

NOVEMBER 1991

CONTACT

OFFICIAL PUBLICATION OF
THE NATIONAL ASSOCIATION
OF FREE WILL BAPTISTS



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**Church in
Cajun
Country**

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**Close the
Back Door**

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**The Smaller
Church**

.....
**Somebody's
Still Thankful**

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NOVEMBER 1991

VOLUME 38, NO. 11

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THE SECRETARY SPEAKS

Capital Stewardship Campaign



Melvin Worthington

Delegates at the 1991 national convention authorized the Management Committee to launch a capital stewardship campaign to liquidate debt on the new national office facility. The Management Committee, chaired by the executive secretary, includes directors of national agencies which occupy the building.

The committee met after the national convention to design the capital stewardship campaign. The group decided that the campaign's success depended on input from state leadership. State leaders were invited to a special consultation to discuss, design, develop and give overall direction to the campaign.

Leaders from 18 state associations met at the new office facility August 27-28. This Advisory Committee's input, ideas and insight provided the basic foundation for a unique capital stewardship campaign.

The Forum

As the Advisory Committee toured the new facility, each agency explained the function space in its particular suite. The committee then met in the main conference room.

The meeting provided an informal setting for open and objective discussion. A spirit of unity and understanding prevailed. Concerns voiced from state associations contributed to better understanding of potential problems the campaign might encounter.

The Framework

Two committees appointed at the close of Tuesday evening's discussion reported Wednesday morning. The first committee, chaired by

Arkansas moderator Carl Cheshier, made five recommendations:

- (1) That the 1134 Murfreesboro Road property be sold as quickly as possible and that the proceeds be immediately applied to the debt.
- (2) That the campaign motto be "A Million More by '94."
- (3) That the remaining \$1 million be raised through the capital stewardship campaign.
- (4) That the authorized trust fund not be a part of the capital stewardship campaign.
- (5) That state association goals be established based on membership.

The second committee, chaired by Missouri Executive Secretary Clarence Burton, also made five recommendations:

- (1) That the campaign be implemented through the denomination's organizational structure.
- (2) That the national Executive Secretary coordinate the campaign, working closely with the Management Committee.
- (3) That state promotional directors and moderators coordinate the campaign in state associations.

- (4) That state coordinators select district coordinators.
- (5) That coordinators be selected in each local church.

The Focus

The new office facility is more than a building. It symbolizes *service*—missions, education, administration and ministry. Designed with the special needs of national agencies occupying the facility in mind, it provides a place for agencies to serve our denomination.

The building also symbolizes *sight*—vision, dreams and focus on the future. It takes into account the next generation and provides adequate space into the 21st century.

The building symbolizes *sacrifice*. How grateful we are for those who sacrificed in the past leaving us a denomination in which to serve. We rejoice when we think of the sacrificial support of denominational ministries at this present hour.

The building symbolizes *spirit*. This facility reflects a cooperative effort by those agencies occupying it. Together, every intricate detail was worked out and approved. We learned the value of a cooperative effort.

The building symbolizes a *start*. We have come a long way from 3801 Richland Avenue, our first office. Growth necessitated relocation in the early 50's, mid-60's and now early 90's. As God blesses our movement, another move will be necessary later.

Join with me in giving sacrificially to help liquidate the debt on the new national offices. Together we can reach our capital stewardship campaign goal—"A Million More by '94." ■

Secretary's Schedule

| | |
|----------------|--|
| November 1-2 | Mississippi State Association |
| November 6 | Horton Heights FWB Church Nashville, TN |
| November 7-9 | Alabama State Association |
| November 11-13 | Tennessee State Association |
| November 14-16 | Georgia State Association |
| November 17-20 | New Home FWB Church Colquitt, GA |
| November 24 | Sylvan Park FWB Church Nashville, TN |



Building a Church in Cajun Country

By Larry Russell

What causes a man to leave the mainstream of his denomination and move hundreds of miles to a completely different environment where the humidity stays about 90 percent year 'round, the culture is foreign to what he knows, and the closest churches are 200-plus miles away? The only answer is that when God calls a man to a field, He means for him to see the work and not only the problems and handicaps.

My first sight of the "Red Stick" (the French translation is Baton Rouge) came in 1961 on my high school senior trip. From that day there was a burden in my heart for that city. God did some pre-planning in my life with my first pastorate where I met my wife, Janis, who was born in north Louisiana.

Then came my first experience in mission work in West Helena, Arkansas, where the Lord gave Janis and me our first daughter, Kimberly. There were also years of growing up during our ministry in Ohio at Porter FWB Church and Garden City FWB Church.

It seemed now that God had me ready for my main purpose in life—starting a church with no money, no people, no building, only a dream and a big red and white church bus.

The Motel Church

While doing itinerate we were given the names of two families in Baton Rouge. They were contacted and on the last Sunday in September 1973 eight people met in our living room to start a Free Will Baptist church.

A month later I asked the Oak Manor Motor Hotel for a meeting room. They agreed and for almost five years we worshipped in different conference rooms at that motel. We baptized new converts in the motel swimming pool, held Sunday School classes in the game rooms and set up a nursery in the card room.

The experiences in this facility were inconvenient and often amus-

ing. One Sunday morning as I was preaching, someone ran down the hall and grabbed the door to our meeting room. The door came loose from the hinges and the man sailed into worship service riding the door like it was a surf board.

The \$3,000 Church

In the late 1970's the C.T.S. Department and Home Missions Department began a project for the mission called "Cash for Cajun Country." They gave us a check for almost \$10,000. This helped us make a down payment on 2.5 acres in the southeast section of the city on a state highway. But still we had no building, only a sign that said, "Future Site of First Free Will Baptist Church."

About a year later a friend called me about a church building that was for sale. The building had all the church furnishings. At that time

our church had saved \$3,000, just the selling price. But we soon discovered that it would take \$5,000 to move the building. Dear friends in northeast Arkansas helped us pay the moving bill.

Working on the Building

On the first Wednesday night in May 1978, with no air-conditioning, no electricity and with kerosene lights, our happy band met in that building for their first service. God worked one of His many miracles and three months later we got electricity and water into the old building that was built in 1919.

We were thrilled with our limited facility. This meant no more collecting song books from the trunk of the pastor's car every time service was held; no more folding playpens and taking down baby beds for the nursery, no more putting the pulpit in a closet. We had no Sunday School rooms, except for hallways and our church bus became children's church.

A friend who sold metal buildings helped us purchase a 40' x 75' building. We went back to our banker, whom we had helped win to the Lord. He made us a small loan that included land and buildings.

For the next two years, three nights a week, the men (and any stranger we could get hold of) came and worked on the building. When it was all over, the 6,000-square-foot building had been built with free labor, except for the air-conditioning work. Even unsaved men and strangers came by and helped with the building.

Shenandoah Academy

In the early 80's when our people saw the need for a Christian school, Shenandoah Christian Academy was opened.

This is where our youngest daughter, Jennifer, who was born in Baton Rouge, was saved. As a second-grader, she was reading her ACE pace and saw her need for Jesus. She bowed her head and asked Jesus to come into her life.

At one time the church had three full-time men on staff and a number of ladies working full-time or part-time at school and church.

The Crisis

But then came the Jimmy Swaggart Ministries. By bringing millions of dollars from outside the area, Swaggart built facilities and lowered his school tuition so that our small school and church could not compete with him. He provided musical entertainment programs and other attractions, and we lost people to his school and church.

On the heels of this, Baton Rouge, which had been a growing city with a non-stop future, began to feel the crunch of falling oil prices. Jobs were lost and people had to move. I got a part-time job selling real estate and Janis taught in a parish (county) school. For the next few years, it was a daily struggle to pay land notes and utility bills.

The Leaving

Even though I made no effort to leave Baton Rouge, Vista FWB Church in northeast Arkansas called me as pastor. Leaving Baton Rouge was one of the hardest things I have ever done. Leaving people I had loved and labored with for 14 years was indeed difficult. But I felt like we had done all we could in Baton Rouge to build a Free Will Baptist church.

Due to difficulty selling our home and our oldest daughter entering Bible College, our family went three different ways. For two years our family was busy commuting and growing far more appreciative of one another.

The Second Beginning

One day I received a call from a dear family in the Baton Rouge church. They said, "Pastor, we voted last night whether to close the church. We decided if it has to be, we'll be the last family to leave and we'll turn off the lights."

I could not bear the idea of the work dying in south Louisiana. People in Arkansas were good to me, and for the first time in many years I had pastors to fellowship and counsel with.

I talked with Home Missions Director Roy Thomas who said, "The Arkansas church can get a pastor, but I'm not sure if the Baton Rouge church will find a pastor who has a

heartbeat for that part of the country like you do."

It seemed that God had given me a two-year sabbatical, and it was now time to go back to the swamps.

It's not been easy trying to pick up the pieces. The isolation is hard to deal with, but I am proud of the faithful families who carry the big burden of reaching their city for Christ. It may take many more years to win and develop people with Louisiana ties with names like Lafleur, Bourgeois, Truax and Fontenot.

When I stop and analyze what we have done in 18 years, it seems like much of our ministry has been to win, train and send them away. I thank those families who have worked in Baton Rouge and have had to move away. They have been a blessing to the work. But I can think of families, including my own, whose lives were changed because of a mission that was started in Cajun Country. ■



ABOUT THE WRITER: Reverend Larry Russell pastors First Free Will Baptist Church in Baton Rouge, Louisiana. He's a graduate of Free Will Baptist Bible College and a member of the Home Missions Board.

What You Can Do

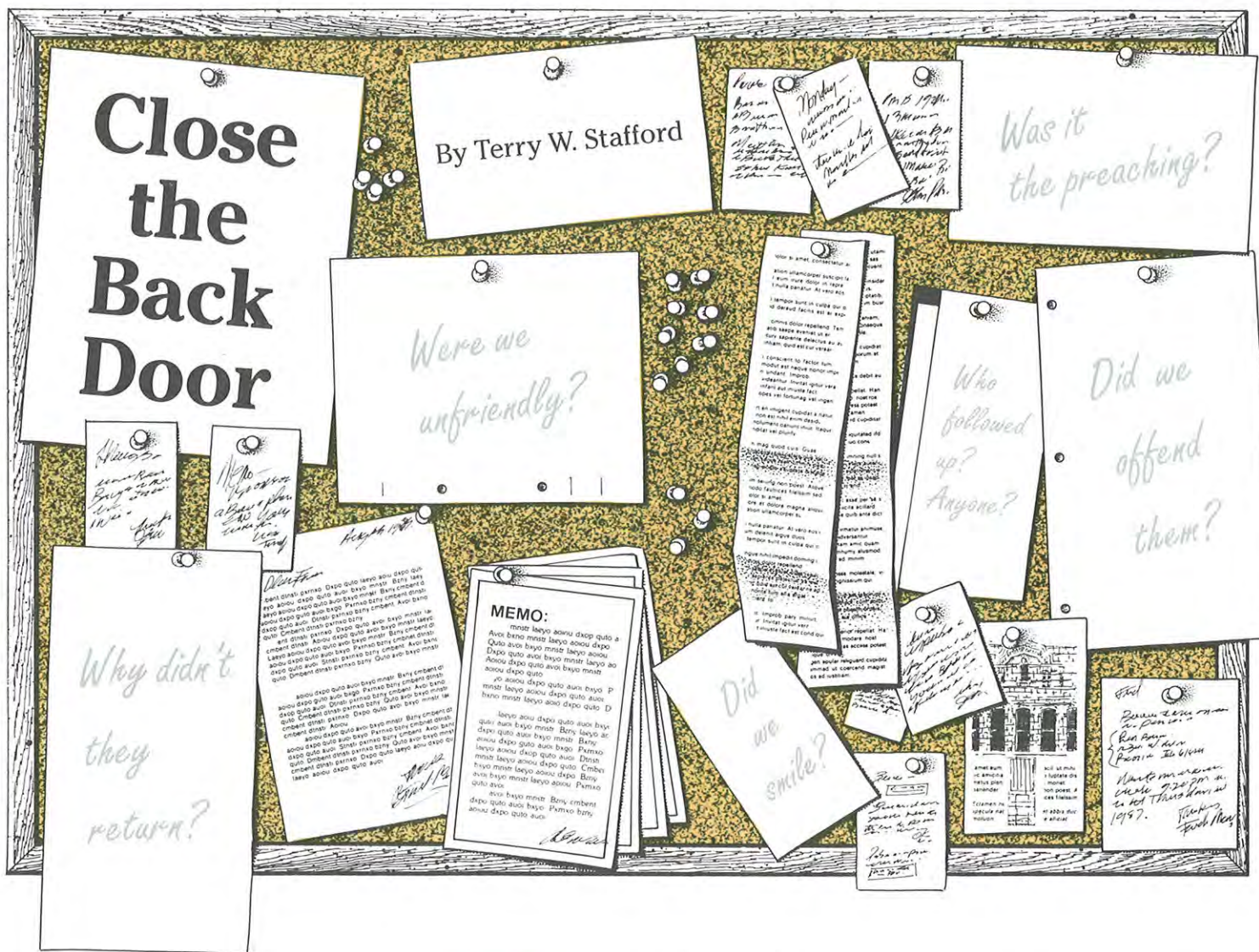
You can help our missionaries in isolated areas.

1. Write or call at least once a month. Isolation is hard to deal with day in and day out.

2. Support the Home Missions "Helping Hands" projects so that future missionaries can have land and a building to start with from day one.

3. Some of you could move to one of these isolated cities and help a missionary build a church.

4. My dream is to see 10 couples move with a mission from day one. If that could happen, Free Will Baptists would be able to establish strong churches all over this country.



Every church wants to open its doors and reach the lost. But how do we keep them from going right out the back door? We have all heard the jokes about having revolving doors installed in the foyer. While we laugh, deep down we may wonder why people have left or why they don't come back.

Is it me? Is it my preaching? Did I offend someone? In trying to explain the exodus or in agonizing over why visitors don't return, it is important to distinguish between those factors we may be able to do something about and those we cannot change.

There will always be people who become unhappy over the new song books or the color of the ladies' restroom. There will always be some who leave no matter what you do. There will always be a church in

town that offers more programs than you do. They bring in big-name singers or speakers and have a full-blown program for all ages. In some ways it is a fact of ministry. It happens. In many cases there is nothing anyone can do.

A Reason to Stay

However, we must also look at the reality of the situation. If people are leaving, there may be reasons. People may leave because we do not give them a reason to stay. People want to feel needed and that they can contribute.

Churches are full of people who have been saved, baptized and then left to figure out the rest on their own. We have failed to disciple them and get them involved in ministry. Those who want to be involved need the opportunity. If they aren't given the chance to serve

where they are, they may go elsewhere.

God has entrusted His children with various gifts and abilities. We must provide the outlets for them to be used.

We felt a need for our foyer areas to be dressed up a bit. We wanted to help people feel comfortable and welcome. We found four ladies we felt would do their best. One said, "Thanks for thinking about me."

It may seem a small thing, but the church had a need and we found some qualified people to help. We will benefit as well as those who are using their abilities.

Our jobs as pastors are not to do it all. Do what you are called to do, then help others find their areas of service (note Ephesians 4:11-12).

Pastors are always making pleas for those who are willing to serve. Often the help is sitting right in front of us, but we have failed to disciple them or encourage them to be involved using their talents. In such cases they may become frustrated and move on.

Follow-Up Program

Researchers say most churches keep about two percent of their visitors. Visitors seldom walk in on their own and they seldom stay just because they liked the sermon. Many believe the key to getting visitors to come back and stay is good follow-up and assimilation.

It is important that visitors make personal contact with someone other than the pastor. They need to receive a handshake, a smile and a "Hello, my name is . . ."

Church growth studies show that we have about six weeks to establish personal contact with visitors if we hope to keep them coming back. Visitors come in and out sometimes without anyone realizing it. It is of utmost importance that someone be responsible to greet visitors.

A personal letter from the pastor goes out Sunday afternoon to the visitor. By Monday evening there should be a phone call from a Sunday School teacher or nursery worker and a short personal visit by a church member on Tuesday evening.

Thus the visitor has contact with three different persons within two days of visiting. People appreciate the interest and will believe you when you tell them from the pulpit that you are glad they are there.

The Big Three

Assimilation is the act in which visitors or newcomers are incorporated into the local body of Christ. In the book, *Mastering Outreach and Evangelism*, Calvin Ratz lists what he terms "critical success factors" in a newcomer's willingness to return to a church. He lists them in order of obstacles, atmosphere and attitude.

Obstacles are given as large family networks, existing friendships, facilities, a church's history, philosophy of ministry, class and cultural distinctions, and poor attitude. These are areas that may need to overcome in order to get visitors to return.

Second, the atmosphere we present must be one of acceptance. Conveying not only through the message but through handshakes, smiles and conversation that the church is truly glad the visitor is there.

Third, Ratz states the church must be structured to include newcomers. This can be done by well-trained greeters and ushers, providing a newcomers class, maintaining a visitors file and integrating them into the ministry of the church as soon as possible.

Ultimately, to keep those we already have, we must train them to use the abilities they possess and provide them opportunities to do so. To get visitors to return we must greet them at the door with a smile, have a good follow-up program, and involve them in the ministry of the church once they come to Christ. In short, we need to give them a reason to stay. ■

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ABOUT THE WRITER: Reverend Terry Stafford pastors Victory Free Will Baptist Church in East Wetchee, Washington. He is a graduate of Hillsdale Free Will Baptist College. He serves as moderator of the Northwest Association.

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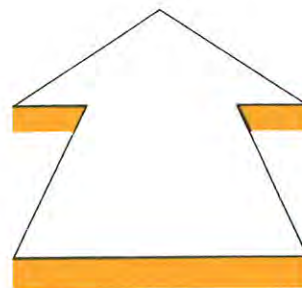
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The Joy of Pastoring a Smaller Church

By E. B. Ledlow

"Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood."

—Acts 20:28

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When you think about it, most churches in our denomination are small. God has to have pastors for these churches. I am one of those pastors. My ministry has been to serve the smaller congregation. My burden is for the small church.

Of the 37 years that I have pastored, 20 of those years were tendered in two churches, 10 years each. Three of my pastorates have been simply to give those particular churches a new beginning. These were short-term pastorates, so the Lord would move me to another church.

All the churches that I have pastored over the years have been a blessing to me. I am not and never have been a jealous or selfish preacher. This is one reason for my success in the pastorate. I love people, especially the ones God has made me pastor over. Pastoring is my calling and I love it!

What's Wrong?

What is wrong with the smaller church? This is the church where most of us live, work and pastor. To

me, this is a hypothetical question because I see no more wrong with the smaller church than is wrong with the larger church.

The word "hypothesis" means something which may or may not prove to be true but is assumed to be true for the sake of argument. The word "hypothetical" means something assumed to be true for the purpose of reasoning. However, what is hypothetical to some can be quite real to others and their reasoning seems to give them a complex toward smaller churches.

This habitual, bad emotional attitude toward the smaller church has been decisive in some minds in our ranks. The false rumor that small churches must be doing something wrong must be put to rest. Let's focus on what is right with these churches. It is not so much what is wrong with the small church as it is what is right with it.

What's Right?

I praise the Lord for larger churches, but I praise Him for smaller ones also. Small churches do a lot of things right. The churches that I have pastored have con-

tributed tremendously to our Lord's work and to our denomination. Our Lord has saved and raised up fine Christian workers from these churches. He is still doing so.

From these churches have come 10 preachers, called to be pastors. Other men were saved to become deacons and leaders in the church and in the community. Others became missionaries, Christian counselors, teachers, principals, nurses and medical doctors. Most of them are serving the Lord and our denomination presently.

Women were saved to become leaders in the church, serving in their capacity. Boys and girls were saved to become leaders in their schools and in their community. They have gone on to our colleges to study and are serving our denomination today.

This same pattern is repeated again and again in other small churches of our denomination. What an impact on our denomination and on the world these churches have made. Folks, these people came and are coming from our smaller churches. I say, "Praise the Lord!" From our smaller churches come a large percentage of the finances also.

What's Joy?

Regardless of what some might say or how they might look at the smaller church, I get great satisfaction and a great joy in pastoring a smaller church. There is a special joy in knowing everyone by name and seeing them come to church Sunday morning, Sunday evening and Wednesday evening and take their places in worship.

They support you in the services. They are willing to do not only one job in the church, but several jobs. It thrills my soul when my members sacrifice their time to see that things needed to be done in the church get done. My experience is that when there is work to be done in the smaller church the members are ready and willing to perform.

What joy to see the church youth taking part in the activities, to see them giving their money to support the church, to see members grow in



The Red Bird

By Vern Gunnels

While sitting in my study one cold, rainy January morning, my attention was drawn to the barren oak tree outside the window. There a bright red cardinal merrily chirped his approval of something, his colorful plumage contrasting with his dismal surroundings.

The firewood directly beneath him was cold and wet waiting to be carried into the house. Heavy raindrops had caused the bamboo to droop sadly as if carrying a burden. Drab brown pine needles covered the ground where just a few months before soft grass had covered the yard like a green carpet. Even the

tall oak trees stood tired and stark in need of pruning.

Mr. Red Bird seemed oblivious to it all as he sang his song and gave thanks to his Creator. That seems to be a habit for many of God's creatures (Acts 16), in spite of their surroundings.

I don't know about your *situation*, but if your relationship to the *Savior* is proper, there should be a *song* of some kind appropriate for the occasion. ■

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ABOUT THE WRITER: Reverend Vernon E. Gunnels, Jr. pastors Pearce Chapel Free Will Baptist Church in Smithville, Mississippi.

the Lord and in His work. What a blessing when the women of the church respond by preparing meals for the family when there is a death. The women work for the missionary efforts of the church; they go into homes of shut-ins and conduct services, leave gifts or have prayer.

It is joy to come together on a designated day and clean the church or work on the building and the grounds. Members do this because the church does not have enough finances to hire it done.

What a joy it is to see members of the small church doing little things to show their love and appreciation for the pastor. I cherish whatever my members say and do for me in this respect.

I began pastoring Cooper FWB Church in November 1989. This church is out in the country some nine miles south of Hamilton, Alabama. It is my first country church to pastor. Yes, I love this

small congregation. Yes, I have found these people to be some of the best in the Free Will Baptist denomination. Yes, there is less stress pastoring the smaller church.

I am enjoying this pastorate tremendously. These are my kind of people. What a joy to pastor where the Lord wants you, especially in a small church! ■

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ABOUT THE WRITER: Reverend E. B. Ledlow pastors Cooper Free Will Baptist Church in Detroit, Alabama. He has been preaching 40 years. Except for one year spent in Montana, his entire pastoral ministry has been invested in Alabama churches.



Let's start with the difference. There is a difference, a big difference, between those who sincerely disagree and those troublemakers who deliberately sow discord. The latter should be dealt with firmly and disciplined (a great subject for a future article). The former should not only be loved but appreciated, for they play a vital role in the life of the church.

I believe that it is healthy to have those who sometimes disagree. It helps us investigate all sides of an issue and spend more time in prayer seeking God's will, not simply rushing ahead with what we want to do.

Disagreements often occur because people look at situations from different perspectives. Pastors often approach problems from a theological perspective. Others may solve problems more pragmatically, a tried and true method they learned in the business world. It is the idealism/realism rub.

As a result, many church people who are less sensitive and more objective say, "Boom. Here's the answer. Now, let's move on." The pastor is identified with the ministry and may feel personally attacked by this insensitive approach.

Therefore, we must realize that while disagreements will always occur, we simply must learn how to deal with them.

I believe the worst possible thing to do with a disagreement that is

Living with Those Who Disagree

By Jim Mullen

obviously not going to go away by being ignored, is to try to ignore it. People who do not try to bury every conflict actually seem to have fewer conflicts. If people are aware that problems are going to be dealt with fairly and openly, it seems to discourage unnecessary problems.

Let me share some methods of dealing with disagreements that often *do not work* and sometimes cause more damage than good.

Spiritualizing

What we need is not a discussion or confrontation; we just need to get down on our knees and pray, confess our sins, and get our hearts right with God. That will take care of disagreements. (Usually what the person who makes this suggestion really means is, *If you get right with God then you will agree with me.*)

Denying

I don't know why people are so upset. I simply gave this disagree-

ment to the Lord and I don't have a problem with anyone in the church. I can't understand why folks keep fussing and complaining. (Many times the person making the denial is also vigorously fanning the flames of contention.)

Trivializing

Why can't these people be more mature? With all the real problems in the world, we sit here tearing each other up over silly matters. Why do we waste so much time?

Guilt-Tripping

It's probably all my fault. If I were the leader I ought to be then these things would not happen.

Even though some of the thoughts represented above may be correct, they really don't solve the problem or settle the disagreements. We need to deal with them honestly.

I know you must be saying, "This is hard." You are exactly right. Not

only is confrontation hard, it is risky.

Here are six practical suggestions.

Be honest.

Admit it when disagreements occur.

Be discerning.

Try to determine if this disagreement needs attention or if it will disappear for lack of attention.

Be a listener.

Really listen and consider what is being said. It may be that the person has a legitimate point.

Be available.

Face-to-face meetings are usually the best. Learn to translate your attitude to actions. If you say you are loving and caring, be available personally to prove it.

Be courteous.

Even if the person disagreeing hasn't been courteous to you, be courteous. If it doesn't make an impression on that person, it certainly will on others.

Be fair.

Don't use the pulpit to beat them into submission or try to embarrass them. You will lose in the long run.

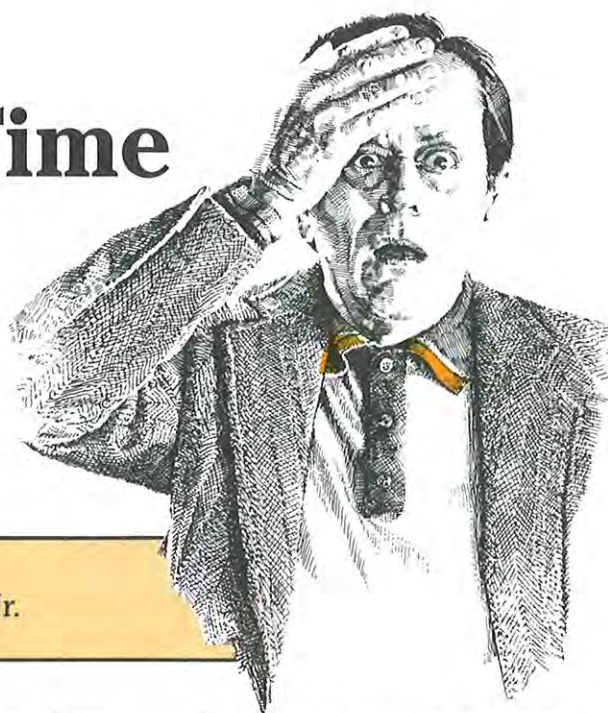
Disagreements are usually painful but they can also be constructive when we labor at really working out the disagreement and not just winning every conflict.

Finally, know this: You may be misunderstood even when you have done all that is humanly possible. Make certain that your motive is pure, and remember that God knows the real truth. Someday so will everyone else. ■



ABOUT THE WRITER: Reverend Jim Mullen pastors First Bible Free Will Baptist Church in New Castle, Indiana. He also serves as Indiana's promotional secretary and edits the state paper, *The Key*.

Ouch-Time



By R. F. Smith, Jr.

Our three children were about 13, 15 and 17, those teen years when parents often conclude that *teenage* is an incurable disease rather than a passing stage of life.

I was trying to plan a family outing, something we had done every Saturday since they could walk. "Family Day," we called it. A time for the family to do something together—some fun-something.

But I was having trouble nailing down any date with them. They had their own agendas and were going 14 ways from Sunday, or so it seemed to me.

No doubt frustration over their stuffed schedules, and my inability to break into their plans, showed up in my face and voice. After all, I only wanted some family time with them. I needed it.

Our son, whose teenage perception and sensitivity still amazes me, gently said, "Dad, we children cannot meet all your emotional needs."

Ouch! And with that bit of teenage insight and maturity ringing in my ears, I quietly folded my tent and silently slipped away to my downstairs study where I could think (or, more accurately, lick my emotional wounds).

I came to realize that I *did* have a lot of emotional needs I was expecting our children to meet. They could meet some of them, but, as son Forest said, they could not meet them all.

Children do grow up; and, in many ways, they grow away from us. And that's often frustrating. Yet, that's what we train them to do. In our saner moments we know that must happen.

As someone said, "The home that does not lose its children is a failure." We do lose our children to their own worlds, their own agendas and their own plans. There are many parts of their worlds we cannot enter; there are many facets of their lives we simply cannot participate in.

That situation creates an emotional problem for us. When they are born we cut their umbilical cord. Then, in time, they cut our emotional umbilical cord. *Ouch!*

And that hurts. But it is a hurt that leads to wholeness and maturity, for both parents and children.

Ouch-time happens. It's called life-realities. ■

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

After 4,000 Years of Trying, We . . .

Still Can't Take it With Us

By Dennis E. Hensley



My father is a self-made man. From an 8th-grade drop-out, he rose to become president of three successful businesses. He believes that a bit of struggle in life isn't so bad. It builds character. And to that end, he claims that when he dies, his last will and testament will read, "Being of sound mind, I spent every dime I had before I died."

Now, before you begin to feel sorry for me in my sad prospects of never receiving any inheritance, let me tell you that I hope my father really carries through on his plan. I'm serious.

My father is a good Christian man. He has given hours of his time and a great deal of his money in support of orphanages, schools, churches and worthy civic causes. The Lord, in turn, has blessed my father with financial and other rewards.

If my father, after having led a "rich" life in *all* aspects of the word, were to die penniless, he would achieve the ultimate goal of a fulfilled life. Let me explain to you why that is less paradoxical than you may believe it to be.

More Toys

From the world's perspective, the attainment of money, land and other tangible goods is the only way to determine whether or not a person has been successful in life. In

fact, one famous Hollywood movie star and recording artist has a separate building next to his home which contains hundreds of toy trains, miles of railroad track and thousands of model railroading accessories. On the door to this building is a brass plate with the engraved message, "The Guy Who Dies With the Most Toys Wins!"

From a Christian perspective, nothing could be farther from the truth. Jesus taught that to spend a life hoarding material goods rather than to share with the needy was to put one's soul in an indefensible position when brought before the judgment seat of God. Thus, the guy who dies with the most of *anything* actually *loses*.

Bigger Barns

In Luke 12:15-21 Jesus told the story of a wealthy landowner whose harvests were so bountiful his barns couldn't contain all the crops. Instead of donating the excess food to people who were less fortunate, the man ordered his little barns torn down and larger barns built. In

this way, he could store all the food and keep it all to himself.

That very night the man died. His soul was called into judgment. His earthly wealth and possessions were of no value to him as he stood before God.

Unspent Millions

That parable is reminiscent of a story reported in a major metropolitan newspaper in 1937, the day after John D. Rockefeller died.

Rockefeller's chief accountant was approached by a newspaperman who asked, "Hey! Just how many millions did old J. D. leave behind?"

The accountant smirked mirthlessly, then replied, "All of them."

How true, how true. The oft-quoted catch phrase, "Ya can't take it with ya," is actually biblical in nature. It was Job who said 4,000 years ago, "Naked came I out of my mother's womb and naked shall I return thither" (Job 1:21). You would think that after all these years we would have learned the truth of that lesson. But we haven't.

Dangerous Riches

The same problem was true during Christ's time on earth. A rich young prince came to Jesus one day and asked to be told how to obtain eternal life. Jesus told him to obey the commandments. The young man said he was already doing that.

Then Jesus added that the prince should distribute all of his personal wealth to the poor. This saddened the prince, for he enjoyed hoarding his riches to himself.

"And when Jesus saw that he was sorrowful, he said, 'How hardly shall they that have riches enter into the kingdom of God!'" (Luke 18:24).

New Definitions

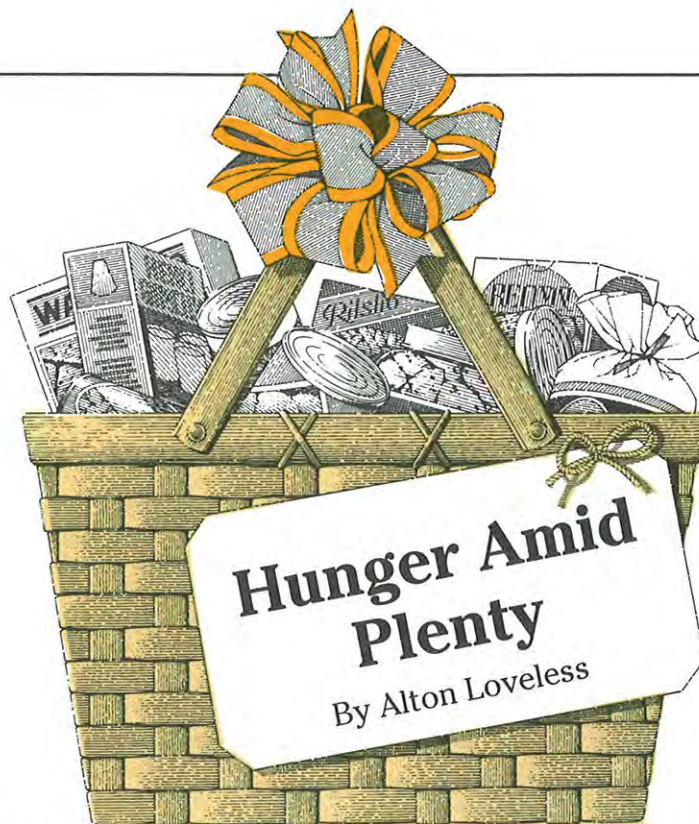
What was the lesson here? That it is sinful to be financially prosperous? No, not at all. The lesson was that there is a better definition of "rich." There is nothing wrong in being financially well-to-do, so long as it does not make you spiritually poor.

Jesus taught that those people who make sacrifices in order to serve God *and* serve the needy will be blessed "in this present time and in the world to come" (Luke 18:30). In other words, we get "the best of both worlds," to put it in contemporary terms.

So it is then that I can rejoice with my dad when he tells everyone he plans to die penniless. He knows the secret: The guy who dies with the *fewest* toys wins! ■



ABOUT THE WRITER: Dr. Dennis E. Hensley is the author of *Money Wise* (Harvest House) and *How to Manage Your Time* (Warner Press).



The rain was heavy and cold as we pulled into the front of an old duplex rental property. A hungry young couple sat waiting for our visit. Two children had been seen jumping with joy as we approached the front door, knowing their needs would soon be satisfied.

After a brief rap on the door, the small apartment was opened to the young deacon and me. We entered seeking a spot to set down the wet box that was ready to come apart.

"Please put it on the coffee table," came the husband's voice. I noticed his crutches and a cast on one of his legs. It was obvious they had more than their share of troubles.

Our visit was nearly over when the husband requested we pray for a baby his wife was holding. I had not noticed the child closely until she turned him to our full view. Immediately, I saw that his head was twice the normal size.

The husband related how they had taken the child from his real mother who was retarded and was not tending him. They moved into the small apartment shortly afterwards so they could get attention for the child at the famed Columbus Children's Hospital. Then he broke his leg, lost his job, and everything went down from there.

We all surrounded the baby and I began to pray, choking up thinking of the compassion they had for the child and now their own requirements for help.

Tears still filled the deacon's and my eyes as we made our way back through the freezing rain and snow that nearly covered our car. Discussing the plight of the couple, we made a turn and the headlights spotlighted a building that was one of the largest grocery warehouses in Columbus.

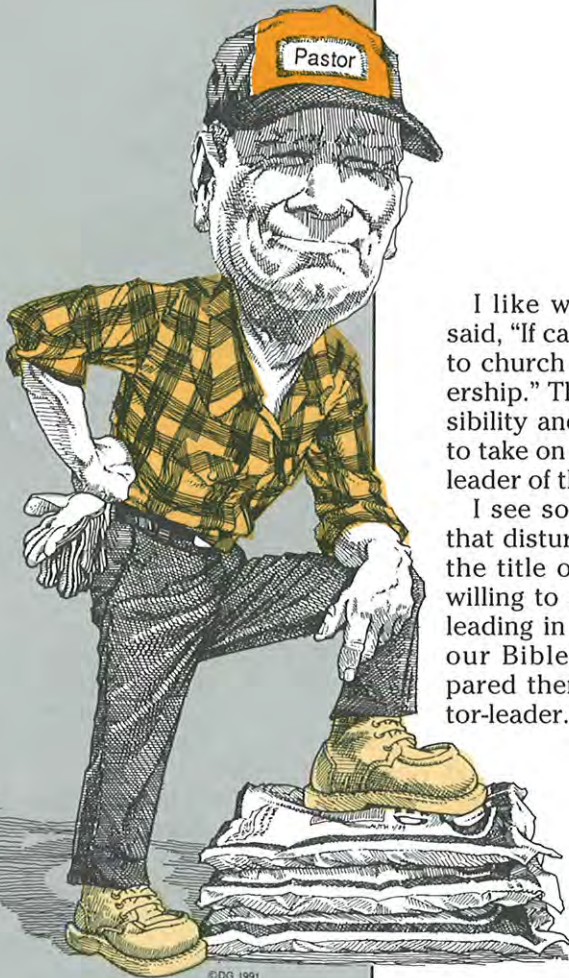
I thought as I slipped up the icy street, *Why should these be hungry living only a block from all this food?* ■



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

Just One of the Boys

By Nuel Brown



I like what Dwayne Davenport said, "If called upon to name the key to church growth, it would be leadership." This is an awesome responsibility and it takes a strong pastor to take on and follow through as the leader of the church.

I see some things in our pastors that disturb me. Some pastors want the title of pastor but may not be willing to assume responsibility for leading in church growth. I believe our Bible colleges have not prepared them for such a role of pastor-leader. Our schools have taught

the pastor-leader. When there is death in the family, it is a pastor the family wants to talk to, not one of the boys. When a church sets itself to win souls and grow, it must have a spiritual leader, just one of the boys will not do.

I don't care what a man looks like or how he dresses, as long as when I meet him I know who and what he is. Not only should the people of his congregation see him as their pastor and spiritual leader, but the community should see him as pastor, not just one of the boys of the community.

There are some pastoral ethics that must be applied, and when applied, it sets the pastor apart from "just one of the boys." There must be pastoral dignity. When the pastor applies the ethics of a pastor, it may create a lonely road for him in some respects. But that is part of the price to be paid.

There is no other occupation in the community that carries so much dignity as does the Christian minister. In most cases, the man-on-the-street associates the pastor with the highest and finest things in life. Therefore, he somehow senses a right to expect the pastor to conform to those customs and practices that apply to true dignity.

It has been my experience through the years that a pastor can achieve that effective position of being the kind of man you can talk to, that is approachable, without sacrificing the dignity of his office.

Can a pastor be the "guy-next-door" in fishing clothes or in a baseball stadium, and still retain a wholesome, spiritual air that invites those who need a spiritual leader to seek him out? Yes! Give thought always, and prayer, to your position, and you will find it can be done. Even in the 90's. ■

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ABOUT THE WRITER: Reverend Nuel Brown is executive secretary for the California State Association. This article is reprinted from the California Voice, August 1991 issue.

A few weeks ago I heard a pastor say, "I want the people in my church to think of me as just one of the boys. I want to be approachable. I want my people to feel they can come to me with anything they want to talk about."

That is all well and good. The pastor should be approachable. But he should be approachable as a pastor-leader, not as one of the boys.

The price a pastor pays to be a leader is not cheap. Luke 14:28 says, "Which of you, intending to build a tower, does not sit down first and count the cost?"

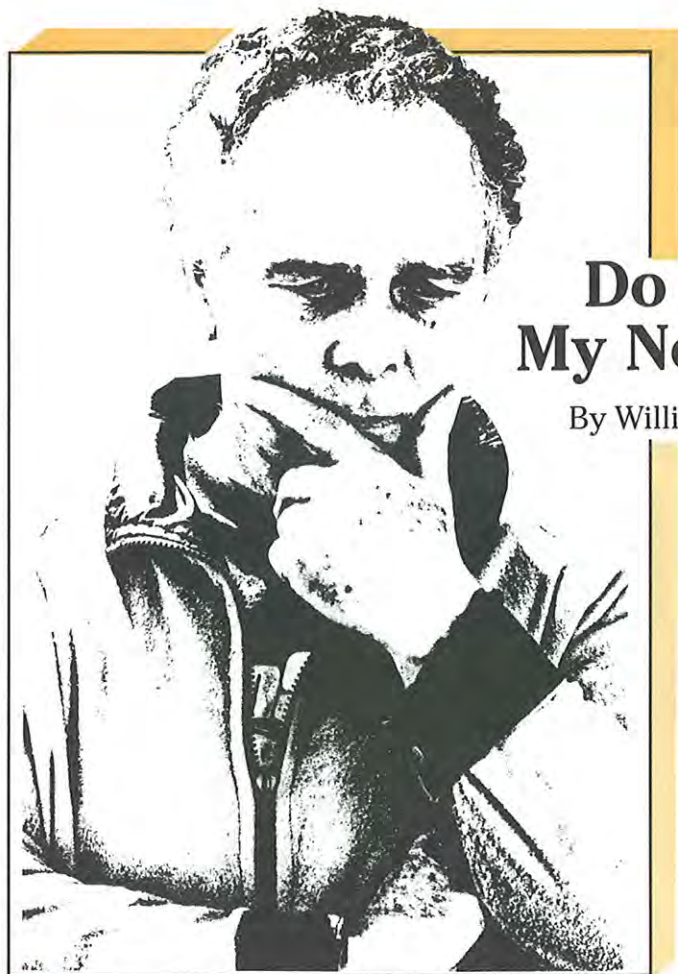
Since leadership is not cheap, pastors must ask themselves, before making plans to pastor a church, "Am I willing to pay the price?"

them to be enablers rather than leaders.

A great emphasis on the laypeople of the church as members of the Body of Christ has caused the pendulum to swing far in the other direction. Some of our pastors are taught to function as a member of the Body and not as a leader of the Body.

Ted Engstrom says, "All strong leaders become so because they are able to identify readily with people but not become 'one of the boys.' A leader has to be ready to walk away from the crowd and be alone." And that is never easy.

The greatest hindrance in being just one of the boys is, in my experience, that when people have a spiritual problem, they don't want to see "one of the boys," they want to see



Do I Love My Neighbor?

By William H. Preston

Recently, a home was severely damaged by fire on the street where I live. It was only a few houses down the block. I was asked the name of the family and to my chagrin I had to confess that I did not know their name, though I had often seen them out for their daily walk. I was deeply troubled after this incident by the fact that in four years of living on this block I did not even know the name of a family just a few houses away.

I asked myself, "Have I become so busy, so uncaring, so preoccupied with my own concerns that I'm not even aware of who my closest neighbors are?"

I tried to rationalize by saying that I really had no responsibility to know everyone on the block, yet I felt a deep sense of conviction and, yes, embarrassment as I recalled an incident found in God's Word. I felt somewhat like Cain who, long ago, asked, "Am I my brother's keeper?" Well, there is but one answer to that ancient question. We *are* our brother's keeper!

During Jesus' earthly ministry, a teacher of the law approached Him and asked, "Of all the commandments, which is the most important?"

Jesus replied that the most important commandment was, "Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength. The second is this: *'Love your neighbor as yourself.'* There is no greater commandment than these" (Mark 12:30-31).

Do we really love our neighbors when we don't even know the names of those who live closest to us? Do we really love our neighbors when the color of their skin is the determining factor in whether we attempt to get acquainted? Does a person's political affiliation determine friendship? Jesus' commandment to love our neighbors has no racial or political conditions attached.

Who are our neighbors? It may surprise you to know that the true definition of who one's neighbor is

goes far beyond a street address. We find the answer to this question in Luke 10, the parable of the Good Samaritan.

An expert in the law asked Jesus, "And who is my neighbor?" Jesus responded with the aforementioned parable.

Our neighbor is anyone we come in contact with who has a need we can meet. There are no geographical boundaries to this. Everyday we interact with numbers of people with needs—at home, at work, at the grocery, at school, at play.

Whenever we become aware of a genuine need—spiritual, physical or emotional, we should seek a way that we might assist in meeting that person's needs.

There are many ways in which we might meet the needs of our neighbors. It may be as simple as a warm smile or just a kind word. A telephone call to a shut-in is an excellent means of showing love and concern. Meeting a material need if you have the resources is a classical example of real neighborliness.

Oh, by the way, Jesus' command to love our neighbors includes those we might find difficult to love. Someone rightly stated that "Christian love is at its best when practiced on your neighbor at his worst."

Do you really love your neighbor? Then express your love to them. Pick up the telephone; give them a call. Try smiling and a sincere verbal greeting while walking down the street. Not only will you brighten their day, but you'll enjoy it yourself.

May the Lord bless you, neighbor! ■

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ABOUT THE WRITER: Reverend William H. Preston pastors Richland Free Will Baptist Church, Nashville, Tennessee.

FREE WILL BAPTIST NEWSFRONT

Capital Stewardship Campaign Gets Underway



ANTIOCH, TN—An advisory committee with members from 18 states launched a three-year, \$1.475 million capital stewardship campaign in late August to liquidate indebtedness on the new Free Will Baptist National Offices building. The committee met August 27-28 in the new facility to develop strategy for the campaign authorized during the 1991 national convention in Charleston, West Virginia.

The campaign, "A Million More by '94," calls for the speedy sale of the 1134 Murfreesboro Road property in Nashville, with proceeds paid immediately toward the debt. Approximately \$1 million will be raised through the capital stewardship campaign. The trust fund authorized by the National Association will not be a part of the campaign.

The Advisory Committee directed that the campaign be implemented through the denomination's organizational structure. Executive Secretary Melvin Worthington will coordinate the campaign, working closely with the

Management Committee. The Management Committee includes directors of all national agencies occupying the facility, the executive secretary and the WNAC executive secretary.

State promotional directors and moderators will coordinate the campaign in state associations. District moderators will select coordinators for districts. Coordinators will also be selected in each local church.

The Advisory Committee believes that the campaign symbolizes the spirit of and follows the guidelines for the capital stewardship campaign authorized by the National Association.

Coordinator Melvin Worthington mailed a news release to all state papers in early September. He said that one of the goals in the campaign is to "keep people fully informed about what's happening in the entire campaign."

Regular mailings will update the denomination about the campaign's progress.

Worthington said, "We appreciate the diligent work of the Advi-

sory Committee in designing the campaign."

The Advisory Committee recommended the following campaign goals for each state association:

| State | Membership | Goal |
|------------------|------------|-------------------|
| Alabama | 19,458 | \$ 97,290 |
| Arizona | 313 | 1,565 |
| Arkansas | 19,576 | 97,880 |
| Atlantic Canada | 400 | 2,000 |
| California | 4,385 | 23,925 |
| Colorado | 201 | 1,005 |
| Florida | 5,273 | 26,365 |
| Georgia | 9,724 | 48,620 |
| Hawaii | 47 | 235 |
| Idaho | 90 | 450 |
| Illinois | 4,120 | 20,600 |
| Indiana | 2,004 | 10,020 |
| Iowa | 68 | 340 |
| Kansas | 328 | 1,640 |
| Kentucky | 9,030 | 45,150 |
| Louisiana | 24 | 120 |
| Maryland | 1,735 | 8,675 |
| Michigan | 3,850 | 19,250 |
| Mississippi | 3,963 | 19,815 |
| Missouri | 15,405 | 77,025 |
| Montana | 7 | 35 |
| Nebraska | 26 | 130 |
| New Mexico | 152 | 760 |
| North Carolina | 15,057 | 75,285 |
| Northeast Assoc. | 225 | 1,125 |
| Northwest Assoc. | 227 | 1,385 |
| Ohio | 10,423 | 52,115 |
| Oklahoma | 23,501 | 117,505 |
| South Carolina | 4,670 | 23,350 |
| Tennessee | 20,008 | 100,040 |
| Texas | 2,941 | 14,705 |
| Virginia | 6,195 | 30,975 |
| West Virginia | 11,768 | 58,840 |
| Other | | 23,780 |
| | | <hr/> \$1,000,000 |

Thigpen Accepts Tennessee Post



NASHVILLE, TN—Dr. Charles A. Thigpen, former president and chancellor at Free Will Baptist Bible College, has been named promotional director for the Tennessee State Association. Dr.

Thigpen, 65, assumes his new duties January 1, 1992.

Although the position is part-time, Thigpen expects to give most of his time to the work. "I want to be a pastor to the pastors. I see the promotional director's job as a ministry of encouragement," he said.

The former Bible College president replaces out-going promotional director Raymond Riggs. Thigpen said he expects to relocate the state office from the Cookeville area where Reverend Riggs lived to Nashville.

In addition to serving as pastor to pastors, Thigpen will serve as editor of Tennessee's quarterly state paper, *The Echo*. "I want *The Echo* to be a family paper," Thigpen said. "I plan to promote

the entire denominational program."

One of his priorities will be making contact with the unaffiliated Free Will Baptists in Tennessee to "at least invite them to have fellowship with us."

Thigpen said he will also visit annual associations in Tennessee as well as some quarterly meetings. Since Nashville has become a major medical center, he plans to make hospital visits when Free Will Baptists from across the state come to Nashville for treatment.

Arkansas Questions Missionary Fund Raising

CONWAY, AR—Delegates to the 94th annual session of the Arkansas State Association passed a resolution requesting that the Foreign Missions Department explore alternate methods for raising missionary support instead of continuing itinerate services. Citing the fact that missionaries spend most of their furlough time raising funds rather than recuperating, delegates asked that the Foreign Missions Department do something to relieve the pressure.

Clerk Wendell Leckbee said that 545 registered for the August 13-15 meeting at Camp Beaverfork near Conway. That included 108 ministers, 80 lay delegates and 44 deacons. Moderator Carl Cheshier was re-elected.

Delegates passed a \$228,000 state budget. They voted that Cooperative Plan funds be disbursed: General Fund—25%, CTS Board—20%, Missions Board—17.5%, Sunday School Board—2%,

Christian Education Board—3%, *The Vision*—2%, National Association 30.5%.

Four speakers preached sermons on the association theme, "Redeeming the Time." Speakers included Arkansas pastors Douglas Little (Russellville) and Mike Hutsell (Van Buren), along with North Carolina pastor Gordon Sebastian and FWBBC dean of students Terry Forrest.

Meeting concurrently with the state association were the Master's Men (17th session), the Woman's Auxiliary (37th session) and the Youth Conference (3rd session). John and Tony Fowlkes, laymen who went to Cuba to construct a chapel, spoke at the Master's Men dinner. Charolette Tal-ent, missionary to France, spoke to the Auxiliary. The national NYC Team (Eddie Bowerman, Jim Lauthern and Dean Jones) led youth seminars.

The 1992 session will meet August 11-13 at Camp Beaverfork.

Leadership Conference to Meet in Nashville

ANTIOCH, TN—The annual Free Will Baptist Leadership Conference will meet December 2-3 at the Doubletree Hotel in Nashville, according to Executive Secretary Melvin Worthington. Dr. Worthington said he expects more than 150 leaders from 20 states to participate this year.

The conference will begin with registration Monday, December 2 from 3:00 p.m. to 5:00 p.m. After a dinner together, state leaders will gather for a two-hour plenary session on denominational stewardship.

Tuesday activities call for morning and evening sessions on stewardship. Tuesday afternoon, state leaders will travel to the new national offices building in Antioch to participate in dedication services.

The Leadership Conference will conclude Tuesday evening at 9:30. Wednesday, the various national boards and commissions will meet separately to conduct the business of each agency.

FWBBC Enrollment Up 11 Percent

NASHVILLE, TN—With enrollment still open, Free Will Baptist Bible College had registered 281 students from 24 states, the Virgin Islands, and three foreign countries, according to Dr. Charles Hampton, registrar.

The college had not closed evening class registration at the time of *Contact's* deadline, so the final count could be different.

The 281 enrollment is an 11.5% increase over last fall's count of 252, according to Dr. Hampton. "Of the 24 states represented, we have an increased number of students from 16. Four other states remained the same," he said.

By states, the college has registered the following totals so far:

| | |
|-------------------|----|
| Alabama | 18 |
| Arkansas | 15 |
| California | 4 |
| Colorado | 2 |
| Delaware | 2 |
| Florida | 7 |
| Georgia | 15 |
| Illinois | 25 |
| Indiana | 10 |
| Kentucky | 10 |
| Louisiana | 3 |
| Michigan | 6 |
| Missouri | 17 |
| Mississippi | 7 |
| North Carolina | 25 |
| New Mexico | 1 |
| Ohio | 14 |
| Oklahoma | 2 |
| South Carolina | 12 |
| Tennessee | 57 |
| Texas | 8 |
| Virginia | 9 |
| Washington | 2 |
| West Virginia | 4 |
| Virgin Islands | 1 |
| Foreign Countries | 3 |

By classes, to date, there are 97 freshmen, 69 sophomores, 64 juniors, 43 seniors and eight special students at FWBBC. Of these, 99 are attending FWBBC for the first time, and 182 are returning to the college.

Southeastern College Enrolls 165

WENDELL, NC—The fall semester at Southeastern FWB College began with 165 students enrolling in August, according to school officials. That number also includes 37 students enrolled in extension courses.

Enrollment on the Wendell campus includes 96 full-time students and 32 part-time students. Forty-one students live in the men's dorm; 50 students live in the women's dorm; 37 students live off campus.

President Billy Bevan said, "This is God's school. Our ministry is students. We are excited about being involved in training young people."

CCC Builds Gymnasium

FRESNO, CA—Workers completed construction of a 7,200-square-foot gymnasium on the California Christian College campus in Fresno, according to President James McAllister. Valued at \$280,000, the construction and final landscaping was completed in mid-October. The facility contains a collegiate-size regulation basketball court and seats 300 in bleachers.

President McAllister said, "We're having a good fall semester with more full-time students than in previous years."

Two new faculty members were added this semester. Frank Crank, who holds an M.A. from Lee College, heads the athletic department and student recruitment. Louis Nettleton, a Free Will Baptist Bible College graduate, serves as dean of students.

A two-year program in medical transcription will be available to students beginning January 1992.

Hillsdale Enrolls 165

MOORE, OK—Some 165 students arrived on Hillsdale FWB College campus in late August to begin the fall semester, according to Tim Eaton, vice-president of academic affairs. The students came from 13 states and five foreign countries. They brought along with all their personal belongings, enthusiasm, ambition and commitment to Christ. Forty-eight young men are ministerial students, and 16 students are in training for missions.

Seventy-six students are classified as freshmen, 48 as sophomores, 26 as juniors, 9 as seniors, and 6 as special. Officials said that the increasing size of the junior class is an encouragement and suggests good things with regard to retention. Most students are theology majors.

The year began with a host of orientation activities designed to acclimate the new students to college life. Pastor Billy Hanna of First FWB Church in Albany, Georgia, preached the fall revival on campus, which resulted in a deepening of the students' spiritual interests. Hanna's son, Brad, is a student at Hillsdale.

A number of personnel changes have been made including the addition of former missionary Janice Banks to the faculty. Mrs. Banks will also serve as dean of students and head up the missions department. Dr. Vernon Whaley will work with the New Life Singers and develop the music program of the college. Katrina Kruizinga, an alumnus of Hillsdale, will teach English, German and direct the Hillsdale Players.

Convention Steering Committee Meets in Indiana

INDIANAPOLIS, IN—The Indiana Steering Committee met September 20 at the Hyatt Regency Hotel in Indianapolis to plan the 56th annual Free Will Baptist national convention July 19-23, 1992. Plenary sessions of the National Association will convene in downtown Indianapolis at the Indiana Convention Center.

Executive Secretary Melvin Worthington said he blocked more than 1,200 rooms in six hotels to house delegates. The convention housing form will be printed in the April 1992 issue of *Contact* and in state papers.

The Indiana contingency includes the Steering Committee, state Auxiliary president and NYC planning captain:

Jim Mullen, Chairman
Dan Runion, Hospitality Committee
Richard Byers, Registration Committee
Ivan Asbury, Prayer Committee
Don Neal, Ushering Committee
Mary Neal, Auxiliary President
Jason Nelis, NYC Planning Captain

The Steering Committee met 8:30 a.m.-3:00 p.m. gathering information, reviewing committee assignments and touring convention facilities. Committee members will meet twice in 1992 (January and May) to expedite convention plans.

Cooperative Channel Contributions August 1991

RECEIPTS:

| State | Designated | CO-OP (Undesignated) | Total | August '90 | Yr. To Date |
|------------------|--------------|-------------------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|
| Alabama | \$ 90.00 | \$ 30.00 | \$ 120.00 | \$ 617.57 | \$ 2,999.57 |
| Arizona | .00 | 85.53 | 85.53 | 50.00 | 778.43 |
| Arkansas | 2.00 | 5,734.53 | 5,736.53 | 4,489.03 | 45,589.79 |
| California | .00 | 2,193.78 | 2,193.78 | 1,048.33 | 10,217.59 |
| Colorado | .00 | .00 | .00 | .00 | .00 |
| Delaware | .00 | .00 | .00 | .00 | .00 |
| Florida | .00 | 1,409.76 | 1,409.76 | 744.43 | 11,175.37 |
| Georgia | 8,352.31 | 1,114.50 | 9,466.81 | 6,982.60 | 73,539.83 |
| Hawaii | .00 | .00 | .00 | 50.00 | .00 |
| Idaho | 160.13 | .00 | 160.13 | .00 | 219.91 |
| Illinois | 13,381.97 | 3,232.79 | 16,614.76 | 8,318.26 | 71,419.26 |
| Indiana | 412.58 | 57.62 | 470.20 | 670.38 | 5,158.02 |
| Kansas | .00 | 132.78 | 132.78 | 88.60 | 522.16 |
| Kentucky | 266.60 | 293.86 | 560.46 | 725.50 | 1,448.79 |
| Maryland | .00 | .00 | .00 | 75.00 | 3,593.56 |
| Michigan | 5,054.85 | 691.16 | 5,746.01 | 1,951.42 | 39,335.26 |
| Mississippi | 53.71 | 654.07 | 707.78 | 225.50 | 4,548.60 |
| Missouri | 7,646.29 | .00 | 7,646.29 | 9,678.39 | 69,475.38 |
| New Mexico | 17.63 | 8.81 | 26.44 | 14.24 | 1,456.24 |
| North Carolina | 3,180.81 | 1,242.23 | 4,423.04 | 1,070.41 | 17,914.18 |
| Ohio | 343.21 | 2,374.00 | 2,717.21 | 2,053.00 | 22,515.21 |
| Oklahoma | 36,874.34 | 9,879.09 | 46,753.43 | 47,313.62 | 336,650.46 |
| South Carolina | 17,512.81 | 74.10 | 17,586.91 | 11,513.58 | 100,317.80 |
| Tennessee | 10,593.47 | 3,399.31 | 13,992.78 | 1,740.89 | 35,646.59 |
| Texas | 11,386.72 | 1,307.41 | 12,694.13 | 10,253.41 | 77,211.84 |
| Virginia | 474.94 | 50.00 | 524.94 | 375.90 | 2,815.11 |
| West Virginia | 9,240.66 | 218.94 | 9,459.60 | 2,385.21 | 30,284.09 |
| Canada | .00 | .00 | .00 | .00 | 86.97 |
| Northwest Assoc. | .00 | .00 | .00 | 47.95 | 147.09 |
| Other (Computer) | .00 | .00 | .00 | .00 | .27 |
| Totals | \$125,045.03 | \$34,184.27 | \$159,229.30 | \$112,483.22 | \$965,067.37 |

DISBURSEMENTS:

| | | | | | |
|------------------------|--------------|-------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|
| Alabama | \$ 320.26 | \$ 61.43 | \$ 381.69 | \$ 1,147.14 | \$ 2,879.57 |
| Executive Office | 5,883.82 | 15,737.45 | 21,621.27 | 20,166.66 | 172,970.20 |
| Foreign Missions | 80,096.79 | 4,242.76 | 84,339.55 | 65,708.26 | 504,610.84 |
| FWBBC | 6,587.49 | 4,242.76 | 10,830.25 | 5,445.00 | 64,251.16 |
| Home Missions | 26,767.35 | 3,320.43 | 30,087.78 | 15,260.07 | 152,132.12 |
| Retirement & Insurance | 497.27 | 2,582.57 | 3,079.84 | 1,578.81 | 18,200.20 |
| Master's Men | 724.67 | 2,582.57 | 3,307.24 | 1,632.03 | 18,666.65 |
| Commission for | | | | | |
| Theological Integrity | 46.40 | 92.22 | 138.62 | 69.62 | 874.77 |
| FWB Foundation | 800.05 | 1,106.82 | 1,906.87 | 862.15 | 11,649.04 |
| Historical Commission | 42.03 | 92.22 | 134.25 | 53.61 | 842.21 |
| Music Commission | 14.96 | 92.22 | 107.18 | 63.67 | 648.84 |
| Radio & TV Commission | 39.47 | 92.22 | 131.69 | 59.00 | 856.16 |
| Hillsdale FWB College | 1,461.58 | .00 | 1,461.58 | 620.29 | 12,109.77 |
| Other | 2,083.15 | .03 | 2,083.18 | 964.05 | 7,255.41 |
| Totals | \$125,045.03 | \$34,184.27 | \$159,229.30 | \$112,483.22 | \$965,067.37 |

CURRENTLY...

For the first time in several years, Free Will Baptists in southeastern **Oklahoma** conducted a youth camp. More than 70 young people met at the **Hugo FWB Mission** in **Hugo, OK**. Pastor **Mike Fields** called the camp a success because of cooperation by the **Southeastern Association** and **Lawnwood FWB Church** in **Tulsa**.

Pastor **Ron Palmer** reports four adults baptized and "three more ready." Palmer pastors **Cross Roads FWB Church** in **Billings, MT**.

State CTS Director **Jackie Brown** reported **Camp Beaverfork** indebtedness (**Arkansas**) paid in full. This summer, officials registered 830 campers with 101 conversions and 216 rededications.

Eight basketball teams will compete in the December 5-7 Tip-Off Tournament at **Southeastern FWB College** in **Wendell, NC**. Teams from North Carolina, Indiana, Mississippi and Virginia will compete.

The **Central Texas District Association** Credentials Committee reports the following action taken at their quarterly meeting August 10, 1991: "Since Brother **Morris Proctor** has affiliated with another denomination, we recommend that his credentials as a Free Will Baptist minister be revoked."

Pastor **Danny Smith** called the August revival at **Corinth FWB Church** in **Midland City, AL**, "the best revival ever." One person was converted, one man answered the call to preach, and members who had never witnessed for Christ began witnessing. **Cecil Farmer** served as evangelist.

Attendance during the first three months reached a high of 40 at **Harvest FWB Church** in **Vallejo, CA**. Pastor **Mike Trimble** reports nine conversions, six rededications and five baptisms.

Pastor **Randy Cox** reports 14 additions to the church, eight baptisms, 23 public professions of faith and 88 members on soul-winning visitation. These encouraging statistics came from **First FWB Church** in **Raleigh, NC**.

More than 180 children attended the Kids Jamboree at **Donelson FWB Church** in **Nashville, TN**. Pastor **Rob Morgan** reports 23 conversions during the jamboree. More than 50 adults helped by teaching and working in various areas.

Vacation Bible School at **Peace FWB Church** in **Granite City, IL**, began with a parade downtown and a police escort. Director **Gail Matthews** said VBS averaged 47 children each night and received a \$218 missions offering. **David Malone** pastors.

VBS at **Waltonville FWB Church** in **Waltonville, IL**, resulted in nine conversions according to Pastor **Dan Martin**. VBS averaged 53 in attendance and received a \$196 missions offering for the FWB hospital in **Côte d'Ivoire**.

Congratulations to Pastor **Burt Hall** and members of **Arnold View FWB Church**, **Creal Springs, IL**. The congregation conducted a note-burning ceremony during homecoming and paid off church indebtedness five years early. Guest speaker was former pastor **Ivan Ryan** who led the building program.

Michael Douglas Trimble has been named director at **Camp Caleb** in **Paintsville, KY**. Trimble, who answered the call to preach at age 16, is a graduate of **Free Will Baptist Bible College**.

Officials at **Camp Jacob** in **Clintwood, VA**, report 70 conversions among campers this summer. They also introduced their new assistant director, **Ed Slep**. Brother Slep began preaching at age 12 and working with the camp at age 18.

Old Mount Zion Association in **Arkansas** conducted its 150th session this summer. **Eldon Bagwell** moderated the historic session.

Pastor **Earl Dean Morris** of **Christian Home FWB Church** in **Hindsville, AR**, baptized eight converts. A large crowd gathered below the bridge on Highway 45 to observe.

Rev. **Glenn Campbell** of **Walnut Ridge, AR**, celebrated 40 years in the ministry. He preached his first sermon July 1951 in **Flint, MI**. He pastored eight churches in **Arkansas** and **Missouri** during his ministry.

Rev. **Burl Osborne** celebrated 43 years in the ministry. Members of **Catcher FWB Church** near **Van Buren, AR**, honored Osborn with a special day of appreciation. He answered the call to preach in 1948 and was ordained in 1949. He pastored seven churches in **Arkansas**.

The annual **Tribute to Trailblazers** sponsored by the C.E. Board of the **Arkansas State Association** met Septem-

ber 13-14 at **Camp Beaverfork** near **Conway**. Three **Arkansas** ministers brought messages: **Keith Johnson**, manager of **Christian Supply Store** in **Conway**; **Raymond Chronister**, pastor of **First FWB Church** in **Greenwood**; **Earl Stapleton**, pastor of **Mt. Vernon FWB Church** in **Russellville**.

Pastor **Kenneth Edwards** of **Harmony FWB Church**, **West Frankfort, IL**, reports the conversion of a 69-year-old man as a result of the church visitation program.

More than 160 people attended homecoming at the **FWB Home for Children** in **Greeneville, TN**. Board Chairman **Jack Taylor** presented a special award to **Hazel Hutsel** who retired after 17 years of service. Others honored during the celebration included Mr. and Mrs. **I. L. Stanley**, the first executive director and Mrs. **Trula Cronk**, the home's first child.

Members of **Victory FWB Church** in **Goldsboro, NC**, celebrated their 25th anniversary. Pastor **George Lee** prepared a 26-page church history which included a letter of congratulations from the President of the United States.

Pastor **Keith Stewart** reports 15 conversions and 14 rededications September 8 at **Springcreek Community FWB Church** in **Garland, TX**. Attendance reached 353, up more than 300 over one year ago. The church had saturated the **Garland** area with a colorful brochure prior to the service. More than 40,000 homes received the mail-out. ■

Directory Update

GEORGIA

Ron Scott to Mothers Home Church, Colquitt

Teron Stonesypher to Zion Hill Church, Millwood

Ronnie Moore to Bethlehem Church, (Union Association)

Bud Hill to Spring Hill Church, Baconton from Harmony Church, Lake Butler, FL

HAWAII

Cliff Holland to Waipahu Church, Waipahu from Huntsville, AL ■



HOME MISSIONS

Honoring Benjamin Randall

By Roy Thomas



Benjamin Randall

The founder of the northern movement of Free Will Baptists, Benjamin Randall, left the denomination an awesome legacy as a home missionary and church planter. At the age of 31 he organized his first church in New Durham, New Hampshire on June 30, 1780, with seven members. By the end of his first year, he had planted 14 Free Will Baptist churches in Maine and New Hampshire.

After 20 years in the ministry he had organized 51 Free Will Baptist churches with a combined membership of 2,000 and had 30 men enter the ministry under his poignant and powerful preaching. At the time of his death, he had been responsible for helping establish almost 500 churches.

This amazing growth was accomplished through much hardship and suffering as he rode on horseback to all his preaching appointments, experienced cold, hunger and persecution, and did not have modern conveniences enjoyed by today's pastors. Benjamin Randall gave Free Will Baptists their name, their organizational structure, formulated the doctrines and lit a fire of evangelism that burns around the world today. His is an example of what can be done if people have a burden to win souls and build churches.

Since Free Will Baptists have adopted a goal to double in the next 10 years, and part of that goal is to start 250 new Free Will Baptist churches, we *must* have church planters with the pioneer spirit of Benjamin Randall if the goal is to be reached.

The Free Will Baptist denomination has set aside the Sunday before Thanksgiving each year as *Home Missions Sunday*. On Sunday, November 24, 1991, the Home Missions Department will receive a special Benjamin Randall Offering in honor of this phenomenal Free Will Baptist church planter. Every Free Will Baptist church is urged to receive a special Benjamin Randall Offering to assist with the starting of 250 new churches. Every Free Will Baptist is urged to participate in this gigantic denominational effort to do something significant for Christ and Free Will Baptists as Benjamin Randall did 200 years ago. ■

**Home Missions
Sunday
and
Benjamin Randall
Offering
November 24, 1991**



BOARD OF RETIREMENT

Ants, Ropes and Preachers

Solomon uses the ant and a threefold cord to illustrate major principles—principles that modern financial advisers are emphasizing for retirement planning. So, just what are the principles?

Take a quick glance at the ant story. You will readily see Solomon refers to timing. God ordains a time to gather and to harvest. Since people, even preachers, live more than one summer, Solomon's reference must be to their summer of working years—those years between employment and retirement.

Just as the ant cannot waste its summer and have supplies for the winter, neither can we. You may be in the summer years now, but in God's plan winter is coming. Have you started gathering?

Let me illustrate the importance of an early start. For instance a preacher who begins his retirement plan the month he reaches age 25 and deposits \$166.67 monthly until his 31st birthday, for only six years, will have \$162,177.94. On the other hand, the preacher who waits until age 40 to begin, even though he continues to make the same monthly deposit for the next 25 years, will have only \$159,118.96. (These figures assume a 7% rate of return.)

Solomon illustrates the second principle with the rope. He points out that a rope made of three strands is much stronger than any one of the individual strands. Modern financial advisers suggest that retirement benefits should come from three sources; Social Security, retirement or pension funds, and personal savings.

Some young preachers are choosing to opt out of the Social Security program. Choosing this option should be done only after careful consideration. Opting out of Social Security is available only on the basis of religious convictions, not economic or political reasons. If this option is chosen he must make an immediate commitment to funding a retirement program and personal savings.

According to *Money* magazine, each of these three strands, Social Security, retirement and personal savings, should provide between 25 and 40% of post-retirement income. So you can see that without Social Se-

curity benefits he and his wife will have an even greater dependance upon his retirement and personal savings plan.

How much income will you need in retirement? That will be determined by several factors: such as lifestyle, housing, medical and other needs. Periodically, you should look closely at what each part of your plan will provide as retirement benefits.

There will never be a better time to start your program or increase your level of contributions than NOW. Remember the ant and the three-strand rope. You and your family will be glad you did.

For a projection on your Free Will Baptist retirement benefit, write or call 615-731-6812. For an estimate of your future Social Security benefits call 1-800-234-5772 and request Form SSA-7004. ■

In Honor of ... By...

Everett E. Williams
Sciotoale Auxiliary
Portsmouth, OH

Rick Bowling
Martin Hill Auxiliary
Booneville, MS

In Memory of ... By ...

Frank Rudy Sr.
The Frank Rudy Family
Nashville, TN

Elsie Miller
The Frank Rudy Family
Nashville, TN



WOMAN'S AUXILIARY

Woman's Window on the World

By Mary R. Wisehart

From My Window

A new view! From my window the view is different from the one I saw just a month ago. I can still see trees, grass and plants. The foliage is beginning to turn just a little, and the plants have that tired, dying August look. But in my office, this is a beginning.

We've moved, and life will never be quite the same again. I like change. There's something stimulating, challenging about change.

For most of us though, there is a desire to hang on to the old ways, the old things, the familiar. Change always involves something of a risk, doesn't it?

"Well, it's about time," Karen exclaimed, as she took a look at the new view. Time to slough off the old and get on with the new. Time to thank God for His past blessings. Time to launch out toward His tomorrow for us. Time to trust His leadership for the future.

Surely God has chosen this new view. He has handed us an opportunity, a chance to move forward for His glory.

Let's take the new view and rejoice in His blessings. Let's seize the day for Him.

What We Can Do for Home Missions

November 18-22 is a week of prayer for Free Will Baptist work in the USA, Mexico and Canada. Join women across the country in praying for workers in our own country and in neighboring countries where our Home Missions Department is working.

Prayer should lead to action. One kind of action is giving. Check *Co-Laborer* for an article about Lizzie McAdams, one of the first home missionaries in the reorganization of Free Will Baptists. We give the Home Missions sacrificial offering in her memory.

Giving, however, is not the only kind of action. Check Eleanor Grindstaff's program in *Co-Laborer* about the children in our society. What can you do in our community to reach and save the children? Perhaps there are other groups in your community that you should be reaching for Christ. Prayer for

home missions should lead you to do more than simply give your money. Your Auxiliary should be ministering in its corner of the world.

As you pray, ask God what you can be doing where you are with what you have.

Eunice Edwards Fund

August 31, 1991—\$35,798.60

Give a Continuing Gift

Are you searching for just the right Christmas gift for a shut-in, a friend away from home, a nursing home resident? Have you considered *Co-Laborer* magazine? It is a magazine especially for women. The price is right, just \$5.75 for an annual subscription with six issues. (For this price, make it two or three gifts.)

Your gift will keep on giving right through 1992.

Request a subscription from WNAC, P.O. Box 5002, Antioch, TN 37011-5002. Let us know it's a Christmas gift and we will send an announcement card to the person you select. ■

Pre-Thanksgiving

Week of Prayer

and

Lizzie McAdams Offering

November 18-22



FOREIGN MISSIONS

God's Provision

By Norman McFall



Construction of a Free Will Baptist church is underway in Belo Horizonte, Brazil.

Belo Horizonte ("Beautiful Horizon"), capital of the state of Minas Gerais, is a lovely city. It is also one of the largest cities in Brazil. According to the Brazilian Institute of Geography and Statistics, the population of the greater metropolitan area totals almost four million people and is growing every day. This makes up about 22 percent of the population of the entire state, which is the size of Texas.

People from all over Minas Gerais come to Belo to work, to study, or to try to better their lot in life. However, no matter what these folks do to better their lives, if they do not come to know Jesus as their Savior, they will miss the most important thing in life! So, we are in the capital city to establish local churches and to help people discover life in Jesus Christ.

Closed Doors

In preparing to launch the new work in Belo, fellow missionary Dave Franks and I visited many different real estate agencies seeking to find a meeting place to rent. It seemed that every direction we turned, the Lord closed the doors.

Finally, we started seriously considering the idea of constructing a church building. As we began to pray and make plans to build, the Lord started opening doors. Up to this point, He has provided everything we

need. And we have no reason to doubt that He will continue to supply our needs!

God provided land ten years ago when Dave purchased a lot. At that time, no streets were in the area. Now, it is a fast-growing middle-class neighborhood.

God also provided an excellent building designer at a price we could afford. Through the Free Will Baptist church in Conselheiro Lafaiete, we made contact with a young Brazilian who loves God. He is a building designer highly esteemed by colleagues.

A Christian Engineer

God supplied us with a fine Christian engineer to do the technical part of the designs and to take legal responsibility for the building.

Then, the Lord provided a Christian builder from the Assembly of God church to direct the construction. And, finally, He made the finances available to complete the first phase of the building.

My wife's home church, Oak Park Free Will Baptist Church, Pine Bluff, Ark., decided to give a special offering for the opening of a new work in Belo. They raised over one thousand dollars!

Then, in November of 1990, the Alabama State Association of Free Will Baptists committed itself to raise the \$50,000 needed for this first unit of the building!

Construction Begun

Construction started in May of this year. We hope to finish the first phase of the project, the lower level, by the end of the year or shortly thereafter.

We held an open-air dedication and thanksgiving service at the building site on July 27 with 40 people present. Nine of these were from the area.

The Master's Men from the States are to be in Belo Horizonte in mid-November to help us finish out this lower level so we can begin services. Praise God! He definitely provides! ■



Norman McFall is working with Dave Franks to establish a church in Belo Horizonte, Minas Gerais, Brazil.

FREE WILL BAPTIST BIBLE COLLEGE

FWBBC Is A Family Affair

A number of notable statistics arose from the enrollment tally in September, when the college began its 50th school year.

The total itself—281 students—was encouraging. It was a turn around after several years of decline. The 11.5% increase over last year's is encouraging. But it is more than that. We believe it marks what we hope will be a new era, with more and more Free Will Baptist young people returning to our denomination's colleges to prepare for service within our ranks.

Another statistic we found interesting is that nine students are children of our own faculty/staff. We always hope our own children will choose FWBBC, of course, but it is never something we take for granted. So we are especially pleased that these young people, many of whom have grown up on our campus, elected to enroll here.

But one statistic blew us away.

This year we have *17 families with two or more students in school at the same time!* That's 34 brother/sister combinations here, together.

We have had other years, of course, when several brothers and sisters were here. We even noted it in an edition of the *Lumen* several years ago. But when 12% of the student body is siblings, that's unusual!

We salute those families who are sacrificing to put, not one, but two children through FWBBC at the same time. They are to be admired for their courage and sacrifice. Many of us know how much belt-tightening it takes to put a child through college. But belts can only be pulled so tight. Sending that second or third child can be almost too much to bear.

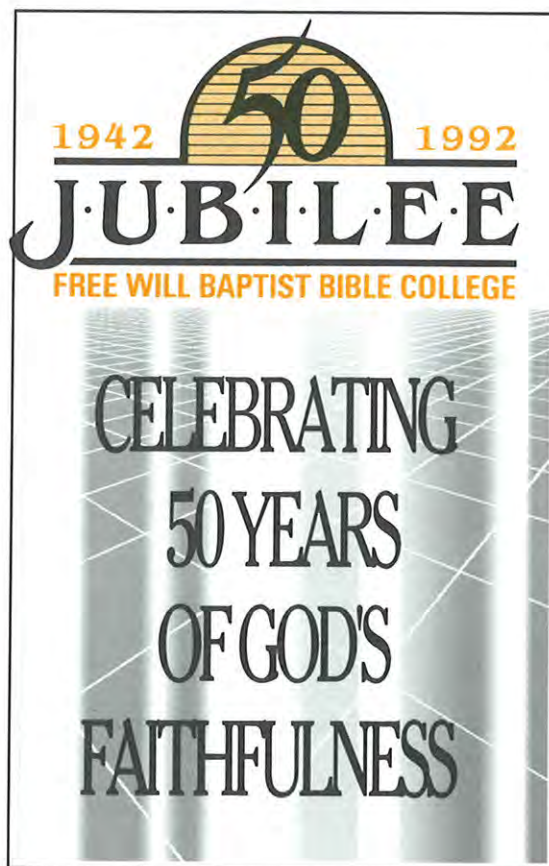
For that reason, we list below our 34 FWBBC siblings:

- Maddy Baker and Lisa Baker Jones
- Allen and Michael Bowen
- Karen and Tina Campbell
- Anthony and Lisa Edgmon
- Jeremy and Veronica Goodman
- Brenda and Tricia Harbin
- Eric and Jason Hurt
- Jeff and Kari James
- Joe and Toni Kemble

- J. P. and Rejyna McClure
- Josh and Luke McFaddin
- Craig and Darren Portell
- Lea and Wendy Southwell
- Carol and Tommi Jo Malone
- Lisa and Kinley Winchester
- Jodi and Josh Young
- Paul and Tammy Zegelian

The McClures' parents are missionaries to Mexico. The Zegeliens and the Malones had *three* children in school last year. One of our siblings was saved just three weeks before school opened and hastily enrolled so he could join his sister who was already coming.

We thank the Lord for every student. We also thank Him for those parents and other family members who are supporting them in every way they can. ■





THE FREE WILL BAPTIST FOUNDATION

As a Good Steward . . .

Come to grips with debts. Millions of Americans will soon pile up big year-end Christmas spending spree debts that will be reflected in monthly bills during 1992.

Buying with credit cards or on installment plans has become too easy. Too few keep a close tab on how debt totals mount when no cash changes hands. Reasonably small purchases seem insignificant until bills come in. Then "charge it" or "put it on my card" buying or paying for services can reach shocking monthly totals.

According to Frances B. Smith, director of the Consumer Credit Institute in Washington, many Americans need to recognize that credit, valuable as it can be to them, must be kept under control.

Only those who, creditably, keep book-keeping records of personal finances have running totals of their indebtedness. If you don't you could be running into serious troubles. Uncontrolled debt can become a financial enemy. You must recognize that if you are to break its hold on you.

There are good debts, justifiable debts and day to day debts that can have an insidious way of causing problems for you.

Good Debts are for such things as a mortgage or an affordable automobile—for purchases of high price tag things that would be hard to buy for cash and that have continuing value. Mortgages and auto loans are reasonable debts because they have a valid function in the lives of American families, young and old.

Justifiable Debts are for emergency needs—hospital or medical charges, perhaps, or for education or sound business purposes. Debts caused by emergency needs often are unavoidable. But family planning should include building up savings to provide for such contingencies as much as possible.

Day to Day Debts, those that are due to the convenience of charge accounts and cards in your wallet, as a way of putting off cash payments, can be hazardous to financial security.

Charge account and credit card debt is a result of today's free and easy ways of doing business—the deferral of payments for purchases or services. It is this form of debt accumulation that can cause later worries.

An economist for *USA Today* warned that when your total debt figure (excluding mortgage and car loans) divided by your annual after-tax income exceeds 20 percent, you've reached a danger point.

According to *USA Today's* Joel Dresang, if your credit card debt ratio is between one percent and six percent, you needn't worry. If it's between seven percent and 14 percent, it's manageable but bears watching. When it rises to between 15 percent and 20 percent, you are on a brink: spending habits should be studied carefully and adjustments made. If the ratio goes higher than 20 percent, Dresang says, "get help."

Perhaps the most important advice is: spend less than you earn; scrimp and save to build up reserves instead of running into debt. Benjamin Franklin said, wisely: "When you run in debt, you give to another power over your liberty." ■

—Ready or Not



RANDALL HOUSE PUBLICATIONS

Church Sign Evangelism

A church consultant asked a young man who joined a small-town congregation in western Missouri, "Through whom or by what means did you first hear about this church?"

"Shortly after I moved to town, I stopped at the traffic light in front of the building and saw the sign on the lawn," he replied. "So, I decided to attend."

A recent study shows that more than 10 percent of the adults who join American congregations each year decide to visit the first time after seeing the church sign and building. Is your church sign reaching its maximum evangelistic potential? The following questions can help that happen.

(1) Does your church actually have a sign? Do not be too sure! A large Indiana church found that shrubbery had slowly grown up in front of their sign. Motorists would have had to get out and part the bushes in order to discover whether the building was a church or a YMCA.

(2) Is your sign well kept? A faded or peeling-painted sign sends a negative signal about the people who worship in the building.

(3) Is your sign perpendicular to the street? Automobile drivers must view signs from a distance. Four times as many people see this type of sign.

(4) Is your sign raised off the ground? Sign ordinances make this impossible for some churches. Architectural considerations make it impractical for others. But motorists are several times more likely to see raised signs.

(5) Is your sign lighted at night? Because people drive at night, darkened signs are an expensive way to save money on electricity.

(6) Are the names of your church and pastor given uncluttered visibility in large letters? Too much information on a church sign can mean none of it is seen. Commercial sign companies have formulas which predict the size of letters needed for good readability. Their advice can save the money wasted by erecting signs which no one can read.

(7) If a great deal of traffic passes on the street behind or beside your church, do you have a sign on that side of the building?

(8) Does your sign give the times of your services? If these times are not on your sign and are not listed in the Yellow Pages, people

will have to phone the church in order to know when to attend. Why keep one of your most important ministries a secret?

(9) If your church is located on a side street with little traffic, do you have signs (available from your denominational publishing house) on nearby travel arteries which point in your direction? If these signs seem too small, construct your own. Whatever you use, keep them well painted.

(10) If your church is in a small town, do you have signs on the major highways coming into town? If your church wants to serve the largest possible number of people, why not tell the largest possible number of people?

(11) If our sign needs improvement, do your church leaders ask only what they will need to spend in order to fix it—or do they also ask what they will be spending if they do not fix it? Figure out the average giving to your church per member, per year. With 10 percent of new adult members coming each year from your sign or signs, are your church leaders willing to forego that amount of income and the opportunity to minister to that number of persons because of inadequate signs?

For further information on church signs, call Randall House Publications at 1-800-877-7030. The authorized manufacturer for church signs for the Free Will Baptist denomination through Randall House Publications is the J. M. Stewart Corporation. ■

This article, reprinted and abridged by permission, is from the 24-page *Net Results*, a monthly journal published by the Net Results Resource Center, 5001 Avenue N, Lubbock, TX 79412-2917; phone 1-806-762-8094.

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A Harlot's Faith

Joshua 2

Israel is poised to enter Canaan. The target is Jericho, the first city that stands in the way of conquest, about two hours' journey on foot on the west side of the Jordan. Before the invasion, however, two men are sent to view the land.

In Jericho they encounter Rahab. The story raises some tough questions. Why would they lodge at a harlot's house (v. 1)? Does God approve of lying in certain circumstances (vv. 4-5)? If so, He doesn't reveal when. Did she—or had she already—quit her wickedness? At what point was she “justified”? The record does not answer our worries.

What the record does is reveal to us a woman, or at least an act, of *faith*: “By faith the harlot Rahab perished not with them that believed not, when she had received the spies with peace” (Hebrews 11:31).

Faith is, at root, putting confidence in God. Rahab showed that in more than one way. First, she acknowledged God for who He is: “The Lord your God, he is God in heaven above, and in earth beneath” (v. 11). The writer of Hebrews said it thus: “He that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him” (11:6). Rahab fulfilled that requirement.

Second, she believed in God's power. Rahab knew full well what the visit of the spies meant (v. 3). She had heard of the acts of God (v. 10)—always intended to beget faith. It was settled that God was going to give her land to the Israelites (v. 9). She understood that resistance was, in fact, resistance against Him, the very opposite of faith.

Third, she sided with the people

of God rather than with her own natural people. The fact that she hid the spies under flax-stalks drying on the roof (vv. 4, 6), lied to protect them from her king (v. 5), secretly let them down from her outside window on the city wall (v. 15), and told them how to escape (v. 16) shows that.

Fourth, she acted on her belief. Faith isn't really complete until that point is reached, a lesson James 2:5 makes out of Rahab's example. The spies gave her a scarlet cord (or was it the very one she would use to lower them) to tie in her window before the invasion; she did exactly that (v. 21). And she did not expose them. And she gathered her family as instructed.

What all this means is obvious: Rahab risked her own life and destiny on the God of Israel. Faith is always that radical.

Thus was the deal struck. In exchange for her protection of the spies, they promised that the invasion would go kindly with her and her family (vv. 17-21). And many an expositor has noted the implication of v. 19: their only safety lay in the house covered by the scarlet cord.

The results we know. When the invasion came, Rahab and her family were spared destruction (Joshua 6:25). Her name is entered in the Hebrews hall of heroes as one who separated herself from her countrymen by a faith they did not share (Hebrews 11:1). James uses her to illustrate the relationship between faith and works in justification (James 2:5).

Furthermore, she gained a place in Israel, among the people of God: “She dwelleth in Israel even unto this day” (Joshua 6:25). Faith always yields that reward.



Robert E. Picirilli

More incredible still, Rahab appears in the genealogy of Jesus Christ, as the great-great-great grandmother of David (Matthew 1:5). A harlot in the ancestry of Jesus? Was there ever a more dramatic testimony to the grace of God?

Indeed, God is, and He is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him in faith. Rahab can tell you about that. ■

KNOW SOMEONE WHO DESERVES A JOURNALISM SCHOLARSHIP?

The 325 periodical members of the Evangelical Press Association are vitally interested in the future of religious journalism.

The Association offers \$500 to \$1,200 scholarships each year to Christian college juniors and seniors, and graduate students, committed to a career in print journalism.

Further details and application forms are available. Forms must be completed and returned by April 1.

Write now to:

Executive Director
Evangelical Press Association
P.O. Box 4550
Overland Park, Kansas 66204



Toxic Faith

Stephen Arterburn and Jack Felton



Thomas Marberry

(Nashville: Oliver-Nelson Books, 1991, 318 pp., hardback, \$17.95)

Unfortunately, religious commitment can sometimes become unhealthy. Religious faith can be carried to such an extreme that it can destroy one's physical, emotional and financial health. People can be controlled and manipulated by unscrupulous religious leaders, and can become victims of religious groups which do not foster a healthy relationship with Christ.

This type of misguided faith, the authors label "toxic faith" because of the tragic results it produces in individuals and in the work of Christ.

Certain types of individuals, such as people with low self-esteem or people from abusive backgrounds, seem to be more susceptible to toxic faith than others. Yet, sometimes Christians who seem to be mature and well-balanced can be caught up in such a false system of belief.

Generally, toxic faith systems are

found in certain cults and other aberrant religious groups. Occasionally, however, they may be found in established churches. Such systems are usually dominated by strong charismatic leaders who demand absolute obedience from their followers.

Members of the organization are not permitted to question or challenge in any significant way. They are taught to follow blindly, to ignore obvious problems and difficulties, and to give large amounts of money to the organization. Such organizations do not produce mature Christians who are growing in their faith. They leave behind them a trail of shattered and broken lives.

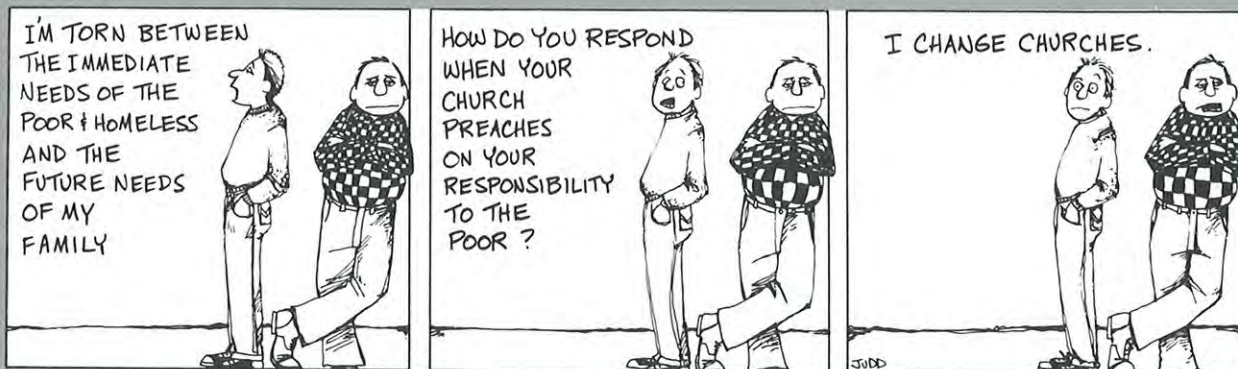
Toxic faith can produce tragic consequences in the life of a believer. It can cause him to believe that he must earn his way to heaven or that he is serving a God who is spiteful and waiting to punish him severely for the smallest transgression.

Toxic faith can replace responsible action with total passivity. As our authors note, "Too often in the name of waiting on God, people fail to take responsibility or action. It is often easier to wait on a miracle than to do the difficult thing and take action."

The authors of this volume have years of experience in helping victims of toxic faith systems find healing. They do not just describe toxic faith; they also offer practical suggestions to identify and assist those who have been seriously hurt by it. It is possible for misguided faith to be replaced by authentic Christian faith.

This is a valuable book about a serious problem in the Christian world today. Most pastors from time to time must deal with those who have been hurt by the kinds of systems described in this book. This volume is a resource for such pastors and for those they are seeking to help. ■

BEYOND BELIEF



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RELIGIOUS COMMUNITY NEWS

West Hollywood Officials Conspire with Gays

WEST HOLLYWOOD, CA (EP)—Rutherford Institute attorneys took the first step toward suing officials in West Hollywood and Los Angeles County on the grounds that they have refused to protect Christians from harassment by homosexuals.

Cyrus Zal, general counsel of the Rutherford Institute of California, prepared and mailed a \$10 million claim accusing city and county officials of conspiring with homosexuals to deny the civil rights of Christians who share their faith on the streets of West Hollywood, California, a city known for its active homosexual community.

The dispute stems from a series of 17 clashes that have occurred between Christians and members of the homosexual groups Queer Nation and Los Angeles ACT UP. The incidents occurred along Santa Monica Boulevard and in West Hollywood Park between March 8 and July 8.

According to the claim, Allan Esses, a Christian resident of West Hollywood, was "assaulted, battered, threatened with arrest, harassed, degraded, spit upon, intimidated, yelled at, interfered with, had his life threatened, had whistles blown in his ears at close proximity, had obscenities screamed in his ears at close proximity, had his personal property destroyed, and was obstructed by persons opposed to the message that [he] and his associates were lawfully expressing.

"My client was not out there preaching against homosexuality," said Zal. "He was simply sharing his faith in Jesus Christ with anyone who would listen. That's what attracted all the abuse."

City and county officials have 45 days to seek a settlement of the matter before Esses proceeds with a federal lawsuit against them.

Christians Beaten by Hindus, Threatened

KERALA, India (EP)—A well-known Christian leader in India was severely beaten by Hindu fanatics recently and narrowly escaped being skinned alive, according to a report from Gospel for Asia (GFA). Two other Christian workers and the leader's 15-year-old son were also beaten in the attack.

Israel Paulose, son of Moses Paulose, was with two other Christians distributing literature in a village near the Indian Ocean when a group of about 20 Hindu men abducted them. The men, part of a fanatic Hindu group, tied each of the Christian workers to a tree and began to beat them. One of the workers fell unconscious. Another co-worker escaped, found Moses, and told him

what was happening. Moses quickly came to the scene where he too was taken and beaten.

The leader of the Hindu group sent one of his men to find one of the few members of their fanatic group who could perform the skinning. After a long period no one came, so he sent another man, and later another. None of them came back.

Paulose later told GFA officials that he heard one of the men suggest that they stop beating the missionaries or they would die, and without the skinning the police would be able to identify them. The rest agreed, and finally let the four go. "With great effort," stated the report, "Paulose, his son, and the other co-worker managed to drag the brother who was unconscious to the hospital where they all received treatment."

Afterward, Paulose said he learned that his wife had been impressed to pray for him at the exact time of the incident. She had gathered others who had prayed diligently for their safety. "It was God's intervention that they couldn't find the man who did the skinning," said Paulose.

Multi-Ministry Center Opens in Columbia

MEDELLIN, Columbia (EP)—The heart of the world's drug capital, also quickly becoming the witchcraft center of Columbia, is the ideal place to birth a ministry, according to a handful of missionaries and national church leaders there.

In May, the group of Christian and Missionary Alliance (C&MA) workers in Columbia dedicated a multi-ministry center which offers neighborhood residents a bookstore and reading room, a social center, a counseling center, and Sunday services.

In the few weeks that the center has been in the area, just off a main thoroughfare, few have taken advantage of the new facility, but workers are not discouraged, according to a C&MA report. "Little by little, they come," the report stated. "A series of family-oriented seminars one night a week attracts five to seven visitors." One woman came into the bookstore and said, "I want to get close to God. What kind of place is this?"

The missionaries are also negotiating for broadcasting time on a local radio station. The 15-minute slot being considered is sandwiched between two hours of witchcraft programs. "I did not like the idea of even going on that station at first," admitted the missionary in charge of negotiations, "but I found out that a high percentage of people living in Medellin listen to that garbage. I realized this would be a good place to preach God's Word."

Canadians Veto Gideon Bibles

VANCOUVER, Canada (EP)—A Canadian school district which oversees 48 elementary schools near Vancouver voted to bar the Gideons from offering New Testaments in the schools.

The Coquitlam School District trustees voted June 25 against Gideon International's request to distribute consent forms to fifth-grade students for parents to sign for a free copy of the New Testament, according to a report in the Christian Info News, a newspaper serving greater Vancouver and the Fraser Valley of British Columbia. Two years ago Vancouver Schools District made a similar decision, according to the report.

More than 50 supporters of the Gideon organization attended a school board meeting to debate the request. Trustee Ron Parks said he opposed the measure because the moral and ethical foundations of Canada have been shaped by those of different religious, cultural and ethnic backgrounds. "We constantly pride ourselves on our tolerance and commitment to freedom of religion and speech," he told Now, a community newspaper.

However, this is not "freedom of religion," said Debra Fieguth, editor of Christian Info News. "This is freedom from religion."

Coquitlam trustee Maxine Wilson, who cast the single vote in favor of the Gideons' request, said she once accompanied her daughter on a school field trip to a Sikh temple. If the children can learn about the Sikh religion, she reasoned, they should also be given the opportunity to learn about the Christian faith.

"Almost all our literature is influenced by Christianity, and has references to the Bible," said Wilson, a former English teacher. With no understanding of the Bible, students will miss much of the significance in literature. "I think it's denying our whole heritage and culture," she added. "What we've noticed is an erosion in the tolerance towards Christianity and increased tolerance to anything else."

The Gideons have been distributing New Testaments in the province for 60 years, said spokesperson Bligh Stockwell. Denying their distribution is "a denial of personal freedom," he said. The rejection of the proposal is to sacrifice Christianity "on the altar of multi-culturalism." ■

Somebody's Still Thankful



Jack Williams

A Nashville paper printed this announcement in the Special Notices section: "Thank you, Mom, for not having an abortion. I love you."

That small message put a new wrinkle in the abortion issue for readers. Some people are thankful when life-and-death social issues turn out right. What are you thankful for?

The citizens of Enterprise, Alabama, are so thankful to a grey beetle that they built a statue on main street to honor it. The honored bug is nothing more than a common boll weevil.

Early in this century when King Cotton ruled the economic South, the boll weevil invaded Coffee County, Alabama destroying crops and devastating farmers. Then someone suggested growing peanuts. Farmers soon discovered that peanuts were more profitable and the weevils didn't like them.

Today, Enterprise is the county seat in one of the world's primary peanut sources. That's why they are thankful for boll weevils. The weevils that brought economic disaster turned out to be a blessing in disguise. Do you honor the bugs in your life? What are you thankful for?

It happened in 1928 in a one-room schoolhouse in Kansas. The day before Thanksgiving a young teacher asked her 25 students what they were thankful for. She received 25 quite different responses.

One little girl said she was thankful for her older sister who held her hand on the cold walk to and from school. Then she would change sides so the other hand could get warm.

When life gets cold, how comforting can be the presence of a friend's warm hand. What are you thankful for?

Historians don't say much about it, but there were two thanksgivings in 1621. The first one occurred, not in November, but on January 14 when men too sick to return to the Mayflower survived a fire in the common-house where they spent the night. The work party that rowed ashore at 6:00 a.m. found the survivors kneeling in the mud and rain thanking God for saving their lives.

Before that bitter winter ended, tuberculosis killed 46 people. Only 56 lived till spring, and they were abandoned by the Mayflower's crew.

An Indian named Squanto showed the Puritans how to plant corn. They dug 100,000 holes, hauled 40 tons of fish for fertilizer and watched the fields by night to keep wolves away. That autumn Governor William Bradford proclaimed the first official Thanksgiving Day on American soil.

Our forefathers were thankful to pray in the mud and rain. Thankful to haul fish for 100,000 holes in the ground. What are you thankful for?

William Greathouse told about the lesson taught by a homeowner after a disastrous flood. A Red Cross worker called at his house to inquire about losses the family had incurred. She saw mud-caked furniture and the waterline disfiguring the wallpaper, damaged floors, damaged appliances, damaged everything.

Before putting any estimates down in her notebook, she looked in the man's face. He was smiling.

"No loss here, Ma'am. We're all fine," he said.

"No loss?" the Red Cross worker asked.

"Ma'am, after the flood, we just got down on our knees and thanked

the good Lord. You see, we can count all our children."

A father walked out of the flood thankful for his children, discounting material losses because some things matter more than furniture and appliances. What are you thankful for?

On the other hand, multimillionaire Andrew Carnegie left \$1 million to one of his relatives, who in return cursed Carnegie thoroughly because he had left \$365 million to public charities and had cut him off with just one measly million.

Even Shakespeare jabbed at ingratitude: I hate ingratitude more in man than lying, vainness, babbling, drunkenness or any trait of vice.

We've all heard about the visiting minister who waited while his hat was passed around a certain congregation to take a collection for him. It was returned without so much as one cent placed therein.

Slowly and deliberately, the preacher turned the hat inside out and shook it meaningfully. Then raising up his eyes toward heaven, he prayed: "I thank thee, dear Lord, that I got my hat back from this congregation."

One of my favorite Bible passages concerns the 10th leper in Luke 17. True, the others' ingratitude prompted Jesus' penetrating questions: "Were there not ten cleansed? but where are the nine?"

However, that does not diminish the shining moment when the 10th leper saw that he was healed, "...turned back, and with a loud voice glorified God, and fell down on his face at his feet, giving him thanks"

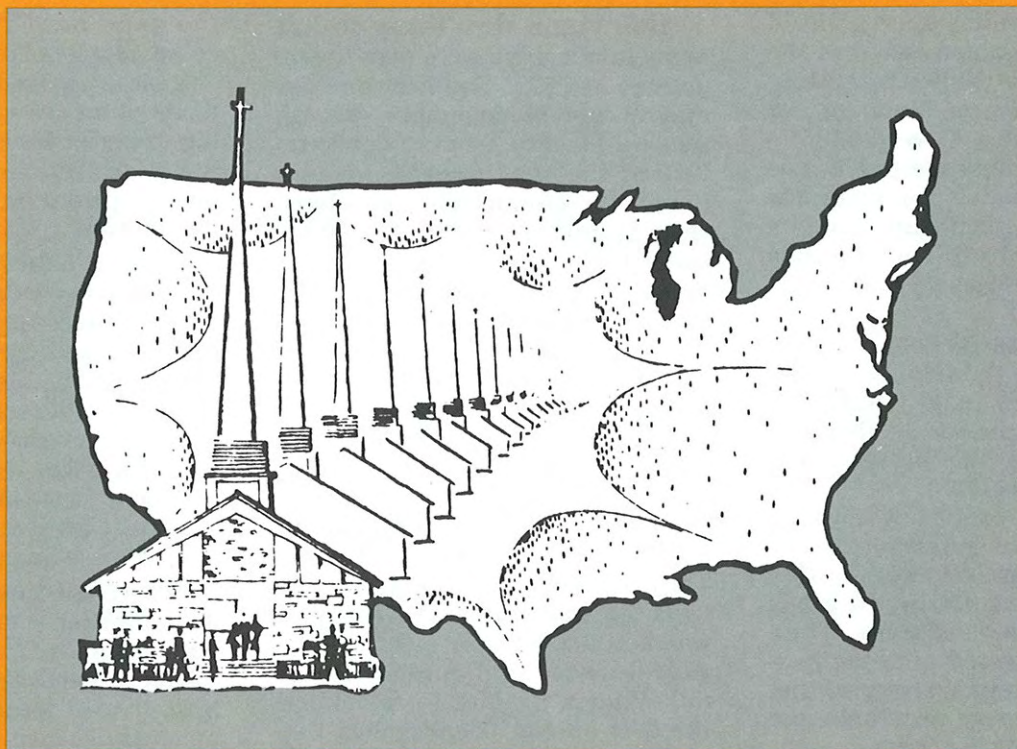
A thankful heart gives life a new perspective. What are you thankful for? ■

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