without warning. More than three-quarters of the respondents said the church had terminated pastors or staff members previously; 63 percent of the churches had experienced two or more terminations. About 90 percent of pastors surveyed said they were unaware or not fully informed regarding the church's history of terminations.

MINISTERS, CHURCHES WILL PAY MORE IN SOCIAL SECURITY TAXES

WASHINGTON, DC (EP)—Ordained ministers and churches will be among those contributing more to the Social Security system this year, as the maximum wage base and tax rates for Social Security tax are increased.

The maximum self-employment tax for ordained ministers will increase by \$401.40 to \$4,672.80 in 1985, according to a report by the Bureau of National Affairs, Inc. This represents an increase in the effective tax rate from 11.3 percent to 11.8 percent, and an increase in the wage base.

All churches have been subject to Social Security taxes since Jan. 1, 1984. This means that churches must pay the employer share of the tax and deduct the employee share from the wages of non-ordained staff members, unless the church has filed for an exemption.

Ordained ministers pay self-employment tax. A 1983 law raised the tax rate for self-employed

persons to 14.1 percent; a 2.3 percent tax credit is allowed for 1985.

But ministers and churches aren't the only ones that will be paying more in Social Security taxes. The maximum amount of annual earnings subject to Social Security tax will increase from \$37,800 to \$39,600, and the tax rate for employees and employers will each increase to 7.05 percent. Employers paid 7 percent and employees paid 6.7 percent in 1984. The maximum Social Security tax paid by employers on a worker's wages will rise by \$145.80 to \$2,791.80; the maximum Social Security tax for employees will be increased by \$259.50 to \$2,791.80.

According to the report, Social Security benefits will also increase. The average monthly Social Security check will increase from \$434 to \$449 in 1985. A couple's average monthly check will increase from \$750 to \$776 if both individuals are drawing benefits.

ONE IN TEN HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS IN NEW YORK HOOKED ON ALCOHOL

NEW YORK, NY (EP)—One in ten high school and junior high school students in New York State described themselves as "hooked" on alcohol in a recent survey. The survey, which was conducted for the state's Division of Alcoholism and Alcohol Abuse, estimated that of the state's 1.5 million secondary-school students, 53 percent had been drunk at least once in the last year.

One student in ten reported getting drunk weekly; 13 percent said they had attended classes while drunk. Of students in grades 7 through 12, 83 percent said they had tried alcohol; in grades 10 through 12 that figure jumped to 92 percent. Students who described themselves as heavy drinkers (at least five or more drinks weekly) were less successful academically.

The responses of New York students indicate a more liberal attitude toward drinking than survey results from other states. While 15 percent of students questioned in national surveys described themselves as heavy drinkers, about 20 percent of New York students said they were heavy drinkers.

CUBA IMPORTS BIBLES

HAVANA, Cuba (EP)—The Cuban government has authorized the Cuban Biblical Commission to import 12,000 Spanish Bibles and 900 Bible dictionaries. These will be given to leaders and pastors of Cuban churches. This is the fourth shipment of Bibles Cuba has allowed since 1970.

EVERY SIXTH BRAZILIAN IS A SPIRITIST

SIEGEN, W. Germany (EP)—Almost every sixth Brazilian is a spiritist, according to missionary Arthur Lienhard of the evangelical German Missionary Fellowship. Lienhard told the organization's main conference that the world's sixth most populous nation has its own Spiritist Church of Brazil. But Lienhard also said that only Korea surpasses Brazil for speed of church growth, pointing out particularly high increases in membership of evangelical churches there.

MICHAEL JACKSON CALLED RETURNED CHRIST BY FRINGE JEHOVAH'S WITNESS GROUP

BROOKLYN HEIGHTS, NY (EP)—A fringe group within the Watch Tower Bible and Tract Society (Jehovah's Witnesses) is hailing rock superstar Michael Jackson as the returned Christ.

Jackson poses a special problem for the Watch Tower leadership: as a rock star he represents a culture condemned by the sect, yet he reportedly leads an exemplary life, free of drugs, alcohol and sexual immorality. Jackson has been known to disguise himself and distribute Watch Tower literature on street corners.

The "Michael Jackson Cult" starts with the accepted Watch Tower belief that Jesus Christ was Michael the Archangel, and goes on to say that Jackson is that same angel, returned to earth. Jackson was conceived in 1957, which Jehovah Witnesses believe is an important year in end-times prophecies; the Witnesses held their largest international assembly ever during the month in 1958 in which he was born.

A pamphlet by the Jackson cult says "If Michael is the Archangel, He's been here before. And His appearance on earth would have grave implications for Witness theology: it would mean that Armageddon has already come and gone, and that we are already living in a 'new world,' over which Michael, the returned Messiah, rules as the Prince of Peace."

POLL: HALF OF TEENS ATTEND CHURCH REGULARLY

ARLINGTON, VA (EP)—A poll conducted by TeenAge magazine shows that half of teens attend church services weekly. Of the 710 teenagers who responded to the magazine's reader poll, 73 percent said they considered religion to be very important in their lives.

Nearly half of the teens polled (44 percent) said they looked to their faith to guide them in daily activities, while more than a third (37 percent) said they belong to a religious youth group.

On religion in the classroom, only 41 percent said religion has a place in public schools, but 63 percent said prayer should be allowed in school.



Gideon's Group



THE SECRETARY SPEAKS

By Melvin Worthington

The most unique battle in human history unfolds in Judges 6—8. It's a battle strategy that contradicts "getting there firstest with the mostest." You've never seen anything like it. It took a man of faith and obedience to bring it off.

Gideon's life is an encouragement and example to anyone who would be effective and efficient in the work of God. His circumstances were impossible. He helped a nation rise from the ashes of slavery by daring and flaming trust in God.

Gideon's Summons

In the dark days of Israel's oppression by the Midianites, God surprised Gideon in a wheat field. When God called Gideon and explained the task, Gideon was filled with honor. God usually takes ordinary people and uses them to accomplish His purpose. But, remember, it's a foolish man who seeks to lead God's people without a divine call.

God confirmed His call to Gideon with the fire (6:17-22) and the fleece (6:36-40). It always takes more than courage and ability to do things God's way.

Joseph Parker said, "Be sure that the heavens are with you, then be confident that the harvests of the earth will be gathered even to the last grain of wheat, and the enemy shall not prevail in any degree." The darkest circumstances never discourage God nor detour His plans.

Gideon's Strategy

You know the story—by divine direction Gideon's army was reduced from 32,000 to 300. Doing it God's way is not for the fainthearted!

Dr. Graham Scroggie observed, "God eliminates from His army those who dread and those who delay, and maintains only those who dare. God wants only those for whom victory is a magnificent obsession."

God reduces us to the minimum in order to use us to the maximum. Having reduced Gideon's group to 300, God guarantees victory over the Midianites. Gideon's 300 will do what Gideon's 32,000 could not do.

The significance of the strategy must not be overlooked. Gideon *divided* his soldiers into three companies. Each soldier had a trumpet, an empty pitcher and a lamp. What unusual weapons. They were not equipped for conventional warfare. That's God way. Those are God's weapons.

The instrument of victory could as easily have been a smooth stone, the jawbone of an ass or an ox goad—anything that points away from man's inability to His ability.

No human explanation could explain the outcome of Gideon's battle with the Midianites. God did the work. Victory today comes the same way. We have no weapons to wield but the Word of the Lord and the light of a Christian life shining through earthen vessels.

Gideon's Snare

Success is often followed by snares. Gideon rejected the privilege of becoming the first in a line of hereditary kings of Israel for he wisely recognized that Jehovah was the ruler of Israel.

Gideon did, however, allow the people to make an ephod from the spoils that Israel had taken from the Midianites. Perhaps he thought it would perpetuate the memory of the miraculous deliverance. Unfortunately, as it always happens, man's attempts to improve on God's way ended in disaster (8:27).

God delights to use men and women who recognize their own incapacity, who trust in His all-sufficiency and who make sure they are in His will before they attempt to do His work.

Gideon's group were few but they were fit. There will always be a place in God's work for Gideon's group—those who trust and obey, the fit few. ▲

The Secretary's Schedule

- Feb. 14-15** South Carolina State Association
Little Star FWB Church
Lake City, SC
- Feb. 17-20** First FWB Bible Church
Darlington, SC
- Feb. 27-
March 3** First FWB Church
Joplin, MO

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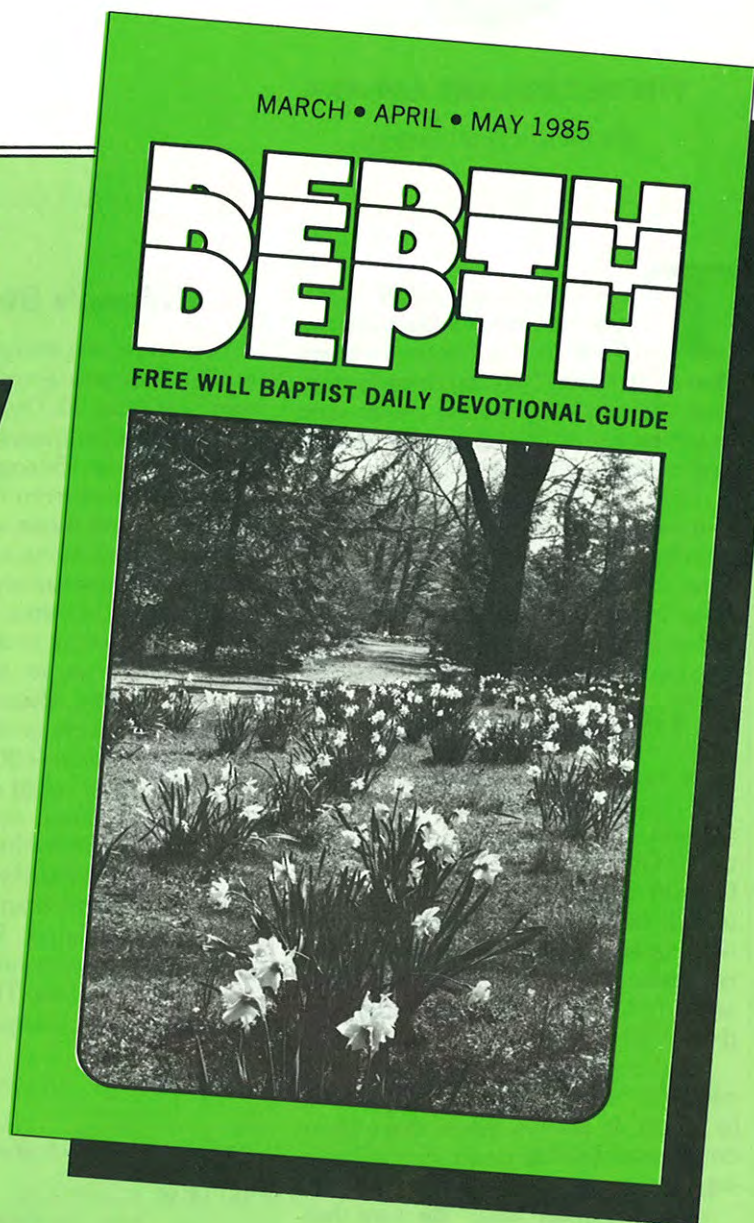


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