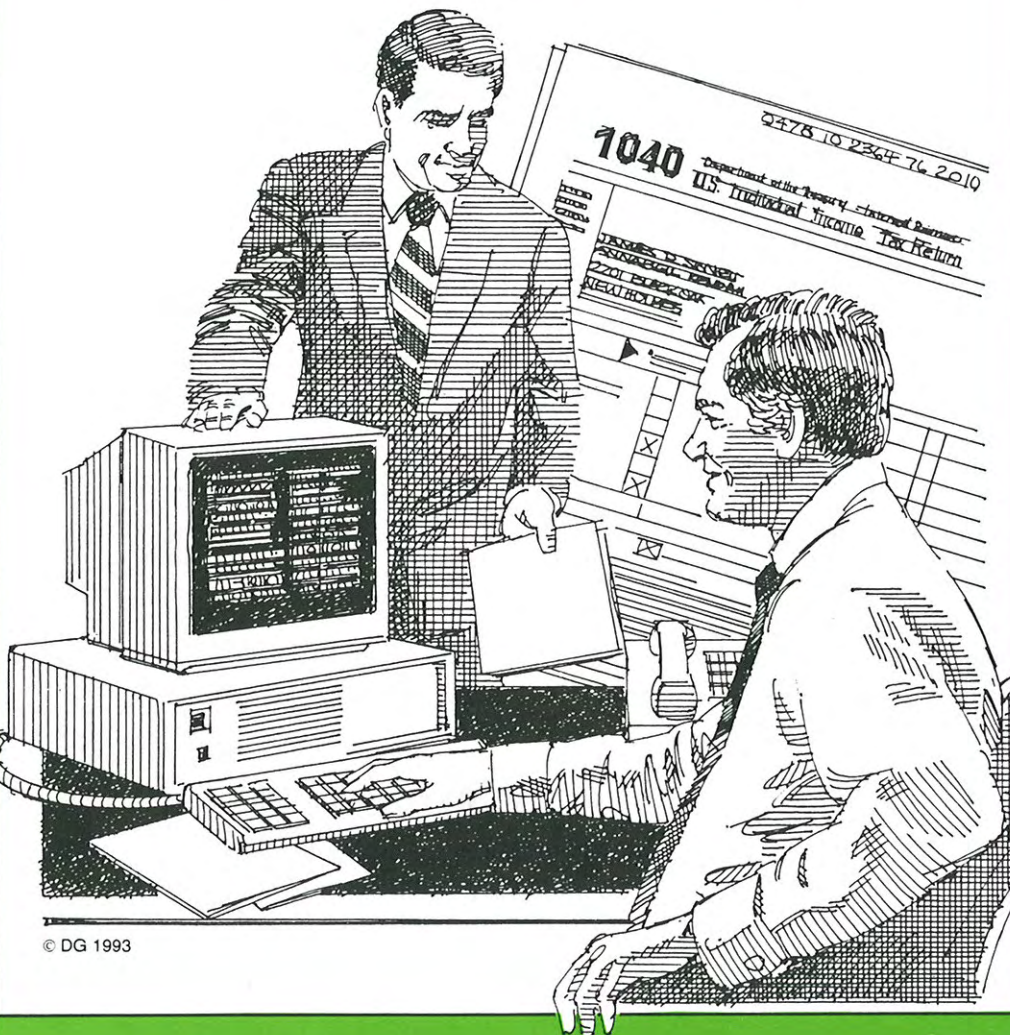


MARCH 1993

CONTACT

OFFICIAL PUBLICATION OF
THE NATIONAL ASSOCIATION
OF FREE WILL BAPTISTS

Ministers and Their Taxes



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Pastor's 1040

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I Don't Regret a Mile

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Melvin Worthington

Gift Goals

The Bible gives a prominent place to stewardship. Still, many pastors and educators seem reluctant to address the decline in giving. Some churches and organizations have had to make painful cuts in ministries at home and abroad as a direct result of the giving decline. Every decision we make about spending money is deeply spiritual—whether the decision concerns buying groceries or giving to denominational ministries.

Dirk Vander Steen concludes, "One's use of money indicates spiritual commitment and growth at least as much as church attendance, prayer and Bible reading. Thus the worst damage of reduced giving may not be to the agencies that have cut back. It may be to the givers themselves."

The material affluence of the American Christian poses a problem. The Bible warns us that prosperity often leads individuals to disregard, disobey and depart from God. Just as Christ addressed the issue of money, so pastors should challenge Christians to properly use the resources God has entrusted to them.

Giving is an act of worship and confirms one's attitude toward the Giver of all blessings. Regardless of circumstances our first-fruits, not our left-overs, belong to the Lord. Free Will Baptists have the financial resources to adequately fund local church, district, state and national ministries.

Let's preach and teach what Free Will Baptists believe—tithes and offerings as the means for supporting God's work. Let's believe and practice the words of Malachi to "Bring ye all the tithes into the storehouse"

The Goal Denoted

Every Free Will Baptist needs to give \$42.85 in 1993 to underwrite national ministries. This is less than one dollar a week. The gift should be *above* what we presently give. This should be a sacrificial offering to the Lord's work.

This is an attainable goal for children and adults. Parents can provide it for their children. Adults can forego some non-essentials to reach this goal. What can I do to support national ministries? Give at least \$42.85 during 1993. That is your proportionate share.

The Gift Distributed

When you give an undesignated gift of \$42.85 for national ministries in 1993, it will be distributed in the following manner:

Executive Office	\$ 1.45
Foreign Missions	20.93
Free Will Baptist Bible College	4.90
Home Missions	11.95
Retirement and Insurance	1.78
Master's Men	.70
Free Will Baptist Foundation	.18
Commission for Theological Integrity	.01
Historical Commission	.01
Music Commission	.01
Radio and Television Commission	.05
Woman's National Auxiliary Convention	.88

This distribution is determined by the budgets presented by each agency and adopted by the National Association. Your undesignated gift of \$42.85 can equitably support all national agencies. The distribution formula takes into account that some

agencies have greater financial needs than others.

Free Will Baptists need to contribute to every national agency, not just Foreign Missions, Home Missions and Free Will Baptist Bible College. Please continue to support these larger agencies, but do not neglect the others. When we neglect funding all denominational enterprises, we become unfaithful to our covenant promise and endanger the very movement we call the National Association of Free Will Baptists.

The Grand Design

The new denominational stewardship plan, The Together Way, recognizes the value of local church, district, state and national ministries. Working together, the denomination can have an effective world outreach. After all, this is why we exist as a national association. Equitable support of all denominational ministries is embedded in The Together Way plan.

Some ministries are more attractive than others, and, yet, all have a significant place. Some ministries are more prominent than others but no more important. Local churches would soon go out of existence if the congregation did not support the total program. That's also true of the broader denominational work.

The Together Way plan takes into account the dollar, distribution, design and duty of every member of the National Association of Free Will Baptists. Covenant with me to give a special undesignated \$42.85 gift to national ministries in 1993. ■

The Secretary's Schedule

- March 1-5 Cuban National Assoc.
- March 14 Horton Heights FWB Ch.
Nashville, TN
- March 19-20 Illinois State Association



The Pastor's 1040

By Rick Jagers

An important place for the pastor to help himself on his 1040 is his attitude toward it. If we believe that the tax collector is right in what he asks of us, we will approach April 15 in a spirit of ministry. New Testament references to tax collectors do not suggest that the occupation was evil, although it did lend itself to abuse.

Those who came to John to be baptized in Luke 3 were not told to cease their work as tax collectors but to "collect no more than what is appointed for you." The pastor should follow that instruction as he fills out his 1040. He should pay what is due and no more.

Know the Law

In order for the pastor to pay the proper taxes, he must know those deductions to which he is entitled. The Internal Revenue Code may be changed by Congress several times

a year. The pastor should at least review annually the tax changes that have been made to see how they may affect his return.

The IRS makes several publications available which outline the Code. There are also private publications available for purchase. It is important that these publications be the most up-to-date available.

One which is revised annually and is quite easy to use is *Income Tax Guide for Ministers and Religious Workers* by B. J. Worth. Even the use of Mr. Worth's guide for this article, however, does not replace the final authority of those changes in the Code which may be made by Congress or the IRS.

For this reason, there are three basic rules to record keeping. The pastor must know what the tax code allows, he must keep adequate written records of deductible expenses, and he must keep supporting evidence (such as receipts) of his expenses (Wade, 1986).

The Housing Allowance

One of the largest benefits to the pastor is the housing allowance exclusion. While the pastor does have to pay FICA on his housing allowance, he does not have to pay income tax. There is even a *double deduction* for those pastors who are buying their homes.

They may report real estate taxes and mortgage interest for their home on schedule A and deduct that amount again as an itemized deduction (Worth, 1991). In addition to the house itself, the pastor may also include the following in his housing allowance:

1. Insurance on the structure and/or contents.
2. Improvements, repairs and upkeep of the contents and/or structure.
3. Appliances and furnishings.
4. Items for decorating.
5. Utilities (including cable TV and garbage removal).
6. And anything else for the home or contents

including cleaning supplies, gas for the lawn mower, light bulbs, watering hose, etc. (Worth, 1991).

In order to realize these deductions, adequate record keeping is a must. For example, grocery store register receipts should be retained to document the amount spent on such items as cleaning supplies. In fact, even when paying by check, a receipt should be obtained and filed for documentation of expenses (Wade, 1986).

IRS rules designate how much the parsonage allowance can be. It also requires that amount to be *designated in advance* by the board or the congregation of the church and recorded in the minutes. It is best to overstate the housing designation. Any excess at the end of the year is to be declared on Form 1040 as "Other income" (1991 form 1040, line 22).

Professional Expenses

Another area of deductions for the pastor is professional expenses. One of the largest professional expenses the pastor has is the automobile. There are two methods of deducting automobile expenses. They are the mileage allowance method (\$.275 per 1991 business mile) and the actual expense method (Worth, 1991). Once again, good record keeping is a must.

The pastor must log the date, odometer reading at start and end of trip, number of business miles driven, and place and purpose for

the trip. Since the pastor may make several business trips in one day, this information adequately recorded will allow him a sizeable professional expense deduction over the course of a year.

Other deductible professional expenses include travel, entertainment, education, depreciation of library and equipment, office supplies, postage, religious materials, seminars, dues, subscriptions, paperbacks, tapes and long distance business calls from home. The IRS Code has guidelines for the deductibility of these expenses.

In order for the pastor to realize the deduction for professional expenses to which he is entitled, the church must have a written accountable reimbursement policy. Worth (1991) notes the following:

To be an accountable reimbursement plan, as defined in the new permanent regulation ... the plan must meet the requirements in *three* basic areas: (1) business connection [sic] (2) adequate accounting, and (3) return of any excess reimbursement.

Ideally, the church would have a policy of salary plus unlimited reimbursement. At least, the church would need a policy of salary plus fixed-limit reimbursement. Either of these policies of accountable reimbursement would satisfy the IRS regulations and the Word of God.

In I Corinthians 9:7a, Paul makes the point that the expenses incurred in the ministry are not the financial responsibility of the minister but of the church. And yet, some churches pay their pastor a salary from which

they also expect him to pay all of his professional expenses.

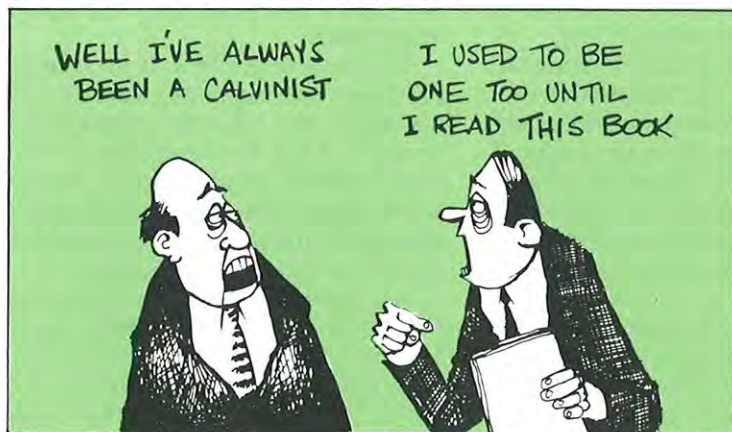
While a pastor may lovingly and joyfully carry this financial responsibility, the Lord does not command him to, but the Lord does command the employing body, the church, to carry it (I Corinthians 9:1-18). In addition, under the permanent regulation, the pastor will limit his professional deductions and may exclude them altogether if the church does not have a written accountable reimbursement policy.

Hopefully, the pastor has in hand legitimate new ideas for paying no more taxes than the law requires. It cannot be stressed enough that it is the pastor's responsibility to abide by the IRS Code and to provide adequate documentation for his deductions. Nothing can guarantee that the pastor will not be audited, so he must file as though he will be audited. ■



ABOUT THE WRITER: Reverend Rick Jagers pastors First Free Will Baptist Church in North Charleston, South Carolina.

BEYOND BELIEF



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The Subject No One Talks About

Apostasy

By Daryl Ellis

When was the last time you heard a sermon, a lesson or a reference to the possibility of losing salvation? One of the distinctive doctrines of Free Will Baptists is the possibility that one could lose his salvation. If we believe it, why do we not hear more about it? If it could happen, why aren't we told?

Apostasy is a biblical teaching, not just a denominational preference. We believe it because it is taught in the Bible. Free Will Baptists just believe what the Bible teaches!

What do we believe?

Discussion of the loss of salvation must begin with the gain of salvation. If there is uncertainty concerning how salvation is attained, there will be uncertainty over whether it can be maintained. A person is saved when he exercises faith in what Jesus Christ did on the cross—paid for our sins.

Salvation is a process whereby the Spirit of God convicts and convinces a person of his sinfulness and draws him to the Savior. The individual then chooses, by his own free will, to trust Christ for the sin problem.

Knowing the nature of salvation forces a person to decide how he feels about sin and the Savior. Some who claim Jesus as their Savior made "decisions" having not understood the nature of salvation. Understandably, problems usually follow.

The condition of salvation is faith. Faith is the door through which one walks to secure salvation. Stopping sins or starting good works does not merit eternal life. However, an attitude change toward sin and the fruit of good works is a guaranteed result of being regenerated by the Spirit of God.

The New Testament positions warnings for those who have followed Jesus Christ in faith. Hebrews 2:1, 3:12, I Timothy 1:18-20, II Peter 2:20-22 and Hebrews 6:4-6 wave the

red flag. Colossians 1:21-23 describes the Christian life as continuing in faith. Additional faith is not the issue. Works, added to faith, do not secure eternal life. Salvation is by faith and faith alone—a faith that continues throughout the experience.

Why would we be warned if there were no danger? Hebrews 6:4-6 and II Peter 2:20-22 provide a strong basis for our belief. In both passages, the discussion focuses on people who have had a genuine salvation experience.

Hebrews describes three stages: (1) tasted the heavenly gift; (2) fallen away; and (3) impossible to be brought back to repentance. The same triplet appears in II Peter: knowing our Lord and Savior; again entangled and overcome; and worse off at the end than they were.

Apostasy is a departure from the faith. The departure is a deliberate, free will choice of going out the door through which one came to get saved, the door of faith. Neither weak faith nor an accidental step on a

slippery slope constitutes this departure. What Jesus Christ did on the cross is rejected. It is a choice which holds no remedy.

How could the falling away happen? Leroy Forlines suggests three roads to apostasy: (1) false doctrine; (2) rejection of orthodoxy; and (3) tampering with sin which could lead to a rejection of the saving work of Christ (*Systematics*, pp. 218-219).

Yes, the Bible teaches the possibility of one losing salvation but, as our *Treatise* states, "There are strong grounds to hope that the truly regenerate will persevere unto the end, and be saved through the power of the divine grace which is pledged for their support" (Chapter XIII, p. 31). We are kept by the power of God. Are we guilty of avoiding verses that sound like eternal security?

Why don't we teach it?

We may suffer from intimidation.

The intimidation surfaces because we are a minority in the scholarly world. The most visible and well-read authors advocate eternal security—the impossibility of a truly regenerate person losing salvation. Many of these writers are not aware of the Free Will Baptist view. They react to other Arminian views or questionable illustrations of apostasy from those who have a weak view of assurance.

Some may feel awkward because we are characterized as theologically unsophisticated. That tension freezes our conviction. We are afraid to be identified with a minority, an unpopular belief. How some came to their view is revealing.

For instance, Charles Stanley, in his book *Eternal Security*, showcases his religious background: "I was continually confessing my sins, begging for forgiveness and hoping I wouldn't die before I had time to repent" (p. 2).

His Pentecostal Holiness background prepared him to grasp at a strong view of assurance dangled by eternal security. A confident Christianity found fertile ground in his mind which was victimized by insecure, works-oriented religion. Similar experiences make one more vulnerable, believing the only alter-

native to roller-coaster religion is eternal security.

Insecurity muzzles us.

Are we confident teaching Hebrews 6 and II Peter 2? People raise the criticism that some do not know how to explain apostasy, they just believe it! Uncertainty drains our resolve. If we are confident of our interpretive skills and are willing to be misunderstood by others, we can proceed to explain our views.

Confidence increases with knowledge. Take advantage of Leroy Forlines' book *Systematics* and Dr. Robert Picirilli's video series on Free Will Baptist doctrine. They are excellent resources to bolster our confidence in teaching these matters.

What should we do?

Avoid reckless comments.

As a rule, eternal securitists are godly people with a high view of holiness. Let's not paint them as people who promote loose living. Also, in our vigilance for high morals, avoid scaring people into right living. Solid biblical teaching coupled with the work of the Holy Spirit will transform people for God's glory.

Interpret with integrity.

First, preach the great texts of assurance like Romans 8:31-39, John 1:27-29, Philippians 1:6 and II Timothy 2:11-13. Christians need these encouraging truths of God's involvement in their lives. Ignoring these starves our people from hearty spiritual meals.

Second, learn from the criticism that some who reject eternal security do teach salvation by works. Some do promote a fear of losing salvation. Allow the criticism to save us from careless teaching.

Third, don't find apostasy behind every verse. Some verses may sound supportive of our view, but they are not. In the parable of the soils, although the third person sounds like an apostate, only the fourth person was saved. (See Matthew 13; Luke 8.) In our zeal for holiness, we scare people into thinking a particular sin will rob them of eternal life. Commit-

ting a sin is not the culprit in this particular issue.

Promote scholarship.

Why doesn't the evangelical world know about the Free Will Baptist view of security? Scholarship is not held in high regard in our circles. We have not encouraged it, perhaps even discouraged it. Some label scholars less spiritual than soul winners.

We do not read, even our own publications. Some of our young men need to pay the price to stretch their minds to a cutting edge of theological expression. We must encourage and honor them. Our denomination will profit from their discipline.

Resist relatively unimportant battles.

Is our view of apostasy important? Of course it is. However, it cannot blind us to the more critical issue of reaching the lost and teaching the saved. Our mission field is not eternal securitists, the unsaved are. Calvinists and others who teach eternal security are not the enemy. They differ on a matter beyond the fundamentals and we all belong to the family of God.

Make relevant application.

Who should have the most effective discipleship following decisions for Christ? The people who believe the possibility of apostasy! Peter reminds us (I Peter 1:10) that spiritual growth keeps one from falling. Pastors must realize discipleship involves more than preaching sermons. Spiritual growth demands relationships and accountability on a more intimate level. We must provide outlets.

The infiltration of New Age thought is phenomenal. This wrong view of God leads to an inadequate view of Christ. Our people must be warned and instructed so they will not fall prey to this spiritual spider web.

Shepherding of the saints needs to make a comeback. We live in a morally bankrupt cesspool. Tender, yet firm, pastoral care may head off a moral slide which could eventually lead to a rejection of Christ.



Temper our confidence with humility.

We are a small group with a big message. Riding in the back seat is not our role. The truth is a precious possession so we must preach it without apology. Arrogance, however, is a perversion of confidence, so speak the truth in love. Our denominational distinctive must not become a source of pride.

The Word of God teaches a strong view of God's power in the life of a Christian. Yet, we know a possibility exists that we could reject the work of Christ in our lives. Apostasy is a subject we must talk about. It's a matter of life and death! ■



ABOUT THE WRITER: Reverend Daryl Ellis pastors Butterfield Free Will Baptist Church in Aurora, Illinois. He also serves on the Commission for Theological Integrity.

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I Don't Regret a Mile

By Ralph Staten

My earliest recollection of Free Will Baptists goes back to my boyhood days in Arkansas when my parents, Isom and Nona Staten, took me to the Fender Hall Free Will Baptist Church. Once a month, Brother W. T. Shoffitt would come to the church and conduct services in

the one-room public school at Fender Hall. (Later this church became the New Covenant Free Will Baptist Church).

When I was eight years old my mother became ill and was hospitalized for the next 13 years. At that time, we moved to the Sharum Community near Pocahontas, Arkansas,

and began to attend the Liberty Free Will Baptist Church (now known as Alice Brooks Free Will Baptist Church). During an arbor meeting conducted by three ministers—E. W. Tucker, R. S. Shelton and W. T. Shoffitt—I accepted the Lord as my Savior and became actively involved in my church and denominational work. At age 21, I was licensed to preach and ordained one year later.

In 1934, Brother Brown, editor of the *Free Will Baptist Gem* in Purdy, Missouri, announced that a delegate had dropped out from going to Jakin, Georgia, where a meeting was to be held to discuss the merging of the Eastern and Western Conferences of Free Will Baptist churches. Because of my desire to help my denomination grow and expand, I volunteered to go.

Brothers Winford Davis, Cecil Campbell, Noel Turner and I agreed to meet in Hoxie, Arkansas, and travel to Jakin to hear the discussion regarding plans for merging. We were four, young, single preachers setting out to conquer new realms. I can still recall the excitement of this trip and the expectations we as a group coveted for our denomination.

It was at this meeting that plans were made to meet in Nashville, Tennessee, in November 1935 to discuss organizing the National Association of Free Will Baptists. The Lord gave this servant a chance to serve. I was appointed to serve on the *Treatise* Committee as the representative from Arkansas.

Although my own home state of Arkansas did not join the National Association in 1935, I stayed abreast with the people who merged by reading their publications, the *Gem* and *Free Will Baptist* of Ayden, North Carolina. I desired that my own state join this band and strengthen each other by association. In 1948, as state moderator, I invited the National Association of Free Will Baptists to hold their convention at the church I pastored in Pocahontas, Arkansas.

At that meeting, Arkansas became a member of the National Association of Free Will Baptists. Job 8:7 began to take effect, "Though thy beginning was small, yet thy latter end, should greatly increase."

I have seen Free Will Baptists go from one-room classrooms in a rented building to large facilities that house classrooms for our own denomination's Christian schools. The Lord has truly blessed us. Not only do we have bigger and better facilities to worship in, we have four colleges where our young people can receive an education. We have expanded our outreach through Home and Foreign Mission Departments.

My role with Free Will Baptists is due to the ministry of preachers like G. W. Million, L. C. Doyle, W. A. Herron, T. H. Dixon, C. E. Wilson and W. M. Guinn. I was grounded in the faith through their teaching and encouragement. The Lord also gave me an "helpmeet" of like sentiments to make the road easier to travel.

No matter which way I turn I "forget not all his benefits: who forgiveth all my (thine) iniquities" (Psalm 103:2-3). I want to praise God who through the blood of Jesus Christ and the eternal Spirit purged my (our) consciences from dead works to serve the living God (Hebrews 9:14).

"Who redeemeth my life from destruction" (Psalm 103:4) and who crowneth me (thee) with loving-kindness and tender mercies. The Lord keeps busy encamping through His angels around about them that fear Him, to deliver them (Psalm 34:7). It is through the Lord's mercies, compassions and faithfulness to me that I have been protected from harm and danger many times.

"Who satisfieth thy mouth with good things" (Psalm 103:5). The Lord has satisfied me with "good things" and reminds me that while God is sun and shield and will give grace and glory, that also, "No good thing will he withhold from them that walk uprightly" (Psalm 84:11).

No matter the road I've traveled, my dear Lord and Savior has supplied all my needs. He's allowed me to be part of a denomination where heritage makes me stand tall and proud and that makes me strongly believe in keeping the *Free Will* in the Free Will Baptist nomenclature.

For 59-1/2 years, I had the privilege of pastoring churches in Arkansas, Missouri, Alabama, Oklahoma, Virginia and Tennessee, gaining friends and supporters that have

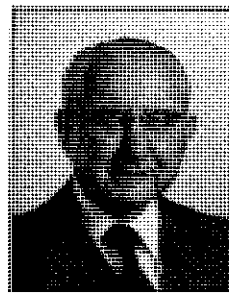
lasted down through the years.

The road has been many miles from beginning to end. It is one of tests, trials, troubles and tribulations, but as a child of God, I have learned that "There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man; but God is *faithful*, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it" (I Corinthians 10:13).

I would be less than honest if I said that I readily gave thanks for the losses, the sorrows, the heartaches—my own weaknesses and failures, even those that I can now call "sweet sorrows," those in which there is a great degree of comfort and consolation—all of which remind me that "all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose" (Romans 8:28).

"Above all, I thank Christ Jesus our Lord, who hath enabled me, for that he counted me faithful, putting me into the ministry" (I Timothy 1:12).

With 81-1/2 years of living there have indeed been many roads—roads that led to conviction, conversion and to answering His call. However, there have also been detours because the Lord in His infinite love and wisdom saw a need to chastise and correct. But all these roads have been paved with Christ's care and have only brought contentment deep within. No, I don't regret a mile!



ABOUT THE WRITER: Reverend Ralph Staten is a member of Wooddale Free Will Baptist Church in Knoxville, Tennessee. He served as moderator of the National Association of Free Will Baptists 1960-1962. He is highly regarded as a speaker and writer.

How to Wake Up the Sunday School

Beyond the Yawn

By Jonathan and Yvonne Thigpen

Listen carefully in the vestibule and parking lot on any given Sunday and you may hear someone say: "Sunday School is boring! All my teacher does is talk. There are never any activities for us to do." Or perhaps, "I only go to Sunday School because my wife insists we go. The teacher is a nice guy, but his lessons have absolutely nothing to do with my life as a businessman. To me, Sunday School is a wasted hour."

Stop by the church office and you may find a defeated director sighing, "Our Sunday School attendance just keeps dropping. We've tried contests and give-aways, but nothing works. At first coffee and doughnuts seemed to boost our adult participation, but not any more. And the volunteers are a constant struggle!"

These are voices of frustration, apathy, boredom and, in some cases, hopelessness. For these people and many like them, Sunday School is the sleepest hour of the week. To them, Sunday School, at best, merits only a yawn. To many, this hour is an out-of-date and out-of-touch ritual.

Furthermore, pastors question the value of Sunday School as much as lay people. Historical references aside, many folks are not sure the Sunday School should exist, much less know how to fix its problems.

What is the Church to do? Has time passed by this 200-year-old institution named Sunday School? Should we call Sunday School off and give people an extra hour of sleep Sunday morning? Should we awaken the Sunday School to renewed purpose, ministry and the vibrance which surrounded its beginning?

We believe so! However, to wake up



the Sunday School, local church leaders must prepare specific positive change, and keep church education biblical, relevant and life-changing.

Evaluate

Purpose

The first step in awakening the Sunday School is to carefully evaluate every aspect of this ministry in the local church. The first area is the purpose. Why does this program exist in your church? What is the Sunday School program supposed to be doing?

Basically, Sunday School exists to fulfill the Great Commission; Christ's last command to His disciples as recorded in Matthew 28:18-20. We understand Christian education to be the contemporary design for obeying Christ's command and the Sunday School is the traditional program assigned the business of making disciples; by "baptizing" (leading them to Christ) and "teaching them to observe all things."

In speaking to the necessity of the program of Christian education in the local church, Howard Hendricks wrote, "Christian education is not an option, it is an *order*, it is not a luxury; it is a *life*. It is not something nice to have; it is something *necessary* to have. It is not a part of the work of the church; it is the *work of*

the church. It is not extraneous; it is *essential*. It is our obligation; not merely an option."

Curriculum

The second area of evaluation is the curriculum used in the Sunday School. By curriculum, we mean more than just the quarterlies, resource packets and other printed materials used. Curriculum, by definition, refers to the entire plan and scope of an educational enterprise. This is why it is crucial to first understand the purpose of the Sunday School. The curriculum cannot be evaluated properly until the purpose is clearly in focus.

Teachers and Workers

The third area of evaluation involves teachers and workers. Does your church have an established training program for all volunteers?

Students

Fourth to be evaluated are the students. Are your classes properly graded? Are teaching materials and methods suited to each age group? Does the Sunday School involve the whole family? Are lessons related directly to the life needs of students? The leadership will have to discern between needs and wants as results

are tabulated, but a survey of all adults may reveal a faulty perception of the current program.

Facilities

Facilities should also be evaluated. Are rooms properly sized, adequately lighted and comfortably furnished? Are learning areas attractive? Do the classrooms invite learning or discourage it? Your facility may not be ideal but it should convey a caring, welcoming invitation to involvement.

Establish

After a church has evaluated these five critical areas, it is important not to stop the process. Your list of things to correct may seem overwhelming, but it is important to outline a wake-up call.

Once the leadership has reached a consensus on the purpose of the Sunday School it must be clearly and assertively communicated to the rest of the congregation. It is critical for the pastor to actively support the Sunday School; both in the pulpit and in working relationships with laity.

Curriculum materials should be chosen on the basis of the overall curriculum plan determined by the church leadership. Carefully involve those who are currently teaching. Decisions by the leadership about curriculum materials should be related to how well those materials are fulfilling the purpose of this Sunday School. As a program matures, the resources will alter, just as they do in every other educational process.

A program of teacher training should be implemented. The best curriculum materials in the world are ineffective in the hands of poorly trained teachers. The key is to find the format that fits the people of the church.

Some churches find training new teachers works best if a session is held during the Sunday School hour. Other churches use a concentrated weekend approach (Friday night and all day Saturday) held periodically. Still others offer new and experienced volunteers a continuing education structure once a quarter, perhaps on a Saturday morning or a

convenient week night.

The important thing is to encourage every teacher with regular reinforcement; even if you need to offer multiple tracks in the smallest of time periods.

The wake-up call should extend to student needs. Are proper teaching methods being employed for each age group? Are teachers relating Bible knowledge to life needs of the students, regardless of age? Is there a visible bridge to the evangelistic emphasis of the total Christian education program of the church? Are social foundations being prepared upon which other special programs can build?

There should be a wake-up call for facilities, also. Do not fall into the sleepy trap of thinking the only answer is a new building. Churches who cannot build have become inspirational in adapting existing buildings.

Rethink the way in which you are using your space. Be open to new arrangements or space-saving furnishings. A new coat of paint, proper lighting or new carpeting can give added usefulness to an aging room. Scout out unused space in the sanctuary, choir loft, balcony or (gasp!) pastor's study.

In developing a wake-up call, carefully examine the five areas in each of the main age groups: preschool, children, youth and adults. The highest morale will result if some positive action can be taken in each age group. Prioritize a wish list and prepare a time table to check off the items.

Emphasize

For a Sunday School renewal to take place, the leadership must actively stress their commitment from pulpit to nursery, to certain key principles.

Spiritual Ministry

First, the leadership should stress Sunday School as a spiritual ministry. The ultimate success or failure of the Sunday School, as a program, does not rest solely in a training program or a remodeled building. It will succeed in direct proportion to the prayers of the people involved. If the Sunday School seeks to fulfill

biblical goals, God has pledged His divine power to bless our efforts.

Firm Commitment

Second, the leadership must highlight renewal as requiring a firm commitment. Time, money and effort from the entire congregation are necessary. Sunday School is about people—people giving of themselves to see God change their lives and the lives of the people who will be touched by this ministry.

Evangelism

Third, the leadership should focus efforts on more than edifying the saved. We must seek to evangelize the lost. Every growing Sunday School is staffed by men and women who are teaching not only to add Bible knowledge to the heads of believers, but to see unbelievers added to the Lamb's Book of Life!

Time to Wake Up

Can the Sunday School in your church be awakened? Yes! But it will take dedicated people sacrificially giving of themselves to see it happen. Not dreamers, but visionaries! An awakened Sunday School will rise to seize the opportunity at hand—an hour on the church calendar surely to be taken for other purposes if given up.

The need for educational instruction will not disappear. Why not dedicate the time already allotted to fresh teaching methods and appropriately used resources to awaken the Body of Christ for service. ■



ABOUT THE WRITERS: Jonathan and Yvonne Thigpen serve with the Evangelical Training Association. Jonathan, an ordained Free Will Baptist minister, was recently named president of ETA. Yvonne is director of educational ministries with ETA. Both are graduates of Free Will Baptist Bible College.

There's a Better Way

By Robert J. Morgan



One potato, two potato, three potato, four . . . Well, it isn't *that* bad, but the way we select national board members could stand a tune-up. We have clear views about predestination, but we need to amend our thoughts about election. The expansion of our denominational ministries will never exceed the quality of our boards, yet we frequently invest more time selecting wallpaper for Sunday Schools than electing the men and women who will direct our world-wide works.

Our *Treatise* states:

The nominating committee which is selected at the beginning of the annual session shall present at least one name to the assembly for each vacant office . . . on Wednesday or Thursday. After the committee's report the floor shall be open for further nominations and the election shall proceed in regular manner.

That gives an impromptu committee scant hours to recommend people from scratch for dozens of crucial positions. There's no time to determine the needs of the various boards. There's no time to search for gifted clergy and laity with specialized areas of competence; no time to conduct recruiting interviews; no time to orient prospective board members to the demands of the positions.

Just enough time to play Baptist roulette.

There's a better way—and it can be done without changing our polity or *Treatise*.

The Home for Children Model

For several years, I've served on the board of the Tennessee FWB Home for Children. Our board requires specialized input from its members. We need in addition to pastors, a Free Will Baptist lawyer on our Board. And an accountant. And someone experienced with the Department of Human Services. We could use a Christian child psychologist.

Our director, Roger Hood, sensing these needs, led us to form a resource committee, a NAC—Nomination Advisory Committee. This sub-committee of the board researches the Free Will Baptist churches across our state, locating ministers and lay people who have the special skills and passions we need. The board interviews these prospective members, and recommends them to the state nominating committee at the beginning of our annual association.

We don't short-circuit or side-step the nominating process; we enhance it. The nominating committee doesn't have to follow our recommendations, and nominations are still taken from the floor. But we've done our homework, and the nominating committee has something to go on.

The Tennessee Recommendation

The Tennessee State Association is recommending to the General Board that all national boards, commissions and agencies create NAC's. Our ministries, after all, deserve our best.

The Foreign Missions Board will increasingly need missiologists, and perhaps investment advisors and attorneys. The Board of Retirement will require wise, godly businessmen. We will increasingly need people on our Bible College Board who are respected in academia. The Sunday School and Church Training Board requires Christian educators, publishers and marketing experts. All our boards need experienced pastors who are willing to contribute their time to a broader work.

We need men and women who read widely, who dream wildly and who aren't afraid to work. We need both young and old, both clergy and laity, both East and West. Progressive thinkers are vital if we're going to seize the opportunities of the 21st century.

Nothing more is needed to implement this plan than a nod from the chairmen of our boards, commissions and agencies. Each of them can appoint such a subcommittee, or they can lead their boards to elect them. And they can do it now. Almost all non-profit and charitable boards do this as a matter of course.

We have other options for upgrading our selection process. The *Treatise* could be amended, for example, to allow formation of the nominating committee a year in advance. Even so, the boards themselves best know their needs, and should have input into the selection process.

In any event, the actual election of board members is—and will re-

Snakes and Prayers

By Kathy Tippett Henderson

I hate snakes. I mean really hate them. Even as a small child I feared them. To me they're all 20 feet long with diamond-shaped heads and six-inch fangs.

One day when I was about 8 years old, our family went to the farm to visit my grandparents. My 6-year-old brother, Ricky, and I set off to explore the woods behind Granddaddy's farm. It was only a few acres but to us seemed like the deepest part of the Black Forest.

We chattered as happy adventurers. Leaves crackled beneath our Keds. We swung sticks at branches to scythe our way over the worn path. As the pungent smell of damp, musty earth rose, the sun grew dimmer and our talk more hushed.

"What if we see a snake, Ricky?"

"There's no snakes in Granddaddy's woods!"

"Are too!"

"Are not!"

"Are too!"

"Are not!"

"Are too, Ricky Tippett! I'm older and I know."

main—in the hands of the voting body at our National Association, and nominations from the floor are always allowed. We've done it the same way since 1935, so we know the system works.

Perhaps we just need a NAC for doing things better. ■



ABOUT THE WRITER: Reverend Robert J. Morgan pastors Donelson Free Will Baptist Church in Nashville, Tennessee. He also serves on the Board of Retirement.



Ricky's brown eyes widened and he whispered, "I'm scared."

"Me too."

"But you're older!"

"I'm still scared."

Our slow pace came to a standstill. Every vine hung like a coiled snake. Finally a shaky voice pierced the silence, "Kathy, maybe we should pray."

"Yeah. Let's ask Jesus to help us not see any snakes."

Explorers became prayer warriors as we dropped to our knees and prayed aloud. With our faith renewed, we popped up and in wet-kneed dungarees bounced along on our original trek.

Now what happened next may be hard to believe, but cross-my-heart, it really did happen just this way.

A huge dead tree lay in our path so we mounted it, about to step down when I screamed, "Snake!"

There, inches below our feet, was a "20-foot-long, diamond-shaped headed, six-inch fanged" king snake. Faith flew and so did we. We ran hollering all the way back to Granddaddy's house.

Ricky's crew cut stood out straighter than ever as we sputtered out our story in breathless staccato. We embellished some parts to get more attention from our audience of parents, aunts and cousins.

Surely God has a sense of humor. He likes to use the unexpected, the bizarre to get our attention. For years I wondered why He let that snake appear just minutes after our prayer. As an adult, I can look back and see some lessons He taught us through that.

First, He made a memory. I never

forgot that trip through the woods, and even though we never discussed it, I double-dog dare you to ask Ricky about it. I'll bet he remembers it too. Had God answered our prayers the way we wanted, I'd never recall that day.

Some seeds are planted and meant to lie dormant for years. That's why we teach scripture even to our toddlers before they have understanding. Memory is a wonderful tool for re-learning lessons.

Second, God showed us that He protects us in danger, but not always from danger. He promised Isaiah that He would go with us "through the waters . . . through the rivers . . . through the fire."

God looked down my life that day, scanning 20 years, 30 years and knew I'd face frightening forests and blocked paths in my lifetime. I remembered His protection then and it carried me through later trials.

Another lesson I learned from our snake experience is how to pray. Even Jesus dreaded the "cup," yet He prayed, "nevertheless, Thy will, not mine." As children we want God's stamp of approval on our plans. As mature Christians we learn to trust His will, His judgment in our lives.

Finally, I learned that sometimes God even allows the snakes to bite us. It hurts. Pressure. Pain. Yet in adversity we become more useful servants. Pressure turns grapes into wine, wheat into flour and coal into diamonds.

I still hate snakes. I even killed one once to protect my own children from back yard perils. Only mother love and adrenalin could do that. When God cursed the serpent in the garden, He instilled a natural enmity between me and reptiles. I really do hate snakes. ■



ABOUT THE WRITER: Mrs. Kathy Tippett Henderson, killer of snakes and slayer of dragons, is a member of First Free Will Baptist Church in Newport News, Virginia.

What is Prayer? Why Should We Pray? When Should We Pray?

Learning to Pray

By Stuart Briscoe



Several years ago, after I preached in a church in Toronto, an elderly lady came up to me, took my hand, kissed it and whispered, "I have prayed for you every day since you first preached in this church." Then she walked away before I had an opportunity to ask her name. Old ladies rarely kiss my hand, but they may do it anytime if they tell me they pray for me daily! I love old ladies who pray!

"But I'm not an old lady," you say. True, some of the world's greatest praying people are old or infirm or both, but prayer is meant to be a vital part of every Christian's experience.

I think it is no coincidence that young people and active types have more difficulty with prayer than do older and more sedentary people. Activity-prone people tend to find quietness, medi-

tation and a "sweet hour of prayer" decidedly onerous or little more than a nice idea.

The young and active tend to be self-sufficient, and this militates against prayer. But if youth, health and vigor keep you from praying, then those qualities are not all they're cracked up to be.

You may have decided that prayer is for those who are "inclined that way"—and for you only when you feel like the small boy who said, "I pray when I want something, and I think there is no other way of getting it."

So we need to start at the beginning and make sure we understand what prayer is. James Montgomery wrote,

Prayer is the soul's sincere desire,
Uttered or unexpressed,
The motion of a hidden fire that trembles in the
breast.

That's beautiful, but what is it? I believe we've been too mystical and poetic about prayer; because it is a strange exercise of the human soul,

we have tended to keep it delightfully vague, carefully couched in antiquated language and liberally peppered with clichés.

What is prayer? To me, it is the talking part of a relationship.

The Bible portrays the Christian experience as a relationship, among other things. We are Christ's friends, His servants and His bride. Prayer is the talking part of these relationships—friend talking to friend, servant to master, bride to groom.

Why Pray?

Relationships that don't talk, don't grow. The first reason to pray is to develop our spiritual relationship.

"But isn't conversation a two-way street?" you might ask. "What's the talking part of the Lord in prayer?"

Strictly speaking, God does not

converse in prayer. But He does talk through scriptures. Thus Bible reading and prayer go together; the former is the Lord talking to you, and the latter is your response. I'm not saying you can pray only immediately after reading the Bible, but I believe the effectiveness of your prayer life is closely related to your depth in the scriptures.

Similarly, the effectiveness of your Bible study can be largely determined by your prayer life. Conversations that have only one talker aren't conversations. They're monologues. The Lord's talking through scripture to you and getting no response of prayer is not likely to build a relationship. Neither is your doing all the talking and ignoring the fact that He reserves the right to speak.

The second reason to pray is that we have been told to. This brings a whole new dimension to prayer. Some people think they don't need to pray simply because they don't like it, just as they don't eat oysters because oysters are slippery. Whether they like to pray or not is irrelevant; they have been told to pray. Others feel too busy to pray and therefore feel quite happy not praying.

Still others don't know how to pray—and never take the time to find out. But not knowing how to pray is no excuse when God has given us so much information on the subject.

If we were free to pray only when we felt like it, we would probably do so only when something extraordinary happened—like seeing the number-three engine on our jumbo jet burst into flames over the polar ice cap. By all means pray then, but prayer is much more than a last resort.

If we were free to pray only when we had the time, we would probably never find the time. When did you last hear someone say, "Good, I have a few minutes to spare; I must do some praying"?

If we understand that prayer is commanded by our Lord, however, the whole picture changes. We discipline ourselves to pray when things are good or bad. We pray when we are busy doing something—or nothing. And learning to pray becomes a top priority.

The third reason to pray is to follow the example of Christ. If He needed to pray as much as He did, we certainly need to!

When Should You Pray?

"Okay," you may say, "praying is a worthwhile endeavor. But do I have to stay up all night to do it? When should I pray, anyway?"

There are three "times" at which Christians should pray.

1. Regularly.

Daniel was so organized in his praying that even when he was forbidden to pray on pain of being thrown to the lions, he went ahead anyway and prayed three times daily. While that doesn't mean you have to pray "morning, noon and night," it wouldn't be a bad idea. I suggest you plan a time of prayer—one that is right for you—into your regular schedule the way you plan eating and sleeping.

Your regular prayer should include regular attendance at church services where you can pray with other Christians. In the church I pastor, we lay heavy emphasis on the time of prayer in all our services. When the pastor prays in the service, that is not the time to think about your finances or whether you left the car lights on; you should pray along with him.

For the same reasons, you should also form the habit of joining your fellow church members when they meet to pray.

You should pray regularly at meal-times, too. Even when you eat away from home you can bow your head in thanksgiving and witness—nothing ostentatious, but nothing to be ashamed of either. Don't pretend to rub the nonexistent sleep out of your eyes, but don't kneel on your napkin beside the table and boom out a prayer for the benefit of bemused diners nearby.

When Jill first bowed her head to pray in a restaurant, she opened her eyes to find an old woman looking anxiously at her and saying, "Here's an aspirin. Have you got a headache, Luv?"

Doubtless there are other times when you can pray regularly, but I

leave it to you to find them.

2. Spontaneously.

Nehemiah did this beautifully. As the royal cupbearer, he was not allowed to look unhappy in the king's presence. One day he received some bad news from home and naturally was upset. He forgot to put on his stage smile, and the king demanded to know why he was looking sad. That spelled trouble for Nehemiah, and he admitted to being "sore afraid"—but he took a deep breath and "prayed to the God of heaven."

That doesn't mean he said to the king, "Every knee bowed, every eye closed . . ." It means he flashed a very quick prayer to Heaven between heartbeats—something like, "Help!"

This is what I call spontaneous praying. You will need to do it often when you are faced with danger or decision. The more you practice prayer, the more of a reflex action spontaneous prayer will become.

3. Continually.

Prayer is not only a definite act, but it is also a continual attitude. The thought behind continual prayer is not that your life should be spent in the act of prayer, but that your spirit should live in an attitude of prayer. It is an attitude of humble thanksgiving, reverent awe, child-like dependence and expectant faith. It is an attitude that swiftly and easily at the slightest sigh of necessity slips into the act of prayer.

This attitude is also of great practical help. Often I drive with the radio on to keep me awake; the information coming over the airwaves frequently stirs me to pray as I drive.

As I run my morning mile, I run in an attitude of prayer as well. On the first lap I pray for the family, on the second for the church, and on the third for outside activities. And on the fourth lap? I pray, "Lord, give me breath for this unfinished task!" ■

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7 Hints for Child-Rearing

By David Burgess



Many in the secular world, and some in the court systems seem to think that any parent who spansks a child in any way and under any circumstances is abusive. Here is a quick seven-point response to the question, "Do you believe in spanking your child?"

1. Praise a Lot.

A child who is praised consistently as well as corrected consistently can tell the difference in what the parent wants and does not want. We are to give honor to whom honor is due and rejoice when our children walk in truth (Romans 13:7; and III John 4).

2. Play a Lot.

Parents must be firm and not behave like children. However, life has many problems and children need to see us work and play, be serious and laugh, and love them enough to take a personal interest to play their games with them from time to time (Proverbs 17:22).

3. Pray a Lot.

Honest parents realize their daily need for God's Spirit to guide them through His Word. Every good parent comes to that place when he backs away and asks, "Lord, did we do it right?" These can be great times of growth (James 1:5).

4. Teach a Lot.

In Ephesians 5:4, the key parenting verse, the parent is given two ways to bring a child up to avoid an impul-

sive lifestyle. Paul insists on admonition or teaching, putting into the mind or building inner convictions, along with correction or nurture.

Much can be accomplished through reading with and teaching a child. This is not lecturing but more of an on-the-job training as we use words that edify and minister grace to the hearer (Ephesians 4:29). To help a child handle his anger biblically, our anger must be used constructively.

5. Use Cause and Effect a Lot.

When it comes to correction, the most natural way of learning that actions have results is teaching by cause and effect. If the use of a toy is sufficiently abused, then the toy is put away for a period.

While reward and punishment is a biblical way for training, it is not the only way. Life will not always give rewards or punishment immediately. It is good that there are things the child does without expecting a reward simply because he is part of the family.

6. When You Do Spank . . .

Do it lovingly, slowly, thoughtfully and thoroughly so that you do not have to do it often. One or two swats does not tend to bring about correction if the child needs six swats to make him think about changing.

The instrument should be short and something that will sting but not physically harm the child. Spanking is usually not as effective as is cause and effect with the older young person. "Rod" in the scriptures usually

speaks of all we do in child training, not just spanking.

7. Be an Example.

Parents growing in God's love and care are helpful to the young person trying to make changes. They often respond to tough places the way we do.

In closing, we must not interpret Proverbs 22:6 in a way that causes it to fight with the basic message of that book or the rest of the Bible. We must not say that if a parent pushes the right buttons he will always get a certain product.

The thrust of Proverbs puts the monkey on the young person's back, not the parents'. Good parents generally have good children, but the only perfect parents had two children go astray in the Garden of Eden.

We must seek to grow in biblical parenting to please God and give our children the best training we can, realizing the time comes when the child himself must choose wisdom. ■



ABOUT THE WRITER: Dr. David Burgess pastors Cornerstone Free Will Baptist Church in Bloomington, Illinois. He is a graduate of Free Will Baptist Bible College.



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Clocks and Calendars

By R. F. Smith, Jr.

Dr. Ralph Sockman wrote not with a pen but with nails. The theologian-pastor had the uncanny ability to write with insight that still nails readers to chairs.

Example: "A man may like his job so well that he never looks at the clock, but sooner or later he does look at the calendar and asks, 'What is the use of it all? What does it all add up to?'"

That insightful statement nails even the most insensitive for at least a moment or two.

Short-term objectives are important and necessary. Day-to-day living demands daily contribution of resources to keep bread on the table and body and soul somehow intact. No person dare be so naive and idealistic as to neglect attaining certain basic levels of creature-comforts.

Yet, becoming so engrossed by hand-to-mouth existence—no matter how exciting and stimulating the process—to the neglect of an overall life-purpose is to invite disaster.

One day one does look at a calendar!

The calendar one day may mock us unless we have enlisted our lives and resources in causes

that are larger and longer than our lives.

Blessed is the person whose life's work needs to be done whether or not he/she is paid for it. Many jobs grant such privileges, and the rewards are as much in the investments as in the dividends.

But not all jobs enjoy that classification; therefore, such persons must find "blessedness of task" outside their jobs in and through such service-oriented organizations as church, civic and community projects that enable them to embrace and become involved in the needful work of the world.

"Start something," the wise one said, "that you can never finish in life. Do it well, and with class. And when you must lay it down, do so with grace so that someone will have to pick it up. Don't ever come to the end of your road map," he said. "Die enroute."

The calendar is not as fast as the clock, but it's more deadly. One day we will look at it. Will it haunt or will it heal? ■

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

Prayer for Help

By M. J. Pritchard

When I do good, it's not good. When I do bad, it's bad. When I try, I'm trying too hard. When I quit trying, I'm lazy.

Father, I've tried to do good and failed. I've sought Your wisdom; I've prayed for your help; I've asked for Your solution.

And right now, the hurt is worse, the pain deeper, the frustration more intense, the situation awful.

Your Word tells me you're in charge, You know the outcome, You are working all things for good . . .

Lord, it doesn't *feel* good right now; it doesn't *look* hopeful. But Your Word assures me that I can't go on feelings—or on my limited sight. You see down the road and know the outcome.

Please, Lord, help me:

- honor You even when I can't see the way,
- live for You even when I don't feel good,
- do what is right even if it causes pain.

Give me grace, Lord. Give me peace—Your peace. And please, Lord, please—Help me. ■



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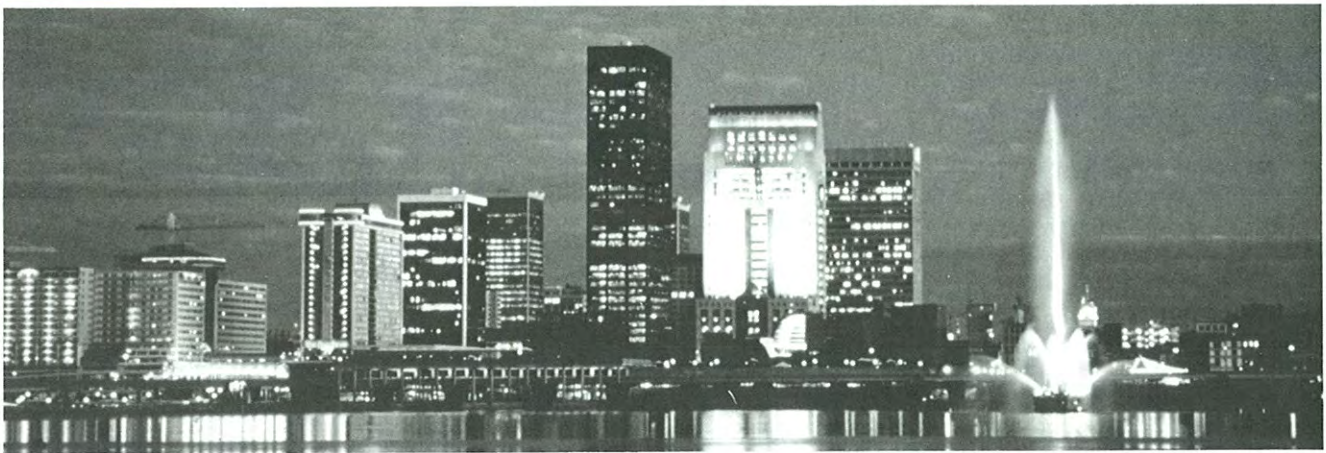
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Pastor
First FWB Church
Russellville, Arkansas

Wade Trimble, Contractor, Dies of Cancer



NASHVILLE, TN—Mr. E. Wade Trimble, maintenance engineer at the Free Will Baptist National Offices Building for two years, died January 10. The 59-year-old contractor and lay minister coordinated construction of the new National Offices Building located at 5233 Mt. View Road in Antioch, Tennessee.

Executive Secretary Melvin Worthington said, "The Free Will Baptist denomination owes a debt to Wade Trimble for his leadership during the build-out process for our new office building. Wade gave himself day and night to the eight-month construction project. In a very real sense, we have this fine office complex because of his professionalism and his commitment to excellence. He will be greatly missed."

Mr. Trimble was a member of Donelson FWB Church in Nashville. He was frequently invited by local churches as a lay speaker. He always gave a clear testimony of God's saving grace and championed greater lay involvement. His commitment to the Word of God and the Free Will Baptist doctrine made him

welcome wherever he spoke.

He died after a year-long battle with cancer. Funeral services were conducted January 11 at Donelson FWB Church. Pastor Robert J. Morgan officiated. He was assisted by Reverend Robert Trimble and Randy Ledbetter, brother and step-son to Mr. Trimble.

Wade Trimble is survived by his wife, M. June Trimble; two step-children, Sandra Black of Nashville and Randy Ledbetter of Arkansas; sisters, Opaline Watkins and Dorothy Stidham of Ohio; brother, Rev. Robert Trimble of Maryland; and five grandchildren.

In lieu of flowers, the family requested that memorials be made to the National Association of Free Will Baptists, P. O. Box 5002, Antioch, TN 37011.

Tulsa Churches Rally for Christmas Concert

TULSA, OK—More than 1,300 people attended the second annual Community Christmas Concert on December 20, 1992, according to event coordinator David Messer. The concert was performed at Union High School Performing Arts Center in Tulsa.

Free Will Baptist churches from the Greater Tulsa Association provided a 250-voice choir from 14 churches. The choir was accompanied by members of the Tulsa Philharmonic Orchestra.

Reverend Messer, associate pastor at Bethany FWB Church

in Broken Arrow, said, "Many people invited unsaved friends to attend the holiday concert." The concert included a multimedia slide presentation and a live video projection of the choir and congregation.

Ray Addudell, minister of music at Owasso FWB Church, said, "This is a great opportunity to share the gospel with an unsaved person. People will come to a concert during the Christmas season who would never darken the door of a church. And once they are here,

we have an opportunity to share the true meaning of Christmas with them."

At the close of the concert, Pastor Bob Thomas of Locust Grove FWB Church led a time of commitment. The responses included four conversions, four rededications and two requests for baptism.

After the concert, the sponsoring Free Will Baptist churches gave a \$1,500 offering for Hillsdale FWB College.

Stewardship Object Lesson Raises \$10,000

BROKEN ARROW, OK—Members of Grace FWB Church in Broken Arrow cashed in on a 90-day stewardship object lesson by the pastor and raised \$10,016 toward church debt retirement, according to Rick Ketchum, the church's Christian education director. Pastor Bob Ketchum said that with interest over the term of the note the stewardship response will save the church more than \$17,000.

During the Sunday evening service on September 13, 1992, Pastor Ketchum preached a sermon on the parable of the talents in Matthew 25:15-30. At the close of the sermon all adults who wanted to participate accepted an envelope containing a \$10 bill and this note:

"This money belongs to God. I am to keep it for Him until December 13, 1992. I will try to multiply His money as a good steward should. I promise to return the money with any money earned by it on December 13, 1992."

Sixty-seven envelopes were distributed that evening and the work began. Many people used the money to buy raw materials for crafts, then sold the crafts and reinvested the profits. Members Jim and Sandy Holt raised

over \$900 with their craft sales. Some ladies made and sold deserts and baked goods. One of them, Velma Roberts baked and sold 51 pies.

Charles Lomenick took portrait photographs of the church members. Carl Bridges, a gravel truck driver, donated his "going home" load profits to the project. Others combined their money to have an "all you can eat" bean supper with donations accepted.

Michelle Ashby, an 8-year-old, decorated baby food jars and sold them for a quarter each. She was not given an envelope, but presented her dollar to the Lord.

The most unusual testimony

came from Bill Bell, a truck driver who pledged \$.02 per mile driven. He drove over 6,000 miles in the first month of the object lesson. On December 13, Mr. Bell's son, Mark accepted Christ as his Savior. After returning to work the next day, Bill Bell received a \$1,000 bonus.

Rick Ketchum, who suggested the idea to the church, said, "Our people were drawn more closely together than ever before as they used their various talents for the Lord."

Grace FWB Church is a member of Oklahoma's Greater Tulsa Association. Pastor Bob Ketchum serves on the FWBBC Board of Trustees.



Pastor Bob Ketchum points to stewardship total.

Fall Enlargement Campaign Logs Increase

NASHVILLE, TN—The 1992 fall Sunday School enlargement campaign saw attendance soar in the top 10 churches according to officials at Randall House Publications. First FWB Church in Petal, Mississippi,

increased attendance 183% from 14 to 48. Three Oklahoma churches were named in the top 10 winners. The enlargement campaign theme was "Go for the Goal."

Top 10 Churches According to % of Increase

1. First FWB Church of Petal	Petal, MS	183.0%
2. Crossroads FWB Church	White Lake, MI	85.6%
3. First FWB Church	Tecumseh, OK	84.5%
4. First FWB Church	Cape Girardeau, MO	68.0%
5. First FWB Church	McCall, SC	63.2%
6. Spring Grove FWB Church	Jesup, GA	60.0%
7. First FWB Church	Tucson, AZ	33.8%
8. First FWB Church	Greenwood, AR	20.3%
9. Skyridge FWB Church	Noble, OK	18.6%
10. United FWB Church	Red Oak, OK	17.5%

Top 10 Churches According to Numerical Increase

1. First FWB Church	Tecumseh, OK	67.2
2. First FWB Church	Cape Girardeau, MO	48.2
3. Spring Grove FWB Church	Jesup, GA	42.7
4. First FWB Church	McCall, SC	40.5
5. Crossroads FWB Church	White Lake, MI	40.2
6. First FWB Church of Petal	Petal, MS	31.2
7. First FWB Church	Greenwood, AR	26.7
8. First FWB Church	Tucson, AZ	20.0
9. Skyridge FWB Church	Noble, OK	20.0
10. United FWB Church	Red Oak, OK	14.7

Capital Stewardship Campaign
December 1992
Update

State	Goal	Gifts
Alabama	\$ 97,290.00	\$ 1,000.00
Arizona	1,565.00	1,800.00
Arkansas	97,880.00	16,649.73
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	7,285.30
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	188.00
Missouri	77,025.00	18,854.75
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	150.50
South Carolina	23,350.00	100.00
Tennessee	100,040.00	19,882.05
Texas	14,705.00	3,185.00
Virginia	30,975.00	.00
West Virginia	58,840.00	320.00
Other	<u>23,780.00</u>	<u>1,733.85</u>
Totals	\$1,000,000.00	\$77,117.18

190 Attend Youth Conference

TULSA, OK—The Oklahoma State Youth Conference registered 190 attendees, including 145 teens as well as 25 sponsors and staff members, according to Paul Allen, promotional secretary for the state Christian Education Board. The December 28-29, 1992, event met at the Adam's Mark Hotel in Tulsa.

Participants from 22 local churches heard keynote speaker John Kane, director of counseling with Shepherd Ministries. Mr. Kane challenged the teens to share Christ with their

Cooperative Channel Contributions
December 1992

RECEIPTS:

State	CO-OP		Total	Dec. '91	Yr. To Date
	Designated	(Undesignated)			
Alabama	\$ 88.89	\$ 30.00	\$ 118.89	\$ 284.80	\$ 3,114.56
Arizona	550.08	51.50	601.58	44.20	2,602.28
Arkansas	6,300.08	.00	6,300.08	4,447.30	99,577.90
California	60.00	.00	60.00	909.15	10,843.03
Colorado	.00	.00	.00	.00	755.00
Delaware	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00
Florida	.00	2,838.18	2,838.18	2,018.68	16,642.33
Georgia	14,573.25	1,344.48	15,917.74	10,344.56	131,472.79
Hawaii	.00	.00	.00	.00	221.00
Idaho	.00	.00	.00	.00	89.86
Illinois	9,547.62	1,754.81	11,302.43	22,832.31	107,648.70
Indiana	579.41	80.11	659.52	1,075.63	8,186.16
Kansas	.00	36.16	36.16	79.77	759.14
Kentucky	.00	1,691.26	1,691.26	1,511.57	10,111.07
Louisiana	.00	.00	.00	120.00	900.00
Maryland	.00	75.00	75.00	.00	4,031.54
Michigan	14,257.08	1,884.50	16,141.58	5,980.26	142,624.74
Mississippi	188.00	361.56	549.56	382.61	5,596.16
Missouri	10,999.97	.00	10,999.97	7,117.68	134,315.68
Montana	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00
New Jersey	.00	.00	.00	.00	30.00
New Mexico	.00	.00	.00	.00	184.54
North Carolina	366.00	550.00	916.00	350.00	19,267.20
Ohio	742.74	5,557.20	6,299.94	2,577.00	36,001.68
Oklahoma	56,020.12	.00	56,020.12	37,088.37	540,896.20
South Carolina	22,079.21	182.46	22,261.67	14,309.76	212,585.79
Tennessee	7,153.51	987.67	8,141.18	10,067.75	96,838.31
Texas	9,157.65	930.29	10,087.94	21,816.68	84,210.96
Virginia	512.50	50.00	562.50	245.45	5,333.17
West Virginia	2,036.84	140.30	2,177.14	100.08	48,809.42
Canada	.00	.00	.00	.00	80.51
Northwest Assoc.	.00	.00	.00	.00	313.70
Other (Computer)	.00	.00	.00	(.01)	.07
Totals	\$155,212.96	\$18,545.48	\$173,758.44	\$143,703.60	\$1,724,043.49

DISBURSEMENTS:

Executive Office	\$ 6,777.61	\$ 18,545.48	\$ 25,323.09	\$ 21,621.27	\$ 303,877.09
Foreign Missions	84,161.05	.00	84,161.05	72,410.21	865,152.16
FWBBC	9,316.54	.00	9,316.54	10,359.30	96,045.10
Home Missions	41,516.10	.00	41,516.10	28,512.31	305,019.65
Retirement & Insurance	2,236.05	.00	2,236.05	2,179.13	25,259.91
Master's Men	2,399.97	.00	2,399.97	2,251.51	26,138.80
Commission for					
Theo. Integrity	168.50	.00	168.50	99.19	1,505.96
FWB Foundation	1,331.12	.00	1,331.12	1,146.77	14,786.50
Historical Commission	151.47	.00	151.47	92.70	1,449.53
Music Commission	145.82	.00	145.82	75.30	1,232.78
Radio & TV Commission	155.78	.00	155.78	157.18	1,354.94
Hillsdale FWB College	1,967.20	.00	1,967.20	1,318.71	15,638.19
Other	<u>4,885.75</u>	<u>.00</u>	<u>4,885.75</u>	<u>3,480.02</u>	<u>66,582.88</u>
Totals	\$155,212.96	\$18,545.48	\$173,758.44	\$143,703.60	\$1,724,043.49

friends. Conference music was under the direction of Mark Brawley, a youth pastor from Arkansas.

Promotional Secretary Paul Allen said, "Seventeen young people made commitments to Christ. More pledged to share

Jesus with people they care about. Many youth groups spent the night sharing and praying about . . . lost family members and friends."

The Christian Education Board is planning a 1993 conference for Oklahoma youth.

CURRENTLY...

The **Mississippi** Pastor's and Worker's Conference met February 18-20 at **Tupelo FWB Church**. Guest speakers included Oklahoma Executive Secretary **Connie Cariker** and FWBBC President **Tom Malone**.

The congregation at **Martin Hill FWB Church** in **Booneville, MS**, honored two lay members for their work and dedication in the church. Members **Betty Sue McKinney** and **Jackie Whitley, Jr.** received plaques from the church in recognition of their contributions. **Rick Bowling** pastors.

Members of **County Line FWB Church** in **Richton, MS**, declared November 29, 1992, as **Myrtle Phillips Day** in honor of the long-time community church leader. **Billy Tabb**, editor of *The Messenger*, presented a special plaque to Mrs. Phillips. Others gave a number of gifts. **Frank Henderson** pastors.

Pastor **Rob Morgan** of **Donelson FWB Church** in **Nashville, TN**, is preaching a series of 11 sermons on Power Parenting this spring. The sermons focus on how parents can instill values in a valueless age as well as understanding how to communicate with and discipline their children.

Faith FWB Church in **Johnson City, TN**, celebrated its 25th anniversary. Pastor **Ermine Butler** started the church in 1967 in a home and continues to pastor the congregation. The church now has a 300-seat auditorium, Sunday School rooms, large fellowship hall and a growing outreach in the community. Dr. **Charles Thigpen**, promotional director for the Tennessee State Association, was guest speaker at the 25th anniversary celebration. Members prepared a church history for the day.

Pastor **Willie Martin** is all smiles these days. **First FWB Church** in **Columbus, GA**, added 17 new members by baptism. The congregation also broke their attendance record when 135 worshipped during homecoming activities.

Evangelist **Irvin Hyman** was asked what he gave up to follow Jesus in the ministry. His answer: "The only thing I gave up to follow Jesus was a flop-

peared mule, a bull-tongued plow and a patch of new ground near my home in Florence, SC." Reverend Hyman resides in **Albany, GA**.

During a semi-annual baby dedication service, members of **Gateway FWB Church** in **Virginia Beach, VA**, took note that the nursery is still growing. Eleven babies were dedicated. **Dale Burden** pastors.

Pastor **Patrick Palamo** reports 70 conversions and 33 baptisms last year at **South Union FWB Church** in **Bakersfield, CA**. The church also set an attendance record of 288 in worship service.

Reverend **Lee Ramsey** died October 23, 1992. He was a Free Will Baptist minister in California for 41 years. He served churches in Exeter and Hughson. He also spearheaded in building the **Kerman FWB Church** in **Kerman, CA**.

Pastor **Bobby Shepherd** led members of **First FWB Church** of **Batesville, AR**, to give \$300 toward the indebtedness on the new national office building and \$200 to Hillsdale FWB College.

Members of **Hurricane Chapel FWB Church** in **McEwen, TN**, completed paving the 19,000-square-foot parking lot with four inches of concrete. The group also erected a new church sign. **Tommy Street** pastors.

Contact welcomes **Rejoice**, publication of **First FWB Church** in **Owasso, OK**. **Leonard Pirtle** pastors.

Members are calling 1992 the "Comeback Year" at **First FWB Church**, in **Salem, OR**. Fifteen new members joined the church with another dozen attending services. **Terry Motte** pastors.

Pastor **Gary Sheets** led 45th anniversary services at **First FWB Church** in **Lebanon, MO**. The church was organized July 25, 1947, with 19 charter members. Twelve pastors have served the church in the 45-year history.

Congratulations to **Calvary Chapel FWB Church** in **Buffalo, MO**. The congregation paid off the church mortgage nine years early. Pastor **Doug Earls** said more than 100 people gathered during the mortgage-burning ceremony.

Eastern Gate FWB Church in **Springfield, MO**, dedicated a new educational

building. Pastor **Jeff Daniels** commended the church leadership for their faithfulness during the building process. Missouri Executive Secretary **Nathan Ruble** preached the dedication message.

Members of **Cuba FWB Church** and **Bourbon FWB Church** in **Missouri** conducted a joint baptismal service. Cuba pastor **Rick Dablemont** and Bourbon pastor **Hugh Stogsdill** baptized 15 converts at Huzza Campground following an afternoon of fellowship and recreation.

Pastor **Roy Wilson** reports 17 new members at **Woodlawn FWB Church** in **Russellville, AR**.

Members of **Bethel FWB Church** in **South Roxana, IL**, honored treasurer **Royall Hannis** for 23 years of service. Pastor **Randy Corn** presented the church servant with a plaque in recognition of his service.

Seven junior church children were baptized at **Blue Point FWB Church** in **Cisne, IL**. **Ernie Lewis** pastors.

Pastor **Sam Williams** welcomed six new members at **Immanuel FWB Church** in **Joliet, IL**. In order to make the church more accessible to the physically handicapped, the church built a new entrance ramp and wheelchair pew.

A storm did severe damage to the roof of **First FWB Church** in **Columbus, MS**. Broken windows and water damage also resulted from the violent storm. **Michael Lake** pastors.

Reverend **Stanton White**, a retired Free Will Baptist minister and father of FWB missionary to Brazil Sue Aycock, reports that his house burned in December 1992. The house, which was outside of **Warren, AR**, and all its contents were destroyed. Reverend White has relocated in Warren. ■



Where are the Children?

By Billy Brown

Has the church adopted Mark Twain's attitude toward children? "Children should be put in a barrel, fed through the knothole, and when they become teenagers, plug up the hole." Are our children hidden in the shadows only to be brought out occasionally as showpieces? Churches who love children show it through ministry. Some churches treat children as nuisances, not gifts from God. Could we be guilty of this sinful behavior?

Have you wondered why children want to skip church as they grow older? Perhaps it's because they feel they have no place in church. Are our programs centered around adults and teens? (We lose teens while they are still primary and junior age.) Do we spend hours preparing for adult ministry and minutes for children? Some feel that children are so easy to entertain they don't notice our lack of preparation. Not true!

Take note of two facts: One, children still love Sunday School. Two, most adults are unwilling to invest the necessary time to disciple children.

How can we tolerate this second fact when statistics prove that most Christians come to Christ before age 16? Is there anything you can do? Yes, there is.

1. Develop a love for children (all children).

One lady brings candy or balloons each Sunday for the children. She remembers their birthdays with cards and special gifts.

2. Spend time with the children of your church.

Call them by name. Bend down to their level and talk about things which interest them. Visit children on their turf. Your time shows them how important you think they are.

3. Children's ministries require four things:

Manpower, money, materials and management. Baby sitting can no longer be the goal of our children's programs. We must plan with children in mind, not adults.

4. Include children in adult programs.

Children have talents and abilities to offer our congregations. So what if they sing flat or stumble and mispronounce a word. The results are worth every sour note. In my home church the junior boys regularly receive the offering.

Small acts of involvement make great impacts in the lives of children.

5. Identify children's spiritual gifts and use them.

God gives children special gifts when they believe. Identify their gifts and involve them in ministry as soon as possible so they will become productive believers.

6. Allow children to express their faith and participate in worship.

A preacher asked a rhetorical question, "You children know how this song goes, 'This little light of mine, I'm gonna' let it [pause]'"

One little boy piped up, "Shine," which brought a slap on the leg from an adult. We want people to say, "Amen" or "Hallelujah," then promptly teach children they have no place in worship.

7. Listen to the needs, difficulties, problems and heartaches of your children.

In a world seemingly out of control, children need to unload their burdens, ask difficult questions, and receive straightforward answers and advice without judgmental second guessing.

8. Listen to their suggestions.

You'll be amazed how many good suggestions they have. In many ways they are more in tune with what's going on than we are.

9. Apologize to them.

Apologize if you have slighted or neglected your children. They know when they've been wronged, and they deserve an apology.

10. Give children priority in your ministry.

I've heard it said, "It's a sin to bore a kid." Children are bored for one of two reasons: (1) Adults in charge are not prepared. (2) Adults in charge do not allow children to become full participants. Rowdy children are a sign of poor adult leadership and planning, not bad kids.

If you love and minister to children, then they will love and minister to you. But most importantly, they will love and serve the Lord Jesus Christ.

Randall House's Bible-based Sunday School curriculum and children's church programs provide a stable basis from which to train children in the teachings of our Lord. ■

FREE WILL BAPTIST BIBLE COLLEGE

Reaching Nashville's Spanish Community

By José Rodríguez, Junior Student



José Rodríguez

I am a Cuban who was raised in a Christian family. I was born under the Fidel Castro dictatorship where the freedom of assembly is very limited. This limitation urged me to seek the freedom the Lord gives to our lives and to realize that no one has the right to take that freedom away from us. When I left Cuba in 1986, I came to the United States and began studying English. A few months later, I moved to Nashville to attend Free Will Baptist Bible College, where I am preparing myself to serve the Lord.



Rosie Sanchez

Outreach To Spanish

As soon as I arrived in Nashville, I heard about the Spanish Ministry. This ministry was started by the Inscoc Family, who served as missionaries to Panama and were then attending Woodbine Free Will Baptist Church. During my freshman year, I was very involved with them, preaching and teaching the Word to new converts. By the second semester of my sophomore year, the Lord gave me the opportunity to serve as pastor.

My dreams of serving the Lord with freedom had been answered! Now was my opportunity to do what I could for the Lord. When I started as pastor, we had about 15-20 attending regularly.

I was not accustomed to working with Catholics, and the outreach has been hard at times. Conversion can be a long process. It usually begins with friendship, inviting people to church and praying with them. Sometimes it took months before I could see results. But, with God's help, the group began to grow.

Discipleship is also a hard task. It is hard for a person with little or no knowledge of spiritual things to understand and apply God's Word to his or her life.

Rooted and Growing

In March 1992 we baptized our first group of eight new believers. The group kept growing and by the end of September we averaged 50 each Sunday night. In October, another seven believers were baptized. Four others joined us and now we have 19 charter members. (Believers do not join until they have

been thoroughly disciplined. This process often takes months to complete.)

Since the church is growing, it has given us the opportunity have several services, such as Bible studies on Tuesday nights. These studies are mostly to disciple new converts. It is a great opportunity to interact with the congregation as a whole.

An English class is also being held on Tuesday nights, after the Bible studies, for those who are trying to adjust themselves to this new culture and language. Eddie Bowerman, another FWBBC student, teaches these classes and is a great help to me. On Sundays, we have a Sunday school at 11:00 a.m. and a worship service at 6:00 p.m. All of these services include children's churches, which are conducted by Rosie Sanchez, another student at FWBBC.

With Deepest Thanks

We deeply appreciate the help we have been given by Woodbine Free Will Baptist Church and its pastor, Dr. Stanley Outlaw. Without their help, it would have been impossible to maintain such a ministry.

Psalms 96:4 says, "Great is the Lord, and greatly to be praised." I give Him all the glory for what He has done in my life and through me. He will continue working in this ministry and many others who have not heard yet will come and hear about the good news of Jesus Christ. My prayer is that in a few years we will have the first Spanish Free Will Baptist Church in Nashville, where the name of Jesus will be lifted up. ■

Note: José calls the church the Iglesia Bautista Libre Getsemani (Gethsemane Free Will Baptist Church) and believes it is now the largest Spanish ministry in Nashville.



Eddie Bowerman



WELCOME
DAYS

April 1-3, 1993
Call 1-800-76-FWBBC
for details.



THE FREE WILL BAPTIST FOUNDATION

Achieving Your Goals with a Trust

By William W. Evans

When you look ahead, what do you want to achieve with your finances?

That big open-ended question has no one correct answer. Answers are as varied as each individual's goals. However, there are some common answers based on age and circumstances.

One financial planning method that may work for you is the Charitable Revocable Trust. But before we proceed with the "how" let's focus on what a trust is. It is a legal document which controls the property interest for a beneficiary.

The law sees a trust as having three distinct personalities involved. One is a "trustor" or "grantor" who owns the assets placed in the trust.

Another is the "trustee" who may be a person or an organization, such as the Foundation. The trustee accepts control of the trust assets to manage them, make any payments and finally dispose of them as directed by the trust agreement.

The third personality is the "beneficiary" who is the person or persons to receive the payments during the operation of the trust. The "final beneficiary" receives the remaining principal at the termination of the trust. For trusts managed by the Foundation the grantor agrees to give a minimum of 20% of remaining assets to some Free Will Baptist ministry.

Any trust created during the life of the donor is referred to as an inter-vivos trust. A trust created through a donor's will is called a testamentary trust. These titles refer only to the time at which a trust is established—before or after death of the donor. Either type can include an almost unlimited number of applications.

The major advantage to an inter-vivos trust is that the donor can make sure his wishes are fully met.

Who would want to use a trust of this type? Anyone who wants to make a significant gift to the Lord's work but needs present income or future access to the principal. If the grantor needs income, the Charitable Revocable Trust pays the net income from principal to him. If income is not needed, the grantor can add it to the trust principal. If a portion of the principal is needed, he may make withdrawals from the trust or totally revoke the agreement. If he

chooses to revoke the agreement, 100% of the principal is returned to him.

Using a Charitable Revocable Trust you can achieve a personal financial goal and benefit your local church, district, state or national ministry of your choice, or any combination of them. ■

Trustor (Grantor)	— Person or persons who place assets in trust.
Trustee	— Person or organization that manages the trust assets.
Beneficiary	— Person or organization that benefits from the trust assets.
Trust	— A document that directs the management, the distribution of income during trust term, and the disposition of all assets at termination of the trust.

In Memory Of . . .

By . . .

Charles Allen Carpentier

Frank and Myrna Carpentier
Oklahoma City, OK

Rev. George Ludwig

Ada Belle Binkley
Ashland City, TN

Rev. Jack V. Stallings

Tidewater Assoc. of FWB
Hampton, VA

Mr. Opal Tyler

Northside Ladies Christian Circle
Pocahontas, AR

In Honor Of . . .

By . . .

Rev. Fred Taylor

Robert and Evelyn Sautter
Toledo, OH

HOME MISSIONS



Has Roll Call Sunday Helped?

By Roy Thomas

Since the first Roll Call Sunday in 1984, this special day has become widely accepted among Free Will Baptist churches. Many congregations use it for an annual record-breaking attendance day. Some state associations set attendance goals for the entire state on Roll Call Sunday. Other states plan a special offering on Roll Call Sunday for the Capital Stewardship Campaign to reach their state quotas toward the debt retirement on the new National Offices Building. Roll Call Sunday has become a special day when all Free Will Baptists unite to try to gather unsaved, unchurched and absentees into the Sunday morning worship service to hear the preaching of God's Word.

Roll Call Sunday has also been a tool that pastors and laymen could use to convince people to attend church for the first time. No one can come the second time until he comes the first time. No one can become a regular attender or a faithful church member who never comes the first time.

These first-time visitors have provided many prospects for pastors to preach to and visit. Hundreds of them, because they came to church for this special day, were saved on Roll Call Sunday.

The Home Missions Department which sponsors Roll Call Sunday did not ask churches to report the number of conversions the first few years that Roll Call Sunday was observed, but in the last five years, a total of 3,167 salvation decisions were reported on this exciting day. These precious people whose names were written in the Lamb's book of life are praising God for Roll Call Sunday.

The people who attend on Roll Call Sunday provide a prospect list for many churches to use on visitation, and some are won to Christ in their homes. Others start attending church and are saved in worship services. Roll Call Sunday helps because it results in people being reached for Christ who might not have ever been reached had it not been for the special efforts put forth on Roll Call Sunday.

On the first Roll Call Sunday in 1984, a total of 197,992 people attended 2,584 Free Will Baptist churches (a 100% report). Compare this to last year's total of 231,117 attending 2,610 Free Will Baptist churches (also a 100% report). Our

record attendance on any given Sunday in Free Will Baptist history was recorded on Roll Call Sunday, 1991, when 273,718 people heard the gospel in our churches.

Roll Call Sunday has shown that many of our churches have grown considerably the past few years. It took an attendance of 441 to be in the top 10 churches in 1984. However, it took an attendance of 850 to make it to the top 10 in 1992. In 1984 we had one church with over 1,000 in attendance, but in 1992 we had eight churches with more than 1,000 in attendance. In 1984 five churches had 500 or more, while in 1992 a total of 25 churches exceeded 500.

Yes, Roll Call Sunday does help! These statistics reveal that Roll Call Sunday is an excellent opportunity for us to set a new attendance record in church, provide the incentive for prospects to attend, give our families a tool to get their unsaved loved ones to attend church, and see many precious souls saved.

Roll Call Sunday this year is March 28. (Roll Call Sunday is always the last Sunday in March.) I hope your church will break its attendance record and see many souls saved! ■





Robert E. Picirilli

Homosexuality: Natural or Unnatural?

One of the things some say is that homosexuality is as “natural” as heterosexuality. The God who made man’s nature has something to say about that, especially in Romans 1:24-27.

First, let’s put the passage in context. Paul is describing the course of mankind’s distance from God. God has clearly revealed Himself—His power and existence as God—in the created universe (vv. 19-20). Furthermore, mankind has known God (v. 21a). How then has humanity come to be so far from Him? Though knowing God, people have failed to glorify Him or to be thankful (v. 21). They have suppressed (“hold”= “hold down”) the truth (v. 18).

From there, human history has been progressively (and repeatedly) away from truth (vv. 21-23). Empty thinkings lead to darkened, ignorant hearts and minds. Foolishness is regarded as wisdom. The concept of the glorious God is idolatrously perverted into that of human likeness or, worse still, into the lowest forms of animal life.

Therefore, in judgment God has “given over” people who have not preserved the truth about Him to various kinds of falsehood—in belief and behavior. Wrongdoing always reflects wrong thinking. People who depart from God have, in fact, exchanged the truth of God for the lie (v. 25a). And out of this comes false worship, which is at root worship of themselves (v. 25b).

With some, this takes the form of idolatry. With others it takes the more subtle form of declaring independence from God. Regardless, when we substitute our own way of thinking for God’s revealed way, we are presuming to take His place.

And out of that falsehood about

God comes wickedness like “uncleanness” (v. 24) and “vile affections” (vv. 26-27). Assuming the correctness of Professor Leroy Forlines’ observations, the first of these refers primarily to heterosexual sin, the second to homosexual sin, although both are unclean. And both are “dishonoring”: the verb in v. 24 has the same root as the adjective translated “vile” in v. 26.

Such sins dishonor people and God. Nor is there much difference between “lusts” (v. 24: Greek *epithumia*, strong desire) and “affections” (v. 26: Greek *pathos*, strong feeling, passion); either word would work for either sin. Any kind of sexual sin is wrong and hurtful.

The biggest difference between the two, then, is that Paul speaks of homosexuality as a violation of what is “natural.” In v. 26 he speaks of female and in v. 27 of male homosexuality. Of both he says that they have exchanged the natural for that which is against nature, departing from “natural use.”

Here nature obviously refers to the kind of being God constituted humanity with and thus designed people to be and intended for them to be. Paul also calls this “unseemly” (Greek *aschemosune*), which literally means “not according to form”—here a moral “deformity,” that which is so against form as to be shameful, indecent. Clearly then homosexuality is not natural and this is the reason many call it, appropriately, perversion.

Furthermore, Paul notes that those who practice homosexuality receive in themselves the “recompense” which their error necessitated (the meaning of “meet”). The error is probably the falsehood of both concept of God and of wicked practice. And the recompense

(Green *antimisthia*, the corresponding wages) is not defined; we may assume that it refers to all the difficult consequences of the homosexual lifestyle. And there are many; the saddest and unlikeliest name they have ever worn is “gay.”

Does this include AIDS? Probably not specifically, as such; we need not think of God designing this disease specifically to punish homosexuals. But it is often one of the consequences of homosexual practice, as it is of shared drug needles, or of heterosexual sin—or sometimes even the experience of innocent babies or hemophiliacs or other bystanders.

Two answers, then, for those who claim homosexuality is natural. First, it certainly is not in accord with the nature God gave us. If nothing else, this passage makes that unmistakable.

Second and more broadly, we are no longer the way God made us. We are depraved and many of the inclinations we think are “natural” are wrong. All of us are sinners and equally so. What we really need is to be born again and bring our minds and manners into conformity with the revealed will of God, disciplining our lives according to His law. ■

He Came to Set the Captives Free

By Rebecca Brown, M.D.

(Chino, CA: Chick Publications, 1986, 288 pp., paperback, \$8.99)

This is one of the most popular books on the Christian literature market today, already in its 26th printing. It is a leading seller in many Christian bookstores in the U.S. and other countries as well.

In this volume, Dr. Rebecca Brown chronicles the story of her own life, and her story is truly an amazing one. She gave her life to Christ during her first year of medical school. She grew and matured in the Lord during the difficult years of medical training. During her year of internship she was confronted for the first time with the power of Satanism through an occult group called The Brotherhood.

Early in the book Dr. Brown introduces the reader to her friend Elaine who was a high priestess in this satanic cult. Elaine's life was dominated by a demon called Mann-chan. Elaine had been quite active in her church as a youth and, apparently, continued to attend church quite regularly during her years of involvement with Satanism.

After some time, Elaine became disillusioned with The Brotherhood and was determined to leave it. She turned to God and to Rebecca. The demons and Satan would not let her go easily. They continued to torment both Elaine and Dr. Brown for an extended period of time.

As a result of all this, Rebecca Brown became a student of the occult. She invested a great deal of time and energy in learning how demons work and how they can be cast out of people.

This book is filled with sordid tales of satanic rituals and ceremonies, black magic, demon possession, sexual immorality, and even human sacrifice. Elaine describes

how she had sex with Satan himself during the ceremony in which she became a high priestess. It leaves little doubt about the kinds of evil things that Satan and his followers do.

The author quotes many passages of scripture in the book. She presents numerous warnings about becoming involved with Satanism or with any form of the occult. She repeatedly affirms that God is superior to Satan and can defeat his power. She presents helpful information to those who want to turn from Satanism to Christ.

I find myself in agreement with much of what the author says, but there are parts of this book which I have real difficulty accepting. For one thing, this book attributes a great deal of power to Satan and his demons. Satan is able to afflict people, even Christians, in a variety of different ways (both physically and spiritually).

The view presented in the book is that Satan is so powerful that it is only with the greatest difficulty that God can defeat him. I have difficulty accepting that type of limitation on the power of God.

The book affirms that human sacrifice is widely practiced in this country and that Satanists in positions of authority are effectively keeping this knowledge from the American people. Personally, I find this a little hard to believe.

As was mentioned earlier, this book describes how Satan had sexual intercourse with Elaine. Satan is presented in scripture as an evil angelic being, not as a human being. It seems rather far-fetched to believe that an angelic being can have physical intercourse with a human.



Thomas Marberry

In the latter part of the book, Dr. Brown often asserts that our spirits can be physically separated from our bodies. I find this very hard to accept in light of the clear teachings of scripture. The Bible describes a person as having a material body and an immaterial soul or spirit, but it never speaks of man's immaterial part being separated from his material part until they are separated at death.

This book contains, no doubt, useful information about Satan and Satanism. There is every reason to believe that Satan is a powerful being and that Satanism is increasing in our world today. I have trouble, however, accepting at face value a book which contradicts several clear and specific teachings of scripture. The fact that a book is popular does not make it right. ■

Directory Update

ALABAMA

Tim Sizemore to Cooper Church, Detroit

ARKANSAS

Roger Harwell to First Church, Walnut Ridge from First Church, Fort Smith

WEST VIRGINIA

Tom Williams to South Ruffner Church, Charleston

Raybon Cook, Sr. to Kopperston Church, Kopperston

OTHER PERSONNEL

David Fite to Allen's Chapel Church, Batesville, AR, as associate pastor from Arbor Grove Church, Hoxie, AR

YOUTH MINISTRY NETWORK

What Is The YOUTH MINISTRY NETWORK ?

A fellowship of Free Will Baptist Youth Workers (part-time or full-time) who are actively involved in ministry with youth of all ages (children, teens, college, etc.).

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- Full-Time Youth Workers
- Pastors
- Parents
- Sunday School Teachers
- Children's Church Workers
- Youth Camp Personnel

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Δ Youth Ministry	Δ Fund Raisers
Δ Children's Ministry	Δ Reviews
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Δ Oral Communications Resource Guide	Δ Youth Evangelistic Team Handbook
Δ Drawing for Free Materials each quarter	Δ TEAM Magazines
	Δ  YOUTH MINISTRY NETWORK Discount

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Clergy Respect Drops as Scandals Grow

PRINCETON, MA (EP)—The public image of the ministerial profession continues to drop, according to a survey by the Princeton Religious Research Center. The study found that public confidence in priests, ministers and rabbis is at an all-time low.

A majority of those polled, 54 percent, gave the clergy "high" or "very high" ratings for ethics and honesty. Though the clergy rank higher than doctors (52 percent) and college teachers (50 percent), they still come in below pharmacists (66 percent).

"There was a time when the clergy was at the very top of the list of American occupations ranked by the public as having high standards of honesty and ethics," said the report printed in *Emerging Trends*.

Public opinion of the clergy peaked in 1985, when 66 percent of those polled gave high marks for honesty. Favorable ratings dropped sharply in 1988 as televangelist scandals came to light, and have continued to decline.

Book Campaign Takes Gospel to Moscow

MOSCOW, Russia (EP)—World Help, an evangelism and discipleship organization based in Forest, Virginia, has been invited to produce and distribute an evangelistic book to the residents of Moscow.

At a recent meeting, the Board of Directors of World Help met with Russia's equivalent of our Vice President (the former Chairman of the Supreme Soviet), and the former vice-chairman of the KGB. Konstantin Lubenchenko, the former Chairman of the Supreme Soviet, told the group, "The only hope for our country is not an economic solution, but rather a spiritual solution." He went on to say that Russia was totally receptive to any help toward a spiritual revolution.

The project has been called "Moscow for Jesus." A 32-page book titled *To Be a Christian* was written by Alexander Menn, a Russian church leader and writer who was mysteriously and violently murdered as he walked to church. If the funds are raised, the books will be printed in Moscow on former communist-owned presses, and will be distributed to three million homes in Moscow.

To Be a Christian presents the gospel of Jesus Christ in the language, history, tradition and culture of the Russian people. According to Vernon Brewer, president of World Help, "This book may be one of the most important Christian publications ever written in Russian . . . it could literally help transform this entire city, and possibly the entire nation."

'Miracles' Course Hides New Age Psychology

ATLANTA, GA (EP)—A *Course in Miracles* got a big boost from talk show host Oprah Winfrey, but the Southern Baptist Home Mission Board warns Christians that the book is deceptive New Age teaching.

The book is gaining acceptance in part because of a new book by Marianne Williamson, *A Return to Love: Reflections on the Principles of a Course in Miracles*. Williamson has twice been a guest on Oprah's program, and Winfrey was so impressed that she bought a copy of the book for everyone in her audience.

Williamson's book is based on her experience with *A Course in Miracles*, a three-volume set of books published in 1975 by Helen Schucman, a Jewish atheist. Other commentaries have been published as well.

"The Course," as it's often called, includes a workbook with 365 lessons; about 1,500 groups in the U.S. meet each week to study *The Course*, according to *Christianity Today*.

The contents of *The Course* were supposedly "channeled" by a voice claiming to be Jesus Christ. But Southern Baptist interfaith specialist Maurice Smith says *The Course* "is a radical denial of every basic Bible teaching." Smith notes that the contradiction with scripture may not be immediately apparent to all believers because the material uses language familiar to Christians.

One example is the title itself. While Christians think of miracles as supernatural acts of a personal God, *The Course* teaches that miracles are "changes in your understanding of reality."

Smith explains, "The primary focus is that what you see is not real and you can change your own reality. The past and the future are not important. Only the present as you create it by your thoughts is important. Only what is pleasant is real."

Additionally, *The Course* teaches that sin is allowing negative things to happen, that people can heal themselves by changing the way they think, and that God is something each person can become.

Missionaries Meet Rebels

LUZON, Philippines (EP)—A chance encounter in a remote mountain village gave a team of missionaries an unexpected opportunity to share the gospel with a group of elusive Communist guerrillas in the Philippines.

The visiting evangelists were threatened and accused of being government spies when armed Communist rebels discovered them in a small settlement in the Abra province, northern Luzon.

But the soldiers, members of the illegal

New People's Army who had retreated to the area after a clash with government forces, found only Bibles and tracts when they searched the team's belongings.

Their "suspects" were a team on outreach from Youth With a Mission's Discipleship Training School in Baguio city, further south, evangelizing among the area's Adasen people, who mostly follow tribal and folk religions.

"They were surprised to find us there and wanted to know what we were doing, so we had an opportunity to explain we were there to tell the people about Jesus," said party leader Mariano Gahid.

The YWAM group had been in the village for over a week, befriending the local people and presenting the gospel through a series of short dramas. They were planning a series of Bible studies with the villagers when the NPA men arrived.

The guerrillas questioned community leaders about the visitors on the first evening, and then returned the next day to question the YWAM team themselves at length over several hours.

"They claimed that the village was their territory, and at one stage they got quite angry. It made us a little anxious, but God gave us courage to speak his love to them about Jesus," said Gahid.

"I told them that religion couldn't save them, only Jesus. They quoted the Bible and how it says that faith without works is dead; they said that was why they were carrying their rifles. Eventually they decided that we must just leave. The people from the village tried to support us, but there was nothing they could do. As we were leaving the next day, though, they called out that we were welcome to go back and tell them more about Jesus some time." ■

The Higher Call

Ten years ago I sat in a Free Will Baptist meeting where a roomful of brothers hurled angry words and accusations at other brothers. Emotions flared, the tension so high it tasted like copper. Misunderstanding and years of frustration caused lifetime friends to turn their backs on one another and the greater good.

Then a wise man rose to speak and pled for unity and tolerance. We ignored his counsel. I watched as he sat in a corner while wildfire burned the harvest of 40 years. He wept, as an abandoned child he wept—and it tore my soul apart.

He did not abandon his faith. He did not remove his hand from the plow. He did not shred his Bible or resort to cynicism. Over the years, he quietly rose above his hurt. He grew bigger than the problems. Heartache drove him deeper into the arms of God. Today he's a spiritual dynamo.

Perhaps it's true that society requires some men to live life an octave above others. Is it fair? No, but that's the way things are. Some of us, seemingly, don't have the capacity or maybe the willingness to rise above tauntings and littleness from others.

Like a blacksmith, God sets a few anvils into His plan. They are the bellwethers upon whom the rest of us pound our hammers of frustration. We bang away for a season. The anvils endure; the hammers do not. We need anvil-like men to complete the task of the Church—longsuffering, resilient, forgiving, solid, unchanging amid change.

Not long ago, an evangelist gave me a tract titled, "Others May, You Cannot." It's no more than seven paragraphs long, yet it glistens with the power of surrendered living.

It says, in part: "If God has called you to be really like Jesus, He will draw you into a life of crucifixion and humility. God's call will put such demands of obedience on you that you will not be able to follow other people, or measure yourself by other Christians. At times, He will let other people do things which He will not let you do. . . ."

"The Holy Spirit will put a strict watch over you with a jealous love. He will rebuke you for the little words and feelings or for wasting your time. So make up your mind that God is an infinite Sovereign, and has a right to do as He pleases with His own. . . ."

I am grieved that it seems so fashionable today for men of God to be short-fused and intolerant. Society may look the other way when a childish basketball player rails at his opponent or those officiating the game. That same society requires more from Christians, especially Christian leaders.

Fair? No, but then we serve a Master who had the power to call a thousand legions of angels, yet meekly allowed those who did not understand to nail Him to a tree. And He did it for the greater good. He did it because He saw what they did not.

It's time that we who speak in the name of God take the longer look. There's a tangled line of people eager to speak first and think later, to flail and accuse and vilify. If we really want to make a difference, let's step across the aisle to the line where there's no waiting—the line with those who live life with action instead of reaction, who respond with graciousness instead of grossness.

We can disagree without burning down the house. We can practice freedom without enslaving those who don't see it our way.



Jack Williams

Somebody must be bigger than this immaturity that threatens to bankrupt our nation, destroy our churches and wreck our lives. It has to start somewhere. Why not here? Why not now? Why not us?

Only bigger men can handle bigger problems. The choice is ours. We can be more than a label, more than a temper waiting to explode, more than the judgment of others believes us capable of becoming.

Spiritual maturity sweeps through the community of believers with moderation, grace, love and strength. Immaturity brutalizes the church, slashing and kicking. No one can find a safe handle to control it.

You may remember the five-verse poem titled, "Dream On." The fourth verse tells this powerful truth:

"I've sown many seeds that fell by the way for the birds to feed upon, But I've held enough golden sheaves in my hands to make me keep sowing on."

That dear saint who sat in the corner 10 years ago and wept while his brothers torched the future has recovered. He's strong and vibrant now . . . but he carries within himself a deep sadness. It's a sadness that raises the unasked question: "Why must I be the one who is strong, Lord? Don't they have a responsibility also?"

I was there that day. I saw how quietness said more than anger, how tears watered the burned fields. I learned a costly lesson that day: The price of bigness is high; the price of smallness is higher.

This is a new day. We have a second chance. I intend to take it. ■

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