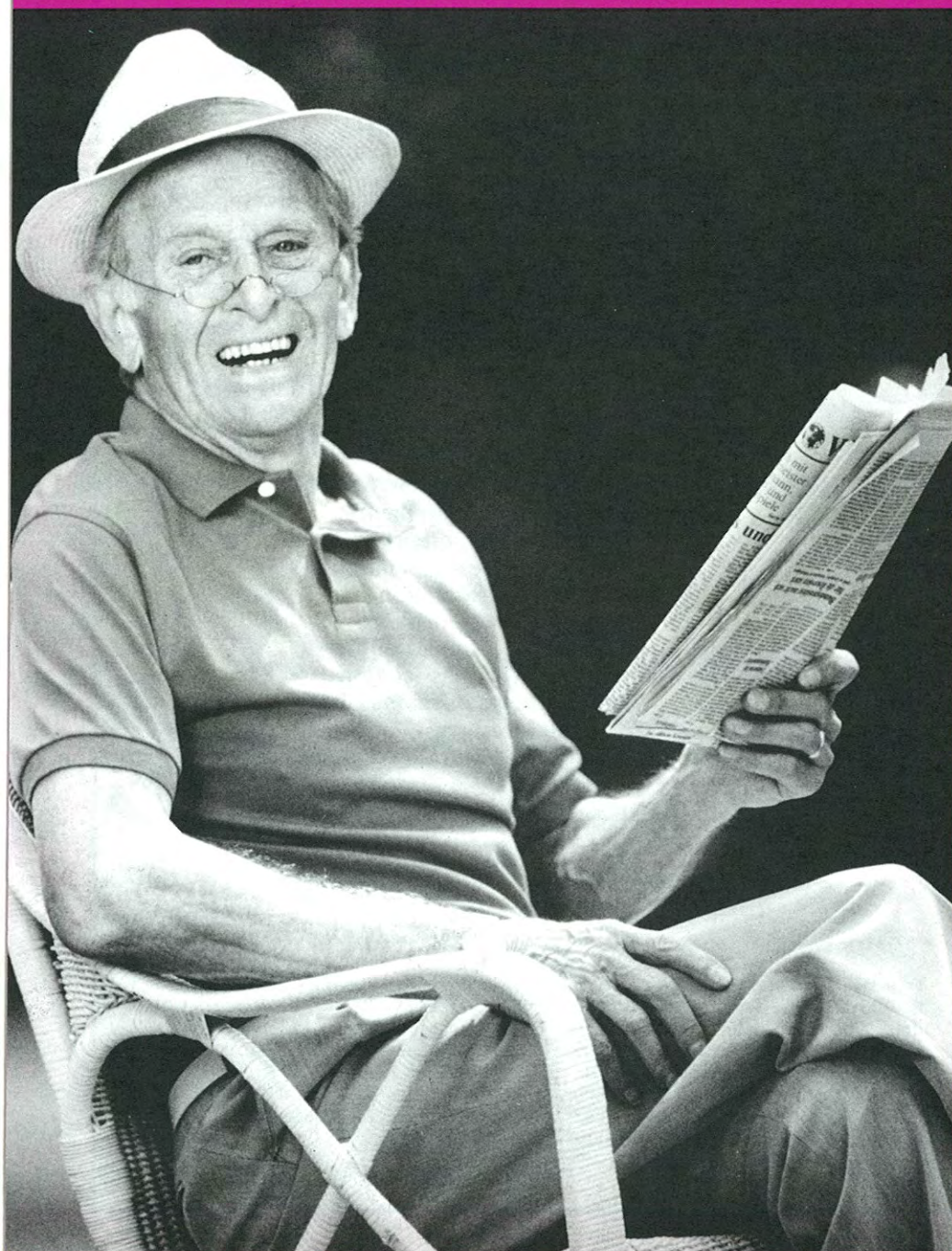


FEBRUARY 1991

CONTACT

OFFICIAL PUBLICATION OF
THE NATIONAL ASSOCIATION
OF FREE WILL BAPTISTS



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**Capture the
Silver Fox**

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**The Retired
Minister**

.....
Help! I'm Aging

.....
**Any Room for
"Old" Folks in
Your Church?**

INSIDE

FEBRUARY 1991

VOLUME 38, NO.2

ARTICLES

- 4 Capture the Silver Fox**
Pastor Joe Grizzle explains why the church needs to harness the graying generation.
- 6 The Retired Minister**
What can retired ministers do? William Mishler has some answers.
- 8 Help! I'm Aging**
Retired missionary Trula Cronk discovers the fear, fact and face of old age.
- 9 What Retirement?**
Fay Ratcliff profiles a retired FWB minister.
- 10 Any Room for "Old" Folks in Your Church?**
Bill Evans believes there's a special place in the local church for older adults.
- 12 The Emptying Nest**
Janis Williams wonders where she fits.
- 12 'Til Death Do Us Part?**
Pastor R. F. Smith, Jr. says marriage is not on trial. We are.

COLUMNS

- 3 The Secretary Speaks**
The Graying Generation
- 19 The Department Pages**
- 27 Top Shelf**
- 28 Teen Scene**
- 29 Green Tree Bible Study**
Parable of the Shrewd Steward
- 31 Briefcase**
The Blue-Eyed Gun

NEWS

- 14 Free Will Baptist Newsfront**
National Offices to Relocate
FWBBC Bible Conference
Mississippi State Association
Florida State Association
All-Boards Conference
Georgia State Association
Tennessee State Association
Church Doubles Missions Giving
1991 State Meetings
Small Church Computer System Ready
- 18 Currently**
- 30 Religious Community News**

Cover Photo: H. Armstrong Roberts
Editor-in-chief: Dr. Melvin Worthington
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Circulation: Geneva Trotter

Contact (ISSN 0573-7796), published monthly by the National Association of

Free Will Baptists, 1134 Murfreesboro Road, Nashville, Tennessee 37217. Address all correspondence and subscriptions to Post Office Box 1088, Nashville, Tennessee 37202. Phone 615/361-1010.

Subscription rates: 1 year, \$10.00, church family plan \$8.50 per year; church bundle plan \$9.00 per year. Sec-

ond class postage paid at Nashville, Tennessee.

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USPS 130-660



Melvin Worthington

The Graying Generation

A large segment of the American population is over 65 years of age. This is often overlooked by those who emphasize the baby-boom generation.

Consider this: There are more Americans 65 and older than in the entire population of Canada. The over-55 population is multiplying three times faster than the population at large. Since 1982, the number of persons in the U.S. over 65 has exceeded those under 18. Life expectancy will increase from 75 to 80 within the decade. The U.S. is moving from a youth-oriented culture to a nation of middle-aged and older adults. The 65-plus group represents 12 percent of the national population.

The Church faces unparalleled challenges and unique opportunities to minister to the aging ambassadors in our society. The graying generation and our responsibility toward it has roots in the commandment, "Honor thy father and mother."

Addressing this age wave requires four things.

The Realities

Reality is a wonderful thing. Facing reality can be painful and yet profitable. One reality of the graying generation is physiological change. The body gets wrinkled, stiff and stooped. Physical strength and stamina wane.

Another reality is psychological change. As one grows older their view of life changes. They realize they will not live forever. They look at death from a different perspec-

...tive. They are no longer needed in the work place.

Philosophical changes also take place. When ministering to them this change must be kept in mind. They no longer strive to rise in the corporate world nor aggressively accumulate wealth and security. Life takes on a new dimension. Eternal values replace earthly values in many cases.

Practical changes include the loss of children who leave home and often die. They lose their companion through death or divorce. They retire from their jobs and now have time on their hands. What can they do? What good are they? What contribution can they make to the church and society. Are they useless or do they represent an untapped resource for society and the Church?

The Role

The graying generation has an obligation to teach the younger generation. Every senior citizen has an obligation to do the will of God. The Church desperately needs the graying generation and the graying generation needs the church.

Opportunities for older adults in society and church are so numer-

...ous that no one need feel unwanted or unloved. But the graying must look beyond themselves and focus on ministry to others. Any emphasis that causes them to focus on themselves and become group or self-centered is a mistake. The graying generation does not need to just play or be pampered. Let's help them harness what could be their best years.

The Responsibilities

Children have a responsibility toward the graying generation to honor, heed and help their parents. This is a lifetime responsibility for children.

The Church has a responsibility toward the graying generation. Programs must be designed for them to fulfill their roles as mandated by the scripture. Churches must be careful not to so segment programs that there is no place for all age groups to interact.

The community and country have responsibilities toward the graying generation. When raising taxes and making laws individuals on fixed incomes should be considered. The community must not neglect, forget or discard this group. Health care, tax benefits, housing need to be addressed.

The Recognition

The graying generation needs some recognition. Their wisdom, worth and work should be recognized. They have a unique role in society, the church and community. One day, not far off, we too will be numbered with the graying generation. ■

Secretary's Schedule

February 7-8 South Carolina State Assoc.
Mill Branch FWB Church
Johnsonville, SC

February 11-13 Mid-South Pastors and Workers
Conference
Pleasant Grove FWB Church
Pleasant Grove, AL



Capture the Silver Fox

By Joe Grizzle

Silver foxes! Over 55, retired and the fastest growing segment of our society. They're everywhere. Millions scurrying down freeways in motor homes and fifth wheels. A consolidated group of gray warriors who control billions of economic dollars and who bring politicians to attention with a conservative perspective always represented at the polls.

They have not forgotten the price of freedom and are relentlessly committed to preserve it. Busloads crowd restaurants, fill parks and make the southlands virtually metropolitan in winter.

Is this vast potential of wisdom, experience and stability for our churches to be lost by neglect? Has our commitment to youth and young adult ministries blinded us to the marvelous resources of this sleeping giant?

Most certainly, God's plan is not that life should conclude with years of meaningless play, years of games with no further commitment to the building of the kingdom of Christ. These seasoned troops must be called up, organized and deployed back into active duty. One such warrior, "the servant of God," provides us an excellent example.

The Servant of God

God did it. He captured a silver fox, and what a prize He had. The bait was a burning bush; the place, Mt. Sinai. The fox, Moses. Silver locks, bronze complexion and lines etched deep in his face by 80 years of living. Eighty years old—when most people resign, retire and retreat to a docile life often typified by a woeful lack of productivity.

But God captured this man and commissioned him to deliver over two million Jews from Pharaoh's bondage. Moses had excuses abundant, "I cannot speak with eloquence; I don't know who you are; I have no power against this great king." But he missed the best excuse yet, "I am too old."

He never suggested that he was too weary, too worn or too useless to be of significant value. His best years were still ahead. The glory of Moses began at 80 and concluded at the ripe age of 120. It is noteworthy that on numerous occasions Jehovah called him, "My servant, Moses."

A Lifetime Assignment

Matthew 20:28 says that Jesus "came not to be served but to serve" (NIV). Made in God's image, our divine design is that we be useful, productive and creative. The sense of worthlessness typical in many senior adults results from an acquiescence to meaningless and non-productive living.

Slow down in older years? Yes. Sit down and do nothing? Never! We are created for God's glory and will only experience a quality life as we reach out to achieve and move ahead. The grace gifts of the Holy Spirit were never intended for the shelf. It's upward and onward whether 8 years of age or 80.

Senior citizens must stay involved in the mainstream of social as well as spiritual life. Their conservative insights and practical understanding balance the megatrends of today's world. Active, militant, vibrant service of senior saints is imperative if the church is to be well rounded.

So Much to Give

Every person must contribute if the body of Christ is to be healthy. Every person must feel that his contribution is significant. Though our bodies grow old, the persons inside are still alert, sensitive and have need for a continuing sense of work.

Retired believers are able to teach, pray, worship, counsel, give and witness. They can do tele-

phone ministry, handcrafts and still have the world's best recipes written in their heads. They are encouragers who experienced God's grace through two world wars, Korea and the Vietnam conflict. They are conservatives who survived the depression and can teach us the value of a dollar as well as the danger of credit.

Many are celebrating golden wedding anniversaries, providing beautiful examples of how to love truly and stay together even when the going gets tough. These silver soldiers with the real know-how, the true grit are an absolute must to the development of the 21st century church.

Their Own Program

Senior adults must "own" their program for it to be effective. Basic to any successful attempt to develop a ministry for retired believers is recognition of their personal autonomy and their right to exercise involvement in their own spiritual labor. Probably the most crippling misconception is that the church must provide a ministry FOR the elderly—to wait on them, to serve them, to see to their practical needs.

It is true that these seasoned, godly men and women deserve our respect and support; but they must not be robbed of the right and privilege of personal responsibility. Responsibility to serve—Christ, one another and others.

Our church recently birthed such a ministry. It began through a few visionary seniors willing to be consumed as kindling to ignite the program. They started with a well-planned kick-off banquet. It quickly mushroomed into an exciting fellowship involving the majority of seniors in our congregation.

This work belongs to these retirees. Coordinated and conducted in conjunction with other church programs, this band of believers has tailored their ministry to meet mutual needs as well as reach out to others.

They selected their own name. They run their own planning and development meetings, plan their own social functions. They pur-

chased their own van, conduct their own service to the sick and shut-ins, provide daily care and oversight especially for the widows living alone. And they publish their own monthly paper (*Golden Notes and Quotes*) written by their own 78-year-old journalist.

Valuable Results

The song writer of yesteryear aptly titled the song, "You're Nobody 'til Somebody Loves You." This is true for all of us but particularly for those who in upper years lose their sense of personal value and purpose. A senior adult ministry opens opportunity for deep, genuine, lasting friendships to occur.

It also provides a vehicle for well-organized, comprehensive Christian care which can address specialized needs. It gives time for regular fellowships among not only the retired but especially the lonely. There's a time to sing, to visit, to laugh and to tell stories. There's a reason to dress up, a time to act like teenagers, a reason to sew a new dress or fix your hair.

It provides a structure to quickly incorporate new senior adult church members into the ministry of the church. It guarantees immediate and tender response to families in bereavement. Above all, this ministry provides a sense of worth, value, self-esteem and significance to people who feel they have been set aside.

It is a place to fit, a place where you're loved, a place to know you are someone special. Best of all, it is a place to continue to be servants, like Moses. ■

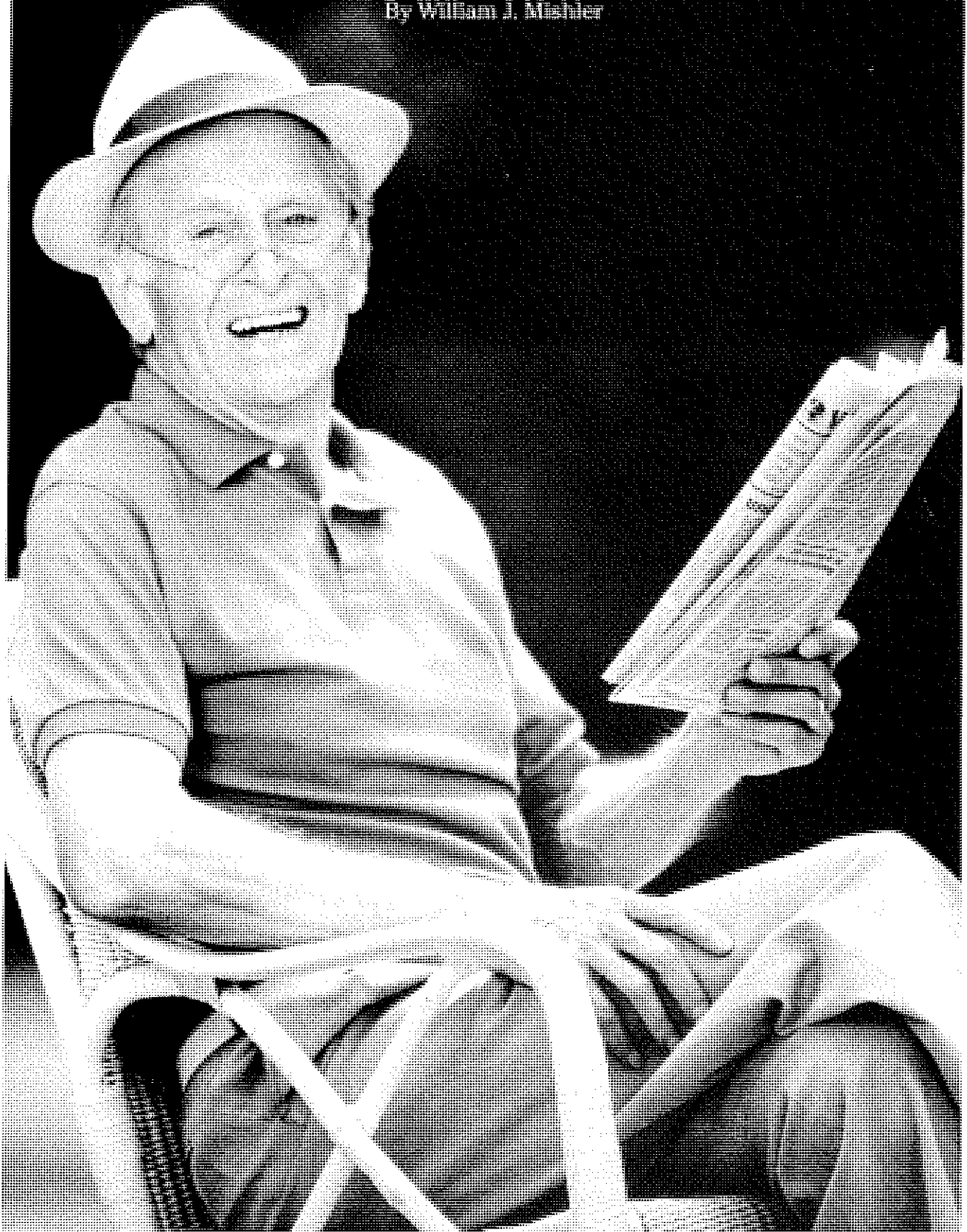
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ABOUT THE WRITER: Reverend Joe Grizzle pastors First Free Will Baptist Church in Norman, Oklahoma.

The Retired Minister

By William J. Mehlter



H. Armstrong Roberts

When Jesus told those first disciples to "follow me and I will make you fishers of men," the social and economical conditions of the world were quite different than they are now. However, I am sure they viewed their call as do most ministers today—a lifetime obligation to a task that has no end except in death.

The task was of utmost importance to them—They knew their call was divine, their duty undeniable, their responsibility worldwide in scope. To those early God-called men, retirement as thought of in our day never entered into their thinking.

If any of God's creatures need a double portion of wisdom from on high, it is the minister who retires. I do not mean the minister who, having fallen heir to an estate worth millions or because of pensions from other employment chose to retire at age 50 or 60 and can lead a life of leisure. Rather, I mean the minister who has served until failing health makes it impossible for him to continue in the pastorate.

Valuable Resource

The retired minister may yet physically and mentally serve the church and denomination in various capacities. His years of pastoral, evangelistic and teaching experiences can be invaluable.

His pastoral ministry, though now limited, can be useful as interim or supply pastor. He can serve as missionary to senior citizens in the local church or assist missionary pastors in establishing new churches. He can also assist churches that are small and unable financially to employ a full-time minister. His pastor-teaching experience can be useful in local church conferences as well as in the adult Sunday School teaching.

The expertise he developed in areas of leadership and administration can be harnessed to serve the local, state and national work of his denomination. Knowledge gained through practical experience gives him the ability to exercise wisdom in counseling and making deci-

sions. He can encourage young ministers, especially concerning problems in the ministry.

Some retired ministers have developed their abilities as writers. Others excel as spiritual counselors and good listeners (a quality greatly needed in a minister). Many retired ministers are good at public relations. They know when it's time to reach for outside administrative help, as well as when to stretch one's own talents and qualities.

Personal Needs

What a tragedy if all those years of experience were lost to future generations. Consecrated humility should prevent the retired minister from becoming an undesirable in his circle of fellowship.

Dr. Schuette said, "The retired minister can be a model of loving and lovable manhood. On the other hand, he can easily strengthen the derision of the ministry which is sometimes evidenced in cartoons and wit-and-humor columns." The retired minister's lifestyle is all-important.

The retired minister must provide for his family and for his continuing retirement. If the pastoral ministry is his sole vocation, the church and denomination must be aware of their responsibilities to him in his retirement years. (This information can be obtained from the Board of Retirement.) However, he must not become frustrated and forget God's promises that the laborer is worthy of his hire and that God will supply all his needs.

The Future

Thank God that our churches and denomination are doing more to help the retired minister in the areas of housing, insurance and finance. Wouldn't it be great if God gave our state and national leaders the vision to build a home for retired ministers?

What an opportunity the retired minister has to use his experience. He knows how to reach the hearts of people without making his sermon long and wearisome and without cutting remarks that undermine what he says.

What an opportunity to drop

thoughts into the sermon which heighten members' regard for their minister and their appreciation of him in his daily tasks. What an opportunity to demonstrate imperishable spiritual youthfulness and practical up-to-dateness to those floundering on a sea of indecision.

Has God sent you into the ministry? Into those areas of many unanswerable questions?

As Dr. Schuette states, all you need is, "First, the clear knowledge that God wants some men to be His ministers; second, the testimony of reliable friends and advisers as to your mental and physical fitness for the work; third, a conscience which tells you the responsibility is yours. If, in addition to this, you feel that the Holy Spirit directly planted a conviction in your heart and mind that God wanted you personally in the ordained ministry of the church, well and good!"

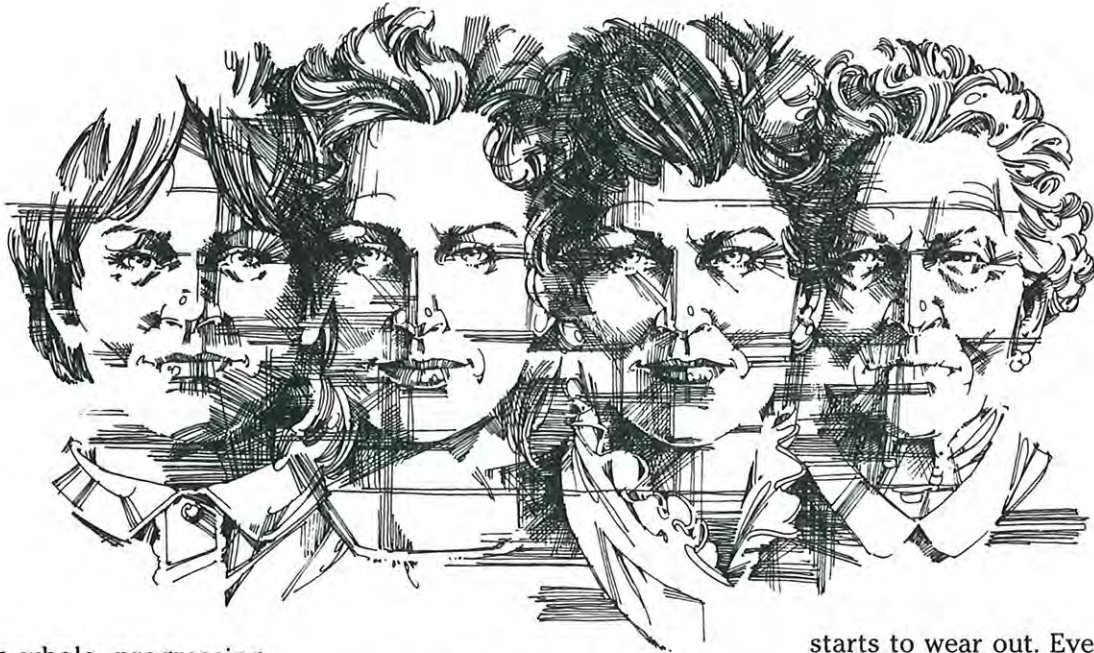
Serve while you can. You'll be glad you did. Do all that your calling requires and God demands. When it comes time for you to retire, you can do so with dignity. ■



ABOUT THE WRITER: Reverend William J. Mishler, a retired Free Will Baptist minister, lives in Johnston City, Illinois.

Help! I'm Aging

By Trula Cronk



Life is a whole, progressing as God planned from birth through old age to immortality. Each phase prepares us for the next and Christ is the key that unlocks the meaning in every stage. To the person who has settled once and for all, "I belong to Christ and Christ belongs to me; for all eternity we belong to each other," excitement can only increase as the race toward the final reunion accelerates.

Fear of Old Age

I would be less than honest if I did not admit to occasional twinges of fear as I enter the valley of old age. It is not death I fear but the disrobing: the taking off of the familiar to put on the unknown, the unclenching of my grasp on this world to open my hands to receive the next.

I know neither the length of the valley nor what's around the first curve, but I do believe His promises and that He'll be walking with me around the last bend.

Surely I will be with you always to the very end of the age (Matthew 28:20b) (NIV).

Even to old age and gray hairs I am he who will sustain you. I have made you and I will carry you... (Isaiah 46:4) (NIV).

Can a woman forget her sucking child...? Even they may forget, yet I will not forget thee. Behold I have graven thee upon the palms of my hands... (Isaiah 49:16).

He who has never washed His hands of me before will not do so in old age. Furthermore, I know that "He who hath begun a good work in me will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ."

Fact of Old Age

Moving along happily, powers always increasing, I could not really believe that old age was approaching so quickly. Two things happened. My father-in-law died leaving my husband and me the "old ones" in our family. I also reached that arbitrary age of 65 which some bureaucrat set as the time to be old in our society.

I tried to fight it. I walked a little faster, added a little color to the shampoo, faithfully swallowed my vitamin pills and worked right on past 65, all to no avail. I noticed that I never ran any more. My steps became shorter and slower as I searched for firmer ground. I began keeping a magnifying glass at hand and found myself asking people to repeat things.

Old age begins when the body

starts to wear out. Eyes dim, teeth decay, hearing decreases, joints creak and hurt, memory plays tricks. The changes are gradual but their progressive accumulation eventually spells O-L-D. Yet, even in old age God still deals with us individually.

Some are old at 50. Others are robust at 80. Moses died at 120, but I don't think he was ever old. His eyes were not dim nor his strength gone. He climbed Mount Nebo just before he died. Abraham thought he was old at 99 and lived another 76 years!

Face of Old Age

If we knew how long we would be old we could better prepare. Demographers report that a person in the United States who reached 65 in 1980 could expect to live another 12 years. The psalmist said centuries ago that "the length of our days is 70 years or 80 if we have the strength." That's still about right.

How long we are old is not nearly so important as how well we are old. The best thing to bank for old age is good spiritual, physical and mental health. I see many people, old in years, who are happy, well-adjusted and obviously enjoying the most productive years of their

lives. But I have walked through too many nursing homes not to know that there is another side.

While the Bible says that old age is a crown of splendor, the picture in Ecclesiastes 12 is not very regal. "...the years approach when you will say I find no pleasure in them....strong men stoop, grinders cease because they are few...the windows grow dim....men are afraid of heights and of dangers in the street....desire is no longer stirred."

Furthermore, the biblical image of being "well stricken in years" evokes a picture of being smitten, wounded, worn out or incapacitated.

Robert Browning's version of old age may have been more literary license:

"Grow old along with me, the best
is yet to be
The last of life for which the first
was made"

On the other hand, Shakespeare's words may be closer to reality:

"...the last scene of all...is second childishness and more oblivion, sans teeth, sans eyes, sans taste, sans everything."

Future of Old Age

Both are wrong, of course. Old age is neither oblivion nor the last of life. I believe in the resurrection. It is no more miracle that I should live again than that I should have lived at all. I am walking into the sunrise of immortality where neither age nor death invade at all.

Sociologically I am already old. Physically I am getting old. Mentally I am holding my own for the moment. But emotionally, deep inside where I really live, I have never been more alive, more aware of God's wonderful creation, more sensitive to a hurting world or more certain that life goes on forever and the spiritual growth never stops.

I ask God to take me home before the ravages of aging occur, praying often the words of Robertson McQuilken's poem, "Let Me Get Home Before Dark." But if it be my lot to go through the darkness before the sunrise, I am persuaded that "neither death, nor life...[nor old age] nor anything else in all creation shall be able to separate me from the love of God...."

My church, my family, my friends, make room for me to serve in love as long as I can. But when the time comes that I am no longer able to carry my load, don't throw me on the rubbish heap.

Understand when I become bored by forced inactivity or anxious about medical expenses. Forgive when I become preoccupied with aches and pains or retreat into the past when life was easier. Speak loud enough for me to hear, but don't talk down to me. Allow me time to think.

Don't let me become apathetic, lethargic or senile for lack of social interaction. Help me to solve physical and spiritual problems so that I may continue to cultivate the unfolding beauty of a gentle and quiet spirit.

Love me and hold my hand occasionally, until I awake and find it God's hand leading me over the threshold of His eternal home. ■

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ABOUT THE WRITER: Mrs. Trula Cronk is a retired Free Will Baptist foreign missionary. She and her husband, Dan, served 25 years in India.

What Retirement?

By Fay Ratcliff

When asked what he did with his spare time since retirement, 79-year-old Rashie Kennedy, a Free Will Baptist minister said, "Since I gave up pastoring on a regular basis there has not been a time that I have not been busy. I have been called on to take someone's place during their absence, have been interim pastor for several churches, the latest was First FWB of Baton Rouge, Louisiana."

Rev. Kennedy's wife Myrtie is a victim of alzheimer's disease and has been a resident of Golden Age Nursing Home in Denham Springs, La., for several years. Since she has been confined there he has conducted preaching services every Wednesday.

He has a loyal congregation that enjoys his style of delivery. His ser-

mons are plain words from the Bible to which senior citizens are accustomed. He also attends monthly residents' council meetings in his wife's interest. He opens and closes these meetings with prayer.

Rev. Kennedy visits residents of the nursing home and if anyone wants to discuss a problem he is always available. He is the man a ship's captain sent for to baptize a sailor in a bathtub aboard a cargo ship, so his talents are not limited to preaching.

Rashie Kennedy has an enviable record of achievements down through the years. He organized Grace Free Will Baptist Church in Greenville, N.C., and served as pastor nine years. He served eight years on the Foreign Missions Board and four years on the Texas Home Missions Board. He also at-

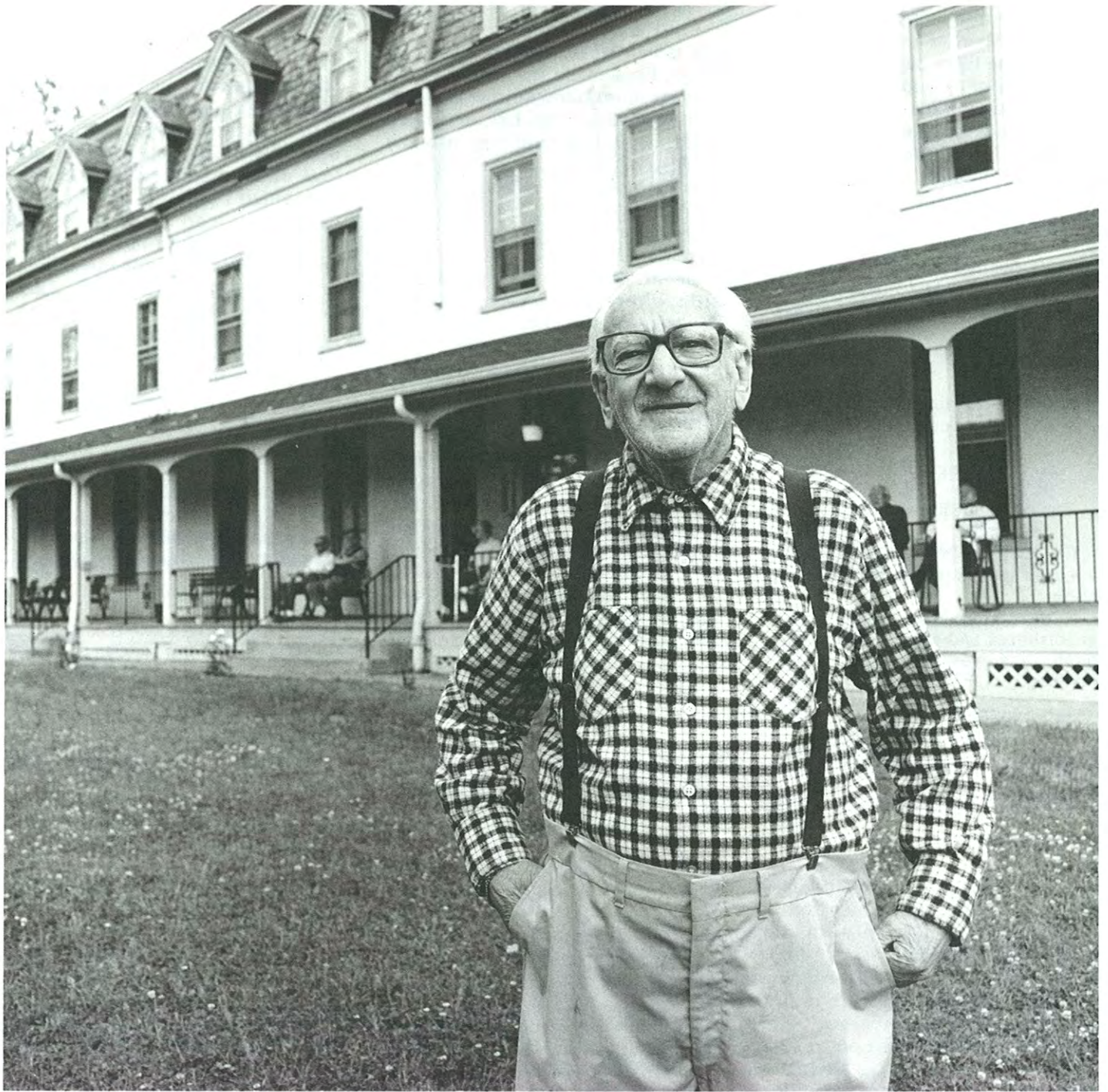
tended conventions and other church-related programs.

This busy man tells of being "asked" to attend driver's education classes after being involved in a couple of automobile accidents. With a smile he said, "You know, there is something good in everything. I learned that my vision is not what it used to be and my reflexes have slowed down considerably."

"So now I drive a little slower and watch traffic a lot closer. But retire? Not yet!" ■

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ABOUT THE WRITER: Fay Ratcliff is a free lance writer who resides in the Golden Age Nursing Home at Denham Springs, Louisiana. The 82-year-old writer prepares her manuscripts on a portable manual typewriter that a friend found in a pawn shop. She types with one finger on "my good hand."



H. Armstrong Roberts

Any Room for “Old” Folks in Your Church?

By Bill Evans

How do you know when you're an older adult? Try this test:

1. Everything hurts and what doesn't hurt doesn't work.
2. You sit in a rocking chair but can't get it going.
3. You decide to procrastinate but never get around to it.
4. Your mind makes contracts your body can't keep.
5. You get winded playing chess.
6. You burn the midnight oil after 9:00 p.m.

Speaking about our graying society, Win and Charles Arn say, "The possibilities for an outreach-oriented, growth-producing senior adult program in most churches are tremendous."

Why would a church growth specialist say something like that? Have a look at your congregation! Most churches show a generous sprinkling of gray and white hair. Isn't that a basic goal for all of us, reaching senior adult status?

Senior Facts

If we are successful in reaching young people for Jesus we are building a steady supply of older adults. Our success in the past two or three decades can now be seen in pews peopled with senior adults. Did you know—

- There are more people 65 and over in the U.S. than the population of Canada.
- The number of people over 55 is increasing three times faster than the overall population.
- Of the total population, the fastest growing segment is those over 85 years of age.
- The over-65 group makes up only 12 percent of the national population but is 20 percent of the American church.

Every study of population trends shows that our country is aging. Fast. While we have numbers of seniors in our churches, there are thousands outside the church. Any church dedicated to proclaiming the gospel and reaching our world must develop an effective ministry with senior adults.

Some Free Will Baptist churches

have begun ministries to this older adult group. But with a one-member staff, the majority of our churches can't call a pastor for just this segment. The pastor is already spread too thin for his own good and that of the church. So, what can we do?

Shared Experiences

First we must realize that ministry is not what we do to or for someone but what we do with them. Search for individuals who will give time to one or two others. Encourage them to share insights and experience.

Expose them to good books, tapes and videos, to good speakers both in and out of the church, and to cultural events in the community. Encourage them to share their faith when appropriate during such times. Put into practice the II Timothy 2:2 principle.

Remember that no young whipper-snapper can really identify with the problems and pain senior adults experience. But those who have faced the death of a mate or child or dear friend can. The person who has been an overcomer has something to share; give them the opportunity within the ministry of your church.

Small Groups

Next, encourage small group involvement. This ministry does not depend on crowds (See Galatians 6:2). After all, most of us function more freely in small groups. Also, small groups give opportunity to develop special interests. A few may want to sew, others to paint or make various crafts. Some will be interested in fishing or just getting outside when possible.

The strongest ropes and cables are made up of many smaller groups of fiber or strands. So it is in senior ministry. Apply the principles found in Genesis 2:18 and Matthew 18:28.

Spiritual Development

Spiritual development is important to the senior adult. Many of life's greatest stresses come during middle age and later—death of a

spouse, close family member or friend; move to a retirement home; major physical problems; realization of no meaningful faith for eternity; financial loss of retirement funds; forced early retirement; loss of driver's license; spouse confined to retirement home; less contact with church, children or friends.

During these years people begin to see death as a personal experience.

What an opportunity for your church to share in these felt needs. Many become receptive to the gospel, especially when the love of Christ is lived out to them. How can you pass up these advantageous times to "snatch them from the flames?"

Have you got room in your church for senior adults? ■

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ABOUT THE WRITER: Reverend William Evans serves as administrative assistant with the Free Will Baptist Board of Retirement.

Directory Update

GEORGIA

Stephen Hutchinson to Corinth Church, Alma from Liberty Church, Commerce, TX

Damon Dodd to New Home Mission Church as interim pastor

Carl Miller to Deep Creek Church, Midville

Terry Hennecke to First Church, Brunswick

KENTUCKY

Bill Roberts to First Church, Louisville from Camp Caleb

NORTH CAROLINA

Archie Ratliff to Bethel Church, Kinston from Peace Church, Indianapolis, IN ■



The Emptying Nest

By Janis Williams

Does this sound familiar? "I would give anything if I could stay home and not have to work." How many times have you said that or heard it said by others?

You reach a point where you are physically and mentally burned out, exhausted. That's when you re-examine priorities. Do we really need that extra car or new furniture? How do I say, "No, I don't have time," to friends? We spread ourselves so thin that we're no good to anybody.

As wives and mothers we want what's best for our families. We try to make do with one income, but then comes unexpected expenses. You feel guilty that you aren't work-

ing to help out.

So you try part-time work; soon you are juggling your time again. Your body wears down from too much stress. It's a no-win cycle.

By the time the children finish college and are grown, you start to think, "Now I can stay home, sit down and read a good book. At last I can relax."

For three months this is great. You finish those projects you put off for years. In six months you begin inventing new projects. By nine months you start to feel restless. A year goes by and you feel left out of the mainstream. Friends discuss their jobs or careers at get-togethers.

You collect advice from well-meaning friends like, "Do volunteer work." But they don't tell you where to find information on volunteer projects.

Others advise, "Go back to school." After all, you're never too old to learn. Take a night class for fun: flower arranging, art, foreign language, you name it.

But you're afraid to volunteer because sometimes people take advantage of your free time and dump on you. Or maybe going back to school is not financially possible right now.

You have this nagging feeling of not being needed any more. You

clean your house until it shines. Or you deliberately put off projects because you have tomorrow to do them. You study your Bible, pray and read devotional books until you feel you could run for sainthood. Now what do I do, Lord?

Perhaps that year off was a time of restoring to good health and helping you grow spiritually. The time comes when the nest empties. Do something you have always wanted to do.

Maybe you will take that class in school. Like the advertisement says, "A mind is a terrible thing to waste." Join a club and work on a project that interests you. Volunteer to help an adult learn to read. For an hour or two, babysit a child so a tired mother can have an evening out. There's always something to do; look for it.

Now that my nest is emptying, this is my pact with God, "Lord, give me strength to do the things You want me to do. Wisdom to know when I have done enough. Help me to feel needed. When You are through with me, take me home to be with You." ■

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ABOUT THE WRITER: Janis Williams is a member of Fellowship Free Will Baptist Church, Antioch, Tennessee.

'Til Death Do Us Part?

By R. F. Smith, Jr.

He was about 50. Came to his pastor with a question about that part of the marriage ceremony which says, "'Til death do us part." Wanted to know if after death—in heaven—he would still be married to his wife.

The pastor figured something deeper was behind his question.

Asked him why he wanted to know.

"Well," the man confessed, "I was just wondering about it. You see, I think I can hang on until death—but heaven...?"

Too much truth here to laugh. He voiced feelings and fears for more people than we dare admit. One out of three marriages is not hang-

ing on 'til death. (That's our divorce rate.)

Some couples are asking that the statement—"Till death do us part"—be taken out of the ceremony. They want such phrases as: "Until we are no longer compatible," or "Until we no longer find fulfillment," or "Until we no longer desire each other."

Some are writing their own marriage contracts in which they put renewal options. They propose to maintain the marriage for two (maybe three) years after which time they can decide to divorce or renew the contract. Others are leaving the phrase in the ceremony but are not taking it seriously. Many people are putting a big question mark after the word, "death," in the phrase.

And one wonders if marriage has a chance when entered into without a sense of permanency. Does it not become more of a legitimate affair to be terminated at the whim of either, than a commitment of two people to establish an environment in which two personalities can grow and flourish? Most of the things we enter into on a temporary basis become just that—temporary.

The professor urged us to attend the concert. Beethoven's works would be featured. Then he told a story:

A college freshman who had never heard of Beethoven or his music wandered into the college chapel where a Beethoven concert was about to begin. He told the professor sitting beside him he thought he'd come to check out the music. To give it a try.

"Young man," the professor warned, "Beethoven is not on trial. You are!"

The institution of marriage is not on trial. It's worth . . . beauty . . . joy . . . meaningfulness has been proved.

And I doubt if its beauty and meaningfulness can be discovered short of the commitment, "'Til death do us part." ■

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

Cooperative Channel Contributions November 1990

RECEIPTS:

State	COOP		Total	Nov. '89	Yr. To Date
	Designated	(Undesignated)			
Alabama	\$ 71.61	\$ 20.00	\$ 91.61	\$ 164.02	\$ 3,734.01
Arizona	.00	.00	.00	.00	50.00
Arkansas	135.00	8,814.58	8,949.58	6,287.04	63,528.79
California	.00	1,415.59	1,415.59	1,063.59	15,941.01
Colorado	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00
Delaware	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00
Florida	.00	.00	.00	1,879.13	20,828.78
Georgia	9,212.86	1,200.00	10,412.86	9,775.96	100,026.92
Hawaii	.00	.00	.00	.00	269.00
Idaho	104.47	.00	104.47	92.28	392.46
Illinois	8,916.28	1,842.60	10,758.88	6,046.56	97,467.65
Indiana	474.59	114.66	589.25	.00	6,031.04
Kansas	.00	.00	.00	161.26	792.84
Kentucky	90.00	519.98	609.98	467.38	2,871.21
Maryland	.00	50.00	50.00	.00	4,849.31
Michigan	6,003.05	1,561.50	7,564.55	3,965.30	54,998.43
Mississippi	35.12	335.80	370.92	557.66	5,351.06
Missouri	10,478.33	.00	10,478.33	8,415.78	86,678.91
New Mexico	.00	.00	.00	.00	377.18
North Carolina	1,875.38	388.00	2,263.38	1,335.76	19,571.51
Ohio	372.50	2,390.00	2,762.50	4,619.85	29,786.94
Oklahoma	30,943.26	8,164.27	39,107.53	30,618.66	454,114.57
South Carolina	9,809.10	86.80	9,895.90	9,232.55	134,093.89
Tennessee	443.95	1,187.38	1,631.33	1,925.49	24,375.68
Texas	6,817.62	854.18	7,671.80	6,334.65	81,023.02
Virginia	418.36	30.00	448.36	292.76	4,151.35
West Virginia	2,152.44	.00	2,152.44	1,649.94	34,257.50
Canada	.00	.00	.00	.00	365.31
Northwest Assoc.	.00	40.55	40.55	7.75	237.76
Other (Computer)	.00	.20	.20	.00	.47
Totals	<u>\$88,353.92</u>	<u>\$29,016.09</u>	<u>\$117,370.01</u>	<u>\$94,893.37</u>	<u>\$1,246,166.60</u>

DISBURSEMENTS:

Executive Office	\$ 7,845.65	\$12,321.03	\$ 20,166.68	\$18,787.36	\$ 221,833.33
Foreign Missions	55,817.80	3,839.83	59,657.63	46,747.72	666,822.39
FWBBC	4,755.43	3,839.83	8,595.26	7,502.47	76,961.79
Home Missions	14,452.89	3,005.07	17,457.96	14,485.40	190,652.38
Retirement & Insurance	663.57	2,337.31	3,000.88	1,730.72	25,477.71
Master's Men	660.70	2,337.31	2,998.01	1,854.87	25,413.76
Commission for					
Theo. Integrity	28.35	83.50	111.85	177.93	1,153.99
FWB Foundation	1,729.58	1,001.71	2,731.29	1,097.50	17,236.05
Music Commission	16.77	83.50	100.27	2.85	905.06
Historical Commission	24.71	83.50	108.21	62.29	1,121.66
Radio & TV Commission	95.10	83.50	178.60	179.01	1,194.21
Hillsdale FWB College	1,088.37	.00	1,088.37	1,996.32	10,689.00
Other	1,175.00	.00	1,175.00	268.93	6,705.27
Totals	<u>\$88,353.92</u>	<u>\$29,016.09</u>	<u>\$117,370.01</u>	<u>\$94,893.37</u>	<u>\$1,246,166.60</u>

FREE WILL BAPTIST NEWSFRONT

National Offices to Relocate



New building to house seven national agencies.

NASHVILLE, TN—The Free Will Baptist National Offices will relocate in South Nashville sometime this spring, according to Dr. Melvin Worthington, executive secretary. The National Association purchased a two-story building located at 5233 Mt. View Road on September 26, 1990.

The 29,700-square-foot structure was purchased for \$800,000. Officials expect the \$400,000 interior building-out process to take at least 90 days, and hope to relocate the various agencies from the current 1134 Murfreesboro Road location in late spring.

The new building sits just off Interstate 24 adjacent to one of Nashville's largest shopping centers, Hickory Hollow Mall. It will house seven national agencies: Executive Office, Board of Retirement, FWB Foundation, Home Missions Department, Foreign Missions Department, Master's Men Department and the Woman's National Auxiliary Convention.

The building contains twice the space as the Murfreesboro Road property. There is room to park 75 cars. Dr. Worthington said plans are underway to sell the 4.5-acre Murfreesboro Road property.

Shores Keynotes Florida State Assoc.

SEFFNER, FL—Illinois Promotional Secretary David Shores delivered the keynote address at Florida's 46th annual state association. His sermon titled, "How to Continue What God has Started," opened the October 31-November 2, 1990, meeting at First FWB Church in Seffner.

Two Florida ministers shared preaching duties with Reverend Shores. James Osborn, assistant pastor at the host church, and Carlie Lloyd, pastor of Traveler's Rest FWB Church in Altha, delivered sermons on Nehemiah and making disciples.

In addition to the preaching responsibilities, Reverend David Shores also conducted a major seminar on the promotional secretary's work.

Moderator Leroy Cutler gavailed delegates through the business sessions which included adopting a \$60,000 state cooperative plan budget. The State Youth Board presented a plaque to Ruby Amerson for 23 years of service as she completed her final term with that board.

Clerk Randy Bryant said that while 192 registered for the state association, more than 340 attended the services. This included 47 ministers and 10 deacons.

The 1991 session will meet October 30-November 1 at First FWB Church in Panama City.

FWBBC Sets Bible Conference

NASHVILLE, TN—Free Will Baptist Bible College's spring Bible Conference, March 10-14, will feature three preachers and be highlighted by the inauguration of the school's fourth president, Rev. Tom Malone.

Speakers for the conference include Dr. Howard Bickers, Rev.

tant moderator of the National Association of Free Will Baptists. He has also ministered in Oklahoma, California and Texas.

Rev. Van Kluyve, a 1957 FWBBC graduate, pastors First FWB Church, Beaufort, North Carolina. He served 14 years as director of deputation for the



Bickers



Cheshier



Van Kluyve

Carl Cheshier and Rev. Henry Van Kluyve.

Dr. Bickers is vice president for academic affairs and professor of missions and church history at Mid-America Baptist Theological Seminary in Memphis. He was featured at FWBBC's 1986 Bible Conference and made a major impact on the college family and visitors with his strong biblical preaching and commitment to evangelism.

Rev. Cheshier pastors Cavanaugh FWB Church, Fort Smith, Arkansas. He is a native of Oklahoma and serves as assis-

Foreign Missions Department and pastored a home missions church in the Virgin Islands before assuming his present pastorate.

Rev. Ken Walker, chairman of the Bible College Board of Trustees, says that the inauguration of Rev. Malone is scheduled during the conference so that as many people as possible can attend. The Trustees extend an invitation to all Free Will Baptists to attend the 1991 Bible Conference and enjoy both the inauguration and the excellent preaching that is anticipated.

All-Boards Conference Time of Unity

NASHVILLE, TN—More than 100 people gathered for the December 3-4, 1990, All-Boards Conference at Nashville's Doubletree Hotel. Executive Secretary Melvin Worthington called the meeting "a time of unity as we discussed how to move our denomination into the future."

Seven national boards and two commissions met under the conference theme, "Focused on the Future." Free Will Baptist Bible College president Tom Malone and South Carolina moderator Earl Hendrix delivered major addresses on denom-

ination goals and gifts.

The group shared three meals together before breaking out into individual meetings to conduct business. Tuesday afternoon the combined group met for a two-hour open discussion about financing the new National Offices Building. Dr. Melvin Worthington led the discussion.

Five boards and commissions completed their work by Tuesday at 10:00 p.m. after meeting from 8:00 that morning. Most of the others finished by Wednesday noon.

Tennessee invites 2002 National Convention

DICKSON, TN—Delegates to Tennessee's State Association invited the 2002 national convention to their state. Tennessee last hosted the national convention in 1985 in Nashville. The Volunteer State has hosted the annual meeting seven times since 1935.

More than 235 people registered for the 53rd annual session which met November 12-14, 1990, at United FWB Church in Dickson. Delegates elected Clarksville pastor Don Walker as moderator to succeed Terry Boyd who completed five years at the helm. Reverend Walker pastors Pardue Memorial FWB Church.

Delegates gave special recognition to Don and Billie Sexton who coordinated a \$112,000 Tennessee Walk-a-Thon for missions. The Sextons were given a plaque citing their work for foreign missions, and a \$600 love gift.

In other action, delegates learned that Tennessee's state paper, *The Echo*, will be printed quarterly in the future rather than bi-monthly. Missionary to Japan, Ruth McDonald spoke during the Woman's Auxiliary banquet.

Two Tennessee pastors, Bobby Greene and Kenneth Kirby, joined Executive Secretary Melvin Worthington as featured speakers during the three-day meeting. Bible Conference sermons were preached by Home Missions staffer Richard Adams and Free Will Baptist Bible College professor Ken Riggs.

The 1991 state association will meet November 11-13 at Donelson FWB Church in Nashville.



Georgia to Raise \$300,000

NORMAN PARK, GA—Delegates to the Georgia State Association voted to raise \$300,000 to buy land and build a new state office facility in Macon. The first \$40,000 raised will be used to purchase land. If funds cannot be raised in three years, the Macon project will be terminated and the money used to implement alternate plans.

This action came during the 54th annual session which met November 15-17, 1990, at Norman Park Baptist Assembly. Moderator Billy Sharpston

gaveled the more than 225 delegates, ministers and deacons through business sessions.

Delegates also adopted two constitutional amendments which place the state Master's Men and Woman's Auxiliary under the umbrella of the Georgia State Association. Georgia's Double in a Decade Committee will cooperate with the National Association's campaign.

In other action, delegates approved a \$500,000 state budget, half for in-state projects and half for national outreach. The state

distribution includes \$97,000 for missions, \$66,000 for state office and \$43,000 for Camp Mt. Bethel.

Georgia pastor Galen Dunbar (Ebenezer Church, Glennville) joined FWBCC president Tom Malone and Home Missions staffer Richard Adams on the state preaching program developing the theme, "The Christ-Honoring Church."

The 1991 state association will meet November 14-16 at Norman Park.

Small Church Computer System Ready

NASHVILLE, TN—Randall House Publications announces the introduction of church computer software developed specifically for the smaller Free Will Baptist church. The new software is called TBIS (The Baptist Information System) "500" System and can be used by Free Will Baptist churches tracking fewer than 500 people.

The TBIS "500" system runs on IBM Personal Computers and compatibles (requires a hard disk) and includes three modules: Membership, Contributions and Attendance. System benefits include the ability to maintain

records about members, visitors and prospects; print class rosters and track attendances at any church functions; monitor contributions and pledges; develop customized reports; print contributions statements and more.

The Baptist Information System and TBIS "500" are products of Randall House Publications and are the official church computer software products of the Free Will Baptist denomination. To order a demonstration system or receive more information, contact Randall House Publications.

Mississippi Honors Layman

TUPELO, MS—Delegates to the 26th annual Mississippi State Association awarded a plaque to a 79-year-old layman for attending every state meeting in its 26-year history. Tony Holifield, layman from Charity FWB Church in Laurel, received the plaque during the November 2-3, 1990, session at Beech Springs FWB Church in Tupelo.

Moderator George Crowden was re-elected to his sixth term. Some 200 people registered for the meeting, including 100 ministers and 30 deacons.

Pastor Rick Bowling (Martin Hill FWB Church, Booneville) and Executive Secretary Melvin Worthington preached during worship services.

Missionary to Japan Judy Smith spoke to 95 people at the Friday evening Woman's Auxiliary banquet.

The 1991 state association will meet November 1-2 at First FWB Church in Pearl. ■

Church Doubles Missions Giving Goal

EAST WENATCHEE, WA—Members of Victory FWB Church in East Wenatchee, Washington, set a goal to raise \$500 for missionaries Don and Ruth McDonald, then went out and doubled it.

Pastor Terry Stafford invited the McDonalds, who are in the United States on furlough from Japan, to the church to personally receive the check from

members. The McDonalds met with Victory Church on October 17, 1990.

In a special service, the McDonalds accepted a check for \$1,082 from the church. Pastor Stafford said that \$428 was raised through the Sunday School. The junior church raised \$164 in quarters.

1991 State Association Meetings

<u>STATE</u>	<u>DATE AND TIME</u>	<u>PLACE AND ADDRESS</u>	<u>STATE</u>	<u>DATE AND TIME</u>	<u>PLACE AND ADDRESS</u>
Alabama	Starts: November 7 Closes: November 9	Madison FWB Church Highway 20 Madison, AL 35758	Michigan	Starts: May 17 Closes: May 18	New Hope Association
Arizona	Starts: May 4, 10:00 a.m. Closes: May 4, 3:00 p.m.	First FWB Church 7516 N. Black Canyon Hwy. Phoenix, AZ 85021	Mississippi	Starts: November 1 Closes: November 2	First FWB Church (Pearl) Toni Lane & Upper Road Pearl, MS 39208
Arkansas	Starts: August 13, 7:30 p.m. Closes: August 15, Noon	Camp Beaverfork P. O. Box 1404 Conway, AR 72032	Missouri	Starts: June 3, 7:30 p.m. Closes: June 6, Noon	Grace FWB Church 2258 Tenbrook Road Arnold, MO 63010
Atlantic Canada	Starts: June 27, 7:30 p.m. Closes: June 30, 7:00 p.m.	St. John Valley Bible Camp Route 5 Hartland, New Brunswick Canada E0J 1N0	New Mexico	Starts: April 19, 1:30 p.m. Closes: April 20, 4:00 p.m.	First FWB Church 601 East Skelley Hobbs, NM 88240
California	Starts: May 16, 7:30 p.m. Closes: May 18, Noon	Calif. Christian College 4881 E. University Avenue Fresno, CA 93703	North Carolina	Starts: June 3, 11:00 a.m. Closes: June 4, Noon	Rocky Pass FWB Church Route 1, Box 244 Nebo, NC 28761
Florida	Starts: October 30 Closes: November 1	First FWB Church 305 Airport Road Panama City, FL 32405	Northeast Association	Starts: May 10, 4:00 p.m. Closes: May 11, Noon	Austin, TX
Georgia	Starts: November 14 Closes: November 16	Norman Baptist Assembly Norman Park, GA 31771	Northwest Association	Starts: May 17, 7:30 p.m. Closes: May 18, Noon	First FWB Church 402 North 4th Avenue Yakima, WA 98902
Idaho	Starts: May 17 Closes: May 18	First FWB Church 2606 E. 6th Street Rupert, ID 83350	Ohio	Starts: June 21, 9:00 a.m. Closes: June 22, Noon	Heritage Temple FWB Church 2295 S. High Street Columbus, OH 43207
Illinois	Starts: March 15, 9:00 a.m. Closes: March 16, 3:00 p.m.	First FWB Church 7th and Monroe Johnston City, IL 62951	Oklahoma	Starts: October 14, 7:30 p.m. Closes: October 17, 3:30 p.m.	First FWB Church 332 West Carl Albert Pkwy. McAlester, OK 74501
Indiana	Starts: June 14, 7:00 p.m. Closes: June 15, 3:00 p.m.	First FWB Church 23 Lake Street Chesterfield, IN 46017	South Carolina	Starts: February 7, 9:30 a.m. Closes: February 8, 3:30 p.m.	Mill Branch FWB Church Route 1, Box 221 Johnsonville, SC 29555
Kansas	Starts: June 13, 7:30 p.m. Closes: June 15, Noon	Bethel FWB Church 2719 North 67th Street Kansas City, KS 66104	Tennessee	Starts: November 11 Closes: November 13	Donelson FWB Church 2909 Knobdale Road Nashville, TN 37214
Kentucky	Starts: June 15, 9:30 a.m. Closes: June 15, p.m.	Salyersville FWB Church Salyersville, KY 41465	Texas	Starts: June 5, 7:00 p.m. Closes: June 7, Noon	Austin, TX
Maryland	Starts: June 20, 7:00 p.m. Closes: June 22, Noon	Woodland Heights FWB Church Round Hill Dr., Chatham Rd. Martinsville, VA 24112	Virginia	Starts: June 13, 7:00 p.m. Closes: June 14, 9:30 p.m.	First FWB Church 1019 Gus Nicks Blvd. N.E. Roanoke, VA 24012
Mexico	Starts: August 2 Closes: August 4	Monterrey	West Virginia	Starts: June 7, 9:30 a.m. Closes: June 8, 3:00 p.m.	Bradley FWB Church Bradley, WV 25818

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CURRENTLY...

More than 500 people attended the centennial anniversary homecoming at **First FWB Church, Beaufort, NC**. The record crowd heard guest speaker **Dennis Wiggs** preach. An afternoon slide presentation reviewed the church's 100-year history. **Henry Van Klyuve** pastors.

Eleven seniors at **Free Will Baptist Bible College** were selected to be included in the 1991 edition of *Who's Who Among Students in American Universities and Colleges*. Five of them were from North Carolina (3) and Kentucky (2).

The first edition of the **Alabama Mission Update** appeared in November 1990. The eight-page publication is published by the Alabama Board of Missions and Church Extension.

Pastor **Earl Hood** reports 17 baptisms and 17 new members at **Center FWB Church** in **Ada, OK**. The church also secured **Mike Wood** as youth pastor.

Members of **Okemah FWB Church, Okemah, OK**, dedicated their new building, according to Pastor **Frank Young**. The church overlooks Interstate 40.

Pastor **Jim Puckett** reports dedication services for two additions at **Harrah FWB Church, Harrah, OK**. One includes five classrooms that will accommodate 120 people. The other is a 1,500-square-foot fellowship hall.

Pastor **Beryl Blair** and members of **Grace FWB Church, Comanche, OK**, have a lot to be thankful for this season. At the moment they are most thankful for a fresh coat of paint on the church, fellowship hall and utility buildings. That was done by **Paskel Bevins**, pastor of Hilltop FWB Church in Wewoka.

After **Willard Kiper** came on board as pastor at **Faith FWB Church, Vian, OK**, attendance surged to 62. Members promptly purchased a parsonage for Pastor Kiper.

Attendance at **Cleveland FWB Church, Cleveland, OH**, increased 21 percent last fall, according to Pastor **Robert Prichard**. During one month almost 1,100 contacts were made for the church. Member **Charlene Carver** gave out 429 invitations for people to attend church.

Members of **East Nashville FWB Church, Nashville, TN**, raised almost \$1,800 in a Saturday tent sale to replenish their food closet for the needy. Pastor **Fred Hall** said the church ministers to neighborhood residents who from time to time need food. The church is developing guidelines for general distribution procedures when anyone requests assistance.

Hats off to **Fulton FWB Church, Ful-**

ton, MS. The church set a cash goal of \$2,500 for missionary to Spain, **Jeff Turnbough**. They raised more than \$2,800, according to Pastor **Bill Van Winkle**.

A secret service agent assigned to former president Jimmy Carter addressed the Master's Men at **First FWB Church, Albany, GA**. The agent, Buster Williams, related some stirring escapades and then let them examine a pouch of counterfeit money. **Billy Hanna** pastors.

More than 120 people attended the **Arkansas Trail Blazer's Retreat** sponsored by the Christian Education Board. The group met at Camp Beaverfork near Conway. Pastors **Randy Scott** and **Sam Rogers** shared speaking duties with retired pastor **Oris Doggett**.

Pastor **Earl Stapleton** reports a gift of a new organ to **Mt. Vernon FWB Church, Russellville, AR**. The organ was donated by **Mr. & Mrs. Jim Martin**. Charter member **Sybil Chronister** was given a plaque celebrating 53 years as a member.

New Home FWB Church, Tulsa, OK, sponsored a two-day layman's conference, according to Pastor **Roy Dale Smith**. **Wendell Leckbee**, chairman of the National Master's Men Board, and Pastor **Ben Scott** from First FWB Church in North Little Rock, AR, led seminars on responsibilities of deacons, leadership through laymen and pastoral responsibility to laymen.

Contact welcomes *Temple Times*, publication of **Temple FWB Church, Greenville, NC**. **Bobby Parker** pastors.

The teenage Sunday School class at **First FWB Church, Emporia, KS**, increased in attendance from three to 14. **Larry Collins** pastors.

Members of **First FWB Church, Topeka, KS**, gave Pastor **Steve Hendrix** a pastor appreciation month. The 30-day appreciation included a love offering, a grocery shower and numerous invitations from the church family for meals and fellowship.

Members at **Victory FWB Church, East Wenatchee, WA**, installed ceiling fans in the sanctuary, a baptistry and two sets of entrance doors. The church averages 70 in Sunday School, 90 in morning worship and 40 for junior church. **Terry Stafford** pastors.

The seven churches of the **Tulsa Area Quarterly Meeting** in Tulsa, Oklahoma sponsored their 13th annual missionary conference. **Arilla Wode** was the keynote speaker. The conference gave her an offering exceeding \$4,300. The fall 1991 conference will include missionary to Brazil

Earnie Deeds and church builder **Howard Gwartney**.

Pastor **James Wilhide** and members of **High Point FWB Church, Lancaster, SC**, dedicated their new family life center. The 6,600-square-foot building was completed at a cost of \$185,000. The steel-frame structure includes a regulation high school basketball court. Pastor Wilhide also reported 18 conversions and 32 new members. Attendance averaged 226 in 1990. Wilhide has pastored the church 15 years.

Members of **Walker's Chapel FWB Church, Sumter, SC**, presented Pastor **Mancy Noles** with a plaque and a \$1,000 love offering to show their appreciation. Brother Noles established the church in 1974 and has pastored there for the past 16 years.

Pastor **Jack Strickland** reports the completion of an 1,800-square-foot fellowship building at **Wildwood FWB Church** in **Nichols, SC**. Erected at a cost of \$25,000, the brick veneer structure includes a dining area, fully-equipped kitchen and storage.

Members of **First FWB Church, Anderson, SC**, celebrated their 10th anniversary, according to Pastor **Norris Hawkins**. Members presented a plaque of appreciation to Pastor Hawkins.

Pastor **Carl Cheshier** reports seven baptisms at **Cavanaugh FWB Church, Fort Smith, AR**. The Cavanaugh church celebrated 27 years of service to the community.

One hundred sixty-five people attended homecoming services at **First FWB Church** in **Darlington, SC**. A picture gallery as well as a copy of the church history from 1906 to 1990 was available for members to view. Four over-80-year-old members were honored: **Leroy Carnes, Cora Truett, Myrtle Buck, Alma Miles. Reuben Cason** pastors.

Pastor **John Kruger** said **Capitol City FWB Church, Lincoln, NE**, increased attendance from 30 to 50 over four months. Three Sundays attendance climbed past 60 as three new families were added to the church. Pastor Kruger said, "*Contact* is often the only source of information we receive about what is going on of the work through the Free Will Baptist denomination."

For the past 40 years the **Old Mt. Zion Association** in Northwest Arkansas has conducted a Sunday morning radio program. The program airs at 8:30 a.m. **Noel Easterling** is the speaker. ■



THE FREE WILL BAPTIST FOUNDATION

Want to be Rich? Why?

Men try to accumulate wealth. I believe the Bible speaks about every issue of life. Therefore I believe the Bible speaks about the reasons men try to acquire wealth.

Some men accumulate wealth because they (1) love money (Ecc. 5:10; I Tim. 6:8-10), (2) want self-esteem (Ps. 49:5-6; Prov. 16:16-19; I Tim. 6:17; Phil. 4:11-12), (3) want the envy of others (Ps. 73:2-17; Lk. 12:15), (4) desire protection and/or independence (Mt. 6:25-34, 7:7-8; Mk. 11:24; Lk. 12:16-34).

But God has a special reason for allowing man to accumulate wealth. Look closely at Romans 12:1-13. God talks about gifts of abilities which He places within man. Several of these gifts are easily recognized and highly honored among us. One of these is the ability to give (v. 8). God allows man to accumulate wealth to fulfill a spiritual gift—the gift of giving.

This is confirmed by II Corinthians 9:10-11. The context certainly is clear that the provision is supplied by an Almighty God to enable giving. Paul also reminds us that, “God shall supply all your needs according to His riches in glory by/in Christ Jesus.” The context concerns the generous giving of the Philippians.

Sure, the scriptures refer to the love of money, self-esteem (or pride), envy of others and protection or independence as negative reasons to acquire wealth. But God also reminds us that He is the one who gives power to get wealth (Deut. 8:18).

I admit that there are not many men God can trust with wealth. But I believe God will bless a man with right motives even in accumulation of wealth.

What greater protection could we ask than a God who supplies all our needs according to His riches? Who is more envied than the individual who is able to use his wealth to care for the needs and opportunities he confronts? Who has more esteem than the individual who generously provides for others, whether building a church, feeding a child or endowing an educational institution?

And who can really appreciate money more than the person who knows what it will accomplish when placed in God’s hands, to be used as He directs?

Let’s check our motives. After all, a man can have the wrong motives about a few dollars as well as many. Proper motives make stewardship a blessing and joy. Wrong motives make it a pain. Are you joyful or hurting?

Something a Will Can’t Do

You may have heard it said, “Where there’s a will, there’s a way.” Not in every case!

A will is the primary estate planning device used by many people. But there are some limits to what it can do. It is important to know the limitations before your heirs run head-on into them in the settlement process.

1. In most cases your will, upon your death, will not distribute all of your property. Many people own property jointly with a spouse, a child or even a friend. If joint ownership is with rights of survivorship, the property passes to the joint owner regardless of the will.

Life insurance policies with a named beneficiary also bypasses the will. The same is true with property placed in a trust, transferred with a retained life estate or any other form of contractual arrangement to transfer property.

Usually your will transfers only the property you hold in your name at the time of death.

2. The will does not avoid probate court. The only way to avoid probate is through the use of trusts, joint ownership or other contractual arrangements.

3. A will does not avoid estate taxes. However, proper drafting of a will can limit taxes. Although many estates will not be subject to federal tax under present rules, it is important to keep your planning updated. ■



RANDALL HOUSE PUBLICATIONS

The You of Youth

By Roger C. Reeds

Someone has said, "The tragedy of youth is that it is wasted on young people." The real truth about youth is that it doesn't last long. The years go by ever so swiftly. One would think that as you grow older time would pass more slowly. However, the opposite is true.

Every church ought to provide for its youth. The starting place is the Sunday School. Classes should be provided for *all* age levels. Adequate literature should be purchased for each level. Good teachers should be trained to teach the young people. The better teachers ought to be slotted here.

Children's church can provide a means for children to participate and benefit from a service that is designed especially for the children. If space and personnel are available you might have several levels of service each Sunday morning.

An area of dwindling ministries is the Sunday evening training hour. Do you remember the days when we had Free Will Baptist League? Later the name was changed to Church Training Service. This area has been on a downhill slide since the mid-70's.

There is a strange paradox that exists. Our denomination has a youth ministries department that operates through our Sunday School and Church Training Board. This board sponsors a National Youth Conference each year that draws nearly 2,000 participants. The main attraction is the competitive activities. Competition is provided in numbers of categories. If there is so much interest in the National Youth Conference, why is there so little interest in Church Training?

It is my opinion that the competitive activities ought to be carried on a weekly basis in the local church. In many instances the competitive groups or individuals get together just a few months before the National Youth Conference and hone up for competition. This is acceptable but not ideal. The ideal would be to conduct the competition weekly.

The Youth Ministries Division of the Sunday School and Church Training Department provides several vital ministries. By now most of our people have heard of Truth and Peace and the YET ministries. These units reach a few of our young people. The *most* young people are reached through the National Youth Conference.

Why not write our youth division and find out how you can make your competitive activities a weekly program? We must win and train our youth today. Tomorrow they will be our senior citizens. "Work for the night is coming, when man works no more." ■

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HOME MISSIONS

Goal: Double in a Decade

Since the National Association of Free Will Baptists has adopted a goal to double in a decade, plans are being made by the Home Missions Department to help the denomination double its membership by the year 2000. The campaign began January 1 and will conclude December 31, 2000 A.D. if the Lord tarries His coming.

The Home Missions Department plans to take an active role in the "Double in a Decade" campaign. It not only plans to be involved in helping those churches already in existence to increase attendance, win souls and grow, but will also work to plant 250 new churches during the decade. Programs that will be used to realize these goals are already being implemented.

During the past few years about 60 full-time missionary families and 15 national pastors in Mexico received salary checks from the Home Missions office to plant Free Will Baptist churches. Each missionary goes to the field with a goal to make that church indigenous within six years after services begin. Some time limits have to be extended because of difficulties on various fields, but the goal is within reach to begin 250 churches in the last decade of this century. All of them would not be self-supporting by the year 2000, but they could all be averaging 50 in attendance by that time.

The Home Missions Department has a tentmaker program to assist men who either have their own incomes or work at secular jobs while laboring to begin new churches. At present 15 men are enrolled in the tentmaker program. Plans are being made to enlarge this concept of church planting so that as many tentmakers would be starting churches as salaried missionaries. At least 100 churches could be started in the next 10 years by tentmakers.

A challenge is issued to every state association by the Home Missions Department to adopt a goal of several new churches to be started within their state in the "Double in a Decade" campaign. Also each district association is challenged to begin at least one new church during the decade of the 1990's.

As the "Double in a Decade" campaign begins, the Home Missions Department plans to monitor the starting of churches in all places and in all ways so that progress toward the goal of 250 new churches can be charted.

The goal of 250 new churches in the next 10 years is a challenging but reachable goal. The entire denomination needs to catch a vision of this goal and involve itself in every possible way to see it accomplished. ■

**Double
in a
Decade**

**Double
in a
Decade**



MASTER'S MEN

Dear Pastor:

The Layman of the Year award was first given in 1962. Pastors are given an opportunity to recognize and honor outstanding laymen. You may nominate a man from your church. He doesn't have to be a member of Master's Men, but he can not be a preacher.

Your nomination will be reviewed by the Master's Men Board. Each board member selects the man he feels best demonstrates devotion to our Master and His work. Then the votes are tabulated to select the 1990 Layman of the Year. Your nomination should be based on accomplishments for the 1990 calendar year.

Two awards are presented: Layman of the Year and Runner-Up Layman of the Year. The men will be introduced by Chairman of the

Board, Wendell Leckbee. Recipients will receive a special plaque and certificate. Each layman nominated receives a certificate of recognition.

The awards will be presented at the Master's Men Dinner, Wednesday, July 24, 1991, during the National Association of Free Will Baptists in Charleston, WV.

Mail your nomination form by April 30. Board members must have adequate time to process and select recipients. Please use the following form and extra pages if needed. Mail your completed form to:

Master's Men
P. O. Box 1088
Nashville, TN 37202

LAYMAN OF THE YEAR NOMINATION FORM

Sponsored by the Master's Men Department
(Please **print** or **type** all entries.)

Nominee's Name _____
Last First Middle Initial
 Age _____ Birthday _____ - _____ - 19____ Telephone (_____) _____ - _____
 Street Address _____
 City _____ State _____ Zip _____
 Occupation _____ Wife's Name _____
 Name of Church _____

(Use extra pages if needed. You don't have to comment in each space. These are suggested areas to aid your preparation of the nomination form.)

Here are my reasons for nominating this layman. Offices held during the last calendar year in the local church, district / quarterly meeting and state / national work:

Accomplishments, work performed, honors received (church or civic) during the last calendar year:

Evangelistic efforts in local church, district, state and national levels during the last calendar year:

Pastor's Signature _____ Date _____

Telephone Number (_____) - _____ - _____



BOARD OF RETIREMENT

Retirement Checklist

If you are considering early retirement, try answering these questions: Do you have something definite you want to do after early retirement?

Is there something you have always wanted to do that you can undertake in your late 50's or early 60's? A second, deeply satisfying career, perhaps?

Can you earn enough or have you saved enough to bridge the financial gap between what you will get as a pension if you retire early and the full amount that you'd get at 65?

Have you considered what you might lose in Social Security—and have you talked to your nearest Social Security office about this? Some retirement counselors estimate that an income of at least \$10,000 a year from all sources is necessary now and a proportionately larger amount will be needed each year inflation continues. They also suggest at least \$10,000 in savings and investments. Such estimates already appear to be too low.

Have you planned sufficiently for early retirement? With your spouse and other members of your family? Remember, planning for retirement at 65 should begin five to ten years before that.

Financially, are major obligations (mortgages, children's education, installment credit) paid off or under control? What about medical and hospital insurance between the time you leave your job and group plans and when you become eligible for medicare? Are you sure that early retirement will make you and your spouse—and all of your family—happier? That you really want it?

If you answer "no" to any of these questions, you should probably do more thinking about early retirement: perhaps you aren't ready for it. Think about what changes you will have to make for your "no" answers to become "yes."

Don't Leave Details Until Last Days

"I'll have plenty of time to take care of retirement details when I retire. I'm busy now...."

Many who retire regret saying—or thinking—something like that. Putting off detail work can lead to long delays in collecting Social Security or enjoying the potential benefits of retirement.

Generally, a combined pension program and Social Security will yield about 60 percent of your preretirement income. You may be able to live on less after you retire, but you probably will need a supplementary income to avoid a lowered standard of living.

In your 40's and 50's, concentrate on financing retirement years.

In your 50's begin giving more serious thought to what you want in retirement, how you would like to spend your time, where you will live and what adjustments you might have to make. If you are married, the planning should be done jointly.

In your early 60's, you must begin thinking about when you will retire—at 65? Earlier with reduced benefits? Or later? You can now work on to age 70.

If you're thinking about quitting early, check with your Social Security office to find out how much you'll forfeit in benefits. Also check with your company on how and when pension checks will come to you; what options are open to you, whether life insurance carries over or must be switched from a group plan to an individual policy and what could be done about continuing health and hospitalization insurance. Retiring at 62 could cost about 20 percent of the benefits you'd be due if you worked to age 65.

If you are retiring but plan to continue to work in a second career, get a copy of the pamphlet, "You Can Work and Still Get Social Security," from your Social Security office.

In a nutshell, when you retire, be ready.

—Ready or Not ■

In Honor Of
By
Cecil Boswell
Emmanuel Auxiliary
Washington, NC



WOMAN'S AUXILIARY

Woman's Window on the World

By Mary R. Wisheart

From My Window

Why did I think I could climb to the top of this bell tower? I thought as we approached the halfway mark of the 14 levels in St. Peter's Church, Munich.

"I don't think I'm going to make it," I said to my partner. Too fat, too out of shape. I strained for breath and a searing pain went up the backs of my legs.

Just then we rounded a corner and there under a small window was a bench for out of shape travelers. I sank down thankfully and didn't mind at all the rough, hard wood. After a few minutes of breathing freely and stretching my legs, I easily walked up the rest of the stairs to the top. Just a bench for resting, but it was sufficient.

"Does the road wind uphill all the way?" Christina Rossetti asks in her poem, "Uphill." The answer is, "Yes, to the very end."

Do you sometimes get weary in the uphill way? God must have anticipated that weariness. He left us many messages along the way, benches so that we may catch a breath, stretch out in His love and head on toward the top.

"Be not weary in well doing" (Galatians 6:9).

"Your labor is not in vain in the Lord" (1 Corinthians 15:58).

"He restoreth my soul" (Psalm 23:3).

Foreign Student Scholarship

The Foreign Student Scholarship in 1991 goes to Erika Diaz, Betania FWB Church, Panama. Erika is in her second year at Free Will Baptist Bible College.

February gifts to the fund will help train Erika and other students from Free Will Baptist mission fields.

The Eunice Edwards Fund

Do it again! The end of the five years set aside for completing the goal of \$50,000 approaches.

At the end of November, the fund had \$31,077.11. Only \$18,922.89 needed to complete the project.

Have you already given at least \$5 to the project? If you have, then give again. Let's go over the goal so that our people abroad can have meeting places.

Prepare for The Pre-Easter Week of Prayer and Offering

Materials are now available from WNAC and Foreign Missions Offices for the Pre-Easter Week of Prayer and the Laura Belle Barnard World Missions Offering.

The 1991 offering is for evangelism and church planting projects on all Free Will Baptist mission fields. WNAC's goal is \$40,000.

The 1990 Laura Belle Barnard World Missions Offering was \$30,454.84 in November. Our goal was \$20,000.

Check the *Co-Laborer* for materials and ideas for publicity.

WNAC Continues to Grow

From January through November 1990, the office staff mailed 50 packets to new or reorganizing Auxiliaries.

The January / February 1991 issue of *Co-Laborer* showed 119 more subscriptions than the same issue in 1990.

Women gave \$2,726.16 to the equipment fund for the national office.

Study Committee Makes Survey

The study committee constituted by the July 1990 convention devised a survey for Auxiliary and non-Auxiliary members.

The survey has gone to women in Georgia, Illinois, Mississippi, Oklahoma, North Carolina, California, Florida and Tennessee. If your women would like to be included in the survey, write WNAC for forms.

The study committee is also studying women's organizations similar to WNAC. If you have suggestions or ideas for the committee, send them to the WNAC office. The committee welcomes any comments or suggestions. ■

FOREIGN MISSIONS



Cuba's Hope, Our Opportunity

By Jim Vallance

The government has relaxed most of the restrictions and has acknowledged the Christians to be good citizens.

My mind held a mixture of feelings: concern for my safety in a communist country, worry over my family, frustration over leaving unfinished work, excitement over another missions trip, and anticipation at the prospect of practicing the Spanish I had studied 28 years earlier. Yes, preparing to leave for Cuba triggered all of these emotions.

I also had some misconceptions. These illusions were based on speculation rather than fact. I had expected to see nice homes and beautiful properties left behind when our missionaries fled Castro's regime in the early sixties. But a few years of neglect in this subtropic region renders most buildings uninhabitable due to the heat and moisture. That's just how I found the missionary facilities. But I did discover, still intact, the real treasure of their work: those whose hearts were committed to serving a living God.

My two-week visit in October of 1990 was arranged by invitation of the Cuban Association of Free Will Baptists. It afforded me the opportunity to see firsthand some of the changes that have taken place recently. In spite of restrictions during the past three decades, God empowered the believers to continue faithfully in His work. Now, the government has relaxed most of the restrictions and has finally acknowledged the Christians to be good citizens.

Today, about a thousand Free Will Baptists worship in 16 churches and 16 mission points. These are led by eight pastors. And a host of mature, responsible laymen and laywomen bring effective leadership to the Convention and the churches.

People are now allowed to have missions in their homes. Pastors and churches have begun to move into nearby towns, establishing new preaching points. One is even using a side porch on the property of a Catholic church.

At last, building materials are available to churches even though these must be

purchased with dollars from other countries. Although this has created a dilemma for our Cuban brothers as well as Christians in the United States, God is still opening doors.

The government has also permitted churches to reopen schools. Cedars of Lebanon Seminary, located on the property bought by the Willeys in the early 1940s, has resumed classes. Since 1987, the people have built two new buildings on the property: a women's dorm and a combination kitchen/dining hall.



But my greatest excitement stems from the prospects of the new Willey Memorial Tabernacle to be erected at the seminary. A group of 15 of our men from the United States (including me) are scheduled to enter Cuba in February of 1991 to help construct this monumental building. The 450-seat structure will provide a heavenly anchor to the existing buildings on the seminary property.

During my visit to Cedars of Lebanon, the first load of cement (200 bags) was delivered and unloaded by the seminary students. I carried the first bag into the storage area.

While on the island, I visited nine churches and two missions besides the seminary property. I spoke 16 times in 13 days—quite a lot for a layman! Two of these efforts were made without an interpreter! My hopes to practice a nearly forgotten, dormant language were abundantly supplied by God. I almost wore out the little dictionary I carried everywhere.

My heart responded to the warmth of the Cuban people. In spite of the difficulties, they show their love for God through vibrant services full of hope and faith. While their society offers little in the way of social life, these Christians give liberally of their time and their lives in God's work. Our churches in the United States could use a fresh infusion of their excitement in knowing God. ■

Jim Vallance is general director of Master's Men in Nashville, Tenn.



FREE WILL BAPTIST BIBLE COLLEGE

The Real Cost of A Secular Education

By Garnett Reid, Bible Teacher, Free Will Baptist Bible College

Recession,
Slowdown.
Economic downturn.

You've heard the talk. These buzzwords are flying right now among professional money-watchers.

For you and me, though, hard times mean less dollars and cents and more cost evaluation of where those dollars and cents go. Yet when it comes to the matter of educating our children, "cost" may involve more than we usually think it does.

Before you decide that a Christian college education for your son or daughter carries a higher price tag than does that of a nearby state school or community college, you had better think again.

A wrong choice now may cost your son his faith.

It may cost your daughter life-long freedom from dependency on alcohol and other drugs, or from the tyranny of the dollar.

That choice could cost your young people their belief in a value system founded on ultimate truth—where right and wrong exist, and actions are measured by divinely fixed standards. Otherwise, they may swallow the lie that if it works, it must be okay.

It may cost your boy the exhilarating awareness that he is made in God's image, and that his purpose in living is to know God and to enjoy Him forever.

It may cost you the price of a young person victimized by New Age thinking, Satanism, or a thousand other cults flourishing on college campuses.

It could cost them a hopeful view of the future, leading instead to a pragmatic, fatalistic despair, where suicide may be the only way out.

It may cost your girl her confidence that there really is a God, and that the Bible is His word to her.

A wrong choice now could cost them the answers to life's critical questions at a time when they can least afford to miss those answers.

It may cost you the years you have spent trying to teach that son to do right, trying to

instill within him Biblical values of right and wrong.

That choice may even cost your daughter in terms of a damaged self-esteem and broken health due to sexual experimentation outside of marriage.

It may also cost them the likelihood of a Christ-centered home and a lifetime with a Christian mate.

It could cost your church potential Sunday school teachers, deacons, pastors, and other workers who, instead, now shrug off the church as an outmoded institution irrelevant to the modern world.

In short, that "cost-effective" choice you make not to send your teenager to a Christian college *could wind up costing you your child*. You may never know that son or daughter as the person you have asked God to make him or her.

There is no way to take full measure of a Christian education in terms of dollars and cents. The "cost" which matters the most is the measure of young lives who face the future either with or without a Biblical mindset shaping who they are and how they think.

Parent, look at the *total* educational package a college offers. Your investment is an eternal one, so spend wisely. *Any choice that fails to consider that perspective costs far too much.* ■



Mr. Reid is a graduate of Free Will Baptist Bible College, earned his Master's at Bob Jones University, and is presently completing his doctoral dissertation.

He joined the FWBBC faculty in 1982. He teaches Bible and Pastoral Training courses. He also directs the college's Christian Service Department.

Mr. Reid, his wife, Carol, and their two sons, Hugh and Seth, are members of Cross Timbers Free Will Baptist Church, Nashville.



Thomas Marberry

I Thessalonians Through Philemon, The Randall House Commentary

Robert E. Picirilli, W. Stanley Outlaw, Daryl Ellis

(Edited by Robert E. Picirilli. Nashville: Randall House Publications, 1990, 447 pp., hardback, \$19.95).

With pleasure we welcome the latest volume in The Randall House Bible Commentary series. This is the first major multi-volume commentary to be published by Free Will Baptists in this century. It represents a significant commitment to the writing and publication of quality Christian literature which is true to the beliefs and practices of our denomination.

Dr. Robert Picirilli, well-known author and academic dean at Free Will Baptist Bible College, wrote the commentary on I and II Thessalonians, two of the most eschatological of Paul's epistles. He argues that I Thessalonians was the earliest of Paul's letters (written about A.D. 50). In his view, the epistle was written to encourage Thessalonian believers and to respond to certain doctrinal and practical problems which arose during the early days

of this church.

The author does a helpful analysis of major themes developed in these epistles. He recognizes the important contribution of these letters to the New Testament eschatology and devotes a special essay to their eschatological teachings.

The commentaries on the pastoral epistles are done by W. Stanley Outlaw. Dr. Outlaw has been a professor at Free Will Baptist Bible College for 25 years. This is his first contribution to the commentary. He notes that authorship of these epistles has long been a matter of controversy in New Testament scholarship. He ably defends the traditional Pauline authorship of these letters.

Since these three epistles were written after the period of time described in Acts, it is difficult to reconstruct the exact situation which produced them. The author exam-

ines information which can be known from the letters themselves and from early church tradition.

Dr. Outlaw analyzes important Greek terms and grammatical constructions found in these epistles. The most helpful part is his analysis of qualifications of church officers such as bishops and deacons.

Reverend Daryl Ellis who pastors Butterfield FWB Church in Aurora, Illinois, contributed the commentary on Philemon. His study includes a helpful discussion of slavery in the ancient world. He helps us see what this book would have meant to those who first received it. His suggestions for preaching and teaching from Philemon are most helpful. This little epistle is of greater theological significance than generally recognized.

I challenge every Free Will Baptist pastor to make this commentary set a part of his library. ■

BEYOND BELIEF



TEEN SCENE

Oklahoma Youth Conference

The annual Oklahoma State Youth Conference met on the campus of Hillsdale FWB College November 3. Some 368 teens, youth sponsors and college students gathered for a Spirit-filled morning of fellowship. The theme, "Light Your World," centered around the message of Matthew 5:14-16. Jonathan Thigpen delivered the keynote message challenging the youth to be disciples for Christ and that they are responsible for telling their world about Christ.

Nine youth pastors led seminars on "What is a Disciple?" This time provided a chance for small group discussions. The New Life Singers and the Drama Team from Hillsdale rounded out the morning with a short service. Jim Lauthern introduced the four Oklahoma teens who will be members of the 1991 National Youth Evangelistic Team. Conference participants were presented "Light Your World" T-shirts as a reminder of what they had learned.

The conference is a ministry of the Oklahoma FWB Christian Education Board. Paul Allen, Jeff Stegall and Brad Ransom coordinated the event.

Missouri Youth Conference

Missouri youth and youth workers held their annual fall conference at Windermere Conference Center at Lake of the Ozarks. There were 396 youth

and adults in attendance for the two-day event, November 9-10.

Excitement grew as vans, buses and cars rolled in on Friday afternoon. The opening event was a concert by Samson and Higher Ground. After the concert everyone gathered for fellowship and pizza.

Saturday featured a well-rounded program of seminars, special services and free time. Seminars were conducted for youth and adults. The seminar leaders were Jeff Turnbough, Dean Stone and Toby Jenkins.

Eric Rochester, Kansas City Youth for Christ director, was the featured speaker. He challenged the youth to live up to the theme of the conference, "No Compromise."

There were approximately 40 decisions at the close of the final service.

This annual conference is planned by the Missouri Youth Ministries Board. The dates for the 1991 conference are set for November 8-9.

Bethlehem Youth Retreat

Youth from Bethlehem FWB Church in Ashland City, Tennessee, conducted their eighth annual fall retreat at Happy Hill Camp. Tad Stone served as coordinator.

They invited the Phillip's Chapel Youth Evangelistic Team from Springdale, Arkansas, to share with them in the retreat. The fellowship of the two youth groups brought a close relationship that provided unity of pur-

pose during the retreat. Activities also included softball, volleyball and a scavenger hunt.

But the youth's attention was not focused on the games and the good food. Their attention was directed toward the two services and the fireside testimonies. Three teens were saved during the Saturday evening concert presented by FWBBC students Mark Stone, Donald Myers and Eric Thomsen. A charge was given by Bible College student Bryan Bowerman to go tell someone about Jesus and to start a new spirit among their friends.

People had prayed about the Sunday morning service. The Youth Evangelistic Team ministered through music and drama and the Holy Spirit touched many lives. The retreat closed with an altar full of teens and adults committing themselves to serve the Lord. ■



Robert E. Picirilli

The Parable of the Shrewd Steward

Luke 16:1-12

Of all the parables unique to Luke, this is one of the strangest. On the surface, it appears that Jesus advised His followers to make friends with money—with *unrighteous* money at that—and that this had something to do with their welcome into heaven. But before we treat the *application* of the parable (vv. 9-12), we need to examine more closely the parable itself (vv. 1-8).

In summary: a certain rich man called his steward to account for wasteful management of the estate. Realizing that he was about to lose his position of trust, the steward rounded up his master's debtors and arranged reductions of their indebtedness. He did this so that those debtors would feel obligated to him and provide for him when he lost his standing with his master. When the master learned what had happened, he grudgingly (?) commended the steward for his shrewdness.

The parable is easier to summarize than to explain; there is more than one way of understanding exactly what the steward was doing. The traditional view is that he was acting corruptly, falsifying the accounts, and that this shrewd foresight was being commended, not his morality. Jesus certainly could draw lessons from the behavior of sinful people.

The other view is that what the steward did was proper—or at least legal. After all, the steward was the manager of affairs and the “adjustments” in the bills may have been within his prerogatives. Perhaps the reduction was a canceling of the interest. Some suggest that the interest would have been the

steward's own “commission” on the account and that he was sacrificing this in order to curry the debtors' good graces. If this were the case, the master's commendation need not be grudgingly given.

Probably it isn't necessary to decide between these two views, after all, the application is the important thing. Apparently verse 9 is the primary application, while verses 10-13 provide secondary application and further development of the theme. But what, after all, does verse 9 mean?

Some have suggested that all Jesus means is that one should emulate the steward's wisdom in recognizing imminent disaster and prepare accordingly. But the verse says more than that, and a few details help us sort it out. “Unrighteous mammon” does not need to mean money dishonestly gained; all it means here is the money that is minted as part of this unrighteous world's system, “worldly wealth.” And “of the mammon” clearly means “by means of the mammon.”

What Jesus was saying, then, is simply this: Christians must realize that the wealth of this world is good only for the temporary life of the here and now. (This is true whether the correct textual reading is “when we fail” or “when it—the world's money—fails.”) What we ought to do, then, is use this world system's money for purposes that will benefit the kingdom of God, which is eternal.

We can take this even a step farther. Jesus may well mean that we should use money as a means of “winning” friends for ourselves for the kingdom of God, friends—converts to Christ—who will join in

the throng that welcomes us into that eternal kingdom. That way, we can actually “outsmart” the “children of this world” who are generally wiser than we are (v. 8a). We can use *their* monetary system as a means of procuring something that outlasts this life in which they have invested everything.

Without space for detail on verses 10-13, we may observe that Jesus picks up two themes that have been suggested in the parable and develops them. First is the importance of faithfulness in stewardship, whether in much or little. Apparently the “much” corresponds to heavenly wealth and the “little” to worldly wealth. He expects us to be faithful stewards in both realms, and stewards have to give account.

Second is the matter of using worldly wealth. Christians must use it wisely and faithfully, and this will include using it for general gain rather than as sinners use it.

May the Lord help us to use (and not abuse; cf. I Cor. 7:31) the things of this world wisely, to be faithful stewards even in that, and thus to “purchase” the eternal things of the kingdom of God. ■

CHRISTIAN EDUCATION

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Nashville, Tennessee 37205
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RELIGIOUS COMMUNITY NEWS

CLeaR-TV Ends Boycott of Burger King Chain

TUPELO, MS (EP)—Christian Leaders for Responsible Television (CLeaR-TV) has announced an end to their boycott of Burger King, as of Nov. 1. CLeaR-TV had called for a one-year boycott of Burger King, but agreed to end the boycott after Burger King showed a willingness to be more selective in its sponsorship of television spots which feature sex, violence, profanity and anti-Christian stereotyping.

CLeaR-TV called the boycott against Burger King after its monitoring in spring of 1990 showed that the fast-food chain helped sponsor two-thirds more sex, violence and profanity than the average advertiser. According to CLeaR-TV's study, Burger King helped sponsor 18.85 incidents of sex, violence or profanity with every 30-second commercial it ran.

The decision to end the boycott was made after Burger King announced plans to begin a national advertising effort in support of traditional values. On October 28 the chain began running ads in daily newspapers which affirm traditional values.

The Lord Blessing China, Says Chinese Leader

HONG KONG (EP)—Although the events that culminated in the massacre at Tienanmen Square shocked and stunned the world, "the Lord is still blessing China," according to a Chinese Christian leader, "in a very hidden way."

The incident at Tienanmen Square and the upcoming transition of power in Hong Kong (in 1997 the British Crown colony will be restored to Chinese rule) has caused upheaval in the country, and Chinese people, particularly scholars, are trying to get out. But the vacancies they leave behind will provide ample opportunities for Christians to go into the country and be a presence of Christianity, according to Philemon Choi, director of Breakthrough Ministries in Hong Kong.

Since the June 4, 1989, massacre at Tienanmen Square, the exodus of Chinese from the country, often through the more open door of Hong Kong, has accelerated. That exodus will create about 3,000 vacant posts in Hong Kong universities by 1995, Choi estimates, pointing out that these positions could be filled by Western Christians. "That would be very strategic, because you would be reaching really the cream of Hong Kong, and would be in a good position to lead them to Christ."

Choi said that he sees the Lord at work in China, and encourages Christians to be a part of it, even without going to the country. "Global intercession for this vast land, and for Hong Kong during the transition, would be very crucial and would help us to have the spiritual energy and power to go through this very testing period," he said.

"For the past year or so, there is a very obvious sense of openness among the non-Christians towards the gospel," Choi said. "If the door opens up, we might even have opportunities to serve the young people in mainland China."

Nearly 700 Soviet Christians Arrive in U.S.

WHEATON, IL (EP)—Nearly 700 Soviet Christians flew into the U.S. on World Relief "Freedom Flights," the first to arrive in the country after nearly a year of fighting government red tape—not from the Soviet Union, but from the U.S.

For nearly a year thousands of Soviet Christians who expected to emigrate to the West under new, relaxed Soviet guidelines have been stranded in their own country waiting for restrictions in the U.S. to ease. When U.S. policy suddenly changed in October 1989, thousands of Soviet families who had decided to leave had already given up homes and jobs to apply for emigration. Up to that point, they had been allowed relatively free access to the U.S., but suddenly the stream of Soviet immigrants dried up.

"Since October [1989], many families that decided to emigrate have been forced to split up, live in bus stations or with relatives because they gave up homes to emigrate," said Eugene Lyubov Irkhina, who left his home in the city of Krasnodar to re-settle in Idaho.

Joseph Peter Pynkevich, one of the World Relief's most recent arrivals, said that a year ago when he applied to emigrate, "I was fired from my job immediately. I had been a plumber for 25 years. Our children were expelled from school and our house burned down."

Many of the refugees, most of them evangelical Christians, are fleeing long-standing religious persecution. In spite of recent encouraging changes in Soviet policy and law allowing for religious freedom, many of them believe they must take advantage of present opportunities to flee to the West before reforms are set back and religious restrictions restored.

Some U.S. Soldiers Convert to Islam

DHAHRAN, Saudi Arabia (EP)—An Islamic expert hired by the U.S. military to reach troops in the Middle East about Islamic culture in Saudi Arabia has seen an unexpectedly high number of U.S. military personnel express an interest in converting to Islam.

At least 25 soldiers, including Catholics, Protestants and others, have converted to the Islamic faith since taking part in informational meetings with Muhammad Akkas, who considers himself a missionary of sorts. Akkas thinks of himself as an Islamic "propagator" who knows how to instruct those who express an interest in Islam.

Akkas, a graduate of Waynesburg College in Pennsylvania, was working as a computer programmer at the Aramco oil firm in Saudi Arabia when the Army hired him to educate troops about Islamic culture. Akkas travels by helicopter to military bases in Saudi Arabia where, he says, his lectures are well-received. "All of us are born Moslem," he told Laurence Jolidon, a *USA Today* journalist in Saudi Arabia. "Some of us have to be reminded of that....If Islam is only presented to people they will see the correctness of it."

PTL Supporters Seek \$757 Million from Jim Bakker

CHARLOTTE, NC (EP)—One year after PTL Ministry founder Jim Bakker was sentenced to 45 years in prison for fraud, a civil trial opened in which supporters of the ministry are seeking more than \$757 million from the fallen televangelist.

In opening arguments, an attorney for PTL donors told the jury that Bakker committed "management fraud" in asking his followers to send money.

"We represent some 145,000 investors who were told that for a \$1,000 investment they would receive the right to stay for four days and three nights in...[PTL hotels]," said attorney Tom Anderson.

In the suit, thousands of former ministry "partners" are accusing Bakker of conspiring with others to misuse ministry funds. The suit also charges that Bakker and top aides "laundered" money before spending it on themselves. ■



Jack Williams

The Blue-Eyed Gun

Yesterday a man pointed an 87-year-old gun at me and pulled the trigger. The gun had blue eyes. Here's how it came down.

I had driven across town to check some printing a company did for us. As I marched down a corridor, I spotted Richard M. "Pek" Gunn, Tennessee's Poet Laureate, sitting alone at a table. I threw up my hand in greeting and said, "Good morning, Mr. Gunn." He spoke and waved back.

Now you must understand that "Pek" Gunn is Tennessee's answer to Hannibal, Missouri's Mark Twain. His poetry fills souvenir shops and bookstores from the Mississippi River to the Blue Ridge Mountains.

Yessir, "Pek" Gunn is the real McCoy—a nationally-published author with two books and racks of poetry to his credit. The homespun philosopher might have to stand on a washtub to look you in the eye, but he casts a long shadow in the Volunteer State. All of which makes what happened next unforgettable.

After I finished my business with the printer and started to leave, I found "Pek" Gunn sitting in a chair next to the exit. Ham that I am, I could not ignore him on my way out.

"Hello again, Mr. Gunn," I said. His response stopped me in my tracks.

"Call me 'Pek,' not Mr. Gunn," he smiled. Piercing blue eyes flashed up from a face that was part pixie, part elf, glowing with the light of fourscore and seven years.

"But, Mr. Gunn, my dad would whip me if I called you 'Pek,'" I said.

His eyes twinkled. A quick grin

later, he said, "Well, then, call me 'Uncle Pek.'"

What could I do? It took that little man all of 10 seconds to cut through his fame and my awe. Not a shred of ego. He wasn't impressed with himself and didn't expect anybody else to be either. But I was.

I learned something important from "Uncle Pek" that day. A man doesn't need to use his reputation or his age to command respect. He took time to reach out to a stranger when a nod of his head would have been enough.

With no more than a dozen words he pulled me into his circle of admirers. It cost him a smile and a kind word. It gave me a new appreciation for the potential of gray-haired Americans.

Do the rest of us draw the circle of love around others? Some don't do too well, I fear. Others use old age as an excuse to be short-tempered. Or they grow bitter at their own failings and fret over lost battles, untraveled roads, unrealized dreams.

Not Uncle "Pek" Gunn. The same practical approach to life that made him a Tennessee legend causes him to live today well. Maybe we need to place that key in the hands of all older adults—learn to live today well.

We can't re-live yesterday. That's gone. We can't pre-live tomorrow. That's only a promise. We have today. That's reality.

Smile today. Speak a kind word today. Lend a hand today. Make a difference today. Don't stop growing.

Huntington, West Virginia pastor R. F. Smith, Jr., tells about the day 80-year-old "Mr. Joe" burst

into his office wanting to borrow a typing book. It seems that Mr. Joe wanted to learn to type. When asked why, he said, "You just never know when you'll need it."

Six months later a small pulpwood company opened an office in town. They needed someone to answer the phone and do some typing. Mr. Joe got the job. At age 80.

The oldest Christians should be the best examples. The most spiritually mature should be the gray-haired. Those who've walked longest with God should be our wisest, most caring and most forgiving. Our brightest lights should be those turned on decades ago. Our saltiest salt should pour from older shakers.

Wayne Grudem, professor at Trinity Evangelical Divinity School, said "Growing old is God's wise plan for our sanctification." That means coming to terms with our own aging.

Men like "Pek" Gunn never seem to waste time trying to beat the clock of aging. On the other hand, Shirley, who has known "Uncle Pek" for 18 years, may be onto something when she chuckles, "He doesn't know he's old!"

Sh-h-h....Let's not tell him. That blue-eyed Gunn never fires a blank!

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(1 Corinthians 4:2 NASV)

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