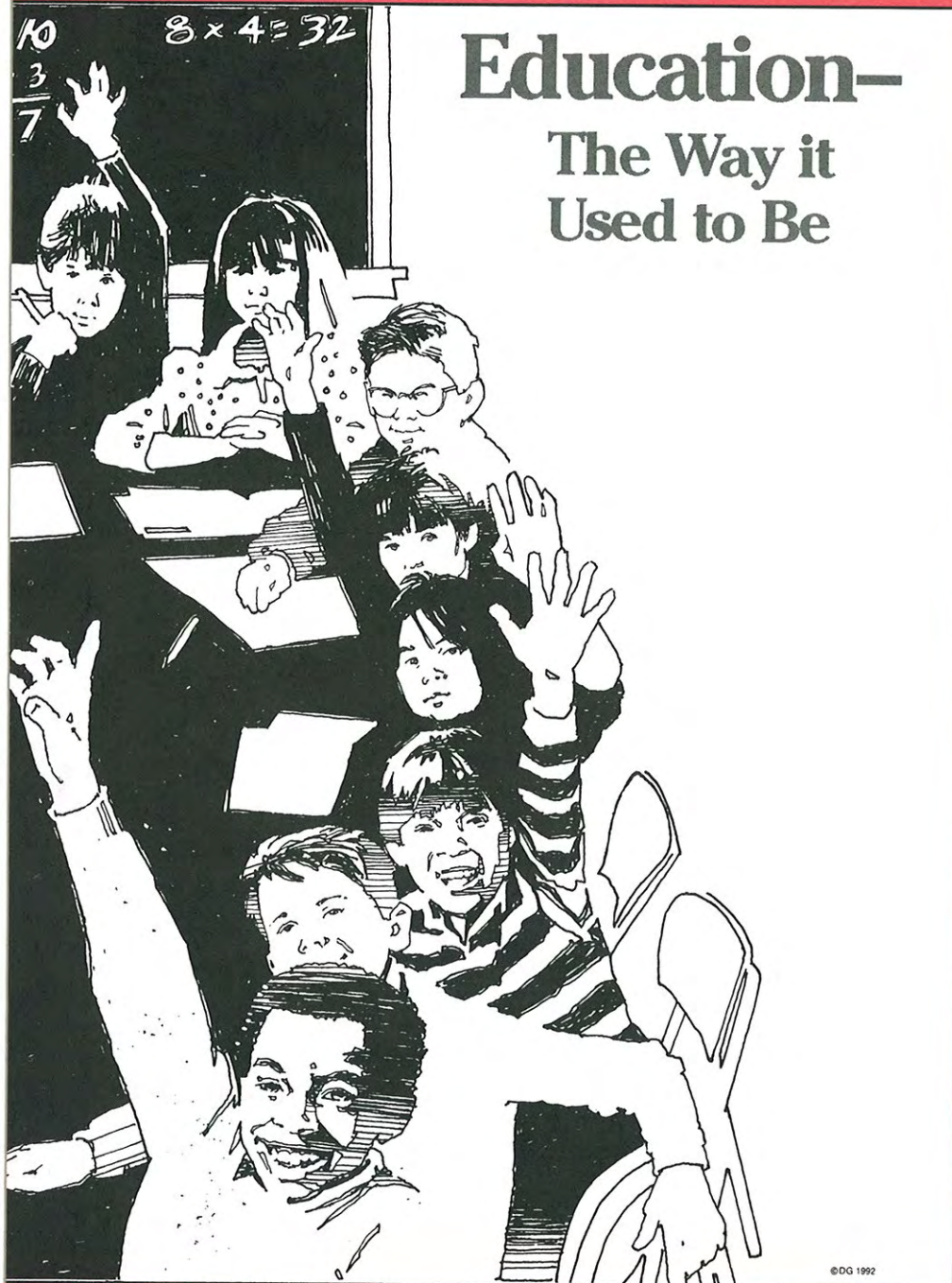


FEBRUARY 1993

CONTACT



Education—
The Way it
Used to Be

OFFICIAL PUBLICATION OF
THE NATIONAL ASSOCIATION
OF FREE WILL BAPTISTS

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**Christian Day
Schools**

.....
The Reading Habit

.....
This Can't Be Love!

.....
**Instant of
Understanding**

.....
The Barnabas People

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FEBRUARY 1993

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Melvin Worthington

Offering for the Office

The Executive Office relies on Cooperative Plan contributions for its major funding. Some churches, associations and individuals designate funds for the Executive Office ministry. States with cooperative giving programs have borne a disproportionate burden for funding the Executive Office through the years.

The "Together Way Plan" adopted during the 1992 national convention calls for a change in funding for the Executive Office. This plan will be implemented January 1, 1994. The Together Way Plan is one plan with two methods—designated and cooperative.

Every church is challenged to give 10% of undesignated tithes and offerings to denominational ministries outside the local church. The plan further calls for equitable support of local, district, state and national ministries. Of the 10% states should keep no more than 50%, with 50% going to national ministries.

The Concern

Changing the fundamental support base means that churches which have never designated gifts to the Executive Office must feel an obligation to underwrite this ministry. The Executive Office serves, strengthens and stabilizes the denomination. It is the denomination's nerve center giving direction through communication and coordination. The annual convention and *Contact* magazine are the responsibility of the Executive Office.

Our concern is that since the of-

fice is not always visible and serves as the administrative arm for implementing programs adopted by the denomination, some see no value and thus do not feel any obligation to support this ministry.

The Challenge

The Executive Office faces the challenge of providing adequate information detailing its ministry. This is no small task. For the office to maintain efficient and effective service it must be funded. We need your prayer support as well.

Pastor, does your church include the Executive Office in its outside giving? Church, do you have us in your budget? Free Will Baptist, do you give systematically to the office? We do not suggest that giving to other ministries be cut. We do challenge you to include the Executive Office in your giving.

For a number of years I have given above my tithe to both the Tennessee and national cooperative programs in order to support all state and national ministries. I believe that every Free Will Baptist has a personal responsibility to support all local, district, state and national ministries. That is The Together Way Plan.

The Secretary's Schedule

- Feb. 4-5 South Carolina State Assoc.
- Feb. 11-12 U. S. Church Leaders Conf.
Washington, DC
- Feb. 13 Green River Association
Glasgow, KY

The Choice

The implementation of The Together Way Plan begins with the fact that all denominational ministries are important and contribute to the health of the denomination. Individuals, churches, district and state associations are part of something much bigger and broader than themselves. The denomination provides the channel to engage in world-wide evangelism. We have a responsibility to the whole denomination, to see that all ministries fulfill those tasks assigned to them.

The implementation of The Together Way Plan reminds us that denominational stewardship is an obligation. We must choose to be good stewards of the resources God has put at our disposal. We have enough resources to fund all denominational enterprises. The choice is mine . . . and yours.

The Together Way Plan binds Free Will Baptists together in stewardship endeavors. The Together Way Plan will bring a sense of unity, unselfishness and understanding to denominational life. I believe it is a good plan which provides the flexibility and freedom which biblical stewardship requires. ■



Education— the Way it Used to Be

By Grant Endicott

Mrs. Olive was my third-grade teacher. She had taught third grade at Inez Elementary School for 29 years. Mrs. Olive was small in stature but large in everything that mattered.

I remember how she stood at the classroom door each morning to welcome us to school. She held in her hand a worn old school bell which she shook briskly at precisely 8:00 a.m. That sound was the signal for all third-graders to stand beside their desks and face the front of the classroom.

There in the center of the blackboard stood two flags side by side. Between the flags stood a little table; on that table lay what Mrs. Olive said was the foundation for all that she would teach us. In fact, there were many reading classes when she would read to us from this rather large, tattered, black book she referred to as God's Word.

The morning routine began with pledges to the American flag, the Christian flag and the Bible. It would conclude with a closing prayer, usu-

ally from Mrs. Olive, but occasionally from some brazen youngster. More often than not it was Doug Sisco. His papa was a preacher and Doug's goal was to be just like him.

About 8:15 we would hear the pop and crack of the intercom system warming up in preparation for a message from our principal, Mr. Sumpter. He would clear his throat, greet us, mention any announcements he deemed important . . . and then Mr. Sumpter prayed.

In 1973 in Inez, Kentucky, we had never heard of a private Christian school. To be quite honest, we didn't need one. We had public *Christian* schools.

My first memorable exposure to God's Word came in the form of Mrs. Olive's morning devotions. When considering my need for salvation years later, the Lord brought to my remembrance a short, silver-haired lady sitting in a circle with 25 scruffy children holding hands, heads bowed in prayer.

The Restaurant Encounter

Sixteen years later, in 1989, I was administrator of Mingo Christian School in Lenore, West Virginia, 20 miles from Inez. After dinner at a local restaurant, I was moving toward the door when I felt a touch on the shoulder. I turned and found myself face to face with Mrs. Olive.

She had just been honored by the Martin County public school system for 45 years of service.

After a long, comfortable hug, she pushed me back, smiled and asked what I had been doing with myself. I introduced my wife and baby, then told her that I was a principal in a Christian school. Knowing her commitment to the public school system, I was uncertain what would be her response. I looked into her eyes, nervously awaiting some reply, when I noticed a tear.

She grabbed me again and pressed her tear-moistened cheek against mine and whispered, "Charles Grant, . . . if we were permitted to teach like we used to, you wouldn't need a Christian school."

I leaned back, looked into her soft eyes and nodded in agreement.

After returning home, I began to seriously consider Mrs. Olive's remark. What a simple, yet profound statement for her to make. "If we could teach like we used to, you wouldn't need a Christian school."

Teachers like Mrs. Olive Endicott are forbidden to speak of God's love in their classrooms in today's public schools. They are not permitted to tell hurting children that Jesus cares. They are forbidden to share with our children the truth that eternal life is to be gained through faith in Christ. They are told to leave their Bibles in their desks. They are

told not to pray in front of the children for it could do them "emotional damage."

What Happened to Our Public Schools?

- The 10 commandments have been ripped from classroom walls and replaced with posters of rock stars like Madonna.
- Prayer and Bible study have been replaced by violence and sexual promiscuity.
- Academic counseling has been reconstructed and reintroduced with counselors who serve as surrogate parents and possess authority to influence crucial decisions our children will make.
- The school nurse has been transformed into a contraceptive distributor as well as an abortion counselor.
- The simple aspirin for a headache dispensed by the school nurse has been replaced by cocaine and heroine sold by student drug dealers.
- The tussle during recess has been replaced by a brawl with guns and knives during class time.
- Since prayer was taken out of the public school system, sexual promiscuity has drastically increased.
- Unwed births by girls 10-14 have risen 553% since 1963—the year prayer was banished from the classroom.
- Violent crimes have increased 544% since 1963—the year children were forbidden to pray in the classroom.
- Divorce rates have risen 117% since 1963—the year God's Word was taken from bookshelves in the public school classroom.

Do I think that the decision certain liberal politicians made pertaining to prayer in our schools had an effect on how quickly these social problems increased? *Yes, I do!*

"Train up a child in the way that he should go . . ." (Proverbs 22:6).

Reasons for Dissatisfaction with Public Schools

When we consider the reasons why Christian schools were devel-

oped, we discover that they all lead back to one underlying motive—parents are not happy with the way public schools deal with Christianity. Nobody was happy with the violence, the overcrowded classrooms, the poor academic program or the drugs. However, the root of all grievance is that God, His Word, and the expression of faith in Him are not welcome in public school classrooms.

We are not happy with the way they deal with prayer.

In 1962 the Supreme Court of the United States declared that prayer was a violation of the First Amendment and ruled that prayer was not permissible in the public school classroom (*Entel v. Vitale*).

We are not happy with the way they deal with God's Word.

In that same court battle the Supreme Court declared Bible reading unconstitutional. Bible study is now inappropriate for the public classroom.

The state of Kentucky required that a copy of the 10 Commandments be posted in every public classroom. In 1980 the United States Supreme Court determined that the displaying of the 10 Commandments on the walls of Kentucky classrooms was unconstitutional. Kentucky schools were forced to remove the 10 Commandments from their classroom walls.

We are not happy with the way they fail to teach the values and principles of the Word of God.

What is the Advantage of Christian Schools?

The Christian school movement began not as competitors for the public school system but as an alternative for parents who desire an education for their children the way it used to be. Though Christian schools are not enemies to the public school system, there are some definite differences in philosophy. These differences have become clearly defined over the past 30 years.

Why do I think that Christian education is the best choice for Christian families? I believe it is a matter of eternal advantages.

More important to me than anything else is my daughter's soul. It is more important to me than her social status. More important than the size of her bank account. More important to me than her occupation—doctor, lawyer or waitress.

What is important to me is that she makes it to Heaven. So as her daddy, I will do anything, everything I can to provide her any *advantage*, any inside track, anything that might point her in God's direction.

I realize that when she faces important decisions concerning social problems such as drugs, sex, alcohol and the like, she will pull from the teachings and experiences she has had at home, at church and at school. I want those teachings and experiences to be those which point her toward the cross.

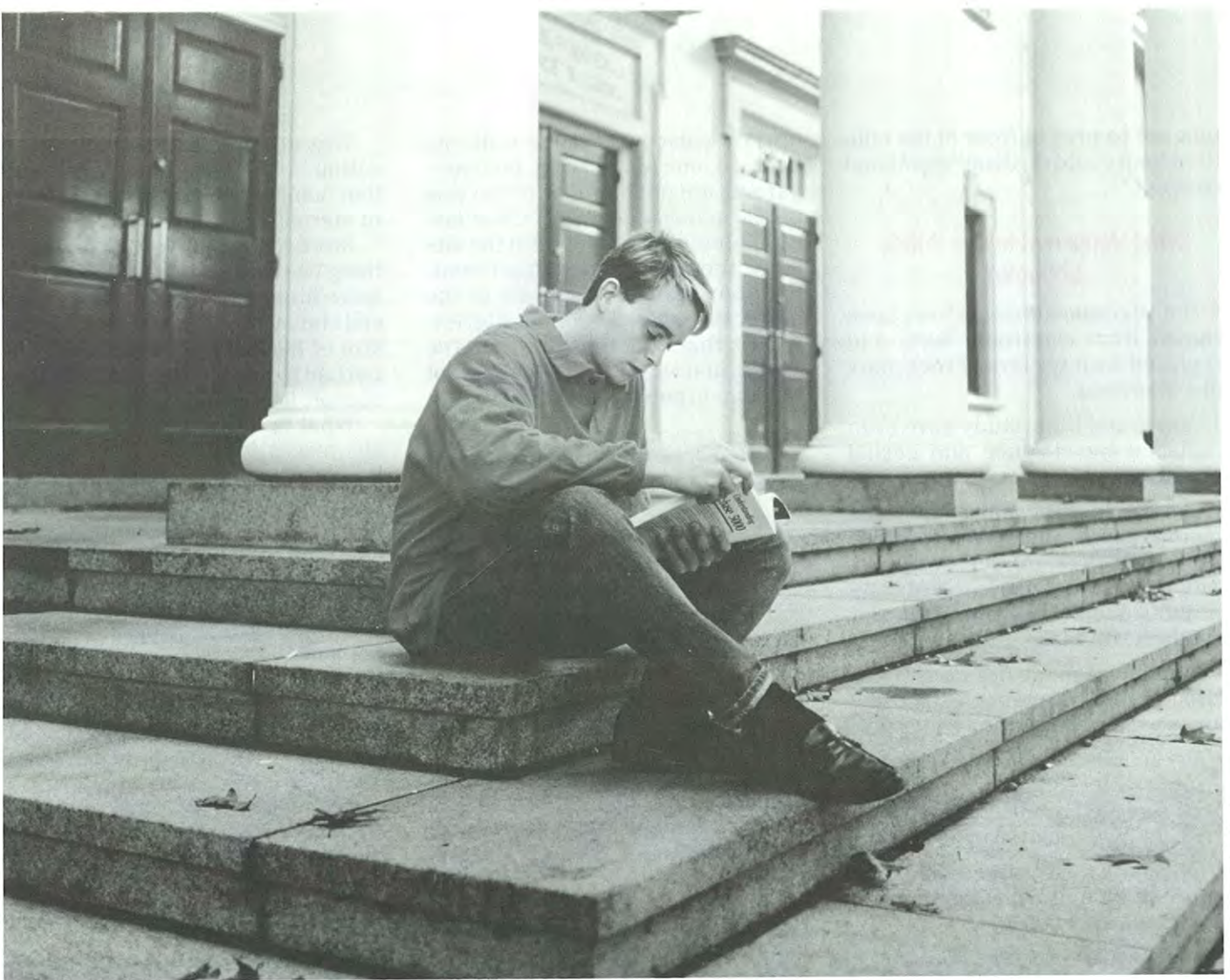
Do I believe that a child can go to a public school and be a Christian? Certainly I do! However, I do believe that they are at a disadvantage with children who go to a Christian school.

As I look about me, I see good families suffering because of rebellious children—godly parents, parents who prayed with and for their children. It takes more to raise a child in our society. Our children need every spiritual advantage they can get.

Ten years down the road I do not want to be on my knees regretting that I did not give my child every possible opportunity for spiritual success. Do you? ■



ABOUT THE WRITER: Mr. Grant Endicott serves as principal of Woodbine Christian Academy, a ministry of Woodbine Free Will Baptist Church in Nashville, Tennessee.



H. Armstrong Roberts

It Could be Habit-Forming

By Carol Reid

I picked up our favorite, *Farmer Jones' Animals*, and sat on the floor in my nursery Sunday School room. Nicholas immediately turned and started backing up, aiming for my lap. He was only a year old but he knew what to do with a book.

Too often, when others see someone pick up a book, they turn and start backing up also—backing away! Somehow, they missed out on the joy and satisfaction of reading. They must have never taken trips down the Mississippi River or across a wrinkle in time. They must have never met Mrs. Piggleswick or Dr. Doolittle or Tell Sackett.

They must have never huddled in the shadows during a gunfight or settled in the drawing room for the unveiling of the murderer. They must

never have wept when Charlotte or Bonnie Blue or Chad Stewart died, or when Jean Valjean showed mercy instead of revenge. They must never have mined that nugget of spiritual truth for encouragement and strength during a difficult time.

You remember what the Apostle Paul asked Timothy for from his prison cell: his cloak to keep his body warm, and his books and parchments to keep his mind warm. Scripture always values books—from the scrolls of the Law in the Temple to the Lamb's Book of Life in Revelation. His Son is described in terms of the "Word" and His communion with us is through the living, powerful written Word of God.

I think God wants us to be readers. Reading in school years is not sufficient. We should make reading

a life-long habit.

The Reader's Edge

Why should we read? Why should we make reading a habit? Reading keeps us fresh. If you read, you are more interesting, more enjoyable to be around.

Reading gives you information. Every imaginable expertise can be yours if you seek it in books. You have new insights, new outreach because of the information you've encountered.

Reading makes you grow—not physically but emotionally, intellectually, even spiritually. Reading stretches those higher-level cognitive skills and helps you become a critical thinker. Reading links you to people and places and feelings you

might otherwise never know.

Reading opens to you the joy of words, and that joy produces by-products of better thinking and speaking skills. Reading gives you the pleasure of shared experiences with others—others who read what you read and others about whom you read. The wisdom of one tee-shirt advises: "Those who will not read are no better off than those who cannot read."

What to Read

What should we read? We need to start with God's Word. No other reading is more vital to the Christian. Somehow, calling our daily Bible reading a "habit" seems to demean it. But we need to read it just as habitually as we read the newspaper.

Then we need to hide it in our hearts for protection from the devil's assaults. We need to share it with our neighbors and teach it to our children and sing it and live it—walking, sitting, inside, outside—in all we do. But we must start by reading it.

But the Bible is not all we should read. The very composition of scripture points to the variety of literature for the believer to enjoy. Poetry, history, drama, romance, biography, exhortation—all are in the pages of God's Word.

Read everything! The only caution I issue is that which Paul, the reader, offered: "Whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are noble, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report, if there be any virtue and if there be any praise, think on these things" (Philippians 4:8).

And don't forget. Read *Contact*, and your Sunday School lesson, and the announcements in the church bulletin too!

When should you read? Anytime. All the time. Read around the clock.

Where to Read

Read in every room of the house. Keep the newspaper in the den, a cookbook in the kitchen, a novel at the side of your bed, a Christian living "self-help" book at the desk, a

craft book in the workshop or sewing room, a magazine in the bathroom and the Bible at the dining room table. Add some books-on-tape for your car tape player, and you're ready to read, wherever you are.

Read at the library. If your church doesn't have one, start one to share Christian devotional, fictional and inspirational books. Families and individuals can benefit from some carefully selected or generously donated materials.

But use your city or county library as well. After all, you paid for those books. And if you don't feel the immediate pinch that a bookstore price tag creates, you may discover a variety of dormant interests. You can always splurge at the library.

Read at the hospital or the nursing home or the elementary school. Share books with someone else. Be ready with a book report for every child you meet or every college student or every new mother or every co-worker. Let everyone share the benefits of the books you read.

Reading is contagious. Kids catch it from their parents and teachers. Friends catch it from friends. Start an epidemic!

Create the Habit

How can you make reading a habit? Maybe a few ideas will set your own imagination to action.

- Go to bed 30 minutes earlier and spend the time with a book. After all, the news is about the same at 10:00 as it is at 6:00.

- Read more than one book at a time. Read different sorts of books, according to the mood you're in.

- Turn off the television. TV robs us—not just of time, but of imagination and concentration and deliberation. It is the number one enemy of reading.

- Read to a child. You may discover their books are often better and you'll find the rewards are many for the time you spend together. If you don't have a child of your own, you can always borrow one.

- Subscribe to a new magazine. If reading seems like a chore to you, start with shorter articles and work

up to thin books with short chapters before you start the epic novels.

- Consider joining one of the book club programs that sends you a book a month.

- Consider starting a *real* book club, where you meet with friends to discuss either the same book or a variety of books that you're reading.

- Volunteer as a reader. My retired school-teacher friend reads regularly for the public radio station's channel for the blind. You may also get involved in literacy programs or in English-as-a-second-language programs in your area. Children's hospitals and nursing homes also welcome your help. If a program for readers is not already started, start your own.

- Use your library card. Have a set day each week or every other week to go. Don't be bashful about recommending purchases and asking questions.

- Hang out at your local bookstore so you can get to know what's available. Standing at the bookstore display window can make you just as hungry as standing at the bakery window.

- Give books as gifts. Every teacher, child, friend, pastor, neighbor, family member, newly-wed, parent, graduate, grandchild or anyone else who needs a gift, can open the present you give again and again if that present is a book.

Notice—you've already started on this task of making reading a habit by reading this article. Read on! ■



ABOUT THE WRITER: Mrs. Carol Reid is librarian at Free Will Baptist Bible College. She is a member of Cross Timbers Free Will Baptist Church in Nashville, Tennessee.



1-800-FWB-HELP

Do We Need a Free Will Baptist 800 Number?

By Mal King



Solomon, in Proverbs, acknowledges the need for many counselors. Modern technology (through the use of 800 numbers) makes it possible for pastors and deacons and other church laity to seek counsel. And of course an 800 number would make it possible for Free Will Baptist National Offices to provide it.

I know instances when such counsel would have made the difference between a church remaining alive and dying. Call on your own experience to identify the times when you, your church or your pastor needed objective, knowledgeable, spiritual counselors. I'll share some of mine with you as they might remind you of other similar events.

Jim

Jim was a popular pastor. It turned out he was too popular. The father of several children, he began an affair with a woman outside the church. The church almost split over the conflict. He refused to leave.

The deacons didn't know what to do; none had past experience dealing with such a circumstance. Although they were devout and practical men, none even had a high school diploma. (Not that diplomas mean anything in God's kingdom, but they were at a disadvantage when it came to dealing with a more highly educated pastor.) They didn't know what to do.

Ted

Ted was even more popular than

Jim. It looked as if he would trigger much needed growth in the church. But rather than grow, the church started to lose members, the services lost vitality and some church ministries died. Slowly, the reasons surfaced.

Ted was not setting an example. He would call a work day and wouldn't do any work. He would preach about knocking doors but wouldn't knock any doors. He took off each time he had visitors from out of state (losing about five weeks the first year he was with the church).

He got his sermons out of a book and read them to the congregation. The former pastor's wife had participated with the Woman's Auxiliary in cleaning the church. This pastor's wife refused to help. When the deacons made suggestions on how to improve the church, the pastor wouldn't heed them. The deacons didn't know what to do.

Paul

Paul was a dedicated young pastor and took his first church with stars in his eyes. The stars soon fell. The deacon board wouldn't help him at all. He had to prepare the church buildings and the Sunday School rooms for service each Sunday. He had to water and mow the lawns and flowers. He had to do all of the visiting and door-knocking.

And finally he had to take a full-time job to support his family while continuing to pastor the church. Inexperienced, he didn't know what to do.

Herman

Herman learned to preach when pastors preached an hour or more. As the trend toward shorter sermons took hold, he fought against it. To him, people came to church for long sermons and he would give them what he thought they wanted.

Preaching until 12:20 or 12:30 on Sunday mornings and then an altar call, he felt that he was giving people more for the money than other pastors did. Several people stopped coming because of the lengthy sermons.

When the deacons talked with Herman about the problem, he responded, "No one can tell me what to do in the pulpit." The deacons didn't know what to do.

Daniel

Daniel had pastored five years when he moved to a new church. The church seemed to thrive for awhile. Then he learned that the wife of one of his deacons was having an affair with a married man in the church. He talked with the offending couple. They refused to give up their affair after being shown that it was sin.

He had them put out of the church. Other couples left in sympathy with the two couples who left. The pastor didn't know what to do to build up the morale of those who remained.

I'm sure you know variations of these scenarios. With such problems confronting all churches, isn't it about time that Free Will Baptist national leadership provides the kind of technical and spiritual assistance modern technology makes possible?

I suggest that we take a second look at an 800 number for Free Will Baptists. ■



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

A Broken Heart

By Dr. William S. Deal



Perhaps nowhere in scripture is there a more truly penitential prayer than that of David in Psalm 51. It has often been called the Penitential Psalm. Hardly could a sinner or backslider find more appropriate words for his confession to God than these. If accompanied with the attitude found here, the outcome of such a prayer could never be in doubt.

The setting of this psalm has a very dark background. It was after David had taken Uriah's wife and had the good man placed in such a position in the army as to accomplish his death. Then the prophet Nathan stood before David and pointed out his sin. When David was awakened and truly aroused by the Spirit of God, he saw his condition. The psalm is his prayer for forgiveness and restoration.

At the height of his prayer he cries out, "The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit: a broken and contrite heart, O God, thou wilt not despise" (v. 17). The key word of this section is clearly seen—"broken."

God can do nothing for a stubborn heart except continue to convict it. As long as there is one iota of rebellion, unwillingness to take up the cross or a desire to do something other than the plain will of God, one can never hope for forgiveness or peace with God. He will have

nothing short of full surrender.

Our pride, self-will and self-justification must go. Our thin veneer of rationalizations that some particular thing is not wrong, when deep down in our inner spirit we feel condemned, must crumble. It is only when there is nothing but complete submission and absolute trust in Him that we can sing, "Blessed assurance, Jesus is mine."

Too many people today in the religious world would make sacrifices to God other than a broken heart. Some folk will gladly support the church, do religious work of one kind or another and often make a pretense of religion. But they are not willing to cease from sin and give God their innermost hearts.

Nothing can take the place of a broken heart and contrite spirit. Loud confessions, protestations against a former way of life and outward conformity to the Christian standards do not of themselves assure a broken spirit and a contrite heart.

It is only when one who so professes demonstrates the spirit of such a condition that he gives real evidence of his change. Many loud professors when put under pressure reveal that their hearts are far from broken from sin or contrite for their evils.

What God begins to do in a heart at conversion, He will continue to work until His way is the supreme

goal of that soul. He will take that broken heart to its last full measure of consecration and fill the contrite spirit with the joy of the Holy Spirit's fullness. Then will the soul know the full meaning of a heart that knows no wanderings, a spirit that has not bitterness and a life that is not unfruitful.

One sure sign of the truly broken heart is this: it is possessed of a meek and a quiet spirit. This does not mean that young life will not bubble with cheerfulness or that one will merely be physically quiet. It means far more: a restfulness of soul amidst turmoil, a meekness when under fire, a disposition to forgive and to be tolerant, no matter how others have treated you. God grant that we may each have this always. ■

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ABOUT THE WRITER: Dr. William S. Deal mailed this article to *Contact* on January 23, 1992. He died January 25. He was converted in a tent meeting in Winston-Salem, North Carolina, at age 16. He served as an evangelist in the Wesleyan Church, and was a prolific writer.

This Can't Be Love!

By Kevin Skiles



A few things in our world need to be loved no matter how dreadful the task. Take children for instance. Those adorable, innocent creatures, those playful beings and natural comedians, those despicable, nerve-wrenching, deceitful worms!

Yes, kids are a confusing part of God's creation. Their attitudes and actions change as often as the second hand on a clock. But then so do our feelings for them. One moment they're sitting on our laps listening to a story they've heard many times. The next moment they're secretly beating up one of their friends without our knowledge.

Sometimes we want to give them whatever they desire. Other times we want to give them what they deserve. And yet, we must always love this wonderful part of God's perfectly designed creation.

You see, these little humans, though smarter than we sometimes think, are but naive, open doors for anything that enters. Love keeps these little doors unlocked.

The question is, how do we reach children, protect them from the world's philosophy and lifestyle, introduce them to something better, make them understand? We might think God should brand a special minority for the task of dealing with children and let the rest of us avoid them as we would a skunk with a raised tail.

The Fun Company

The truth is, we all sooner or later come into contact with children. No matter how much or little patience God gives us, there is a way to deal with them. I had no choice in this matter since I worked at a "fun company" for several months. A "fun

company" is nothing more than a day care with a cute name.

When I first started work I thought I was going to be a best friend to children. I thought I would care about them, listen to them, give them my great advice. The first two weeks challenged these ideals.

I soon learned that kids aren't always so touching. Sometimes they don't care about your advice. They are not worried about the feelings they're crushing when they tell someone to be on the other team. They just want to win the game.

Children lead day-by-day lives. Getting them to see beyond the day is one of mankind's greatest efforts. So do we ignore them, allow them to have free reign? I will admit I have been guilty of that, but the answer is, "No." Too much is at stake to ignore them, their personalities, their lives.

What can we do to better listen,

care about and love children with whom we build relationships, whether short-lived or life-long?

Tough World

First, realize the kind of life these children face. In a world where so many marriages end in divorce, where elementary children must be educated to "just say no" to drugs, when the popular slogan for alcohol is not, "Don't drink," but, "Don't drink and drive," it is a miracle that a kid survives to adulthood.

In my day care, I was unable to find parents' last names by looking up the child's last name. Nor could I ask anything about Mommy or Daddy until I really got to know them, for they may not have one or the other.

One of my first experiences at day care involved a fourth-grade boy who was playing in the grass with his friends. His clothes got rather dirty. I told him that his mom was going to have a hard time washing the dirt out of his clothes. He told me that his mom was in a different country.

What an embarrassing blow! How sad for him to see his best friend's mom come to pick up his friend while he could only wonder what his own mother was doing right then.

Two brothers left our day care because their parents divorced and their mother took them to Georgia. A few weeks later a woman who seemed to be an outstanding mother gave us news that she was separating from her husband and taking her daughter with her. Suddenly the little kindergartner was without a full-time father.

We must have pity for the kids of today. Home does not hold the value it did when even we younger adults were tots. Families who stay together do not always love their own children. To them, kids are a necessary bother. Kids need our love more than ever.

Natural Humor

Another thing we can do is look for the humor in children. They are natural comedians. One thing that makes them so hilarious is the innocence in what they say and do. They rarely try to be funny. They just are.

One day a little girl called someone a vulgar name. She was, of course, questioned by one of the staff members, and immediately she said, "I was calling myself that."

Some girls, when spring arrived and the sun was a potential danger, enjoyed putting "sun scream" on their arms and backs, though they wore their shirts so the sun had no way of reaching their backs anyway.

One of the funniest things I heard a child say came from my nephew. My brother Jeff had taught him to count. One night little Alan was saying his prayers. He would repeat after Jeff. It went something like this:

Jeff: "Dear Jesus,"
Alan: "Dear Jesus,"
Jeff: "Thank You"
Alan: "Thank You"
Jeff: "For"
Alan: "4, 5, 6, 7 . . ."

If you sit back and observe kids, you will be surprised by how often you find yourself laughing. The next time they get on your nerves, think about those funny phrases or actions. It might help smooth over the other experiences.

Reminisce and Interact

Something else that helps us relate to children is to realize that we were not a different species when we were kids. I was such a brat when I was a youngster that my grandfather had to thump me for pulling the curtains down when Mom left me to go shopping. It's difficult to remember those days when we were children now that we're adults, but we need to try.

Finally, interact with the children. Oh, I don't mean blow your adult example, be selfish or throw tantrums. But have fun and don't worry about not performing well at what they're doing. You can be horrible at something compared to people your age, but to a child you will be fantastic.

For instance, I was playing basketball at day care one day. I know nothing about basketball. I just can't play the sport. I was performing some simple maneuvers, however, when a second-grade boy commented, "Man, Mr. Kevin must really know how to play basketball!"

Boosting your ego is a talent most children possess without realizing it. Become a friend to children—not just someone they can look up to physically but inwardly as well.

These tips are not guaranteed to win a child. There are some cases which seem to be hopeless. Nothing you do seems to work. They do not care about their lives. At these times we can do nothing but lift this precious life into the Lord's arms and let Jesus decide what to do. But most of all, we must love, love, love this child. ■



ABOUT THE WRITER: Kevin Skiles is a 1991 graduate of Southeastern Free Will Baptist College in Wendell, North Carolina. He is on the college's music staff.

Directory Update

ALABAMA

Herman McFaddin to Macedonia Church, Millport, from Burls Chapel Church, Sweetwater, TN

FLORIDA

Paul Oppy to First Church, Deerfield Beach from Mt. Carmel Church, Perry

MARYLAND

Frank Owens to Waldorf Mission Church, Waldorf, from First Church, Florence, AL, as assistant pastor

NORTH CAROLINA

Gary Maines to Trinity Church, Greenville

SOUTH CAROLINA

William Justice to Little Bethel Church, Johnsonville

Leo Thomas to Bethel Church, Fort Mill
Everett Tyner to Walker's Chapel, Sumter

OTHER PERSONNEL

Thurman Lucas to Trinity Church, Greenville, NC, as minister of music and youth ■



An Instant of Understanding

By Dennis E. Hensley

Any of us who spend a fair amount of time on this earth can look back on our lives and recall a scattering of incidents wherein the realities of life came into immediate, sharp focus. Each of these “jolts of comprehension” was a mere flash—an instant of understanding—yet, it altered our perspectives on life in monumental ways.

When I was a boy, for example, I used to play “army” with my buddies. The rules were simple: if you got “shot,” you had to fall down and count to 60 before you could get up and start playing again. If any side had all of its men down and counting at the same time, the other side won.

Long Binh Awakening

Many years later I was in the *real* Army, carrying a *real* rifle, walking through a *real* jungle (Vietnam). In one sense, I understood that I was a soldier and that this was a real war. After all, I’d been given a uniform, I’d gone through basic training, and I was on foreign soil. I was prepared, right?

Well . . . not really. At 6:30 a.m. on February 8, 1971, I was on patrol six miles north of Long Binh. Our squad leader gave a hand signal indicating he had spotted something ahead of us.

Instinctively, I crouched amidst some heavy foliage. Two seconds later the tree branches above me and the large fronds just over my head were shredded into a thousand pieces of leaf pulp as enemy machine gun fire riddled our position.

I’ll never forget my reaction. I dropped forward on my knees, went white with terror and sat motionless in wide-eyed shock. As though it was some great revelation, the thought went through my mind, “*I could have been killed just then. Hey! This isn’t ‘count to 60 and get up again.’ This is real war. Whoa! This is serious, man!*”

Until that instant, the understanding of what war was really like had been beyond my comprehension. Previously, I had read about war, heard others talk about it, had seen movies about it and had even played it as a child. But not until those

machine gun bullets split the vegetation over my head did I *comprehend* war. From that instant on, I was a changed soldier.

The Daddy Kick

I recall a more peaceful but equally astonishing instant. Two years after I was married, our family doctor told my wife and me that we had a child on the way. I was happy because (in theory at least) I understood that I was going to be a daddy.

However, on a Sunday morning three months later when my wife put my hand on her stomach and I actually felt the baby give a strong kick—wow! I then *knew* I was going to be a daddy. There was a real baby inside there. I’d just felt it move. It just took that instant for me to understand that our twosome was definitely a threesome.

Old Testament Lessons

Throughout the Bible we have numerous examples of how God used miracles to provide “an instant of understanding” to people about His sovereignty and power.

The Egyptian Magicians

When Moses confronted Pharaoh and demanded the release of the Jews, He used power from God to turn water into blood. Using satanic power, the magicians of Pharaoh's court performed similar miracles.

However, when Moses smote the dust of the earth and transformed it into lice (and when he performed numerous other miraculous deeds), the court magicians found themselves absolutely powerless to match Jehovah's greatness. The Bible notes, "The magicians did . . . their enchantments to bring forth lice, but they could not" (Exodus 8:18).

As the magicians beat the dust and chanted their cultic rituals, they quickly noted that a greater power than Satan had chosen to nullify their abilities. In that instant, they were able to comprehend that the God of Moses was greater than the idols of the Egyptians.

The Bible says they confessed Jehovah's greatness: "Then the magicians said unto Pharaoh, This is the hand of God" (Exodus 8:19).

Other Old Testament Residents

That same hand of God provided other "instants" of understanding to other people regarding God's power. The inhabitants of Jericho had an instant of understanding when God sent fissures through their great wall and crumbled it. The citizens were so stunned, they didn't even fight back when the Israelites attacked (Joshua 6:21).

The Philistines had an instant of understanding when Goliath fell headlong to the ground, killed by a Jewish shepherd boy (I Samuel 17:49). The prophets of Baal had their instant of understanding when God answered Elijah's prayer and sent fire from heaven to consume the bullock and altar (I Kings 18:38). The residents of Sodom and Gomorrah had their instant of understanding when they saw brimstone and fire drop on them from heaven (Genesis 19:24).

New Testament Revelation

Other, more enlightening, in-

stants of understanding are found in the New Testament.

Peter

After traveling with Jesus and watching Him feed the multitudes, heal the sick and cast out demons, the disciples were still not certain about His identity. So, one night Jesus asked them directly, "Who do men say that I, the Son of Man, am?"

To this, the disciples came up with a vast range of names—Old Testament prophets like Jeremiah and Elijah, current wandering preachers like John the Baptist—all sorts of responses. But then Jesus asked them who the disciples, themselves, thought He was.

No one spoke, except for Peter. In that instant everything became totally clear to him and (as usual) he spoke his mind: "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the Living God" (Matthew 16:16).

Peter's life was changed forever in that moment. Even when the flesh would later fail him, his spirit would rebound time and again to do new service for the Lord.

Paul

Similarly, the Apostle Paul was persecuting Christians until his road to Damascus confrontation with the risen Christ. His misconceptions about religion and his ill-placed loyalties were corrected at that instant and, with a new comprehension about proper service to God, he later went forth to evangelize the Gentiles.

Today's Great Opportunity

As dramatic as all these examples are, a far greater instant of understanding lies just one breath away for each of us. Sooner or later everyone must die (Hebrews 9:27). In the moment after death there will be an instant understanding of who God is.

For the believer, it will be an immediate time of blessed fellowship with Christ in Heaven (II Corinthians 5:8). Right now, in our earthly bodies, we can imagine how wonderful this experience will be, but we will never be able to comprehend it until

that "instant" actually occurs.

For the person lost in sin, however, it will also be an instant of understanding, but one permeated with horror and agony. Christ warned the hypocrites and sinners, "How shalt ye escape the damnation of hell?" (Matthew 23:23).

In Christ's lesson on the rich man in hell (Luke 16:19-31), we are told that the man was alive (his soul), that he had his memory, that he was keenly conscious of his physical torment and that he was emotionally distraught over the fact that his family members were bent on experiencing an identical fate.

This man knew true torment . . . and he *still* knows it. It will go on forever. And, there is no chance of ever altering that judgement.

The rich man forfeited his opportunity to accept Christ as his Savior. For the living, that opportunity is still available. Your life, or the life of some unsaved person you know, can be changed in an *instant* by calling upon the name of Jesus and yielding everything to Him.

We can either go to Him now, or wait until He calls us . . . an "instant" from now. ■



ABOUT THE WRITER: Dr. Dennis E. Hensley is the author of *How to Fulfill Your Potential* (Warner Press) and *The Jesus Effect* (Pacific Press).



Who Do You Think You Are?

By Bruce Robertson

Your name is not who you are. It is only an identifier given by your parents to distinguish you from other individuals and to tie you to a particular family. Later on, you may be further identified by the company where you work, the position you hold or by certain accomplishments. Human identity is culturally tied to these and other means of identification. There is another way, however.

When you accepted Jesus Christ as Savior, according to the scriptures, you took on a new identity. Being a Christian makes you no less unique, since each of us still has a different personality, tastes, talents and temperaments.

Yet, there is a sameness between those of us who are born of God, which identifies us with our Heavenly Father. There is a spiritual likeness springing from that common force that regenerated us and made us who we now are—Christ's disciples.

Yes, if you are truly a Christian, born again, born of God's Spirit, then who you are is no longer a name on a birth certificate. You are a disciple of the Lord Jesus, an adopted member of an eternal family, a child of God.

Family Traits

As a disciple of Jesus Christ, certain characteristics emerge from within the new man. These spiritually-originated and Christ-like qualities gradually become more and more the real you, until the family identity is apparent to anyone beholding your life. Eventually, Christian traits identify us because Christian attitudes, values, principles govern our behavior. This is what Paul means in II Corinthians 5:17-19.

This re-orientation assumes a natural process of spiritual growth which begins at conversion and continues through life. Such growth, or lack of it, is dependent upon the degree to which we come to recognize and are willing to accept our new identity in Christ.

Identity Crisis

Strangely, some Christians seem unaware of the identity issue. When that occurs, an identity crisis erupts. Although few recognize the problem, it is more common among church members today than most want to admit. It robs Christians of their joy and saps the vitality of the church.

The answer begins with recogniz-

ing the symptoms. Christians suffering from an identity crisis are uncomfortable about their spiritual life. They are aware that something is wrong, that they are not fully on track, spiritually speaking.

A sense of frustration and inadequacy makes them feel defeated and robs them of their joy. They feel guilty for "not doing more for God," and yet, the activities and programs of the church leave them unfulfilled, compounding their unhappiness. Sometimes, the empty feeling causes some to doubt their dedication or even their salvation. Rededication may bring temporary relief, but where an identity crisis is the problem, the symptoms soon return.

Just as physical symptoms are nature's way of warning us of disease and disfunction to be diagnosed and treated, these spiritual symptoms are God's way of warning us of a threat to our spiritual well-being. When physical symptoms are ignored, more serious illness or even death may occur. Certainly, no less important to our overall well-being is a quick response to any symptom of spiritual disease.

Unconfessed sin can cause the spiritual symptoms I've described, but when confession and repentance

fail to give relief, the problem obviously has another source. For most Christians, an identity crisis is the cause of their misery.

Healing Process

Recognizing the symptoms as those of an identity crisis is the first step in the process of spiritual healing. Then, there must be a refocusing on who we really are since becoming Christians.

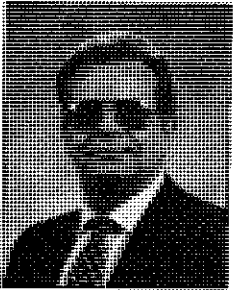
We must abandon the idea that our Christianity is just another role we play in life, alongside all the others. Our culture demands that we fill various roles—husband, wife, father, mother, son, daughter, employee. But Christianity requires more than role playing.

To be the Christians we have become involves becoming the persons we are . . . Jesus' disciples. It is not a role at all, it is our true identity.

Many problems evident in the church today are directly related to the identity issue. If the entire Christian community could undertake a major refocusing on our true identity as Christ's disciples, we would experience a spiritual awakening that would restore the Christians, revitalize the church and turn the world upside down . . . Again!

Top Priority

Understanding the nature of discipleship is critical, but we must first recognize our true identity as disciples. This must become a top priority during these crucial days of doctrinal confusion and denominational conflict. As cultic winds and



ABOUT THE WRITER: Bruce Robertson is a member of Calvary Fellowship Free Will Baptist Church in Fenton, Missouri. He graduated from Free Will Baptist Bible College in 1990.

We Went to a Meeting

By Delma Gunnels

Last night my husband asked me to ride with him to a meeting. He invited a local pastor new to our area to ride along with us. My husband graduated from California Christian College. The pastor friend graduated from Southeastern Free Will Baptist College. I graduated from Free Will Baptist Bible College.

On the way we shared our triumphs, our concerns, our ideas for our churches. We laughed and talked together like old friends even though this was our first venture with the new pastor friend. We invited him to bring his wife and new baby to our home to visit. He invited us to bring our teens and join his church for an outing.

My husband graduated from CCC; our pastor friend graduated from Southeastern. I graduated from FWBBC.

Our pastor friend had asked if we could leave early to go by the mall. Of course I jumped at the chance! My husband said, "Sure." We each needed something. We each went our sepa-

rate ways. We each met at the checkout counter. We each left with a bag of goods that met our individual needs.

My husband graduated from CCC; our pastor friend graduated from Southeastern. I graduated from FWBBC.

We left the mall and drove to our meeting. It was a planning session to discuss our upcoming missions rallies. It felt good to sit around the table and plan together.

After the meeting, we got back in the truck and drove home—my husband from CCC, our pastor friend from Southeastern, and I from FWBBC. The two preachers visited for a while and I busied myself with plans for the next day.

When I crawled into bed last night, I thought, "This whole evening was profitable. The fellowship was good. Now, that's the way it ought to be." ■

ABOUT THE WRITER: Mrs. Delma Gunnels is a member of Pearce Chapel Free Will Baptist Church in Smithville, Mississippi.

changing cultural values threaten the stability of the still undisciplined, we must show them who they are and teach them how to practice their real identity in the world.

Winning the lost is no less important than it ever was, but somewhere along the way we've forgotten the second part of the Great Commission . . . "and teaching them to obey all things, whatsoever I have commanded you." Discipleship. Teaching baby Christians how to be the disciples they've become.

Until "Who am I?" is clearly answered with "I am Christ's disciple,"

there is little value in attempting to address the question, "What is a disciple?" Only when I understand and am convinced of my identity am I prepared to deal with how to express that identity.

Understanding who I am from a biblical perspective is the answer to the identity crisis and to the revitalization of Christ's church. Until we see ourselves as disciples of Jesus Christ, first, last and always, and begin to live in that reality, we will continue to suffer the pains of identity crisis. God help us learn who we are. ■



The New Pastorate

By David Taylor

The president of one of Tucson's ministerial groups asked me to speak at their monthly luncheon. I had only been in the city one year so my assigned topic was, "When coming to a new pastorate, what are the three biggest challenges faced in getting started or turned around?"

Since this is my second pastorate, I was limited in specific examples of challenges from which to select the biggest three. As a layman I had the nightmare of breaking in three new pastors in a relatively short span of time. Nevertheless, I decided to pull my three challenges from my own restricted sources.

Challenges are fairly common among preachers in new pastorates, no matter the congregation's size. I gave thought to what I had tried to do in my first year at each church I'd pastored.

Know the People

The first challenge I faced was to become familiar with the people; get to know the who, what, when, where, why and how of my new church. I'm convinced from reading the scripture that a pastor must know his people.

Read about Paul's New Testament journeys and then his letters, and you will discover a man who had a close relationship with people. Paul knew what piqued the Galatians' interest, what made the Thessalonian church special and what would touch the heart of Philemon.

Jesus said He was the "shepherd of the sheep." He added that the sheep heard His voice, "and he called his own sheep by name, and he

leadeth them out . . . and the sheep follow him: for they know his voice" (John 10:2-4).

As pastors we are "under-shepherds." However, the idea of becoming familiar with our folks applies.

I've heard much pastoral rhetoric about not getting close to people in church. The fear is that either the church will hurt me and my family, or when I leave, the leaving will be too hard. That's not my style and not my fear. I like people.

We all want to be called by our names—Floyd, Walt, Milton, Glenn, Nolen, Lonna, Betty, Carol, Norma. People need recognition, a pat on the back, a friendly smile, or a non-threatening, personal inquiry, "How did that new plant food work on your prize yellow roses?"

You can't do these things without becoming familiar with your people. It must be sad after one or two years for a pastor to get an emergency call from a member and have to ask directions to the house.

Gain Their Confidence

After becoming familiar with the congregation, build a foundation with your people; that is, have a basis of confidence and trust.

If we are to evangelize the lost and edify the saved, we must have a solid foundation of confidence and trust that enlists cooperation. Some ministers enter the pastorate with too high an estimate of themselves. At the same time, some churches have too little esteem for the ministry.

What we need is balance. A pastor is both a servant and a shepherd. Indigenous to the office of pastor is the idea of respect. We must also be willing to earn that respect. Christ said that "the laborer is worthy of his hire" (Luke 10:7). He is worthy because he has been called of God and separated to a work. He is worthy because he accepts the call and puts time into the labor. He is wor-

thy because he is a faithful worker.

A pastoral foundation built on force or stubbornness is precarious at best. How much better to build on mutual respect, confidence and trust.

Become Their Pastor

Now comes the third biggest challenge, blending a following and becoming *their* pastor.

Good, bad or indifferent, when you accept the position of pastor of an existing church, you come to a congregation that has previously called someone else "pastor."

Yes, they voted you in as pastor (maybe even unanimously), but it will take time for them to think of *you* when they first think of *their* pastor. At the same time, it will take the pastor some time to think of "his people" as those in his new church.

Until pastor and people get on the same page of the program, it's tough turning things around or getting something started. My wife loves the bumper sticker that says, "Which way did they go? How many were there? I must find them, I am their leader!" That may describe more pastors and churches than we think.

The needful thing is to move forward, tackling challenges straight on, one at a time. Let's accept the challenges and address the needs that we may accomplish "the good" for the cause of Christ. ■



ABOUT THE WRITER: Reverend David Taylor pastors First Free Will Baptist Church in Tucson, Arizona.

NEWSFRONT

Thigpen Named ETA President

WHEATON, IL—Reverend Jonathan Thigpen, 41, was appointed president and chief executive officer of the Evangelical Training Association (ETA), according to the Board of Directors. He assumed responsibilities December 1, 1992, replacing the retiring Richard Patterson, who served since 1987.

Rev. Thigpen is the eighth president to hold the office since its beginning in 1930. The 62-year-old organization is an international ministry promoting Christian education among evangelical institutions. It comprises a membership of seminaries, colleges, universities and institutes. ETA publishes a wide range of lay leadership training materials for local ministries. Since 1930, over two million people have taken ETA courses and over 79,000 college and seminary graduates have been awarded diplomas.

Jonathan Thigpen brings a unique combination of experience and skills to ETA. He completed undergraduate studies at Free Will Baptist Bible College,

Nashville, Tennessee. He holds the Master of Religious Education degree from Temple Baptist Seminary in Chattanooga, Tennessee. He is currently enrolled in the Ed.D. program at Trinity Evangelical Divinity School in Deerfield, Illinois.

Ordained as a Free Will Baptist minister in 1974, Thigpen has ministered in a variety of positions. He most recently served as advertising manager for Christianity Today, Inc. (1988-1992).

Prior to that he taught eight years at Free Will Baptist Bible College (1980-1988) as professor of Christian education. Twice he worked with Randall House Publications as Christian education consultant (1979-1980) and editorial manager (1985-1987).

Thigpen logged five years (1973-1978) with the denomination's Church Training Service Department where he coordinated the National Youth Conference and served as assistant to the director. While pursuing his master's degree at Tennessee Temple Seminary, he pastored First FWB Church in Chattanooga (1976-1979).

Rev. Thigpen resides in Wheaton with his wife, Yvonne, and daughter, Jessica. Yvonne E. Thigpen has served as director of educational ministries at ETA since 1990. The Thigpens have ministered together in conventions and training workshops across the country and look forward to continuing their ministry with ETA.

FWBBC Sets Spring Conference

NASHVILLE, TN—People who attend Free Will Baptist Bible College's spring Bible Conference, March 7-11, will hear five outstanding preachers in a program that will feature solid biblical preaching, music and fellowship.

This year's conference speakers are:

- **Dr. T. V. Farris**, professor of Old Testament and Hebrew at Mid-America Baptist Theological Seminary in Memphis, TN.
- **Rev. Joe Grizzle**, pastor of First FWB Church, Norman, OK.
- **Dr. Paul Harrison**, pastor of Cross Timbers FWB Church, Nashville, TN.
- **Rev. Wayne Phillips**, pastor of Fellowship FWB Church, Flat River, MO.
- **Rev. Fred Warner**, director of missionary/church relations for the Foreign Missions Department.

The annual conference is also homecoming for many of the college's 5,500 alumni. Dr. Ken Riggs, FWBBC Alumni Association president and his staff will be ready to host activities that include times for fellowship and the association's annual business meeting.

Growth Seminars Boost Georgia Meeting

NORMAN PARK, GA—The annual Bible Conference Day at the Georgia State Association was given over to four Double-in-a-Decade seminars, according to Executive Secretary Herbert Waid. The November 12 emphasis featured workshops by Oklahoma pastor Curtis Linton and FWB Executive Secretary Melvin Worthington.

The 56th annual session of the Georgia State Association met November 12-14 at Norman Baptist Assembly in Norman Park. Some 264 people registered for the meeting, including 61 ministers and 61 deacons/lay delegates.

Moderator Paul Smith gavelled delegates through the business sessions which included adopting a \$500,000 state budget for 1993. Delegates also passed a

resolution opposing Senate bill S.574 and its House companion H.R.1430 to legalize homosexuality and give sodomy legal protection.

Three ministers preached sermons developing the association theme, "A Time for Excellence." Savannah pastor Roy Harris delivered the keynote message on "The Excellency of Christ." Other speakers included Homerville pastor Kent Barwick and Home Missions director Roy Thomas.

The Georgia Woman's Auxiliary met November 11-12 using as their theme, "Teachers of Good Things." Mrs. Lucy Hyman delivered the major address to delegates.

The 1993 Georgia State Association will meet November 18-20 at Norman Baptist Assembly in Norman Park.

Tennessee Wants Shorter Convention

COOKEVILLE, TN—Delegates to the 55th annual Tennessee State Association adopted a resolution requesting that officials condense the National Association schedule so that it concludes with the Wednesday night missions service instead of the lightly-attended Thursday morning business session.

More than 325 people, including 87 ministers, attended the November 9-11, 1992, meeting at Cookeville FWB Church. Moderator Don Walker led the busy delegates who also adopted four constitutional changes.

The constitution now calls for a \$5 registration fee for each voting delegate. District and state fees were increased. The Executive Committee will serve as an examining board to evaluate churches outside the state association that want to join the body.

Two men, Pastor Winston Sweeney and Mr. Erritt Darnell were recognized for serving on

the Tennessee Children's Home Board for 30 and 31 years respectively.

Nashville pastor Fred Hall preached the keynote message Monday evening. Two other Tennessee pastors, Gene Deaton (First FWB Church, Johnson City) and Willie Justice (East Side FWB Church, Elizabethton), preached during the meeting.

The Tuesday morning Bible Conference featured two speakers: Pastor Terry Boyd of Ashland City FWB Church and Pastor John Gibbs of Good Springs FWB Church.

Susan Bumpus, missionary appointee to Uruguay, spoke during the 47th annual Woman's Auxiliary Convention on November 10. Mrs. Rebecca Pugh, pastor's wife from Millington, addressed the Auxiliary's Fellowship Banquet.

The 1993 Tennessee State Association will meet November 8-10 at Grace FWB Church in Memphis.

Record Number Attend FWBBC Welcome Days

NASHVILLE, TN—Free Will Baptist Bible College hosted a record 346 visitors from 16 states for its fall Welcome Days, November 19-21. This eclipses the old fall record of 255 set in 1981, according to Neil Gilliland, recruitment director.

"Praise the Lord," he exclaimed. "We are still rejoicing and thanking the Father for all who came and for the wonderful job the college family did hosting our very special guests."

He says that a local high school teacher brought some of his students to the opening Thursday night service and that one of the boys was saved. "Several visitors spoke to me about their eagerness to come back as students," Mr. Gilliland adds.

The largest groups came from Peace FWB Church, Indianapolis, IN (13), and First FWB Church, Kalamazoo, MI (12).

In addition to visiting classes, attending special services and enjoying the college's athletic facilities, visitors were treated to two basketball games Friday evening. The first featured former FWBBC Flames who paired off to compete against each other. In the second game, the 1992-93 Flames faced and beat Florida Christian College from Kissimmee, Florida.

The college also provided a seminar for youth workers and another on financial aid.

The next Welcome Days is scheduled for April 1-3. FWBBC officials anticipate another record attendance and plan to house what may be the most visitors the college has ever had for any recruitment event.

Capital Stewardship Campaign
November 1992
Update

State	Goal	Gifts
Alabama	\$ 97,290.00	\$ 1,000.00
Arizona	1,565.00	1,800.00
Arkansas	97,880.00	15,354.73
Atlantic Canada	2,000.00	.00
California	21,925.00	.00
Colorado	1,005.00	755.00
Florida	26,365.00	.00
Georgia	48,620.00	6,569.10
Hawaii	235.00	.00
Idaho	450.00	.00
Illinois	20,600.00	100.00
Indiana	10,020.00	500.00
Iowa	340.00	.00
Kansas	1,640.00	.00
Kentucky	45,150.00	740.00
Louisiana	120.00	1,020.00
Maryland	8,675.00	.00
Michigan	19,250.00	1,553.00
Mississippi	19,815.00	.00
Missouri	77,025.00	17,309.12
Montana	35.00	50.00
Nebraska	130.00	.00
New Mexico	760.00	.00
North Carolina	75,285.00	1,250.00
Northeast Assoc.	1,125.00	.00
Northwest Assoc.	1,385.00	.00
Ohio	52,115.00	.00
Oklahoma	117,505.00	.00
South Carolina	23,350.00	100.00
Tennessee	100,040.00	19,807.05
Texas	14,705.00	3,140.00
Virginia	30,975.00	.00
West Virginia	58,840.00	320.00
Other	23,780.00	1,500.00
Totals	\$1,000,000.00	\$72,868.00

**Camping Personnel
Plan Get-Together**

DAYTON, OH—Free Will Baptists involved in camping ministries would like to get together and exchange ideas, according to William Krimmer who works with the FWB Youth For Christ Camp in Dayton. Mr. Krimmer exhibited at the 1992 FWB National Convention in Indianapolis and began a list of interested individuals.

Krimmer has begun a mailing list to coordinate information and monitor interest in a future

Cooperative Channel Contributions
November 1992

RECEIPTS:

State	CO-OP		Total	November'91	Yr. To Date
	Designated	(Undesignated)			
Alabama	\$ 91.05	\$ 30.00	\$ 121.05	\$ 229.78	\$ 2,995.67
Arizona	10.00	.00	10.00	.00	2,000.70
Arkansas	11,167.43	.00	11,167.43	9,234.95	93,277.82
California	.00	939.12	939.12	846.64	10,783.03
Colorado	.00	.00	.00	.00	755.00
Delaware	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00
Florida	.00	.00	.00	1,180.87	13,804.15
Georgia	15,111.81	2,178.39	17,290.20	9,888.16	115,555.05
Hawaii	.00	.00	.00	.00	221.00
Idaho	.00	.00	.00	45.51	89.86
Illinois	21,021.14	4,608.16	25,629.30	16,517.16	96,346.27
Indiana	.00	.00	.00	626.58	7,526.64
Kansas	.00	70.28	70.28	29.15	722.98
Kentucky	1,419.10	1,716.19	3,135.29	150.00	8,419.81
Louisiana	.00	.00	.00	.00	900.00
Maryland	.00	75.00	75.00	.00	3,956.54
Michigan	8,799.63	2,690.95	11,490.58	9,979.82	126,483.16
Mississippi	.00	214.35	214.35	159.25	5,046.60
Missouri	10,386.91	.00	10,386.91	8,577.74	123,315.71
Montana	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00
New Jersey	.00	.00	.00	.00	30.00
New Mexico	.00	.00	.00	282.58	184.54
North Carolina	1,428.13	578.49	2,006.62	1,927.82	18,351.20
Ohio	10.00	10.00	20.00	2,582.00	29,701.74
Oklahoma	36,156.36	.00	36,156.36	40,681.98	484,876.08
South Carolina	14,441.83	106.53	14,548.36	11,099.00	190,324.12
Tennessee	1,645.26	1,132.12	2,777.38	7,284.64	88,697.13
Texas	8,571.24	1,373.79	9,945.03	12,304.32	74,123.02
Virginia	247.64	25.00	272.64	261.80	4,770.67
West Virginia	3,686.78	83.77	3,770.55	5,487.15	46,632.28
Canada	.00	.00	.00	.00	80.51
Northwest Assoc.	.00	.00	.00	.00	313.70
Other (Computer)	.00	.00	.00	(.01)	.07
Totals	\$134,194.31	\$15,832.14	\$150,026.45	\$139,376.89	\$1,550,285.05

DISBURSEMENTS:

Executive Office	\$ 9,490.95	\$ 15,832.14	\$ 25,323.09	\$ 21,621.30	\$ 278,554.00
Foreign Missions	73,258.04	.00	73,258.04	70,450.66	780,991.11
FWBBC	11,903.65	.00	11,903.65	8,298.39	86,728.56
Home Missions	26,022.60	.00	26,022.60	25,685.13	263,503.55
Retirement & Insurance	2,378.54	.00	2,378.54	2,610.29	23,023.86
Master's Men	2,271.18	.00	2,721.18	2,699.98	23,738.83
Commission for					
Theo. Integrity	140.64	.00	140.64	126.62	1,337.46
FWB Foundation	1,282.04	.00	1,282.04	2,180.55	13,455.38
Historical Commission	136.07	.00	136.07	121.94	1,298.06
Music Commission	133.59	.00	133.59	91.96	1,086.96
Radio & TV Commission	140.64	.00	140.64	116.36	1,199.16
Hillsdale FWB College	2,104.37	.00	2,014.37	1,281.41	13,670.99
Other	4,482.00	.00	4,482.00	4,092.30	61,697.13
Totals	\$134,194.31	\$15,832.14	\$150,026.45	\$139,376.89	\$1,550,285.05

meeting among camp personnel. One of the goals is to compile an up-to-date log of FWB camps currently operating.

Anyone who wishes to be placed on the mailing list and

receive more information should contact:

William L. Krimmer
201 Waneta Avenue
Dayton, OH 45404
Phone 513/236-3197

All-Boards Conference Recommends Disclosure

NASHVILLE, TN—After more than an hour of general discussion during their December 7-8, 1992, meeting, the All-Boards Conference endorsed a financial disclosure recommendation to the National Association. The recommendation was presented by the Financial Disclosure Committee who studied the issue Monday evening. The committee, chaired by Moderator Ralph Hampton, included the chairman of each national board.

The recommendation suggests that the full salary package of the top three or four administrators in each agency be published in the *Digest of Reports*, effective 1994. The matter now will be forwarded to the General Board when it meets in July at Louisville, Kentucky, and on to delegates of the National Association for final disposition. Delegates had requested during the 1992 National Association that the All-Boards Conference consider this matter.

Conference attendees met at Nashville's Doubletree Hotel for two days of intense sessions before conducting individual board meetings in the city. Oklahoma attorney Ron Barber led a three-hour seminar Tuesday



Fla. General Board member Randy Bryant.



Foreign Missions Director Eugene Waddell (L) and Ohio Executive Secretary Alton Loveless.

morning on board members' responsibility. Mr. Barber is a member of the Board of Retirement and a partner in the Barber and Bartz law firm.

Monday evening Executive Secretary Melvin Worthington led a 90-minute Capital Steward-

ship Campaign discussion. Attendees also viewed the first showing of the *Vision 2000* video, a 12-minute film designed to assist state leaders and pastors in raising funds to eliminate indebtedness on the National Offices Building. Dr. Worthington said



Board Chairman Rue Dell Smith (standing) converses with Home Missions Staff.



Devotional speaker Larry Powell.



WNAC Executive Secretary Mary Wisehart (L) and Study Committee member Diane Thomas.

copies of the video will be made available at no cost to Free Will Baptist churches.

Tuesday afternoon Moderator Ralph Hampton presided during a seminar on the Together Way Plan. Tennessee pastor Larry Powell set the tone for the conference with a rousing devotional Monday evening.

All attendees received a 48-page conference notebook which included denominational statistics, 1993 state associations, lists of state papers and state leaders, and other data.



Georgia Executive Secretary Herbert Waid.



Executive Secretary Melvin Worthington.



Foreign Missions Board member Archie Mayhew (R) instructs California pastor Tim Wood (Standing).

1993 State Association Meetings

State	Date / Time	Place / Address
Alabama	Starts: Nov. 11, 9:30 a.m. Closes: Nov. 12, 7:00 p.m.	Forestdale FWB Church 3615 Adamsville Pky, 78W. Birmingham, AL 35214
Arizona	Starts: May 1, 9:00 a.m. Closes: May 1, 3:00 p.m.	Cathedral of the Cross 610 N. Alma Sch. Rd, Suite 50 Chandler, AZ 85224
Arkansas	Starts: Aug. 10, 7:30 p.m. Closes: Aug. 12, Noon	Camp Beaverfork P. O. Box 1404 Conway, AR 72032
Atlantic Canada	Starts: June 24, 7:30 p.m. Closes: June 27, 7:00 p.m.	St. John Valley Bible Camp Route 5, Hartland N. B., Canada E0J 1N0
California	Starts: May 6, 7:30 p.m. Closes: May 8, Noon	California Christian College 4881 E. University Avenue Fresno, CA 93703
Colorado	Starts: February 15 Closes: February 15	Harvest FWB Church 7465 Horseshoe Road Colorado Springs, CO 80922
Florida	Starts: May 5 Closes: May 8	Ocala Hilton Hotel Ocala, FL
Georgia	Starts: November 18 Closes: November 20	Norman Baptist Assembly Norman Park, GA 31771
Idaho	Starts: May 14 Closes: May 15	Airport Road FWB Church 800 Washington Street S. Twin Falls, ID 83301
Illinois	Starts: Mar. 19, 9:00 a.m. Closes: Mar. 20, 3:00 p.m.	First FWB Church 2709 North 27th Street Decatur, IL 62526
Indiana	Starts: June 17, 7:00 p.m. Closes: June 18, 3:00 p.m.	Emmanuel FWB Church Route 3, Box 105-A Wabash, IN 46992-9803
Kansas	Starts: June 17, 7:30 p.m. Closes: June 19, Noon	First FWB Church 3900 Shunga Drive Topeka, KS 66614
Kentucky	Starts: June 18, 9:30 a.m. Closes: June 19, 4:00 p.m.	Inez FWB Church P. O. Box 457 Inez, KY 41224
Louisiana	Starts: Jan. 16, 10:00 a.m. Closes: Jan. 16	Heritage FWB Church 2665 Williamson Way Shreveport, LA 71118
Maryland	Starts: June 24, 7:00 p.m. Closes: June 26, Noon	Elkton FWB Church 209 West Marshall Ave. Elkton, VA 22827
Mexico	Starts: July 30 Closes: August 1	Monterrey, Mexico

State	Date / Time	Place / Address
Michigan	Starts: May 20 Closes: May 22	To be determined
Mississippi	Starts: November 5 Closes: November 6	Corinth FWB Church Route 1 Waynesboro, MS 39367
Missouri	Starts: June 7, 7:30 p.m. Closes: June 10, Noon	Kansas City, MO
New Jersey	Starts: Mar. 19, 7:00 p.m. Closes: Mar. 20, Noon	Centerton FWB Church c/o Rev. Paul Sprouse Route 8, Box 25 Bridgeton, NJ 08302
New Mexico	Starts: Apr. 16, 1:30 p.m. Closes: Apr. 17, 4:00 p.m.	First FWB Church 6601 Leta Road N.E. Albuquerque, NM 87113
North Carolina	Starts: June 7, 11:00 a.m. Closes: June 8, Noon	Tabernacle FWB Church 1003 West New Bern Road Kinston, NC 28501
Northeast Association	Starts: June 18, 4:00 p.m. Closes: June 19, Noon	First FWB Church 124 Bay View Avenue North Kingstown, RI 02852
Northwest Association	Starts: May 14, 7:30 p.m. Closes: May 15, Noon	First FWB Church 1340 45th Avenue N.E. Salem, OR 97301
Ohio	Starts: June 25, 9:00 a.m. Closes: June 26, Noon	Heritage Temple FWB Church 2295 S. High Street Columbus, OH 43207
Oklahoma	Starts: Oct. 11, 7:30 p.m. Closes: Oct. 14, 3:30 p.m.	Tulsa, OK
South Carolina	Starts: Feb. 4, 9:30 a.m. Closes: Feb. 5, 3:00 p.m.	First FWB Church 2624 W. Palmetto Street Florence, SC 29501
Tennessee	Starts: November 8 Closes: November 10	Grace FWB Church 7201 East Shelby Drive Memphis, TN 38125
Texas	Starts: June 9, 7:00 p.m. Closes: June 11, Noon	Airport Hilton Inn McAllen, TX
Virginia	Starts: June 17, 7:00 p.m. Closes: June 18, 9:30 p.m.	First FWB Church 1019 Gus Nicks Blvd. N.E. Roanoke, VA 24012
West Virginia	Starts: June 11, 9:30 a.m. Closes: June 12, 3:00 p.m.	Sophia FWB Church Box 157 Sophia, WV 25921

CURRENTLY...

Pastor **Dave Bates** baptized six converts and received six new members at **Unity FWB Church** in **Middleburg Heights, OH**.

The congregation at **Pleasant Hill FWB Church** in **Delaware, OH**, now conducts two services Sunday mornings as well as a Friday night outreach in the community. Pastor **Lucian Baker** is happy about this turn of events since he recently reported 17 conversions, 12 new members and three baptisms.

Members of **Columbus First FWB Church** in **Columbus, OH**, celebrated their 50th anniversary. Pastor **Edwin Hayes** reports 10 new members.

There are bus kids and then there are older bus kids. Members of **First FWB Church** in **Bakersfield, CA**, met **Carl Crosby** and **Hester Minton** while knocking doors in the community. Both were subsequently converted and have become bus kids. Pastor **Claudie Hames** says the interesting part about this is that Carl is 78 and Hester 86.

A four-year construction project at **Parkway FWB Church** in **Spartanburg, SC**, concluded with the dedication of a \$180,000 facility. Pastor **Jimmy Miller** said the 6,000-square-foot fellowship building is located on five acres along with other church educational facilities. The land and buildings are appraised at \$500,000.

South Carolina FWB churches sent more than \$6,600 to South Florida in order to help victims of Hurricane Andrew. South Carolina churches funnelled monies through the promotional office, according to **Norwood Gibson**. Pastor **Larry Montgomery** in **Hollywood, FL**, served as liaison for the distribution of funds.

Pastor **Randy McCraw** received 45 new members in 18 months at **Lesslie FWB Church** in **Rock Hill, SC**. He recently baptized 15 converts. South Carolina Promotional Director **Norwood Gibson** was on hand to help the church celebrate a note-burning ceremony on their property. The group paid off a \$55,000 construction loan.

Members of **Fairview FWB Church, Spartanburg, SC**, completed a \$76,000 remodeling project, according to Pas-

tor **Tim Hackett**. Among other things, the project included a new church sign, entrance doors and carpet.

Pastor **Don Bailey** baptized 10 people at **Forest Park FWB Church** in **San Angelo, TX**. The church has been averaging 30 in attendance.

First FWB Church in **Henderson, TX**, received 15 new members, according to Pastor **Leroy Blankenship**. More than 100 people visited the church during one month—one family brought 30 visitors one Sunday. During Pastor Appreciation Day activities, members presented Pastor Blankenship \$300 in cash as well as other gifts.

Pastor **Robert Legg** and members of **East Side FWB Church** in **Houston, TX**, have attempted to open the church to the community. Since 90% of the community people do not attend church, East Side makes their building available for such meetings as local crime watch and mother's day out. They may extend the property for use as an adult education center.

Members of **Valley Community FWB Church** in **McAllen, TX**, can now admire their new 4 x 12-foot church sign when they drive into the parking lot. The \$5,200 sign will be visible 24 hours a day while 10,000 cars drive past the church. Pastor **Raymond Getz** reports four baptisms.

Members of **First FWB Church** in **Houston, TX**, gave Pastor **Bobby Ferguson** a \$500 check to show their appreciation.

Artesia FWB Church in **Artesia, NM**, burned the mortgage on their property. **Earl Jenkins** pastors.

Pastor **Jerry Copeland** reports 30 new members at **Way of the Cross FWB Church** in **Sallisaw, OK**. He baptized 11 converts.

Pastor **Wayne Bryant** said members of **New Hope FWB Church** in **Lone Grove, OK**, turned their old fellowship hall into Sunday School rooms. They then built a 1,200-square-foot fellowship hall and refurbished the kitchen.

Members of **First FWB Church** in **Ardmore, OK**, celebrated 40 years of service to the community. The church organized in 1952 with 44 charter mem-

bers. **Jeff Sloan** pastors.

Reverend **Clyde A. Hamer** died at age 86. He was ordained to preach the gospel in 1924. Since that time he pastored seven churches in Oklahoma and founded four Oklahoma Free Will Baptist churches. Funeral services were conducted at **Clinton FWB Church**.

Reverend **Carl G. Pugh**, 77, was a Free Will Baptist preacher in **Oklahoma** for 60 years before his death in 1992. He began preaching at age 17. While hospitalized just prior to his death, he sang *Amazing Grace* in Choctaw to the nurses in the hospital. Rev. Pugh was a Christian, a Free Will Baptist and a Choctaw Indian.

Pastor **Pascal Bevan** said members of **Hilltop FWB Church** in **Wewoka, OK**, conducted dedication services for their new two-story building. Located on 6.1 acres three miles west of Wewoka, the structure includes a 3,000-square-foot sanctuary, four classrooms, nursery, library and fellowship hall.

Pastor **Dale Burden** reports 24 new members at **Gateway FWB Church** in **Virginia Beach, VA**.

Oklahoma's third annual **Teen Leadership Conference** was held on the campus of **Hillsdale FWB College** in **Moore, OK**, last October. Eighteen high school students from 11 Oklahoma churches attended the conference. The theme was "Tough Topics for Tough Teens." Topics included divorce, suicide, substance abuse, entertainment and morality. The conference is sponsored by the Oklahoma C. E. Board. ■



MASTER'S MEN

Sponsor A Day's Ministry

Master's Men Director Jim Vallance and the Master's Men Board invite churches and individuals to sponsor the ministry of the department for an entire day. Budget needs equal the figure of \$403 per day.

According to Director Vallance, "This method of giving breaks down a large budget into amounts people or churches can give. Almost two months of ministry in 1992 was underwritten using this method. Two weeks of ministry was financed by two individuals. I thank God for every gift that enabled the department to function and minister last year.

"People and churches who know the value of this work find this an easy way to help us reach ministry level. About three months of the year still need to be subscribed. Then, sufficient funding will be provided to avoid a deficit year."

The \$403 may be divided into monthly amounts of \$33.59 or given quarterly (\$100.75). Every individual or church participating receives a certificate of appreciation when the gift is completed.

This method is simple. Every church could accept the challenge to give a little and help a lot. No bigger mistake is made than to decide to do nothing because you can only do a little. God's work survives on small gifts, given in love because there's a need.

Laymen and Pastors Take Note!

The 15th annual Master's Men Conference dates are set for April 22-24. Men will gather at Camp Beaverfork in Conway, Arkansas. Pre-registration is \$10 and the additional cost for the camp is \$40, payable at registration.

Who can attend? Every layman and pastor among Free Will Baptists is invited. Those who live in the midwest should realize the conference was moved to help make it more accessible to the region.

"Be thou an example" is the 1993 theme. Excited, dedicated men will share from their hearts . . . testimonies, songs and messages. Thursday evening and Friday evening services are open to the local churches.

In addition to the fellowship, other activities are planned: A golf tournament on Thursday April 22, canoeing or fishing, and on

Friday afternoon: State Sports Competition.

Make your reservations early. Fill up a cabin with men from your church. Only you know what you will miss and lose if you fail to attend this valuable time with the Lord and your Christian brothers.

Send your pre-reservation with \$10 to:

**Master's Men Conference
P. O. Box 5002
Antioch, TN 37011-5002**

Honor a Layman in Your Congregation

Pastors, take time to honor a man from your church. Nomination forms are available for accomplishments in calendar year 1992. If you haven't received your form, call or write today. Deadline for postmarked entries is Monday, May 10, 1993.

Every nominee receives a certificate. The Master's Men Board considers all the nominations, then votes on those who are the outstanding examples of yielded service to the Master. During the National Association the Layman of the Year and Runner-up Layman of the Year are introduced. ■



WOMAN'S AUXILIARY

Woman's Window on the World

By Mary R. Wisehart

From My Window

February, the heart and love month. "I love you with all my heart." Love—these days I almost wish we could coin another word. The word is used so lightly, so meaninglessly. "With all my heart"—what does that mean? Again, it's used so often and so glibly.

We may think of the heart as a symbol for the innermost being, the seat of affections, the core from which life springs. Then to love with all the heart would equal the words in the greatest commandment: Love the Lord God with all the heart, soul, mind and strength.

Who am I told to love with heart, soul, mind and strength? God, only God.

But love doesn't stop there, of course. The second greatest commandment, "Love your neighbor as yourself," follows. Paul wrote in his tender letter to the Philippian church, "I have you in my heart." What a beautiful expression of loving my neighbor as myself. If I hold you in my heart, can I do you harm? No, only wish you good and do you good when I have opportunity.

In a world of anger, hatred, selfishness and violence, do I stand out as different when it comes to the words *love* and *heart*? People may use the words lightly, but they recognize love from the heart, love that does men good and not evil.

Who do I really love with all my heart and as I love myself?

Foreign Student Scholarship on Hold

Pastor Neto of Brazil, selected as the recipient of the WNAC Foreign Student Scholarship in July 1992, has delayed his program of studies for a few months.

The \$1,000 scholarship, however, is ready for him when he returns to school.

In the meantime, February is the month when Auxiliaries make contributions to the fund. Dollars can reach a long way when they contribute to the training of Christian workers around the world.

Send funds marked Foreign Student Scholarship Fund through regular channels to the WNAC office.

New Editor at the Computer

Melissa Riddle, new editor for *Co-Laborer*, moved into the office October 25, 1992.

Melissa says, "I am excited about the ministry God has placed me in here at WNAC. I want to see *Co-Laborer* become a progressive publication with an even stronger missions heartbeat, one that appeals to the entire cross-section of Free Will Baptist women."

A native Tennessean, Melissa graduated from Free Will Baptist Bible College with an English major. At the Bible College she edited the college newspaper and the yearbook.

She did graduate work at Middle Tennessee State University and Southern Illinois University. At SIU she was one of four students chosen for a publishing internship at the university press.

She comes with training and experience in desktop publishing, layout, design and editing.

Check out her style in the March/April issue of *Co-Laborer*.

Study Committee to Report in July

The Study Committee for WNAC plans to give a report at the Convention in Louisville, Kentucky, Tuesday, July 20, 1993.

Each state and each local Auxiliary should send the proper number of delegates to the convention and see that they are informed and ready to vote on the issues presented.

WNAC could have 1,500 delegates voting if all eligible delegates attended the convention. ■



BOARD OF RETIREMENT

Prepare Now for Retirement

By D. Ray Lewis, Business Manager

If we live long enough and the Lord doesn't return, all of us will one day come face to face with retirement. These years can be the most exciting and fulfilling years of our lives. On the other hand, this can be one of the most difficult times in life. It all depends on how well we prepare.

The greatest concern of everyone approaching retirement is finances. Will there be sufficient funds to meet our daily needs? All of us know that Social Security income will not be adequate.

That is why most workers participate in some type of retirement program. Some employers require the worker to personally contribute to the fund, while others provide the total contributions. This establishes a financial base for the worker when he retires.

Since pastors and other full-time church and denominational workers have the same needs, Free Will Baptists established the Board of Retirement over 20 years ago. To date more than 1,100 pastors, missionaries and workers have utilized the program. More and more of our churches and denominational agencies are participating with them.

To enroll in the retirement program, an enrollee agrees to contributions of at least 3% of base salary during the year. The pastor (worker) or the church (employer) can make these deposits. The combined deposits from both can make up this 3%.

To enter the program at the highest level, the employer makes deposits of at least 5% of the participant's yearly base salary. The participant is encouraged to at least match employer contributions.

Tax deferred deposits can be made by those who need the tax advantage. A participant along with his employer can deposit up to 20% of his yearly base salary in tax deferred contributions.

If a participant is ordained, his annuity payment at retirement is treated as housing. Up to 100% can be designated as tax-free housing. This is a unique provision to church pension accounts.

By participating in our retirement plan, members accomplish two goals. They not only invest in their future, they also invest in

the Lord's work. Approximately 60% of retirement funds held are invested in First Mortgage loans to our churches and our denominational organizations.

For more information on how you can get started in preparing for your future, contact our office. ■

In Memory Of . . .

By . . .

Rev. J. C. Herbert Carter

First Brunswick Woman's Auxiliary
Brunswick, GA

In Honor Of . . .

By . . .

Rev. Paul Davis

First Brunswick Woman's Auxiliary
Brunswick, GA

Stan Bunch

Verdella Day Auxiliary
Liberal, MO

FOREIGN MISSIONS



Changed Through the Bible!

By Rocío Suarez

I never once read the Bible, not even one of the Gospels.

I am the oldest of four children. My parents are rather young, and my home has never been a religious environment. My mother and father believed in God, but only in their head, not in their heart. In spite of all this, I went to a private Catholic school where I studied for 12 years.

I Worshiped Mary

During my years in school I lived a type of Christianity completely conditioned by the school I attended. I never once read the Bible, not even one of the Gospels. I worshiped Mary. And when I say worshiped, I mean I searched for refuge in her and attempted to feel as if she were my mother. I was taught to love her. But each time I returned home, all of this would come to a sudden halt.

In the last year of my studies I decided to attend the school as a boarding student instead of as a regular student. By that time I had begun to think for myself, and I had started rejecting most of the things being taught. This was mainly because I saw things I didn't like, such as how selfish we all are, even those in the church.

Finally, I created my own god as I thought he should be. I had never really felt God's presence, so I limited Him to my head. My idea of Christianity was based on some of what Catholic teachers had taught me and on other aspects I invented. To me, God was the father of all men and it didn't matter what I did. I always found a way to justify myself before God.

I Wasn't Really Too Worried

I never threw out the idea that God would punish men, but I never thought it would be for eternity. I didn't understand what part Jesus played in all of this (not once did I figure He had come to save me). But truthfully, during the next three or four years I wasn't really too worried about any of these things.

Then, something strange happened. My boyfriend's sister, Nieves, got involved in a Christian group—and it wasn't Catholic!

When she told me, I warned her to be very careful because "some really strange people, religious groups, cults, and the like are out there."

Nieves told me how the people would gather in their services to read and comment exclusively on the Bible. I played the devil's advocate. I didn't understand how they had arrived at their conclusions, but regardless of how they did, in my opinion, the outcome was weak because everything was based on one book. Nonetheless, I kept asking questions and Nieves always answered by saying, "Read the Bible!" She had an evident peace, tranquility, and happiness. Javier, my boyfriend, noticed it even more than I because I was still confused by all of my own thoughts about God.

He Opened the Bible

One day Javier came to me and said, "I'm going to talk to the pastor. Do you want to come along?" At that moment I said no, but later I thought to myself, "Oh well, let's see what he has to say." So, Javier and I talked with missionary Jeff Turnbough (the pastor). He opened the Bible and started to explain it very simply. I began to understand that Christ came to provide salvation to the lost. He came to give us the opportunity "to become the sons of God" (John 1:12, 13), but I still didn't comprehend the significance of those words.

Jeff gave us the opportunity to continue studying the Scriptures on a weekly basis. I said, "Sure, why not? I'm not going to deny another way of getting to know God."

Hallelujah! As a result, I accepted the Lord on December 1, 1991! He still has a lot to do in me, but He's already changed me! I'm happy, I have peace, I sense His presence, and I love to talk about Him. In Christ I have found the answers to many questions and have discovered a new family. I'm already almost closer to them than I am to my own family. ■

Rocío Suarez is the equivalent of a Certified Public Accountant in Villalba, Spain. She is one of the first converts to be truly native to Villalba.



Robert E. Picirilli

Sodom Revisited: Homosexuality and the Mosaic Law

The Mosaic Law was God's Law for Old Testament Israel. True, it provided many things temporary and typical, like animal sacrifices and an earthly priesthood. But whenever God reveals Himself in a form of law for a particular time, He also reveals there the unchanging moral principles that are part of His permanent, universal Law. Given the rest of the Bible, one has no doubt that this was the case with the prohibition of homosexuality.

The previous article focused on the first reference to homosexuality in the Bible. The Mosaic Law confirms God's attitude in that account:

Thou shalt not lie with mankind, as with womankind: it is abomination (Lev. 18:22).

If a man also lie with mankind, as he lieth with a woman, both of them have committed an abomination: they shall surely be put to death; their blood shall be upon them (Lev. 20:13).

There shall be no whore of the daughters of Israel, nor a sodomite of the sons of Israel (Deut. 23:17).

From these commandments we learn three things:

(1) Homosexuality was condemned as *abomination*. The Hebrew word translated this way means that which is abhorred as repugnant to morality and decency. It appears often in the Old Testament and for many sins—idolatry (Deut. 7:25), sacrificing a blemished animal (Deut. 17:1), witchcraft (Deut. 18:9-12), wearing the garments of someone of the other sex (perhaps related to homosexuality; Deut. 22:5), dishonest weights (Deut. 25:13-16), and the seven things listed

in Proverbs 6:16-19—including sowing discord among brethren (plus many more).

(2) In Israel, this sin was one of several that required the death penalty: murder, kidnapping, cursing, father or mother (21:12-17); witchcraft, sexual intercourse with an animal, idolatry (22:18-21); adultery (Lev. 20:10); and others.

(3) Homosexuality for a man was as immoral and rejected as harlotry for a woman. Neither practice was to be tolerated in Israel.

What this tells us is, God has created no special category for homosexuality. We don't have to feel more disgusted about it than other sins. Still, He has put it in the category of serious wickedness, one that called for execution in Moses' day. We cannot look lightly on this sin. The judgment of Sodom confirms this seriousness.

Why then did the sin flourish again? As incredible as it seems, the Israelite town of Gibeah in the territory of Benjamin became like Sodom during the days of the "judges." The sorry story is found in Judges 19-21. A certain Levite, having retrieved his concubine from Bethlehem, stopped in Gibeah for the night and lodged with an unnamed old man. Were others not hospitable (19:15) because they anticipated what might happen? Perhaps so.

At any rate certain "sons of Belial" ("worthless ones") in the city replayed the earlier Sodomite role and demanded that the Levite be given to them to "know" him sexually. Like Lot, the old man refused to let his guest be thus abused and offered his maiden daughter and the Levite's concubine. The wicked Gibeahites finally settled for gang raping the

Levite's concubine all night, her death the tragic result (19:22-28).

In consequence, the Levite aroused the rest of Israel to arms by means of an especially grisly message. Both Gibeah and nearly the entire tribe of Benjamin, as accessory to the crime, were destroyed. A millennium later, Hosea the prophet remembered this when he spoke of wickedness in the Israel of his day and of God's impending judgment: "They have deeply corrupted themselves, as in the days of Gibeah: therefore he will remember their iniquity, he will visit their sins" (9:9).

The Old Testament, at least, apparently knows nothing of the idea that homosexuality is an acceptable "alternative lifestyle," much less that this practice, unlike other moral wickedness, is in some way "inherited" genetically. It is no worse, but it is no more excusable, than any other kind of immorality.

The fact is that all of us are born wicked, we have all inherited a sinful, depraved nature. But to the homosexual as to the heterosexual adulterer God offers love, atonement, forgiveness and deliverance. But for the grace of God we all were still helpless victims of our own sinful rebellion.

The key to understanding what happened at Gibeah is found in one of the repeated themes of Judges: everyone did that which was right in his own eyes. So it always is when people ignore the law of God. ■



Thomas Marberry

Acts (The New American Commentary, Vol. 26)

By John B. Polhill

Edited by David S. Dockery. Nashville: Broadman Press, 1992, 576 pp., hardback, \$24.95.

This is the first volume to be released in a new 40-volume set of commentaries being published by Broadman Press. According to the editors, this set “focuses on communicating the theological structure and content of each biblical book.” The various authors “seek to illuminate both the historical meaning and the contemporary significance” of each book of the Bible.

The commentators include scholars, teachers and administrators from almost 20 different colleges and seminaries, as well as pastors, missionaries and a layperson. Each writer has a commitment to the inspiration and inerrancy of scripture.

John Polhill has taught courses in the book of Acts in seminary classrooms and in local churches for more than 20 years. The extensive footnotes bear eloquent testimony to the breadth and depth of his scholarship.

In this volume he demonstrates

an awareness of the relevant literature in English, French and German. He also demonstrates his understanding of the original Greek text of Acts.

Outstanding commentaries are those which help the reader understand difficult passages in a biblical book. It is here that Polhill is at his best.

For example, his analysis of the events surrounding the Day of Pentecost is quite insightful. He interprets the “tongues” of Acts 2:4 to refer to the different languages spoken by the Diaspora Jews who were present in Jerusalem at that time.

One of the strong points of this commentary is its analysis of various speeches and sermons delivered by Peter, Stephen, Paul and others. Its exegesis of Stephen’s speech before the Sanhedrin is the best I have read. The author outlines in considerable detail the major themes presented in this speech in light of the Old Testament and the

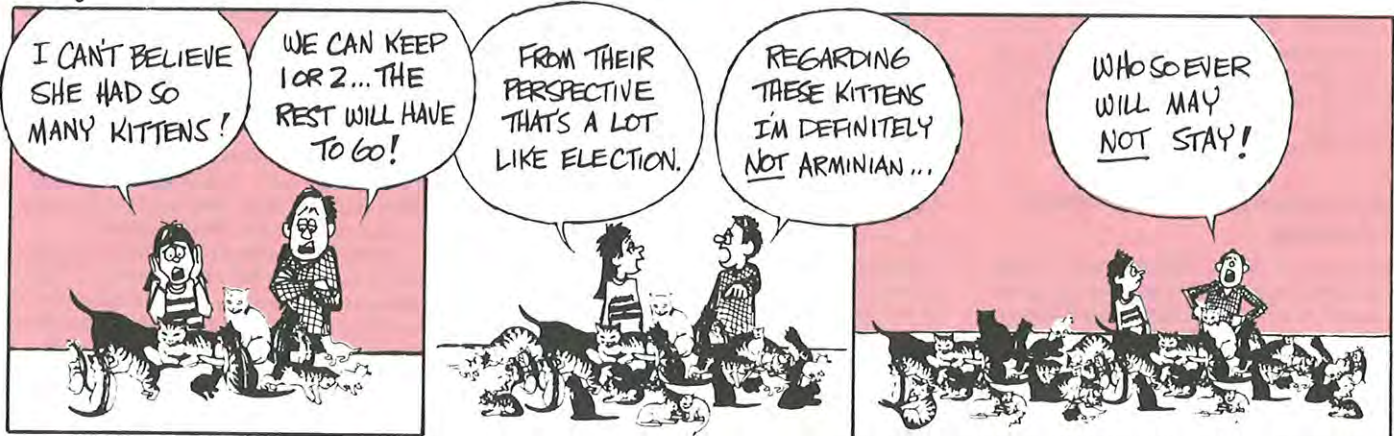
overall theme of Acts.

This volume presents a most valuable treatment of Paul’s travels. The author’s extensive knowledge of geography and archaeology helps the reader understand and appreciate Luke’s eye for detail. His understanding of Roman social, political and legal practices adds much to the narrative.

It is a pleasure to see a commentary published which presents a comprehensive picture of current research being done on the book of Acts. It is an even greater pleasure to see one which does this without becoming so technical that most pastors and laymen find it difficult to use.

This is a volume which will be used for years to come. There is, however, one thing which would have made it much better. The addition of an annotated bibliography would have made it a much more useful tool for college and seminary students. ■

Beyond Belief



RELIGIOUS COMMUNITY NEWS

Russian Ministry of Education invites Christianity

ANAHEIM, CA (EP)—Russian officials from the Ministry of Education extended a formal invitation to Western organizations to come to the Commonwealth of Independent States to equip the public school teachers and administrators in the former Soviet Union to teach courses on Judeo-Christian principles to students in some 120,000 public schools.

Said Evgenly Kurkin, a deputy minister of education of the Republic of Russia, "Seventy years ago we closed God out of our country and it has caused so many problems in our society we cannot count them. We must put God back into our country and we must begin with our children."

In response to the invitation, 60 Christian ministries and education groups joined to form The CoMission, with the goal of helping to teach, train and equip CIS teachers, administrators, students and individuals who are interested in learning more about the principles of Christianity.

The invitation from the Russian officials took place at the Association for Christian School International (ACSI) Convention.

Identity Cards Opens Discrimination Door Against Christians

ISLAMABAD, Pakistan (EP)—The government of Pakistan instituted a new law requiring inclusion of religion on every citizen's national identity card, laying the groundwork for a system of religious apartheid, according to News Network International.

The government has been under pressure from fundamentalist Muslim religious parties to pass the law. The Federal Minister for Religious Affairs, Maulana Mohammad Abdus Sattar Khan Niaza, stated that the Constitution of Pakistan was very clear about the supremacy of Islam, and he saw "no harm" in mentioning religion on the identity cards. All previous cards, which citizens are required to carry with them at all times, are to be replaced with new computerized identity cards.

It is speculated that Pakistan's three million Christians, as well as other religious groups including Hindus, Parsees, Sikhs and Buddhists, will be subject to more open discrimination on a daily basis as a result of the law.

Mission Anniversary Says Christians Still Suffering

MINNEAPOLIS, MN (EP)—Richard Wurmbrand, the Lutheran minister imprisoned and tortured for 14 years in Communist Romania for proclaiming his faith, is celebrating the 25th year of ministry for the mission he founded.

Formerly called Christian Mission to the

Communist World, Wurmbrand's Voice of the Martyrs is now located in 40 countries. With literature printing and distribution, the mission provides Christian information around the globe. In addition, support is given to those being persecuted for their faith and their families.

Wurmbrand speaks of tortures modern-day Christians are facing. In Sudan, he says, 40,000 Christians have been deported from their homes in the capital city and are now living in the desert. They are given no water, food or shelter. Because they have nothing to keep them warm during the cold nights, mothers bury their children in the sand, except for their noses and mouths, to keep them from freezing to death.

He tells of torture in Vietnam, where not only are Christians sentenced to death for their beliefs, but then the family is billed for the execution bullet, coffin and burial. Other Christian prisoners have been stripped naked and made to lie in the snow to freeze to death. In China, Christians are arrested for meeting, and they are tortured during imprisonment.

Wurmbrand has been tortured over and over for remaining faithful to Christ. His body bears the scars of countless beatings. But even in prison, he recalls having much to rejoice about. The prisoners sang hymns and songs together. "We sang accompanied by musical instruments," he said. "Not a mandolin or instruments, they would be too expensive. Rather the guards put chains on our hands and on our feet." He sings out a tune of the chains: clink, clink, cling clong, cling clong.

When Wurmbrand first arrived in the United States 25 years ago, he was seen by a physician. When asked about treatment, the physician responded, ". . . ask the one who kept you alive. By our records, you should be dead." Wurmbrand knows the power of God and eagerly shares it with others.

Wurmbrand has come to understand Western culture but maintains a simple approach to living. Wurmbrand and his wife Sabina have found little use for many of the conveniences that many Americans enjoy. They live without a car, and do not display fancy clothing. He said the cost of a can of Coke could feed a child in a Third World country. It is this kind of thinking that Wurmbrand tries to teach Christians.

Bible Portions in 18 African Languages Not Enough

ATLANTA, GA (EP)—As a Ugandan, Kirabo Lukwago understands the need for contemporary Bible texts in Africa. Until the release of the Luganda Living New Testament, the most widely-used African Bible text was over 100 years old and very difficult to understand. Lukwago says he has seen the Bible become an "old people's book."

With the ultimate goal of seeing people's lives changed, Lukwago works with International Bible Society's Africa office in Kenya to get Scripture into the hands of people, and he shares his vision with others so they can participate in it.

"Our main work is Bible translation. We've got 30 translation projects going on in Africa right now," Lukwago said. He is quick to add that translation is only part of the project. It is his responsibility, as Director of Publishing at IBS-Africa, to "package" the product. "My background is in communication design. I am more involved in how things are presented."

"We have two complete Bibles, and eight New Testaments (in Africa)," he stated. The two complete Bibles are in Egbo, a language spoken in Nigeria, and Afrikaans, the tongue spoken by many South Africans. . . .

"We basically translate meaning for meaning, that is our translation policy," explained Lukwago. "The truths don't change...the words change, but the truths remain the same."

Lukwago addressed the needs of Africans in many turbulent countries. In Kenya, a country that is 80 percent Christian (according to Lukwago). "The government is receptive to Christian things, although there is a certain amount of resistance on the coastal region of Kenya," he said, where there is a high Arabic influence. The people are experiencing transition and dealing with a lot of political anxiety. Because they do not know what their future holds, people are searching for answers.

In Africa, in general, he said, "People are disillusioned." He said that their purpose was "to help people see that the answer comes from a transformed inner person, from a relationship with Jesus Christ."

There are a number of Bible translating organizations working in Africa. "We try to work together all the time," said Lukwago. There is a new thrust among Bible translation organizations, he said, where 17 different agencies are working together to identify some of the languages that still have needs in Bible translations and delegating these tasks among the agencies. "I think there is a new spirit of working together," said Lukwago.

"We get overwhelmed by the needs. Almost every day we get letters from people asking for literature." A university recently requested 10,000 Bibles to give to students. "We can't cope with them [the requests]. That's a big challenge. We can't really cope with the needs for the Word of God."

Lukwago requested prayer for the people of Africa and the work of IBS there. "That's very powerful; it's more powerful than what we realize. Sometimes we don't see results immediately, but it's a very important factor." ■



Jack Williams

The Barnabas People

When the books close on my life, I'd like for the record to show that I was one of the Barnabas people. Here's why. Every time Barnabas appears in the New Testament, he's encouraging somebody. In Acts 9:27 he befriends a new convert with the reputation of John Dillinger. Saul of Tarsus scared everybody except Barnabas who saw unlimited potential in the brash convert.

Two chapters later when church leaders deputized Barnabas to check out the revival at Antioch, he again extended a hand to Saul. By Acts 12 Barnabas had picked up another rookie to encourage—a young man named John Mark.

When the Holy Spirit sent out the first New Testament missionaries, He called Barnabas by name (Acts 13:2). There was steel in his fiber—enough steel to oppose Saul (now known as the Apostle Paul) in order to salvage John Mark. Events proved Barnabas right—John Mark was worth the effort. Barnabas put his life on the line for others. He never lost faith in his fellow man.

There's no shortage of people willing to criticize others, blame somebody else, complain about the economy, wag their fingers at teenagers and give anybody who'll listen a piece of their mind. Critics live frustrated lives, while the Barnabas people walk across the pages of history turning on lights. Wherever they go, they make things better.

When some people look at a fallen brother or sister, all they see are failure and sin. The Barnabas people see beyond the sin to a man who needs a second chance, a woman who hurts and needs a listening ear.

Barnabas people take chances on others. They believe that something worthwhile and noble can rise

from the rubble of a shattered life. You may not be a Barnabas, but when your world crumbles, you'll want one to take a chance on you.

Barnabas people encourage others in practical ways. Here are four of the best.

They say something. "A word fitly spoken is like apples of gold in pictures of silver" (Proverbs 25:11). The Barnabas people know that sometimes all it takes to lift a person's spirit is a quiet word.

Small words can do big things. Words like: "I love you. I believe in you. You can do it. Keep trying, it will be worth it." You can track Barnabas people through a community by following the trail of encouraging words they leave at the grocery checkout, the service station, a neighbor's home, in a colleague's office.

They write something. The disadvantage of phone calls or brief conversations is that once they're said, they're gone. But a letter or note can be pulled from the file again and again. Barnabas people put it in writing.

There's something permanent and alive about a letter. It calls you by name, describes a specific incident and brings a warm glow every time it's read. A good letter is like an old friend. It never changes.

Not every note or letter is a keeper. I've gotten a few over the years that I treasure. "Keeper" letters allow us to feel the fire when the flame is gone, to sense the touch, taste the emotion . . . again.

A French proverb counsels: "Write injuries in sand, kindnesses in marble."

They give something. There's more to Barnabas people than talking and writing. They also give. They give themselves to others. They give

their time. They give a smile, a kind word. They give the benefit of the doubt to others. They give trust in a world of cynics.

If asked, they give advice or counsel. When they have it and when it's appropriate, they occasionally give money—usually not much. But at the right time, a quarter for a phone call goes a long way, or \$5 slipped into a trembling hand.

The most important gift the Barnabas people give is hope. They give the discouraged hope to try again, the despondent hope to live again, the disillusioned hope to believe again, the bitter hope to love again.

They do something. The Barnabas people do random acts of kindness wherever they go. They show up when a family gets ready to move and tote boxes. They loan a mower or trim a neighbor's yard for no reason.

They stop to help the elderly change a flat tire. They drive to a service station for gas when your tank is empty. It's always the Barnabas people who carry jumper cables in their cars.

Herbert V. Prochnow's *A Treasure Chest of Quotations for All Occasions* includes this dandy commentary: "You may be sorry that you spoke, sorry you stayed or went, sorry you won or lost, sorry so much was spent. But as you go through life, you'll find—you're never sorry you were kind."

There's one final trait about Barnabas that I admire. Thirty years later in a Roman prison when Paul admitted that "John Mark . . . is profitable to me . . .," Barnabas did not shout through the jailhouse window, "I told you so." ■

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