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- Best Christmas Ever!**
- The Jews' Messiah**
- 10 Miles Beyond Bitterness**



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The Jews' Messiah



H. Armstrong Roberts

By Joe Grizzle

Condescended from Heaven, born of a virgin, laid in a manger, celebrated by shepherds, worshiped by Magi, threatened by Herod! The familiar story is timeless. At each telling the luster deepens as time and tradition polish the holy nativity.

Amazing that God "with us," heaven's most sacred event, would introduce a child destined to fulfill hundreds of ancient prophecies most of which were beyond any human manipulation. He performed irrefutable miracles before their eyes, cast out demons by name and spoke with such authority that religionists were rendered speechless.

His life and ministry were in no way understood or comprehended by the chosen nation. Jesus, the Jews' Messiah, "came unto his own and his own received him not" (John 1:11).

Blinded by Preconceptions

Admittedly, the Jews' preconceptions

about the Messiah prompted a closed mind. Expectation was that Jehovah would send a military leader to head a revolution against Rome and secure social, political and economic independence. They postulated endless prosperity and cultural achievement—another golden age.

Least of all were inclinations that He might be a "street person" who would offend their dignity and challenge their traditional sacred cows. Never once did they suspect their long-awaited leader to be a poor man or a "country bumpkin" from Galilee.

Buried by Bigotry

The Pharisees had become a stench in the nostrils of God, reeking with external piety and "full of dead men's bones." They were prejudiced, bigoted, narrow-minded, proud, superior and had lost all sense of the genuine spirit of Judaism. They looked for a messiah who would accommodate their foolish

ostentation and honor their long robes, eloquent prayers, dangling prayer tassels and broad phylacteries (small boxes containing prayers worn between the eyes), which were but beautiful embellishments for wicked hearts.

Jewish social prejudice, especially against the Samaritans, reduced this neighboring nation to mere dogs and sent every Pharisee running for a complete bath if he inadvertently touched one. They neglected widows and hated Christ for doing good on the Sabbath.

Similar to Americans, they placed more value on the care of animals than people. They would pull the ox from the ditch and feed him on the Sabbath but disallowed a miraculous healing for a withered hand. They prayed in conspicuous places and thanked God that they were not as other men.

Noted to be aloof, detached and uncaring about the personal needs of a confused society, the only problem they saw with religion was that it was frequently cluttered by human need. They treated traditions of men as though they were the commands of God and were hypercritical of every opposing perspective. They banished or disquieted any person not thinking exactly as themselves and were narrow, intolerant and absolutely inflexible.

Sadly, they, as many still today, had no objectivity. They never saw themselves as they really were.

Born the Messiah

Jesus was a simple man, transparent, open. He refused to complicate friendship with God by giving credence to religious hypocrisy epitomized in the Pharisee. He lived close to the land and the people, knew the smell of dust cast up by the feet of hurrying multitudes. He lived in the streets and slept under the starry constellations. A poor man, not a theologian in the formal sense, yet "never a man spake as he."

The regalia of religiosity never entangled Him. His view was uncluttered; He spoke with clarity; He was in touch with humanity. He rejected pious jargon (thee's thou's, art's) and avoided eight syllable eloquence. We would do well

to follow His lead and simplify our approach to worship and faith.

An Approachable Man

Common people were comfortable with Jesus. Little children pursued Him, searching for a hug, a prayer and a word of encouragement. The irreligious and secularists were magnetized by His warmth.

Today many non-Christians legitimately complain of uneasiness with the sometimes artificial, well-planned, "churchy," and thoroughly intimidating practices of traditional worship. A worthy challenge has been issued by a contemporary minister whose commitment is to carry a cross around the world. He typically stays in local parks or public gathering forums where he sleeps on the ground, gives himself to prayer and fasting, and through the day gives witness to persons intrigued by the cross he carries.

Unorthodox? Yes. Bizarre? Yes. But effective at communicating to multitudes of common people from Hollywood to Third World countries.

Our primary concern should not necessarily be the procedure of evangelism, but the question of willingness to descend from spiritual ivory towers and hit the streets—to come out of the sealed houses and face raw humanity.

Jesus was unconventional, and He was rejected. His association with the baser elements of society such as barmaids, prostitutes, Samaritans, tax collectors, as well as the rich, the intellectual and the political leaders was an ultimate insult to the Jews. Jesus was so earthy, so common, so touchable, so undignified. He valued people so highly that He lost sight of typical religious priorities, like liturgy, creeds, traditions, organizations, programs, plans, publications, policies and procedures.

The Christians' Messiah

Lest we be overly critical of the Jewish spiritual imperceptivity, we should examine our own attitude regarding the real Christ. How do we measure up on the scale of approachability, sensitivity and especially toleration?

Unbelievable atrocities have been contrived against mankind in the name of Christianity. Myriads have beaten, butchered and battered the weak and defenseless rationalizing that the cause was worthy and thus any means to defend it was justifiable.

We are easy prey to this snare of Satan. We must avoid overt and inflexible attitudes which prompt us to sling mud, castigate and criticize those who differ in worship style, methods, organization and doctrine. The gospel message is to remain absolutely unadulterated, but, please, could there not be more tolerance to allow for creativity and change in manner and method?

The Yuletide season provides an excellent backdrop for measuring our personal messianic conception. Where is the emphasis in Christmas? Is it decorations, parties and fellowships, school and church programs, making costumes for wise men and angels, memorizing the cantata in the nick of time or the mad race to buy just the right gift?

This season is rich with beautiful and worthwhile family tradition. It provides one of our best opportunities for bonding family life. Yet, unless we enjoy unique insight into God's priorities, "the reason for the season" is usually buried beneath the clutter of profitless and shallow hyperactivity.

Shouldn't we consider emulating our Lord's perspective and renew our focus on developing relationships, first with God (prayer, praise, scripture study) and then with people, keeping celebrations simple and maintaining approachability—saying "I love you," hugging a child, visiting an aged relative, preparing a meal for the poor or sharing sacred family time with a foreign student who has no concept of the true Christ?

Bethlehem's babe was so approachable, so involved, so intimate with humanity. He came seeking a relationship with his creation much like the one he shared with His Father. He sought to be close; His message was of peace and good will. He was so common, without pomp, social prestige or public piety.

So unexpected was His demeanor and deportment that the Christ child came and went and Jehovah's chosen people, sadly enough, missed their long-awaited Messiah. Heaven help us that the baggage of Christmas activity, perverted personal priorities, and a misinterpreted Christ will not cause us to do the same!

ABOUT THE WRITER: Revered Joe Grizzle pastors First Free Will Baptist Church in Norman, Oklahoma. He is also a member of the Foreign Missions Board.

Contents

December 1989

2 The Jews' Messiah

Joe Grizzle

4 A Barn, A Baby, A Dream . . .

R. F. Smith, Jr.

5 Briefcase: Ten Miles Beyond Bitterness

Jack Williams

6 The Best Christmas Ever

Verla Fletcher

7 What If . . .

Mal King

8 Service

David Taylor

9 Tribute to Billy Samms

Herman Hersey

9 Free Will Baptist Newfront

12 The Department Pages

19 Currently

19 Only You, Lord

M. J. Pritchard

20 Top Shelf

Thomas Marberry

20 Support Your Church

David Copeland

21 Green Tree Bible Study

Robert E. Picirilli

22 Teen Scene

23 On Little Lanes

Donna Mayo

25 The Encourager

Janis Williams

26 1989 Index

30 Religious Community News

31 It's Incredible

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A Barn, A Baby, A Dream ...

By R. F. Smith, Jr.

Advent—or Enter: God; God as “Bethlemlen’s Barn Baby.” There’s only one word in that phrase that makes sense: “Bethlehem.” Barn and Baby simply do not square with deity or divinity or God. They are words which are neither logical nor theological nor practical, or so we conclude if we look only at the facts without faith to focus the facts.

Bethlehem—that’s okay; logical and understandable because that’s where God’s Messiah would come from; the City of David, the house and lineage of David. “From you, O Bethlehem,” said preacher-prophet Micah, “shall come a ruler who will govern my people Israel.”

And preacher-songwriter Phillips Brooks felt the rightness and theological logic as he penned “O Little Town of Bethlehem / How still we see thee lie.” Bethlehem lived out its destiny; it is still hallowed by its place in prophecy and history. So far, so good.

But *Barn* and *Baby*? That’s too much. That goes beyond logic almost to what Bishop Karl Block called “a kind of divine insanity.” Well, the good bishop may be a bit extreme in his choice of words, but you have to agree that the whole scenario was revolutionary and has become a source of frustration and confusion.

Forget the *Barn* part of it; that’s only scenery—a place for something to happen, scaffolding. But “the thing that happened,” ah, that’s where confusion happens; that’s where questions surface and frustration births.

Why a baby? Of all the options available to God, why a baby? Why *not* a baby? How else could God experience what it’s like to live as He created us and place Himself in a position and condition to do for us what needs doing and what we cannot do for ourselves?

A. E. Whitham imagines Christ reminding us what we can do with

humanity that possesses us:

Let me have your tools,
the little stage of your workshop,
surround me with your
identical temptations,
add the malice and suspicion of man,
narrow the stage to the dimensions
of a dirty Eastern village;
handicap me with poverty,
weigh the scales,
crib and cabin me in a
little Eastern land,
and there, at the point where you
have failed in the flesh,
I will produce the fairest
thing earth has seen;
I will give the world a dream come true.

And that’s what Messiah, Barn, Baby, Bethlehem and Christmas are all about: “A dream come true.”

ABOUT THE WRITER: Dr. R. F. Smith, Jr., is senior minister at Fifth Avenue Baptist Church in Huntington, West Virginia.

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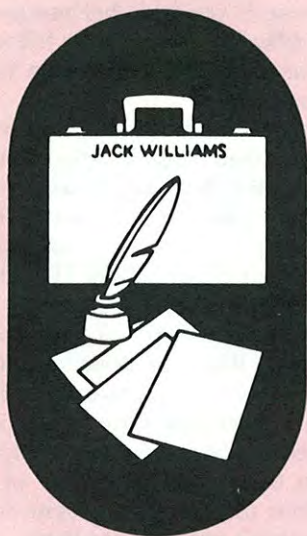
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Ten Miles Beyond Bitterness

Briefcase



Some time ago Dr. Malcolm Fry, editorial chief at Randall House Publications, spoke to an employee prayer meeting in Nashville. His major point turned on the fact that when we insist on getting what we want before God is ready for us to have it the result is often bitterness.

He pulled that truth from Israel's ordeal at the waters of Marah just three days after crossing the Red Sea (Exodus 15:23-27). The people wanted water and wanted it *now*, but what they drank at Marah nearly caused a riot. Fortunately, God healed the bitter waters after Moses tossed a tree into them.

That's what Jesus does with our bitter experiences, if we let Him. He who hung on a tree as our curse turns the gnawing bitterness of life sweet, even when we insist on doing things that run contrary to His will.

Dr. Fry told how 10 miles from Marah's bitterness God had prepared Elim, a desert oasis with 12 wells and 70 palm trees, a well for each tribe and a palm tree for each of the 70 elders. God's provision waits for those who walk past bitterness, who refuse to camp at Marah and poison their lives with disappointments.

Living by the Book provides a way out. Test pilot Chuck Yeager

learned that survival depends on living by the book. In his book *Yeager*, he tells how the F-86 Sabre Jet was killing people. Four pilots had flown it into the ground for no apparent reason.

One day as Yeager piloted an F-86 flying upside down about 150 feet off the ground the aileron locked. This is the control mechanism on the wing. He could have been dead in seconds but when he let off on the speed the aileron unlocked. He went up higher and tried it several times. Under stress the wing was bending just enough to jam the control mechanism.

They discovered some of the planes had one bolt on the wing upside down. The error was traced back to a man at one of the plants who believed he had been putting in bolts long enough to do it without consulting a book. Under stress it stuck out just far enough to jam the aileron. They never told him how many pilots he had killed.

Lutheran Brethren pastor Hal Christensen remarked, "It makes you wonder how many lives, marriages and eternal souls have crashed because we think we know better than the Book. When you are in spiritual trouble and confused emotionally, mentally or otherwise . . . just obey your way out. Follow the Bible. . . Don't follow your feeling or human reason. Obey your way out of confusion. Do it by the Book!"

One famous woman in the Bible was unable or perhaps unwilling to move beyond her bitterness. When Naomi returned to Bethlehem after burying her husband and two sons in Moab, she refused to be called "Naomi" any more because Naomi means "pleasantness." She blamed God for circumstances that sent her away full but returned her empty (Ruth 1:20-21). All she had to show for her pain was a Moabite daughter-in-law.

But as in the case of Israel at Marah, the sweet waters were just past her bitterness. When Naomi gave up and turned inward, God used the Moabite woman who had seemed a poor bargain for all Naomi had suffered. Within

a few short months the name of Ruth the Moabite became linked with the promised Messiah, for she married Boaz who became the great-grandfather of David.

For some strange reason, churches seem to attract people who cannot move beyond Marah's bitterness to Elim's bounty. When that happens, as with Naomi, God may raise up a "Moabite" to complete His plan, while we who could have been used are left to sit and watch. The ironic part is that Ruth also lost her husband in Moab but found strength in Naomi's God to step beyond her grief. Those who cannot walk away from life's graves settle down at Marah and pollute the rest of their days with bitterness.

More than a century ago Robert Louis Stevenson devised 12 rules to help people live happier, more productive lives. Rule #2 states, "Make the best of circumstances. No one has everything, and everyone has something of sorrow."

But what works best is Rule #11, "Don't be the one who never gets over things."

Oscar Hammerstein found a way to balance life's scales in his music, "I know the world is filled with troubles and many injustices. But reality is as beautiful as it is ugly. I think it is just as important to sing about beautiful mornings as it is to talk about slums. I just couldn't write anything without hope in it."

Bravo, Mr. Hammerstein! God did not leave His world without hope in it. No matter how disappointing life may be, no matter how deep the hurts or betrayals, God will finish what He started and one day brush aside the tears.

A father took his son to a pet store to buy a puppy. As the boy watched the window full of dogs, his father asked which one he wanted. Pointing to a puppy furiously wagging his tail, the boy said, "I want the one with the happy ending."

That's God's way!



The Best Christmas Ever

By Verla Fletcher



H. Armstrong Roberts

As you wrap the glass ornaments in tissue paper and vacuum the pine needles, how do you feel? Happy, fulfilled and renewed? Or relieved, tired, disappointed and just a little cynical? Is it possible that your post-Christmas attitude is directly related to your pre-Christmas activities?

What does December's schedule look like for you and your family? If you're a typical family, the month is full of activities: decorating, baking, shopping, practices for the children's program, collections for the needy, parties, dinners, rehearsals for the choir cantata and endless entertaining.

We rush through the days checking off each commitment as we meet it, breathing a sigh of relief when "that's behind us." We fight the crowds, spend too much money, lose our tempers and through it all extol the wonders of the brightest season of the year. Is it any surprise that the real meaning gets lost in the shuffle?

We painstakingly *decorate* and *design* an atmosphere that exudes Christmas warmth and cheer. The tree must be real, at least six feet tall and per-

fectly shaped. Cans of spray snow create a wintry scene on the front room window. Mistletoe hangs in the doorway. Candles glow on the mantel sending out scents of a pine forest. Christmas cards crowd the entryway as they arrive daily. Everything must look just right.

Decorations in place, we start the *baking*. It doesn't seem like Christmas unless we bake dozens of cookies, make pounds of fudge and bake a fruit cake. We make our shopping list and shop, bake, wrap and freeze until it's completed. We threaten our family not to touch anything in the freezer because "that's for Christmas."

Shopping—loved by some, feared by many and dreaded by more than would probably admit. Besides the obvious drawback, money, there's the pressure to find the right gift for each person. That usually means buying something they've requested. We know our financial limitations, yet we strain to meet the expectations of those on our list.

Add to all this the rehearsals, practices and parties, and small wonder that the day after Christmas finds us disillusioned. We prepare for Christmas, but

the preparations leave us too exhausted to enjoy the season.

Every year do you wish that next year could be different? Perhaps the following suggestions will help you make that wish come true.

1. Focus on the fact that Christmas is more than Jesus' birthday. Singing "Happy Birthday" and blowing out candles on a cake do not convey the true meaning. God loved us so much that He gave us His only Son. The "gift" is more important than the event.

2. Get involved in an outreach project. Whether it be in your church, school or community, offer your time and services. One mall in our city sponsors a Star Tree. Each paper star on a tree bears the name of a family. Your family adopts them and buys Christmas presents for them.

The Junior High teens in our church distributed blankets and warm clothing to the homeless one year. There is no better way for children to learn about giving than by involving them in service.

3. Create memories by observing the traditions of your families. Maybe it was Grandpa reading the Christmas story or Mom's gingerbread men—if it was special to you, continue to do it. Pass it on to the next generation.

Make your own traditions too—at our house it's new pajamas for Christmas Eve! Some families have special meals on Christmas Eve or buy new ornaments for each child each year. Do something the same way every year so that your children can recall and say, "I remember how we *always* . . ."

4. Do your shopping throughout the year or at least over a period of three to four months. When you see something that's right for someone—buy it. This helps ease the financial burden during December. Shop for the most-difficult-to-buy-for first.

5. Christmas cards—to send or not to send?—that is the question. If you send them, choose them carefully and thoughtfully. Somehow, to me at least, a card that features Santa on a pair of skis doesn't befit the message of Christmas. And don't wait until December 20 to sign, address, stamp and mail those cards. Start a new tradition—buy them early (the best time is right after

What If . . .

By Mal King

You may have read my article on ministerial training titled, "Sink or Swim" in the January 1989 issue of *Contact*. I feared that the message would be misunderstood. It was. But so far not in the way I feared.

My fear was that readers would think I thought training more important than prayer, Bible study or being called of God. Nothing could be farther from what I intended.

People who responded to the article went far beyond my vision. Consider these excerpts from letters about the article:

Crystal Cathedral, Thomas Road Church, Liberty College—why are we not dreaming great dreams and building a city on a hill to the glory of God? Why are we letting others outshine us? I love our denomination but we don't seem to be going anywhere. . . .

After my baptism of fire (nothing in college or graduate school prepared me for it) in one pastorate, I agree with your basic premise: a leader needs all the training he can get. (But he also needs a Board of Deacons trained to do what the Bible says they are to do.) Do you have a seminar related to deacon boards who realize the church is growing faster than they are? Do you have a Diotrophes (III John 9) seminar?

Thank God for the blessings, but (as a veteran of local and foreign wars with deacon boards) it is easy for me to understand why many would-be pastors are now in secular studies and vocations.

Christmas) and address them on Thanksgiving night.

6. Attach new meaning to the symbols of Christmas. When you see the beautiful colored lights, remember that Jesus is the Light of the world. As church bells ring, thank God for the good news we can share. In choosing and receiving gifts, reflect on the supreme gift—Jesus.

7. Instead of counting the days until Christmas, make each day count for Christmas. Prepare a basket with slips of paper, and on each slip of paper write an activity such as visiting the Children's Hospital, baking cookies for an elderly person, etc. Take one project out each day (and do it!) until Christmas arrives.

8. Look around for someone who is alone or lonely during the season. Include them in your plans sometime during Christmas. Invite a single friend or student for dinner or to go shopping with you. Share your family with them.



How can we get deacons to "deac?" I have new converts who show up for visitation when only one member of my deacon board is there. If it were possible to do so, I would keep my new converts completely away from most of my church leadership—a leadership that doesn't lead.

What about a training program for deacons—a retreat—that will challenge them to do what they are supposed to do? What about requiring that they also get some training before being certified by a local church?

*We need all of the help we can get with today's church boards who must be related to the first century Pharisees with their narrow-mindedness of doing everything their way or not at all. Your article in *Contact* was relevant and I pray not 20 years too late to help turn around our beloved denomination.*

The responses had several things in common: love for our denomination, hurt (of the deepest kind), pleas for

9. Share a special book with the entire family. Let the children read too. Those who are too young to read may draw pictures to illustrate the story as it is read. Suggested titles: *The Best Christmas Pageant Ever* or *The Giving Tree*.

10. Plan a family worship time for Christmas Eve or Christmas Day. Involve the children in the planning. They may wish to act out the Christmas story or sing a song. Use this time to give your "gifts" to Jesus.

Make this a Christmas that your family will look back on and say, "Do you remember the year we ___? That was the best Christmas ever!"

ABOUT THE WRITER: Mrs. Verla Fletcher is employed by the California State Association of Free Will Baptists. She is a member of Harmony Free Will Baptist Church in Fresno where she teaches a seventh grade Sunday School class. The mother of two is president of her district Woman's Auxiliary. Her husband, Dennis, is a deacon and Sunday School superintendent.

national leadership to take action ("It is time to stop talking and to develop a national agenda to provide the kind of challenge Jesus left us with in the Great Commission"), and dreams of what could be if only we have the will to act.

As a child born during the great depression, I learned early to play the game of "wouldn't it be nice if. . . ." A good thing, for in the small Arkansas town of my childhood we had little else but our dreams. I guess, then—when I awoke at 2:30 this morning thinking about some of the responses cited above—it was natural for me to play again that childhood game.

What if:

—We had a hotline for pastors, deacons, Sunday School superintendents, principals of Christian schools, presidents of Master's Men, Woman's Auxiliary, and others—a hotline they could call (toll-free) when they have problems. The hotline could be backed up by leaders of our denomination with experience dealing with specific problems.

What if:

—We had a video-tape and/or movie dramatizing some of the problems deacon boards can cause a church if they fail to lead and to serve. A discussion guide could be provided so that deacons don't just say after the showing, "That was a challenge," and go their way and forget it.

What if:

—Our National Association developed a four- or five-day intensive training program for the training of pastors (both would-be and actual). These seminars could "go on the road" or they could be held in Nashville. Funds could be obtained to create the course and to provide stipends for lecturers, and transportation for attendees (There are more than 26,000 private foundations from which funds could be sought).

What if:

—Our National Association commissioned the filming of the intensive sessions and made these videos available (for cost) to all of our churches.

What if:

—Our National Association appointed a cross-section of pastors to develop the curriculum for intensive and ongoing leadership training. This curricu-

Service

By David Taylor



Service. In tennis it's when you toss a fuzzy yellow ball in the air and hit it with a racket. At a restaurant it's a waiter's careful attention to your dining needs. In the military it's your livelihood as you protect and defend your country. In the church it's all those things you would do if you could, and the other guy, who can do them, isn't.

Can't you hear the fellow in the next pew back and the sister sitting across the aisle as the pastor or Sunday School superintendent shares a need for someone to help with a class, the youth, a project or maybe visitation? Never out loud, but said just the same, "I'd help do that, if only. . . ." in our minds we pick and choose the perfect person for every service needed in the church. Yet when was the last time I picked me, and you picked you? Shame on us!

Contrary to popular opinion, nowhere in scripture does God give to us a talent's minimum requirement to make it useful, acceptable or pleasing to Him. What we are told is that every talent and gift is from God. In His eye a talent is a talent and a gift is a gift. They are all important to Him. Size is only in man's eye.

Using talents and gifts in willing service has been a deficiency among God's people for a long time. So many needs, so few volunteers. In Ezekiel's day God looked for someone to "make up the hedge, and stand in the gap" (Ezekiel 22:30). He is still looking today.

Some needs are rather obvious: preachers, pastors, evangelists, missionaries. If these were all the needs of the church, there would be solid evidence for us to claim, "I don't have the ability nor feel led of God to serve in those areas." In the local church though, how many preachers, pastors, evangelists or missionaries do you need? Let's look past the obvious and get to the important.

What Sunday School could exist without teachers? What church service could function smoothly without attentive ushers? Is there a need for song leaders, pianists or organists? Could anyone write an article for the local newspaper? Can you paint or hammer? Could you organize and host? Can you cook or bake? How about operate the

sound system? Could you be a door monitor in the house of the Lord? Most importantly of all, will you try?

If you think these are not important in God's eye nor worthy to be called service, consider some of the supporting cast of the scriptures. Elijah found a woman to assist his ministry who could only offer a small portion of meal and oil. Jesus commended a woman who used her hair to wipe His feet. Andrew found a boy with five loaves and two small fishes. David stood against Goliath with a sling and five stones. Aaron and Hur simply held up Moses' hands during the battle.

Service. It's where earthly opportunity meets with talents that are divinely-

What If . . . (from page 7)

ulum committee could consist of the presidents of our colleges, leading pastors and any others (retired pastors) the association thought necessary. I can see this committee conducting a needs assessment by meeting with pastors now in the trenches, debriefing those who have left the ministry, and so on.

What if:

—Our National Association developed a plan that would challenge all our churches to commit funds to the association to develop "a city on the hill"—a symbol akin to some of those mentioned in the letter excerpts mentioned earlier.

What if:

—Our National Association and *Contact* magazine held a national contest with awards or rewards to those with the best ideas for "turning around our beloved denomination."

What if:

—*Contact* magazine started a "Dear Jack Column" (although Jack might not be as pretty as Dear Abby, he is far more witty). This column could contain letters (names not mentioned) from leaders who have real

given. Where opportunity and talent meet, you find men and women at their best: their best efforts or their best excuses.

How often will we read the parable of the talents until the words of commendation sink in? To both men, he with five talents and he with two talents, was given the same approval, "Well done, thou good and faithful servant. . . ."

The gaps in God's service must be filled today because of the *danger*—to the church's structure and the Christian's service. The gaps in God's service must be filled today to halt their *development*—left alone they enlarge and expand. The gaps in God's service must be filled today because of their *discouragement*—to the young and old, the weak and the strong.

Service. The Lord is still looking for men and women, boys and girls who will stand up, step out and sign on for God's service. Are there any volunteers?



ABOUT THE WRITER: Reverend David Taylor pastors First Free Will Baptist Church, Wilburton, Oklahoma.

problems. The response to these letters could help all of us do better what God saved us to do.

What if:

—We had a group of men and women (men might be the head of the church but women are usually the backbone) praying for those who have let our association know about a request or problem they have.

Well, it is now 5:00 a.m. and I have a living to make. So this "what if" dream had better end. From my heart though I would like to share one other dream. It is a dream that reveals the "Lions of Judah" who could come out of a national, God-based blueprint for Free Will Baptist leadership development.

It is a dream Aesop revealed long ago in one of his fables. It seems that a vixen and a lioness had just given birth. The vixen boasted to the lioness about the many beautiful cubs she had brought into the world, and then asked, "How many did you have, my dear?"

"Just one," answered the lioness, "But that one is a lion."



ABOUT THE WRITER: Mal King is president of Mentor Consulting Group and a member of Santa Paula Free Will Baptist Church, Santa Paula, California.

Tribute to Billy Samms

By Herman Hersey

A giant has fallen. Don't be deceived by his small stature—Billy Samms really was a giant! To most of us little shrubs, there are not many giant oaks, but Billy was one. We shall miss his smile, words of encouragement and friendship.

Billy was a giant in preaching. Few have approached his mastery of the scriptures. I'll never forget his moving finger as he quoted verse after verse while preaching. At his funeral, I mentioned to one of his sons, Kenneth, that Billy must have spent hours studying the scriptures. Kenneth agreed but added, "He also spent a lot of time in prayer." But that does not surprise me.

Billy was a giant among pastors. He loved his people and they loved him. Last December I preached at McCorkle FWB Church in West Virginia where he had a long pastorate. At that time the doctors said Billy only had a few weeks to live, so the conversation was about him. One of the men said, "Brother Samms is the only pastor I've had with a shepherd's heart."

He was a giant as a friend of preachers. Two younger ministers told me at the funeral how Billy had been an encouragement to them. Preachers

of all ages have lost a friend who cared.

In serving the Free Will Baptist denomination, Billy was a giant. For 23 years he led West Virginia Free Will Baptists as promotional director. He served on boards and committees of both the state and district associations. Billy was called by some outside his state as "Mr. West Virginia Free Will Baptist." For seven years he faithfully served the National Association of Free Will Baptists as a member of the Board of Retirement.

But the giant has not really fallen, he simply moved to a new home. The Lord saw that Billy magnified His name through months of suffering and pain. On September 20, 1989, the Lord said, "Call Billy home. He's suffered enough—his mansion is ready."

To those of us who knew and loved Brother Samms, he shall be missed but not forgotten. Let's have patience in our Blessed Hope for some day we will join him and many others rejoicing and praising our Savior around the throne.



ABOUT THE WRITER: Reverend Herman L. Hersey is executive secretary of the Free Will Baptist Foundation and director of the Board of Retirement.

REVEREND BILLY SAMMS WITH THE LORD

CHARLESTON, WV—Reverend William H. "Billy" Samms, 71, died September 20 in Charleston after an



extended illness. Funeral services were conducted September 23 in St. Albans with burial in Cunningham Memorial Park Mausoleum. Reverends Tommy Blake, Norwood Webb and Herman Hersey officiated.

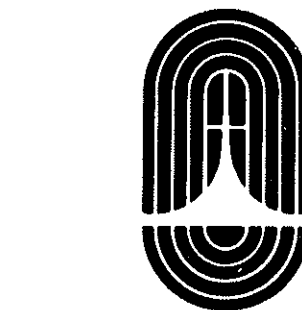
The West Virginia native was a Free Will Baptist minister for 39 years. He pastored seven churches, all in West Virginia, beginning in 1951: Grace FWB Church, Blount; Magazine FWB

Church, Charleston; Ansted FWB Church, Ansted; Old Glory FWB Church, Winifrede; McCorkle FWB Church, McCorkle; Cedar Grove FWB Church, Parkersburg; Hope FWB Church, Parkersburg.

Reverend Samms served 22 years as West Virginia's promotional director. He also served as state moderator and state parliamentarian as well as serving on various state boards and committees. For the past seven years he served on the Board of Retirement for the National Association. For three years he was West Virginia's General Board member.

Billy Samms preached at the National Convention Bible Conference in Louisville, Kentucky, in 1981. The widely-known minister developed a unique preaching style in which he quoted scripture extensively while his moving index finger seemed to follow invisible words that appeared before his eyes.

Brother Samms was a peacemaker



FREE WILL BAPTIST

newsfront

FIRE DESTROYS OKLAHOMA CHURCH

TULSA, OK—Flames swept through Lewis Avenue FWB Church in Tulsa Wednesday, September 27 after the evening service, destroying the contents and heavily damaging the building. Pastor Troy Staires and members stood by helplessly as fire caused \$360,000 damage to the church.

Fire Captain Jim White said the cause of the fire was not immediately known. White said there was about \$235,000 in damage to the structure and \$125,000 to contents.

An anonymous phone call at 10:12 p.m. alerted fire officials to the blaze. The anonymous call was made from a service station a half-block from the church. Some 26 firefighters fought the blaze before bringing it under control after 11:00 p.m.

The Lewis Avenue Church started 47 years ago as a mission of First FWB Church in Tulsa. The building that burned was built in the 1940's and later expanded. Pastor Staires said the church has about 80 members and was insured. The congregation plans to rebuild as soon as possible.

In addition to losing all the church furniture, Sunday School material and hymnals, the church also lost a recently-purchased \$4,000 sound system. Some church records, including baptismal and financial data, were kept in a room not destroyed by the fire.

among brethren, a faithful pastor, a friend to preachers and a man of unusual vision. He called God his friend and every Free Will Baptist his brother and sister.

He is survived by his wife, Myrtle; three daughters, four sons, four brothers, one sister and 17 grandchildren.

PASTOR BOB KING DIES AFTER HEART TRANSPLANT

CRAMERTON, NC—Reverend Bob L. King, pastor of Cramerton FWB Church, died September 27, eight weeks after a heart transplant. Pastor King had transplant surgery August 1 but developed a staph infection and meningitis in late September when his body began rejecting the new heart.

The 51-year-old minister pastored churches in Tennessee, Missouri and Florida before going to the Cramerton Church where he had served for 14 years. Converted in 1956, the North Carolina native was ordained to the ministry in 1960 at the age of 23. He graduated from Free Will Baptist Bible College in 1961 with the B.A. degree.

Reverend King was one of the founders of Southeastern FWB College and served on the college's Board of Directors until his death. He preached the keynote message during the 1986 national convention in Tulsa, Oklahoma, and was widely-known among Free Will Baptists.

He founded Cramerton Christian Academy in 1977. The academy has taught more than 2,500 students, with nearly 500 attending in 1989.

Funeral services conducted Septem-



ber 29 at Cramerton FWB Church attracted so many people that more than 200 had to be seated in a gymnasium and watch by closed-circuit television. Douglas King, son of Bob King, officiated. Retired FWB minister Roy Rikard and Reverend Earl Hendrix spoke to the assembly, as did Brother King's wife, Joanne, and his daughter, Janet. Reverends Tom Malone and Dann Patrick conducted graveside services in Gastonia.

Reverend King is survived by his wife, Joanne; a son, Douglas; a daughter, Janet Ballard; his mother, Mrs. Norville King; a brother, Ronald King; and a sister, Mary King.

TRIPLE MURDERS STUN ROBIRDS FAMILY

NASHVILLE, TN—Free Will Baptists from across the nation and around the world rushed to comfort the Don Robirds family October 3 after his 34-year-old daughter and her two teenage sons were found murdered in their south Nashville home. Reverend Don Robirds has been director of communications for the Foreign Missions Department since 1973.

The bodies of Judith Robirds Smith, her sons Chad (16) and Jason (13), were found shot and stabbed in their Woodbine home Monday afternoon. Police speculate that they were killed late Sunday evening, but the murders went undetected until shortly after 3 p.m. Monday when 8-year-old Michael Price, a relative, discovered the bodies.

Deputy Police Chief John Ross confirmed that Judy Smith dialed 911 at 11:22 Sunday night stating that she needed help. She gave her address and then the line went dead. Officers were dispatched to the home at 11:23, but radioed back 15 minutes later that they

had found nothing. At press time, no one had been charged with the murders.

Funeral services for the mother and her two sons were conducted Friday, October 6, at Donelson FWB Church in Nashville. Pastor Robert Morgan who officiated gave the clear plan of salvation in his message, especially calling on the teenagers present to make a decision for Christ. A number of salvation decisions have been made as a result of Pastor Morgan's sermon. Judy Smith and her two sons were buried at Woodlawn Cemetery.

Reverend Don Robirds told the *Contact* staff, "Only God knows the anguish we experienced through the loss of our daughter and two grandsons. The brutality of their deaths has made the matter more difficult than ever. But I praise God for the demonstration of love by our friends, neighbors and brothers and sisters in Christ. We have been overwhelmed at the response to our hour of burden. Gifts, phone calls and cards

SOUTHEASTERN COLLEGE ENROLLS 119 FOR FALL SEMESTER

WENDELL, NC—Officials at Southeastern FWB College expressed encouragement as the fall semester got underway August 28. "The year is off to one of the best starts ever. The atmosphere is like the first year the college began. There is a spirit of excitement and cooperation."

Some 119 students enrolled for the fall semester as Southeastern began its seventh year of operation. That number includes 15 seniors, 28 juniors, 30 sophomores, 44 freshmen and 2 special students.

The Board of Directors honored Dr. Joseph G. Ange for four years of service as president of Southeastern.

The opening message was preached by newly-elected president, Billy M. Bevan, from Ezra 9:8, "A Little Reviving in Our Bondage."

HILLSDALE ENROLLMENT UP 16 PERCENT

MOORE, OK—The fall semester at Hillsdale FWB College began with 135 students enrolled, up 16 percent, according to Richard Terry, director of development. Students came from 13 states and four foreign countries.

Terry said, "We are excited with the new students' potential because of their high school grade point averages and high ACT scores. We have a number of leadership quality students."

Hillsdale College instituted a scholarship program two years ago to assist students. Hillsdale students secure nearly \$40,000 in scholarships each year, including NDSL loans, Stafford loans, College Work Study and Pell Grants.

Mr. Terry said, "From all indications we will have another good recruiting season this year. We believe that good students attract good students."

have come from around the world. We extend our love and gratitude to all our precious friends and family."

The family had no insurance. A special emergency fund, the Don and Carol Robirds Trust Fund, was established by the Donelson Church to assist the Robirds family with funeral expenses and legal fees. A church spokesman said contributions could be sent to Donelson FWB Church at 2909 Knobdale Road, Nashville, TN 37214.

FREE WILL BAPTIST BIBLE COLLEGE ENROLLS 269

NASHVILLE, TN—Free Will Baptist Bible College enrolled 269 students from 23 states and six foreign countries for the 1989 fall semester, according to Dr. Charles E. Hampton, registrar.

The student body now numbers 53 seniors, 42 juniors, 74 sophomores, 82 freshmen and 18 special students. Of these, 61 are ministerial students and 53 are preparing for missionary service. All but 11 are from Free Will Baptist churches.

By states, the enrollment breaks down as follows:

Alabama	14
Arkansas	17
California	5
Delaware	3
Florida	10
Georgia	20
Illinois	23
Indiana	7
Kansas	1
Kentucky	12
Louisiana	2
Michigan	10
Mississippi	5
Missouri	22
New Mexico	1
North Carolina	18
Ohio	11
Oklahoma	3
South Carolina	14
Tennessee	43
Texas	7
Virginia	7
West Virginia	2
Foreign	12

NORMAN GEISLER ADDRESSES BIBLE COLLEGE FACULTY

NASHVILLE, TN—Dr. Norman Geisler, prominent teacher and author, now serving as dean of Liberty University's Center for Research and Scholarship, addressed the Free Will Baptist Bible College faculty for two days, August 23-24. In four sessions, he contrasted the Christian worldview with false worldviews, particularly that of the New Age Movement.

The FWBBC administration invited area pastors and personnel from the Free Will Baptist national departments to share these illuminating seminars with Dr. Geisler.

The FWBBC faculty and visitors were challenged by Dr. Geisler's graphic presentation of current attacks on Christianity, in everything from "Star Wars" to textbooks.

Dr. Geisler has served on the faculties of Trinity Evangelical Divinity School and Dallas Theological Semi-



Norman Geisler (L), Robert Picirilli

nary, and has taught philosophy, ethics and related subjects for nearly 30 years. He was the leading expert witness for the defense in the famous "Scopes II" trial in Arkansas in 1981. Dr. Geisler has travelled in all 50 states and 20 foreign countries. His books include *World Apart: A Handbook on Worldviews*, *The Creator in the Courtroom*, and *Origin Science: A Proposal for the Creation-Evolution Controversy*.

LEADERSHIP CONFERENCE TO MEET DECEMBER 4-5

NASHVILLE, TN—Free Will Baptist leaders from 20 states will meet in Nashville December 4-5 for the biennial Leadership Conference, according to Executive Secretary Melvin Worthington. Some 150 state moderators, clerks, promotional officers and board members are expected at Nashville's Maxwell House Hotel.

Worthington said that seven plenary sessions will highlight the two-day conference on "Accountability." Speakers include Illinois promotional secretary David Shores, Arkansas promotional secretary David Joslin, South Carolina promotional director Norwood Gibson,

National Association moderator Ralph Hampton, Board of Retirement director Herman Hersey, Nashville attorney Frank Ingraham and Melvin Worthington.

Following the Leadership Conference, most of the national boards and commissions will meet at the Maxwell House Hotel.

The \$75 Leadership Conference registration fee includes three meals, coffee breaks and a conference notebook containing outlines and lists of denominational agencies and state leaders.

SPRING ENLARGEMENT CAMPAIGN THEME SET

NASHVILLE, TN—The March 1990 Spring Sunday School Enlargement Campaign includes the "Always Abounding" theme. This contest is based on I Corinthians 15:58 where Paul admonished believers to be "always abounding in the work of the Lord."

The campaign will begin Sunday, March 4 and end Sunday, March 25 on Roll Call Sunday. The goal for the day is 270,000 in attendance.

Each Sunday will feature a special emphasis:

- Week one—"Abounding in Commitment"
- Week two—"Abounding in Faithfulness"
- Week three—"Abounding in Witness"
- Week four—"Abounding in Victory"

Any Free Will Baptist church can participate in the campaign. The church size does not limit chances of winning the contest. The divisions used for competition are:

Division A over 500 average

- Division B 400-499 average
- Division C 300-399 average
- Division D 200-299 average
- Division E 150-199 average
- Division F 100-149 average
- Division G 50-99 average
- Division H under 49 average
- Division I newly established

Sunday Schools in each division experiencing the greatest percentage of increase over the average attendance for Fall quarter (September, October, November) 1989 will be declared winners. Awards will be presented to the first and second place finishers in each division.

Order campaign materials from Randall House Publications, P. O. Box 17306, Nashville, TN 37217.

All campaign entry blanks must be received no later than March 2, 1990.



Herman L. Hersey
Director



Board of Retirement

AT YOUR SERVICE

Thank You

As this 20th anniversary of our retirement ministry comes to a close, I would like for us to pause and thank God for His blessings on this department.

My heart rejoices as I recall you who had a part. I would like to thank each of you personally. But, that is impossible. There are thousands of you. Please accept this general expression of my gratitude.

Donors. Thank you for your gifts. During those early years many of you pledged a dollar monthly. It seemed like so little, but God added each dollar to others and multiplied them to meet our every need.

Churches. You put us in your budgets and gave to us through the Cooperative Plan of Support. Thank you for caring.

Delegates of district and state associations. You welcomed us to your meetings. Thank you for listening and sharing our ministry with your churches.

Board Members and Leaders of conferences, associations and national ministries. You had faith in the future of this department. Our Sunday School and Foreign Missions Boards were among the first to enroll missionaries and staff members. Thank you for your confidence.

Congregations. You welcomed us and opened your hearts and pocket-books in behalf of our pastors. I appreciate you.

Treasurers and Secretaries. You gave your time to process funds and forward them to our office. I'm grateful for your faithfulness.

Pastors. You graciously allowed me into your pulpits. You and your families accepted me, encouraged me, challenged me by your dedication, and gave me your help and suggestions. Thank you.

Auxiliary and Master's Men Members. You were a constant source of encouragement. Thank you for rallying to our support.

Promotional Secretaries. You furthered this ministry through your publications and personal work. I thank God for you.

Randall House Board and Staff. Your presentation of this ministry in your publications helped us to reach thousands of our people with information. I'm grateful for your help.


FWB Bible College Staff. Thank you for inviting me into your classrooms to introduce our future ministers, missionaries and lay workers to the pension program and ministry.

Executive Office Staff. You generously provided space in *Contact* magazine for us. I appreciate your constant loyalty and support.

Retirement Office Staff. I am grateful for you and for those who worked with us in past years. I appreciate your loyalty and faithfulness.

Members of the Retirement Board. You have been a great blessing to me and our people. With wisdom and faith you charted the course. You gave your time and talents freely. My sincere thanks and gratitude to each of you.

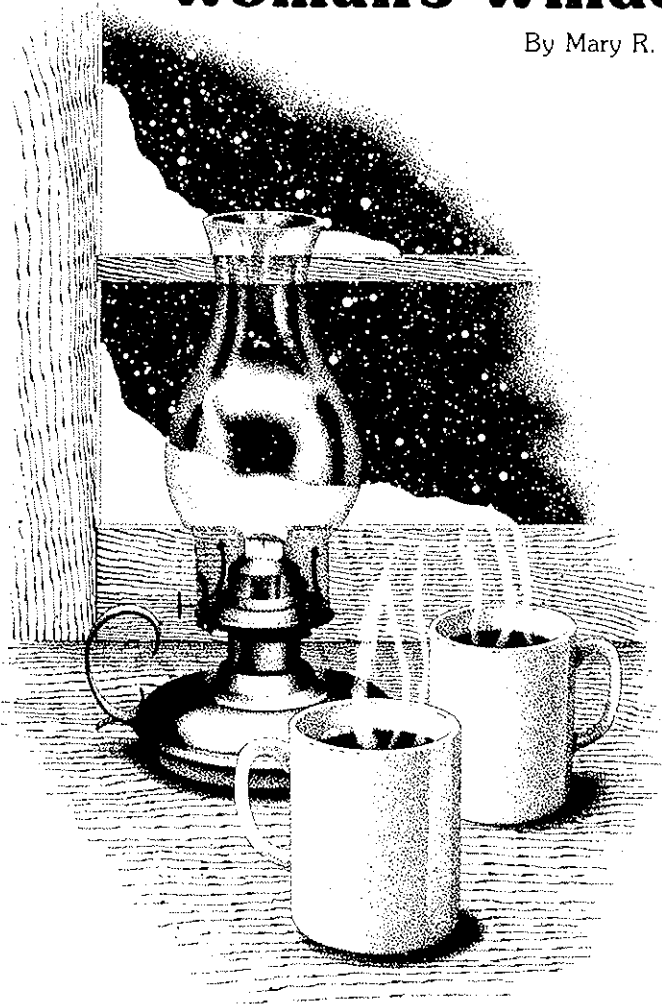
Professional Advisers: Craig Holland, Lonnie Wilson and Ed Smith of First American National Bank; Terry Hill, CPA; Mike Mudry, pension plan consultant and actuary; Richard Albers, attorney; and, our Money Managers. Your expertise was vital to our development.

Through a host of His people, God established this ministry. He heard our prayers—some prayed even a half-century ago—that our denomination might awaken to its responsibility to care for those who serve us. To Him be the honor and glory. 

Woman's Window on the World

By Mary R. Wisehart

The Department Pages



From My Window

Gifts! Awkwardly but lovingly wrapped by a child. Gifts! Beautifully wrapped with gleaming paper and bright ribbon. Tempting, teasing with beauty, shape and mystery.

And there is that special gift. You didn't think it was possible. Still, the size and shape look like what you really wanted, but didn't even dare ask for. And when no one's looking and you shake it gently, you're almost sure. It must be just what you've been wanting! You can hardly wait to break the ribbon, tear off the paper and experience the gift for yourself.

Can you imagine refusing such a gift? Leaving it lying unopened day after day? Of course not!

But wait. What about God's gift? Wrapped in flesh, tied with the crimson cord, God gave the best gift ever. Words can't even explain it. "Thanks be unto

God for his unspeakable gift" (II Corinthians 9:15).

Once opened, the gift pours out life, abundant, eternal. Love, unconditional, enduring. Joy, full and complete. Liberty, real freedom to be our own best selves, all that God wants us to be. Even better, the Giver Himself is part of the gift. And there's more.

Romans 8:32, "He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things?"

All we have to do is reach out and take the gift. Yet many reject it. John 1:11, "He came unto his own, and his own received him not."

Still, the gift is waiting. "But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God" (John 1:12).

Have you opened your gift?

Eunice Edwards Fund

The year is closing for the Eunice Edwards Fund, national project to help congregations abroad with their church buildings.

September 29, we had \$22,867.27 in the fund. Only two years to go, and we need \$27,132.73 to complete our goal of \$50,000 by 1991.

Special Gifts to WNAC

Gifts to the Office Furnishings and Equipment Fund now equal \$997.50.

WNAC Studies

WNAC recommends books on prayer, missions and Christian living.

This year the book *Touch the World Through Prayer* (\$4.50) by Wesley L. Duewel, combines a study of missions and prayer.

John T. Seamands' *Harvest of Humanity* (\$7.95) challenges us to meet demands of our time on the basis of the Word. Seamands is concerned about our reaching those from the Orient, Europe, Africa and other countries right in the USA.

Peaceful Living in A Stressful World (\$8.95) by Ronald Hutchcraft gives a plan for experiencing the peace of God in the midst of troubled times.

These books are available from WNAC.

Sixth National Retreat

Watch for information on the Sixth National Woman's Retreat in the January issue of *Contact*.

Free Will Baptist Bible College **REPORT**

3606 WEST END AVENUE
P.O. BOX 50117
NASHVILLE, TENNESSEE 37205-0117
(615) 383-1340

Denominational Goal Set At \$135,000:

PAUL KETTEMAN CHRISTMAS DRIVE IS UNDERWAY

The late Rev. Paul Ketteman loved Christmas! He loved it for all the reasons most Christians do, but he also loved it for one very special reason—The Christmas Project!

In 1976, he inaugurated a plan that, to date, has resulted in nearly \$640,000 for Free Will Baptist Bible College. It was simple. He challenged the students to bring back a signed checkbook or an offering from their church or a Sunday School class when they returned from Christmas vacation. Those who did, he teased, would be served a steak supper, while everyone else at FWBBC had ravioli. Eventually, a goal was set for the entire student body that, if met, meant a steak supper for everyone.

On tally day, in early January each year, the whole college family met in

the auditorium to see the results. Mr. Ketteman would call students with offerings to the front, section by section, and announce what each was bringing in. Occasionally, he would ask one to tell how he or she had raised the money. New totals were announced periodically, as the tally reached closer to the goal. No one rejoiced more than he when, year after year, the goals were met or exceeded.

In May 1987, the Lord called Paul Ketteman home. The administration later renamed the Christmas Project in his honor—The Paul Ketteman Memorial Christmas Fund Drive.

What Can We Do?

"Together, we can do it!!"

The key to success is for everyone to do something, as the Lord enables.

This year our goal is \$135,000, and we are praying that every family will make a special gift, large or small, to Free Will Baptist Bible College.

You can be the answer to prayer! You see, God wants to do something for you that He might do something through you for His glory.

I really believe that when God knows He can send gifts through you, He will send gifts to you. Yes, you can be a channel of blessing to many

wonderful students here at the Bible College who are preparing to take the glorious Gospel of Jesus Christ into the 21st century.

Perhaps you would like to sign a checkbook for \$10, \$20, \$50 or \$83.34 (\$1,000 per year) per month. (Write or call the college and we will be happy to send you one.) Others may want to send a check directly to the college or give a gift through their

"When God can send gifts through you, He will send gifts to you."

church.

Pastors can be a great help to the college by having a special College Day during the holidays and, if you have students in your church, use them to speak, preach, teach or sing. They will be a blessing to your church.

Some youth directors and teen teachers plan special fundraising events with their young people in December, with the proceeds going to FWBBC.

Thank you for what you are doing and will do for FWBBC!

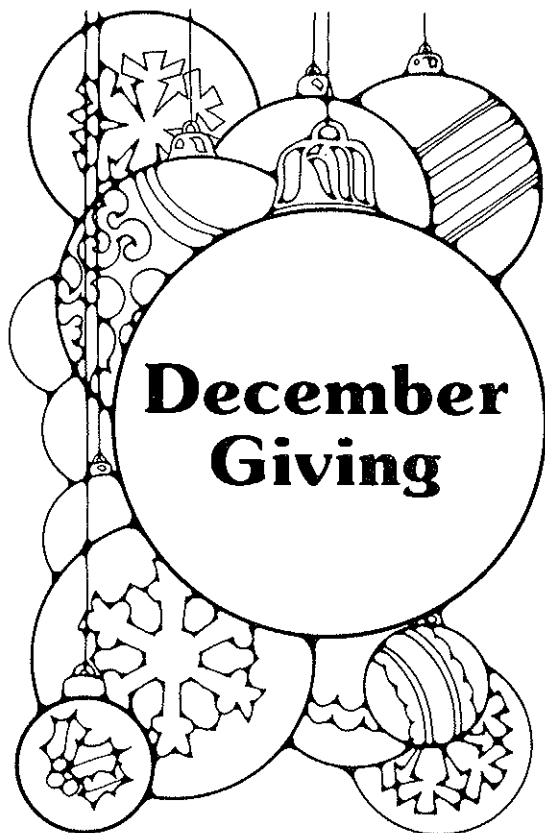
For materials or special help, write or call:

Free Will Baptist Bible College
3606 West End Avenue
Nashville, Tennessee 37205
615/383-1340



Paul J. Ketteman
1924-1987

Herman L. Hersey
Executive Secretary-Treasurer



At year-end, businesses take several important steps toward closing out. They review income and expenses, take inventory, prepare an annual audit, process tax reports, implement plans for the coming year.

December is an appropriate time as well for you to review your financial stewardship, set goals for the coming year and give a special gift to the Lord.

Have you been a wise and prudent steward? Prepare a report on your personal and family stewardship performance. Look for areas to correct or to improve during 1990.

Have your expenditures been in line with your income? Did you overspend? Did you meet your savings goal? Do you have one? Did you meet your obligations to your family and dependents? Did you pay your honest debts? Be ruthless in your evaluation of your per-

formance and apply God's guidelines.

Have you met your goals for percentage giving (10% or above)? Was your giving based on your gross income or just on the net? Did you include extra cash gifts or bonuses? Salary increases? Have you met your faith promises? Did you support outreach causes? Give to the needy? Did you forget to forward a check for ministries that you intended to support?

Are you setting budget and stewardship goals for 1990? Can you increase your percentage giving? Extend your giving to more ministries? Should you set up an endowment, trust or annuity? Renew your faith promises?

A good way to get started for 1990 is to begin right now during this Christmas season.

Be honest with yourself. Are you spending a reasonable amount on

Christmas gifts? It is good to remember loved ones and friends. But, is your Christmas spending in line with stewardship principles?

During December do you expect extra income from cash gifts, bonuses, capital gains on investments or from other sources? Include that in your percentage giving to the Lord.

Can you reduce your income taxes for 1989 by increasing your charitable giving? If you have bonds, stocks or other property that you can give to the Lord, now is the time. There is nothing wrong with prudent planning to channel funds to the Lord's work for a tax advantage in honest and fair deductions. Remember gifts must be made on or before December 31 to be counted as part of this year's deductions.

Try one of these giving ways to close out 1989 in honor of our Lord:

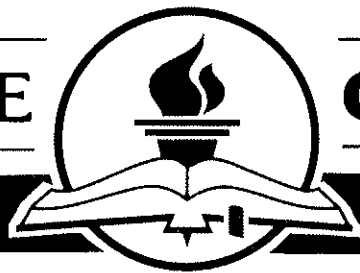
1. Double your tithe the week of Christmas.
2. Tithe cash Christmas gifts, bonuses, extra income.
3. Give an extra offering amounting to a tithe of what you spend on Christmas gifts.
4. Choose something from your possessions—stocks, bonds, property, collectibles, a paid-up life insurance policy—and present it to the Lord this Christmas.

Let your FWB Foundation help you with your planned giving through endowments, trusts, annuities and life estate agreements. For a list of established endowments or other information, send us your name and address. We can help you give to as many ministries as you wish through one gift.

Have a merry giving Christmas and blessed new year.

The Foundation is not engaged in rendering legal service or advice. Advice from legal counsel should be sought.

HOUSE



CALL

Committed to Growth

Randall House Publications wants to see the National Association of Free Will Baptists grow. We are convinced that Free Will Baptist churches can—must—grow. That's why we are committed to work together with your church to help Free Will Baptists grow for God's glory.

A widespread concern for growth gave birth to Target 90 in 1985. This is the fourth year of that five-year strategy. The overall goal for this campaign is to increase total membership by 50,000 and start 100 new churches.

Each of us rejoices that we have already surpassed the church planting portion of our goal. We at Randall House want to do our part to help achieve our membership goal before the end of next year. To be more specific, we want to help your church grow.

That's why we created the Attendance Booster Clubs. Each church is asked to select the attendance goal that can best be attained by them. Various materials are available to help your church achieve its goal. You must maintain your goal for 13 Sundays.

Once your goal has been attained, your church should notify Randall House of this accomplishment. (Special

forms are available upon which this can be done.)

When we receive your report form, the following steps will be taken:

1. The name of the church will be engraved on a plaque that will be displayed at Randall House Publications in Nashville.

2. An appropriate award plaque will be sent to the achieving church for them to display.

Take the following steps now:

1. Choose your attendance goal.
2. Choose the time period in which you plan to work toward your goal.
3. Order materials that will help you achieve your attendance goal.

Randall House has published several books to help organize an effective outreach to your community. *Planting and Growing A Fundamental Church* by Roy Thomas, general director of Home Missions, contains a wealth of information to help build a growing church. The *Attack Manual* presents one way of mobilizing congregations to reach the unreached. It gives a step-by-step procedure for enrolling more members in Sunday School.

Bob Shockey's booklet "Let's Go Fishing" challenges people to become soul winners. Shockey, veteran pastor and denominational leader, is employed by Free Will Baptist Bible College as director of student support. He is also the


speaker for the denomination's radio program *Victorious Faith*.

Gordon Sebastian, pastor of Peace Free Will Baptist Church, Wilson, North Carolina, has prepared a helpful tool for equipping soul winners. The tape containing two lessons—"Effective Personal Soul-winning" and "Training Others to Witness"—is well worth its modest price.

Tracts are an integral part of an effective outreach ministry. "We'd Like You To Come To Our Church," "The Free Will Baptist Church In Your Community," "God's Simple Plan of Salvation," "The Romans Road," "Now That You Are Saved"—these Randall House tracts have been used widely with good results.

Randall House also has follow-up material. Greg McAllister, registrar at California Christian College in Fresno, California, has authored *Leading Questions: A Free Will Baptist Discipleship Manual*, a tool designed for use with new converts. Malcolm C. Fry, editor-in-chief of Randall House Publications, wrote *Precepts for Practice*. *Precepts* has become a standard resource for grounding new believers in the faith. *How To Know You're Saved*, by Garnett Reid, Free Will Baptist Bible College professor, provides a biblical basis for assurance for the newly-saved person.

Every new member of a Free Will Baptist church needs a copy of *Your Church and You* by Robert Picirilli, academic dean of Free Will Baptist Bible College.

For complete information about any of these church growth resources, contact Randall House Publications, P. O. Box 17306, Nashville, TN 37217 

MINI GRAMS

Department of Home Missions and Church Extension
of the National Association of Free Will Baptists

The Department Pages

Hit by Hugo!

God Works Miracles While Churches are Destroyed.

By Roy Thomas



Hugo devastates Free Will Baptist Church.

Hurricane Hugo ripped through the Caribbean Islands in September and left a trail of death, devastation and destruction. St. Croix in the Virgin Islands and Puerto Rico suffered the most extensive damage, and the home mission churches on both islands were destroyed as well as the Virgin Islands school.

During the storm, our home missionaries on these islands experienced many blessings. In the Virgin Islands, home missionaries Grady and Judy Runyon were unharmed. Their house suffered no damage whatsoever, while all of their neighbors' houses were destroyed. Even though the Free Will Baptist Church and High School buildings were destroyed, the pastor's study where Brother Runyon's books, files and desk were located was preserved unharmed and dry.

Terri and Marlene Thomas and Clark and Donna Ryman, four employees of the Free Will Baptist Christian School in St. Croix, also were kept miraculously safe. They spent a terrifying night huddled beneath a kitchen table while the roof was blown off their house and their belongings destroyed.

These events remind me of Psalm 91:7 which says, "A thousand shall fall

at thy side, and ten thousand at thy right hand, but it shall not come nigh thee."


Hugo left no utilities, food or drinking water on the island, and since the church and school property were destroyed, the missionaries and Christian school workers had to be evacuated to the states. While in the states the Runyons were donated five new generators by the Harmony FWB Church in Lake Butler, Florida. This supplied electricity for the clean up and reconstruction to begin. Funds were donated and a volunteer crew enlisted to assist with the rebuilding.

Miguel Vera, home missionary to San Juan, Puerto Rico, was in Tennessee conducting itinerary services when the

storm hit the island. He was almost frantic with concern for his family until he learned they were safe at a neighbor's house. A huge tree located about 100 feet from the Vera's house fell across the rented church building crushing it. If the tree had fallen another direction it would have fallen on the neighbor's house where Adelaida Vera and her children waited out the storm.

Miguel was delayed from Monday until Saturday returning home because the airport runway in San Juan had to be repaired. However, when he did return to the island, he had a check for \$1,000 in emergency funds that had been donated by sister churches in the states. These funds were used to find a new place for services and to purchase needed supplies.

An emergency relief fund for the Free Will Baptist works in the Caribbean has been set up in the Home Missions office, and numerous churches and individuals have already contributed to it. This crisis has also stimulated an awareness of the need for property and a church building for the Puerto Rican church.

Romans 8:28 says, "We know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them that are called according to His purpose." God has certainly been true to His word among our home missionaries and churches in the Caribbean Islands. 



Free Will Baptist Christian School destroyed by Hugo.

ABOVE ALL

Arkansas Men Give to Missions Projects

A gift of nearly \$673 was received by Director Jim Vallance during the Arkansas Master's Men state meeting in August. Larry Phillips presented the check and stated that the funds were received as part of their adopted project for 1988-89. The funds are a portion of over \$1,000 given to purchase tools through the Master's Hands Projects in 1989.

Director Jim Vallance stated, "This effort shows what our men can do when they rally to a cause. The need for tools is great. These men are leading the way in our missions projects this year."

Arkansas has chapters in nearly 25 churches, making their organization the largest Master's Men state work. Each year the men adopt a project within the state and a national project. They have contributed thousands of dollars to Arkansas' Camp Beaverfork. This year the men completed a project to overhaul the living quarters on the camp property.

Eight-year-old Blake Fowlkes was welcomed as LifeMember number 350 at the state gathering. He is the youngest LifeMember of Master's Men. The Fowlkes family now has three generations represented in Master's Men. That's Grandfather A. T. Fowlkes, Son Tommy Fowlkes and Grandson Blake. They attend Centerpoint FWB Church in Vilonia, and share a rich heritage of involvement in the Lord's work.

Michigan Laymen Meet

Rouge FWB Church hosted a pancake breakfast and gathering of Master's Men and other laymen the first weekend of October. Director Jim Vallance was present to challenge the men as they consider organizing a state Master's Men work.

Pastor Ray Wilson has good reason to be proud of the men and youngsters in their Upward Bound program. Over 30 men attended the session. Music was provided by Don Dyer, accompanied by Gary Wilson.

Master's Men State Senator, Elmer Ferrell, was present and gave the men two challenges:

(1) Make efforts to begin the state Master's Men organization, and

(2) Efforts are underway to have a bus load of Michigan men travel to the National Master's Men Conference at Camp Linden, Tennessee, in April.

Vallance encouraged the men to find pastors to act as advisors for the organization. He gave practical points to begin the effort, including using one or two representatives from each Master's Men chapter to act as a nominating committee for state officers.



National Master's Men Conference Set

The twelfth annual National Master's Men Conference is scheduled for April 26-28, 1990. The location is Camp Linden in Linden, Tennessee. Plans include a guest speaker and singer from Japan, Mr. Sadao Hirobuki. Director Vallance stated, "Having Hirobuki-san visit will be a highlight as our men hear his testimony and share his beautiful singing. I am as excited about this conference as anything we've planned in the past six years!"

A conference brochure should be ready to mail by the new year. If you're not on the Master's Men mailing list, write or call for a copy of the program.

TAKE THE SHIELD!

Pastor **Jim Crawford** and members dedicated a new sanctuary at **Calvary FWB Church, Conway, MO**. Executive Secretary **Clarence Burton** delivered the dedication message.

Hannibal FWB Church, Hannibal, MO, called out the National Guard and set a new morning worship attendance record, according to Pastor **Dale Cochran**. The Hannibal church honored the 2175th Military Police Company in a special celebration. Guardsmen posted the colors as the congregation said the pledge of allegiance to the American and Christian flags. Specialist 4th Class **Michael Clancy**, Missouri National Guard Soldier of the Year, and member of Rolla FWB Church, Rolla, MO, was the guest speaker.

The new mission work in **Hugo, OK**, got underway in July when Pastor **Mike Fields** and his family moved to the southeastern corner of the state as home missionaries. They began a Bible study in their mobile home situated on a seven-acre site purchased by the Oklahoma State Mission Board. Twelve people attended that first Bible study.

Youth at **Feiker FWB Church, Valliant, OK**, committed themselves to raise \$1,000 for the Phoenix Land Fund in Arizona, according to Pastor **George Harvey, Jr.** The youth named their theme, "Great Phoenix Land Rush of 1990." The Woman's Auxiliary started a "Pennies for Phoenix" drive. Members presented a plaque and money tree to Pastor Harvey.

Vacation Bible School turned out to be a big success at **Gahanna FWB Church, Gahanna, OH**. Attendance averaged 144 nightly with 20 converts. **Curtis Booth** pastors.

Members of **Sterling FWB Church, Sterling, OH**, called **John Castle** as their new pastor and promptly added 20 new members. Way to go, John!

Pastor **Delmar Sparks** reports 10 baptisms and 26 new members at **Westerville FWB Church, Westerville, OH**. The group averaged 228 in Vacation Bible School.

The annual Ministers-Laymen Retreat in Ohio will meet January 25-27, 1990, according to the retreat director, **Alton Loveless**. Two college presidents will speak this year. **Charles Thigpen**, president of Free Will Baptist Bible College will speak four times. His subjects include "The Pastor—His Study and Books," "The Pastor—The Sermon and Sermonizing," "The Sunday Morning Service" and "Exercising the Gift of Encouragement." Hillsdale FWB College president, **Jim Shepherd**, will speak four times from the book of James. He calls this series, "Faith in the Fire."

Members of **East Tulsa FWB Church, Tulsa, OK**, honored Pastor and Mrs. **Bailey Thompson** in a Pastor Apprecia-

tion Day. Events included a special dinner for them as well as a cape for Mrs. Thompson which came wrapped in \$400.

Pastor **David Archer** is singing the praises of 55 people who visited more than 2,000 homes in **Glenpool, OK**. The visitation blitz was part of a children's crusade effort which resulted in a high attendance of 289 at **Faith FWB Church**. The children gave \$361 to missions, and Pastor Archer reported 54 conversions among the children.

In another youth-oriented effort, young people from **Lawnwood FWB Church, Tulsa, OK**, spent several days in Hugo, OK, spreading the word among residents that a new Free Will Baptist church was beginning. **J.C. Morgan** pastors the Lawnwood Church.

Reverend **U.C. Purdom**, a Free Will Baptist minister for 57 years died in August. Brother Purdom organized churches in Keefeton, Brooken and Briartown. He pastored seven churches in Oklahoma as well as serving as an evangelist for a number of years. Before he entered the ministry in 1932, Purdom pitched AAA baseball under a St. Louis Cardinals contract. Funeral services were conducted at Hoyt FWB Church, Hoyt, OK.

Twenty-two men from across **Oklahoma** drove to **Vinita** to put roofs on the parsonage and church for state missionary, **Kenneth Stephens**. Stephens is the missionary pastor at **First FWB Church** in Vinita.

Members of **Victory FWB Church, Goldsboro, NC**, adopted a \$95,000 budget for the next fiscal year. Pastor **George Lee** said the budget calls for offerings of \$1,825 weekly.

In an effort to promote Sunday School growth, members of **First FWB Church, Salem, OR**, viewed five training films on Evangelism Explosion produced by James Kennedy. Pastor **Terry Motte** leads the congregation.

Reverend **Darvin Oakes** has voluntarily surrendered his ministerial credentials to the Wolverine Association of Free Will Baptists in **Michigan**. Mr. Oakes is no longer a Free Will Baptist minister.

The **Oklahoma** State Youth Conference met on the Hillsdale FWB College campus at Moore. Conference directors **Terry Van-Winkle** and **Phil Akin** said, "This is one of the biggest events for Free Will Baptist teens in Oklahoma." In addition to a wide range of seminars and other activities, the conference featured **Steve Davis**, former quarterback for the Oklahoma Sooners as keynote speaker.

Members of **First FWB Church, Duncanville, TX**, presented a new wheelchair to **Debbie Smith** who is recovering from an automobile accident. **David Sutton** pastors.

Pastor **Larry Cook** said members at **Bear Point FWB Church, Sesser, IL**, voted to build an additional fellowship hall and classrooms at the church. The first offering toward the building goal exceeded \$4,000.

Harmony FWB Church, West Frankfort, IL, reports six baptisms and six new members. **Kenneth Edwards** pastors.

Bethany FWB Church, Timmons-ville, SC, recently completed new offices for Pastor **Rick Cason** and minister of youth, **Mark Williford**. Cason said that attendance in youth activities increased significantly after Williford joined the church staff.

Oklahoma pastor **Joe Grizzle** led the Fall Couples' Retreat at **Donelson FWB Church, Nashville, TN**. The two-day October retreat met in a suburban hotel. **Rob Morgan** pastors.

Grant Avenue FWB Church, Springfield, MO, began a new Sunday School class this fall for young adults and couples in their 20's and 30's. Pastor **Jeff Gaskins** teaches the class.

Jay Shelton received a seven-year pin for perfect Sunday School attendance at **First FWB Church, North Little Rock, AR**. Pastor **Ben Scott** said, "Jay hasn't missed a Sunday since he was three years old."

Pastor **Claudie Hames** completed 25 years at **First FWB Church, Bakersfield, CA**. Hames said that in that time he preached more than 4,000 sermons, taught 1,300 Sunday School lessons and taught the Bible through verse by verse. He said the church income has increased 15 times and the Sunday School averages more than 600 in attendance. The church deacons gave Pastor Hames a plaque honoring him for 25 years of service. ☺

Only You, Lord

By M. J. Pritchard

There is only You, Lord, isn't there, after all is said and done in this life? Only You.

One friend ignores my words. One ignores me—totally. One takes offence at my, "No," however gentle it's given.

And when I call another for comfort and understanding, a stone wall meets me with silence.

So after all is said and done, there is only You, Lord, isn't there? Only You, my God, my Friend, the Lover of my soul. ☺

Top Shelf



Thomas Marberry



Jack Wilson Stallings, *The Gospel of John, The Randall House Bible Commentary*. Edited by Robert E. Picirilli. Nashville: Randall House Publications, 1989, hardback, 295 pp., \$19.95.

It is a pleasure to welcome another volume in the *Randall House Bible Commentary* which is being published by our denominational publishing house. This commentary on the Gospel of John represents an effort to provide a study of this important book which is informative, practical and doctrinally sound.

The author examines such important issues as the date, author, place of origin, destination and literary structure of the book. All four gospels are anonymous in the sense that they make no specific claim as to the identity of their authors. The view that John the Apostle is the author of this gospel was widely held in the early church. Stallings examines the internal and external evidence on this issue; he concludes

that the Apostle John is the only likely possibility.

Most scholars have dated the gospel in the 80's or 90's of the first century. Stallings takes a different approach. He argues that the book was written between A.D. 64 and A.D. 69.

There are several things which I like about this work. His explanations of Greek words and Greek grammatical constructions are among the best I have seen. The author has the ability to paraphrase and summarize the basic teachings of important passages in the gospel. This produces a commentary which is quite readable.

The suggestions for preaching and teaching the book are both valuable and useful. The authors and editors are to be commended for including this material.


The author deals fairly with problems which are faced in the study of the

book. He notes that 7:53-8:11 is not found in the earliest manuscripts of the gospel, although it may well be an authentic story from the life of Jesus.

It is not always easy to harmonize the Gospel of John with the synoptics. Stallings recognizes that John was independent of them and written for different purposes. His analysis of events during the last week of Jesus' life is quite helpful. He compares statements found in John with those found in the synoptics.

There are just a few things I would question. I disagree with his dating of the book. John clearly presumes that the reader is already familiar with the synoptics. It also represents a clear refutation of an early form of the Gnostic heresy. Personally, I find it much easier to see the Gospel of John against the background of events transpiring during the last quarter of the first century.

I would also have appreciated more references to literature on the Gospel of John. Many excellent books and articles have been written in recent years on a variety of different subjects relating to this gospel. The commentary would be even more useful if it had referred the reader to more of this literature.

In spite of these concerns, this is a book I can heartily recommend. It deserves a place on the shelf of every Free Will Baptist pastor. 

Support Your Church

By David Copeland

It is both difficult and frustrating trying to live up to unknown expectations. How can you fulfill a responsibility if you don't know what your responsibility is?

As pastor of a church, I don't want to be guilty of having expectations that the congregation is unaware of, and therefore unfulfilled. The success of the church depends largely upon laity and their faithfulness.

Here are four ways you can support your church:

Support with Your Prayers. The early church was successful. That success was due largely to the fact that those Christians were fervent pray-ers. We would do well to follow their example.

Support with Your Presence. A body that does not have eyes is blind. A body

that has no arms cannot work. If it has no legs, it cannot walk.


You are a member of the Body of Christ. Which member? An arm? A leg? The eye? If you don't show up in your church, you are causing the Body to be handicapped and hindered in its work and walk.

Support with Your Participation. You may be one who comes to church, but are you involved? A paralyzed arm is attached to the body. It's there, but is dormant and inactive. It is of no value. Each member of the Body has a role, a function to perform. Are you doing your part?

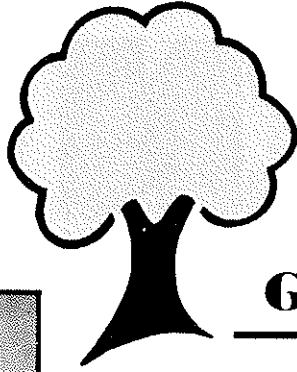
Support with Your Payment. Your payment of tithes and offerings. God is not greedy. He has a reason for what

He does and demands. He asks for tithes and offerings, first of all, because it is an act of worship. Giving the first-fruits of our wages tells God that He has first place in our priorities.

Second, God asks for our financial support so that the work of the church will not be hindered. If all Christians gave what they are supposed to give, the church would have no financial worries.

Laypeople, the church needs your support. Its success depends on you. Be faithful to fulfill your God-given responsibilities. 

ABOUT THE WRITER: Reverend David Copeland pastors Chapel Lane Free Will Baptist Church, Searcy, Arkansas.



Green Tree Bible Study



Robert E. Picirilli

I Corinthians 14

I Corinthians 14 and the Gift of Tongues (Part III)

In the two previous articles in this series we have seen, first, that even in the apostolic age prophecy was regarded as superior to speaking in tongues simply because of its usefulness for the edification of the church (I Corinthians 14:1-5).

Second, we have seen that speaking in tongues, in the church, is fruitless because it is not understood (I Corinthians 14:6-11)—a point Paul made dramatically by comparing tongues to musical instruments that do not play any recognizable tune or to a soldier's bugle that does not sound a recognizable call.

Recommendations for Edification

Now we look at vv. 12-19, where Paul takes a much more positive approach. He starts by giving his basic principle (v. 12): edification. That is the principle that should rule in the discussion of tongues.

We have already noted 12:31a, "Covet earnestly the best gifts," and 14:1, "Desire spiritual gifts." Now Paul says, "Forasmuch as ye are zealous of spiritual gifts, seek that ye may excel the edifying of the church." All this ties together neatly: the very same Greek root is used in all three for "covet earnestly," "desire," and "zealous." Paul wants his readers to have zeal for the gifts; indeed he acknowledges that they have. Only he wants them, in this zeal, to *make the edification of the church the undergirding principle*. Gifts that do this

are the "best" gifts.

How can that principle be put into practice? First (v. 13), tongues should not be spoken apart from interpretation. Just as "tongues" means *languages*, so "interpretation" means *translation from one language to another*. Certainly the supernatural gift of speaking in a language one did not already know was being given in Paul's day. But the one exercising such a gift should also ask God for the gift of translating it into words understood by the congregation for their edification. (This proves that the speaker in tongues did not already understand what he himself was saying.) Note also v. 28 below: Paul did not allow speaking in tongues without translation into the language of the congregation.

Second, they should prefer a devotional activity that involves both the spirit and the mind and not just the spirit without the mind (vv. 14-15). Paul mentions two such activities, praying and singing. He indicates that if either of these is performed in tongues, only the person's "spirit" is active.

Then he affirms, clearly, that his inspired preference is to perform such activities in such a way that his mind is also active and thus fruitful: in other words, performed in the person's own language and thus understood. We should beware of spiritual activity that takes its flight from the mind's understanding; there is much danger in that kind of activity.

Third, they should prefer praise that will be understood by and thus edify others who hear (vv. 16-17). To "bless" is to offer a word of praise. Both Jews and early Christians had the custom of responding to such a "blessing," in the public service, with an "Amen." But, says Paul, such a blessing uttered in a language not understood cannot be thus greeted, and consequently the hearers are not edified.

Fourth, they should prefer speech that instructs (vv. 18-19). Now Paul testifies to his own practice, going as far as he can with those who loved tongues so much. He had spoken in tongues often; but in the church he would rather speak five words understood than ten thousand in "the unknown tongue." If this chapter said nothing else, that alone stands as God's own inspired statement of the value of tongues: Just five words in the hearer's language are better than hours of tongues speaking in the public service! (And Paul has already said he preferred language understood for his own personal devotions, too: v. 15.) One wonders how the charismatics can be so insistent on urging people to speak in tongues, when it will be far better for them to speak in the language understood!

Once again: What is the reason for all this? One word: edification. Speaking in tongues has no value for that, and that should be our main concern. 🌐

TEEN Scene

Truth and Peace Youth Leadership Conference

The 1990 Truth and Peace Leadership Conference will provide a unique experience for the 48 youth participants.

The theme of "Expanding Your Horizons" will be featured in the seminar program and all other aspects of this leadership conference. For instance, the first two weeks will be conducted on the campus of California Christian College in Fresno, California. During these two weeks the youth will be actively involved in a new mission work in Fresno.

Trips are being planned to Yosemite National Park and to the Pacific coast at Monterey.

The conference will be transported by charter bus to Phoenix, Arizona, for the final week. The youth will be housed in the Phoenix Sheraton Hotel and assume leadership responsibilities in the 1990 National Youth Conference.

The three-week conference will begin on Monday, July 2, in Fresno. In addition to the leadership training seminars, missionary involvement and group trips, other activities are planned. There will be special youth services, group events, local church involvement and much more.

made in February. If you are interested, write today.

Illinois Youth Rally

Over 100 youth and sponsors gathered at the Waltonville FWB Church in Waltonville, Illinois, for the first youth rally held in several years. It was a service conducted by the youth for youth.

Bryan Ferguson, a Waltonville youth, moderated the service. The Illinois TEAM representative, Larae Clyatt from Benton, introduced TEAM (Teens Equipped and Active in Ministry) to the youth. Brad Ryan from South Roxana led singing. Young people who had participated in Bible Tic Tac Toe and Bible Bowl shared how God worked in their lives while participating in the Bible competition.

The movie, *Lifetime Contract*, was shown. It challenged the youth to commit themselves to Christ for a lifetime. After the movie, Corey Robbins further challenged the teens through a devotional to live for Christ.



Applications and brochures are available from the Youth Ministries Division of Randall House Publications, P.O. Box 17306, Nashville, TN 37217. Selection of the participants will be

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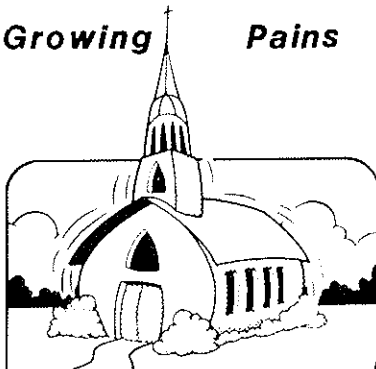
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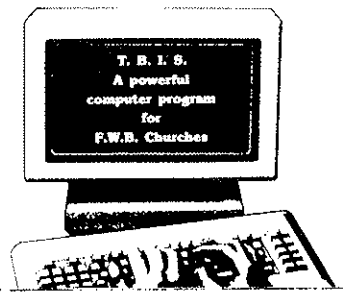


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You Can't Have My Christmas!

ON LITTLE LANES

BY DONNA MAYO

Marty and Megan loved Christmas because it meant being out of school. They loved the familiar decorations in their home, the goodies their mother made, the excitement of getting and giving gifts and the warmth and family closeness that Christmas brought. And each year they were learning to love Jesus more and love the celebration of His birth.

It was Christmas Eve, finally, and the Lane home was popping with excitement. Mr. Lane had gone out for some last-minute shopping. Mrs. Lane was in the kitchen baking one more batch of sugar cookies. Jeff was sitting under the Christmas tree shaking packages. And Marty and Megan were locked in Marty's room wrapping Jeff's present.

"I sure hope Jeff likes the present we got him," said Megan.

"He will," answered Marty.

The twins had put their money together to buy their little brother something special this year—a Bible of his very own. Jeff was always getting one of theirs down from the shelf and pretending he was reading it or preaching from it. And Jeff loved to look at the pictures of Jesus in one of the twins' Bibles.

"I know he's always playing with one of ours," said Megan. "I just

hope he isn't a little disappointed that we didn't get him a toy."

"He won't be," said Marty, putting a big red bow on the package. "Let's go hide this under the tree."

The twins hid Jeff's present in the back of the tree behind some larger gifts.

The three little Lanes had a difficult time going to sleep that night. But at last, one by one, they drifted off.

"Merry Christmas!" shouted Marty bright and early the next morning. Megan leaped out of bed and collided with Marty as she ran out of her room. Marty went in to wake Jeff, and Megan ran to her parents' bedroom.

"Mama, Daddy, wake up! It's Christmas!" squealed Megan.

In a matter of minutes the Lanes gathered in front of their Christmas tree. Paper and ribbon flew everywhere. There were "ooh's" and "ahh's" and "wow's" and "neat-oh's." The mound of presents quickly disappeared. And there was a lot of laughter.

Jeff's favorite gift was a battery-operated three-wheeler. Megan was thrilled with her doll house, and Marty was proud to have a BB gun.

"Oh, here's one more hiding back here," said Mrs. Lane.

"That's Jeff's," said Megan.

"It's from me and Megan," added Marty.

Jeff quickly ripped off the paper and opened the box. His mouth popped open. "For me? My very own?" He carefully removed the blue leather Bible from the box. "Now I can be a Christian like Marty and Megan."

The twins giggled.

"Jeff, having a Bible doesn't make you a Christian," answered Mr. Lane.

"It doesn't?" Jeff looked disappointed. He had seen his mama and daddy and his big brother and sister reading their Bibles. He had seen how special this Book was to them.

"Then what's so good about a Bible?" he asked with child-like honesty.

"The Bible is God's special message to us," answered Mrs. Lane. "In the Bible God tells us about Jesus and how to get saved."

"Well, I want to," said Jeff.

Mr. Lane showed Jeff a picture of Baby Jesus lying in a manger. Then he showed him a picture of Jesus dying on the cross. Mr. Lane read some Bible verses, and there under the blinking lights of a Christmas tree, the little pajama-

Little Lanes . . . (from page 23)

clad boy asked Jesus into his heart.

After Jeff prayed, he looked at Marty and Megan. "Thanks for the Bible. It's a good present. It showed me how to be a Christian."

The children played with their toys all morning. Then the Lanes went to Mrs. Douglas' house for Christmas dinner. While they were enjoying turkey and dressing, ham and all the fixings at Mrs. Douglas' house, back at their house a brown van pulled into the driveway.

A man with a ski mask covering his face got out. In his hand he carried a pistol. He used the pistol to break out the window in the back door. Then he reached in, unlocked the door and walked into the kitchen. He started loading his van with everything he could carry out of the Lane household.

After a delicious dinner and an afternoon of visiting, the Lanes headed home. It was almost dark when Mr. Lane turned the corner onto their street, Dogwood Place.

"Look, we've got company," said Marty, spotting a van in their driveway.

The Lanes were still several houses down from their home. "I don't recognize that van," said Mrs. Lane. "I really can't even tell if it's in our driveway."

When the driver in the brown van saw the Lanes approaching, he quickly backed out of their driveway and sped off down the road.

"That's silly," said Megan. "Who would come to see us, and then

leave when we get home?"

Mr. Lane pulled into the driveway and parked the car. He saw the broken window in the back door. "A robber," he said gravely.

Mrs. Lane gasped. The children's eyes got big.

"Stay in the car," Mr. Lane ordered. He cautiously entered the garage, picked up a baseball bat and stepped into the kitchen. Mr. Lane looked around quickly, called the police and went back to tell his family what had happened.

"Did he get my doll house?" asked Megan.

"Yes, honey," answered Mr. Lane. He looked at Marty and Jeff, whose eyes were asking the same question. "And Marty's BB gun and Jeff's three-wheeler."

"Oh, Peter, not the children's Christmas presents," cried Mrs. Lane.

"That's not fair!" shouted Marty angrily.

Megan began to cry. "He can't have my Christmas!" she sobbed.

Little Jeff seemed to be the only calm one.

"He can't have my Christmas either," he said, "'cause it's in my heart."

The bigger Lanes got quiet. They looked at this little member of their family who sometimes spoke with such wisdom that it surprised them.

Jeff added, "The very best Christmas present is having Jesus in my heart, and all the robbers in the world can't steal that."

Just then a police car with a blaring siren turned down Dogwood Place. It stopped in front of the Lanes' home, and two police-

men in blue uniforms hurried over to the family.

"Was anyone hurt?" asked the first officer.

"No, sir," answered Mr. Lane.

Then the policemen introduced themselves. One was Officer Belks. He went inside to have a look around. The other one, Sergeant Nickerson, began asking questions. Mr. Lane told him all he knew about the afternoon's events.

"What all is missing?" asked the sergeant.

Mr. Lane told him what he had noticed missing in his quick survey.

When he finished, Sergeant Nickerson said, "We'll do our best to catch him. That scoundrel—stealing kids' Christmas toys. But I must say, you all are taking this very well. Especially you kids."

Jeff looked up at the big man in the blue uniform. "But he didn't steal my bestest present."

"What, Sonny?" asked Sergeant Nickerson.

Jeff looked at his daddy.

Then Mr. Lane continued for Jeff. "We were just talking when you drove up. All those things the robber took, well, that's it, they're just 'things.' They can all be replaced. But the best Christmas present is having Jesus in your heart."

"And all the robbers in the world can't steal that," added Jeff. 📖

What is the most important part of Christmas to you? Why were the Lanes able to remain so calm after the robbery? Read Matthew 6:20-21.

The Encourager

By Janis Williams

How often have we heard it said, "What can I do for God? I'm not a great soul winner, I can't sing solos, and when I stand in front of a group of people my mind goes blank."

As a young Christian I faced this same question. My father encouraged me to remain faithful in what I was asked to do and God would show me in time. Little by little He did just that.

One day I discovered this truth almost by accident. As I left church Sunday morning, I saw a woman who was going through a rough time in her life. I wanted to help but I didn't know what to say. I felt that God was saying to me, "Tell her you love her." I proceeded to do just that.

I placed my arm around her and said, "I love you." Years later I was told how she needed that then. Sure, it was a small thing to me, but God used it to encourage her. Through the years I have tried to listen to that instinct.

We need more people who will give encouragement. We can do this with our smiles, our prayers and small gifts. Here are some ideas that might help: First, be sensitive to others and their needs. Pray about it. Then just do it.

Greet people with a friendly smile. You never know who might need it. Many people are hurting and don't say anything; your smile can help. A word of encouragement can send them off with an uplifted spirit.

My favorite saying, "You are still loved and prayed for," may sound trite, but it works because it's true. Maybe we need to tell our pastor and his wife that more often.

Bake some cookies for a neighbor, a shut in or a lonely college student. Take homemade soup to some family where there is illness. Write a note of encouragement. Remember birthdays with a card and send get-well cards. Write out some easy recipes so newlyweds can cook for two people—add a spice to go with it. Getting started is expensive.

Keep in touch with home and foreign missionaries. There may be some small item you can send to them, something


Cooperative Channel Contributions September 1989					
RECEIPTS:					
State	Design.	COOP (Undesignated)	Total	Sept. '88	Yr. To Date
Alabama	\$ 90.25	\$ 20.00	\$ 110.25	\$ 230.19	\$ 4,779.45
Arizona	.00	71.00	71.00	67.00	1,262.87
Arkansas	.00	5,153.70	5,153.70	4,51.68	42,797.85
California	.00	1,986.41	1,986.41	1,643.83	14,392.09
Colorado	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00
Delaware	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00
Florida	105.04	.00	105.04	965.73	15,108.82
Georgia	7,194.05	848.00	8,042.05	8,992.07	92,367.26
Idaho	.00	.00	.00	95.72	427.00
Illinois	9,973.93	1,922.15	11,896.08	6,129.04	88,320.63
Indiana	380.85	58.35	439.20	485.43	4,556.91
Kansas	.00	47.78	47.78	.00	492.82
Kentucky	.00	471.02	471.02	.00	4,990.51
Maryland	.00	1,175.48	1,175.48	113.25	2,793.90
Michigan	7,081.83	.00	7,081.83	4,135.56	45,740.65
Mississippi	28.18	334.17	362.35	351.81	4,247.42
Missouri	16,089.66	52.37	16,142.03	8,549.66	77,933.05
New Mexico	10.08	5.04	15.12	55.06	113.74
North Carolina	275.00	1,608.40	1,883.40	2,184.45	16,688.60
Ohio	28.00	.00	28.00	5,471.47	22,733.00
Oklahoma	30,624.12	5,920.42	36,544.54	35,722.62	366,177.24
South Carolina	9,454.39	.00	9,454.39	19,891.51	94,825.10
Tennessee	1,269.77	2,163.79	3,433.56	2,659.35	20,896.25
Texas	10,005.13	1,663.98	11,669.11	25.00	72,575.59
Virginia	.00	388.97	388.97	206.55	3,871.61
West Virginia	1,405.70	132.41	1,538.11	2,573.33	24,858.41
Canada	.00	.00	.00	.00	525.31
Northwest Assoc.	.00	68.98	68.98	.00	649.98
Other (Computer)	.00	.00	.00	.00	.21
Totals	\$94,015.98	\$24,092.42	\$118,108.40	\$105,110.31	\$1,024,126.27
DISBURSEMENTS:					
Executive Office	\$ 3,101.67	\$ 15,685.69	\$ 18,787.36	\$ 18,145.75	\$ 169,086.22
Foreign Missions	64,781.64	1,933.55	66,715.19	62,176.24	566,110.60
FWBBC	6,876.45	1,933.55	8,810.00	5,836.19	69,503.40
Home Missions	13,162.70	1,513.21	14,675.91	13,753.39	151,432.98
Retirement & Insurance	524.64	1,176.94	1,701.58	933.19	14,861.05
Master's Men	673.94	1,176.94	1,850.88	1,128.75	16,530.44
Commission for					
Theological Integrity	108.33	84.07	192.40	126.69	1,528.87
FWB Foundation	420.22	504.40	924.62	857.75	10,049.15
Historical Commission	108.18	.00	108.18	122.05	574.23
Radio & TV Commission	176.82	84.07	260.89	124.22	1,675.14
Hillsdale FWB College	3,585.49	.00	3,585.49	1,567.38	19,170.43
Other	495.90	.00	495.90	338.71	3,603.76
Totals	\$94,015.98	\$24,092.42	\$118,108.40	\$105,110.31	\$1,024,126.27

they would like to have but hesitate to request from a large group.

What about those MK's in the U. S. to attend college? They need encouragement. Adopt them and be their parents away from home. Remember their birthdays, Christmas and special occasions.

We may never know if we have done

anything to help, but we have obeyed God. That is important.

Thank God for people who practice their ministry of encouragement. They lubricate the world with love. 

ABOUT THE WRITER: Janis Williams operates her ministry of encouragement from Fellowship Free Will Baptist Church in Nashville, Tennessee.

Index

Volume XXXVI

January-December 1989

KEY TO INDEX: Articles, authors, columns and Newsfront items are arranged in three separate divisions.

In part one, articles are listed in order of title, author, issue and number of the page on which they appear. The authors'

division is alphabetized according to last names. Columns are listed in chronological order. The Newsfront index is alphabetized in four main sections: churches, ministers, state ministries and national ministries.

—Compiled by *Contact Staff*

A

ABC's of Work, The; Larry D. Hampton October, 14
Answers to Anger, June Critcher July, 14

B

Balance for Revival, A; Paul Kennedy January, 6
Barn, A Baby, A Dream..., A; R. F. Smith, Jr. December, 4

Beat the Juniper Tree, David Copeland April, 10
Best Christmas Ever, The; Verla Fletcher December, 6
Blight of Erosion, The; Roger C. Reeds October, 12
Brother Penrod's Attendance Board, David Taylor March, 4

Businessman's Prayer, The; Tim Jordan January, 4

C

Christ Event, The; Jim Shepherd February, 2
Christian and AIDS, The; Paul Gentuso, M.D. May, 2
Cocke County Revival! The; Bert Tippet August, 4
Confronting Youth About Drugs, Larry M. Montgomery July, 10
Convention '89, Thomas Marberry September, 2

D

Deliverance! Donna Mayo November, 10
Destiny of Men, The; Earl Hendrix February, 8
Discord or Harmony? James Forlines January, 25
Don't Preach to Me! Heath Meeks March, 12
Downwind from the Pulpit, Mal King October, 6

E

Elected in Tampa September, 13
Encourager, The; Janis Williams December, 25

F

Face of the Cults, The; Fred Hall July, 4

Filling a Father's Shoes, Douglas Little June, 15
"Free For the Claiming!" Doug Little October, 13

G

Get More Out of the National Convention, Douglas Carey May, 4

H

Half a Blanket, Mal King June, 4
He Needs Me, Richard Terry April, 9
Help Wanted—Help Needed! Billy Bevan October, 2

I

If I Were a Young Preacher, Delbert Akin August, 6
Inspiration of Scripture, The; Charles Thigpen February, 4
Is God Calling Me? James Combs April, 6

J

Jews' Messiah, The; Joe Grizzle December, 2

K

Kick Those Bad Habits, Delilah Scott November, 8
King of the Front Row, Garnett Reid October, 11

L

Little Israel, M. J. Pritchard March, 16
Living Like a Legalist, Fred Hanson July, 12
Local Church, The; Richard Atwood March, 2
Looking Toward 2000, Ralph Hampton January, 2
Looking for a Church? David A. Joslin March, 6
Looking for a Pastor? Paul Kennedy March, 7

M

Marc, Mark Braisher October, 4

Ministry is..., Dean Jones May, 27
 Ministry to Missionaries, Douglas Little April, 4
 Mother's Right—Mother's Way, Tim S. McDonald May, 12

N

National Convention Program June, 6
 Nettie at 93, Mal King March, 29
 New Age Movement, The; Bill M. Jones July, 2
 Next Time I Move, The; Vern Gunnels, Jr. August, 9
 9 Steps to Forgiveness, Kathy Tippett Henderson June, 2
 No Leisure Time, Wade Jernigan March, 8
 NYC Program June, 10

O

Obstacles to Prayer, Billy Sharpston October, 10
 Oklahoma Missions Story, The; Berton Perry November, 2
 On the Road Again, Terry Stafford November, 13
 Only You, Lord, M. J. Pritchard December, 19

P

Pastor's Pay Package, The; Milburn H. Wilson August, 8
 Peace Prayer, The; M. J. Pritchard October, 14
 Power of an Invitation, The; Fred Hall October, 9
 Preach a Better Meal, Dennis Wiggs August, 2
 Preachers' Kids Speak Out! Sandra Atwood August, 10
 Pride Comes Cheap, Greg McAllister March, 13
 Put a Computer in the Church, John Ludeman March, 14

R

Real Thing? The; Allan Crowson April, 8

S

Salvation Experience, The; Nate Ange February, 6
 Second Chance, The; Alton Loveless April, 29
 Service, David Taylor December, 8
 Sink or Swim! Mal King January, 8

So You're the Sunday School Superintendent? March, 10
 Mark H. Braisher
 SonShine '89, Jim Lauthern September, 15
 Steps of Servanthood, The; Edwin Hayes October, 8
 Sunshine Convention! The; Marilyn Pritchard May, 6
 Support Your Church, David Copeland December, 20

T

Take a Cooler, Ruth Creech Mullen April, 10
 Take the Bright Look, Jeff King January, 7
 Teacher Education at Free Will Baptist Bible College, Ken Riggs July, 7
 Teamwork, Alton Loveless January, 26
 Thank God! Thank God! L. A. Yandell November, 12
 30 Years of Excellence, Richard Terry February, 10
 Tough on the Lottery, Alton Loveless February, 16
 Tribute to Billy Samms, Herman Hersey December, 9
 Twilight Magic, M. J. Pritchard November, 27

U

Ultimate Educator, The; Ken Riggs January, 10
 Unfinished Business, Paul Thompson November, 4

W

What If..., Mal King December, 7
 When it Snows, David Copeland February, 27
 When is it Time to Build? Claudie Hames November, 6
 When a Working Mother Has Second Thoughts, Sue Larson May, 10
 When You Pray that Souls Will be Saved, Greg McAllister January, 9
 Where Do You Go? M. J. Pritchard September, 18
 Where's Your Light? David Copeland November, 29
 Who Will Replace Them? Jimmy Aldridge April, 2
 Who Qualifies to Serve? Doug Little February, 12
 Winning—the "Only" Thing? Jonathan Yandell March, 11
 WNAC Program June, 12
 WNAC Review, Lorene Miley September, 14
 World's Ugliest Bus, The; Doug Lance August, 12

AUTHORS INDEX

Akin, Delbert August, 6
 Aldridge, Jimmy April, 2
 Ange, Nate February, 6
 Atwood, Richard March, 2
 Atwood, Sandra August, 10
 Bevan, Billy October, 2
 Braisher, Mark H. March, 10; October, 4
 Carey, Douglas May, 4
 Combs, James April, 6
 Copeland, David February, 27; April, 10; November, 29; December, 20
 Critcher, June July, 14
 Crowson, Allan April, 8
 Fletcher, Verla December, 6
 Forlines, James January, 25
 Gentuso, Paul, M. D. May, 2

Grizzle, Joe December, 2
 Gunnels, Vern, Jr. August, 9
 Hall, Fred July, 4; October, 9
 Hames, Claudie November, 6
 Hampton, Larry D. October, 14
 Hampton, Ralph January, 2
 Hanson, Fred July, 12
 Hayes, Edwin October, 8
 Henderson, Kathy Tippett June, 2
 Hendrix, Earl February, 8
 Hersey, Herman December, 9
 Jernigan, Wade March, 8
 Jones, Bill M. July, 2
 Jones, Dean May, 27
 Jordan, Tim January, 4
 Joslin, David A. March, 6
 Kennedy, Paul January, 6; March, 7
 King, Jeff January, 7
 King, Mal January, 8; March, 29; June, 4; October, 6; December, 7

Lance, Doug August, 12
 Larson, Sue May, 10
 Lauthern, Jim September, 15
 Little, Douglas February, 12; April, 4; June, 15; October, 13
 Loveless, Alton January, 26; February, 16; April, 29
 Ludeman, John March, 14
 Marberry, Thomas September, 2
 Mayo, Donna November, 10
 McAllister, Greg January, 9; March, 13
 McDonald, Tim S. May, 12
 Meeks, Heath March, 12
 Miley, Lorene September, 14
 Montgomery, Larry M. July, 10
 Mullen, Ruth Creech April, 10
 Perry, Berton November, 2

(continued on page 29)

EDITORIALS

BRIEFCASE

The January People	January, 5
Win 'Em Now or Pay Later	February, 5
Right People's Wrong Ways	March, 5
A Stranger at the Door	April, 5
The Failure	May, 5
The Crazy World of Fathers	June, 5
The Church of the Bake Sale Preacher!	July, 5
What Makes the Difference?	August, 5
Revenge	September, 5
The Big Lie	October, 5
Ten Miles Beyond Bitterness	November, 5
	December, 5

THE SECRETARY SPEAKS

Leave a Legacy	January, 31
Living with Leanness	February, 31
The Miracle in Mexico	March, 31
In His Image	April, 31
I've Had Enough!	May, 31
The Porn Plague	June, 31
Scriptural Stewardship	July, 31
Servants Who Serve	August, 31
Big Sunday!	September, 31
Lay Leaders	October, 31
Back the Boycott	November, 31
It's Incredible	December, 31

COLUMNS

GREEN TREE BIBLE STUDY

Do Promises to Believers Guarantee their Security?	
John 5:24	January, 27
Hebrews 6:4-6 and the Possibility of Apostasy (Part 1)	February, 28
Hebrews 6:4-6 and the Possibility of Apostasy (Part 2)	March, 27
Predestination and the Believer—Romans 8:28-30	April, 30
The Blessings of Election: Ephesians 1:3-14	May, 29

The God Who Saves Whom He Wills, Romans 9:14-21	June, 29
God's Sovereignty and Man's Responsibility, Acts 2:23; 4:28	August, 29
I Corinthians 14 and the Gift of Tongues (Part I)	September, 28
I Corinthians 14 and the Gift of Tongues (Part II)	October, 27
I Corinthians 14 and the Gift of Tongues (Part III)	December, 21

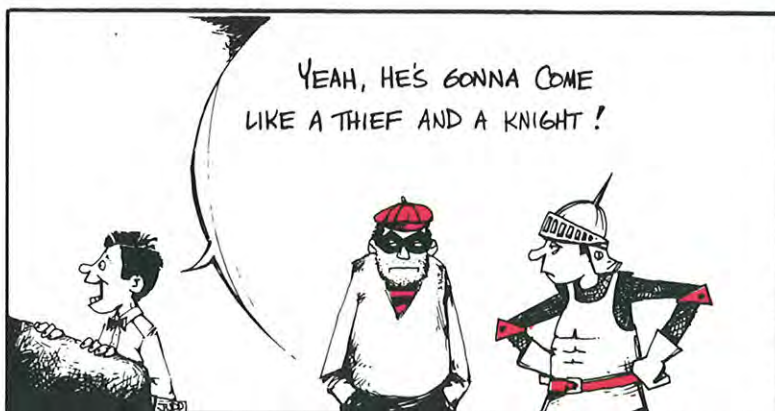
ON LITTLE LANES

I Can Do It!	January, 28
Reservations	February, 26
Jeff and the Fences	March, 28
The Checker Champion	April, 28
Follow the Leader	May, 26
What Really Counts	June, 26
For the Son's Sake	July, 28
The Chocolate Temptation	August, 26
No Greater Love	October, 28
Living Thanks	November, 28
You Can't Have My Christmas!	December, 23

TOP SHELF

Counseling for Family Violence and Abuse, Grant L. Martin, Ph.D.	January, 25
Ready to Minister, William M. Pinson, Jr.	February, 25
The Satan Hunter, Thomas W. Wedge with Robert L. Powers	March, 25
Galatians through Colossians, The Randall House Bible Commentary, Thomas L. Marberry, Robert E. Picirilli, and Daryl Ellis	April, 26
Practical Christianity, LaVonne Neff	June, 30
Understanding the New Age, Russell Chandler	July, 26
Your Prodigal Child, D. James Kennedy	August, 25
God's New Envoys, Tetsunao Yamamori	September, 29
Humanism; Prophets of Prosperity; The Charismatic Movement; Jack W. Stallings; Lonnie Skiles; Leroy Forlines; Harrold Harrison	November, 27
The Gospel of John, The Randall House Bible Commentary, Robert E. Picirilli, Editor	December, 20

BEYOND BELIEF



NEWSFRONT

Churches

GEORGIA

First FWB Church, Albany
October, 15

ILLINOIS

Butterfield FWB Church, Aurora
January, 15

MISSOURI

First FWB Church, Waynesville
August, 15

NORTH CAROLINA

Canton FWB Church, Canton
September, 18

Clermont FWB Church, Kannapolis
January, 13

Tippett's Chapel FWB Church,
Clayton October, 15

OHIO

Ambassador FWB Church,
Cincinnati April, 15; July, 16

OKLAHOMA

First FWB Church, McAlester
August, 13

First FWB Church, Stroud July, 17

Lewis Avenue FWB Church, Tulsa
December, 9

TENNESSEE

First FWB Church, Erwin
August, 15

Woodbine FWB Church, Nashville
March, 15

VIRGINIA

Adwolfe FWB Church, Marion
February, 13

Ministers

Akin, Delbert July, 16

Cason, Mance March, 15

Hanson, Fred D. August, 15

Hersey, Herman July, 17

King, Bob October, 15;

December, 10

Lee, George February, 13

Loveless, Alton November, 16

Malone, Wallace June, 17

Richey, Jack July, 16

Robirds, Don December, 10

Samms, Billy December, 9

Sanford, Melvin June, 17

Thomas, Bob November, 16

VanKluyve, Henry June, 17

Woolsey, Paul September, 16

Young, Homer July, 16

Young, Waldo July, 16

Laymen

Bailey, Chester and Billie April, 16

Wisehart, Mary April, 15

State Ministries

Alabama—February, 13

Arizona—August, 16

Arkansas—November, 17

California—August, 14 (2)

Florida—January, 13

Georgia—February, 15

Idaho—August, 13

Illinois—June, 15

Indiana—September, 17

Kansas—September, 16

Kentucky—September, 18

Michigan—August, 16

Mississippi—January, 14

Missouri—October, 16

New Mexico—July, 16

North Carolina—January, 14; April, 16;

August, 14 (2); October, 15, 16;

December, 10

Northwest Association—August, 16

Ohio—September, 18

Oklahoma—January, 14; November,

15; December, 10

South Carolina—May, 14

Tennessee—October, 16

Texas—September, 17

Virginia—September, 16

Washington—February, 13

West Virginia—September, 16

National Ministries

Calling All Free Will Baptist Singers!
April, 16

Churches Win Enlargement Campaign
July, 17

Convention Hotel Changes Name
June, 17

Convention Steering Committee Meets
in Phoenix November, 15

Department Sets Spring Enlargement
Campaign February, 12

Discount Air Fares to National
Convention Available June, 16

FWB Bookstore Fellowship Meets
June, 16

FWB Church Day Schools Meet in
Atlanta April, 16

FWBCC Announces Bible Conference
Speakers January, 13

FWBCC Graduates 66 in May
Commencement August, 13

FWBCC President to Lead TCA
July, 17

FWBCC Reports 72 Decisions
July, 16

FWBCC Students Approved for

Summer Missionary Service

March, 15

59 Attend Bible College Summer
Camp September, 17

Free Will Baptist Bible College Enrolls
269 December, 11

Haddon Robinson to Lead FWBCC
"Biblical Preaching Workshop"

November, 16

Home Missions Board Statement

February, 12

Hymn Book to Cost More

February, 13

Leadership Conference to Meet

December 4-5 December, 11

National Office Gets FAX Machine

October, 15

National Office Hours June, 16

1989 State Association Meetings

February, 15

Norman Geisler Addresses Bible
College Faculty December, 11

Oklahoma Pastor to Preach FWBCC
Baccalaureate May, 14

115 Attend All-Boards Conference

February, 14

177 Attend Bible College Welcome
Days March, 15

Randall House to Publish New "Who's
Who" August, 13

Spring Enlargement Campaign Theme
Set December, 11

Target 90 Reaches "New Church" Goal
March, 16

Woodbine Team Wins FWBCC
Tournament April, 15

Worthington Named President of
RCMA April, 15

Authors . . . (from page 27)

Pritchard, M. J. March, 16; May, 6;
September, 18; October, 14;

November, 27; December, 19

Reeds, Roger C. October, 12

Reid, Garnett October, 11

Riggs, Ken January, 10; July, 7

Scott, Delilah November, 8

Sharpston, Billy October, 10

Shepherd, Jim February, 2

Smith, R. F., Jr. December, 4

Stafford, Terry November, 13

Taylor, David March, 4;

December, 8

Terry, Richard February, 10; April, 9

Thigpen, Charles February, 4

Thompson, Paul November, 4

Tippett, Bert August, 4

Wiggs, Dennis August, 2

Williams, Janis December, 25

Wilson, Milburn H. August, 8

Yandell, Jonathan March, 11

Yandell, L. A. November, 12



NEWS OF THE RELIGIOUS COMMUNITY

CATHOLICS SAY PROTESTANTS KNOW THE BIBLE BETTER

NEW YORK, NY (EP)—Catholics think they don't know the Bible as well as their Protestant friends, according to a recent survey by *U. S. Catholic* magazine. The poll found that 53 percent of *U. S. Catholic* readers agreed that their Protestant friends "know a lot more about the Bible than I do," while only 38 percent disagreed.

The poll found that while the magazine's readers are much more likely to be regular Bible readers than the Catholic population at large, 27 percent said they read the Bible "hardly ever" or "never." Still, 78 percent said they know they should read the Bible more than they do.

The poll also found that 31 percent believed they could be "good Catholics" without ever reading the Bible, and only five percent believe that "every word I read in the Bible is literally and factually true." Half of those polled felt it was more important for Catholics to receive the Eucharist (communion) than to read the Bible.

COVEN OF WITCHES WINS TAX EXEMPTION

PROVIDENCE, RI (EP)—A coven of Rhode Island witches convinced state officials that it is entitled to tax-exempt status as a religious group.

In a reversal of one of its own rulings, the Rhode Island Division of Taxation granted a sales tax exemption to Our Lady of the Roses Wiccan Church, also known as the Rosegate Coven.

The coven's high priestess, Joyce Siegrist, told *Religious News Service*, "I think the decision gives us legitimacy. With this ruling, we witches will definitely be able to come out of the closet and take our place in our society."

Sandra J. Murphy, an administrative hearing officer for the Division of Taxation, found that the Wiccans are a legitimate nonprofit group with a purpose beyond the avoidance of taxation, and meet various criteria for identification as a religious group, including specific doctrines, sacraments and rituals.

Initially, the state had ruled against the church's request for tax exemption, citing the lack of formal theology schools for Wiccan training, and the fact that the Wiccan faith encourages its members to belong to other churches as well. The Rev. Thomas Ahlburn, a Unitarian minister, testified on behalf of the witches, noting that his denomination also permits members to belong to other faiths.

USSR CHURCH LEADERS ASK FOR HELP WITH MODERN BIBLE TRANSLATION

TBILISI, Georgia, USSR (EP)—At a first-ever translation symposium in Tbilisi, capital of the Russian republic of Georgia, a top church official told leaders of the United Bible Societies (UBS) that a modern translation of the Bible is desperately needed there.

"We need a modern translation; not because people don't respect the old version, but because they don't understand it," said Ilia II, Catholicos-Patriarch of All Georgia.

The Patricarch was referring to the language of the old version, which is so out-of-date that the meaning is lost on many of Georgia's people, particularly the young ones. Patriarch Ilia is leader of some one million members of the Georgian Orthodox church, one of the denominations which made up the Eastern Orthodox branch of the Church. He stressed that is extremely important to "have a new translation of the Bible for the people."

The five-day symposium was organized by UBS, the world partnership which American Bible Societies (ABS) helped found, in conjunction with the Eastern Orthodox churches.


NEW CHURCHES PLANTED IN THAILAND

WHEATON, IL (EP)—New Life Training Centers, a program of New Life 2000, an evangelistic global strategy being spearheaded by Campus Crusade for Christ, is responsible for more than 2,300 new churches being planted in northeast Thailand in the last five years, according to Fuller Seminary student Roy Rosedale.

Rosedale, a student of missiology, gathered the statistics for his doctoral dissertation. His findings appear in a report in the October issue of *Evangelical Missions Quarterly*, a publication of the Evangelical Missions Information Service in Wheaton, Illinois.

Rosedale traveled 5,000 miles across northeast Thailand in February, 1988, where he visited six New Life Training Centers, mobile schools which prepare students for ministry in evangelism, discipleship and spiritual multiplication based on II Timothy 2:2. Rosedale found that six denominations have new churches as a direct result of the training centers, and that more than 150,000 people are involved in those churches and in 16,600 home Bible study fellowships associated with them.

Students attend 60 hours of class instruction and 75 to 100 hours of field ministry work while in the program.

"One of the most impressive aspects of this church growth movement taking place in northeast Thailand is the detailed records being kept by each training center director," wrote Rosedale. Such records are responsible for "authenticating progress and delineating where new efforts should be made. These records list each New Life Group leader, the number of groups he leads and the name of each village the groups are in." 

OUR READERS COMMENT



READER DISAGREES WITH TWO ARTICLES

A few things disturbed me in the October issue. The first was the article, "Downwind from the Pulpit," and the fallacies it promoted. Since I sit downwind, please permit a few comments in opposition.

The National Guard utilizes 912 hours per 8,736-hour-year to train part-time soldiers. Mr. King advocates 52 hours per year (three sermons per week of 20 minutes each) to train the full-time army of God. Is it any wonder that we are so poorly equipped to handle the situations of life and present to the world a viable picture of Christ as He indwells the believer?

When I attended leadership courses in the military, we were taught the KISS (Keep It Simple, Sergeant) principle. But we were also taught to "tell them what you are going to tell them, tell them, and tell them what you just told them," which is the principle of "repetition enhances retention."

The Bible is full of repetition, because we learn precept upon precept, line upon line, here a little there a little. Dr. Picirilli stresses the biblical concept of repetition (*Contact*, October 1989, p. 27. "Paul has made his point. That he takes it up again probably means . . . that he felt it necessary to emphasize his opinion as strongly as possible").

The military also taught priorities: (1) Accomplish the Mission and (2) Welfare of the Troops, in that order. As a nation we have scrambled our priorities and elevated the welfare (desires) of the troops (congregation) above the biblical examples of lengthy sermons like Peter's in Acts 2:40 and Paul's in Acts 20:7-12.

When pastors shepherd the flock of God by telling the truth in love, they will cause the flock to reproduce and multiply into a holy nation, full of convictions. But you cannot do it with 20-minute sermons that only cover "one thing you want to get across." I cannot help smiling when I think of the Sermon on the Mount with its one subject of attitude, but look at all the subpoints!

The second thing that disturbed me was the article, "The Blight of Erosion," that expresses the idea, "Some who went to other schools never returned to us." When I attended Luther Rice Seminary from 1975-1977, Bro. Leroy Cutler was the only Free Will Baptist attending at the time. He was the stimulus that began my exodus from the Southern Baptist Convention to Free Will Baptists. We do have a need for higher education, but if our people are properly grounded in the faith, instead of defecting, they should be a stimulus like Bro. Cutler when they are on foreign ground.

Paul Jett
Bluebird Hill Farm
Long Branch, Texas



THE SECRETARY SPEAKS
By Melvin Worthington

It's Incredible!



THE NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF
Free Will Baptists

Millions observe the annual celebration of Christmas commemorating the birth of Christ. Parties, plays and preaching calling attention to His birth make this season a unique time for Christians to proclaim the incarnation of Christ.

The incarnation is an intriguing and incredible event that must not be overlooked. We must see more than the Babe in Bethlehem. Jesus Christ the eternal Son of God contracted Himself to the size of a woman's womb, became a human being and lived among us.

John declares, "And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth." As we read and reflect on this miracle three facts surface.

Foretold

Genesis 3:15 contains the first proclamation of the incarnation. Following the sin of Adam and Eve and the sentence on sin, God promised a redeemer. The incarnation was not an afterthought, but foreknown and foreordained in God's plan and purpose.

Throughout the Old Testament the coming of the Messiah was foretold, and the world waited with great anticipation. Under the universal decline in morals, politics and religion prior to the birth of Christ, this desire reached its maturity. The world did not look for nor need a social reformer, philosopher, prophet or angel but a Savior—the Messiah.

Fulfilled

John 1:1-5, 14-16 provide the basic information about the incarnation. John

establishes the fact of Christ's *Preexistence* in 1:1-2, declaring Him the eternal Word. Jesus Christ was existing when matter was first created and before time began. He was "before all things" (Colossians 1:17).

John cites the *Person of Christ* (John 1:1). Christ was not merely a created angel or a being inferior to God the Father. He is nothing less than perfect God—equal to the Father, the Creator of all things. All who have ever had spiritual light and life owe it to Christ.

John points to the *Power of Christ* (John 1:3) when he attributes the work of creation to Him. Paul declares, "For by him were all things created . . . all things were created by him, and for him" (Colossians 1:16).

John confirms the *Presence of Christ* (John 1:14) when he says, "And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten Father,) full of grace and truth." Paul repeats the same truth when he declares, "But when the fullness of the time was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law" (Galatians 4:4).

Focused

The incarnate Christ *Reveals the Sovereign*. He shows what God is like.

The Secretary's Schedule

December 4-5	Leadership Conference Nashville, Tenn.
December 6-7	Executive Committee Meeting Nashville, Tenn.
December 14-17	Mexican National Association Tampico, Mexico

As the Shekinah glory abode in the tabernacle in the Old Testament so God tabernacled in Christ's flesh. Maclaren says, "If you want to know God . . . you must turn away from everything else to Christ."

The incarnate Christ *Reflects the Standard*. He shows what man ought to be, setting before us the perfect pattern for the practices in our daily life. J. C. Ryle says, "Had He walked among us as an angel or a spirit, we could never have copied Him. But having dwelt among us as a man, we know the true standard of holiness is to 'walk even as He walked' (I John 2:6). He is a perfect pattern because He is God. But He is also a pattern exactly suited to our wants, because He is Man."

The incarnate Christ *Redeems the Sinner*. Redemption for sinners was provided by the work of Christ through His death, burial and resurrection. His death on the cross made provision for the salvation of all men.

The incarnate Christ *Resides in the Saint*. Paul affirms this when he says, "To whom God would make known what is the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles; which is Christ in you, the hope of glory" (Colossians 1:27).

The incarnate Christ *Responds to our Supplication*. We have confidence when we pray in His name. He is our advocate and appears at the right hand of God on our behalf. He prays for us and listens attentively when we pray to the Father in His name.

During this special season take time to pause, ponder and proclaim the thrilling, timely truth that the birth of the Babe in Bethlehem was incredible, for He was Immanuel, God with us—the incarnate Christ—the Messiah.

CONTACT

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CHRISTMAS

Is
Together Time

**THE
PAUL
KETTEMAN
MEMORIAL
CHRISTMAS
FUND DRIVE**

**Goal:
\$135,000**

As our families gather around the Christmas tree to share together, our hearts are filled with laughter and love. My, how we enjoy each other! We open our presents and share the bounty that God has given.

Together we take time to praise and adore Him.

Together we worship and fellowship with Him.

Together we remember how much His gift cost Him.

Together we give Him the glory that is His due.

Together, this Christmas season, let us remember Christ's birthday and honor Him with a special gift to Free Will Baptist Bible College. A gift that will be used to prepare young men and women to carry the "glad tidings of great joy" to people around the world.

Send your gift by Dec. 31 to:

Free Will Baptist Bible College
3606 West End Avenue
Nashville, Tennessee 37205