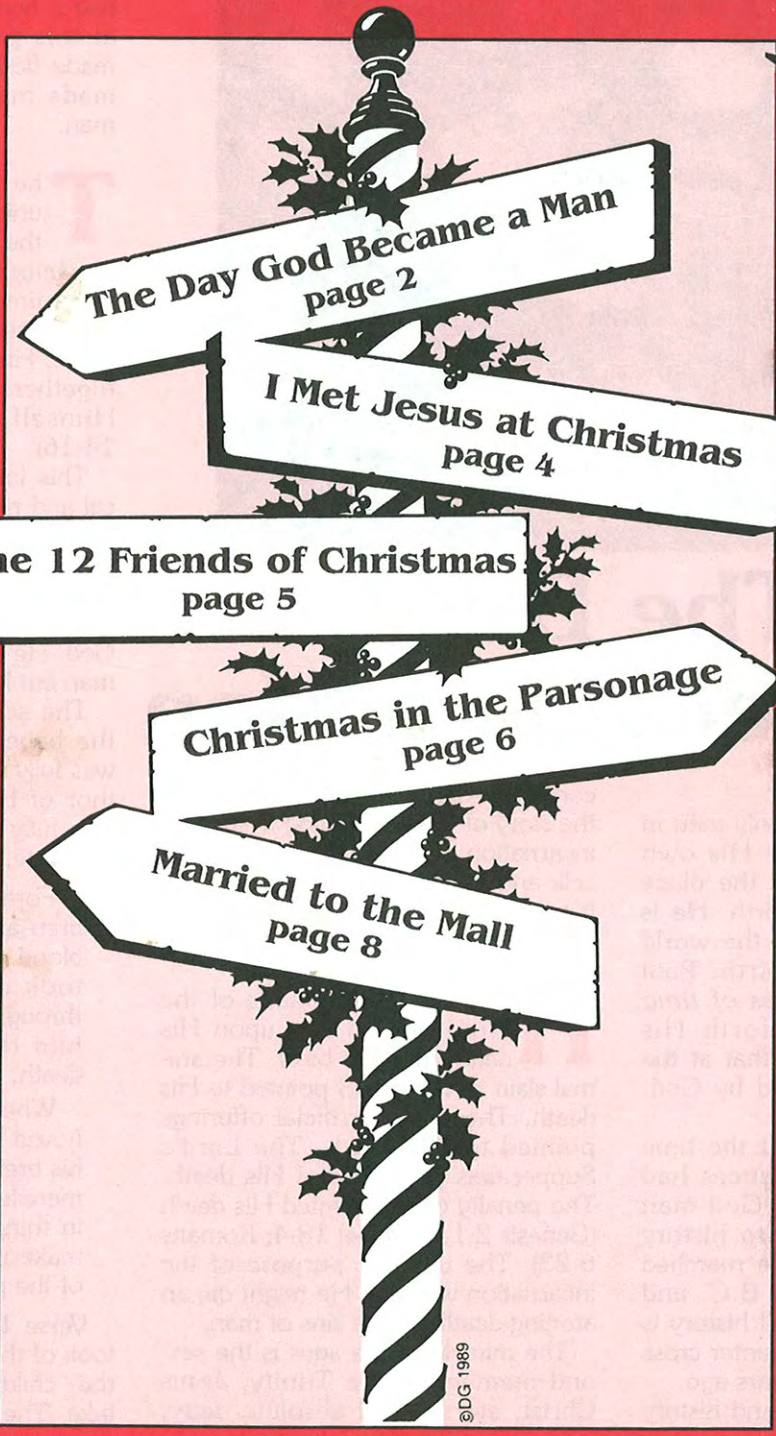


December 1990

# Contact

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# The Day God Became a Man

By A. B. Brown

**J**esus Christ is the only man in history to choose His own parents as well as the place and time of His birth. He is the only man for whom the world was prepared for His birth. Paul wrote, "When the *fullness of time* was come, God sent forth His Son...." The idea means that at the exact right moment fixed by God, Jesus was born.

But it also implies that the time was ripe, that circumstances had been arranged. So the God-man Jesus Christ marched into history and made it His story. He marched into time and divided it B.C. and A.D. The focal point of all history is the solitary figure on the center cross at Calvary almost 2000 years ago.

His entrance into time and history

constitutes the Christmas story. It is the story of God becoming flesh. The incarnation of Jesus Christ is the miracle and the mystery of all the ages. It's the story of God, absolute deity, robing Himself in human flesh.

**H**owever, the emphasis of the Word of God falls upon His death, not His birth. The animal slain in Genesis 3 pointed to His death. The O.T. sacrificial offerings pointed to His death. The Lord's Supper was prophetic of His death. The penalty of sin dictated His death (Genesis 2:17; Ezekiel 18:4; Romans 6:23). The ultimate purpose of the incarnation was that He might die an atoning death for the sins of man.

The miracle of the ages is the second member of the Trinity, Jesus Christ, eternal and absolute deity,

clothed in human flesh in order to become one of us in order to die for us. Philippians 2 insists that He, prior to His incarnation, existed as pure deity equal with the Father (v. 6). But at the incarnation a radical transformation took place.

He took upon Himself the form of a man and was made in the likeness of men. (The words "form", "likeness" and "fashion" describe His total identification with man, except for sin.) Up to that point, He had not had a human nature or form. It was at this point that the "Word was made flesh" (John 1:14). God, who made man, became man to save man.

**T**he mystery of the ages is the union of the human Jesus and the divine Jesus into *one self-conscious person* and yet, at the same time, both the human and divine natures remaining distinct and intact. His two natures never blended together and yet Jesus referred to Himself as "I," not "we" (John 14:16).

This important distinction is biblical and necessary. If His two natures had blended and not remained distinct and intact, the divine/human mixture would have formed a third entity neither fully human nor fully God. He would have been more than man but less than God.

The scriptures are emphatic that the babe born that Christmas day was fully God and fully man. The author of Hebrews is clear that Jesus was fully human. In 2:14 and 2:17 he wrote,

Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself likewise took part of the same; that through death he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil (v. 14).

Wherefore in all things it behoved him to be made like unto his brethren, that he might be a merciful and faithful high priest in things pertaining to God, to make reconciliation for the sins of the people (v. 17).

Verse 14 is explicit that Jesus partook of the same flesh and blood that the "children" or we as humans partake. The term, "flesh and blood," is



an idiom of speech referencing Christ's human body or His humanity. The word, "likewise," means in a manner which amounts to equality. Thus, Christ's flesh and blood was equal to human flesh and blood.

For emphasis the author adds that He partook of the "same" flesh and blood that humans partake. The word, "same," is in the genitive case; the genitive case limits as to "kind." The author wants to be clear that Jesus partook of the *same kind* of flesh and blood that we as humans partake. (It was just as necessary for Jesus to be fully human as it was for Him to be fully God.)

Verse 17 further emphasizes the point of His undiluted and undiminished humanity by saying that it was necessary that He be made like His brethren "in all things." Of course we understand this to mean in all things except sin since He knew no sin (Hebrews 4:15; II Corinthians 5:21).

**T**he passage says that it "behoved" Christ to be made like man in all things. The word, "behoved," has to do with a debt owed someone or with something which is necessary, a must or a moral obligation. The idea being that Christ was obligated to become like man in "all things." This obligation rested on a least three important truths.

1. The high priest was taken from "among men" (Hebrews 5:1). In order to qualify as man's high priest, He had to be taken from "among men." He had to be authentic man.

2. He had to be fully man in order to qualify as man's kinsman redeemer (Leviticus 25, Ruth). An O.T. kinsman redeemer had to meet three qualifications. He had to be willing to redeem his kinsman sold into bondage. He had to be able to redeem, which demands that Christ be God. Otherwise, He could never have paid man's sin debt. He also had to be blood kin (Leviticus 25:48-49), which obligated Christ to be fully human.

3. If God was going to maintain His justice, it was morally necessary that He not punish a non-human for the sins of humans. Therefore, it was necessary for Jesus to become an authentic human being.


**Y**es, Jesus, the God-man, is indeed the miracle and mystery of the ages. This unique union creates questions beyond the reach of mortal man. As authentic man, could He have sinned? As God, He could not (James 1:13). (This is called the "peccability" and the "impeccability" of Christ and has been debated for centuries.)

How could He have said that He did not know the day and hour of His return? Did He simply answer from a human viewpoint? If so, as human He would not have known all things. But as God He was omniscient and would have known all things. Of what did He empty Himself (Philippians 2:7)? Certainly not of any of His divine attributes since God would not be God devoid of any of His attributes.

We do know that He limited His glory (John 17:5). But the term most likely means that He emptied Himself of Himself. This would be a reference to His earthly humiliation. It would have to do with the God of great glory becoming mortal man limited in glory and suffering on the humiliation of Calvary.

How could He, being both God and man, have had a normal human development? But as a human He grew intellectually, physically and socially (Luke 2:52). At what point in His development as a man did He become aware that He was indeed the Messiah? Was He aware of that from the beginning of consciousness? Certainly He was aware of His mission by the age of 12 (Luke 2:49).

Whatever our questions, we must always be clear that Christmas marks the day that the eternal Son of God, the second member of the blessed Trinity, clothed Himself in human flesh making Him unique in all history. He became the God-man.

Christmas marks the invasion of history by the only unique man to ever walk the dusty shores of time. The young virgin on that first Christmas morn peered down into the eyes of a baby who was fully God and fully man. Indeed, this was and is the miracle and mystery of the ages! 

**ABOUT THE WRITER:** Reverend A. B. Brown is academic dean at Southeastern Free Will Baptist College, Wendell, North Carolina. He also teaches Bible and theology.

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# I Met Jesus at Christmas

By Bill Foster



**W**hen I was a child Christmas was toys, candy, fruit, Santa Claus and sharing a bike with my brothers. There was no Christian influence in our home. At age 13, I had the responsibility of my mother and two younger brothers after my parents divorced.

I quit school and started working in the cafeteria of a steel mill making \$16.22 a week. I worked six days a week, six hours a day. When I was drafted into the army at age 21, I had never been to church.

I served in Korea and came close to death many times. After three months of fighting on the front lines and another close call with death, I promised God that if He would get me home I would start to Sunday School. I must have heard about Sunday School from someone because I didn't know anything about God or church.

God brought me home safely and I did attend a church on New Year's Eve for the first time. I was so confused when I left, I didn't go to church again until after I met Barbara Hill, who later became my wife. Barbara had attended Bethel FWB Church in South Roxana, Illinois, and we were married there.

We were invited to church by Barbara's good friend, Iva Lewis. Iva worked in a bakery. She always asked us to church each time we came in. I always had an excuse. We attended church on Easter and after witnessing a "footwashing" service, I was sure this was not the church for me!

The Lord used a young preacher home for the Christmas holidays from Free Will Baptist Bible College in Nashville, Tennessee, to reach me. He was to bring the Sunday night message on December 27, 1959. Barbara was acquainted with the young man, so we accepted the invitation and attended that service, sitting on the second row in the front of the church.

The Lord spoke to my heart through this man as he preached a sermon titled, "No Room for Jesus." Before that night I had no room for Jesus. The Holy Spirit of God worked within my heart and I accepted Christ as Savior that night. This was the best Christmas gift I could ever receive. It has always been my best Christmas.

Christmas is when we celebrate the birth of Jesus, and Christmas is when I celebrate my second birth. I was born again at Christmas 1959. The young man who preached the

night I was saved later became a good friend and is now the president of Free Will Baptist Bible College, the Reverend Tom Malone.

Tom's father, Rev. Wallace Malone, was my pastor after I was saved. He and his wife, Eunice, took us in as babes in Christ and helped us mature in the Lord.

Since Barbara and I wanted to start our Christian lives out right, we were both baptized on January 18, 1960, in the Hartford Canal.

I had been saved 10 years when the Lord called me into full-time Christian service. Roger Reeds, director of Sunday School Department, called and asked if I would consider working for the Sunday School Department. The Lord seemed to open every door and we moved to Nashville in February 1969.

I served as shipping manager; Barbara joined the department in June 1969 as an order clerk. We celebrated our 20th anniversary with Randall House February 1989.

I have been on disability retirement since August 1989 due to kidney failure. I went on dialysis September 2, 1989. During this time the Lord has truly been a very present help in time of need.

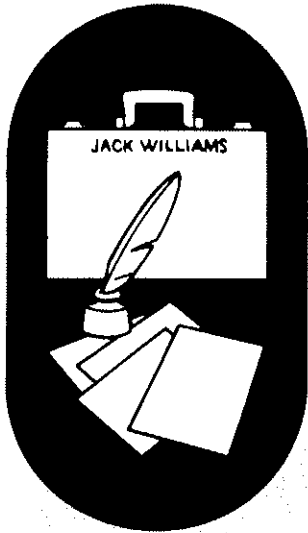
The Lord was especially close to me Christmas of 1989. Not only did He save me at Christmas time, but He continues to keep and bless me. If I hadn't had Christ in my heart, it would have been a dim year. But with His help and guidance, I am looking forward to an even greater Christmas in 1990.



**ABOUT THE WRITER:** Mr. Bill Foster retired from Randall House Publications in October 1989. While in Nashville, Tennessee, he was a member of Fellowship Free Will Baptist Church. Bill is a LifeMember of the Master's Men. He now resides in Poplar Bluff, Missouri.

# The 12 Friends of Christmas

## Briefcase



**T**wo years ago a friend who assumed that I dislike Christmas gave me a coffee cup with the words, "B-a-a-a-a! Hum-Mug," stamped on the side. It's not Christmas I dislike, it's the parties—I'm just not a party animal.

On the other hand, Christians do seem to feel guilty about celebrating Christmas American-style. Why is that? Everyone else seems to like it. Think about it: from Douglas fir trees to plastic glow-in-the-dark angels, Christmas delights Americans.

**Retail merchants** say Christmas generates 40 percent of annual sales. Christmas is big business from Hallmark cards to Ma Bell. After-Christmas sales clean out inventory for the new year.

And don't forget the kids. Christmas enchants kids with its presents, bright lights and fresh-baked cookies. Besides what's not to like about a season that guarantees two weeks without math class.

The entertainment industry turns out a glut of holiday specials. The most calloused directors can't resist weaving a Christmas theme into their programs. And I can hardly wait to see *Miracle On 34th Street* again.

Newspaper reporters comb the city for stories that tug at readers' heartstrings. Police departments de-

liver toys to disadvantaged kids. Fancy restaurants round up street people and serve them baked Alaska. Something mysterious softens the hearts of even cynics in December.

**Back in mid-September** we asked 10 Christians what they liked most and disliked most about Christmas. The survey group included an accountant, a widow, a business teacher, a secretary, an editor, a grandmother, a meeting planner, a mother of two, a suburban pastor and a new bride.

Their number one dread was shopping, followed by too-full schedules and commercialism that masked the real meaning of Christmas.

The accountant dreaded the morning after because of emotional let-down. "A few hours are so precious that we want to hold them forever, but then it's back to reality."

The business teacher dreaded busy people "who run over you in their rush to shop. People are so inconsiderate at Christmas."

**But the real grinch** turned out to be the secretary. When asked what she disliked most about Christmas, she snapped, "Just about everything: the commercialization, materialistic approach, unbearably full schedules, unrealistically high expectations, crazy drivers and crowded stores." Sounds like she needs a raise!

**On the flip side**, three people (the mother, grandmother and bride) bubbled that there was "nothing about the Christmas season" they didn't like.

The mother of two said, "I love the whole idea of Christmas...the crowds, the lights, the decorations, family and food."

The grandmother likes "Christmasizing my house. I hang Christmas curtains, put up two Christmas trees, decorate the house and put a red cloth on my kitchen table."

Seven out of 10 liked family gatherings most, along with traditions such as reading the Christmas story

aloud and the warm glow of memories.

**Then I talked** with one more important person. I called one of my favorite people, a Jewish friend, and asked him the same two questions. He surprised me.

He said, "I enjoy the smell of Christmas trees. I remember going into my friends' homes 35 years ago and smelling those pine trees. They welcomed me. I like the warmth that people show. I especially like the good nature of people in the weeks preceding and after Christmas."

When I pressed for what he dreaded most about Christmas, he said, "Jack, as an outsider I find nothing offensive about Christmas. Oh, sure it's probably over-commercialized. But it's a beautiful holiday and I enjoy watching my friends be happy."

**That makes me the 12th** man of Christmas. I wait all year for that special spirit that reaches the lowest man and lifts him high enough so he can see the star. And reaches the highest man to remind him that something wonderful happened in a humble Bethlehem stable.

Like my Jewish friend, I find nothing offensive about the Christmas celebration. For me the pace slows. I mingle anonymously with happy, bustling crowds as they rush to finish shopping. I enjoy the sounds of Christmas and the magic of little kids with their noses pressed against store windows.

**Christmas reminds** me how full life can be. Christmas is a new beginning. While Christmas may be big business for merchants, it's bigger business for churches. So, go to your Christmas parties and enjoy the seasonal warmth without feeling guilty.

This tired world needs to hear again the healing words, "Fear not: for, behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy which shall be to all people." That day God came inside so that no man had to stand outside. 🕊



An insider's look at the pastor and his family at Christmas.

# Christmas at the Parsonage

By Ruth Creech Mullen

**D**ecember 31. Sunday morning worship. Christmas was almost over. My parents were visiting with us and my husband asked Dad to preach. Halfway through his sermon, I recognized the outline. It was mine!

Earlier, we'd played the *Ungame* and I listed three things for which I was thankful. I mentioned family, freedom and faith. Dad added friends and food and was preaching *my* outline. Since he failed to give me credit for those original three points, I'm borrowing his two points (plus my three) and using "our" outline for this article.

## Food

Christmas at the parsonage starts with food. At our house it's Christmas cookies. The significance of that rests in the fact that I am not a baker. During the year my family never tastes home-baked pies, cakes or cookies. (I realized how desperate the problem was when my son begged to bake Christmas cookies in July.)

Even at Christmas I don't make divinity, fudge or fruitcake. But we do make cookies from scratch and we use cookie cutters. It's quite a production from melting butter to spreading flour on faces, elbows, clothing and the floor to painting the finished product with egg yolk and food coloring.

As we roll dough, cut shapes and paint bright colors, we discuss ways to let others know we care about them. Some of our cookies go to the shut-ins of our church. My daughter takes some to school for her class party. Mostly we have fun and the cookies even taste good.

## Friends

Christmas food involves friends and fellowship since so many groups gather at this busy time of year. Some parties are large, some small. Some exchange gifts; some don't.



But the combination of food with friends always equals fellowship.

Our church participates in a Christmas card exchange. We bring cards to church, save the postage and give the money to missions. And we eat and fellowship with friends as we open our cards.

As the pastor's family, we would like to visit in each member's home during the holidays. But that isn't practical, so we invite the church to a Sunday afternoon "Christmas at the Parsonage." Some years I make all the snacks; at other times each family brings something.

Some contact with friends doesn't center around food because of distance. We call our special missionaries, Charolette Tallent in France and the Ken Bailey family in Japan, to find out what they need for Christmas.

Those on our Christmas card list receive a newsletter that summarizes our yearly activities. This takes time but links us to those we no longer see often—relatives scattered around the country, college friends, friends from former pastorates.

Each year we receive Christmas cards from many places. Just like Mom, I display my cards. We don't have a mantel so I use a door frame or ceiling beam. After the holidays we put the cards in a basket on the kitchen table and pray for one family or friend each day. Sometimes spring arrives before we finish with all the cards, but this helps preserve the Christmas spirit long after the tinsel and holly disappear.

## Freedom

Freedom is one of our richest



Christmas gifts in America. The price of this gift escapes us because it was paid so long ago. Christmas 1989 reminded us of that price as other countries struggled to gain what we already possess. The constant news breaks of European countries fighting to be free prompted a new appreciation for our freedom.

### Faith

Still we must remember that true freedom for the individual is found in Christ, regardless of the political leanings of any government. That brings us to faith. For Christmas at the parsonage, in the church or in the world concerns the faith and freedom available to us because of God's gift: Jesus.

Long before the tree goes up or carols heard on the radio, plans must be made for the Christmas program, play and cantata. We usually start in September when stores put up their Christmas displays. Decisions regarding how many programs to have, which material to use and what supplies are needed start the ball rolling. We pick up speed with assigning parts, practices, choosing costumes, constructing props, dress rehearsal and then the day of the performance.

Sharing faith seems most appropriate at Christmas, yet it's often the one thing we most neglect because of our busyness. Inviting unsaved friends to a Christmas dinner is an enjoyable way to reinforce our witness to them during the year.

One of our Christmas highlights is the gifts for the King special offering. We challenge church members to give Jesus a present at least as large as their single most expensive present. After all, it is *His* birthday. We place a box wrapped as a Christmas present in the church for this special offering. We designate gifts for the King to a missionary's account, a project that benefits the church or the general fund.

Reading the Christmas story frequently during the holidays makes it familiar to children. We discovered this accidentally with our daughter a few years ago. By Christmas Day she could recite from memory the majority of Luke 2:8-16. What a gift to give children—God's Word hidden in their hearts.

### Family

Saving the best for last, Christmas is family. I am sorry for those whose Christmas celebration doesn't include joyful times with family.

Our immediate family consists of Jim (my pastor-husband), Laura (13), Luke (6) and me. We enjoy the Christmas season from early November with our trip to a tree farm to the day that tree gets thrown out as garbage.

We all love the music of Christmas, listening to records and tapes. Our schedule gets hectic with church activities plus all the extra Christmas meetings, school activities, choir commitments, buying gifts and the million other things that fill the days of Christmas.

Last year Luke's Christmas wish list grew to such proportions that I had to tell him he could not possibly get all those things. So he began a list for "the Christmas after this." That list also got too long and he began a list for "the third Christmas past this one." Such is the spirit of our society.

We needed to instill the true spirit of Christmas that asks, "What can I give?" instead of, "What can I get?" Under our tree we placed boxes labeled "Gifts from Luke" and "Gifts from Laura." No other presents showed up under the tree during the Christmas season until time to open their gifts from us.


How exciting to watch their boxes fill up with wrapped presents for family members, friends and school teachers. We didn't spend a lot of money. The gifts were tokens of love and appreciation. Those bought with allowance money were most special.

Later when Luke received money of his own and asked to spend it on Benjamin Lundquist, I was thrilled. Benjamin's parents are Wycliffe missionaries to Columbia. The plan was working.

Christmas 1989 was one to remember. Laura passed a milestone in her life by "putting away childish things." She cleaned her room and emptied her bookshelves of children's Bible story books, passing them on to Luke. Then she wanted the children's encyclopedias moved from her room. One chapter ended and another began for her and us.

Meanwhile, Luke asked all the questions since he was still at home and not yet in school. "Is Santa Claus real? Why are there so many? Why did Santa at Kroger not know I'd mailed him a letter? Why did he say he hadn't received it yet when I already have a letter back from him?" Jim, of course, is never around when important things like this occur.

Being in the pastorate means separation from extended family. I manage pretty well all year if I can go home for the holidays. My sisters and brother are all grown so we rotate the holidays. One year we spend Thanksgiving with in-laws and Christmas with our parents; the next year we switch.

Christmas at the parsonage is like a stained glass window created from bits of happenings too numerous to mention. Yet when we reflect back on the season, the pattern there is beautiful and fills us with a sense of continuity. 

*ABOUT THE WRITER: Ruth Creech Mullen is a free-lance writer who resides in New Castle, Indiana. Her husband Jim pastors First Bible Free Will Baptist Church in New Castle.*

### Three Ideas to Calm Christmas

Christmas doesn't have to be hectic and cause frayed nerves. Try these ideas to ease the holiday strain.

1. Do everything possible early.
  - a. Shop early. We tried this and it works. Everything you buy early is one less thing to worry about when the crunch hits.
  - b. Bake early. That is if you bake at all. I don't need this idea, but I thought you might. You can freeze most food and thaw it later.
  - c. Address Christmas cards early. It will be one more item off that "To-Do List."
2. Plan ahead. Make a schedule of all December activities. Reserve time for family so they don't get left out.
3. Keep Christ in Christmas.
  - a. Guard your regular quiet time. Don't let busyness rob you of peace from God.
  - b. Read the Christmas story often to your children. Include the Old Testament prophecies that Jesus' birth fulfilled.
  - c. Emphasize giving instead of getting. Find an idea that works and work it.



FINE JEWELRY · WATCHES



## Married to the Mall

By Greg McAllister


Christmas is a wonderful time of year to spend in South Texas playing golf.

I feel that way because my wife drags me to the mall where we fret and fuss, and where I suspect she begins devising murder plots. Although she never actually says she's going to kill me until December 23rd. That's when I start talking about golf in Texas.

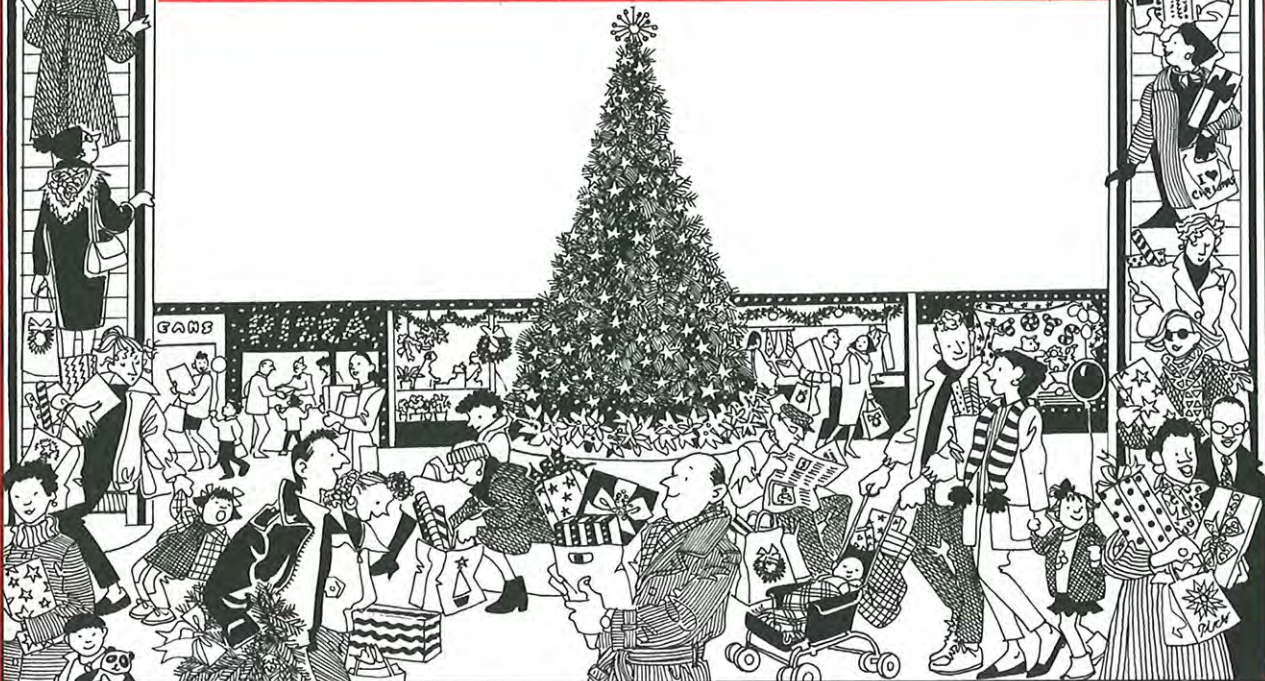
The problem is that my family, like yours, wants stuff. My daughter generally makes it known that she has earned certain Barbie accessories. My son feels the same way about Ninja Turtles. (I wish some preacher would come up with a doctrine that

the Ninja Turtles promote demonism. My kids never liked Smurfs, so that hobby-horse didn't help any—and they were a year too late with He-Man.)

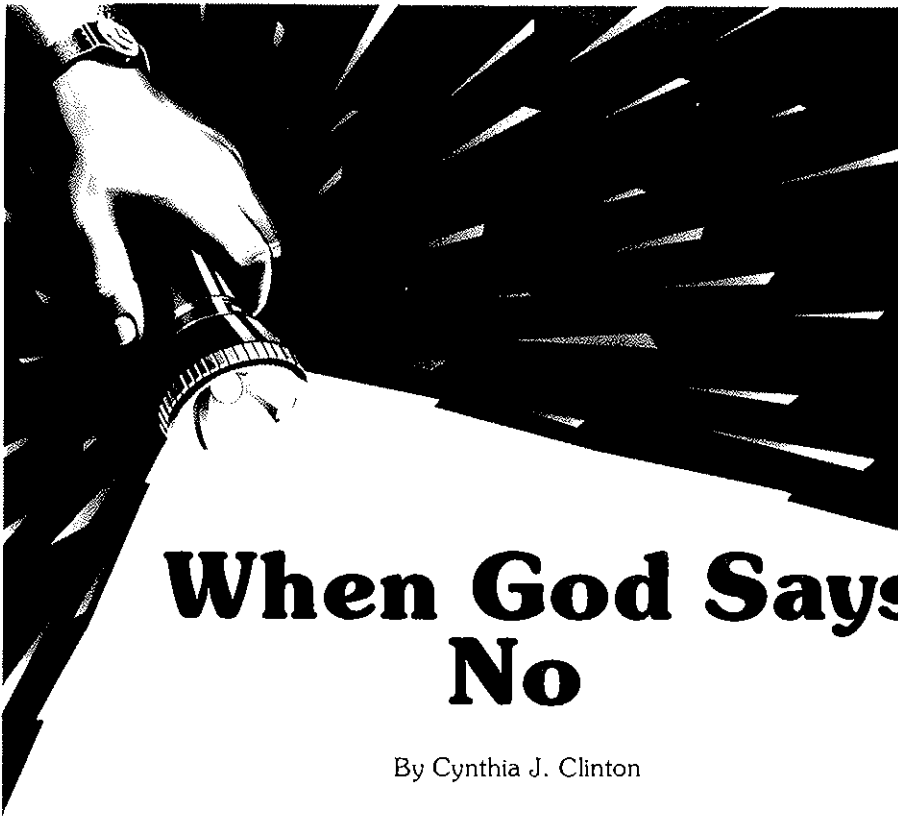
Our doctrine says that you can't earn a gift. That means my daughter has no right to demand the Barbie junk, and my son doesn't have the right to drive me nuts about Ninja Turtles. And my wife has no right to threaten my life at Sears. But neither have I the right to be selfish and stubborn with my family at Christmas.

I'm still working on Texas. 

*ABOUT THE WRITER:* Reverend Greg McAllister is registrar at California Christian College in Fresno, California.







# When God Says No

By Cynthia J. Clinton

We are certain that the Lord wanted us in Cleveland this last year, but He has made it obvious that it is time to move. God has said, "No," for the time being at least, to our starting a church in Cleveland.

**A**ugust 1987: We are packing our belongings into a rented truck and will soon wave goodbye to all our friends in Nashville. We are moving to Cleveland, Mississippi, where the Lord has impressed us that we should move. After we get settled, we will look into the possibility of becoming associate missionaries with the Mississippi Home Missions Board.

There are so few Free Will Baptist churches in the Delta. The closest one to Cleveland is an hour away. Also, most of Walter's family is unsaved so we want to get reacquainted with them and, hopefully, have a part in leading them to Christ.

**N**ovember 1988: We are again packing our belongings into a rented truck and will soon wave goodbye to all our friends in Cleveland. We leave here much humbled, more realistic and more capable of ministering to other people.

**W**hy does God say, "No"? Why does He say one thing, and then, seem to change His mind? These are obviously lofty questions, which will never be completely answered. But why are we led in one direction, and then suddenly, the course changes? Were we mistaken as to where the Lord was initially leading? Not necessarily. We simply left unable to understand why we were led in that direction at that time.

David pictured a beautiful palace, a holy temple suitable for God. He knew just how he wanted it to look and where he could get materials. As king of Israel, he had all the resources he needed. He called for Nathan the prophet one day and disclosed his plans.

"Whatever you have in mind is great, David. Do it because God is with you." Nathan the Lord's prophet had placed the stamp of approval on David's plans.

That night, however, the Lord showed Nathan differently: "Tell David that he is not to build a house for Me. I will let one of his sons build it, but he will not." Closed book.

David's plans were not wicked or foolhardy. He was not trying to pat himself on the back. He wanted to build a magnificent place to worship God. His idea was good and pure, but God said, "No, David, this is not for you to do."

**O**ur year in Cleveland was not wasted. Life hit us full force, and we had to put down our roots in Christ even further so that we would not be overcome.

Conflict surrounded us. Non-Christians tried to pressure us into illegal and unethical actions. Some Christians bullied us when we became mediators between an immature church and its immature pastor. In trying to be honest and fair, people misunderstood and—in turn—rejected us.

Financial pressures came, and we had to petition God for money to buy, not a luxury car or a big screen TV, but food and shelter. We were further frustrated because we found little time to spend with Walter's family much less time to spend starting a new church.

Are we angry at God for this turn of events? No! Quite honestly, we see God's grace moving us out of the situation rather than asking us to continue as we were willing to do if He so prescribed. We also see God's grace to those people to whom we will minister. If we had not gone through our Cleveland experience, we would have been able to give only textbook answers. Now, when they speak of rejection and the strain of daily life, we can remember and hurt with them.

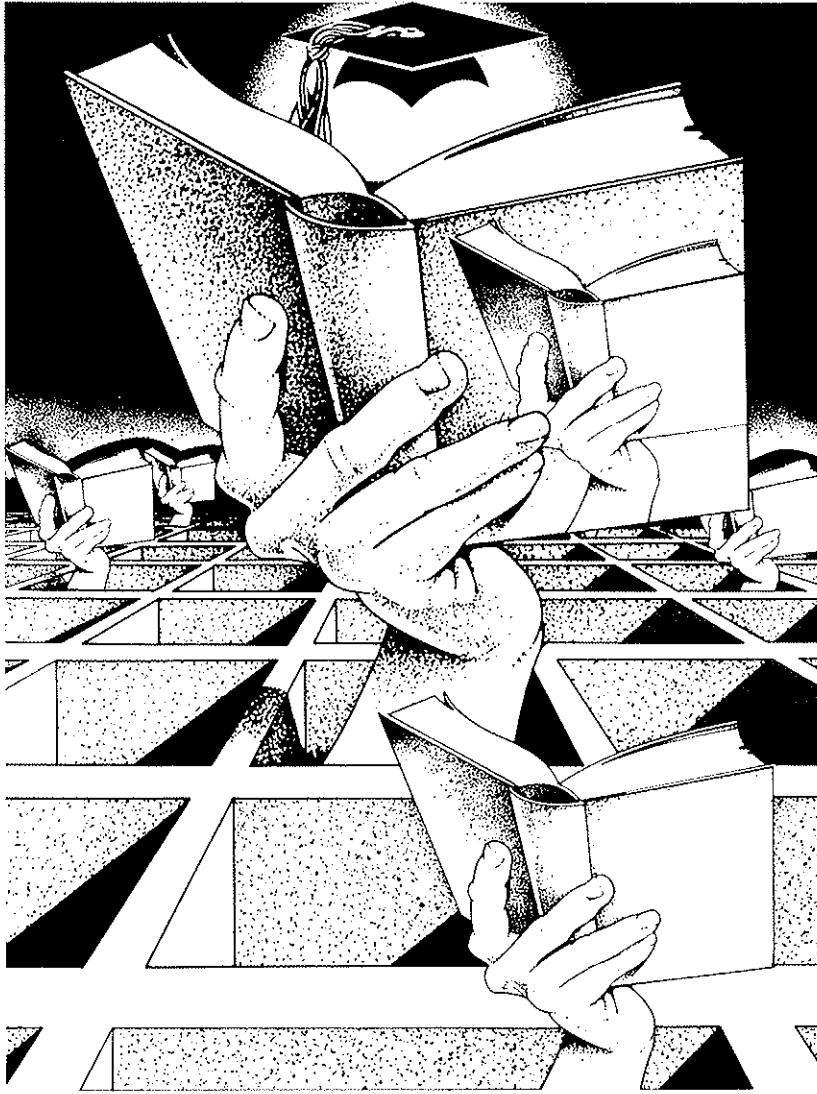
**L**ate November 1988: We are all packed and ready to go. This time to Arkansas. We do not know what is ahead for us, but we do know that we can do anything through Christ. Perhaps someday, we will come back through Cleveland and find a Free Will Baptist church which someone else has started, or, maybe, the Lord may even lead us back to start one.

He has not promised us that someone would build a church here as He promised David that Solomon would build the Temple. But He has said, "No," to us at this time. We accept this and are content for we know His way is best. ☪

*ABOUT THE WRITER: Mrs. Cynthia J. Clinton says she is "a full-time mother and pastor's wife." She graduated from Free Will Baptist Bible College in 1987. Her husband, Walter, pastors First Free Will Baptist Church, Arkadelphia, Arkansas.*



# What are You Reading?



By Vern Gunnels, Jr.

**B**ecause of my insatiable thirst for books, my basement has almost 20 large boxes of books and two medium-sized bookcases full of good reading material. I love to read. How about you?

Years ago while helping me move into my new office, one young man commented about my "expensive habit" of buying books. I paused for a moment and then reassured him that at least this habit had scriptural backing. Ezra and Paul also had good reading habits. Timothy was encouraged by his mentor to devote himself to private and public reading.

No one can afford to neglect good reading habits. Satan is subtle enough to know that man was not created with a vacuum in his brain (Matthew 12:43-45). Man needs to renew his

mind with spiritual truths on a daily basis.

One of Christianity's most educated scholars in his old age still had a desire to get his hands on some good reading material (II Timothy 4:13). Preachers and pastors especially need to develop good reading habits if they are going to feed the sheep and the lambs. If done properly, it will be hard work, but rewarding (II Timothy 2:15).

"What are you reading?" you enquire. Right now I'm reading about Wesley, mid-life crisis, Revelation, communicable diseases, teaching skills, teenagers and servants. My desk is cluttered with my books, magazines, newspapers, pamphlets, paperbacks, newsletters and some things I cannot see.

I borrow my son's *Sports Illustrated* once in a while for variety. Last week I even glanced through *Field and*

*Stream* when a bass fishing article caught my eye. I haven't bought a fishing license in years, but someday I'm really going to give 'em fits. You'll see.

Do I ever encounter liberalism or controversy in my reading escapades? Absolutely. It would be safe to say that approximately 75 percent of the authors I read teach eternal security. But like a good gardener, I take what I can use and discard the weeds. In fact, I'm not always in agreement with everything I read in my Sunday School manual either, but that doesn't stop me. If I read enough, they can teach me something or give me a different perspective or a new slant on an old thought.

What if I'm reading a borrowed book? I take notes and give credit where it's due. If the book is mine, I'll mark passages for later reference. If the passage is exceptionally noteworthy, I underline it and place an asterisk on the margin, turn back to the front and write "Good" at the top of a blank page. I write the page number and sometimes a brief comment. This makes it possible to pick up a book years later, turn to the inside cover and review the entire book for references in less than 10 minutes.

When is the best time to read? Only you know for sure. The mornings are best for me. While pastoring, I cautioned my people about interrupting these precious hours I spent alone with my Lord and my books. Of course, emergencies took first priority, but they knew if the sheep and lambs were to be fed, their under-shepherd needed to have his soul fed also. Have your secretary and/or wife help guard your reading hours. It will pay rich dividends to all concerned.

Read. Read. Read. Read history, biographies, family living, sermons, leadership, teaching, education, growth and other worthwhile subjects. Occasionally read something controversial so you'll know how the enemy thinks. I remember the stunned looks on many faces when I took books to the podium with me and read what some of today's "wolves in sheep's clothing" advocate.

What are you reading? My desire is to help stimulate you to read and keep on reading. If you're not able to read, pray and ask the Lord to bring you a teenager to read to you. For eternity's sake, read!

**ABOUT THE WRITER:** Reverend Vern Gunnels, Jr. pastors Pearce Chapel Free Will Baptist Church, Smithville, Mississippi.





FREE WILL BAPTIST

# newsfront

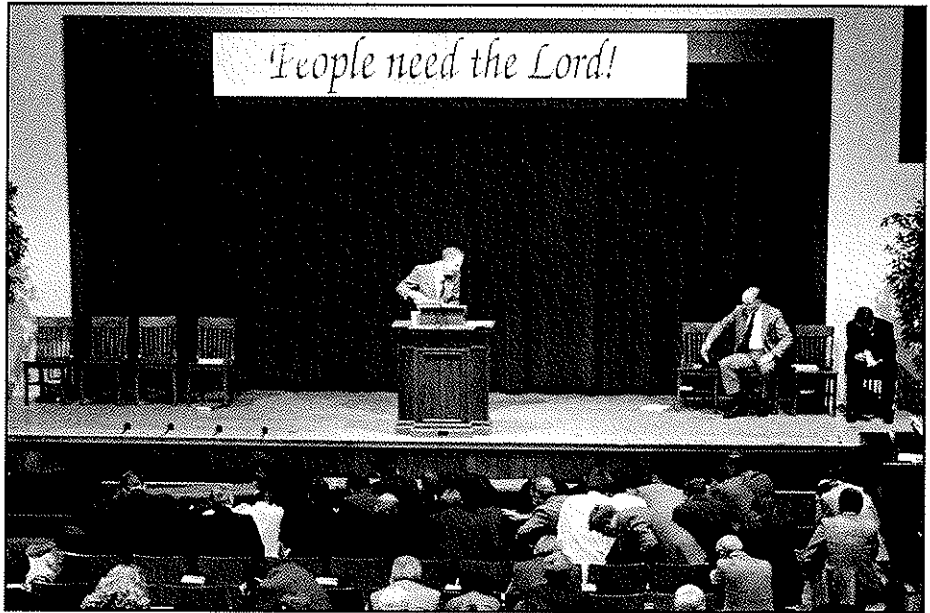
## ALL-BOARDS CONFERENCE TO MEET IN NASHVILLE

NASHVILLE, TN—The biennial Free Will Baptist All-Boards Conference will meet December 3-4 at the Doubletree Hotel in Nashville, according to Executive Secretary Melvin Worthington.

Dr. Worthington said he expects more than 90 board members from 20 states to participate this year. The conference will begin with registration Monday, December 3 from 3:00 p.m. to 5:00 p.m. After a dinner together, board members will gather for two plenary sessions Monday evening.

After Monday's plenary sessions, the various national boards and commissions will meet separately to conduct the business of each agency. The boards will have breakfast and lunch together on Tuesday. Several boards and commissions plan to complete their work by Tuesday evening. The remainder plan to finish by Wednesday evening.

## FWBBC EVANGELISM CONFERENCE SURPASSES EXPECTATIONS



NASHVILLE, TN—Free Will Baptist Bible College's October Evangelism Conference exceeded everyone's expectations. "The content was some of the best I have ever heard in this type conference," said President Tom Malone. "It was challenging, thought-provoking and exciting."

Dr. Robert Woodard, chairman of the conference planning committee, said that more than 100 visitors—mostly pastors—from 16 states and two foreign countries attended. "The full impact of a conference like this will only be seen in eternity," he adds. "I believe, as a result, many lost souls will be in heaven who, otherwise, would not have been there. And that makes it worth the effort."

Four times during the meeting the altar area filled with preachers and students seeking to be more effective soulwinners. Evaluation forms filled

out by conferees rated the meeting 9.43 on a scale of 1-10.

Special speakers included Dr. Calvin Evans, Dr. Roy Fish, Dr. Randy Ray, Rev. Gordon Sebastian, Rev. Keith Burden and FWBBC President Tom Malone. Mrs. Pat Thomas and Mrs. Dana Thompson held seminars for the women.

Here are some of the comments included on the evaluation forms:

"This conference meant more to me than any conference we've ever had."

"My outlook on evangelism will never be the same."

"As I leave the campus, I have a greater determination to reach the lost."

"Thank you so much for the conference. It was one of the best I have ever attended anywhere."

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## newsfront

(continued)

### TENNESSEE CHURCH FOUNDER, J. W. LOVE, DIES

NASHVILLE, TN—The Reverend Jess W. Love Sr., 73, died September 19 in Nashville. He was pastor at Faith FWB Church in Nashville at the time of his death. He founded the church 32 years ago and was its only pastor.

Funeral services were conducted September 22 at Faith FWB Church. A standing-room-only crowd gathered in final tribute to Rev. Love. Dr.



Charles Thigpen, chancellor of Free Will Baptist Bible College, and Rev. R. Eugene Waddell, general director of the Foreign Missions Department, officiated. Burial followed at Nashville's Woodlawn Cemetery.

Rev. Waddell said, "Brother Love was just like his name, a loving and faithful man. He was always the first to reach out to the disadvantaged with a helping hand. He used what he had and he did what he could."

Rev. J. W. Love was a bi-vocational pastor. He invested his entire ministry at Faith FWB Church, and supported his family with his electrician's trade. For a number of years he maintained a weekly radio program on WNAH.

Pastor Love touched many lives with kindness. He was respected as a gentle man who lived the gospel he preached.

He is survived by his wife, Blanche; daughters, Alice Hammond and Deborah Renegar; sons, Rev. Jess W. Love, Jr., John P. Love and Steven Love, all of Nashville.

### GEORGIA CHURCH COMPLETES \$350,000 BUILDING




ALMA, GA—Eight months after construction began on a 7,000-square-foot building project, members of Pine Level FWB Church moved into their \$350,000 worship center, according to Pastor Wayne Miracle.

The church plant includes a 200-seat sanctuary, 10 classrooms, pastor's office and a 1,500-square-foot social hall. Men of the church did 85 percent of the construction. Nearly one-half of the construction cost was raised while the work was underway.

Former pastor Rex Lynn led the building project, then left to start a mission church in Rome, Georgia.

Dr. L. C. Johnson, former president of Free Will Baptist Bible College, preached the November 5, 1989, dedication service. The Pine Level church is Dr. Johnson's home church.

Pastor Miracle said, "This is the third building this church has built and occupied since it organized in 1882." 

## Not All Sinners Welcome

By Alton Loveless

**W**hile traveling to a preaching engagement, I routed through a small farming community where I saw a large old church building with all its windows and doors open.


That openness had such an invitation, until I noticed on the yard bulletin board the words, "Not all sinners are welcome!" I was taken by surprise until I read in smaller words the equally commanding phrase, "We have room for only 350."

At first glance your eyes and mind think all should be welcome, especially to such a beautiful open church. I was critical until I read the smaller print. Then I understood that they had not shut a door to any sinner as long as they had room.

Thank God for a church that's open to all sinners.

Sometimes we are far less open and we let the public know the kind of sinner we welcome. We have not only put sin in good and bad categories, but have done the same with sinners. We know the type sinner we

prefer attend and avoid those to whom we have no preference.

Let us not forget that Christ came to save sinners. He has room for "whosoever will." 

*ABOUT THE WRITER: Dr. Alton Loveless is executive secretary for the Ohio State Association of Free Will Baptists.*

### Directory Update

#### ILLINOIS

Clifton Buchanan to Pleasant View Church, Walnut Hill

#### NORTHWEST

Terry Stafford to Victory Church, E. Wenatchee, WA, from First Church, Yakima, WA

Ernest Snowden to First Church, Yakima, WA

#### SOUTH CAROLINA

Billy Wayne Baker to Oates Church, Oates from Damascus Church, Conway

Sigbee Dilda to Pamplico Church, Pamplico



## Currently...

Members of **Bethel FWB Church, Allen, OK**, conducted ground-breaking ceremonies for their new fellowship hall. Pastor **Earl Scroggins** and deacons **Bill Griffin, Dale Long, Danny McDougal** and **Gene Prentice** led the service.

Members of **Harrison FWB Church, Minford, OH**, mourned the death of **Ben Wright** who served 30 years as their Sunday School superintendent. **Tom Dooley** pastors.

Pastor **Chester Osborne** reports 38 new members at **Charity FWB Church, Cleveland, OH**. The church conducted extensive remodeling which included Sunday School rooms.

**New Bethel FWB Church, Cleveland, OH**, added 10 new members. Church youth raised more than \$1,000 in a walk-a-thon. Pastor **Freddie Ray** said the group also installed new air conditioning units.

Pastor **Lucian Baker** reports some welcome problems at **Pleasant Hill FWB Church, Delaware, OH**. He said, "Our new Sunday School rooms are becoming crowded!" The church logged four conversions and eight baptisms.

**Laddie Hamilton** received a plaque for 16 years of faithful service as Sunday School secretary at **Amherst FWB Church, Amherst, OH**. **Robert Nelson** pastors.

**Glendale FWB Church, Midwest City, OK**, voted to support the state cooperative program with 10 percent of its income. **Ed Baine** pastors.

**Oklahoma's** Arkansas Valley Association completed a 3,200-square-foot kitchen in time for youth camp with 105 campers.

After meeting for nine months in a schoolhouse, members of **Lewis Avenue FWB Church in Tulsa, OK**, moved into their new building. They dedicated their debt-free facility July 15 with 148 people in attendance. **Troy Staires** pastors.

A rousing children's crusade resulted in 18 conversions at **Faith FWB Church, Glenpool, OK**. Pastor **David Archer** said more than 2,400 invitations were distributed prior to the crusade. A crew of 50 adults and teens worked each evening teaching, driving buses and other chores. Some 197 children attended.

Officials at **Free Will Baptist Bible College** expect the 1990 Christmas Drive will push the 14-year total past the \$1 million mark. The Paul Kettelman Memorial Christmas Fund Drive has raised more than \$972,000 since 1976. Public Relations Director **Bob Shockey** said the school set a 1990 goal of \$140,000.

Pastor **Ron Henthorn** reports 23 youth saved at the summer church camp. **Henthorn** pastors **Stoney Run FWB**

**Church, Portsmouth, OH**.

Evangelist **Homer Willis** preached the homecoming service at **Burdine FWB Church, Burdine, KY**. He said that in the last 60 years the church produced more than 50 preachers, musicians and Christian workers. **John Depriest** pastors.

Members of **Gahanna FWB Church, Gahanna, OH**, report 27 conversions among church youth during VBS activities. **Curtis Booth** pastors.

It took 23 years, but members of **North FWB Church, Columbus, OH**, finally paid off the mortgage September 30. Pastor **William Chadwick** said, "Our new building was completed in 1967. What blessings and trials we have had. But God has always taken care of us."

Pastor **James Blair** said members of **Williams Road FWB Church, Columbus, OH**, decided to do more than voice opposition to abortion on demand. The church sponsored a baby shower for mothers-to-be who chose not to abort their babies.

The Central Texas District Association (**Texas**) welcomed two new churches: **Zion FWB Church of Corpus Christi** where **Bobby Joe Davis** pastors and **Northcrest FWB Church of Victoria** where **Roy Wilson** pastors.

Pastor **Cliff Donoho** says **Calvary FWB Church, Salem, IL**, plans to start a ministry for the deaf. The work will be under the direction of **Jeff and Diane Ropp**.

Busy times at **Harmony FWB Church, West Frankfort, IL**. Pastor **Kenneth Edwards** baptized four people in a pond. The church rejoiced over 17 conversions during VBS activities. The church also purchased a bus and named it "Heaven Bound."

A businessman in **Effingham, IL**, donated a Chevy Blazer to the church for the pastor's use. The happy pastor is **John Hollis**. The church is **Crossroads FWB Church** in Effingham.

The **Illinois** Camp Board named **Larry Cook** as general director. **Cook** pastors **Bear Point FWB Church, Sesser, IL**.

Children of **Hazel Dell FWB Church, Sesser, IL**, raised more than \$220 for the George Harvey Land Fund. Harvey is a home missionary to Phoenix, AZ. **Gene Outland** pastors.

Pastor **Terry Pierce** reports five baptisms at **First FWB Church, Thomas-ton, GA**.

Meet Hungry Herman! That's the name of the food closet sponsored by members of **Bethany FWB Church, Broken Arrow, OK**. **Roger Harwell** pastors.

For months men at **Concord FWB Church, Concord, CA**, met at 5:00

a.m. Monday, Wednesday and Friday mornings to pray about church outreach. Must have worked. Pastor **Ralph Dell** reports Sunday School attendance at 113 and morning worship at 126. Some 26 people participate in Thursday night visitation. The church enrolled 18 in a Friday night singles group.

**California's** San Joaquin Association reported 30 conversions at their summer youth camp. Three campers announced calls to the ministry.

Members of **Oak Grove FWB Church, Elm City, NC**, dedicated their 10,500-square-foot family life center, according to Pastor **Tommy Bryson**. The four-month construction project cost approximately \$150,000. The facility includes an assembly room, 7,000-square-foot gymnasium and a mezzanine.

Pastor **Earl Hanna** reports construction underway at **Liberty FWB Church, Orangeburg, SC**. The volunteer-labor project will include a 2,000-square-foot sanctuary, five classrooms, nursery and fellowship hall.

Ground-breaking for the Bobby Bowers Fellowship Building excited members of **First FWB Church, Greenville, SC**. Members decided to name the building in honor of Pastor **Bobby Bowers** who has served 23 years. Construction costs for the 6,000-square-foot metal building are expected to reach \$150,000. The structure will house a basketball court, meeting room, kitchen and mezzanine.

Pastor **Phillip Jones** reports a \$15,000 renovation project at **New Town FWB Church, Lake City, SC**. The work required removing the old foyer area, including the roof, and rebuilding.

Pastor **Dale Burden** celebrated 25 years at **Gateway FWB Church, Virginia Beach, VA**.

Officials at **Camp Jacob in Clintwood, VA**, report 281 campers this summer with more than 80 making professions of faith for Christ. An ongoing project is an effort to winterize cabins at a cost of \$1,000 each.

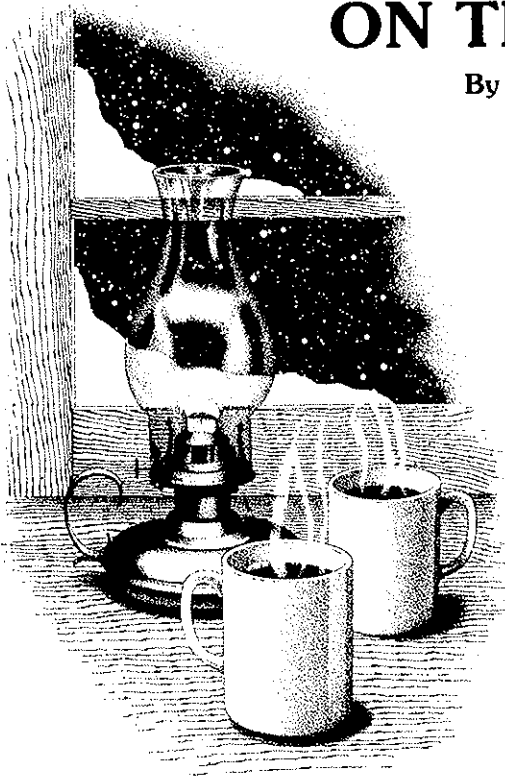
Pastor **Randy Key** and members at **Pocahontas FWB Church, Carbon Hill, AL**, sponsored a "Homer Willis Day" for Evangelist **Homer Willis**. The church gave Willis a plaque and love offering in honor of his more than 50 years in the ministry.

Members of **Fulton FWB Church, Fulton, MS**, voted to go full time October 1. Pastor **Bill Van Winkle** has served for eight years while the church bought property, remodeled facilities, upgraded the parsonage and paved the parking lot. During that time the church budget almost tripled. Outside giving grew from under \$1,000 to over \$15,000 a year.



# WOMAN'S WINDOW ON THE WORLD

By Mary R. Wischart



## From My Window

Frost frames the glass pane in the front door and snow lies on the pines and across the fields. A girl looks out on the beauty of a Missouri December and shivers with anticipation. She can hardly wait for the Christmas homecoming and the gifts under the Christmas tree.

How exciting those days were just before Christmas when I was a youngster.

For us one waiting has already ended in the promise fulfilled one night in Bethlehem. We look back at His coming as a tiny babe to be our Redeemer and Friend.

This Christmas, a sense of expectancy comes anew. A different sense and a more urgent expectancy than ever before.

He's coming again! We don't know the day or the hour, but we know He is coming.

Every event in these days seems to suggest that His coming approaches.

What a lovely gift if He should come this Christmas.

Whenever He comes, I hope to be standing on tiptoe, looking up, waiting in anticipation.

## We're Moving

WNAC, along with other agencies, will be moving soon into the new building located at 5233 Mount View Road.

The new building will furnish needed relief for the Provision Closet and office space. Increased space, however, increases the rent, plus we will have moving expense and other demands.

As WNAC moves toward the next century, the work depends entirely on Free Will Baptist women in local Auxiliaries. Remember to write the national office into your budget and goals for 1991.

## Study Committee Meets

The study committee for WNAC, elected at the 1990 convention, held its first meeting at the retreat in Ridgecrest, September 21, 1990.

The seven women—Diana Bryant, Florida; Kay Hampton, Tennessee; Marguerite Kern, Oklahoma; Peggy Outland, Illinois; June Rolen, California; Diane Thomas, North Carolina; and Mary R. Wischart, Tennessee—will meet again December 3, 1990, in Nashville.

The committee elected Kay Hampton as chairman and Peggy Outland as secretary.

The committee welcomes ideas and suggestions about Woman's Auxiliary. They may be sent to committee members or to the national office.

## Eunice Edwards Fund

September 30, 1990—\$29,830.33

## Empty Medicine Bottles

The hospital in Cote d'Ivoire can use empty medicine bottles. Missionaries returning to Africa sometimes pack them in small spaces in their barrels.

Remember that these bottles should be clean and free of labels. The nurses and doctors prefer screw-on caps and not child-resistant caps.

Send to the national office for packing in barrels.









# Free Will Baptist Bible College REPORT

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

## This Christmas together we can change ...never to be the same.

by Bob Shockey

### Can Christmas change people?

Matthew 2:12

**T**he description of the first Christmas ends with this statement concerning the wise men:

"Then, being divinely warned in a dream that they should not return to Herod, they departed for their own country another way."

It makes you wonder if that was not one way of saying that the wise men had experienced something in Bethlehem which made it impossible for them to return home the same way they had come.

They saw the Christ-child. Now they had a new vision. They had found new loyalties. They had discovered new objectives. They were no longer the same men. Having been changed themselves, they changed the road they traveled. They could not go back the same way that they had come. They were never the same.

Let us pray that this Christmas *Together We Can* change...never to be the same!

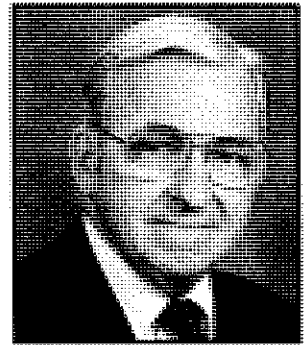
Today is new at Free Will Baptist Bible College.

- The college has a new president.
- The college has a new spirit.
- The college has a new opportunity.
- The college has a new challenge.
- The college has a new expectation.

We want you to join us, for we truly believe that...

*"Together We Can"*  
make the difference

at  
Free Will Baptist Bible College  
and  
in this world.

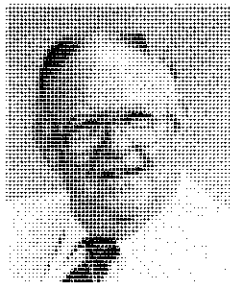


Paul J. Ketteman  
1924-1987

**T**his is the 14th year the college has conducted a Christmas fund-raising drive. If past giving is an indicator, the drive total should surpass \$1 million this Christmas!

It is doubtful that Paul Ketteman envisioned the drive meaning so much to FWBBC when he began it in 1976. He served as Public Relations Director before the Lord called him home in 1987. The college later renamed the drive in his honor: The Paul Ketteman Memorial Christmas Drive Fund.

This year's goal is \$140,000. Of that amount, the college family will attempt to raise \$80,000. Any gift given to the college in December will go toward this goal. So will any gift received by January 31, 1991, earmarked for the drive.



Bob Shockey is the college's Public Relations Director. He also maintains a vigorous revival schedule



**W**e want to thank God for all He has done for us at Free Will Baptist Bible College. We thank Him for the great men—like Rev. Paul J. Ketteman—that he has used to lead and to build this college to what it is today.

But we must go to greater heights, see more victories, reach more young people and train more workers to serve Him—until He comes.





# My Christmas Gift

By **Don Robirds**  
*Director of Communications  
 for Foreign Missions*



**D**ecember 25, 1964, was quite different for me and my family. It wasn't spent with tinsel and tree, unwrapping presents, eating turkey or ham, or even visiting with family and friends. And, while we didn't spend the day in the Christmas story or singing Christmas carols, it was a very special Christmas to us!

Actually, the children had already had their time with family and friends a few days earlier, but Christmas day was our day for giving to the Lord! You see, we were in the Los Angeles airport getting ready to leave for Brazil—our mission field—to serve our Lord as representatives of Free Will Baptists.

---

***Christmas day was our day for giving to the Lord!***

---

We were happy, excited, and rejoicing in the prospect of winning Brazilians to Christ. We sensed the presence of the Lord in a real way that day. And we were claiming His promise to be with us

"always, even unto the end of the world."

Although we encountered a field of opportunity in Brazil, we also discovered a culture that took us completely by surprise.

Even Christmas was different! No live Christmas trees. No snow. Not even any cold weather. Summertime Christmas somehow seemed drastically strange!

We saw religion manifested everywhere. Churches, cathedrals, crosses, names, etc., all pointed to religion—Christian religion. But we soon realized most were mere facade with no real substance.

Lives manifested a longing for something real, yet few were open to change. They were wrestling with fears and superstitions which kept them chained in darkness. And little was being done to release them.

They needed more than Christmas trees, tinsel, snow, Christmas carols, and big Christmas dinners. They needed the person of Jesus Christ in their hearts by faith.

Our present to the Lord on that Christmas day in 1964


simply included our lives in service to Him. Our gift to the Brazilian people was a message of hope. And we personally witnessed its changing power in many lives while we were in Brazil.

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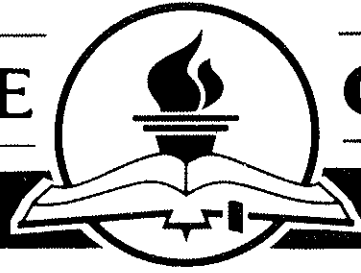
***They needed more than Christmas trees, tinsel, snow, Christmas carols, and Christmas dinners.***

---

God is still changing lives today through the ministries of our co-workers who remained in Brazil after we were called home to labor in the missions office. But we miss the personal involvement in the lives of those we had the opportunity to affect while we were in South America. Today, God is working through them.

As I reflect, I praise God for His unspeakable gift. And I offer Him myself anew this Christmas. Perhaps you, dear reader, might consider doing the same this year. Your "gift" could change lives in some area where Christmas has no significance at all. 





## Katzenjammer

By Billy Brown

**W**hile preparing an alliterated message I hit a mental block at the letter K. So I turned to my trusty dictionary and discovered several K words which describe today's attitude toward Sunday School growth methods and ideas. One is katzenjammer, "a bewildering hodgepodge or distressing confusion."

Everyone is looking for the magic key to unlock Sunday School growth. We try this idea and that program. We follow other men's plans only to find ourselves tired, frustrated and no closer to true growth. We fall into the old pattern "up today, down tomorrow." Is there a way to break this katzenjammer?

The first thing to learn is that there isn't a magic key. There are many keys and none of them are magic.

The second thing to learn is that a key does two things. It locks and unlocks the same door. The same program which causes your Sunday School to grow may cause mine to decline. Programs are not always adaptable to other communities. However, some principles and motives exist that we all can use.

For years I labored under a false spiritual assumption that since "the Lord giveth the increase," it really didn't matter what I did or didn't do. If God wanted us to grow, then we would. My problem was I confused the end result ("the Lord giveth")

with the entire process ("I planted," "Apollos watered").

God works in and through people. If I decide to take a certain action, then I must accept a certain consequence. I cannot blame God for my failure. But I owe God all the credit and praise for my successes.

In Matthew 25 Jesus tells about three servants entrusted with the master's talents. The first two doubled their talents, but the third buried his. This parable teaches us three things about the third servant.

1. He was a coward. He had an irrational fear of the master. 2. He was lazy. He found it easier to bury the talent than expend energy earning a profit. 3. He was a blamer. If only the master hadn't been such a stern master, reaping where he hadn't sown, then this servant could have accomplished financial wonders.

Here's another great K word, "Kineto." Kineto is defined as "moving or motion." Concerning motion, science says "an object in motion tends to stay in motion and an object at rest tends to remain at rest." Evaluate your church and ministry; are you moving or resting?

Do you want to get moving or accelerate your movement? Then, let me introduce you to three D's—desire, decision and direction.

*Desire.* Psalm 37 says that God will give you the desires of your

heart. The problem with most of our desires is they are not in accordance with the will of God. Do you have any great desires for God's Sunday School?

Get a pen and a sheet of paper. Label the paper, "My Desires for God's Church." List all the wants, wishes and dreams you would like to see God accomplish through you. List them all. There are no unimportant dreams.

*Decision.* Now comes the difficult part of your journey toward Sunday School growth. Examine all your dreams. Prayerfully decide which dreams you can pursue. Once the decision is made, you must set your direction.

*Direction.* What steps will you take to accomplish God's desires? It is at this point where most of us fail. Read Proverbs 2:2-9. Now, think creatively. Ask and answer these questions: Who? What? When? Where? Why? and How? These simple questions clarify thinking and give vision. When you determine your goals, you are free to create the plan that accomplishes God's will.

But plans are no good unless we implement them. Be persistent. Commit your life to your dream. Expect to sacrifice time, money, personal comfort and energy in order to complete the project. 🌐



# FOUNDATION

Herman L. Hersey  
Executive Secretary-Treasurer

## Work: The Foundation of Stewardship

The first step in developing a Christian basis for stewardship is to realize that according to the Bible the basis of all stewardship is work. Our world is busy planning for leisure time and retirement as an escape from work. But early in scripture, Genesis 3:19, God said, "By the sweat of your brow you will eat your food."

Centuries later, Solomon added his insight. In Proverbs 28:19 he states, "He who works his land will have abundant food, but the one who chases fantasies will have his fill of poverty."

Paul is moved by the Holy Spirit to include in his second letter to the Thessalonians, chapter three, that if a man will not work he shall not eat. Then two verses later adds, "settle down and earn the bread [you] eat."

Another interesting thought about labor is found in Ephesians 4. The passage should be read starting at

verse 20 to get the full impact and context. Verse 28 concludes, "He who has been stealing must steal no longer, but must work, doing something useful with his own hands, that he may have something to share with those in need."

This passage gives two interesting thoughts to consider. First, the word, "stealing" is used. Recent estimates show that last year employees stole \$137 billion from employers by simply not doing their jobs they were paid to do. This was greater than all other recognized crimes put together.

The second major thought in this verse is that Paul gives one of the reasons why we work, so we will have something to share with those in need.

The basis of stewardship is work. Therefore, the basis of a Christian lifestyle should be the development of "perfection" in the marketplace in which we work. As Christians, are

we not obligated to be the very best we possibly can so that our labor will be worthy of those who seek it?

People do not seek out our services simply because we are Christians, but they seek us out because we are the best we can possibly be, and among the best in our field. And being the best we can be is simply part of our Christian lifestyle.

Therefore, because of the compensation we receive from our labor, we are financially enabled to practice the stewardship of giving. December is a good time to examine our labor in the marketplace over the past year to see if we have been consistent in our lifestyle of Christian perfection.

Stewardship from this basis will then be a personal extension of our life and profession. It will be a worthy gift to our Lord and the needs around us.

(Note: all scripture quoted from the New International Version.)

### THAT'S 'CHRISTIANITY WITH ITS SLEEVES ROLLED UP'

What a great production of *Contact* I just received. The October issue was a marked achievement of our denomination to recognize a group that does so much behind-the-scenes work. We have a denomination of caring and kind people.

The articles were pointed to major issues of the day. Our most untapped resource is the networking of all men within the denomination to the work of the church.

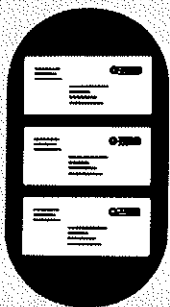
"What Master's Men Can do for the Church," by Thurman Pate, Jr. clearly addresses the solution to many church problems. "How to Reach the Professional Man," speaks to the most untapped potential for new people. We too often limit our contacts to people who aren't professional. My hat is off to William F. Hayes.

Master's Men is Christianity with it's sleeves rolled up and the best friend a pastor ever had to support his efforts in the cause of Christ. As Master's Men, we must put our hand to the plow and not look back; the task before us is rough plowing.

I have seen first-hand the results of a good Master's Men chapter. Our church enjoys a sweet spirit within and is led by a leader who has his flock at heart. His men love him.

A church where men come to worship usually finds the rest of the family right behind them. Our Master's Men program allows men to develop to full potential in using their God-given talents.

Tim Jordan  
Member, National Master's Men Board  
Member, First Free Will Baptist Church  
Albany, Georgia



### OUR READERS COMMENT



# ABOVE ALL

## Mississippi Master's Men Retreat

Mississippi's 11th annual Master's Men retreat attracted 60 men. State president Bobby Birmingham led group meetings at Roosevelt State Park near Jackson, September 27-29.

Home Missions Director Roy Thomas was the featured speaker. Master's Men Director Jim Vallance spoke to the men Friday. Vallance reported the state has 31 LifeMembers.

Friday morning home missionary J. L. Gore was presented a piano for his new church at Southaven. The Master's Men raised funds for the piano project and delivered the piano to the camp.

Billy Tabb reported he could get an organ for \$500 that would work "real well" with the piano. In a matter of minutes, men had given and pledged sufficient funds to purchase the organ.

Cross Creek FWB Church (Southaven) is the newest for Mississippi Free Will Baptists. It was built this summer.

Five LifeCommitments were received by Director Vallance during the retreat.

## Tennessee Men's "Retreat" on Bible College Campus

The 1990 fall retreat for Tennessee laymen met at Free Will Baptist Bible College, September 28-29. State President Ed Hall led the services. The men gathered early Friday and spent the day painting and working on campus. This marks the second year the group volunteered labor toward upkeep of the school.

Master's Men Board member Thurman Pate, Jr. was the special speaker during the retreat. Pate is a principal in the Davidson County school system.

## LifeMembership Continues Rapid Growth

LifeMembership added 91 names of laymen, pastors and missionaries during the first nine months of 1990. At press time, the list totals 467 LifeMembers and 40 LifeFriends. Another 84 men are making monthly payments to achieve LifeMember status.

Director Vallance stated, "The growth this year is faster than ever. It really is the best way to belong to Master's Men. The savings over a lifetime can be considerable. And it's a good way to show support for this vital ministry among Free Will Baptists."



## Master's Hands Projects Update....

Men are invited to help in the build-out of the new National Offices building in Nashville. Work began in early November using labor from the denomination's laity to save construction costs. Build-out of the 24,000-plus square feet of offices is expected to take at least 90 days.

Information about skills needed and work efforts scheduled can be obtained by calling the Master's Men office at 615/361-MMEN.

The National Offices Master's Hands Project is the 32nd such effort by Master's Men. Savings in construction costs in previous efforts already exceed \$900,000. This project is expected to send that total over a million dollars.

# TAKE THE SHIELD!

# MINI GRAMS

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

The Department Pages

## A Tribute to Home Missions Pioneers

By Roy Thomas

The Home Missions Department is grateful for the dedicated pioneers who opened new fields for Free Will Baptists. Many earned their livelihood at secular jobs while digging out mission works in their "spare time." Two such people were my parents, Rue and Mary Thomas.

They were converted in the spring of 1951 in a revival meeting in Filer, Idaho, where a Free Will Baptist preacher named Jake Gage was the visiting evangelist. There were no Free Will Baptist churches at that time west or north of Oklahoma except in California.

A few months later Virgil Florence, a Free Will Baptist pastor from Oklahoma, moved to Idaho and began the first Free Will Baptist church in a state with a 70 percent Mormon population.

My parents were involved in starting that new church in Buhl, Idaho. Dad took his farm truck to Oklahoma and moved the Florence family to Idaho. He provided lodging, gas and groceries for them the first several weeks. He made it possible for the church to get a loan at a Mormon-controlled bank for its property and building.

When my parents were saved, they became burdened for their four children. One by one over a period of a few months, they saw them come to Christ. I was the final member of the family to be saved; that was on the last Sunday night in December that year.

My father was a potato farmer but felt God calling him to preach. He



Rue and Mary Thomas

sold out as a farmer and asked God to open doors for him to preach. He had little education and there was only one Free Will Baptist church within 1,500 miles.

However, the Lord opened jobs for both my parents with C. R. Anthony department stores. For 20 years they worked for this company and were sent to stores that were losing money to put them on a paying basis. Through the years both my parents won top sales awards while making the stores show a good profit.

While they worked for their livelihood, God opened opportunities for my dad to pastor Free Will Baptist churches in Midland, Texas; Artesia, New Mexico and other cities. When there was no church, he tried to get one started.


He started a Free Will Baptist church in San Angelo, Texas, and

was the first Free Will Baptist preacher in the churches in Twin Falls, Jerome and Boise, Idaho. He pastored the Free Will Baptist church that once existed in Hawthorne, Nevada, the only one we ever had in that state.

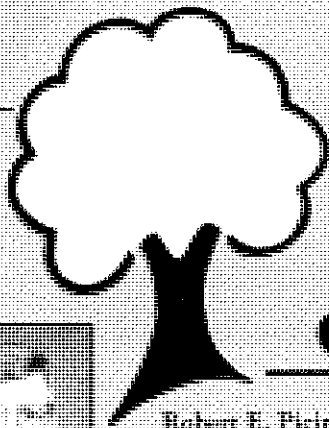
He pastored the Rupert, Idaho, church after his retirement until he was partially paralyzed by a stroke in 1986. My parents have always had a great burden for home missions, and have visited many home missionaries on the field. The Home Missions Board sent them to Billings, Montana, to hold services in preparation for the missionary to come.

They were the first to see the need for the Church Extension Loan Fund and were some of the first investors. Today, they continue to add to their investment that has been in the Loan Fund since it's beginning.

All their children are saved and active in Free Will Baptist churches. They passed on their burden for home missions to their posterity, for there are five preachers among their children and grandchildren. All of them are employed by the Home Missions Department except a grandson, Bobby Thomas, who is a full-time Free Will Baptist evangelist.

The Home Missions Department appreciates these pioneers, along with many others, who established hundreds of Free Will Baptist churches and won thousands of souls to Christ. May God raise up another generation who will catch this same pioneer spirit to finish the task begun by such people as my parents. 





# Green Tree Bible Study



Robert E. Picirilli

Luke 15:11-32

## The Parable of Two Brothers (Part II)

**I**n this series on the parables unique to Luke, I have stressed that parables usually have just one main point. Here is a notable exception. What we often call the parable of the prodigal son is like a shotgun with two barrels; it deliberately makes two main points, revolving around the two sons. In this part of the study, we look at the first of these.

The situation of this parable is true to life, even though some things involved seem strange to us. For one thing, people in that culture regarded inheritance in a somewhat stronger light. A son was regarded as an "heir" even before the death of the father. He was considered already to be in a kind of possession of a portion of his father's estate.

I don't mean that the father, in the story, had to honor the younger son's request to divide the inheritance. He didn't. Even so, the request had more basis in their eyes than it would in ours. And the father—apparently willingly—granted it. Verse 12 evidently indicates that he went ahead and apportioned out the estate to the two brothers. The older brother would have obtained a double inheritance in Jewish custom.

The prodigal proceeded without delay to waste his part in "riotous" living. The word (Greek *asotos*) means dissolute, indulgent. That part strikes us as unrealistic as it would have then. People—young people especially—often indulge their fleshly desires so as to waste all they have.

Consequently, when everything

was spent and hard times came, he did the only honorable thing one can do: he sought, and obtained, work. Only here, too, we must see this through their eyes rather than our own. For Jews, swine were unclean. The job he got was pointedly insulting and repulsive.

Furthermore, his hunger went unsated—so much that he could wish to "gorge himself" (as the Greek word suggests) on the pods he led the swine. These "husks" (Greek *kerata*) were apparently the fruit of the carob bush, horn-shaped pods commonly used to fatten pigs and sometimes eaten by the desperately poor. The younger son was, indeed, desperate.

So we read, with pleasure, that he "came to himself." He faced up to his folly and came to his senses. He determined to return home, confess his wrongdoing, and—admittedly no longer worthy to be a son—seek a position as his father's servant.

But his father, obviously watching for him, ran and embraced him. Hearing only his confession of sin, the father immediately put him in the position of a full-fledged son in the family, restoring the family garments and identifying ring.

The question often raised is whether this son represents one unwelcomed or a backslider. I think the answer is clear: in the context of the whole chapter, he represents anyone lost from God. That was the reason the parables were given, as indicated in vv. 1-2: the self-righteous religious

establishment was angry that Jesus conversed with sinners. And that is the point of the preceding two parables, of the lost sheep and coin.

Servants will object that this prodigal must be a backslider since only one who has already been in the father's family could "return" to him, and original sinners haven't been. The problem there is trying to make too many details of a parable fit the application. In fact, this younger son can represent a sinner as well as a lost sheep or coin—both had been in their owner's possession before they were lost.

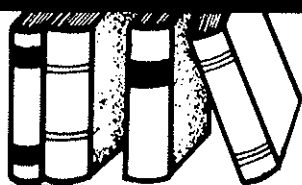
The truth is, all mankind was once in the Father's possession. All sinners who become Christians are, in that sense, lost and found. This part of the parable, therefore, has precisely the same lesson as the previous two, and we see exactly the same elements: the seeking, the finding and the rejoicing. We who are absolutely unworthy to be God's sons—no, have actually forfeited all hope of that—have been graciously made His sons *anyway*.

And, even more clearly than in the stories of the sheep and coin we see the attitude of Heaven. In this parable, the father's compassion and welcome reception of the straying son pictures that in especially dramatic fashion. All of us that are God's children fit this picture precisely: we, too, have been dressed in the family garments He has provided and been given the need of our salvation.

Let all make merry.



# Top Shelf



Thomas Marberry



F. F. Bruce, *Jesus: Lord and Savior* (Downers Grove, Ill.: Intervarsity Press, 1986, 228 pp., paperback, \$10.95).

**D**r. F. F. Bruce may be the greatest living evangelical scholar of the English-speaking world. This volume is his latest contribution to The Jesus Library edited by Michael Green. It is a welcome addition to this valuable series of studies on the person and work of Christ.


In this book the author sets forth the essential information which can be known about the life, teachings and ministry of Jesus of Nazareth. Throughout the work Bruce accords the highest regard to statements made about Christ in the Gospels. He argues that these documents give a reliable and relatively complete account of Christ's ministry.

Bruce does not share the skeptical approach to the historicity of the Gospels which characterizes so much New Testament scholarship in this century. He recognizes, however, that the Gospels do not give all the details we might want about the life of Christ. Throughout the book he avoids hasty judgments based on only small amounts of evidence. The result is a fair and balanced picture of Christ.

Bruce approaches the life of Christ from two directions. First, he examines Jesus as a historical person. He explains teachings and actions of Jesus in light of their significance for the world of first-century Palestine. He does an excellent job analyzing Jesus' relationship with various Jewish parties which existed at that time.

Second, he presents Jesus as "our eternal contemporary." He recognizes that Christ is more than a historical person with great and long-lasting influence. His deeds and His words have eternal consequences for us today. Bruce examines how Jesus touched the lives of those about Him; then he reminds us that Christ also

touches our lives today in much the same way.

This worthwhile study is relatively brief and introductory in nature; it can be read easily by the person just beginning serious study of the Gospels. At the same time, the person with a more extensive background in New Testament studies will find it an insightful and thought-provoking work. 

## Cooperative Channel Contributions September 1990

### RECEIPTS:

State	Design.	COOP (Undesignated)	Total	Sept. '89	Yr. To Date
Alabama	\$ 61.49	\$ 20.00	\$ 81.49	\$ 110.25	\$ 3,506.56
Arizona	.00	.00	.00	71.00	50.00
Arkansas	.00	6,356.37	6,356.37	5,153.70	48,407.15
California	.00	.00	.00	1,986.41	13,461.11
Colorado	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00
Delaware	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00
Florida	.00	3,419.33	3,419.33	105.04	17,069.63
Georgia	6,974.44	1,007.00	7,981.44	8,042.05	82,034.22
Hawaii	.00	.00	.00	.00	269.00
Idaho	.00	.00	.00	.00	287.99
Illinois	8,618.78	1,632.76	10,251.54	11,896.08	86,628.77
Indiana	474.30	.00	474.30	439.20	4,858.82
Kansas	.00	79.58	79.58	47.78	792.84
Kentucky	261.75	81.37	343.12	471.02	2,261.23
Maryland	.00	150.00	150.00	1,175.48	3,667.31
Michigan	.00	170.00	170.00	7,081.83	44,753.87
Mississippi	90.66	203.25	293.91	362.35	4,168.37
Missouri	100.00	.00	100.00	16,142.03	68,441.31
New Mexico	20.24	10.12	30.36	15.12	377.18
North Carolina	275.00	575.00	850.00	1,883.40	15,743.24
Ohio	439.00	2,922.00	3,361.00	28.00	24,773.44
Oklahoma	32,538.36	7,050.33	39,588.69	36,544.54	373,450.83
South Carolina	18,892.16	.00	18,892.16	9,454.39	110,758.74
Tennessee	1,605.36	798.98	2,404.34	3,433.56	20,086.17
Texas	9,393.85	434.62	9,828.47	11,669.11	66,847.95
Virginia	270.38	30.00	300.38	388.97	3,243.34
West Virginia	2,584.53	101.72	2,686.25	1,538.11	29,660.59
Canada	.00	.00	.00	.00	365.31
Northwest Assoc.	.00	12.70	12.70	68.98	197.21
Other (Computer)	.00	.01	.01	.00	.27
<b>Totals</b>	<b>\$82,600.30</b>	<b>\$25,055.14</b>	<b>\$107,655.44</b>	<b>\$118,108.40</b>	<b>\$1,026,162.45</b>

### DISBURSEMENTS:

Executive Office	\$ 612.22	\$19,554.46	\$ 20,166.68	\$ 18,787.36	\$ 181,499.98
Foreign Missions	61,603.22	1,265.18	62,868.40	66,715.19	554,294.11
FWBBC	3,333.15	1,265.18	4,598.33	8,810.00	62,416.96
Home Missions	14,202.12	990.10	15,192.22	14,675.91	158,846.63
Retirement & Insurance	114.98	770.09	885.07	1,701.58	19,997.32
Master's Men	195.70	770.09	965.79	1,850.88	19,799.27
Commission for					
Theo. Integrity	52.02	27.50	79.52	192.40	918.71
FWB Foundation	569.29	330.04	899.33	924.62	12,047.04
Music Commission	10.12	27.50	37.62	2.31	708.36
Historical Commission	49.68	27.50	77.18	108.18	892.14
Radio & TV Commission	42.16	27.50	69.66	260.89	903.10
Hillsdale FWB College	571.88	.00	571.88	3,585.49	8,741.66
Other	1,243.76	.00	1,243.76	493.59	5,097.17
<b>Totals</b>	<b>\$82,600.30</b>	<b>\$25,055.14</b>	<b>\$107,655.44</b>	<b>\$118,108.40</b>	<b>\$1,026,162.45</b>





## ON LITTLE LANES

BY DONNA MAYO

# The Least of These

**Y**ipee!" cried three-year-old Jeff. "We get to see Baby Jesus tonight." His eyes shown as he jumped about the room.

"As soon as we eat supper," said Mrs. Lane.

The town where the Lanes lived had a nativity scene every December. It was in the park, and the marble figures were life-size. There were almost 100 statues, and bright floodlights changed the scene from red to blue to green to yellow-white.

The spectacle must have resembled the angel-filled sky on the first Christmas when the good news of the Savior came to the shepherds. Christmas carols played on a loudspeaker; crowds hushed at the holy sight.

The Lanes visited the nativity scene every year. It was as much a tradition as putting up the Christmas tree and hanging stockings.

"Supper time," called Mrs. Lane.

As soon as the amen was said, the phone rang. "I'll be right over," said Mr. Lane. Then he hung up the phone. His wife and three children looked at him with questioning faces.

"That was Betty, the secretary at church," explained Mr. Lane. "A family has come to the church asking for food. Since Brother Bill is out of town, Betty called me. I need to go over and see what I can do."

"But, Daddy," cried Megan, "we're supposed to go see Jesus tonight."

"Don't worry, Dumpling," said her daddy kissing her on the forehead, "we'll see Jesus tonight."

Mrs. Lane and the children ate supper in silence. Every now and then someone would steal a glance at the clock.

Before long, they heard their daddy's car in the driveway. Then they heard voices. Mr. Lane came into the kitchen with a man, a woman and two children.

"Honey, this is Mr. and Mrs. Bradley and their children, Luke and Rose," said Mr. Lane.

Mrs. Lane was a little surprised to see the unexpected guests, but she quickly shook their hands and said, "Hello, I'm Laura."

"Honey, do you have some of that stew left?" asked Mr. Lane. "I'm sure the Bradleys are hungry."

"Sure," said Mrs. Lane. Then she cleared the table and set it again. She dipped out bowls of steaming beef stew and began frying cornbread in the big black skillet.

"We're on our way to Wisconsin," explained Mr. Bradley. "We left Florida yesterday."

"My husband got laid off," added Mrs. Bradley. "We're going to stay with my brother and help out on his dairy farm until Abe can find another job."

"Don't you have any warmer

clothes?" asked Marty.

"Marty!" scolded Mrs. Lane.

"It's okay," grinned Mr. Bradley. "Son, I tell you, it was a lot warmer in Florida when we left yesterday. Down there we don't have much need for winter clothes."

"Well, you certainly will in Wisconsin," said Mrs. Lane. "While you are eating, I'll see what I can find."

**M**rs. Lane and the twins went to the bedrooms and searched through closets and drawers for extra sweaters and coats.

"The stew was delicious," said Mrs. Bradley when Mrs. Lane went back into the kitchen. "We can't thank you enough."

"You're more than welcome," said Mrs. Lane. "How about some dessert?" She pulled a hot apple pie from the oven.

"That was a feast fit for a king," said Mr. Bradley as he finished his second piece of pie. "We're saving most of our money for gas, so we were a might hungry. I guess you noticed," he chuckled.

"Thanks again," said Mrs. Bradley. "Now we'll be on our way."

"Nonsense," said Mr. Lane. "It's too late to start out tonight. I know you must be exhausted from traveling this far."

"Well, we are tired," admitted Mr. Bradley, "but we can't afford



to stay in a motel."

"Who said anything about a motel?" said Mr. Lane. "You'll stay here, of course."

"Oh, no, we couldn't impose any more," said Mrs. Bradley.

"It's not an imposition, really," said Mrs. Lane. "We'd love for you to stay."

"The couch in the den makes a bed," said Mr. Lane.

"And Rose can sleep in my room," offered Megan, "and Luke can sleep with Marty."

"Please stay," begged Marty. "We can play games and watch tv..."

"And eat popcorn," interrupted Jeff.

Suddenly Mrs. Bradley burst into tears. "What's wrong, honey," asked Mr. Bradley putting his arm around his wife.

"Why I just can't believe how nice these people are to us. And us, perfect strangers."

"I know," said Mr. Bradley. "I don't understand it either."

"Oh, it's not that hard to understand," said Mr. Lane. "We know God sent you to us tonight. We're just sharing His love."

"And the things He's blessed us with," added Mrs. Lane.

**T**he Lanes and Bradleys enjoyed a pleasant evening. When it was bedtime, Jeff remembered something. "Daddy, we didn't go see Baby Jesus." Jeff was about to cry. "But we did see Him," said Mr. Lane. "He was right here in our home."

Everyone looked at Mr. Lane, puzzled. He picked up his Bible and read Matthew 24:34-40.

Then shall the King say unto them on his right hand, Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world:

For I was an hungered, and ye gave me meat: I was thirsty, and ye gave me drink: I was a stranger, and ye took me in:


Naked, and ye clothed me: I was sick, and ye visited me: I was in prison, and ye came unto me.

Then shall the righteous answer him, saying, Lord, when saw we thee an hungered, and fed thee? or thirsty, and gave thee drink?

When saw we thee a stranger, and took thee in? or naked, and clothed thee?

Or when saw we thee sick, or in prison, and came unto thee?

And the King shall answer and say unto them, Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me.

Marty and Megan thought about the verses their daddy had read. "I guess we saw Jesus after all." 

**Marty and Megan and all the Lanes had a merrier than ever Christmas that year because they shared God's love. If you want to give a gift to Jesus, then give to "the least of these." Can you think of someone to share with this Christmas?**

**EDITOR'S NOTE:** This will be the final "On Little Lanes" episode. Since January 1983, Mrs. Donna Mayo has written 86 adventures featuring Marty and Megan, the Lane twins. During that time the face of the nation and the Free Will Baptist denomination changed dramatically. And so did the Lane twins. From hurricanes to bike races, from spelling bees to snow storms, Donna Mayo's journalistic skill and her instinct for what makes a good story made us all love the mischievous twins.

What's ahead for Donna Mayo and the Lane Twins? Perhaps a book some day. But that's another adventure that must wait. By the way, while Donna was writing "On Little Lanes," her third child was born. A girl. Her name is Megan!

The *Contact* staff joins with our readers in thanking Donna Mayo for her faithfulness, for her example as a Christian and for the courage to put Christian kids in the soup of the real world.

## Almost Doesn't Count!

By David Copeland

**Y**ou have heard that almost doesn't count except in horse-shoes and hand grenades. That is especially true of salvation. Almost is not enough. Illustrating the tragedy of this is the Rich Young Ruler in Mark 10:17-22.

Note three things about this young man:

1. *He Was Almost Right.* He was interested in spiritual things. He wanted to know how to obtain eternal life.

His was more than a casual interest, for we also discover that he had been a moral man. He was faithful to his wife. He was not a murderer, thief or liar. He had not defrauded anyone, and he respected his mom and dad.

Yet, when challenged to give up his earthly riches the young man had one

thing in his life more important to him than eternal life. Wealth.

All it takes is one thing to keep a person from Christ. One thing! For some it may be their pride, for others a relationship they don't want to give up. For some it could be a cherished sin that prevents them from being saved. How tragic that so many come so close to a saving relationship with Christ, yet allow one thing to hinder them. Almost doesn't count.

2. *He Was Almost Rich.* He had this world's riches, but in reality he was a poor man (Revelation 3:17). He teaches us that it is possible to have everything, yet have nothing. It is also possible to have nothing, yet have everything (Luke 12:16-21, 16:19-23).


3. *He Was Almost Redeemed.* He

had come to the right person. He had come with the right attitude. He had asked the right question.

Jesus loved him, and Jesus was the answer. Yet this young, rich man apparently died in his sins. He had come so close yet missed it all.

Are you almost persuaded to accept Christ? If so, I urge you to hear the words of the old hymn:

"Almost cannot avail;  
Almost is but to fail!  
Sad, sad that bitter wail,  
Almost, but lost!"

Your life does not have to end like that of the rich young ruler. Be wise. Turn to Christ today. 

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



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## Volume XXXVII

# January - December 1990

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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*

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**M**  
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**T**  
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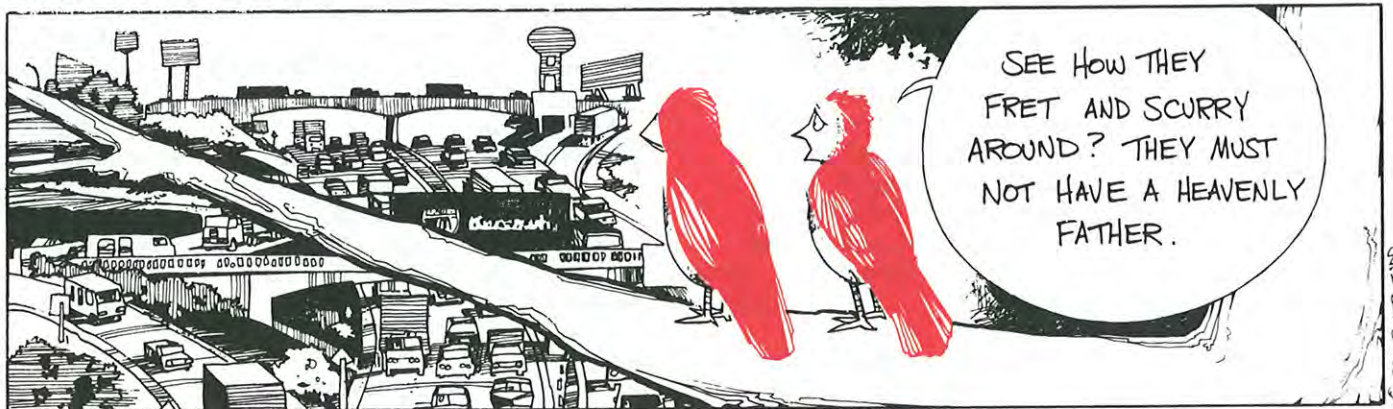
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## BEYOND BELIEF





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October, 15

#### GEORGIA

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November, 15

Pine Level FWB Church, Alma  
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#### NORTH CAROLINA

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#### OKLAHOMA

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June, 18

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Nashville December, 11

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Bible College Christmas Drive Tops  
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Bible College Preliminary Enrollment  
Hits 250 November, 16

Churches from 20 States Enter  
Growth Campaign February, 14

Convention to Feature Special "Old  
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Discount Air Fares to National  
Convention Available April, 15; May, 17

Executive Church Bonds Ends 28  
Years' Service to Free Will Baptists  
March, 17

Free Will Baptist Book Dealers Meet  
June, 18

FWBBC Evangelism Conference  
Surpasses Expectations

December, 11

FWBBC Graduates 59 Students

August, 15

FWBBC Students Participate in  
National Honors Band March, 16

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FWBBC Announces Bible Conference  
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Conference March, 16

Leadership Conference Calls Denomi-  
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February, 15

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Committee Meets in Charleston

November, 16

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October, 14

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February, 16

170 Attend Bible College Preaching  
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173 Attend Bible College's Welcome  
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# TEEN Scene



The 1991 Truth & Peace  
Leadership Conference  
July 8 - 24, 1991



## CELEBRATE *The Life*

Have you ever wondered what it would be like to spend three weeks with other Christian teens from across the nation...learning, worshipping, and growing together? Well...here is your opportunity!

Truth and Peace is three weeks of high energy activities that combine seminars, local church involvement, fellowship, group interaction, and individual involvement into one unforgettable experience!

This is a conference for Free Will Baptist young men and women who are currently in the 10th, 11th, or 12th grades. Conference participants will be limited to 56 teens.

*Discovering and developing your leadership potential is the core of this program.* This year's theme, *Celebrate The Life*, is designed to promote abundant Christian living through the ministry of leadership. You will be involved in seminars with the entire group. Small groups will plan and participate in retreats, ministry projects, worship services, etc. Each individual will also be given leadership assignments during the conference.

Whether it is going to a ballgame, picnic, or shopping trip together, you'll enjoy the warmth of Christian fellowship. Many recreational activities are planned. You will meet other teens from across the denomination that will become your lifelong friends.

July 21-24 will bring over 1500 youth to Charleston, West Virginia for the 1991 National Youth Conference. Truth and Peace will be featured in the Youth Banquet program and will also provide special music for an evening service. You will also assume leadership roles in various NYC programs and activities.

The 1991 Leadership Conference will be housed on the campus of Free Will Baptist Bible College in Nashville, Tennessee. The excitement will begin with a unique celebration on Monday evening, July 8. On Saturday, July 20, the participants will be chartered to Charleston, West Virginia for the final week of the conference. You will be staying in the NYC Headquarters Hotel in the midst of the activities of the National Youth Conference.

**Interested? Apply today! Request application information from:**

**Truth and Peace, P.O. Box 17306, Nashville, TN 37217.**





**THE SECRETARY SPEAKS**  
By Melvin Worthington

# Truth for the Time



**W**e do not celebrate Christmas properly if all our energies focus on tinsel, toys, trees and trinkets. No other season provides the unique occasion to share the gospel with friends and family. This special season provides the time to present redemption, reconciliation and resurrection through Christ.

The Christmas story focuses on Christ's condescension, crucifixion and coronation. Paul declares these truths in Philippians 2 when he commands his readers to exercise the same spirit of self-denial, mutual love and hearty condescension for each other that Christ manifested.

### **Christ's Condescension (Philippians 2:7)**

Paul asserts that Christ left heaven's glory, made himself of no reputation and took upon himself the form of a servant made in the likeness of man. The point is that He left a state of inexpressible glory and took the most humble form of humanity.

Jesus Christ who was rich became poor that we through His poverty might become rich. The Christmas story cannot be accurately told without presenting the condescension of Christ. God became man and lived among us.

The babe in the manger in Bethlehem was none other than the eternal Son of God. John describes it best in

John 1:1-2, 14: "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning with God....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."

Viewing the babe in Bethlehem brings joy unspeakable, and yet we must constantly keep in mind that the Child we adore was the eternal God tabernacling in human flesh. Such a concept gives new meaning to the Christmas story and our Christmas festivities.

### **His Crucifixion (Philippians 2:8)**

Another truth embedded in the Christmas story is the crucifixion of Christ. Paul declares that Christ humbled himself and became obedient unto death on the cross. Christ's substitutionary death purchased eternal redemption for every human being. Jesus Christ gave His life a ransom for the sins of the human race. He sub-

mitted to death in order to provide salvation for sinners.

Christians who properly understand the Christmas story focus on the work of Christ in providing redemption. He was the Lamb slain before the foundation of the world, the lamb which taketh away the sin of the world and the lamb which is worthy to open the book. Christ was born to die. Without his condescension and crucifixion there would be no Christmas story.

### **His Coronation (Philippians 2:9-11)**

The Christmas story would be incomplete without the coronation of Christ. Paul declares that God has highly exalted Christ and given Him a name above all names. At His name every knee shall bow and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord to the glory of the Father.

As a result of His obedience, Christ has been exalted through the resurrection and ascension. Christians must keep in mind the second coming of Christ as they share the Christmas story. What a grand hope we share during this special season.

Let us use this season to clearly, concisely, correctly and compassionately share the gospel—God's good news regarding the Messiah who came, who died, who rose and who will come again. Join with me and celebrate Christmas truths that give hope to the human family.

### **The Secretary's Schedule**

<b>December 3</b>	All-Boards Conference
<b>December 4-5</b>	Executive Committee Meeting
<b>December 24-26</b>	National Offices Closed for Christmas



**CONTACT**

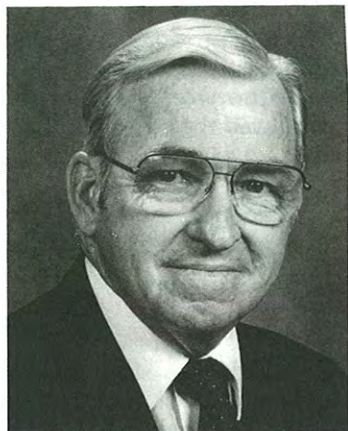
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# Christmas Is *Together* Time!



Paul J. Kettelman  
1924-1987

Please remember *Together We Can*, Free Will Baptist Bible College's current fund raising drive, when you gather this Christmas to celebrate Christ's birth.

The goal for this year's *Paul Kettelman Memorial Christmas Fund Drive* is \$140,000.

All gifts made during December and any gift designated for the Christmas project received by January 31 will go toward meeting the goal.

## Goal: \$140,000

(Of this total, the college family will attempt to raise \$80,000.)

**FREE WILL BAPTIST BIBLE COLLEGE**

3606 West End Avenue  
Nashville, Tennessee 37205  
615/383-1340