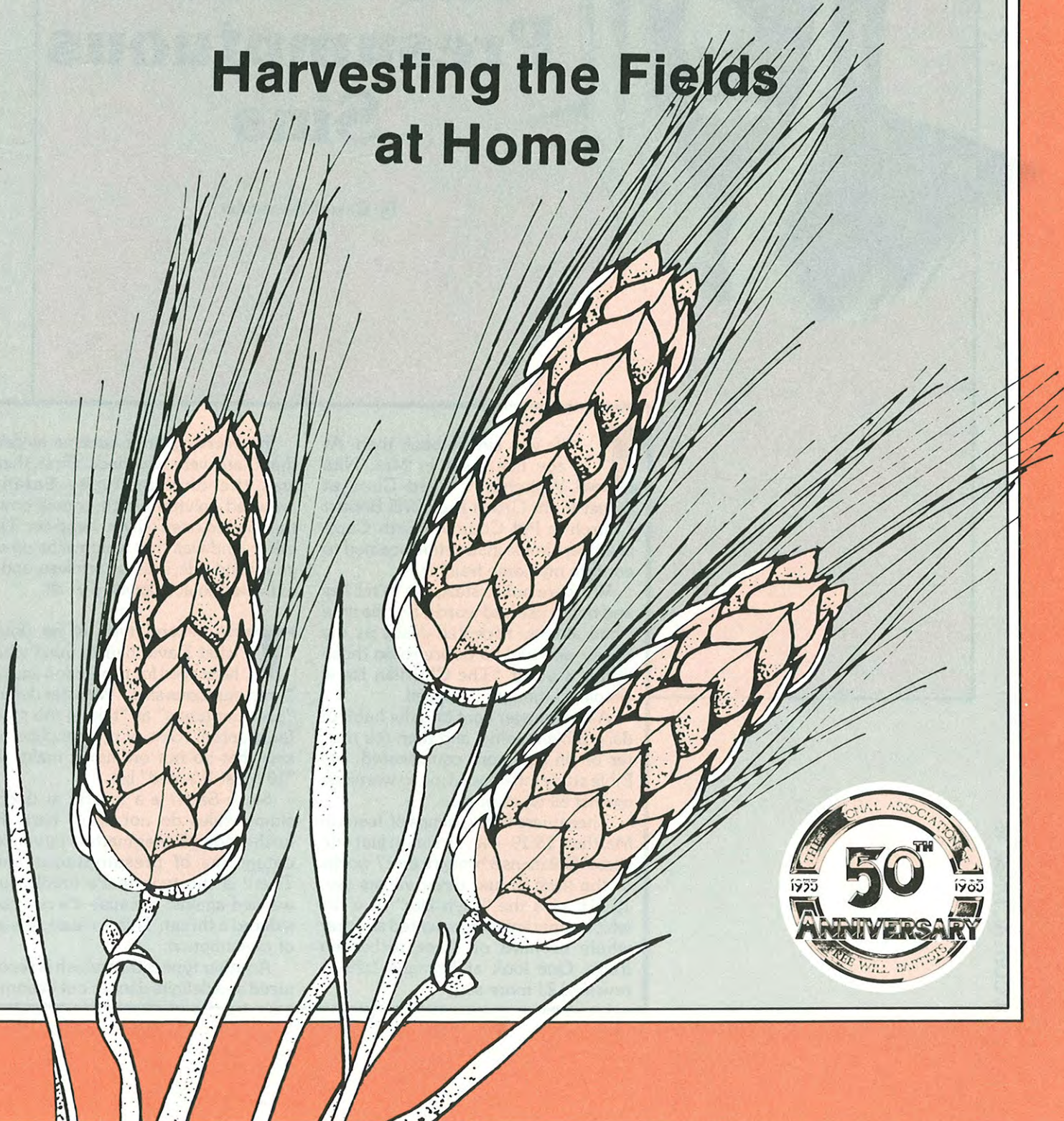


NOVEMBER 1985

Contact

OFFICIAL PUBLICATION OF THE NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF FREE WILL BAPTISTS

Harvesting the Fields at Home





The Curse of Presumptuous Sins

By Carroll Alexander

Life was simple back then. At age five I sat in Mrs. Nita Whitchard's Card Class at Sweet Gum Grove Free Will Baptist Church in Pitt County, North Carolina. Her simple instruction seemed to confirm my home training.

We were not to steal, not to tell lies and not to use bad words. By this time I had already accepted Jesus as my Savior and had no desire to do those things anyway. "The Christian life is simple," I thought to myself.

As a teenager I got into the habit of daily Bible reading, and then the matter of sin got more complicated. My Bible study introduced me to warnings against all types of sin.

There were the warnings of Jesus in Matthew 15:19—seven sins in just one verse! Galatians 5 brought on 17 works of the flesh in just three verses (vv. 19-21), plus the "such like" of v. 21 which apparently represented another whole orchard of these forbidden fruits. One look at Romans 1:29-31 revealed 23 more sins.

In observing sin it became evident that there were two kinds. First, there was the obvious type—Satan's armored column which comes down the road to destroy you head-on. The other kind was that which slips up on your blind side, seems harmless, and is expected to act slowly, if at all.

This second type is no doubt what David had in mind when he prayed for protection against "presumptuous sins," Webster defines "presumptuous" as "taking too much for granted." Sins of presumption are sins that do not ordinarily make the "10 Most Wanted" list.

Since Satan is a master at deceit, simple rules do not apply here. He further complicates matters by various categories of presumptuous sins. There is the type that's hardly ever warned against because it's not considered a threat. This is clearly the sin of presumption.

Another type is that which is recognized as a definite danger but becomes

presumptuous in that it's usually considered the sin of someone else. One of the most subtle is that which is often emphasized but becomes presumptuous in that the real meaning is obscured.

Take, for example, the sin of not worshipping God. Our Christian vocabulary is permeated with references to worship. We go to church to worship God. We attend worship services, sing songs of worship at the house of worship on the day of worship.

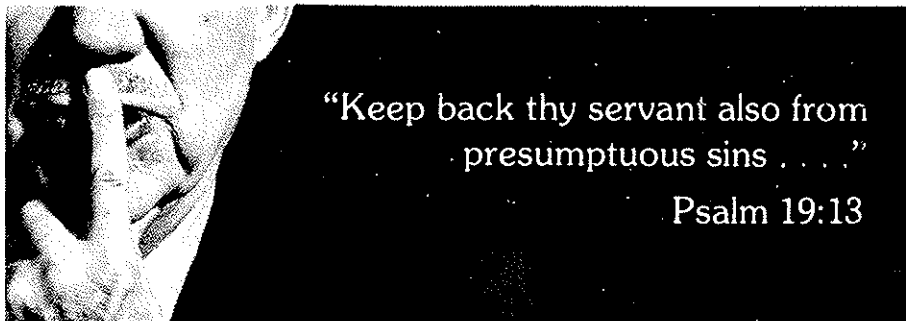
The leader of the service says, "Let's worship the Lord together in song," but how much do we truly worship God? True worship is loving the Lord with all our heart and trying every way possible to please Him (Matthew 22:36-40).

Satan would have us believe that we have worshiped simply because we attend a service, sing songs, listen to a sermon and give an offering.

Another presumptuous sin is spiritual pride. How often it is the topic of preaching will vary from place to place, but it's definitely not considered the devouring monster that it really is. To begin, it utterly destroys true worship. It builds a deceptive view of one's acceptance of and approval by God.

Brother John Doe says, "I am more spiritual than Brother Richard Roe because I witness more than he does or I give more money to the Lord than he does."

We cannot help but wonder how Brother John knows all this to be true.



We also wonder how he knows that his depth and quality of witness and his devotion in giving are superior to Brother Richard's.

Jesus said, "So likewise ye, when ye shall have done all those things which are commanded you, say, We are unprofitable servants: we have done

that which was our duty to do" (Luke 17:10). Apparently having the proper attitude will focus our attention on the inadequacies of our own account rather than the record of our brother.

Then there is the sin of gluttony. There is much biblical evidence to show God's hatred for this sin. It often gets in the news from the pulpit and in regular conversation, but it still seems to come forward as a joke to be laughed at rather than a sin to be crucified.

Why is the defilement of the temple of our bodies (I Corinthians 3:17) always blamed only on the cigarette and the alcoholic drink? That both of these are harmful is well documented in our day even in the studies of non-religious people such as medical groups and insurance companies.

While I was visiting in a hospital, two doctors drew me aside to discuss the condition of a patient who had nearly died. One of the doctors solemnly said, "Preacher, if it were not for smoking and drinking we could (virtually) shut down this hospital."

These studies also document the danger of gluttony. Then why does this sin ride the high road and enjoy the role of celebrity at our feasts when the Word of God warns us to be temperate?

A missionary speaking in our church said that people in his country average one-half pound of beef per person annually and that heart attacks there are virtually non-existent.

Medical experts say that every pound of extra weight puts two miles of extra blood vessels on the heart. Wonder how many suffer a "living death" because of the sin of gluttony? Yet, this sin enjoys the cloak of immunity because it's more acceptable



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SINS (from page 3)

socially and because its indulgence is so enjoyed.

Now consider the sin of gossip. There's an abundance of condemnation in the scriptures regarding the sins of the tongue. Much of it relates to gossip. Why then does it thrive, destroy reputations, split homes and churches, and even denominations?

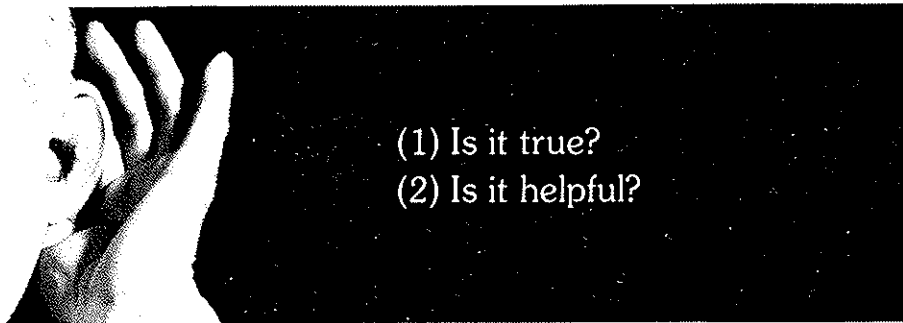
The answer is presumption. When "Brother John's" neighbor does it, it is "gossip," but when "Brother John" does it himself, it's just "discussion."

Two good rules are (1) Is it true? (2) Is my discussion of the matter

the weight of the world on his own shoulders instead of casting his burdens upon the Lord (Psalm 55:22).

Is it being irresponsible to obey God in casting our care upon Him (I Peter 5:7)? No, it's being irresponsible and disobedient not to do it. This does not eliminate our responsibility. He knows that we cannot carry the load alone but that we can serve as a powerful instrument in His hands when we trust Him.

May the dear Lord deliver us from the sins of presumption. With David in Psalm 19 let us pray: "Keep back thy servant also from presumptuous sins."



(1) Is it true?
(2) Is it helpful?

necessary and helpful to the solution of the problem?

Perhaps one of the greatest sins of presumption is lack of faith. The subject of faith enjoys a great share of our preaching, singing and prayer, but how much real faith do we have? No doubt the problem lies again in presumption.

We "take for granted" (Webster's definition) what it really is. Faith is not magical stardust that is strewn before us in life's pathway to remove our troubles. It is simple trust in God that equips us to go through the valley of trial and emerge "... more than conquerors through him that loved us" (Romans 8:37).

Too often we are satisfied with action and Christian service without faith. It is not our prayers, witnessing and a host of good works that hold the world together. Hebrews 1:3 says that Jesus does that. Neither is it all our planning and activity that saves the sinner. It is Jesus who does that through us. We must be led by Him and trust Him to engineer our lives to accomplish His will.

Sometimes a Christian stumbles in defeat because he attempts to carry

"Let them not have dominion over me." "Then shall I be upright." "I shall be innocent from the great transgression."

How? "Let the words of my mouth, and the meditation of my heart, be acceptable in thy sight, O LORD, my strength, and my redeemer" (vv. 13, 14).▲



ABOUT THE WRITER: Reverend Carroll G. Alexander pastors Columbia Free Will Baptist Church, Columbia, South Carolina, where he has served for 24 years. He is a graduate of Free Will Baptist Bible College and Columbia Bible College.

Directory Update

ALABAMA

Phil Bozeman to Red Bay Church, Red Bay from Beulah Church, Pamplico, SC

E. T. Sargent to Sulphur Springs Church, Northport from Pleasant Hill Church, Jasper

Dennis Haygood to Mt. Olive Church, Guin from Goodwater Church, Newton

CALIFORNIA

David Molter to Community Church, Kerman

John Smith to Village Chapel Church, Ceres from California Christian College, Fresno

GEORGIA

Leonard Ogletree to White Hall Church, Waycross

Glenn Thomas to Midway Church, Moultrie from Baxley Church, Baxley

KANSAS

Larry Collins to First Church, Emporia from Center Point Church, Vilonia, AR

TENNESSEE

Gerald Fender to Shady Grove Church, Whitesburg

TEXAS

Clyde Tucker to Stewart Church, Tatum from Forest Park Church, San Angelo

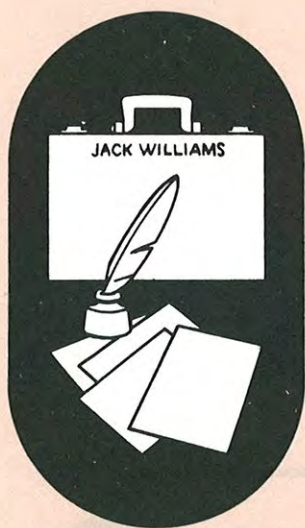
Billy Joe Aulds to First Church, Weatherford from First Church, Bowie

Clyde Gillentine to First Church, Kermit from First Church, Duncanville as associate pastor

OTHER PERSONNEL

Vernon Whaley to Southern Oaks Church, Oklahoma City, OK as minister of music from Free Will Baptist Bible College as chairman of the music department

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The Flip Side of Thanksgiving

I try to evade the very elements that test my fiber and make me a better person. Getting better usually means I have to hurt first.

I've learned that tough times aren't necessarily bad times. However, they are exhausting; they squeeze and shove and threaten. I often lose my balance in tough times, but they rivet my attention and force me to re-examine what really matters.

I'm not noble enough to say I enjoy tough times, yet I'm realistic enough to admit I need them. Tough times require Christ-likeness when it counts the most.

I learn to depend on God's grace and strength when my world collapses. I learn to guard against weaknesses and my tendency to grow discouraged and angry when little things go wrong.

I'm not at my best facing the giant alone or standing across the aisle from lions or trying to flatten the walls of some Jericho. It's frightening but invigorating.

The most important truth I've found in tough times is that I don't have to face them alone.

Thanks for personal critics. I now realize that my critics are often my best friends. They read each line I write and analyze it for accuracy. If I don't say it fairly, they tell me. Sometimes my friends let me slide with sentimentality and sloppiness, but not my critics.

I owe them a debt of thanks. They insist that I be professional and acknowledge all sides of an issue. They ask hard questions. They probe my motives. I don't like it, but I need it. No man ever gets above being accountable, especially the man who holds a pen in one hand and a Bible in the other.

My critics aren't satisfied that I did well yesterday. They demand better than I've ever done today, and I suspect that what pleases them now won't be good enough tomorrow.

Thank the Lord for honest critics. Sometimes they toss pepper in my eyes, but I value them more than they know. The rebuke of one trusted critic is worth six sugar letters from my private fan club.

Thanks for growing older. I'm so glad I'm not 25 again, or 15 with all that teenage hostility to battle. It was hard for me to be young. I'll try to remember that when my son wants the car next Saturday night.

Growing older is a relative term and some of my silver-haired friends consider me a boy. But I chum with some energetic 18-year-olds who know better and who don't let me forget it.

I'm thankful for the maturity I thought would never arrive, for the years that tempered my views and convinced me that a man isn't wrong just because he disagrees with me.

I don't regret losing the zip and fire of my teenage years, nor the untested attitudes of a young minister. My dark hair is graying nicely and I'm not as eager to pronounce judgment.

I gained more with age than I gave up to get here. He who calls himself the "Ancient of Days" knows the wonder of growing older.

Thanks for interruptions. I don't handle interruptions too well when I'm rushing toward a deadline. But sometimes those untimely phone calls, those unexpected office visitors are placed on my agenda by an unseen hand.

Interruptions remind me that life takes a number of unscheduled turns. While my critics keep me honest, my friends keep me interrupted.

I know that my interruption may be another brother's emergency or career-threatening circumstance. Interruptions prohibit me from getting too comfortable with the routine. They also keep me alert to the real agenda in my day.

Finally, I'm thankful for . . . Uhhhh, you'll have to excuse me, there's another "divine" interruption at my door! ▲

The man who has more to be thankful for than anyone else in the world lives at my house. It's me!

Of course, I'm thankful for a loving wife, for obedient children, for robust health and hearty friends. But this year I've learned to be thankful for the other side of life also.

Thanks for more than I can do. Many people seem bored with no purpose in life, no reason to get up in the morning. That's not the case with me.

There's always more to do—a news release to write, an article to edit, a meeting to plan, a phone call to return, a sermon to prepare, a letter to answer, a mistake to explain.

Oh, I miss a few deadlines and I grouse about the hours, but in my better moments I know I've got a good thing. I'm part of something that demands excellence and is bigger than I am.

Even though others could serve as well or better, God chose me for this task in this place at this time. I'm glad it's me, in spite of the fact that I'm frequently overwhelmed by it all.

Thanks for the tough times. Thanks for gritty circumstances that make me toe the mark, for events that surprise me and exact my best at times when I'd rather not be bothered.

I go out of my way to avoid pain and sickness; I run from embarrassment; stress and frustration scar my soul. Perhaps it shows my true colors when



I'm
a

Chaplain's Wife

By Susan Burgess

It sounds like a dream church. Financing church needs and projects does not depend on weekly offerings. Ministry at church does not depend on whether the congregation likes the pastor. The pastor's wife can do as little or as much as she wants without crossing preconceived ideals of the parish.

But this church is also unique in its demands. Projects do not lack from want of money but from red tape in the system. The pastor does not have to worry about congregational expectations but about the standards of his superiors and a semiannual "fitness" report.

The pastor's wife can participate or not; however, if she wants to get in and work, she does not have the support and assistance of that priceless organization, the Woman's Auxiliary.

Our unique church is a chapel on the United States Marine Corps Base at Camp Pendleton, California, and

it's an exciting, challenging ministry for my chaplain husband David, our 14-year-old daughter Wendolyn, and me. Set in an isolated valley three



ABOUT THE WRITER: Mrs. Susan Burgess, former editorial assistant for Contact, resides in Oceanside, California with her husband, David, who is a Free Will Baptist Navy Chaplain.



miles from the ocean, Las Pulgas Chapel is one of 14 chapels on this rugged military base.

Coming to a small congregation of young enlisted men who live in surrounding barracks was a cultural shock. The day-to-day ministry at Camp Pendleton is different from Hazel Dell Free Will Baptist Church in Illinois where my husband previously pastored. There, many in the congregation were elderly, shut-in, sick. Here the congregation is young. Most hospital visits are to welcome new babies to the world.

In the small Southern Illinois town of Sesser, most people had been raised by God-fearing parents and grandparents in a community influenced by Christian standards and morals. But at Camp Pendleton, David spends many hours counseling with Marines and military couples who don't believe in God and who don't live by the commandments spelled out in His Word.

Abortion, alcoholism, violence are daily problems in this congregation. Each week, he visits the correctional facility to witness to and help young men involved in various crimes.

What a blessing when a young man kneels by the office couch and prays to accept Jesus as Savior. How thrilled I am when David shares that a young couple telephoned to say that after counseling and reading the literature he gave them they cannot go through with the abortion they planned.

Not only is the church and congregation unique, the Free Will Baptist Navy chaplain is unique also. Free Will Baptists have nine chaplains serving in the armed forces. Of these, three serve 561,816 Navy, 197,814 Marines and 36,681 Coast Guard personnel (November 1984 statistics).

Endorsed by our Home Missions Department, chaplains are missionaries who receive salary and financial benefits, not from free will offerings, but from government paychecks. These pastors minister "by presence;" that is, working with their congregations Monday through Friday and often on duty on weekends as well as holding religious services on Sundays. Frequently, their pulpits are in muddy fields and on sea-misted decks.

Preparation for the chaplaincy is stringent and demanding. To be accepted as a Navy chaplain, a candidate must earn a Master of Divinity degree from a recognized seminary with at least 96 semester hours on the graduate level, be in good physical condition (able to pass the Navy and/or Marine physical fitness test), be endorsed by his denomination's endorsing agency, and be under 36 years old. Since most denominations require pastoral experience before endorsement, the age requirement is frequently crucial.

This was the case with my husband. David spent six years in the Navy during the Vietnam War. God called him to preach, and after graduating from Free Will Baptist Bible College in 1978, he pastored Hazel Dell Church in his hometown. What a blessing for God to return the sacrifice we had made of family, home and background, and allow us to serve near our old friends, homes and families.

Everyone thought we were settled for life. Almost everyone. Wendolyn, who had been born in Florida while David was in the Navy, loved being near her grandparents for the first time in her life. She started second grade with nearly a dozen little girls who were her closest friends from church. She planned to graduate from high school from the same consolidated school.

My parents, long-time Free Will Baptists, were more realistic. They figured we'd probably change churches, but there are about two dozen Free Will Baptist churches in that area where we could have pastored in coming years. David's mother was happy that we were finally close enough so that she could visit her son and granddaughter in her last years.

However, God had other plans for our lives, and He let us in on those plans step by step. Many people questioned our decision to leave a comfortable pastorate and go to seminary when David already had a Bible college degree. But David knew God was calling him to minister as a Navy chaplain which required a Master of Divinity degree.

One lady in our congregation, however, was not surprised. "Every time you spoke of your experiences in the

Navy, you were always so positive," she explained to David. It's true, they were positive years. Years in which David saw the need for fundamental ministers in the chaplaincy.

He resigned the church, even though some in the congregation did not understand how he could leave. It was heartbreaking to leave dear friends and fellow laborers and especially the little children who were so faithful to ride the van to church each Sunday.

It was heartbreaking to leave my family, but thank God they are all Christians who support us with prayers and love.

It was especially heartbreaking to leave David's mother who knew she was dying of cancer. But she had dedicated her son to the Lord over 30 years ago, and he was just living up to the Lord's command to leave father and mother to do God's will. She died three months after we moved.

God's plans are exact, even to timing. October seems an awkward time to begin seminary. However, since Mid-America Baptist Theological Seminary in Memphis, Tennessee, is on a quarter system, David was able to enroll in the second quarter of 1981.

If David had waited as the young man in Luke 9:59 asked Jesus, "Suffer me first to go and bury my father," it would have been too late. God knew David had to finish his schooling early even though at the time we thought October was just in time for allowing David to graduate in May 1984.

David hoped to attend Chaplain's School in July-August 1984 and come on active duty that fall. We could not foresee that the Navy would lower the maximum age requirement for coming on active duty from 39 to 36 midway through David's last year at Mid-America. David would be 36 on July 2, 1984, just days before he was scheduled to begin Chaplain's School.

Prayers, God's intervention and the support of men of God on the seminary staff worked together to allow David to take extra courses by independent study, receive seminary credit for attending Chaplain's School in the April-May 1984 session, and allow him to graduate from seminary "in absentia" on May 11, 1984.



WIFE (from page 7)

His application for active duty was approved less than one month before his 36th birthday. He came to Camp Pendleton on active duty September 4, 1984.

For David, the ministry proved demanding yet immensely rewarding. As a Navy chaplain, he expected to be wearing Navy blues and working somewhere near water. As a Navy chaplain serving with the Marine Corps, the first thing he had to do was buy a new wardrobe in Marine green.

I thought going back to military life would be easy after my six years experience as the wife on an enlisted Navy man. The commissary offers the same 20 percent savings on groceries over civilian food stores. The medical clinic has been updated to include computers and credit-card-like hospital cards.

However, the biggest change is in the switch from Navy to Marine ranks and insignias. I know a first class petty officer from a master chief in the Navy, but how do I tell the difference between a sergeant and a gunnery sergeant? (An Air Force wife said it has something to do with the gunnery sergeant's being Swedish. It's comforting to know other people have the same problem.)

Nonetheless, plunged into the mainstream of life as a chaplain's family, we discovered several judgments had to be settled regarding points of conduct and course. To understand the points of contention that a chaplain in the armed forces faces, one must first understand that the chaplain actually has two employers.

First, the United States government hires him as an officer and pays him a salary. Second, his denominational endorsing agent expects him to represent his denominational beliefs and only by whose continual endorsement can he remain a chaplain. Yet a chaplain, just as any sincere Christian, will in the final analysis answer to only one all-powerful authority, God.

Many Christians, including myself during David's prior Navy service, question how a min-

ister who wants to obey God can work side-by-side with chaplains who do not believe God's Word to be infallible and whose lifestyles are not representative of what Free Will Baptists would term "godly." The answer is relatively simple when the chaplain is compared to a pastor in the civilian world who has two employers.

A pastor of a small church is employed by the church to preach on Sundays and perhaps lead a Bible study on Wednesdays. However, the congregation, although paying him only for these two days, expects him to represent God and, through that Christian life, the local church all during the week.

He is expected to witness at his weekday place of employment, whether it be a factory, farm or federal post office. The pastor is not judged as to his own spiritual condition by the spiritual condition of his co-workers. He did not hire the co-workers, nor was he expected to seek a place of employment where only born-again believers worked.

That's the way it is with a chaplain. He works for employer number one who hired his co-workers and placed him in the base and particular chapel where the U.S. government felt was the best position according to its needs. The U.S. government is responsible for the quality of men it employs; the chaplain is responsible for the quality of man he is.

What about the expectations of the denominational agency endorsing the chaplain? Free Will Baptists are among the most conservative groups who have chaplains in the military. The Free Will Baptist people manifest holy lifestyles and demand such from their ministers.

Whether these demands are ever spelled out officially or not, there exists in Free Will Baptist ranks an unspoken aura of expectations for Free Will Baptists and especially ministers. Most of these expectations are biblically based. Some are culturally based. However, all must be respected and honored by any minister who wants to effectively serve in Free Will Baptist circles.

While the chaplain's ministry is at the sufferance and direction of the government to a great extent, that

government cannot force him to do what his denominational beliefs prohibit him from doing. If he is expected to participate in something which written faith and practices of his denomination prohibit, he can refuse. He conducts his services and preaches his sermons in a manner which are not contrary to his denomination's teachings.

Now comes the sticky stuff. Most Free Will Baptist churches we have attended did not list every hymn to be sung in the worship service in the bulletin. Some did not even have a bulletin. However, listing or not listing hymn numbers is neither biblical nor anti-biblical, and neither is it Free Will Baptist nor non-Free Will Baptist. It is just preference. When it comes to preference, there can be a lot of leeway.

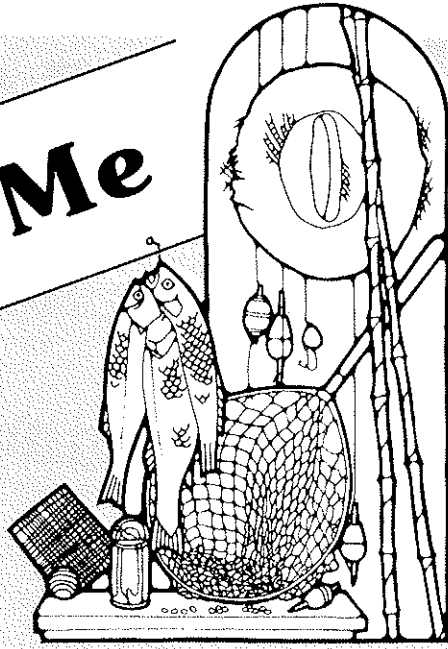
Even in the manner in which the communion service is performed, there can be a degree of freedom. Read the scripture's account of the last supper closely. Jesus only mentions using one cup. Free Will Baptists usually use several little communion cups. One Protestant chapel communion service on this base uses only one cup, and the chaplain dips the wafer into the cup before he hands the wafer to the participant.

For years I had assumed our way of serving the Last Supper commemoration as "the way," but I had never studied the scriptures as to the way Jesus probably served the Last Supper. Nor had I realized that having numerous communion cups and mass produced "unleavened bread" are just trappings of today's society similar to having pianos and organs for musical accompaniment instead of harps and trumpets. However, I still cannot get used to communion wafers that look and taste like styrofoam.

Furthermore, learning that as in the times of Elijah, God has not left Himself unrepresented among chaplains and the military has been refreshing. We have met, heard the testimonies and seen the examples of many God-fearing, conservative chaplains, including those in high command, here at Camp Pendleton.

Las Pulgas Chapel is blessed with several Christian clerks, young men who can serve God and the

Totally Me



By LaCrecia McFaddin

Twice I read *Total Woman* and I still find myself puzzling over the image of a total woman. Why isn't this me? Why, by the author's standards, am I left feeling half a woman?

Once in a while, like most every woman, I put on the frills—the black satin gowns trimmed in lace and the stimulating aroma of elegant perfumes. One day it dawned on me that this didn't have to be a daily routine.

I could be a totally practical woman without having to prove my femininity. I don't have to wear exotic gowns and perfumes to woo him.

military by seeking assignments as chaplains' clerks to help in paper work and day-to-day work of the chapel. Being a Christian is not a requirement for the position, but those at Las Pulgas are full-time Christian workers who are paid by Uncle Sam.

These challenging and thought-provoking circumstances have made us stop, look and listen: stop to reevaluate what we were used to doing as tradition in Free Will Baptist churches, look to the scriptures to see if God's Word speaks directly and in principle to the particular practice at hand, and listen to the Holy Spirit's teachings on smugness and complacency.

What did we find? First, Free Will Baptists actually do not have much written about the "how-to's"; it is mostly handed down practices. Secondly, some customs which we considered anti-biblical because they were

Not long ago my three sons persuaded my husband to go on a fishing trip. My mind burst with endless tasks I could accomplish while the boys and their father were away. While tugging and pulling legs through jeans, the chatter continued, "Dad, where's the sinkers? Dad, will I get to catch one? What if we see a snake?"

That dreaded question finally broke through the excitement. "Honey, you sure would make us happy if you could go." Go? I thought about the dinner dishes and about the endless washing, sweeping, dusting and shaking rugs.

observed by denominations who did not consider God's Word infallible were actually scriptural practices. And lastly that doctrine taught in God's Word is the most important issue.

Living as we have in places where there were no Free Will Baptist churches or Free Will Baptist people, we have had to attend other Baptist churches and have been exposed to numerous other denominational beliefs. How thankful I am for those experiences because they forced me to study the Bible in order to see if Free Will Baptists really are preaching the truth. And how thankful I am that Bible study showed me Free Will Baptist doctrine is as close to the Bible's teachings as any denomination I know.

If it were not, I would not be proud to say, "I'm the wife of a Free Will Baptist chaplain." ▲

My silent thoughts were broken by the eager eyes of four awaiting faces, eager to know my decision. Hesitantly I nodded my head yes. The noise started all over again, as I pondered one still unanswered question, "What if we do see a snake?"

The fishing was such fun and not one time did I remember those duties of home. We laughed and enjoyed one another for three hours. The return trip was a sight since the boys were excited about their catch. My husband talked all the way home.

I wondered how he could stand to look at me with my wind blown hair, my dusty clothes, my insect bitten legs and, worst of all, blood from the chicken livers that we used for bait dried on my hands. "Well, what does he think of me now?" I wondered.

The car slowed down bringing my thoughts back to the familiar sight of home. At the click of the ignition my husband turned to me, gently picked up one of those dirty, undesirable hands and smiled, "You've made me real happy today. We'll do it again sometime real soon."

The most beautiful and intriguing love story of all ages is the story of Ruth. In the first meeting between Ruth and Boaz, Ruth had been gleaning the fields. This task could have been more strenuous than that of the reapers since she got only what was left behind.

I can well imagine what Ruth must have looked like after working in the dry, hot sun, scooting along the dusty ground, dragging that heavy sack of corn, trying to supply the necessities of life for her and her mother-in-law.

Boaz showed favoritism to Ruth before she ran home, fixed her hair, cold creamed her face, did her nails and slipped on a gorgeous dress. His love was conceived for her because of her inward beauty.

Ruth 2:11, "And Boaz answered and said unto her, it hath fully been showed me, all that thou hast done. . . ."

Glamor gives a temporary excitement and uplift to a woman, but her virtues are her true beauty. The Bible says, "Who can find a virtuous woman? For her price is far above rubies." ▲

ABOUT THE WRITER: Mrs. LaCrecia McFaddin is a member of Bethlehem Free Will Baptist Church, Kannapolis, North Carolina, where her husband, Herman, pastors.

The Purpose of Ministerial Ordination

By Clarence Hearron

Certificate of Ordination

This Certifies that the bearer, _____, of the city of _____,
county of _____, state of _____, a regular member of the _____

Free Will Baptist Church

has this day been publicly set apart to the work of the gospel ministry, by prayer and the laying on of hands, according to the practices of the Free Will Baptist denomination, and is hereby authorized to preach the gospel and administer its ordinances wherever God in His providence may call.

This Certificate of Ordination shall be in full force and effect for life, or during the maintenance of sound doctrine and good moral character. It shall be subject to recall or annulment by the conference or association to which the above named belongs, and upon official demand by said conference or association, the above named is hereby placed under solemn promise to deliver this certificate.

Ordaining Council

_____ Chairman _____

_____ _____

_____ Date _____

1 Timothy 4:16 2 Timothy 4:2

When the Apostle Paul instructed Titus to "ordain elders in every city" (Titus 1:5), he was following the pattern set by the Lord Jesus Christ when He called His disciples and ordained 12 to preach the gospel (Matthew 5:1; Luke 6:13). The practice of ordaining men to the ministry is based firmly on the Word of God.

Likewise, the ordaining of deacons to their office is scriptural, if we are to believe that the seven men chosen by the church at Jerusalem to minister to the needy widows constitute the first

deacons of the church. And most scholars agree that this is the beginning of deacons in the church.

Both ministers and deacons were set apart by the laying on of hands of those who had already been ordained, with the exception of the Lord Himself. The church, that is the local body, gave its authority to do the ordaining, under the direction of the apostles.

Although there are some who believe that there are more than two groups that should be ordained, the Bible indicates that there are only two—elders and deacons. No one has

any problem with what the term "deacon" means, but there is some confusion regarding the term "elders."

Most people agree that the New Testament elder is an ordained minister, although they would not be unanimous in their idea regarding the duties. Among Free Will Baptists an elder is considered a pastor, or at least one ordained to the ministry who could be a pastor.

Just what is the purpose of ministerial ordination? It is a public recognition of the call of God on a man's life. It is also an official setting apart to the office. The church and the association confer upon that individual the rights, duties and privileges of the office.

Certain authority belongs to the ordained that no one else has by virtue of the fact that the church has conferred that authority upon him.

By the laying on of hands by the council or presbytery, the church places its approval and confers such authority to the individual who is ordained. The individual then has the assurance that he is not alone, but is in a grand company of men throughout the ages who have placed their lives on the line for the people of God and for the Lord Jesus Christ.

Many associations recognize the one who is ordained as a proper subject for membership in the association to which his church belongs. Because of this, many associations feel that they have the right to approve or disapprove of one's ordination, at the request of the local church, of course.

In the subject of qualifications there are areas of disagreement. Paul lists the qualifications that most denominations follow in I Timothy 3:2-7 and Titus 1:7-9.

The only qualification where there seems to be any disagreement concerns marriage. There probably never would have been any disagreement if there had not been any plural marriages. But the obvious interpretation seems to be the best.

Emotions become involved when some people try to equate these qualifications to a man's Christianity. But if a man is not ordained because he is a novice, does that mean that his Christianity is being questioned? Or if he has

an unruly household, does that mean that he is not a Christian? The answers to these questions are obvious.

Neither should one think that his Christianity is being questioned if he is not ordained because of multiple marriage.

The pastors are to be examples to the believers (I Timothy 4:12), and no one could truthfully say that every believer should have multiple marriages. If the pastor has experienced this situation, the example is there. It is strange, however, that many other qualifications are not insisted upon as strenuously. For example, how many candidates for ordination have been required to teach a lesson to show that he is "apt to teach?" He is to be blameless in this area too.

One area of examination should be regarding the knowledge of the Bible. Some have been ordained who did not even know how to explain the plan of salvation. This is a pathetic situation. He should also be able to tell why he is a Free Will Baptist and give scripture to back up his reasons.

After the individual has been ordained, just how much authority does he have? First of all, he is recognized by the denomination, assuming that his church is affiliated with those who are in the denomination, and may preach the gospel wherever God leads him, solemnize marriages, administer the ordinances, pastor churches, organize churches and assist in the ordination of others.

As a pastor he has certain authority that he does not have if he is not a pastor. The authority of a pastor falls into an entirely separate category from the authority of one who is ordained. An ordained minister who is a member of a church but is not the pastor certainly does not have the same authority that the pastor has, by virtue of the delegation of that authority by the church that called him.

The Bible warns that one should lay hands suddenly on no man. It also states that a novice, a new convert or member, should not be ordained. This warning gives sufficient reason to put a man on probation (a term disliked by many) before he is ordained.

Free Will Baptists do this by licensing an individual for a year or more to see what kind of minister he might become. As was previously stated, the Bible

gives sufficient grounds for this action, and this action should be followed.

There is no higher calling than the calling of God to be a minister of the gospel, and one should regard this call as a trust from God. Paul thanked God that He counted him worthy to preach the gospel and states with the utmost conviction of his soul, "Woe is me if I preach not the gospel."

Unless one has a similar conviction, he should not consider being ordained, nor should any council or presbytery be inclined to lay hands on him. ▲

ABOUT THE WRITER: Reverend Clarence Hearron pastors First Free Will Baptist Church, Denison, Texas.

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Journey Into Winter

By Roger Reeds

Australia—A New Mission Field?



ABOUT THE WRITER: Dr. Roger Reeds is general director of the Sunday School and Church Training Department.

The wheels of the 727 touched the Nashville runway at 11:15 p.m. I was home, courtesy of Air New Zealand and Republic Airlines. I don't mind admitting that I had some anxious moments in my travels. Two planes crashed during the span of time I was gone.

My long journey began 12 days earlier. The Christian Supply Center of Auckland, New Zealand had written to me about the possibility of handling our curriculum and books. Of course I liked the prospect and began wondering about the rest of that section of the world. I've had a burden for Australia,

this giant land some 1200 miles southwest of New Zealand, for some time.

I called my travel agent and together we plotted a trip. A great deal would depend on the cost. I was surprised to learn how economical the trip would be with super-saver fares and winter-time travel rates. We determined that I'd go in August because this is a slow time for me. It was also winter there.

I decided to visit two of Australia's largest cities before I made my contact in Auckland, New Zealand. My first stop was to be Sydney, Australia.

On Saturday night, August 3, I departed Los Angeles International Airport on Qantas Airlines, flight 12. We flew non-stop to Sydney, 14½ hours in the air. We also flew into Monday as we crossed the international date line. Sunday disappeared from my calendar. We arrived in Sydney at 6:40 a.m. on Monday.

I've had jet-lag before but never like this. The first day there I wanted to sleep. I hit the bed without unpacking and awoke several hours later.

I came to Australia cold turkey. I had no one in mind to contact. I used the yellow pages in the telephone directory to find some publishing houses, bookstores and fundamental preachers. My telephone calls led me to one place—the Christian Press at Sydney.

I made an appointment and called on them. I'd brought along samples of our curriculum and books. They seemed impressed and expressed a desire to represent us in Australia.

I went to bed as early as 7:00 p.m. most evenings and slept through till morning. It was hard to shake the effects of jet lag and the loss of sleep on the journey over.

On Wednesday morning, August 7, I left on the brief flight to Melbourne, Australia and went right to work upon my arrival. I searched the yellow pages and made some calls.

One call led me to a Reverend Donald Bell, pastor of Caulfield Evangelical Methodist Church. He had attended seminary in St. Louis, Missouri with our own Ralph Hampton and Jack Stallings.

Incidentally, I travelled some with him in his automobile. I noticed that the front end was severely dented. He told me that he'd hit a kangaroo a few weeks earlier.

My calls led me to Word Books of Australia. This is a licensee of Word Books of America. My call on them involved an hour train ride and a mile walk. The walk wouldn't have been so bad except for the case of literature and books that I was carrying. They were kind enough to give me a lift back to the train station.

On Sunday morning I left Melbourne for Auckland, New Zealand. It was a long flight over and another time loss that got me there late in the evening. On Monday I loaded my literature case and taxied to the Christian Supply Center of Auckland. I was warmly received by a Christian brother. He seemed thrilled that someone would call on him from America. He was excited about our curriculum.

On Tuesday I began my long journey home. Because I crossed the international date line again, I arrived in the United States on Tuesday. Because I was on a super-saver fare, I had to spend the night in Los Angeles before continuing my journey to Nashville.

Australia has a land mass about the size of the United States with a population of nearly 16 million. The country is permeated by liberalism and humanism.

There would be no language barrier and very little cultural shock.

The downtown area of Sydney is filled with adult movie houses and girlie shows. Within one block I was approached twice by prostitutes. (Prostitution is legal there.) Someone told me that homosexuality was rampant there. The punk rock appearance is there and numbers of young people imitate it. Sydney has a population of 3½ million.

Melbourne is a lovely city with many parks and monuments. The downtown area seemed to have a better appearance than Sydney. On one occasion I saw a group of children singing gospel choruses and giving out tracts. That

was encouraging. Melbourne's population is nearly three million.

Australia is very European and very American. They drive vehicles with steering wheels on the opposite side from ours. I saw Pizza Huts, McDonalds, Wendys and Kentucky Fried Chicken outlets. Safeway Supermarkets are there. So is Woolworth, K-Mart and Venture.

Some terminology is different although they speak a good British-accented English. A druggist is a "chemist." Sales are called "closing down" sales or "taking stock" sales. Carry out foods are called "take away" foods. In driving, instead of yield you "give way." Instead of passing lanes they have "overtaking" lanes.

I have no doubt that we will sell some curriculum in Australia. More than that, I wish we would send missionaries there. In fact, I highly recommend this to our Foreign Missions Department. There would be no language barrier and very little cultural shock.

I don't think we'd have much success if the people we send are called missionaries over there. They basically would be doing home mission work on foreign soil. Churches could be dug out in the larger cities and a college begun to train workers. I hope we will

rise to this challenge and not leave the task to someone else.

New Zealand is not as well developed as Australia. It's a lovely country about the size of England with a population of three million. Auckland has about one-third of the country's population. I think we will sell some literature there. Perhaps we ought to send some missionaries there as well.

I came home concerned. I've been remiss in praying for these two countries. I shall pray for them often now. I am also going to pray that other Free Will Baptists will come to share this concern and send young evangelists to preach the gospel. ▲

The Local Church in Mid-Life Crisis

By Milburn Wilson

After World War II thousands of new churches were established. Today, of the 350,000 churches in America, four out of five are either plateaued or declining. Many of these plateaued/declining churches, now between 27-40 years old, are experiencing a predictable mid-life crisis.

New churches often experience an initial 15-20 year period of growth, followed by a plateau. The chart in this article shows the life cycle of the church.

There are no simple solutions to immediately break out of church mid-life crisis. However, there are some steps we can take to begin. We start by answering three questions—

—Why are we here?

—Where will our present course take us?

—Is this where we want to go? If not, what must be changed?

These questions will stimulate your church to rediscover its reason for

being, examine the assets Christ has entrusted to us and focus direction for the future.

Examine the leadership assumptions. In a plateaued/declining church, the pastor often sees himself as an enabler rather than an initiator. This attitude blocks visionary leadership.

Pastors and lay leaders in growing churches have a clear vision of what God wants to do and are willing to risk for that dream. In the typical plateaued/

declining church 95-98 percent of the time, money and people are spent on maintenance activities.

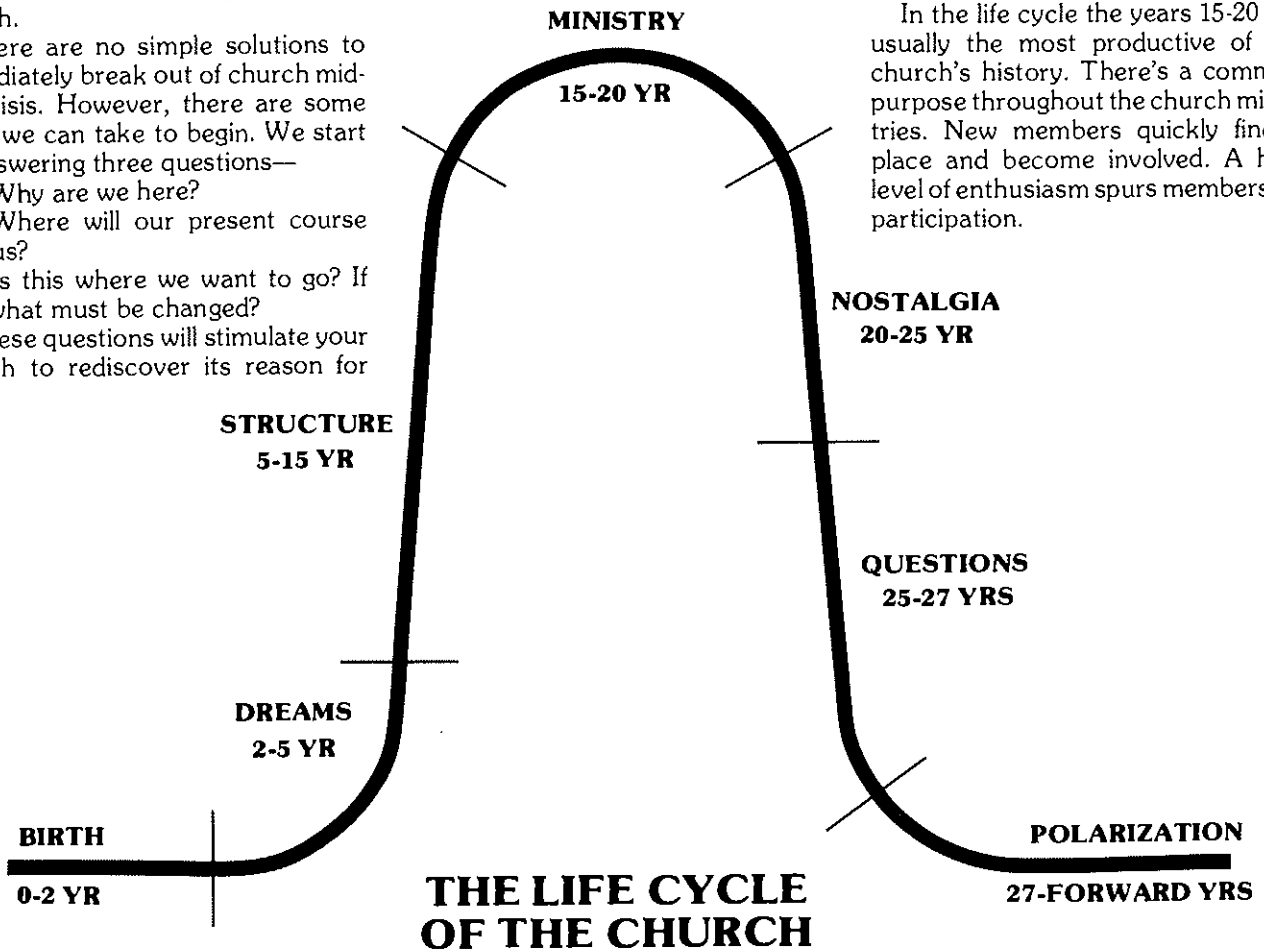
The Cycle of Life

In the birth or first two years of the new church, there is commitment to mission and purpose. All members are willing to work. Morale is high and attitude is positive to dream a dream.

In the years two to five all members put their dreams into place. Everyone is a witness for Christ and involved in making disciples. They are receptive and ownership is unanimous. There's a strong sense of mission and purpose among members. A high percentage of the members' time and identity is committed to the church.

In the years 5-15 the church builds its dreams. All church programs are put into place. The structures (buildings) are built. There is high visibility and understanding of purpose and mission. Volunteers are easily found and traditions begin to form. Changes are adopted and integrated from all levels of membership.

In the life cycle the years 15-20 are usually the most productive of the church's history. There's a common purpose throughout the church ministries. New members quickly find a place and become involved. A high level of enthusiasm spurs membership participation.



New programs are created to respond to new needs, but new proposals are given serious consideration. Morale is high and self-esteem at its highest level. Confidence is contagious that goals can be reached. We could call these years of maximum efficiency.

Now we enter the critical point of the church's life cycle (mid-life crisis), years 20-25. There's a lowering of members' understanding of purpose. New members do not sense the church's purpose.

There's also more paid staff to "enhance" the ministries, and original members feel "we have done our part." Few, if any, new programs are added. The structure (building) creates needs rather than responds to needs.

Few changes are proposed and no changes considered that radically depart from status quo. The morale polarizes into groups of highs and lows. The church's self-esteem develops uncertainties. We could call these years of nostalgia or institutionalization. The total membership tends to rejoice over past accomplishments rather than dream of new goals.

The years 25-30 become questioning years in the life cycle. Attendance drops, new members decline. The church now has sacred cows and power struggles.

Everyone wants to blame someone else (usually pastoral staff) for the lack of church growth. It's usually in the years 20-30 that pastors come and go often (two-year cycle). The new pastor comes with new dreams and the church does not dream with him.

The sacred cows have now become traditions and church leadership is not the pastor but the power influences of lay persons in the church. Pastoral change comes and blame is placed on the pastoral staff leaving. We could call these years of disintegration.

In the 27-following years, we call these years of polarization. The purpose of the church is lost and its mission not understood. Programs are eliminated for lack of participation and it's difficult to find volunteers. Ten percent of the membership do 90 percent of the work.

Each year programs are deleted for lack of funds and the primary goal is preservation or survival. Rationalizations are often made for why it can't be done, or "we've never done it that way before."

There's frustration and/or despair by church leaders in not knowing how to stop decline. This lowers morale and self-esteem in the membership.

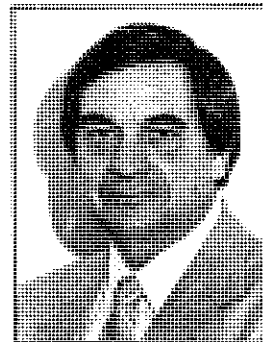
Breaking the Cycle

Many Free Will Baptist churches need to break out of mid-life crises. We need to dream again and start a new life cycle. Church leaders should look to God and within themselves for a clear vision of what they believe Christ wants to do in their church, then pursue that dream with every ounce of energy available.

Add new staff or lay members to be responsible for church growth, outreach and assimilation (rather than music, education, youth, etc.). Give priority to equipping and involving laity for church ministries. Find or create roles based on member interest, strengths, gifts and concerns. This

allows new members to contribute and build new friendships with those of similar interest.

May God help us to overcome the self images "we're a small church." If your church growth pattern in the last few years has plateaued, you need to dream again. Break out of mid-life crisis! ▲



ABOUT THE WRITER: Dr. Milburn Wilson pastors Sherwood Forest Free Will Baptist Church, El Sobrante, California.

What Are You Doing Here?

By Floyd Wolfenbarger

God found Elijah hiding from Jezebel in a cave and confronted him with that question. Perhaps we would benefit from such a confrontation ourselves. Everyone has something to do everywhere. We are challenged as Christians to do all we can wherever we are to bring glory to God.

What are you doing at church? It's too easy to be a spectator at church. Our buildings are designed for the comfort of the watcher with lights focusing on the performers. Every Christian can encourage the pastor or show appreciation for singers with a hearty amen.

What are you doing at home? Are there experiences in your home which have as their central purpose the exaltation of Christ? Our children should hear God's Word preached from the pulpit, endorsed at the dinner table and see it lived out in the family room. The love, the warmth and the discipline of home should be an echo of our relationship to Christ.

What are you doing at work? Earning money is not the sole reason for working. We may be witnessing to our co-workers. I'm not suggesting that you neglect your duties to preach on company time. To defraud your boss is no virtue.

However, if discussions of sports and politics exist, so should a word fitly spoken for God. Most folks who go to church do so because a co-worker or neighbor has invited them and impressed them with a Christian testimony.

What are you doing alone? Perhaps the most significant reason for spiritual drought at church, at home and at work is that nothing really happens when we are alone with God. We rarely pray in intercession or meditate on His word. If God gives us an empty hour in which to commune with Him, we rush to fill it with trivialities. It's when we're alone that we prove whose servants we are.

What doest thou here? ▲

By Brenda Spruill

Somewhere between the Missouri State Youth Camp and Monett, Missouri, I was told that my life's dream was to become a reality, and I was only 9 years old!

My parents, Luther and Helen Sanders, had answered God's call to go to Hawaii and I became a missionary. Hawaii was no different from Africa and Brazil to my childish knowledge of geography. I simply realized it was far away and exciting and I was going to share Jesus with other boys and girls.

If world geography was beyond my comprehension, American geography was not as we spent three months whizzing across the Free Will Baptist states in perhaps the shortest deputation in history. Deputation became a dreaded word, for it was a day by day succession of "being on display."

I had to take part in each service and then sit still the rest of the hour. Sunday after Sunday being in a different Sunday School class was terrifying. Years later I had a preacher's son tell me that he had once thought I was the biggest stuck-up snob in the world when he met me on deputation.

I wasn't stuck up, just shy and tired of all the changes in my world. Perhaps other MK's would agree that deputation has got to be the worst part of the missionary life because the children either stay with relatives and don't see Mom and Dad for weeks or go along and be scared to death of meeting so many new people.

I was fortunate in that my parents were sympathetic to my needs. Traveling from one church to another, we looked for opportunities to learn. Between Dad's love of American history and Mom's love of beauty, I saw so much of America that I was the envy of all my classmates.

Those deputation days were also educational to the ways of Free Will Baptists. There were churches that treated us like royalty and churches that forgot we were coming. Churches who provided pleasant and comfortable accommodations and others that felt it was beyond the call of duty to provide food and beds—for after all they had given \$10 to the poor missionaries.

Cynical? No, for my wise parents taught me at that early age that my

security was not in Free Will Baptists but in God, my heavenly Father. And as we trusted in God, He used Free Will Baptists to supply our every need and most of our wants as well.

Once we arrived in Hawaii, excitement and misconceptions succumbed to the reality that it takes a lot of work to birth and build a church. Mom and Dad were special in that they constantly shared their burden for the people with me and encouraged me to take part. If they had not, I would have been rebellious over the lack of family time we had.

I'll be honest, it was hard to go from being the only child, (my brother joined our family six years after we moved to Hawaii) to sharing Mom and Dad with a whole congregation. There was *always* somebody at our house for counseling, to eat a meal or just to be close to Mom and Dad's love.

My resentment was not successfully hidden when we had to wake up at 6:00 on Christmas morning to open presents as a family and then have people coming at 7:00 a.m. for a "cup of coffee" and leaving around midnight. It was a lesson in hospitality, and now it seems dull to have just my family of six around on special days. The more people the more memories, and I am blessed with many precious memories.

I've often wondered how my folks managed on the meager salary of those early missionary days to support the total expenses of the church, our family and all the entertaining that we did. I've come to realize that the stress was unbelievable in making ends meet, but God always supplied. I didn't mind

(continued on page 18)



Daddy a Miss



y Was ionary



By Rodney Whaley

“Five, four, three, two, one, Go! Let’s go Muktuk! Mush Chena! C’mon Stormy!” and my three-dog team was off for the third of three big days of sled dog racing.

The crackle of the sled’s runners against the snow was muffled by the cheers of the crowd as my team raced down the quarter mile chute and followed the trail into the lonely woods.

I was in third place, only two seconds out of second place. If I could only make up those few seconds! The silence of the woods was broken only by the sound of the sled’s runners against the crisp snow, the dogs’ heavy breathing, and the rapid beating of my heart.

Up a steep hill, down in the valley and then the long straightaway beside the frozen creek. Perhaps I could make up some time here. In the distance I looked and saw team number two, the team I had to beat.

“C’mon Muktuk! Get ’em! Go after ’em!” The dogs lunged forward in their harnesses, sensing the urgency in my voice. Through the woods we raced the entire three and a half mile course.

As we neared the finish line, Stormy sighted a short, southern-looking gentleman cheering on the other side of the finish line. To some he may have looked out of place among the Eskimos, Athabaskan Indians and Alaskan sourdoughs. But to Stormy and this 11-year-old dog musher, he was a one-man welcoming committee and cheer-leading squad combined.

We crossed the finish line and ran to him, a Free Will Baptist home missionary, as we anxiously awaited the announcement of my time: 12:02! Twenty-one seconds faster than team number two and a second place finish in the Junior Alaska Sled Dog Racing Championship for the son of a Free Will Baptist home missionary.

I don’t know who was prouder that day, my father or me. He didn’t say much. He congratulated Stormy while I gave most of my attention to the lead dog, Muktuk. Before long, my mother, brother and other friends gathered around me giving their congratulations. But I would always remember that the one person who met me at the finish line that February day in 1963 was my father.

In 1957 my parents were approached by the Free Will Baptist Home Missions Board to start a work in the then territory of Alaska. After prayerful consideration, they felt it God’s will for our family to go to Alaska and establish the first Free Will Baptist church.

As a 5-year-old, I recall standing in front of the stage at the 1957 National Association in Birmingham, Alabama as our family was presented to the delegates as their new missionaries to Alaska. Little did I realize then that the ensuing months would be remembered as a time when “Daddy was gone” as he spent weeks and months on deputation raising the needed support.

We were living in Jacksonville, North Carolina at the time, and moved into a small apartment so the parsonage of my father’s former pastorate could be available for their new pastor. I vividly remember the night when, after more than six weeks of deputation, my father came home.

We had decorated the house and put a big “Welcome Home, Dad!” sign on the front door. Like any father,



DADDY... WHALEY (from page 17)

he had brought gifts to each of us. I do not remember what my mother or brother received, but mine was a small toy farm tractor.

On the morning of March 12, 1958, we loaded everything we owned in our car and a trailer that we pulled behind, and headed for Alaska. Thirty-two days later, April 13, 1958, we arrived in Anchorage, our home for the next five and a half years.

The next months were spent in door-to-door visitation, Good News Clubs and evangelistic meetings as the birth of a Free Will Baptist church was taking place. Our "chapel" was the basement of our home, but Sunday services were full of enthusiasm as people were won to Christ.

The next fall, I entered first grade and began becoming an Alaskan. Of all our family, I suppose I was the most Alaskan. I enjoyed ice skating, sledding, tobogganing, and most of all, sled-dog racing.

It was my love for this sport that caused me to have my own team of dogs and become involved in racing. My father knew very little about Alaskan huskies and dog sleds, but sacrificed so that my dream could be realized.

He taught me how to take care of animals and to show them affection, as well as train them for the harness. He would take me to the race course and run my dogs. On Saturdays he would come out and support me in my races. And such it was with the Saturday

when I proudly took home the second place trophy.

The excitement of the day's accomplishments soon gave way to our more routine Saturday evening. On Saturday night, we were not allowed to turn on the television and seldom had company or any other activities. It was a time when we were to get ready for Sunday.

This involved the usual baths and polishing of shoes, but also preparation for the Sunday services themselves. My brother and I usually had to prepare a duet, my mother would study her Sunday School lesson at the kitchen table, while my father would quietly go to his study to put the finishing touches on his sermon for the next day.

My father's study was in our educational building which was behind our church which was attached to our house. Many Saturday evenings, I would slip out and perch myself outside my father's study door and listen to him put his finishing touches on his sermon.

The way he did this was that he would practice preaching the sermon. This I especially liked, because I got a sneak preview of the sermon for the next day. I was always proud that it was my father who stood in front of everybody and told them how to live.

The next morning, my father asked me his usual Sunday morning question, "Son, do you want to go with me to get my load?" This was the 1960's version of today's bus ministry. Rather than using a bus, however, my father used an old enclosed jeep and went

out early every Sunday morning picking up children and adults and bringing them to church. Many times he would have to make more than one trip because the little red jeep could not hold them all.

Soon after our arrival at church (which was also our home), we had Sunday School. Our Sunday School was much like any Sunday School in a Free Will Baptist church in the "lower 48." Perhaps the greatest difference was the temperature outside the building.

We had snow in early October and usually didn't see the ground again until late April. Perhaps this partially accounts for the reason we had a "jeep ministry" rather than a bus ministry.

Like many churches in the states, our Sunday School started at 9:45 a.m., but for much of our winter months, this was well before the sun came up. My Sunday School class was usually taught by my mother. You see, in a mission work, the preacher's wife is just as much the missionary as the preacher himself, although her duties are often directed more toward the teaching ministry.

As winter gave way to spring, so the darkness gave way to light. The abundance of darkness in the winter was offset by an abundance of light in the summer. Perhaps it was this abundance of summer sunlight that caused some of the junior age boys (PK's included) to slip out of church one Wednesday night about 9:00 p.m. and play baseball in the parking lot while the church was having a business meeting.

We would have gone unnoticed I'm sure had not *this* PK hit the ball through a window, disrupting the business meeting. My mother felt we should have been punished severely. My father felt the embarrassment and shame of the whole situation was punishment enough. Whew! Thanks, Dad!

Our home life was also affected by being a missionary family. More often than not, we had others living in our home. There were summer missionaries, homeless Alaskan natives, juvenile delinquents who needed a foster home, and an adorable little native girl who, being homeless at 6 years old, became my little sister.

DADDY... SPRUILL (from page 16)

clothes that were handmade or thrift store specials—I thought everyone lived that way. I did miss, however, watermelon and scoops of ice cream that were too high for the budget. Early in my teens I chose John 10:10b as my life's verse and my life was abundant—abundant in love and lessons.

Somewhere in the pages of "Journalism Cliches to Avoid" is the saying "History repeats itself." However, it is true and expresses my life at this point. I, like many of our Free Will Baptist MK's, have returned to my adoptive home.

My husband and I find ourselves in the role of "tentmakers" working along

with my parents, brother and many fine Christian people to spread the news of Jesus' love and salvation to those in Hawaii.

I am thrilled that my children will learn the lessons of showing love even when it hurts, making friends without prejudice, living memories through hospitality and being nurtured in the faith by two of the greatest Bible teachers—their grandparents.

The only thing they will miss out on is that dreaded thing called deputation!

ABOUT THE WRITER: Mrs. Brenda Spruill is a member of Waipahu Free Will Baptist Church, Waipahu, Hawaii. She is the daughter of Reverend Luther Sanders who pastors the Waipahu Church.

Our living room couch was often the altar for many who came to know the Lord in our home. As the missionary's son, I was blessed to observe many conversion experiences right in our home.

At Christmas time, we would have several servicemen from a nearby army base spend Christmas with us, filling the void that was theirs from being away from their loved ones during the holidays. Somehow, with the small missionary's salary, my parents managed to have a gift under the tree for each soldier spending Christmas with us.

I'll never forget the day in December of 1963 when my parents called the family together to have a "family discussion." The Mission Board had requested that we move to Fairbanks, 400 miles to the north, to take over the work there while the missionaries in Fairbanks went on furlough.

A new missionary couple had recently come to Anchorage and would continue the work there. I always appreciated my parents for making mission decisions pertinent to the family, family decisions. We discussed it and prayed about it. Then each of us, beginning with me, the youngest, consented to the move. I believe that had we not wanted to go, my parents would not have made the move.

Regardless of the field, missionary children soon realize that a large part of the work is coming stateside and going on deputation. Many times this meant staying in other people's homes while our parents would be gone for a week or two at a time.

At other times we would go with them and take part in the services. I always remember the services when we would show slides and promote the work. I was proud of the work and felt that it was just as much my missionary work as Mom's and Dad's.

Having Christian parents is a blessing. Being a preacher's kid affords one many rich experiences. But I believe if there be one person more blessed, it must be the missionary's kid. I'll be eternally grateful that my dad was a missionary. ▲

ABOUT THE WRITER: Reverend Rodney Whaley is acting chairman of the music department at Free Will Baptist Bible College. He is the son of Reverend Lee Whaley who is associate pastor and minister to the aging at Bethel Free Will Baptist Church, Kinston, North Carolina.

Thank You For Your Contributions...



... Through the Cooperative Channel

Cooperative Channel Contributions August 1985

RECEIPTS:

State	Design.	COOP	Total August '84	Yr. To Date
Alabama	\$ 127.00	\$.00	\$ 127.00	\$ 169.00
Arizona	.00	.00	.00	.00
Arkansas	.00	5,256.97	5,256.97	4,647.09
California	.00	1,336.47	1,336.47	747.65
Florida	.00	2,913.62	2,913.62	1,860.39
Georgia	4,655.46	10.00	4,665.46	3,015.48
Idaho	.00	.00	.00	.00
Illinois	7,673.95	1,511.27	9,185.22	5,828.10
Indiana	443.20	29.42	472.62	540.73
Kansas	.00	170.44	170.44	31.24
Kentucky	.00	45.40	45.40	52.40
Maryland	.00	.00	.00	90.00
Michigan	2,446.45	537.59	2,984.04	6,813.78
Mississippi	.00	299.84	299.84	739.49
Missouri	1,381.97	7,716.07	9,098.04	7,274.44
New Mexico	52.34	25.68	78.02	33.94
North Carolina	325.00	297.82	622.82	1,687.64
Ohio	.00	10.00	10.00	1,844.00
Oklahoma	20,778.50	11,291.44	32,069.94	33,648.43
South Carolina	489.18	.00	489.18	394.58
Tennessee	.00	324.50	324.50	961.73
Texas	6,066.01	827.12	6,893.13	5,519.89
Virginia	.00	108.70	108.70	161.22
West Virginia	2,259.19	269.81	2,529.00	3,414.28
Other	.00	.00	.00	.00
Totals	\$46,698.25	\$32,982.16	\$79,680.41	\$79,475.50

DISBURSEMENTS:

Executive	\$ 184.62	\$13,918.87	\$14,103.49	\$13,132.19	\$112,217.80
Foreign Missions	34,550.32	4,384.55	38,934.87	41,135.23	293,225.03
FWBBC	1,856.66	4,384.55	6,241.21	5,528.91	49,183.28
Home Missions	8,211.09	3,431.38	11,642.47	11,590.79	97,677.39
Retirement & Insurance	131.57	2,668.90	2,800.47	2,958.27	19,456.16
Master's Men	55.04	2,478.30	2,533.34	2,422.63	17,841.63
Commission for Theological Integrity	20.53	190.60	211.13	188.97	1,500.20
FWB Foundation	209.85	1,143.81	1,353.66	1,097.63	8,559.44
Historical Commission	16.44	190.60	207.04	186.89	1,482.19
Radio & TV Commission	9.85	190.60	200.45	.00	1,539.04
Hillsdale FWB College	1,417.23	.00	1,417.23	1,120.64	9,410.90
Other	35.05	.00	35.05	113.35	450.64
Totals	\$46,698.25	\$32,982.16	\$79,680.41	\$79,475.50	\$612,543.70



FREE WILL BAPTIST

newsfront

BIBLE COLLEGE STUDENTS DECLARE 'FACULTY APPRECIATION DAY'

NASHVILLE, TN—The students of Free Will Baptist Bible College honored the school's teachers by declaring September 11 "Faculty Appreciation Day."

The first notice that teachers had of the honor occurred when students met them as they arrived for morning classes and presented them with an apple and a badge designating each of them "The World's Greatest Teacher."

Student Body President Allen Pointer read the official proclamation in the morning chapel service. In part, the proclamation said:

No gift could ever repay all of the hours you have spent in preparing to teach us, but we would like to offer to you these small tokens of our respect. No other faculty in the world takes the interest in the lives of their students that you do, and it is this interest that makes Free Will Baptist Bible College the great place that it is.

The proclamation closed with: "And finally, we remind you that when the going gets tough and the walls seem ready to cave in, that you have the greatest students in the world behind you: The Student Body of 1985-86."

The faculty deeply appreciated the students' honor and rededicated themselves to be worthy of it.

REVEREND ERNEST HARRISON, SR. WITH THE LORD



MUSKOGEE, OK—The Reverend Ernest Harrison, Sr., pastor of First Free Will Baptist Church, Henryetta, died September 10, 1985, in Veterans Hospital at Muskogee following a lengthy hospitalization and exploratory surgery.

Funeral services for the 65-year-old pastor were conducted September 13 at First FWB Church in Weleetka. Reverend Lonnie DeVault, Oklahoma executive secretary, officiated.

Reverend Harrison pastored for 40 years in Oklahoma Free Will Baptist churches. He began his pastoral career at Allen FWB Church, Weleetka; then pastored First FWB Church, Weleetka; First FWB Church, Drumright (twice); Richmond Avenue FWB Church, Allen; First FWB Church, Wewoka; First FWB Church, McAlester; Bethany FWB Church, Broken Arrow; and First FWB Church, Henryetta, where he pastored until his death.

Reverend Harrison filled numerous state and local association positions including eight years as a member of the Oklahoma State Sunday School Board, three years as moderator of the Progressive Association, five years as Oklahoma assistant moderator, and four years as vice-chairman of the Hillsdale FWB College Board of Trustees.

Reverend Harrison served 12 years on the National Board of Retirement (1971-1982), six years as vice-chairman.

He was appointed as an area representative for the Free Will Baptist Foundation and the Board of Retirement in 1982, and served in that capacity until his death. As an area representative, he promoted both agencies in churches throughout Oklahoma, Texas, Missouri and Kansas.

Brother Harrison was licensed to preach in 1939 and ordained in 1940. He was well known throughout the denomination; he participated regularly in state and national meetings. Reverend Harrison's wife, Jane, resides in Henryetta. His son, Reverend Ernest Harrison, Jr., pastors First FWB Church in Wewoka. His brother, Reverend Harold Harrison, is assistant director of the Sunday School and Church Training Department.

HILLSDALE ENROLLS 142 FOR FALL

MOORE, OK—Students from 17 states and 10 foreign countries enrolled for the fall semester at Hillsdale Free Will Baptist College. "These students have come with a desire to do something for Christ, themselves, and the world they live in. Their Hillsdale experience will afford them the opportunity to pursue academic excellence and spiritual maturity," said Richard Gallant, a college official.

Among the 142 students are 75

Freshmen, 37 Sophomores, 9 Juniors, 13 Seniors and 8 special students.

Jim Shepherd, vice president of student affairs said, "The student body has manifested a commitment to learn, a desire to serve, and an appreciation of Christian fellowship. The readiness with which new and returning students adapted to the new school year promises that this will be among the finest student bodies in the history of the school."



FREE WILL BAPTIST BIBLE COLLEGE ENROLLS STUDENTS FROM 25 STATES

ARKANSAS GIVING TOPS \$926,000

CONWAY, AR—Delegates to the 88th annual Arkansas State Association were told that Arkansas Free Will Baptists gave \$926,493.85 to ministries outside their local churches, according to Promotional Director David Joslin.

The \$926,000 total included \$664,000 for state projects, \$17,000 for Hillsdale FWB College, and \$245,000 for national outreach.

More than 500 registered for the August 13-15 gathering at Camp Beaverfork near Conway. Meeting under the theme, "The Urgency of the Times," conferees heard four major addresses by Ronald Creech, A. E. Coffman, John Turner and Tommy Tims.

Delegates voted to affiliate with the Christian Civic Foundation of Arkansas.

In separate action, delegates adopted the Foreign Missions "Advance Program" and agreed to raise \$75,000 in three years. Pastors Terry Forrest and Fred Warner will chair the state Advance program.

Promotional Director Joslin emphasized the need for growth by soul winning and baptisms, and encouraged churches and individuals to participate in the five-year Target 90 growth plan.

The \$796 missionary offering was shared equally by National Home Missions, Foreign Missions and Arkansas State Home Missions.

Pastors David Copeland and Ray Prince spoke on "Fellowship" and "Reconciliation" respectively at the Preaching Conference conducted at First FWB Church in Conway.

Reverend Joslin said that 198 attended the annual Woman's Auxiliary banquet on Tuesday. The 11th annual Master's Men banquet registered 105 Wednesday afternoon. Rev. Gene Waddell delivered the worship message for Woman's Auxiliary. Dr. Melvin Worthington spoke at the Master's Men banquet.

Moderator Carl Cheshier was re-elected. The 1986 session meets August 12-14 at Camp Beaverfork.

NASHVILLE, TN—Free Will Baptist Bible College enrolled 358 students from 25 states and five foreign countries in late August to kick off the 1985-86 school year, according to Registrar Charles Hampton. The Graduate School enrolled seven for a combined total of 365.

The college enrolled 117 new students. Ministerial students number 82; missions students total 42.

Tennessee boasts the most students with 74, North Carolina second with 51 and Illinois and Indiana tied for third (28 each).

"Opening services were a great blessing, especially student testimonies of summer experiences and hopes

for the new school year," reported Dr. Hampton.

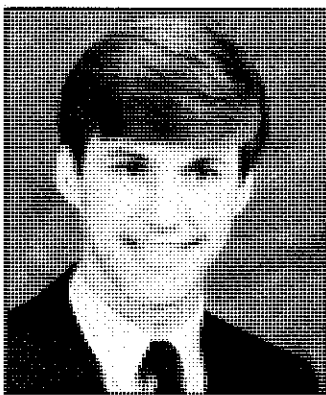
State Breakdown

Alabama	13	Missouri	19
Arkansas	15	Mississippi	8
California	2	North Carolina	51
Delaware	1	New Mexico	1
Florida	10	New York	1
Foreign	8	Ohio	11
Georgia	20	Oklahoma	2
Idaho	1	South Carolina	9
Illinois	28	Tennessee	74
Indiana	28	Texas	6
Kansas	2	Virginia	11
Kentucky	11	Washington	2
Michigan	14	West Virginia	10
			358

BIBLE COLLEGE STUDENT RESCUES TEEN

LENORE, WV—A Free Will Baptist Bible College ministerial student, Ron Cloer, who was visiting his fiancée, pulled a 16-year-old girl from her burning car, according to Charlotte Sanders, staff writer for the *Williamson Daily News* in Williamson, West Virginia.

Sanders reported that Cloer, 20-year-old junior ministerial student from Peace FWB Church, Beech Grove, Indiana, rescued Barbara Sue Chafin from her blazing 1976 Buick after a two-car collision near Lenore. Cloer also pulled two men to safety.



Mr. Cloer was visiting his fiancée, Teresa Parsley at Lenore when he heard the sound of the automobile crash.

Cloer is reported to have rushed outside, running barefoot across the scattered glass from a smashed windshield. He pulled Miss Chaffin from her burning car and dragged her across the roadway to safety, fearing the vehicle might explode.

Cloer made two more trips through the glass in the road to move two men who were also injured to safety.

Meanwhile, Miss Parsley, his fiancée, who has had CPR training, began administering first aid, assisted by Cloer.

The Lenore Volunteer Fire Department arrived and extinguished the fire consuming the Chafin vehicle.

At the end of his ordeal, Cloer found that he had suffered only one minor cut on one foot, despite running several times through the scattered glass in the highway.

Mr. Cloer spent the summer serving as a ministerial intern at First FWB Church, Russellville, Arkansas.

COMING NEXT MONTH . . .

- ✦ **What to Give Your Pastor for Christmas**
- ✦ **The Christmas Credit Curse**
- ✦ **The Real Facts about Christmas**
- ✦ **Expand Your Family at Christmas**

newsfront

(continued)

HILLSDALE DEDICATES LEARNING RESOURCE CENTER

MOORE, OK—Dedication services for the Geri Ann Hull Learning Resource Center were held September 6 on the Hillsdale Free Will Baptist College Campus. Students as well as guests from local churches, city and state offices and denominational leaders attended the function.

The event began with a continental breakfast and tour of the 10,500-square-foot facility that includes library and classroom space. The 10:00 a.m. dedication service featured Dr. James Reid, president of Oklahoma Association of Independent Colleges. Dr. Joe Leone, Chancellor of the Oklahoma

State Regents brought greetings from his office.

Special platform guests included Steve Hull and his daughter Hillary, husband and daughter of the late Geri Ann Hull, a teacher who served the students of Hillsdale for eight years prior to her death.

Hillsdale President Edwin Wade said, "This building is a fitting memorial to the commitment she had to the education of young people." The Learning Resource Center will help provide a quality education for Hillsdale students.

SOUTHEASTERN COLLEGE ENROLLS 170

VIRGINIA BEACH, VA—Southeastern Free Will Baptist College enrolled 170 students for the fall semester, according to Dean Lorenza Stox. This marks a 28 percent increase over the 1984 fall semester enrollment.

Student classification breaks down: Freshmen 81, Sophomores 33, Juniors 38, Seniors 15 and Special 3. North Carolina leads the states with 55 students. Sixteen states and one foreign country are represented this year. There are 108 on campus students (61 boys and 47 girls).

President Joseph Ange preached the opening service Monday night, August 26. A number of students responded to the invitation in committing their lives to the work of God.

Dean Stox said that the campus spirit during the opening days was exciting as students and faculty waited to see the hand of God moving in the lives of His people. Stox said that students were also excited about the fall musical program under the leadership of Rev. Randy Sawyer.

DR. HAYCOCK TO SPEAK AT CHRISTIAN SCHOOLS CONFERENCE

NASHVILLE, TN—Dr. Ruth Haycock, an authority on Christian school education and Christian School Consultant for Piedmont Bible College, Winston-Salem, NC, will keynote Free Will Baptist Bible College's Christian Schools Conference in Nashville, February 17-19, 1986, according to Conference Planner Kenneth Riggs, chairman of the Teacher Education Department.

Dr. Haycock, in addition to her seven years at Piedmont, taught 36 years at Baptist Bible College, Clarks Summit, PA, where she established one of the first departments of teacher education in any Bible college.

She earned her Master's and Doctor of Education degrees at Syracuse University. She has been listed in Outstanding Educators of America, Dictionary of International Who's Who in Religion (Marquis), and International Who's Who in Education.

Dr. Haycock's emphasis has been to integrate biblical principles and secular subjects. This emphasis has been evident in the literature she has produced to help Christian school teachers and administrators.

Several Free Will Baptist educators will also be involved in the conference program, conducting seminars and workshops, according to Dr. Riggs. Christian schools representatives will meet FWBBC students in training to be teachers, and interview them for possible employment.

The conference begins Monday evening and concludes Wednesday noon. For more information, write or call:

Free Will Baptist Bible College
3606 West End Avenue
Nashville, TN 37205-2498
(615) 383-1340

**GIVE
THANKS**



for . . .

Jesus Christ

The Holy Scriptures

Family

Friends

Good Health

Our Church

The "Youth That Care" group from **First FWB Church, Russellville, AR**, was awarded the 1985 Community Service Award for meritorious service to elderly residents of Pope County. The award was presented by the Area Agency On Aging. **Doug Little** pastors.

Pastor **Jim Smith** of **First FWB Church, Weatherford, OK**, says the group had their organizational service on August 4. The church is a product of the Oklahoma State Mission Board and has been operating since March 1981. The group has had more than 100 people join the church.

A trio of Oklahoma Free Will Baptist singers calling themselves **The Glory Land Singers** competed and won third place in the Albert E. Brumley Gospel Singing Contest in Springdale, AR. Their award included five hours of free recording time as well as a cash prize and a trophy. The group consists of **Kevin Daniels** from **Allen FWB Church, Sapulpa**; **Sherri Daniel, Lawnwood FWB Church, Tulsa**; and **Jan Clay** of **Spencer Road FWB Church, Spencer**.

Members of **Hazel Creek FWB Church, Kirksville, MO**, set an attendance record when more than 183 showed up for service, according to pastor **Randy Bishop**. The 183 is more than twice the average attendance during the first quarter of 1985. Bishop said, "The real joy came when I baptized two young boys."

Pastor **John Williams** said that **Union Grove FWB Church, Norwood, MO**, dedicated its new auditorium this summer. The new facility has a seating capacity of 250 with educational space for the same number of people. The building project also included pews, tables, classroom chairs and a furnished kitchen. Former pastor **Gene Terry** delivered the dedication message.

Congratulations to **First FWB Church, Flat River, MO**. Pastor **Ron Edgil** said the church increased their cooperative giving from 12 percent to 15 percent.

Pastor **Dale Burden** reports 75 people on visitation during a Thursday night in August at **Gateway FWB Church, Virginia Beach, VA**. The visitation blitz resulted in seven salvation decisions.

Burden said the church set a goal to knock on 100,000 doors in the Virginia Beach area in the next year. They also plan to make 100,000 telephone calls.

Randall House Publications reports that the large print Sunday School quarterly, *Bible Scholar*, continues to grow in popularity with older readers. Beginning with the spring quarter 1986, the large print *Bible Scholar* will contain everything that the regular print scholar contains. This adjustment has been possible by enlarging the size of the publication to a 7" x 10½" format.

Members at **Calvary Fellowship FWB Church, Fenton, MO**, purchased another bus to expand their bus ministry. Pastor **Jerry Norris** said the group also paved the church parking lot and expanded the entry.

Do you have friends in the **Augusta, Georgia** area? A new Free Will Baptist church is starting in the West Augusta area. The work is sponsored by the Ogeechee Association in Georgia. The mission pastor is **Larry Williams**, 4134 Allison Road, Martinez, GA 30907. Telephone 404/860-7856. ▲



The Free Will Baptist Pulpit

Reverend Ron Scott, Pastor

Prince of Peace FWB Church, Huntington, West Virginia

The Unknown Soldier

Isaiah 63:1-6

Introduction

Shadows of the night are beginning to lift, the mountains in the east take form. A watchman perched high on a wall looks out into the plain toward Edom, the fierce enemy of Israel.

The watchman sees in the distance the form of a man coming close to the city. The image is now certain, a solitary warrior, grand in stature and majestic in his movements. He strides forward with the look of one who conquers.

As the man gets closer, his garments splashed with the blood of battle catch the early morning light. The watchman challenges him: "Who is this that comes from Edom with dyed garments from Bozrah? Why are you red in your apparel and your garments like him that treadeth in the winefat?" The man answers: "I have trodden the winepress alone, and of the people there was none with me."

What a glorious vision for every Christian to see of their Savior who has fought the battle alone.

- I. Alone in Battle (63:3a)
 - A. With Satan (Mt. 4:1)
 - B. With Self-Righteous Men (Mt. 12:14; Luke 11:39)
 - C. In Prayer (Mt. 26:40)
 - D. In Humiliation (Mark 14:50-53; Mt. 15:16-20)
- II. Alone in Death (63:5a)
 - A. In Bloodshed (Romans 5:8-9)
 - B. On the Cross (Mark 15:34)
 - C. In the Tomb (Luke 23:53)

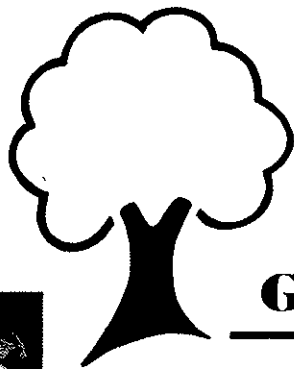
- III. Alone in Victory (63:5b)
 - A. In Worthiness (Rev. 5)
 - B. In Power (II Tim. 1:10; I Cor. 15:55)
- IV. Made Known (63:6)
 - A. First to Believers
 - 1. Road to Emmaus (Luke 24:31)
 - 2. "That I may know Him" (Phil. 3:10)
 - 3. "I know whom I have believed" (II Tim. 1:12)
 - B. Last to All
 - 1. All Nations (Mt. 24:30)
 - 2. Every Eye (Rev. 1:7)
 - C. As King of Kings (Rev. 19:11-16)

Conclusion

This is no Sunday parader that we see coming from Edom. His garments are bloodstained. He has come from where the battle has raged. From Bozrah the heart of Edom. He comes with marks of suffering.

He suffered for me.
He died for me.
He saved me.
His garments are red because of me.
He's my hero.

It wasn't an army that the watchman saw, but a single soldier crying out: "I have trodden the wine press alone!"



Green Tree Bible Study



Robert E. Picirilli

Colossians 4:7-18

The Fellowship of the Christian Ministry

There are many missions and messages in these final verses of Colossians. All revolve around people, co-workers of Paul. The warmth of love and fellowship serves as a backdrop to the words.

The Mission of Tychichus and Onesimus (vv. 7-9). These two will take Paul's letter to Colosse, report on his situation ("all my state"), and minister to the Colossian Christians.

Tychichus was first mentioned in Acts 20:4 as a native of Asia and one of those who accompanied Paul to Jerusalem at the end of the third missionary journey.

Paul identifies him as (1) a beloved brother, (2) a faithful servant (*diakonos*, minister), and (3) a fellow-servant (*doulos*, bond-slave). Who wouldn't like to have that as his "credentials"?

Onesimus was Philemon's runaway slave, now converted and going back home to Colosse ("one of you"). Paul speaks of him now as "a faithful and beloved brother"—Philemon and the Colossian believers should receive him thus.

Greetings from Paul's Co-workers (vv. 10-14). Six of these, with Paul at Rome at the time, send their salutations to the Colossian church.

1. Aristarchus (v. 10a), Paul's "fellow prisoner" (*sunaimalotos*, literally "fellow prisoner-of-war"). We cannot be positive whether this is to be taken literally (to mean that Aristarchus either was then, or had been earlier, in

prison with Paul) or figuratively (to refer to their relationship to Christ). I am inclined to the first. He might, in fact, have volunteered to share Paul's confinement in order to minister to him. (See Acts 19:29; 20:4; 27:2.)

2. John Mark (v. 10b), Barnabas' cousin (*anepsios*, translated "sister's son" in the AV). Apparently he had now proved himself in Paul's eyes, as compared to Acts 15:36-39. Given second chances, people often make good. We know nothing about the communication referred to here. Some interpreters speculate that Barnabas was now dead.

3. Jesus Justus (v. 11), a Jewish Christian and "fellow-worker for the kingdom of God." The last sentence evidently means that these first three were the only Jewish coworkers with Paul at Rome at the time. They were a source of encouragement to him.

4. Epaphras (vv. 12, 13), one of the Colossians (cf. 1:7). Probably he had helped found the Colossian church and ministered there. Evidently he had brought word of the Colossians' needs to Paul, leading to this letter.

Although apparently not planning an immediate return to Colosse, he is still zealous for the entire "tri-cities" area: Colosse, Laodicea, Hierapolis. He "struggles" (*agonizomai*, the athletic contest) for them in prayer, that they may be spiritually mature and complete in their experience of the will of God.

5. Luke (v. 14a), Paul's "beloved physician." He also had made the trip to Rome with Paul (Acts 27:2).

6. Demas (v. 14b), otherwise not identified. We can never think of him without remembering the later reference in II Tim. 4:10.

Messages for the Colossians to Deliver (vv. 15-17). There are two of these. The first is for the nearby congregation at Laodicea (vv. 15, 16). They should express Paul's greetings to them and exchange letters with them. (We do not possess a letter to the Laodiceans as such; some think that "Ephesians" is the one meant.)

The second message is for Archippus (cf. Phile. 2), to encourage him in his ministry. He may have succeeded Epaphras as "pastor" at Colosse. This "public" encouragement would speak both to Archippus and to the church.

Conclusion (v. 18). This, the briefest of all Paul's conclusions, contains his handwritten greetings, a final request (he might have been reminded of his chains when he took the pen to write this), and the benediction of grace.

In living and working for Christ, the fellowship of others similarly engaged is extremely important. Even in his prison situation, Paul was encouraged by that fellowship. We ought always to keep such relationships in good repair.

▲



ON LITTLE LANES

BY DONNA MAYO

“We’ve got four bushels,” groaned Marty. “Are we through yet?”

“Almost,” answered Mrs. Douglas, high on her ladder. “I see a couple of beauties right up here.”

It was a splendid autumn day, the air clear and cool and the sky a brilliant blue. Marty and Megan were helping Mrs. Douglas pick apples.

Mrs. Douglas stretched, but the apples were out of her reach.

“They’re too high,” said Megan. “Please, Mrs. Douglas, come down here before you fall.”

“All right,” agreed Mrs. Douglas. But coming down the ladder Mrs. Douglas missed a rung and fell to the ground.

The twins screamed and ran to where she lay motionless on the ground.

“She’s so still,” said Megan.

“Is she dead?” asked Marty.

Mrs. Douglas wasn’t dead, the fall had knocked her out. In seconds, she came to.

“Are you all right?” they asked.

“Oh, my leg,” moaned Mrs. Douglas, grabbing it. “It hurts so bad. I’m afraid it’s broken.”

The emergency room doctor confirmed Mrs. Douglas’ fears. Her leg was broken. She would have to spend the next week in bed and wear a cast for seven weeks.

Marty and Megan loved Mrs. Douglas, and they were sad she had hurt herself. Early the next morning they went to her farm to see if they could help her.

“You’re sweet to offer to help,” said Mrs. Douglas, lying on the couch, “but I think I can manage.”

“But, Mrs. Douglas, the doctor told you to stay in bed for a week,” reminded Megan.

The Money Mistake

“Fiddlesticks,” said Mrs. Douglas as she sat up and put her feet on the floor. She winced and quickly drew her leg up from the floor. “On second thought, maybe I’d better take it easy for awhile.”

Megan fluffed Mrs. Douglas’ pillows and eased her down on the couch.

“Now, what can we do to help?” asked Marty. “Finish picking apples?”

“Heavens no,” said Mrs. Douglas quickly. “I don’t want one of you falling off that ladder. But I really needed to go to the market today. Would you mind going down to Taylor’s Market and picking up a few groceries?”

Marty got the money from Mrs. Douglas’ cookie jar.

“Where’s the list?” asked Megan.

“Oh, I never make a list,” replied Mrs. Douglas. “I’ll trust you two to buy the usual things—milk, bread, eggs, something for my supper. Just buy whatever strikes your fancy.”

Marty and Megan hopped on their bicycles and started for the little store about a mile from Mrs. Douglas’ house. On the way they met a man selling bouquets of flowers.

“Look, Marty,” said Megan gazing at the blossoms of purple, gold, orange and bronze, “aren’t they gorgeous? Let’s take a bunch to Mrs. Douglas.”

“OK,” agreed Marty. “I think flowers are supposed to cheer up sick folks.”

Marty paid for the flowers, and Megan put the bouquet in the basket of her bicycle.

They rode on toward the market, but before long, they met another man, this one selling boxes of peanut brittle.

“I bet you children are hungry for some peanut brittle right now, aren’t you?” he asked.

“It’s good, that’s for sure,” said Marty. “I know, why don’t we buy a box for Mrs. Douglas?”

Megan put the candy next to the flowers, and the twins pedaled on.

They came to a yard sale. “Look at all that neat junk,” exclaimed Marty, putting on his brakes.

“Marty, come on,” said Megan. “Mrs. Douglas will wonder what happened to us.”

“What’s your hurry?” asked the lady in charge of the yard sale.

Megan explained that they were on an errand for their friend, Mrs. Douglas, who had broken her leg.

“I’ve got just what she needs,” said the woman.

So before the twins reached Taylor’s Market, they had bought, not only the flowers and candy, but a transistor radio and two mystery books from the yard sale. Once inside the store the children selected their items—milk, bread, eggs, hotdogs and potato chips. They placed them on the counter to pay.

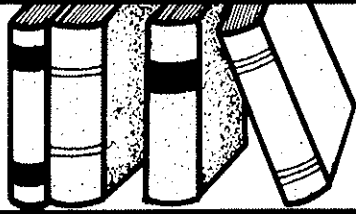
“That will be \$8.14,” said Mr. Taylor.

Marty reached deep into his pocket and emptied its contents. Only two dollars and a quarter in it. He emptied the other pocket—three marbles and a stick of gum.

His face turned red, and he whispered to Megan, “We don’t have enough money.”



Top Shelf



Thomas Marberry



R. Alan Street, *The Effective Invitation* (Old Tappan, New Jersey: Fleming H. Revell Company, 1984, 252 pp., paperback, \$6.95).

The invitation is a key element in Free Will Baptist worship services. Unfortunately, most of us give little thought to this important aspect of Christian worship. In fact, this is the first book I have seen in years which deals entirely with the invitation.

This is the most extensive study of the gospel invitation which has been done for some time. The author examines the biblical precedent for an invitation. He analyzes many passages of scripture in both the Old and New Testaments.

He points out that God spoke to His people through Moses, Joshua, Elijah and others. These men regularly called for the people to make a decision to follow God. They also called upon the people to take concrete action to demonstrate publicly that they wanted to follow God.

The early New Testament preachers invited men to be saved, and then called on them to make public professions of their faith.

Not only is there precedent for the gospel invitation in the Bible, there is also precedent in church history. Leading evangelists throughout history have used different forms of invitations to encourage people to make public professions.

The author includes an analysis of different types of invitations used by Jonathan Edwards, Charles Finney, John Wesley, Billy Graham, Dwight L. Moody and others.

Street also makes helpful suggestions for modern-day preachers. He discusses the most important types of

invitations commonly used today and points out the advantages and disadvantages of each method. He examines the important role which music plays in the invitation.

The author emphasizes that the preacher must prepare an effective invitation; he must plan what he will say and how he will say it. The preacher also needs to be flexible. He must be able to use different types of invitations which are appropriate for different situations.

This is a helpful book for modern preachers. God has called us to do more than proclaim; He called us to challenge men to accept Christ and to follow Him. The invitation is an important part of the sermon, and it deserves the best a preacher can give. ▲

LANES (from page 25)

"What?" screamed Megan. "I'm sure we had enough! What happened . . ." She stopped short as she thought of the bulging basket on her bicycle.

"What are we going to do?" asked Marty. They did the only thing they could do. They bought two dollars and a quarter worth—the bread and eggs, then trudged sadly to their bikes.

"We really blew it this time," said Marty.

"It would have been bad enough if we had wasted our own money, but that money belonged to Mrs. Douglas. She'll never trust us again," said Megan.

They rode quietly down the road until a car horn broke the silence. It was their daddy.

"Hi," he called cheerfully. "Why the

long faces? You two look like you've been eating lemons."

Megan and Marty explained their predicament and showed him their purchases.

Mr. Lane was sympathetic. "It's easy to get carried away when you're spending money, just ask your mother," he laughed. "But seriously, now, that doesn't fix things for you or Mrs. Douglas."

"Daddy, what are we going to do?" asked Megan, her eyes filling with tears.

"First, let's get out of the middle of the road," said Mr. Lane. He put their bicycles on top of the station wagon, and the twins climbed in the front seat. Mr. Lane looked down at the children as he turned the car around and drove off. He could tell they were sorry for their mistake.

"What would you take for those flowers?" he asked.

"What?" exclaimed the twins together.

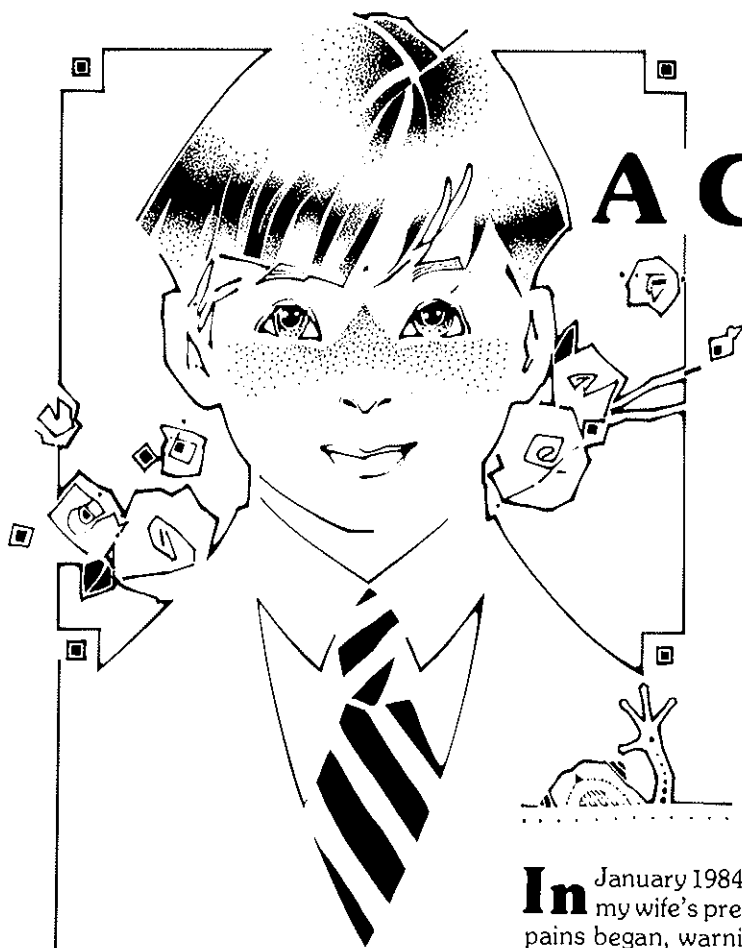
"I can't remember the last time I took your mother some flowers. How much do you want for these?" he asked.

Marty did some quick figuring. "Six dollars," he said.

The twins finished their shopping at Mr. Taylor's store. Mrs. Douglas was satisfied with her groceries and especially pleased with the radio, books and peanut brittle. And Mrs. Lane was thrilled (and surprised) with her bouquet from Mr. Lane. Marty and Megan breathed big sighs of relief.

At their father's suggestion, Marty and Megan went to their rooms and read Luke 16:12. "And if ye have not been faithful in that which is another man's, who shall give you that which is your own?"

"Do you think he's trying to tell us something?" asked Marty with a grin. ▲



A Child Not Ours

By Branson Woodard

What an encouragement, then, when our local church stepped in to help, even before we had the chance to ask.

Then we learned that Christians outside our local church had begun to pray regularly and earnestly for our family. Our parents had been interceding for us.

And they were joined by my colleagues on the faculty at Miami Christian College, where I teach writing and literature. Christ-honoring scholars laid aside their studies in order to claim God's promises—His vows to be with us (Matthew 28:20) and either to heal (James 5:15) or to supply grace for enduring the trial (II Corinthians 12:9).

As these scholars prayed, so did other Christians across 10 states, and perhaps others we do not know about. Many godly people were claiming our baby as their own by making him a part of their most intimate lives, their prayer lives.

But their diligence could not avert a crisis. Two weeks into the sixth month, Debby was hospitalized. Contractions came quickly and all seemed hopeless; a delivery now, even with the superb neonatology unit available, could still end tragically.

We hurried to the hospital where Debby was rushed to the labor room. While she took medication to counteract the contractions, I quickly phoned parents and friends. They pledged their prayers and said they would ask their churches to pray. Some offered to come to the hospital.

I thanked them for their concern but asked only that they continue to pray for us.

The hours dragged on as Debby and I prayed and waited. Finally, the labor pains subsided; the medicine was working, and hope remained for the baby.

In January 1984, three months into my wife's pregnancy, abdominal pains began, warnings of another potential miscarriage. (These pains resembled those in three previous miscarriages.)

So if this child could not survive the nine months, we would again be content in God's will. (That's the only truly comforting place anyway, whatever our circumstances.)

As we prayed, we asked God to have His way with this child. After all, like Hannah's Samuel, he had been pledged to God before he was born. Of course, we didn't know if our baby would be born at all.

But we knew, despite our fears, that God would meet our needs. Little did we know then what darker days awaited the baby, our four-year-old son Jared, Debby and me.

Just six weeks later (midway the fourth month), the pains intensified. We rushed to the obstetrician, wondering if our little one were nearing Heaven's door. Following a thorough examination, the doctor prescribed total bedrest.

This news came as both a wonderful relief and a sudden complication. Though our hearts rejoiced that miscarriage was not inevitable, we felt anxious about making all the proper adjustments in our daily lives.

We live in the age of test tube babies, frozen embryos and other mind-boggling technologies. Such technologies not only boggle my mind, they wound my spirit as I consider what God thinks about them.

What does He think about the children behind the technology? His great love for them and for their simple faith is clear when He says, "... of such is the kingdom of heaven" (Matthew 19:14).

Children are born into a fallen world. But for Christian parents, even that birth is special. It teaches them, as my wife and I discovered, a fuller understanding of spiritual parenthood.

Two recent births in our family show that spiritual parenthood applies to both natural birth and spiritual birth. And both types of births help parents realize the limited sense in which their child is their own.

Sound strange? Here's how it all began.

CHILD (from page 27)

By now, however, we knew beyond question that he was not ours: hundreds of Christians had "adopted" him into their families and prayed for him, we believe, as devotedly as they prayed for their own children.

How that spiritual support upheld us through Debby's hospitalization that followed—seven long weeks. But with each day came reassuring confidence that God was fulfilling His plan; and that plan, we hoped, would include a birthday for a little one.

And it did. On June 26, 1984, three weeks ahead of schedule, a robust boy entered the world, all eight pounds and 10 ounces of him. Amid the sterile, cold instruments and stainless steel furniture in the operating room, God's warm presence filled our hearts.

Through Jonathan's cries announcing his arrival, Debby and I could discern God's quiet strength. Even the doctors and nurses, who knew about the difficult pregnancy, acknowledged that Jonathan was a special baby.

Indeed he was, not simply because his prenatal life was filled with perilous moments but also because he really belonged to many others.

To God first, because He owns the cattle on a thousand hills—and little boys too; to our parents (in their sixties), because they once more shared our anxieties and prayed for a child they might never see on earth; and to Jonathan's multitude of "parents" across eastern America, "moms" and "dads" whose love for an unborn baby sent them to their knees—and into the realm of spiritual parenthood.

For years Debby and I understood spiritual parenthood only in terms of soul winning-discipling; the Christian who leads a sinner to Christ or a young believer into maturity becomes a "parent" to that sinner or to that young believer.

But now that Jonathan is almost a year old (and healthy), Debby and I understand more fully that natural children, unborn and born, need spiritual parents.

If the children's natural parents are sinners, Christian influence *must* come from other adults—"parents" who will

Crises in Our Times

By George Waggoner

In America, it seems, one crisis regularly follows another. We appear not to know we are heading toward a crisis until we have arrived.

In the early 1970's, we awoke one morning to discover an energy crisis. People were either not aware of or shut their eyes to its coming. We were asked to turn our thermostats lower in winter and raise them in summer, to turn off half our house lights, drive

smaller cars at a slower speed and pay more for gasoline. The effects are still with us.

The Country

A couple of years ago everyone awoke to a financial crisis in this country, including the federal debt. We've made the switch from a "pork-barrel" philosophy to a "belt-tightening" program. There isn't enough

pray for the children, spend time with them, take them to worship services, have fun with them, and hopefully someday see them become spiritual children by trusting Christ as their Savior.

That blessed event occurred in our home last January. Our son Jared, for whom we and many others had been praying, came crying one evening to Debby and me. Earlier that week he had been asking questions about God, Hell and the meaning of the Cross, and we eagerly wondered if he were ready to be saved.

He certainly was. After talking together for a moment, we three knelt in front of the sofa and he prayed, "Dear Jesus, please take away my sins and come into my heart."

Not much longer than the twinkling of an eye, his freckled face showed the peace that Jesus gives—only to His own.

We all wept with joy; then we phoned the good news to those spiritual parents who had prayed for Jonathan's birth, and we thanked God for the "new birth" of Jonathan's brother. With all the rejoicing in Heaven that evening, there was plenty also in the Woodard household.

Since then, Debby and I have often thought about who owns our children. Of course, Jonathan belongs to God but also, in a way, to the many Free Will Baptists and other Christians who prayed for his birth. And Jared belongs—in the fullest sense—to God, who saved him from his sins.

What a curious but wonderful fact that each boy in our home is a child not ours. ▲

ABOUT THE WRITER: Dr. Branson L. Woodard, Jr. attends Hollywood Free Will Baptist Church, Hollywood, Florida. He is associate professor of English at Miami Christian College.



H. Armstrong Roberts

money to go around we're told. Sure seems that someone could have seen all this coming before it arrived.

We could go on dreaming until the next crisis catches us. Take your pick—smoking, alcohol, drugs, crime, teenage pregnancy, poor health of the populace, waste, pollution.

However, as Carl Henry recently stated, "The overriding issue of the 20th century is the crisis of *authority*." Who is in authority in the homes today? What is the authority in society, government?

The School

Look at the schools. At one time youth was indoctrinated in truth. Then came the time when pupils were invited to join in the search for truth. Today we've accepted the notion that truth in an ultimate sense does not exist.

Where will this humanistic philosophy lead us? We believe that there is an absolute, final, wholly trustworthy authority—the Bible, God's holy Word. Even so, if that truth is accepted, there's a crisis in the claim to inerrancy and another crisis over the question of interpretation.

If there were errors, who would decide what is truth? Again there is a

crisis of authority. Does the Bible say the same thing to everyone? If not, to whom does it speak truth?

We may be on the brink of losing our religious freedom in this country, another crisis we've just discovered. What can we do about it? We can't save it alone, nor should we expect others to save it for us.

The Church

Now let me get to the point. Many Free Will Baptists feel that the denomination is in a crisis. We've shut our eyes to the facts for a long time. By nature, I'm an optimist. But I'm also a realist.

It has dawned on some of our people this past year that we aren't going anywhere as far as growth is concerned. We've done fairly well financially. We're organized and "programmized" quite well. But how many people are we winning to Jesus Christ? What is our net growth?

Most "new members" on church reports are transfers. Thirty years ago our membership was about a quarter-million. Today it's that same 250,000 with fewer than 200,000 in attendance on any given Sunday. Other denomina-

tions may be doing worse, but that's no consolation. Many are doing better.

Many churches continue their irrelevant ministries to the saved and bored. Evidently, God has written "Ichabod" over numerous church doors.

Let's admit we're already in trouble. I know there are some exceptions. Thank God for them. Without them it would be dismal indeed.

What do we do about the problem, if we agree that one does exist? For starters, let me suggest that each congregation sit down together for a few (or many) hours and honestly try to determine where they've been, where they are and where they're going or want to go.

Solutions, like authority, don't come from the top down. They come from the roots up. Why don't more people attend our churches? Why don't we win more people to Christ? (For fear of being stoned, I'll keep my opinions to myself.)

At the very least, we should try to find out what brought on the crisis and then by prayer and God's leadership seek to right the wrong. Perhaps with all our education, our theology, our fine buildings, our resources, we're doing less to win people to Christ than our unschooled forefathers did.

Dr. Kermit Long says, "We are no longer fishers of men, but keepers of the aquarium, and we spend most of our time swiping fish from each other's fishbowl."

Christianity is an aggressive religion. It was never intended to be confined within the four walls of a building. Most followers of the Cross are only partially convinced of its power. It's easier to close our eyes to reality than to become involved in a need.

The gospel is the only power that can change men's hearts. But instead of taking the gospel to others, we strive for power and use our energy fighting each other. Let's realize that the devil is the common enemy and we must use our energy to fight him. That's a full-time spiritual job.

Let's stop talking about differences and start magnifying our concern for winning people to Jesus Christ. ▲

ABOUT THE WRITER: Reverend George Waggoner pastors Pleasant View Free Will Baptist Church, Walnut Hill, Illinois.



NEWS OF THE RELIGIOUS COMMUNITY

RESOLUTION INTRODUCED TO ENCOURAGE 'GLEANNING' IN U.S.

WASHINGTON, DC (EP)—Citing the biblical practice of leaving part of the harvest in the field to provide for the poor, Rep. Tony P. Hall (D-Ohio) introduced a resolution urging state and local governments to enact tax and other incentives to encourage gleanings.

In remarks before the House, Hall quoted the Book of Leviticus: "When you reap the harvests of your land, do not reap to the very edges of your field or gather the gleanings of your harvest. Do not go over your vineyard a second time or pick up the grapes that have fallen. Leave them for the poor and the alien."

The Hall resolution also commends food producers who permit gleanings of their fields, and nonprofit organizations which glean fields for distribution to help alleviate hunger.

A similar resolution is being offered by Senator Paul S. Trible (R-Va.).

Gleaning is a custom which dates to biblical times. Today, gleanings are largely practiced by church groups and other nonprofit organizations that harvest and distribute fruits, vegetables, and other crops that have been left by mechanical harvesters.

According to a study by the General Accounting Office, in 1974 about 60 million tons of grain, fruit, and vegetables worth \$5 billion were left to rot unharvested. That amount of food could feed nearly 49 million people.

"With the growing rate of hunger in this country, we cannot afford to let these opportunities slip by," said Hall, who is a member of the House Select Committee on Hunger and chairman of its international task force.

One of the largest gleanings groups is Senior Gleaners of California, which harvested over 2 million pounds of food in 1982 which is distributed to over 250 charities in northern California. Other major organizations are the Society of St. Andrew in Virginia, and Sparrow Outreach Ministries in Washington.

"This nation is now experiencing a poverty rate that is higher than any we have faced over the last 15 years," Hall said. "Because we know that poverty is inextricably linked to hunger, we know that a great number of our citizens are living without sufficient resources to assure adequate nutrition for themselves and their families."

GALLUP POLL RATES CLERGY TOPS FOR 'HONESTY, ETHICAL STANDARDS'

Princeton, NJ (EP)—Of 24 occupations studied, clergymen are rated highest by the public in terms of their "honesty and ethical standards." In a Gallup poll, 1,536 adults were asked "How would you rate the honesty and ethical standards of people in these different fields—very high, high, average, low, or very low?"

Clergymen were rated "very high" or "high" by 67 percent of respondents, "average" by 26 percent, and "low" or "very low" by only four percent; three percent were undecided.

Scoring lowest in the survey were car salesmen. They were rated "low" or "very low" by 59 percent of those surveyed.

Journalists were rated "very high" or "high" by 31 percent of respondents, "average" by 47 percent, and "low" or "very low" by 17 percent. TV reporters and commentators scored slightly higher than the general category of journalists, and newspaper reporters scored slightly lower.

CHURCHES ON RUBBER PLANTATION FORM NEW CONGREGATIONS

MONROVIA, Liberia (EP)—Recently-formed churches on the Firestone rubber plantation near here are now taking the initiative in forming new congregations. Reporting on progress during the 12 months since SIM ministry on the plantation began, superintendent Dave Senator listed six established churches, five Bible fellowships, and 13 Bible studies.

"The wonderful part is that all these Bible study outreaches are by the believers themselves," he said. "They go out to teach others what they themselves have learned. There is no missionary involvement in that outreach."

To be recognized as a church, Senator explained, a congregation must have at least 10 baptized members, its own appointed leaders, and hold regular services. Churches start with evangelistic meetings and grow into Bible studies. They develop from there into Bible fellowships and then churches.

SIM became involved early last year after Firestone officials asked the Mission to develop a chaplaincy and church ministry among the workers. The plantation, which is the world's largest, is home to 75,000-100,000 people. "The response is so overwhelming we can't keep up with it," Senator said. "We're looking to God to provide us with more missionary volunteers to buy up this remarkable opportunity."



THE SECRETARY SPEAKS

By Melvin Worthington

Statistics are available on almost any subject today. Organizations use them to chart progress, change programs and challenge personnel.

A quick survey of data found in Free Will Baptist publications shows that we have a serious problem when it comes to reporting statistics. But the fact remains that for us to get a realistic picture of denominational progress, we must do a better job keeping records.

Records map progress or lack of progress. Every organization—local church, quarterly meeting, district and state association—must cooperate in this effort. A breakdown anywhere makes our statistics misleading or inaccurate. Nobody wants that to happen.

The Purpose

Statistics monitor our growth. Through the use of statistics we discover what works, what doesn't work and what needs improving.

For example, our statistics indicate a total of 243,658 members in 1982 while dropping to 213,025 in 1984. What happened to the 30,633 members? Which states grew? Which states declined? Did every state report?

Consider this: baptisms in 1982 totaled 8,679 although 17 states reported no baptisms. Baptisms totaled 8,594 in 1983 with 12 states reporting

Surveying Our Statistics



none. The 1984 total was 6,935 baptisms with 15 states reporting none. Now, were there really no baptisms in 15 states or were there simply no reports filed?

If reported statistics is the means by which we measure growth, we must conclude that numerically we have not grown.

For example, of the 30,633 decrease in membership from 1982 to 1984, one state lost 11,397. Another state decreased 4,000 in the same time period, while two other states decreased more than 2,000 each.

Even though these facts are based on official reports, we're unfair to our constituency when we declare no growth and then substantiate the assertion with statistical data that is neither accurate nor applicable. Did the states actually lose membership or did they not report their statistics?

Statistics serve as a means of motivation. Statistics which provide an accurate picture of an organization can stimulate action. Our statistical data can be used to monitor, measure and motivate us to grow for the glory of God.

The Problems

One problem with our statistical data is that it's *inadequate*. Apparently, many of us feel that statistics are unimportant.

Another problem we face is *inaccurate* statistics. A casual survey of state letters will confirm this. Perhaps the state letters do reflect information

reported to them, but surely those 17 states in 1982, 12 states in 1983 and 15 states in 1984 had some baptisms. Without accurate statistics, we're unable to measure growth or to refute the gainsayers who misuse inaccurate statistics.

Then, we often get *inflated* statistics. We laughingly call it "evangelistically speaking." Statistics ought to be true, not estimated. Better to have no statistics than to fabricate the figures.

What about the problem of *inconsistent* statistics? A state sends a complete statistical report one year and the next year sends nothing. Clerks in the local church, district association, state association, and National Association must push for consistency.

The last problem with statistical data is that it's *influential*. Careless handling of statistics presents a half-truth which is worse than a whole lie. When we quote statistics we should use them in proper context and with a comprehensive understanding of the total picture.

The Profit

Statistical data is beneficial as a *historical* record. In the years ahead, those 17 states (1982), 12 states (1983) and 15 states (1984) which reported no baptisms will be viewed from the historian's standpoint as not believing in evangelism. Unless the historian understands that perhaps they had baptisms but did not report them, he must conclude from the statistical data that they cared little for the lost.

Statistical data will be beneficial to our *heritage*. Those who follow in our footsteps will be able to rejoice over the blessings of God on our denomination. What a thrill to read the *minutes* of the National Association and see how we've grown since 1935.

Statistical data will be a *help* to those who seek to understand our movement. Nothing is more valuable for an organization than statistical data. It gives encouragement, is a means of evaluation and measures endurance.

Some of our records will always be incomplete because of our past carelessness. But tomorrow can be different if we mean business about growing and winning and building.

You can help. Encourage your local clerk to get the facts, record the facts and report the facts. ▲

The Secretary's Schedule

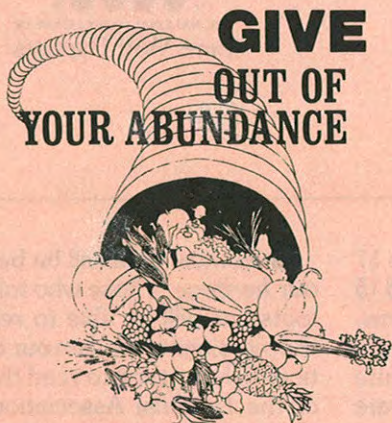
November 1-2	Mississippi State Association Booneville
November 4-6	Eastern Oklahoma Bible Conference First FWB Church, Checotah
November 7-9	Alabama State Association Huntsville
November 14-16	Georgia State Association Norman Park
November 17-20	First FWB Church Jesup, GA

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A United Thanksgiving Effort of Free Will Baptist Churches



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SEASON OF PRAYER AND OFFERING
FOR NATIONAL HOME MISSIONS

November is Home Missions Month!

MISSIONARIES
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VIRGIN
ISLANDS

PUERTO
RICO

SPANISH
AMERICANS

EVANGELISM

CHURCH
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PASTORAL
HELPS

LITERATURE

CHAPLAINCY



Roy Thomas
General
Director



Trymon Messer
Associate
Director



John Gibbs
Director of
Development



Connie D. Cariker
Director of
Evangelism

"We challenge your church to give a generous offering on National Home Missions Sunday, and challenge you as individuals to make a sacrificial gift. These offerings will help build Free Will Baptist churches across America."

**Observe November 24
Home Missions Sunday**

(Send offerings to National Home Missions,
P.O. Box 1088, Nashville, TN 37202.)