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Laymen
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Laymen



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Where Are the
Men?

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Lay Leadership

.....
Good People: Bad
Things

.....
Getting Real

.....
You Can Beat
Temptation



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OCTOBER 1991

VOLUME 38, NO. 10

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Melvin Worthington

The Stewardship Summit

The December 2-3 Leadership Conference in Nashville will be a "Stewardship Summit." During the 1991 national convention, delegates approved the Budget Committee's report and its recommendation that the Leadership Conference probe stewardship. This long-overdue meeting will examine our financial structure and support at every level—local church, district, state, national.

This summit gives us an opportunity to discuss a denomination-wide funding strategy. The Bible is not silent on the subject of stewardship, neither should we be.

Free Will Baptist leaders must develop a financial system to fund and distribute resources to all our ministries. Since I started preaching in 1957, no such broad meeting of leaders has addressed this important area. The time has come.

As a denomination, there is not one financial practice that we all agree on. The Cooperative Plan adopted in the 1950's has never been fully implemented. While it works well when tried, bickering at every level keeps it from being the force it could be. This excellent plan has been ignored by many Free Will Baptist pastors and leaders.

Designated giving has enjoyed success in our movement. Many prefer this method of support for any number of reasons. Some refuse to use any other method and oppose suggestions that other

support methods could be successful.

Direct giving—by-passing local, district and state associations—to national ministries is another method used by some, again for a variety of reasons. Some who prefer this method believe that the denominational structure is unimportant. This method emphasizes the local church and its relationship to national ministries.

During the stewardship summit we will analyze all our giving practices. Are they scriptural, sufficient, systematic? Do our practices strengthen the movement? Why do we support the way we do? What models do we use? Can we blend giving methods to support administrative staff, missions and education?

Problems exist throughout our denomination regarding finances. Shortage of funds remains the cry at every level. Some ministries have more than they need while others struggle to exist. Surely we can find a solution.

Our support often results from

Secretary's Schedule

- October 6-9 Great Bridge FWB Church
Chesapeake, Va.
- October 13 First FWB Church
McAlester, Okla.
- October 14-17 Oklahoma State Association
McAlester, Okla.
- October 20-25 Heritage FWB Church
Fredericksburg, Va.
- October 30—
November 1 Florida State Association

what interests us or what we like. While this is our prerogative, we have a responsibility to all ministries.

Perhaps in discussing the problems we can reach a consensus on how to financially support all the work. All our work deserves support. Inadequate and inconsistent support hinders our growth.

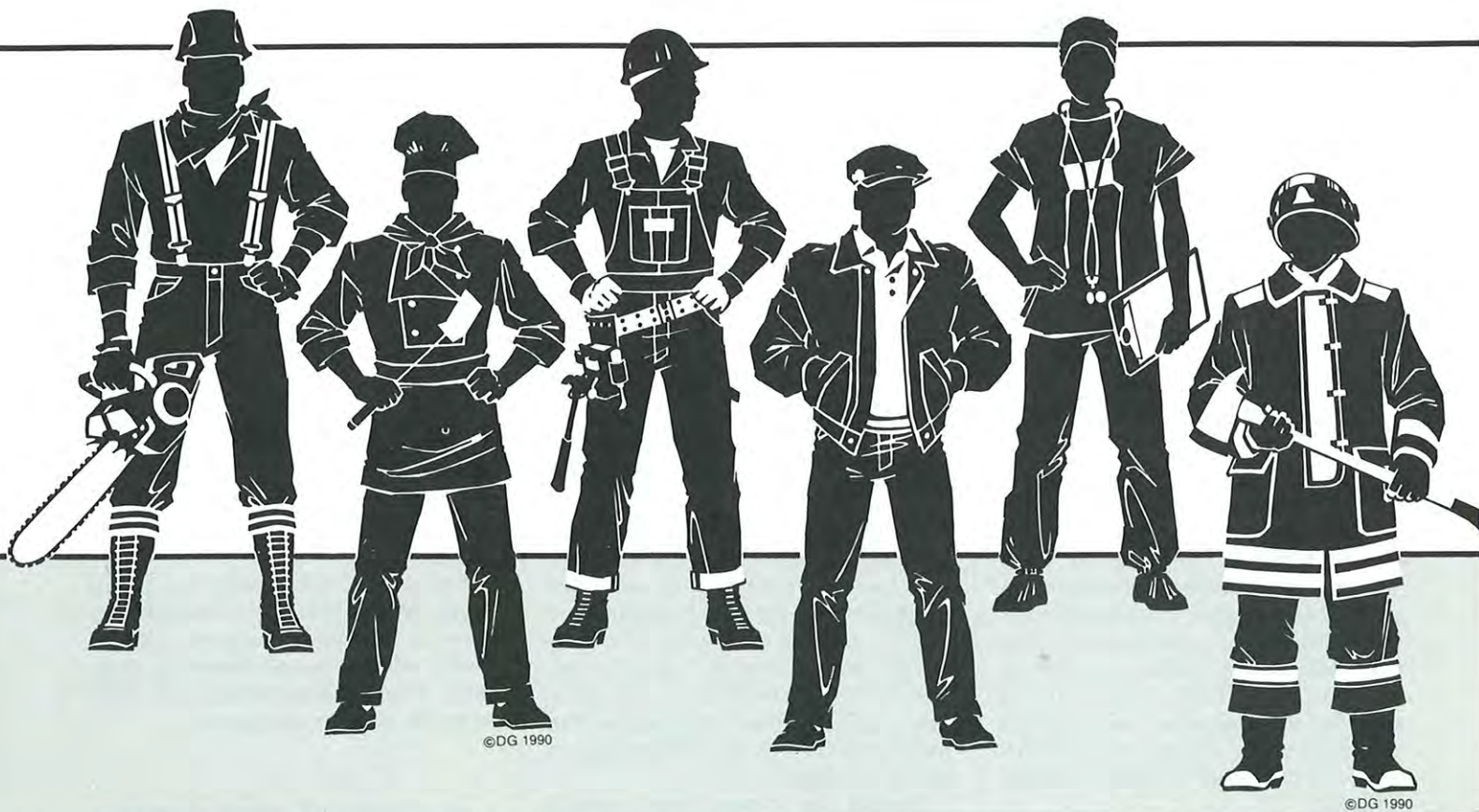
Stewardship Summit attendees will analyze a variety of approaches to developing financial strategy. Perhaps one of the greatest benefits will be understanding why we use a particular method of giving.

We need not continue arguing over plans. Perhaps we need a combination of methods. We need a strategy designed to provide funds for every ministry, yet recognizing the special burdens of individuals.

One thing remains clear. We certainly need a plan which can be promoted and participated in by every church, district and state association. Pastors, elected leaders and membership should be able to endorse and explain the plan.

The bottom line remains TDS—Total Denominational Support. The Stewardship Summit will be a pivotal point for us.

Pray for wisdom for denominational leadership as they meet for the first Stewardship Summit. God's work done in God's way according to God's Word will never lack sufficient resources in money, methods or men. ■



Where are the Men?

By Wendell Walley

The gospel has always been known for its universal appeal. Christians take pride in the fact that Oxford scholars and California surfers alike are compelled by the claims of Christ. Motown mechanics and across-town yuppies stand side by side on level ground at the foot of the cross.

But a glance around many congregations on Sunday morning is more than a little disturbing. Men are conspicuously absent, setting off nervous questions as to the root cause of the imbalance between the sexes.

Is Christianity inherently more attractive to women than men? Why do evangelistic efforts almost always reach a greater percentage of females than males? Why do women comprise the vast majority of Christian bookstore customers? Do tradi-

tional evangelism methods fail men?

What Research Says

Some point to modern scientific research for clues. Studies reveal that from infancy, male and female brains respond differently to their environment.

Baby girls are more alert to social "cues," thus learning to speak earlier and more fluently. Male infants are "visual-spatial" oriented, their innate curiosity making them born explorers.

Educators latch onto such research to explain why 90 percent of hyperactive children are males. It also strengthens their call for fewer classroom lectures and more hands-on learning activities. But what, if any, application can be related to contemporary methods of evangelism?

The average evangelistic appeal requires long sitting and listening, then responding. Some argue, therefore, that women clearly have the advantage, since verbal messages appeal more to them. Men, on the other hand, are predisposed to activity and experiment.

If evangelism is to catch their attention, it must be more creative and dynamic in its visual presentation. At the same time, it needs to allow for greater participation, appealing to the male need for involvement. This is one justification for Bible study groups.

Male / Female Roles

The male/female roles in society come into play at this point. Women are said to be more passive by nature than men and thus conditioned to a more submissive role. By con-

trast, men are aggressors and find submission difficult at best, if not downright distasteful.

This explains why invitations for helpless sinners doesn't get an overwhelming response from men. They are repelled by a plea for poor sinners to fall into the arms of a compassionate Savior waiting to take care of them. There could hardly be a greater affront to their fragile male ego.

Not surprisingly, women find such an appeal inviting because it is merely an extension of their traditional role of male dependence. But for any male to respond to such an appeal requires the admission of weakness since only losers have to be "taken care of."

The Obvious Facts

Maybe there is something to be learned and applied to evangelism from all of this. I leave that to the experts. But my gut reaction is to ask, "Just how were the apostles supposed to know about such complex issues 2,000 years ahead of the researchers?"

If evangelism really is that complicated and scientific, is it such a crime for failing to reach men?

It appears to me that some obvious facts have not been taken into account. Based on my limited understanding of human nature, stubborn rebellious independence is a problem for both sexes. I doubt the daughters of Eve find it any easier than the sons of Adam to vacate the throne of their lives and surrender to the absolute Lordship of Christ.

There are more women than men in society at large and an alarming increase in the number of single-parent households, usually headed by women. To this must be added a growing number of widows. Eleven out of 12 women will be widowed at some point in life; the average age of all widows is 52.

'Real' Men in Pulpit

What about the churches that aren't suffering this worrisome imbalance of the sexes? We would all do well to dust off our concept of manhood. The prevailing Rambo or macho mentality of Hollywood leaves a lot to be desired. Maleness

in the pew takes its cue from the man in the pulpit.

Real men in the pulpit still attract men, and there is no better manual on manhood than the Bible. Its greatest example drew men to Himself because He was the personification of true manhood and He offered men a challenge.

A lifetime of hard work in the carpenter's shop left Jesus with calloused hands, strong shoulders and strength of character. In true grit fashion He cracked a whip defying Temple police and stunning the power of the mighty Sanhedrin.

He was no weakling who unshirted his back to the cat-of-nine-tails then shouldered the instrument of His execution and marched toward Golgotha. He was a man who never knew the embarrassment of being haunted by the ghosts of cowardice but prayed, "Father, forgive them for they know not what they do."

Where is the man, even in this century, who is not moved by such courage and strength? Yes, the gospel still has its drawing power when strong, brave, gentle men of rugged character proclaim it from pulpits aflame with truth and holiness. But God deliver us from spineless, self-seeking crowd-pleasers who are a disgrace to grace and an insult to the Perfect Man they profess to represent.

Key to Reaching Men

I believe the key to reaching males is found in the same way Christ won His disciples. His call to energetic fishermen and busy tax collectors suggests His understanding of the male temperament. He said, "Follow Me" (Matthew 4:19), a clear call to action.

He promised, "I will make you fishers of men," a stimulating invitation to participate in His marvelously productive life. Getting to know Christ was not just passively sitting and listening. It was learning by doing, a promise of active involvement in the greatest enterprise on earth.

The best strategy for reaching males involves challenge and participation. Action attracts and participation persuades. Churches have

been too quick to hire professionals willing to usurp the job of ministering, while conveniently ignoring their biblical mandate of "perfecting [equipping] the saints," in order for them to do "the work of the ministry" (Ephesians 4:12).

Silver and gold make it tempting to find contractors to maintain facilities, while eager men with the gift of helps sit frustrated on the sidelines twiddling their thumbs in boredom. Don't be fooled by that "couch potato" next door. He won't settle for spectatorship at church. He shouldn't have to.

Lay Involvement

Unfortunately some pastors are intimidated by thinking men. Their insecurity causes them to view strong laymen as combatants rather than as co-laborers. While women meet as strangers and become sisters, men tend to meet as strangers and become swordsmen.

Still other pastors see women and children as easy targets in their desperation to stay ahead in the numbers game. Without diminishing the importance of reaching them, let us all call to mind that New Testament evangelism was "household" evangelism (Acts 11:14; 16:31; 18:8).

Pastors and churches should seek to maximize the involvement of laymen rather than feel threatened by them. Strong men gravitate toward leadership roles, otherwise there would be no need for many of the gifts of the Spirit.

Pastors and churches must become more generous and creative in their pursuit of lay involvement. After all, inspiration ceased with the book of Revelation and infallibility doesn't even belong to Popes! ■



ABOUT THE WRITER: Reverend Wendell Walley pastors Zephyr Hills Free Will Baptist Church in Asheville, North Carolina.



H. Armstrong Roberts

Lay Leadership is Serious Business

By Robert Kline

Membership in a true New Testament local church is an honor indeed. The highest honor a layman can ever receive is to be elected a leader in his church. However, none should look upon his office as a position of honor only. The responsibility to faithfully discharge one's duties in this office is perhaps as that of a pastor. There are some minimum standards for those who aspire to

an office in a local church. Many of these may be found in I Timothy 3:8, 13.

Consecrated Life

A lay leader in a local church should live a consecrated life. In doing so, his influence will not bring reproach on the church or the cause of Christ.

Paul wrote, "I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of

God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service. And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God" (Romans 12:1-2).

An unconsecrated lay leader cannot truly discharge the duties of an office in a local church.

Spiritual Vision

A lay leader in a local church must be a person of spiritual vision. A church is poor indeed if the vision of the lay leaders of that church doesn't exceed the vision of the average member.

God has an exciting plan for every one of His local churches. He has positioned it where it is in order to "build His Church." It is to be a living, powerful, growing body of believers. If this happens it will be because the pastor and the lay leaders have been transformed by a vision of what can be—no, what must be, if God is in control.

A visionless lay leader will never see the splendid power of God in a local church, and the community suffers as a result. "Where there is no vision, the people perish..." (Proverbs 29:18).

Faithful

A lay leader must be faithful to the program and events in his church. He should attend all services unless hindered by something that even the Lord would account a good reason.

It is a sad commentary on the church that is led by those who are not concerned enough to attend scheduled meetings. Progress and growth are virtually impossible.

"And let us consider one another to provoke unto love and good works: Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is; but exhorting one another: and so much the more, as ye see the day approaching" (Hebrews 10:24-25).

A lay leader should be committed to the program of his church.

Tither

A lay leader must care enough about his church to support it with his tithes and offerings. A layman that does not systematically tithe to his church is unworthy of leadership responsibilities.

I question if a local church can be effective without its leaders being committed financially. Rarely, if ever, do you find non-tithers that do not have commitment problems in other areas. Failure to consis-

tently support the local church with tithes and offerings evidence a distorted concept of biblical stewardship.

And, finances given to favorite projects should not take the place of faithfully giving tithes and offerings. This too is an erroneous concept of biblical stewardship at best, and a selfish attitude toward our possessions at worst. Remember, it all belongs to God anyway. We are only to be good stewards.

Evangelistic

A lay leader must be evangelistic and missionary in spirit. He should be deeply interested in the salvation of mankind. It is inconceivable that one would aspire to lay leadership in one of Christ's churches, and not be concerned about reaching those for whom He died.

A lay leader should set a good example in evangelism by scheduling time to visit the Christians and win others to Christ. Door to door, house to house, person to person, evangelism is still the most effective method of reaching the lost.

Call it friendship evangelism, or whatever, the unsaved must be found and witnessed to if the churches are to grow.

Cooperative

A lay leader must be cooperative with the pastor. He is God's under-shepherd where he serves. He has been called by God, yet he cannot be effective unless the laymen stand with him. The load on the back of a pastor can be lightened considerably by a supportive lay leader.

In fact, the battle is often lost because of uncooperative subordinates. Joshua was only successful in the battle when Moses' hands were raised toward heaven. Moses, the leader of Israel, became weary. His hands dropped. Joshua and his army retreated. Aaron and Hur came alongside of Moses and held up his hands. Joshua triumphed in the battle. Amalek, the enemy was defeated (Exodus 17:11, 13).

Notice, it took Moses, Joshua, Aaron and Hur in leadership positions, not Moses alone.

Transparent

A lay leader must be one of "...honest report, full of the Holy Ghost, and wisdom..." (Acts 6:3). Transparency is a rare commodity today. It is often considered counter-productive or foolish. But in spiritual leadership, transparency is necessary.

God and the whole world know we have witnessed the opposite of this on the part of prominent Christian leaders. Performance without sincerity has done a disservice to the church. Skill and expertise cannot replace honesty and transparency in the Lord's work.

Get academic excellence, but along with it, contend for spiritual wisdom, and this can only be found at the place of prayer. Appreciate achievement in secular enterprise, but remember, the values of the world often cut across the grain of spiritual values.

A success by world standards doesn't in and of itself qualify one to be a leader in the church.

First Things First

A lay leader must be one whose main business is the extension of Christ's Kingdom in the hearts of mankind. His other business is merely to provide for those of his household. He will not neglect his family in the process, but a lay leader will be zealous for the Lord's work. His priorities will be in place. In everything he does, he must be committed to the expansion of the church.

The Church is the greatest institution on earth. To be elected a lay leader in a local body of believers is a great honor. Esteem it highly. Carry out your duties prayerfully and carefully. Give yourself to it. You are a part of a spiritual army that reaches around the world. Take it seriously, for you are handling the most valuable possession of man—his eternal soul. ■

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ABOUT THE WRITER: Dr. Robert Kline is general superintendent of the Churches of Christ in Christian Union. Reprinted by permission from *Advocate*, July 1990 issue.



Automatic Pilot, Parrot or Prayer?

By Kathy Tippett Henderson

Several years ago our son, Kent, then 10 years old, dashed to answer the phone. Apparently his mind was elsewhere when he panted into the receiver, "Dear Heavenly Father...." Aghast at his own words, he dropped the phone, clasped his hands over his mouth and ran for cover under the afghan on the sofa.

I picked up the phone to apologize for him and was met with hysteria almost equal to mine. Fortunately, it was Kent's Aunt Gwen. She offered consolation with, "Would you be-

lieve I did the exact same thing one day, to the very words, when the phone interrupted my devotions?" Poor consolation for an embarrassed boy.

We all sometimes pray on automatic pilot, parroting churchy phrases, and no where is it more likely to happen than when praying publicly. We seldom identify with rosary beads and chants of, "Hail, Mary, full of grace...." Yet we too slip into the comfy snare of "vain repetition" because it's so safe.

One young man in our church peppered his prayers with, "Oh,

Lord!" We'd count them and compare tallies after service. His record was 72 in one prayer.

Imagine my husband's reaction if I greeted him, "Hi, Doug! How was your day, Doug? Mine was hectic. Washer broke, Doug, and the dog is sick. Oh, Doug, I need grocery money, Doug. By the way, Doug, I love you."

Such habits actually lead to public distraction, rather than public praying. What suggestions then might we give to those who lead us in prayer? I surveyed several church leaders,

both laity and clergy and they offered the following advice.

1. Say "we," not "I."

When praying for the group, use the plural both in speech and context of requests.

2. Be brief.

Closest praying, or lack of it, is often reflected by the length of public prayers. Longer is not necessarily a synonym for spiritual.

Jesus praised the publican's seven-word prayer, "God, be merciful to me a sinner" over the Pharisee's 34 words. It's not the length of the prayer that counts—it's the depth.

3. Pray appropriately.

It may not be necessary to pray for world events at the Sunday School ball game. However, it might be good to remember to include the food when asked to say the banquet blessing.

4. Pray to God, not to the crowd.

Focus on Him, rather than others. If we pray to impress others, our flowery words are not heard by God Who resists the proud.

5. Pray as you would speak.

Some feel that old English ("thee", "thou", "wouldst" and "shouldst") hampers clarity in prayer. Although this may be natural to older Christians, recent converts may be intimidated by it, feeling they can't pray like that. How refreshing, though, to hear the cry of the newborn to God—pure and simple.

6. Pause. Think.

Break the pattern of rote. We rattle off rapid-fire words sometimes, as if speed counts for something. Freshness might come to our public praying if we think ahead to rephrase the pattern of words. "Lead, guide and direct us" might ring sincere if we say, "Show us what You want us to do."

7. Teach children to pray aloud.

This prepares them for public praying. Adults who find it frightening to pray in a group should ask the leader not to call on them. This saves embarrassment on both parts. Training little ones can help alleviate this fear in adulthood.

8. Be transparent for the group.

Depending on the setting, it may be that public prayer time could spark fires of revival. We used to see this on our altars.

Generally, personal confessions should take place in private prayer time, yet sometimes we are too reluctant to confess our coldness or apathy. At times we should expand the closet.

9. Be spiritually-minded.

Folks who pray expecting God to bless *are* a blessing. Others who come to church out of habit, pray routine prayers. Obligatory attenders pray out of obligation. Attitude is a prayer barometer.

10. Intercede on behalf of the group.

The Sunday morning visitors may not know about "Great Aunt Mattie's gout." Some personal burdens are

shared by a group and certainly names are then appropriate.

11. Vary your pattern of prayer.

Without realizing it, we may set wrong examples in our praying. If the congregation can finish the sentence as leaders pray, it may be time to break the clichés.

Oh, how far we have strayed from the original intent of public prayer. We clog the channels with "you knows," "just bless" and "just anoint." Or we drop our tone an octave to that pious pitch somewhere below middle C. Or we rephrase our sermon, including points and alliteration. We interject, "Father, Father, Father," between every phrase. Help!

"Lord, teach us to pray." ■



ABOUT THE WRITER: Kathy Tippett Henderson is an elementary supervisor at Peninsula Christian School. The mother of three is a member of First Free Will Baptist Church, Newport News, Virginia, where her husband serves as associate pastor and minister of music.

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Good People: Bad Things

By **Tharmon Murphy**



H. Armstrong Roberts

Cord McRae has been through some tough times. He and his wife Sylvia, graduated from one of our Christian colleges and moved, with their two-year-old son, Josh, to a distant city to attend seminary. Hopes ran high as they prepared for a life of service in the Lord's work.

Cord's ambition and calling was to be a pastor-teacher. Sylvia was especially gifted in music, teaching and administration of Christian education. For several months they happily engaged in preparations for future ministry.

Suddenly, things began falling apart. Cord was laid off from his part-time job. Then Sylvia became ill, missed some classes and was unable to work at her part-time job. Josh broke an arm when he fell off the back porch. Someone ran a stop sign and damaged their car.

Then the really bad news came: Sylvia was diagnosed with terminal cancer. Cord was devastated. He dropped out of school and tended Sylvia while doing odd jobs to keep food on the table. Bills piled sky high. Five months later, Sylvia died.

With Sylvia gone, more bills than it seemed he could ever pay and with his heart no longer in preparation for the ministry, Cord seemed to enter a dense fog. He was confused and filled with self-doubts.

He kept asking himself, "Why has all this happened to me? Is it because God doesn't love me? Does God even care? Is God not able to take care of His children?" He was hurting and his heart was broken.

For consolation, Cord tuned in a famous preacher on television. By coincidence the media evangelist preached that day on reasons Christians suffer. He said that Christians suffer personal tragedies because they do not have enough faith or because they do not pray enough.

That didn't do much to alleviate Cord's self-doubts.

The next Sunday he sat in church, again hoping to find some answers and some comfort. But to his dismay, his pastor's sermon struggled to the conclusion that Christians are made to suffer because they are guilty of sin. He left the service hurt and more confused than ever.

Proof-Text Answers

Cord is not alone in his struggle to find an answer to why bad things happen to good people. His pastor and the TV evangelist are not alone in giving answers which leave the suffering Christian with deep feelings of guilt and frustration.

After all, the notion that personal tragedy is the result of personal sin is deeply rooted in us. We love to show examples and illustrations from the Bible which, we think, prove the point.

Didn't Miriam suffer temporary leprosy because of her complaining (Numbers 12:1-10)? Wasn't Moses' failure to enter the Promised Land caused by striking the rock instead of speaking to it as God commanded (Numbers 20:1-12)? Wasn't Jerusalem destroyed and the Jews taken into captivity to Babylon as punishment for their sins (II Chronicles 36:15-17)? And were not several disasters in the life of David punishment for his sin with Bathsheba (II Samuel 1 2:7-14)?

Ancient Error

We moderns are not alone in thinking that all personal tragedy is the result of personal sin. Many people in Bible days believed it too. When Job lost his wealth, his family and then his health, his so-called friends came with an explanation: the calamities which had befallen Job were a result of his sins.

His friends had three basic pre-suppositions about suffering: 1) All suffering results from sin. 2) God punishes each act of sin with a penalty which corresponds to the sin. 3) Suffering is always an evidence of personal guilt on the part of the one suffering. However, Job's friends were wrong.

Even Jesus' own disciples, who were preachers in training, believed that all personal tragedy was the result of personal sin. Encountering a man who had been blind from birth, they asked Jesus, "Rabbi, who sinned, this man or his parents, that he was born blind?" (John 9:1 NIV).

Jesus quickly dispelled the idea that the man's unfortunate case was caused by sin, either his or his parents. He said, "Neither this man nor his parents, but this happened so

that the work of God might be displayed in his life" (John 9:3 NIV).

Luke 13 Insight

An important passage of scripture on this subject is Luke 13:1-5. Two calamitous tragedies come into view, one a mass murder and the other a horrible accident.

The murder involved some Galileans who had come to Jerusalem to worship. While they were offering their sacrifices at the Temple, they were struck down, upon orders from Pilate. The blood of these Galileans was literally mingled with their sacrifices.

The accident occurred inside the southeast portion of Jerusalem's wall, near the pool of Siloam. The tower of Siloam had fallen, crushing 18 people to death.

The people to whom Jesus spoke clearly believed that those who had tragically died were worse sinners than other Galileans or Jerusalemites, and, therefore, had met such horrible deaths. But Jesus disagreed with them. He said that the murdered Galileans were not worse sinners than other Galileans, and that the accident victims were not more guilty than others living in Jerusalem.

It is the common experience of mankind, Christians included, that we pay hospital and doctor bills, wrestle with business failures, suffer heartaches and eventually die.

Look at the Apostle Paul for instance. He suffered several shipwrecks, imprisonments, floggings, frequent dangers, hunger and agonizing discomforts during the course of his ministry (II Corinthians 11:23-27), and eventually was executed. Yet there is no indication that these sufferings were punishments for wrongdoing, or because of the lack of either faith or prayer.

Three Ways to Help

How can we minister to God's children when they experience the losses, heartaches and tragedies of life? There are several ways.

First, stop attributing their sufferings to some wrongdoing or spiritual failure in their lives. This would help

relieve the burden of guilt and frustration they are often needlessly made to carry.

Second, help them see that God may have some special purpose in their suffering. Look at Job again. His suffering was a test to prove that he would remain faithful to God even in the face of great adversity.

There may even be several purposes in a crisis. An example is the Israelites, as they fled Egypt, hemmed in on one side by the Red Sea and by the pursuing Egyptian army on the other. When it appeared that they were facing certain annihilation, God suddenly opened a passage across the sea and allowed them to escape. The miraculous crossing of the Red Sea is considered by the Jews to be the single greatest miracle in their history.

We can see at least four purposes God had in allowing the crisis: 1) A testimony to the Egyptians of God's existence and power (Exodus 14:17-18). 2) A witness to Israel of God's power and to fortify them for future trials (Exodus 14:31). 3) Authentication of Moses as their leader (Exodus 14:31). 4) To put fear in the hearts of the Canaanites and make the conquest of Canaan easier (Joshua 2:8-11).

Third, we can minister to God's children during their bad times by giving spiritual, moral and material support. They need comfort, encouragement, understanding and compassionate assistance.

Fortunately, Cord received all these things during the first few weeks following Sylvia's death. Family, friends and church members rallied to his side out of Christian care for him, even paying large sums on his medical bills. As a result of their ministry, he is back in seminary and on track for a lifetime of ministry to others. ■

Cooperative Channel Contributions July 1991

RECEIPTS:

State	Designated	CO-OP (Undesignated)	Total	June '90	Yr. To Date
Alabama	\$ 320.26	\$ 61.43	\$ 381.69	\$ 1,147.14	\$ 2,879.57
Arizona	.00	.00	.00	.00	692.90
Arkansas	62.07	5,982.19	6,044.26	4,334.24	39,853.26
California	.00	1,351.82	1,351.82	909.98	8,023.81
Colorado	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00
Delaware	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00
Florida	155.36	195.77	351.13	293.78	9,765.61
Georgia	6,647.34	934.50	7,581.84	7,964.97	64,073.02
Hawaii	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00
Idaho	.00	.00	.00	90.52	59.78
Illinois	8,170.87	1,623.10	9,793.97	12,885.77	54,804.50
Indiana	556.16	85.04	641.20	504.09	4,687.82
Kansas	.00	68.61	68.61	110.79	389.38
Kentucky	.00	50.00	50.00	10.00	888.33
Maryland	.00	1,126.95	1,126.95	1,276.90	3,593.56
Michigan	3,538.73	2,481.66	6,020.39	4,548.96	33,589.25
Mississippi	168.20	546.78	714.98	817.69	3,840.82
Missouri	17,045.44	.00	17,045.44	7,630.84	61,829.09
New Mexico	.00	.00	.00	.00	1,429.80
North Carolina	728.05	400.00	1,128.05	1,978.07	13,491.14
Ohio	353.00	2,081.00	2,434.00	2,805.00	19,798.00
Oklahoma	40,270.20	7,602.15	47,872.35	18,580.01	289,897.03
South Carolina	23,389.27	227.84	23,617.11	12,576.75	82,730.89
Tennessee	3,376.79	1,231.44	4,608.23	3,206.41	21,653.81
Texas	6,810.83	361.68	7,172.51	2,477.44	64,517.71
Virginia	265.75	25.00	290.75	205.13	2,290.17
West Virginia	4,898.81	.00	4,898.81	3,018.80	20,824.49
Canada	.00	86.97	86.97	365.31	86.97
Northwest Assoc.	.00	35.86	35.86	21.57	147.09
Other (Computer)	.00	.00	.00	.00	.27
Totals	\$116,757.13	\$26,559.79	\$143,316.92	\$87,760.16	\$805,838.07

DISBURSEMENTS:

Executive Office	\$ 8,940.38	\$12,680.89	\$ 21,621.27	\$ 20,166.65	\$151,348.93
Foreign Missions	76,573.34	3,192.13	79,765.47	41,149.01	420,271.29
FWBBC	6,286.76	3,192.13	9,478.89	5,627.29	53,420.91
Home Missions	19,145.29	2,498.18	21,643.47	14,478.87	122,044.34
Retirement & Insurance	1,158.80	1,943.03	3,101.83	1,737.98	15,120.36
Master's Men	1,113.77	1,943.03	3,056.80	1,743.61	15,359.41
Commission for					
Theological Integrity	51.48	69.40	120.88	73.54	736.15
FWB Foundation	771.20	832.73	1,603.93	1,343.95	9,742.17
Historical Commission	48.72	69.40	118.12	62.72	707.96
Music Commission	38.07	69.40	107.47	71.83	541.66
Radio & TV Commission	38.07	69.40	107.47	63.80	724.47
Hillsdale FWB College	1,955.63	.00	1,955.63	598.67	10,648.19
Other	635.62	.07	635.69	642.24	5,172.23
Totals	\$116,757.13	\$26,559.79	\$143,316.92	\$87,760.16	\$805,838.07



ABOUT THE WRITER: Reverend Thurmon Murphy pastors First Free Will Baptist Church in Wichita Falls, Texas. He serves as clerk of the Texas State Association and editor of *The Texas Challenge*.



Betty's Story

By James Pittman III

Betty with her two children walked slowly past the church that day. The pastor was working in the yard, and she shyly glanced to see if he would notice her, or speak. She had every reason in the world to feel that he wouldn't. No one had ever cared for her. All she had known in her 30 years was abandonment, abuse, sorrow and pain. Why would any of these church folk care about her?

But at that very moment the Holy Spirit directed the pastor to notice Betty. She had a little girl look of shyness and a hint of apprehension as he stepped toward her. Years of experience and that special "preacher insight" told him much about her.

Unhappiness, frustration, embarrassment and hopelessness were written on her face. However, the preacher's smile and friendly greeting quickly put Betty at ease. His main concern? He wanted Betty and her two children to visit the church Sunday. Her response? Yes, she would come to church that Sunday and bring her children!

That first Sunday she nervously walked toward the church hand in hand with her son and daughter. This was going to be a new experience for her—going to church. She wondered if anyone would greet her, if anyone would guess about her past. But soon all those apprehensions faded away.

The pastor and his family, as well as the members of the church, all reached out to her to make her feel wanted and loved. They invited her often to their homes. They even told her that they loved her. For the first time in Betty's life God seemed near to her and reaching out to her.

But in spite of all the love and kindness shown, Betty did not respond to the gospel at first. It took months of preparing her heart through love, kindness and prayer before she began to yield to the wooing of the Holy Spirit. Months during which she saw her daughter, Jessica, saved and baptized, and during which she was entrusted with the responsibility of custodial care at the church.

And then it began to happen! Betty began to see that all along God had loved her, that it was God behind her moving next door to the church, and that God led the preacher to talk to her so kindly that first day.

It now dawned on Betty why these people loved her so. It was because God loved her and was showing her through all these people and circumstances how much He loved her.

At last the time had come. Betty visited the pastor in his office. It was a good visit, but it was late and the preacher needed to leave. He rose from his desk to go, but Betty impulsively reached out and touched his arm.

"Pastor," she said, "please don't leave now."

He stopped, looked at her and quietly asked, "Betty, you're ready now, aren't you? You are ready to trust Christ as your Savior."

Through tear-stained eyes she saw again those Bible verses that now were so familiar. She dropped to her knees to call on the Savior, who all along had loved her, and now would save her.

(Betty Norris was saved at Freedom Free Will Baptist Church of Havelock, N.C. where she and her daughter, Jessica, are faithful members.) ■

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ABOUT THE WRITER: Reverend James A. Pittman III pastors Freedom Free Will Baptist Church in Havelock, North Carolina. Reprinted from the *Free Will Baptist Witness*, January-March 1991 issue.



Oppression or Opportunity?

By Patricia Collins

When a visitor to our church remarked to a member, "I sense a spirit of physical oppression in your church," I was dismayed. Though I realized our small congregation had more than the usual number of people with disabilities (mostly children), I had never considered us "oppressed."

I tried to disregard the comment. After all, the background of that particular visitor hinted that our theology might not agree in many areas anyway. But the thought kept returning, rolling around in my mind. *Were we "oppressed"? Were the Lord's blessings being withheld from us? That didn't seem to make sense.*

Most of the handicapped children in our church were there because their families had been reached through the church. I wanted to believe that these families had been touched because of a love and acceptance they found in our midst.

In an effort to deal with the dis-

concerting feeling the remark had created, I decided one Sunday to take a close, reflective look at our group of "special" people.

Kevin finds me before Sunday School begins. Born with Williams Syndrome, Kevin's 13-year-old body and mind have suffered much from the onslaught of the disease. "See my medal!" he calls, holding his bronze medal from the Special Olympics out in front of him as he troops down the church aisle.

"That's wonderful," I smile.

In reply Kevin puts his arm around me, "I love you," he says in his uneven and throaty way.

"I love you, too," I tell him and put my arms around his thin frame. But the hug is hardly complete before Kevin sees another friend with whom to share his treasure. Standing in the afterglow of Kevin's love, all I can think of is, "blessing."

As everyone merges onto the stairs after the opening assembly I feel a tug at my skirt. I look down to see 7-year-old Nicholas, his blonde

hair in a buzz, his blue eyes dancing.

"Hey, you!" I tease in mock irritation. Nicky, who has cerebral palsy, gives me a big grin. I notice that two more teeth have gone the way of all baby teeth.

"Hey, you know what, Sistew Twish?"

Even before I answer I know it will be quite a tale. As we walk to our classes Nicky chatters on happily. Suddenly I'm struck with the realization that I'm understanding everything he is saying. When his mother was saved at our church three years ago I understood little of Nicky's halting speech. I find myself still smiling even after Nicky has disappeared into his class. The word, "precious," comes to my mind.

As the worship service starts my eyes light on 8-year-old Donna, unloading the contents of her purse. When she first began coming to Sunday School on the church van it took us all some time to adjust to the highs and lows of Donna's moods.

An accident as an infant left

Donna with neurological damage. What a rewarding moment it was on Sunday morning not long ago as Donna walked unevenly to the front of the church to give her heart to Jesus. How "valuable" her love must be to the Lord.

As the congregation begins to sing I hear one voice clearly above the rest. My husband's eyes meet mine and we smile a little. Our daughter Mindy loves to sing! The seizure disorder which has been a part of her life for 10¹/₂ of her 12 years, has not robbed her of her song, her love of life, nor her trust in God. Rather than a stumbling block, her physical problems pulled our family down paths of deeper faith and trust, and widened our compassion.

I consider all this as people fellowship after the service. "No!" I tell myself, "I will not accept that we are 'oppressed'." Rather, I choose to believe that God has given us wider opportunities and a greater chance for humble service.

But who serves whom? Truth be told, these special young people minister to others more than we could ever give them in return. They are, in fact, my teachers. The frail bodies, the struggles for life itself, remind me of the Lord's words to Paul, "My grace is sufficient for thee: for my strength is made perfect in weakness."

Their smiles, a child's uncomplaining joy of living, uplifts me as I see them "rejoicing in hope, patient in tribulation...."

As I walk to the parking lot I see Kevin approach a visitor. I drive away with his voice ringing in my ears: "Hi! I'm Kevin. What's your name? I like you." ■

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ABOUT THE WRITER: Mrs. Patricia Collins is a member of First Free Will Baptist Church in Emporia, Kansas, where her husband, Larry, pastors.

Contact Has Moved!

**New Address:
P.O. Box 5002
Antioch, TN 37011-5002**

Telephone: 615/731-6812

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- **Church bulletins for Currently**
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- **News releases**
- **Subscriptions—New, renewal or address changes**

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our new location:**

- **Foreign Missions**
 - **Foundation**
 - **Home Missions**
 - **Master's Men**
 - **Retirement and Insurance**
 - **Woman's National Auxiliary Convention**
-



Sm

Through

By Greg M

Jean Kerr is supposed to have said, "The problem with the story of the fall of man is that the snake has all the good lines." The humor in the Bible usually comes from God's observation of human nature. Through His Word, He lets us in on the joke. God puts us in His place to show us how frustrating sin is.

Notice Moses' words of exasperation in prayer to God over the stubbornness of Israel: "*Have I conceived all this people? Have I begotten them, that thou shouldest say unto me, Carry them in thy bosom, as a nursing father beareth the sucking child...?*" (Numbers 11:12a).

What Moses said was, "Hey, are these *my* kids? No! They're Yours!" Moses had just a taste of the rebelliousness of sin and he almost went nuts.

Remember Job's remark to the three men who were trying to convince him of a perverted view of the sovereignty of God: "No doubt but ye are the people, and wisdom shall die with you" (Job 12:1). Whether it's sin or faulty doctrine, rebellion frustrates the work of God.

1. God uses humor to change us.

First Corinthians 1:18-31 points out that Jesus looks foolish to the

world. How do you give life by dying? And how can God die in the first place? And why die and be resurrected and establish a church if you're just going to turn it all over to some goofballs who fight all the time over who is the greatest among them? It would make perfect sense to give the job to someone like Gamaliel or Saul of Tarsus, but not Simon Peter, the mouth that walked like a man.

And what is the reasoning behind ordering Gideon's army to attack the Midianite army with an arsenal of bugles, torches and clay pitchers? In situations like these, you don't have any choice—you *have* to depend on God—or get arrested for operating a carnival without a license.

2. God's people do things that look goofy so the heathen will gain a false sense of security.

How would you like it if your next door neighbor started building an ark in his front yard? Especially of

shittim wood? And how about the smell the day the skunks and orangutans showed up? What would you think if a nation of nomads was rumored to be planning an attack on your town, and you all took cover, and they showed up and spent six days walking around your town, singing and blowing horns?

Or, what if you had scared the daylight out of every soldier in Israel, and then one day were faced by a red-faced teenager with a sling-shot? *I'd* giggle. These people condemned themselves because of the unusual way God dealt with them.

3. God does the unusual to keep people from sinning and to judge sinners.

One day a prophet named Balaam was on his way to put a curse on Israel. When his mule intentionally banged Balaam's leg against a stone wall, he got off and began beating the mule. The mule asked him why he was hitting him—didn't he see the angel waiting to kill him



ile he Bible

Allister

if he continued on his way? And then Balaam begins justifying his temper fit. To the mule.

Now, if it had been me, I might have said something like, "I say, that animal is speaking fluent Aramaic." One of the dumbest things about humanity is our inability to know a miracle when we see one.

And then there's the bizarre side of divine humor—Nebuchadnezzar got too big for his britches, and God turned him into a wild animal for a while to put him in his place. (By the way, the *Open Bible* says that he had a condition called *lycanthropy*, which is what Lon Chaney had in *The Wolfman*.)

King Herod made a speech and the crowd praised him saying, "It's not the voice of a man—it's the voice of a God!" Herod kind of smirked, as if to say, "Well, I'm glad you finally noticed." And then God struck him dead for taking His glory. (Also, I imagine, it was a payback for having Jesus beaten.) Herod collapsed and *worms* ate him.

4. *Jesus was the Master of the sarcasm which edifies.*

Check out Matthew 23 where Jesus calls the scribes and Pharisees barricades to righteousness (v. 13), houseaters (v. 14), world travellers (v. 15), temple-worshippers (v. 23), camel-swallowers (v. 24), dirty dishes (v. 26), whitewashed graves (v. 27), and snakes (v. 33).

Or how about this famous line: "You money-hungry guys have about as much chance of getting into heaven as that camel has of getting through a needle's eye" (Luke 18:25, my paraphrase)? Or how would you like to be in Thomas' shoes after the resurrection? The point was to get these people to examine themselves, examine Jesus and place faith in God.

5. *Satan is the master of the sarcasm which destroys faith.*

In Genesis 3, Eve told Satan, "God told me that if I eat that fruit, I will die."

And Satan answered, "Yea, hath God said?", which is roughly equivalent to, "Oh, yeah, *right*." He destroyed Eve's faith with sarcasm.

And Satan is blatant—he'll even attempt it on God: "Doth Job fear thee for naught (nothing)? Hast not thou made a hedge about him...? But put forth thine hand now...and he will curse thee to thy face" (Job 1:9-10).

Like everything else in the Bible, God's humor is intended to communicate truth. Come to think of it, that's God's intent for us, too. We had better be faithful to that, because I heard about this one guy who wouldn't preach when God told him to—and a fish ate him. ■



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

Getting Real

By Jim Mullen



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Have you ever been gripped with the intense desire to *really be* godly and consistent in your daily life? I have! Perhaps it's time for someone to come out of the closet and expose to the light the internal struggles that many of us deal with and often feel defeated by.

I believe the greatest challenge facing the church this decade will be dealing with this problem. Are we authentic? Are we real or do we just talk a good game and keep so busy that no one has opportunity to question inconsistencies that exist in the pulpit as well as the pew?

Christianity—our way of life—is supernatural, not natural. It is a daily walk with a living Savior. Then

why do so many experience inconsistent, powerless lives? The answer is painfully obvious. A vital relationship with Jesus takes time—quality time. We can't build this relationship with leftover, throw-away time.

Well, who has that kind of time? We live in a fast-paced society. Our motors are revved up to the maximum. Time is money. We go to work early, stay late, take work home, use meals for meetings and then preach on living by the still waters. How can we lead others to the still waters when we constantly juggle our own schedules till they burst at the seams to get the really important things accomplished.

Just once I would like to have the courage to say, "No, I can't meet with you on Thursday afternoon. I will be reading and meditating."

This too-fast pace touches everybody in the church. No one is immune—from Supermom to the T-ball Tiger—we are all pressed for time.

When do we find the still, small voice of God in all this activity? When do we spend quality time with Him, seeking wisdom and direction? When will those life-changing encounters with God take place? No wonder few believers live consistent lives.

Far too many of us settle for less than the best. We only experience partially the dramatic changes God can produce in our lives.

Because of mass media, Christianity is perhaps more visible than ever. We cry for our nation to turn back to God. Yet our own lifestyle speeds us by the God we want others to experience. Our evangelism is fueled by guilt rather than real commitment to Christ and compassion for our brother.

We serve the church for similar wrong reasons and then wonder where the real enthusiasm can be

found. There is often a beehive of activity and tremendous amounts of energy expended. But this leaves us merely exhausted, not spiritually satisfied.

We reaffirm biblical commitment to monogamous marriage, yet the divorce rate within the church continues to soar. We preach strong families, and our people expect church or day care to raise their children. We preach biblical financial stewardship while many of our people not only don't tithe but buy-in to a credit card culture that causes them to spend more than they earn.

If we ever intend to affect others around us for Jesus Christ, we must first be affected ourselves. We have to do more than talk about our Christianity; we must live it on a consistent, daily basis.

Well, what gives me the right to write such an article or broach such a subject? Have I arrived? Is my life serene, consistent and powerful?

Quite frankly, not yet. But I am on the way. I know that the abundant life Jesus promised is available in all its fullness. I want it—for myself and what it will mean to others to whom I minister.

I want to be real, genuine, authentic, honest and consistent. I know that God can help me to experience this on a regular daily basis. He can do it for you also. Not only does the world need to see this in our lives, they deserve to see it—a glimpse of Jesus in our lives.

Our first priority is fellowship with Him. Our main task is evangelism. It will take time—but it will be worth it. ■



ABOUT THE WRITER: Reverend Jim Mullen pastors First Bible Free Will Baptist Church in New Castle, Indiana.

Fine Tuning Until He Comes

By Alton Loveless



man everyone looked to for direction. He was the one who apparently had done all the behind-the-scenes work. He fine-tuned the group in the beginning. He probably did much of the work in the practice sessions. Every guest artist recognized his efforts and those who aided his presentation. And now this performance without the conductor.

The conductor returned for the finale. At the end, he took most of the credit. But he was gracious and acknowledged his thanks by shaking the hand of the man in the first chair as he departed.

What a thought! Our Lord came to earth for a short time and mobilized a few men who have led others and saw to it that we were fine-tuned to His message.

He left us for a time but will come again. We are in the business of tuning ourselves and others, preparing for His return.

At that time He will not forget those who have done their jobs well in preparing others. ■

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

For an evening of entertainment while visiting in Vienna, Austria, my wife, some friends and I went to hear the Mozart Symphony at the famed concert hall.

Being a small town boy from Arkansas, I had never been to a symphony and didn't know what to expect. As the orchestra began to enter I was struck by their beautiful attire and wigs. This was costume night and their dress depicted that of Mozart's time.

As soon as they were seated the gentleman in the first chair of the violin section stood and went to the center of the group, lifted his instrument with one hand and the bow with the other and slowly pulled it down with a screeching sound. That section began to check their notes. Then he moved to another group and did the same thing. Finally, every member was actively tuning his own instrument in his own way. It was most disconcerting as with toots, booms and screeches they prepared for the concert.

Then quietness. The conductor entered and the first thing he did was shake the hand of the man sitting in the first violin chair.

I turned to my friend next to me and asked why he did that. He replied, "That's the custom."

After several Mozart pieces were played, an individual who was a guest performer entered and played his tune. Then as he departed he too stopped at the first chair and shook the violinist's hand.

By then I was totally puzzled. Why did that fellow get all the special recognition?

As the symphony played the next to last Mozart song, the conductor left the platform. Every eye in the orchestra turned to the person in the first chair. He lifted his bow to the violin and as he pulled it down every instrument in perfect timing harmonized instantly and performed the most beautiful of Mozart's symphonies.

I was mystified. Why did they even need the conductor? That guy in the first chair seemed to be the

You Can Beat Temptation

By William S. Deal

Jesus was tempted socially.

Satan took Him to the pinnacle of the Temple, which some have said was 610 feet above the pavement at the base of the Temple. He then tempted Jesus to leap from the top of the Temple and come down among the people....In this way, Satan suggested that He would receive immediate acclaim and acceptance. But to have done this would have played into the hands of Satan.

Jesus again wisely answered the tempter by the Word of God. "It is written, Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God" (v. 4).

Jesus was tempted spiritually.

Satan showed Him all the kingdoms of the world, from the top of a high mountain, and offered all of them if He would bow down and worship him. Jesus answered him again by the Word of God. "...It is written, Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve" (v. 10).

Since Jesus came to save the world (all who believe), Satan offers the world to Him on a silver platter, so to speak. But Jesus knew that He could never win men by yielding to the enemy of men; and besides, this would have been in direct disobedience to God's will and plan.

As the ruler of this world, Satan had the authority to make this offer, but as the Creator and Redeemer of men and the earth, Christ had both the authority and ability to refuse the offer.

Note that the three points Satan tempted Him on covered all men's necessities—physical, social and spiritual.

As to the place of the temptation, it was likely in the Judean desert, where neither water nor food could be found.

As to temptation's power, Satan can tempt, oppress, depress and compress you, but he never can

possess you as long as you resist him.

We should always do our best to keep the devil guessing. A friend of mine says his father said, "If I die of starvation, I'm going to do my best to make the devil think *I died of fasting!*"

Satan has given many saints a rough time about their financial problems. But just remember, it's not sin to be poor and needy and even in debt sometimes. Lazarus died in dire poverty, but he went to Heaven nonetheless. It is a shame to be stingy and resentful of those who have more wealth than we have.

Another point of temptation for some people is the matter of their position in life. The wealthy and successful may be tempted to be proud and neglect their poorer neighbors. This can be a snare of the devil.

Paul said, "Charge them that are rich in this world, that they be not highminded, nor trust in uncertain riches, but in the living God, who giveth us richly all things to enjoy; That they do good, that they be rich in good works, ready to distribute, willing to communicate; Laying up in store for themselves a good foundation against the time to come, that they may lay hold on eternal life" (1 Tim. 6:17-19).

Finally, remember, that temptation can never overpower you as long as you remain faithful to God in prayer and Bible reading and in attendance at the house of God.

Make it your aim never to put yourself in places where temptation can reach you. If you go on Satan's territory, he will snatch you if he can. Stay on the Lord's territory always.

Remember, too, if you walk with God, He walks with you and will protect and care for you, even in temptation's darkest hour. ■

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ABOUT THE WRITER: Dr. William S. Deal is a freelance writer who resides in El Monte, California. He serves as director of Crusade Publications.



Temptation is the common lot of all men. Even Jesus, the Son of God, did not escape temptation's awful, persuasive power. Paul said of temptation, "There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man; but God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it" (1 Cor. 10:13).

Consider the following points about Jesus' temptation:

We cannot choose where or about what we will be tempted. Even Jesus did not make this choice. Matthew says of Him, "Then was Jesus led up of the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted of the devil (Matt. 4:1).

Jesus was tempted physically.

Satan said, "If thou be the Son of God, command that these stones be made bread" (Matt. 4:3). Jesus had fasted 40 days and nights and was doubtless weak and hungry at this time. Satan hit Him when He was physically weak.

Likewise, temptations often hit us when we are weak and in some need. Satan is a merciless tempter. But Jesus answered him by quoting from God's Word (v. 4). We can defeat Satan's tempting strategy by using the Word.

FREE WILL BAPTIST NEWSFRONT

New Church Goes Up in Arkansas

ROGERS, AR—Members of Rogers FWB Church in Rogers, Arkansas, conducted ground-breaking services July 7 for a new sanctuary, according to Pastor Loy Counts. The congregation is meeting in Southgate Shopping Center in Rogers until the building is complete.

Construction of the 250-seat sanctuary began July 16. Officials expect to finish the project in six months.

Pastor Counts said that the facility can be expanded to seat 450 people. It also provides educational space and a fellowship area.

The church building will be located on the corner of Dixieland and Oak streets in Rogers.

Members of the building committee include church members Buster Harrell, H. K. Knox and



Pastor Loy Counts (c) leads ground-breaking ceremony.

Larry Van Meter. Deacons Carl Cohorn, William McGarrah, Clyde Scott, Terry Sullivan and John

Hutchins joined Pastor Counts and the building committee for the groundbreaking ceremony.

Mexican Association Meets

MONTERREY, MEX.—More than 500 people attended the 31st annual Mexican National Association in Monterrey, according to James Munsey, coordinator of the Mexican Free Will Baptist work. Members from the 30 Mexican Free Will Baptist churches gathered at the Association Campground August 1-3 for the meeting.

Moderator Lázaro De La Rosa led the worship and business sessions. Twenty-nine ministers registered.

In addition to the National Association, delegates also attended

the Woman's Auxiliary and Youth Conventions. Four pastors—Pablo Salazar, Victor Fortanel, Felix Zúniga, Isidro Aguilera—and Executive Secretary Melvin Worthington preached during the session.

Delegates adopted a Cooperative Plan budget with the following allocation percentages: Bible Institute (70%), National Treasury (15%), District Association (15%).

The 1992 session meets July 31-August 3 at the Association Campground in Monterrey.

FWBBC Missionary Conference

November 4-6, 1991

Nashville, Tennessee

Virginia to Sponsor Mission Builder

ROANOKE, VA—Delegates to the Virginia State Association approved hiring Rev. Willie Osborne as associate missionary builder for a new church in Abingdon. The joint project with the national Home Missions Department will require \$2,240 in monthly support, a \$12,000 initial investment, and \$65,000 to purchase an existing church building.

The 53rd annual session met June 13-14 at First FWB Church in

Roanoke. Seventy-three people attended, including 23 ministers and three deacons.

In other action, delegates elected Richmond pastor Daniel Merkh as moderator; he succeeds outgoing moderator David Neitch.

Pastor Bob Surber of Cardwell Town FWB Church in Saltville delivered the keynote address Thursday evening on the "Fruits of the Spirit." Executive Secretary

Melvin Worthington spoke Saturday.

Three pastors preached during the Thursday Bible Conference: Sherman Grace of Kingsport, Tenn.; Ralph Young of Petersburg; and Jack Blanton of Norton. Charlottesville pastor Walter Summerlin spoke at the Thursday banquet.

The 1992 session will meet June 18-19 at First FWB Church in Roanoke.

Southeastern Sets Missionary Conference

WENDELL, NC—Four speakers, including Dr. Michael Cox, president of the Michigan School of Missions, will lead the November 10-12 Missionary Conference at Southeastern FWB College. Dr. Joe Haas, Sr., chairman of Southeastern's missions department, said, "We believe this will be our greatest conference yet."

In addition to keynoting the conference, Dr. Michael Cox will lead several workshops on how to build a successful missions program in the local church.

Other conference speakers include Steve Lytle, missionary to Panama; Fred Jones who directs the Free Will Baptist Bible Institute in Mexico; and Randy Saw-

yer who chairs the music department at Southeastern College.

Dr. Haas said the theme for the fall missions conference is, "I Will Go in the Strength of the Lord," taken from Psalm 71:16.

The Mexican Quartet will accompany Fred Jones from Mexico and sing during the conference.



Cox



Sawyer



Lytle



Jones

Pray For The
Leadership Conference
December 2-3
Nashville, Tennessee
First-ever Free Will Baptist Stewardship Summit

CURRENTLY...

Members of **Southwest FWB Church** in **Columbus, OH**, celebrated their 20th anniversary, according to Pastor **John Meade**. Southwest church was previously Greenleaf Road Baptist Church.

Pastor **Densil Wright** says that something wonderful is happening at **Mt. Sterling FWB Church** in **Mt. Sterling, OH**. The church reports six conversions, eight baptisms and 12 new members.

Wakefield FWB Church in **Wakefield, OH**, reports a successful VBS program. After the VBS program, Pastor **Lowell King** baptized eight people. Later that day three more young people were converted.

Pastor **Roger Childers** and the congregation at **Urbana FWB Church, Urbana, OH**, travelled to Mad River after morning services. That's where Childers baptized five converts.

Pleasant Valley FWB Church in **Pedro, OH**, is 75 years old. Pastor **Larry Joseph** also reports a VBS that averaged 44 people.

Here's more good news from **Divine FWB Baptist Church** in **Cleveland, OH**. The church reports six conversions, four baptisms and four new members. **Bobby Hudnall** pastors.

They have new wheels at **Fellowship Tabernacle FWB Church** in **Xenia, OH**. The church purchased a van and minibus for outreach ministry. They plan to sell a 54-passenger bus. **Vernal Fairchild** pastors.

Pastor **Lucian Mounts** completed 28 years in Christian radio broadcasting. Mounts pastors **Mechanicsburg FWB Church** in **Urbana, OH**. He conducts an hour-long radio program Sunday mornings.

Evangelist **Clovis Vanover** of **Columbus, OH**, reports 10 revivals and 23 conversions.

Members of **Socastee FWB Church** in **Myrtle Beach, SC**, constructed a 1,600-square-foot fellowship building at a cost of \$18,000. Pastor **Ray Cribb** said, "It is possible that the building will be paid for at completion." The Socastee church began as a mission in 1987.

Pastor **James Herring** and members of **New Life FWB Church** in **Conway, SC**, completed work on a 1,920-square-foot brick fellowship building. Although the facility is valued at \$85,000, it cost only

\$15,000 because members donated labor and materials. The facility includes a dining area which seats more than 100 people.

When members of **First FWB Church** in **Greenville, SC**, dedicated their family fellowship center, the congregation named the building in honor of 25-year-pastor, **Bobby Bowers**. The 4,800-square-foot metal structure cost \$85,000 and includes a regulation basketball court, kitchen, mezzanine and lounge.

Pastor **Delbert Akin** and members of **Tecumseh FWB Church** in **Tecumseh, OK**, honored a member for 50 years of service. Mrs. **William Davis Williams** served 50 years as church clerk.

Pastor **Wayne Bookout** of **Blackwell FWB Church** in **Oklahoma** baptized 16 converts. He said, "This is the largest group I've ever baptized at one time."

Members of **Lawnwood FWB Church** in **Tulsa, OK**, surprised Pastor **J. C. Morgan** on his 20th anniversary with the church. In addition to a great show of love and kindness from members, the church presented Pastor and Mrs. Morgan a \$10,000 check.

Members of **First FWB Church** in **Pampa, TX**, dedicated their new church July 13. They purchased a church building from another group.

James Timbrook began pastoring **Revival FWB Church** in **Tulsa, OK**, one year ago. Since that time he has baptized 13, witnessed 32 conversions and received 42 new members.

After four months at **First FWB Church** in **Rolling Prairie, IN**, Pastor **John Dickerson** said that Church Training attendance surged from 12 to 51. Dickerson also reports 16 rededications, five conversions, seven new members and three baptisms. Church attendance climbed to 85.

First FWB Church in **Albany, GA**, scheduled a four-day seminar with FWBCC staffers **Robert Picirilli** and **Ken Riggs**. Picirilli spoke on perseverance while Riggs spoke on the Christian family. **Billy Hanna** pastors.

Members of **Corinth FWB Church** in **Iron City, GA**, installed a new steeple. Interim pastor **Andy Merritt** led the dedication service. Retired minister **Damon Dodd** preached the dedication message.

Members of **Cool Springs FWB**

Church in **Norman Park, GA**, collected \$500 in coins for the Home Missions "Build My Church" campaign. Pastor **Mike Edwards** said the funds were given in memory of **Bobby Holder**, a member who recently died.

The **Georgia** Couples Retreat met September 13-14 at Norman Baptist Assembly in Norman Park, GA. **Don Hill**, director of the Frazer Counselling Clinic in Montgomery, AL, was keynote speaker.

Arkansas minister **Glynn Campbell** of **Walnut Ridge** celebrated 40 years in the ministry. He has pastored eight churches in Arkansas and Missouri.

Members of **Catcher FWB Church** in **Van Buren, AR**, honored retired pastor, **Burl Osborne**, who pastored seven churches in Arkansas in his 43-year ministry.

Pastor **Lonnie Skiles** and members of **Bethel FWB Church** in **Festus, MO**, burned the mortgage on a 300-seat auditorium. The church was erected in 1973 under the leadership of **A. B. Brown**.

Pastor **Wesley Rider** led a ribbon-cutting ceremony at **First FWB Church** in **Cape Girardeau, MO**, after resurfacing the driveway and parking lot. Members gave more than \$4,500 in labor and materials as well as \$4,000 in cash donations.

The educational building at **First FWB Church** in **Springfield, MO**, was dedicated with more than 200 in the worship service. Pastor **Max Courtney** said the 10,000-square-foot facility cost \$259,000. Missouri Executive Secretary **Clarence Burton** led the cornerstone laying ceremony.

Wilma Clark, member of **Greenfield FWB Church** in **Greenfield, CA**, was named Mother-of-the-Year by the Greenfield Rotary Club. Her pastor is **Holt Seawell**.

Pastor **Ivan Ryan** reports six conversions at **Bakersville FWB Church** in **Mt. Vernon, IL**. The church recently voted to purchase new pews.

First FWB Church of **Russellville, AR**, hosted their second annual softball tournament with 11 teams from four states. The tournament ended about midnight June 15 with the Russellville team defeating a Tennessee team 14-4 for the championship. Some 175 people attended the tournament activities. **Doug Little** pastors. ■



MASTER'S MEN

National Convention Highlights

The men of West Virginia and other Master's Men ushered with effectiveness and dignity through all the services of the 1991 national convention. Led by Roger Tolliver, ushering chairman of the West Virginia Steering Committee and by Raymond Lee, national ushering chairman, the men performed excellently in many tasks.

On Wednesday night they "passed the buckets" for a record missionary offering of nearly \$34,000. During General Board meeting, WNAC, general business sessions and in the halls, they helped find people, count people, inform people and direct people. We appreciate the labor of a staff of nearly 60 men who freely gave their time in service to the Master.

Laymen Honored

The 225 people attending the Wednesday evening Master's Men Dinner applauded the announcements of 1990 Layman of the Year and 1990 Runner-up Layman of the Year. Master's Men Board Chairman, Wendell Leckbee presented plaques from the department to Waymon Ray (Okla.), Layman of the Year 1990 and Gary R. Wilson (Mich.), Runner-up Layman of the Year 1990.

Board member Thurman Pate, Jr. expressed his feelings when he returned his votes, "The choice was very hard this year because the nominees are all so involved in the Lord's work." Rev. E. Dwight Fletcher added, "They all deserve the award."

Waymon Ray is a member of the New Home FWB Church in Tulsa, and was nominated by his pastor, Rev. Roy Dale Smith. Gary Wilson attends River Rouge FWB Church where the pastor is Rev. Danny Slater.

Director Awards Two Plaques

"We are honored to have a man serving on the Master's Men Board who is connected to the Home Missions Department. He serves there as our 'part-time' Missionary Builder.

He is fully committed to helping build new churches for our home missionaries.

"Howard Gwartney has led in almost 30 building projects since 1985, making it possible for pastors to have a place to preach and lead the people in worship much sooner and much more cheaply than might otherwise have been possible.

"Today we honor Howard Gwartney with a plaque which reads:

With thanks to the Master for your leadership and effort in coordinating the work of Master's Hands Project crews as Missionary Builder, And the saving of the first \$1,000,000 in construction costs by February, 1991 on Free Will Baptist Churches, Howard Gwartney is honored with this plaque by Free Will Baptist Master's Men Department July 24, 1991."

Director Jim Vallance also presented to Trymon Messer a plaque which stated:

In grateful thanks for your vision in hiring a Missionary Builder to lead volunteer workers in constructing Free Will Baptist Churches, we recognize the Home Missions Department and Board upon the achievement of saving \$1,000,000 in construction costs in February 1991.

Presented by
Free Will Baptist
Master's Men Department
July 24, 1991

Board Votes to Increase Dues

The Master's Men Board voted to increase annual dues and LifeMember dues beginning January 1, 1992. The annual dues will increase to \$20 per man. The LifeMember dues, in keeping with current policy will reflect the same rate of increase as the annual dues, to a one-time total gift of \$200. ■

BOARD OF RETIREMENT

Learn to Piddle

By R.F. Smith, Jr.

Every financial retirement plan demands you start in your early 20's for the best return on your money. And I would suggest that you start preparing mentally, emotionally, spiritually and physically for retirement at that same age.

Most people come to retirement never having learned how to loaf. Now if you want to be a successful loafer, you have to learn how to loaf without feeling guilty about it. All our lives we have been told to work, work, work. Idle minds, idle hands, idle anything, become the devil's workshop. And these "wise sayings" have guided us to the point that work and production are all we know.

But loafing is not being idle; it is changing gears, going from what you usually do to what is unusual for you.

For instance, I like to piddle. (That's another word for loaf.) Every time we have moved I have always made sure the house had a spare room in the basement for my workshop. I don't make many things there, but I do enjoy piddling around, repairing this and that. Often times I fix things beyond repair, and I have a box full of things I've fixed—trash to my wife, but stored inventory for my cherished times of piddling.

I really pity the person who does not know how to piddle. Piddling takes place on any level. It is going from what you do for a living to what you like to do when not making living. It is what you work at when you're not working.

Piddling is . . . putting around on a golf course . . . working out in a gym . . . poring over a good book in the library . . . doing handwork, drinking coffee with friends at unheard-of-hours, and 101 other things the relaxed mind can come up with when allowed the freedom to piddle without guilt.

Fulfillment in retirement goes to those who have learned the art of piddling, by training for it during those demanding, productive years when everything around us yells, "Don't drop a stitch in your work pat-

tern." But everything inside quietly says, "Piddling, like happiness, cannot be retroactive."

It is now or never! ■

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

In Honor of . . .

By . . .

Mr. William DanielCarlos Kelsey
Smyrna, TN**Mrs. Christen Ganey**Cove City Auxiliary
Cove City, NC**Reverend W. E. (Bill) George**Salem Woman's Auxiliary
Alford, FL**Herman Hersey**Smyrna Auxiliary
Smyrna, TN**Herman and Vernie Hersey**Carlos and Rosalie Kelsey
Smyrna, TN**Pastor Carlos Kelsey**Smyrna Auxiliary
Smyrna, TN**Ray Lewis**Annie Rooks
Rocky Mount, NC**Darrel Nichols**First FWB Church
Tahlequah, OK**Mrs. Martha Owens**Wilson Chapel Auxiliary
Norton, VA**Early White**Sutton Woman's Auxiliary
Pocahontas, AR**Mrs. Jesse White**Carlos Kelsey
Smyrna, TN**In Memory Of . . .**

By . . .

Reverend George CappsSalem FWB Church
Wayne City, IL**Rev. Paul Clayton**Hillside Auxiliary
Florence, SC**Reverend J. R. Davidson**Pleasant Hill Auxiliary
Vienna, GA**Reverend David Parent**Kilsyth Woman's Auxiliary
Kilsyth, WV**Don Pettis**Martha Pettis
Perry, FL**Hoyte Powell**Cypress Fork FWB Church
Manning, SC**A. B. Rooks**Annie Rooks
Rocky Mount, NC



WOMAN'S AUXILIARY

Woman's Window on the World

By Mary R. Wisheart

From My Window

"I didn't know how dark it was in here," my friend said as I switched on the light. The room was not completely dark, just half dark. Still, the light showed up how dark it really was.

How like us human beings. Those in darkness are often not aware of how dark it is in their lives. How will they know unless we switch on the light?

We may not realize the darkness in our own lives until the Holy Spirit switches on the light. That light of God may reveal the darkness of greed, selfishness, unconcern, envy, covetousness. That ugly darkness dismays us, frightens us. We may have to cry out of our own hearts, "I didn't know how dark it was in here."

The Holy Spirit stands always ready to turn the light of the Word on in the dark places of our lives. As light reveals darkness, He is ready to chase it away with light, the true Light. "God is light, and in him is no darkness at all."

"If we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin" (1 John 1:7).

WNAC Elects New Officers and Executive Committee

Delegates at the 1991 Convention in Charleston, West Virginia, elected new officers for the next two years.

President: Mary Neal, Indiana

Vice-President: Delois Loveless, Ohio

Recording Secretary: Joan Wood, Oklahoma

Members-at-large of the Executive Committee: Pam Wood, California; Gwen Hendrix, South Carolina; Everyl Getz, Texas

Watch this page for biographies of the new officers and members of the Executive Committee.

Study of Woman's Auxiliary Continues

The study committee elected in 1989 received permission from the convention to continue study for two more years. The seven-member committee is now a six-member committee because of the resignation of Kay Hampton.

The committee set a meeting for December 2, 1991, in Nashville, in conjunction with the Leadership Conference.

If you have ideas or suggestions for the committee, you may send them to the WNAC office or to any member of the committee.

June, Rolen, California, chairman; Peggy Outland, Illinois, secretary; Diana Bryant, Florida; Diane Thomas, North Carolina; Marguerite Kern, Oklahoma; Mary R. Wisheart, Tennessee.

Eunice Edwards Loan Fund

July 31, 1991—\$35,729.08

Make Plans for the Leadership Conference

All Woman's Auxiliary state presidents and field workers are invited to the Leadership Conference December 2-3 in Nashville.

Each state should plan to send at least one representative. The conference will be a stewardship summit, with discussion of how to support national ministries more equitably. ■



FOREIGN MISSIONS

Counting the Cost

By Don Robirds

What does it cost to be a Christian?

To *become* a Christian costs us nothing. Jesus paid it all! But to *be* a Christian, a true disciple, can cost a great deal.

In her book, *Touching the Untouchables*, pioneer missionary Laura Belle Barnard described the dilemma which converts faced in India during her day: "Persecution was a living reality to be dealt with, some cases much less severe and others much more drastic."

Miss Barnard tells of one woman who informed her family of her intentions to follow Christ and be baptized. "They responded by kicking and beating her cruelly, taking custody of her son, and confiscating all her possessions."

Thomas, a young Christian relative, tried to help the woman by instructing her and arranging for her baptism. "Shortly thereafter," says Laura Belle, "the angry relatives stopped him as he entered a restaurant for rice and curry, and beat and kicked him unmercifully."

The Privilege of Suffering

Within an hour, still bearing the marks of his beating, he went to a service where he was to act as an interpreter. "I assure you I am not crying because of the pain," he sobbed, "but because God has given me the happy privilege of suffering a little shame and disgrace for my Lord who bore all my sin and shame."

Barnard also told of Moses and his wife, Gnanamani, who went through severe fires of testing following their baptism. She got sick and her baby died suddenly. Her family, who wanted her to turn back, taunted her with the idea that the gods were punishing her. But she stood firm although Moses lost his job and was terribly distressed.

They endured a great deal of persecution and were even threatened with death. "I heard that Gnanamani was actually dragged about by the hair of her head in an attempt to force her to return to Hindu worship,"

says Laura Belle. "Rumors were circulated that she was finally seen out in a grove, kneeling before a heathen shrine."

Forced to Kneel

Assuring Miss Barnard of their continued faith, Moses declared later, "You can be forced to kneel down, but the heart cannot be forced to worship."

Missionary Carlisle Hanna tells of Barosi who grew up in India as a member of a Hindu family. Although he was exposed to the gospel a great deal during his boyhood days while working for missionaries Dan and Trula Cronk, he never made a profession of faith until much later in life. He finally was moved to receive Christ after hearing an Easter message.

Barosi's wife had not made an open profession of faith, so when he was baptized he refused to let her be baptized. He wanted her to thoroughly understand the consequences of her commitment. Her family offered to kill Barosi for becoming a Christian, but she didn't want him killed. She had counted the cost and determined to become a Christian also in spite of the family's opposition and rejection.

The Benefits of Faithfulness

Today, she and Barosi have a fine Christian family. They have reaped the spiritual benefits of faithfulness in the face of persecution and suffering. Barosi manages the cattle project started by missionary Carlisle Hanna in Sonapur, India. He is involved in developing cows that are smaller, so they eat less, yet they give much more milk than the local breed. People call him "Doctor."

Christians in the United States must also count the cost of true discipleship. Jesus left us with the command, "Go ye into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature." Mark 16:15. He also declared, "If any man will come after me, *let him deny himself...*" Luke 9:23. ■



Robert E. Picirilli

Preamble to Joshua: Challenge for a New Day

Joshua 1:1-9

The book of Joshua opens at a critical time in Israel's history. The first attempt to enter Canaan, a generation earlier, had failed. When you have failed once, a second attempt is automatically more nervous.

Add to that the death of a proven leader. A new and younger man is at the helm. Did anyone ever face a sterner challenge than Joshua?

Never fear: the Lord speaks to Joshua. *He* has not died. And the first thing he says is, "Moses, my servant, is dead. Arise and go." Don't grieve for Moses. Don't look to Moses. What's past is done with. What matters now is what *you* do. I have chosen you (Deuteronomy 3:28).

Three times, in this short passage, the Lord's word to Joshua is, "Be strong and of a good courage." Each of those is linked directly to a distinct point, and the three together summarize the message.

1. Be strong and courageous, for there is a challenging work (v. 6).

There is a two-fold implication here. For one thing, there is need for Joshua to be strong since the task before him is so demanding. He must lead this people to take possession of Canaan and divide it among them.

Verses 2-4 provide background: the Lord had promised to give it to them—every place they would walk, all the way from the Euphrates on the east to the Mediterranean on the west.

If the first implication is need, the

other is confidence. Joshua can do this imposing thing. I promised it, says the Lord, and you *shall* do it. Indeed, we note the "I have given" (v. 3); this thing has already been settled in the counsels of God.

Joshua *needs* to be strong. He *can* be strong, and very courageous.

2. Be strong and courageous, and find your strength in keeping God's law (v. 7).

The covenant relationship between Jehovah and Israel underlies this. It was based on God's promises to them as they observed His law. Then Joshua, as Israel's leader, will find that law to be a source of strength and courage.

He must determine to keep it—all of it (v. 7a), turning neither this way nor that from it (v. 7b). He must speak of it always (v. 8a), teaching it and citing it as a basis for every plan and action. He must meditate on it faithfully (v. 8b), considering how to apply it daily at every decision point. In doing this, he will both find the direction he needs and set an example for those he leads.

True strength and courage will be found here, because those who walk according to the revealed will of God are assured that their way will be prosperous and successful (w. 7b, 8b).

Keil and Delitzsch, by the way, render "have good success" as "act wisely." Whether that is the right translation or not, the idea is right. Acting wisely is true success. And acting wisely is walking with God.

3. Be strong and courageous, because God is with you (v. 9).

Joshua need not fear or dismay. Jehovah God will be with him wherever he goes, so long as he goes where God has commanded.

Verse 5 fleshes this out. No one could doubt that God had been with Moses. Just so surely He will be with Joshua. And God's presence is a promise: He will not fail or forsake Joshua. ■

Directory Update

OKLAHOMA

Billy Ray Wilson to Chickasha Church, Chickasha

Del Miller to First Church, Idabel

OTHER PERSONNEL

Terry Forrest to Free Will Baptist Bible College as dean of students from First Church, Monticello, AR, as pastor

John Murray to Free Will Baptist Bible College as director of Christian service from Nantes, France, as a missionary ■



Thomas Marberry

Public Schools: An Evangelical Appraisal

Frank C. Nelson

(Old Tappan, New Jersey: Fleming H. Revell Company, 1987, 223 pp., hardback, \$14.95).

This volume is one of a series of volumes devoted to a careful biblical analysis of key issues in our society today. The prior volumes in the series presented factual, fair and reasonable analyses of difficult and controversial subjects. This is no exception.

The author begins by discussing the conflict in society over public education. A number of books in recent years argued that much of public education in this country has demonstrated hostility toward traditional moral and spiritual values of society. In many cases evangelicals and fundamentalists responded with calls to establish private Christian schools.

According to Dr. Nelson, public education has always been somewhat suspect within Christian ranks. Horace Mann and others influential in beginning public schools were Unitarians and did not adhere to orthodox Christian beliefs.

The author describes a series of conflicts over the role religion would play in these newly estab-

lished public schools. Some early conflicts centered on textbooks to be used and the books to be made available in school libraries. In some ways, these early conflicts were similar to some of our contemporary controversies.

About the middle of the last century something of an accommodation was reached. The public schools in most areas of the country came to reflect traditional Protestant moral and ethical values without, however, providing specific religious instruction. Roman Catholics and some other groups responded to these developments by establishing parochial schools for their students.

In the early 1960's the situation began to change. The climate in the country became increasingly secular. A series of Supreme Court decisions effectively removed organized prayer and Bible reading from public school classrooms.

Much additional controversy has surrounded the teaching of what has come to be called "secular humanism." The author devotes con-

siderable attention to the type of instruction provided in many public school classrooms today.

Dr. Nelson sounds a voice of alarm at a number of these developments, but he does not call for Christians to abandon public education. He recognizes that Christian schools cannot provide adequate educational opportunities for the children of this country. There is simply no viable alternative to public education.

He argues that Christians must be aware of the issues and organize to confront them. They should seek to influence school policies in positive directions. They should, however, avoid extreme positions which serve only to discredit them in the eyes of the community.

This is a good book which presents a thoughtful and helpful analysis of one of the more difficult issues of our day. Everyone will not be pleased with his conclusions. He is a friend of public education. He does an excellent job separating fact from fiction and confronting the real issues. ■

BEYOND BELIEF



RELIGIOUS COMMUNITY NEWS

Louisiana Passes Tough Abortion Bill

BATON ROUGE, LA (EP)—Louisiana's legislators voted to override Gov. Buddy Roemer's veto of a strict bill banning most abortions. It was the first time in this century that a Louisiana governor's veto has been overturned.

The law, said to be the strictest in the nation, bans abortions except in cases of rape and incest, or to save the life of the mother. Rape and incest victims are required to report the crime within seven days; a provision meant to eliminate false rape reports as a way to circumvent the law. Doctors performing illegal abortions in Louisiana face up to 10 years in prison and \$100,000 fines.

The law was to take effect in September, but both sides in the abortion dispute expected a court to order an injunction, leading to a judicial review of the law. The American Civil Liberties Union will seek a court order to stop enforcement. Legislators hope the restrictive law will be the object of a court-battle that will eventually lead the U.S. Supreme Court to overturn its 1973 *Roe v. Wade* ruling that legalized abortion-on-demand.

"We are delighted that the Louisiana [Legislature] has acted to ensure protection for the most defenseless among us—unborn children," said Dr. Wanda Franz, president of the National Right to Life Committee, the nation's largest pro-life group. "This is a historic event, not only for Louisiana, but also for the nation, which is moving slowly but surely toward protection for unborn children."

Judge Restrains Top NEA Lawyer

PHILADELPHIA, PA (EP)—A federal judge in Philadelphia restrained Julianne Ross Davis, General Counsel for the National Endowment for the Arts (NEA), from further repetition of defamatory comments about the Rev. Donald E. Wildmon and the American Family Association (AFA).

Wildmon and AFA sued Ms. Davis in federal court for defamation and sought a restraining order. The judges order addressed statements first made by Davis in a speech at the University of Pennsylvania Law School on October 24, 1990.

She told an audience of law students and professors that "The American Family Association (headed by the Rev. Wildmon) is simply a direct-mail political action committee. And it has a 24-point political agenda it would like to see obtained by the year 2000. And it's not a pretty agenda. I saw a report a few days ago. It includes the elimination of democracy, elimination of public schools, (and) advocates that astrologers, adulter-

ers, blasphemers, homosexuals, and incorrigible children be executed, preferably by stoning. That's one of our enemies. This is true."

Under a court-approved settlement which is a part of the court's order, Davis is restrained from any further utterance or publication of the false statements. She must also pay Wildmon and AFA \$100,000 in damages if it is ever repeated.

In the agreement Davis admits the statements were false and is compelled to send a letter of retraction to the Deans of the University of Pennsylvania Law School as well as Wharton School of Business, whose students also attended the speech. The agreement also requires the NEA General Counsel to send a letter of apology to Wildmon and AFA. Wildmon and AFA have agreed to drop the remainder of the lawsuit against Davis for damages.

"I am gratified over this restraint on the NEA's top lawyer and pleased with the retraction and the apology. It's unfortunate that we have had to humiliate the NEA's number two official in order to stop her from uttering these lies. However, no smear by any NEA official will stop our public criticism of the NEA's continuing abuse of the taxpayer's money," Wildmon said.

Poll Shows Americans More Religious

VALLEY FORGE, PA (EP)—The long-held perception of the United States as a religious country has been confirmed by the largest and most comprehensive survey of religious opinion ever undertaken.

The poll, commissioned by the Graduate School of the City University of New York, surveyed 113,000 adults throughout the 48 contiguous states between April 1989 and April 1990.

More than six out of seven of those surveyed—which projects to 214 million Americans—identified themselves as Christians. Baptists (19.4 percent) comprise nearly a third of all Protestants, ranking behind only Catholics (26.2 percent) as the largest Christian body in the U.S.

The overwhelming majority of those surveyed were willing to talk about their faith. Less than three percent refused to share their opinions, and only 7.5 percent professed agnosticism or atheism.

Prominent church historian Martin Marty characterized the results as "astonishingly confirmatory" of previous demographic projections. Comparing the survey findings with the state of organized religion in other industrialized countries, Marty said the level of religious commitment in the U.S. was dramatic in such "a high-tech, highly affluent nation."

He added, "If such a poll were done in Western Europe, the ancestral home of many Americans, you would run at least a third lower on every indicator."

According to Dr. Barry Kosmin, senior researcher at the City University Graduate Center, "Religion is more important in America than in most industrialized countries. Americans display a greater level of commitment and a greater level of diversity."

Expert Sees Cult Growth

MINNEAPOLIS, MN (EP)—Steve Hassan, a former recruiter for the Rev. Sun Myung Moon's Unification Church, is a leading authority on the mind control techniques that destructive cults use to recruit and hold members.

Hassan, who is the author of *Combatting Cult Mind Control*, says cult activity is definitely increasing. "The Bible-based cults are growing; there are probably more of them than anything," he explains. "After that would be psychotherapy cults, then the New Age cults. We're seeing more and more of them."

What does the success of such cults say about America? "What we're looking at is a fertile ground for these groups to recruit," Hassan notes. "Our political institutions are not meeting the needs of people. Our religious institutions are not meeting the needs of people. People want to have hope, and they see budget cuts, service cuts, joblessness, a high divorce rate. A group comes along and says, 'We have the answer. We can make the world an ideal place.' You have to be stupid or apathetic to not want to hear what they have to say."

In fact, says Hassan, it is the stupid or apathetic who have the least to fear from cults. "Who's not at risk from cults? Complacent people, apathetic people and mentally disturbed people," he explains. "Cults do not want the mentally disturbed, they don't want retarded people or people with severe medical problems. They want intelligent, middle-class, educated, ambitious, productive people who can withstand the enormous pressures of being in a cult—and the pressures really are tremendous."

Stress, depression, and life transitions—loss of a loved one, change of job or home—can make people vulnerable to mind control cults, Hassan says. "The other variable is ignorance, ignorance of cults and mind control," he insists. "If you know about cults and mind control, even if you're going through a vulnerable time in your life, you'll know what questions to ask, so you won't be vulnerable." ■

The Pella Grouches

Forty miles east of Des Moines on Highway 163 sprawls the Dutch farming community of Pella, Iowa. Other than a rock-solid name, the town's only claim to fame is a unique signpost near the city limits: "PELLA—Pop. 9,270 Great People." Then in smaller print below: and "3 or 4 Grouches."

The Pella city fathers apparently know that a few grumps can raise more dust than the rest of the population can settle. Nobody knows why but grouches always manage to find tourists and new families before the welcome wagon does.

It probably works that way in your church or your place of business with potential customers and new members. Grumps are by nature evangelistic. They knock on every door in the community and dump a tale of woe.

The good news is that there aren't as many grouches around as you'd think. They're such wet blankets it just seems that there's one behind every tree.

Life's too full to waste singing off key. There's so much opportunity to get in step and sing harmony. Besides, grumps can be cured.

James Angel said, "Don't underestimate the ability of God to straighten out a situation even when you can't, and give God a little time!"

I agree with Charles Allen who warned, "When you say a situation or a person is hopeless, you are slamming the door in the face of God."

The grouch stares at one pothole and ignores 50 miles of good highway. He disagrees with one item in the church budget and rejects it all. Does every grouch own Matthew Lesko's *The Great American Gripe Book*?

I'd like to give church grumps a framed copy of John Maxwell's cheery observation: "Nothing is as hard as it looks; everything is more rewarding than you expect; and if anything can go right, it will and at the best possible moment." That sure beats Murphy's Law.

The Christian life-style is God's teflon umbrella to repel grey, weasly attitudes. But even the Christian life-style has to be practiced for it to work.

Herb Miller told about a religious version of an old secular saying in his book, *How to Build a Magnetic Church*: "'If you build a better mouse trap, the world will beat a path to your door.' That was never completely true of mousetraps, and it is not true of Christianity."

Church grumps are like Oscar Wilde's Aunt Jane who, he said, "died of mortification when no one attended her grand ball. But she died without knowing that she had failed to mail the invitations."

That's why grumps sink deeper into their gloom when no one shows up to help them celebrate. They forgot to mail the invitations: A ready smile, an eager hand to help others, a warm life of faith, openness to new ideas and a sense of humor.

Last summer a dandy list appeared in a Christian monthly: "How to Be Miserable in 20 Easy Steps!" It reads like the grump's bible and provides sure-fire ways to never be happy.

Take #11, for instance: "Always look for faults in others." Or #3: "Be jealous and envious." And check out #15: "Sulk if people are not grateful for your favors." Everything on the list reminds me of religious grumps I've known.

The average grouch rattles gloomily through life sucking on imaginary lemons and eating

worms, unaware that his attitude is a prison with no doors and no windows.

Cartoon character Nancy roared how unfair it was that there were only 68 more days left until school started. When her friend Sluggo suggested that she do something to enjoy the time left instead of complaining, Nancy snapped, "I enjoy complaining!"

My friend Bob Smith owns a sign company in Nashville. Some time ago he painted a small sign for a customer who wanted to sell some property, and charged him \$52. Three years later the man brought the sign back, said he never liked it and asked Bob what he intended to do about it.

Bob examined the sign noting that it had been roughed up by the weather. The man, somewhat irritated, added that he had not sold the property and never planned to use the sign again. Bob generously refunded the man's \$52. What a great story!

Then the grumpy man fellow asked Bob if he would also return his sales tax! You can't win with a professional grump.

Van Wyck Brooks said, "How delightful is the company of generous people, who overlook trifles and keep their minds instinctively fixed on whatever is good and positive in the world. People of small caliber are always carping. They are bent on showing their own superiority, their knowledge or prowess. But magnanimous people have no vanity, they have no jealousy, and they feed on the true and the solid wherever they find it. And, what is more, they find it everywhere."

How refreshing. That's almost as uplifting as a hike down Highway 168 to read the signpost in Pella, Iowa. ■



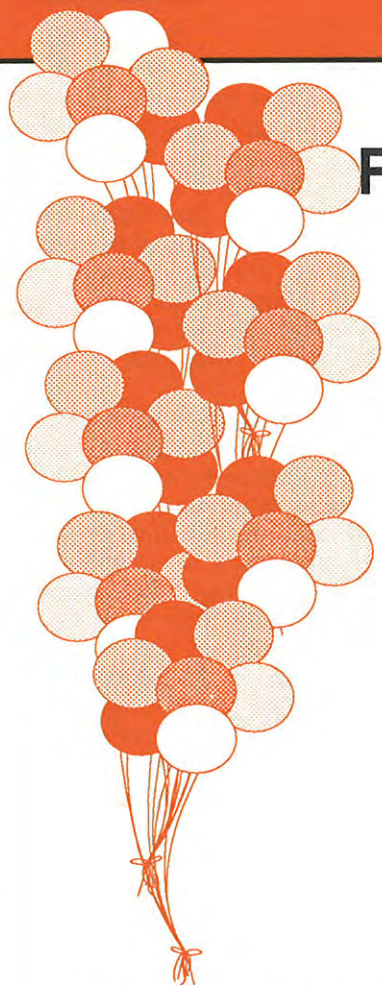
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