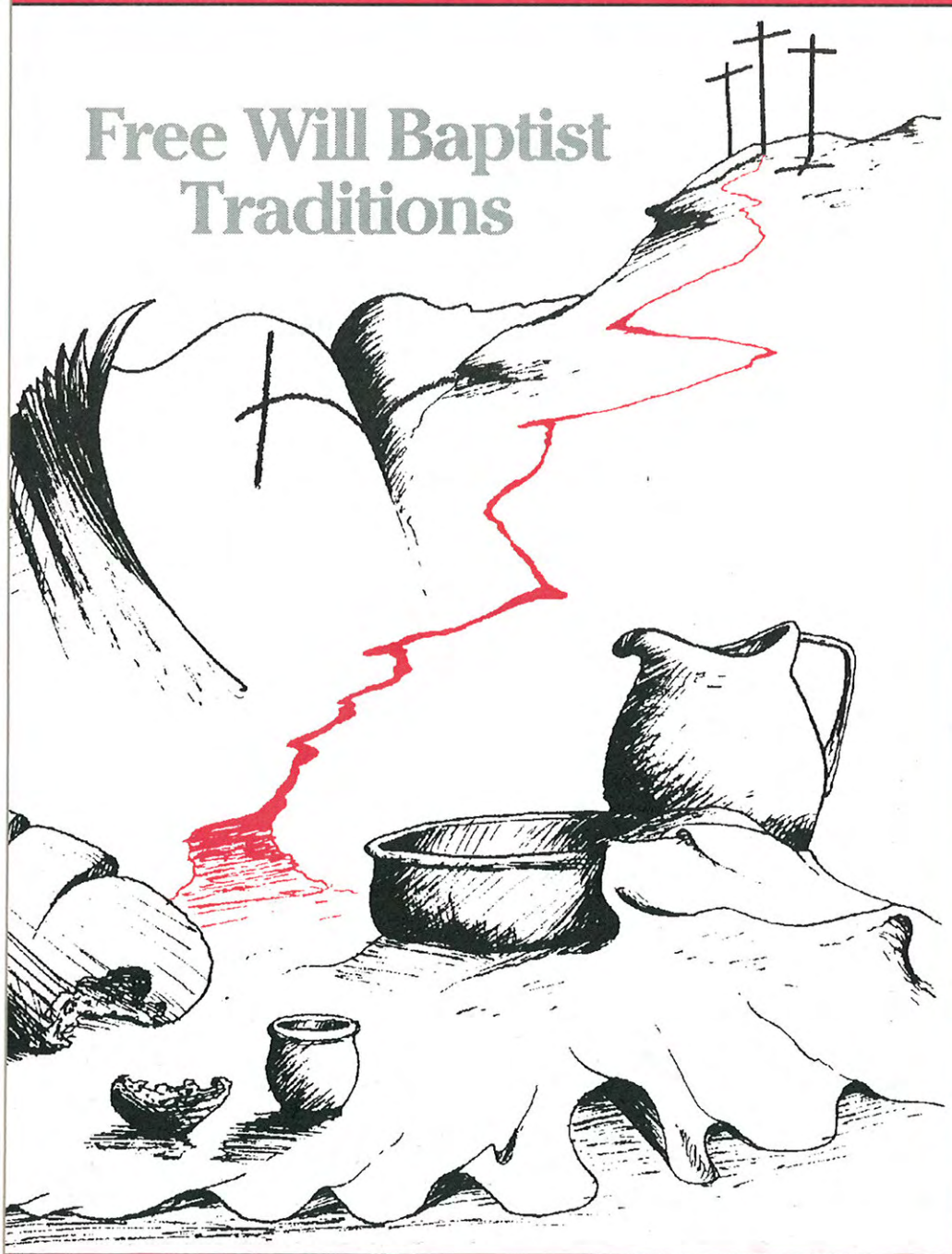


JULY 1994

# CONTACT

## Free Will Baptist Traditions



OFFICIAL PUBLICATION OF THE  
NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF  
FREE WILL BAPTISTS

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Preserving Our  
Traditions

.....  
Revival!

.....  
Don't Leave . . .

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Divorce

.....  
Protect Our Children

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Melvin Worthington

## Doing Denominational Business

**T**he National Association of Free Will Baptists is a unique organization with a membership of more than 214,000 members. Transacting denominational business is a challenge on any level, but especially when the annual national convention meets for business.

We must face reality. Business is not always transacted harmoniously. Sometimes heated discussions, debates and disagreements surface during business sessions. The challenge we face at every annual business session is to transact denominational business in a manner that brings glory to God and provides the climate necessary for continued growth. That's what we will do July 17-21 in Little Rock, Arkansas.

### *Remember the diversity.*

Our diversity is greater at the local church level than the National Association level. Nevertheless, we are a denomination filled with diversity. When we gather together, we bring differing perspectives, philosophies, personalities and practices.

### *Respect dissent.*

Those who dissent are not enemies. They are brothers and sisters who view things differently.

While we may not agree, we can respect each other while disagreeing. Dissenters should not be condemned or censured. Lack of respect for others produces a climate of hostility.

Every delegate should remember that when the majority of delegates vote, the matter is settled. Delegates register their dissent by voting on issues. After the vote, it is time to implement the will of the body.

### *Reaffirm our doctrine.*

The annual convention provides the forum to reaffirm our position on various vital issues. Resolutions dealing with a number of issues are adopted. Occasionally, we reaffirm our position on the scriptures or register opposition to practices in the moral, religious and political arenas which are contrary to our understanding of scriptures.

### *Review our direction.*

The national business meeting remains the time to examine and evaluate the direction the denomination is taking. The mandate which brought us into existence was to extend Christ's Kingdom to the ends of the earth—missions. Reviewing the home and foreign missions reports confirms our continued commitment to missions.

Total gifts to national ministries in 1993 was \$7.86 million. Where did we spend it? We gave \$7.3 million (93%) to missions and education (Foreign Missions—51%; Home Missions—31% and Free Will Baptist Bible College—11%). All other national agencies operated on the remaining 7%. These figures confirm that we have not deviated from the purpose which mandates our exist-

ence. Missions remains the focus of our movement.

### *Refine our documents.*

The National Association retains the right to amend its documents—charter, constitution and by-laws, *Treatise* and Covenant. Procedures for changes in these documents are detailed in the constitution and by-laws of the National Association.

### *Resolve our disagreements.*

At times, all organizations deal with issues which cause disagreement. Our business sessions provide the forum to discuss, debate and decide the position of the denomination on areas of disagreement among the members.

Disagreement is not a sign that God is not in our midst. In fact, the exact opposite is often the case. Disagreement shared with the right spirit will sharpen and shape the course of the denomination.

### *Redress our differences.*

Free Will Baptists differ on many issues—music, drama, worship style, eschatology. Our documents take into account these differences and provide an organizational structure and doctrinal statement which reflect the differences. When differences arise, the national business meeting is the place to thoroughly address the areas where differences exist.

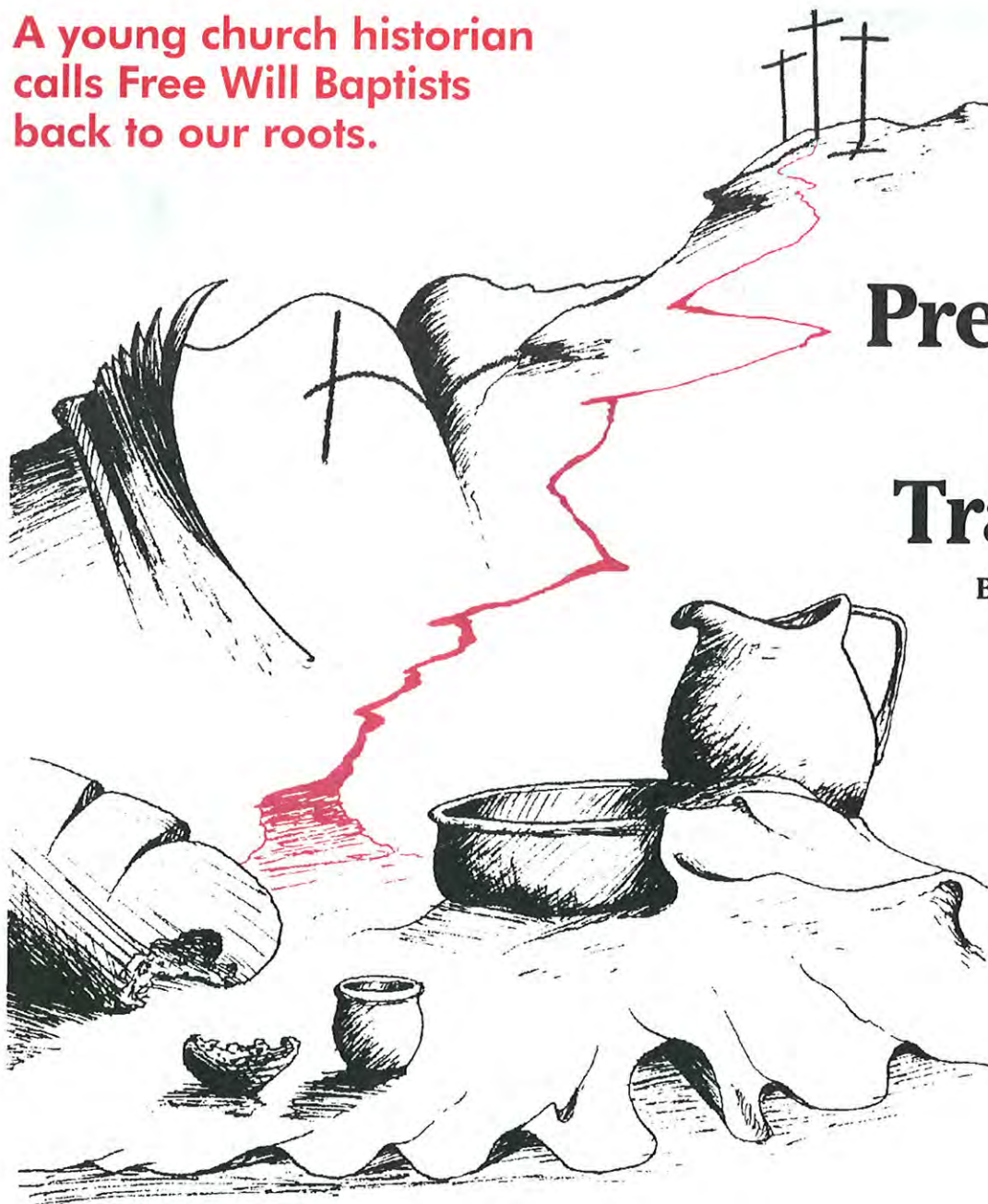
### *Renew our dedication.*

Each national convention provides opportunity for Free Will Baptists to dedicate themselves afresh to our Maker, movement and ministry. Join us in Little Rock for the 58th annual convention of the National Association. You will be glad you did. ■

### *The Secretary's Schedule*

<b>July 11</b>	Directors' Prayer Retreat Antioch, Tennessee
<b>July 12-15</b>	Pre-Convention Meetings Little Rock, Arkansas
<b>July 16</b>	Executive Committee Meeting Little Rock, Arkansas
<b>July 17-21</b>	National Convention Little Rock, Arkansas
<b>July 21-22</b>	Post-Convention Meetings Little Rock, Arkansas
<b>July 29-31</b>	Mexican National Convention

**A young church historian  
calls Free Will Baptists  
back to our roots.**



# Preserving our Tradition

By Matt Pinson

**F**ree Will Baptists take the Bible as their sole rule of faith and practice. Unlike the Roman Catholic Church, we believe that tradition cannot be an authority for us in matters of faith and practice; scripture alone must be our authority. Free Will Baptists, nonetheless, have a tradition and traditions. Webster defines tradition as the handing down of customs, beliefs, etc. from generation to generation.

On this definition, it may certainly be said that Free Will Baptists are a people of tradition. We speak of our

values as traditional values; we speak of ourselves as having a traditional theology as opposed to a modern one. Yet we hasten to say that our tradition has been—and our traditions are—based upon inerrant scripture.

## **The Erosion of Tradition**

Late 20th century America has witnessed the erosion of tradition, partly because of the move from a rural or agrarian culture to an urban culture. With urbanization has come uprootedness from our customs and

traditions. This erosion of tradition can be seen among Free Will Baptists and may be credited to the move from an agrarian or rural culture to an urban culture in our own denomination.

When the denomination was largely rural, young men beginning in the ministry were rooted and steeped in our tradition. The tradition was second nature to them (in part, perhaps, because they had been to quarterly meeting after quarterly meeting and yearly meeting after yearly meeting as children). These men were self-consciously

preservers of the tradition.

I recall as a boy growing up in a small, rural Free Will Baptist association in West Florida/South Alabama, a senior minister who would give his testimony about an Elder Mark Rainey from Pitt County, North Carolina, who had come to West Florida to establish churches there. The minister would recount how that, as a young man, Elder Rainey made him promise that he would defend the articles of faith until his dying day, and never let them be changed.

Hearing this same testimony 15 or 20 times during my boyhood impressed upon me the importance of tradition—our tradition. This is something that seems foreign—even laughable—to many young ministers in our denomination today.

### *Change in Society*

What has caused this erosion of respect for our tradition? First, as noted above, our society has changed. Whereas our grandfathers grew up in an agrarian culture and rural churches which placed great value in beliefs, traditions and customs, most of us have grown up in uprooted urban or suburban cultures which have been flooded with secularism through the media and educational structures.

With the uprootedness of urbanization and secularization, we have lost the sense of continuity with our religious past. Modernity has, in essence, snatched Free Will Baptists from the small-town 1880's and thrown them into the late 20th century, complete with its concrete and steel, its urbanity and its atheism. Young Free Will Baptist ministers today are not receiving the natural training in our tradition that was received by our grandfathers.

The dilemma that exists, then, is how to transmit our tradition to our young people. Since they are not getting it naturally, it is now necessary to educate them in it, so that they can learn how to appreciate and perpetuate our tradition in the 21st century—in a world so alien to the tradition.

### *Dissatisfaction with Denomination*

Another cause of the erosion of

our tradition has been the lack of satisfaction with being Free Will Baptist (a sort of inferiority complex). Many of us today have failed to rely on or take solace in our own traditions (perhaps because we are ignorant of them), and hence we go somewhere else for traditions, whether to the Southern Baptists, the Methodists, the Independent Baptists or even the Charismatics.

There are numerous concrete examples of how our tradition has begun to erode. Let me stress strongly at this point that this erosion of tradition transcends party lines in our denomination, touching the left, the middle, and the right. Let us discuss just a few examples.

### *Erosion of Our Worship Tradition*

In the old days, worship practices distinguished Free Will Baptists and other Baptists from other denominations. Our worship was something that was very important to us, not merely as an unnecessary appendage to our doctrine, but something that was a working-out of our doctrine. Though worship modes have healthily differed among Free Will Baptists, there has always been a desire to emulate the New Testament pattern for worship.

This pattern teaches us to worship God in spirit and in truth. Thus Free Will Baptists have always insisted upon freedom in worship, shunning all set forms and appurtenances that would hinder the free moving of the Spirit in the worship of God.

The simplicity of a humble sacrifice of praise and worship has always been a paramount emphasis of Free Will Baptists. At the same time, however, Free Will Baptists have insisted that things be done decently and in order. Thus there have always been checks to excessive emotionalism. Though some of us have worshipped more emotionally than others of us—and though we allow each other that freedom—we have all desired to worship decently and in order.

### *Formalism in Worship*

These traditions of worship have not been ingrained in our young ministers. There is an alarming tendency

to go against the most basic tenets of our tradition of worship because of an ignorance of our tradition. This is manifest in some churches in the use of liturgies and forms or the use of what has been called by some the “church year”—all inventions of the Roman Catholic Church which are alien to New Testament Christianity and to our own tradition.

Some young Christian workers I have talked with think that the reason why most Free Will Baptists don't observe Lent or the reason our ministers don't wear robes or the reason we don't use set forms and liturgies is because “we didn't know any better,” or that Free Will Baptists are “ignorant” or “backwards.” We need to educate our young people, especially our young ministers, as to why we worship the way we do.

Our worship practices are not the way they are just by default—just because we did what came natural and didn't know any better—but because we have self-consciously tried to follow the New Testament pattern for the church. We need to be proud of our tradition, know why we have the tradition, and preserve the tradition.

### *Charismatic Worship Forms*

At the other extreme is the tendency toward charismatic worship forms which are also alien to our tradition. This is manifest in the tendency toward excessive emotionalism and the elimination or near-elimination of hymns from worship which comes with the reliance, either solely or primarily, on choruses or easily-remembered tunes.

While emotion has always been a necessary component of Free Will Baptist worship, there has arisen a tendency in some quarters to rely on an emotionalism characteristic of the charismatic movement, a recent innovation which is also alien to our tradition. And while scripturally-based choruses can greatly enhance Christian worship, some churches have manifested the tendency to over-emphasize the singing of choruses with words displayed on overhead projectors or printed in a program.



An over-reliance on these musical forms not only mitigates against music education in our churches (since hymnals are often dispensed with and notes are not used at all), but also throws away our entire hymnic tradition, which consists not only of the older English hymn and American folk hymn traditions, but also of late 19th century revival hymn and early 20th century Stamps-Baxter traditions.

All these musical traditions are part-and-parcel of our religious experience as Free Will Baptists. To forget them is to throw away traditions which helped to define who we are and to leave our children bereft of any understanding of where they came from.

### *Rally-Style Worship*

Others, while not giving in to either formalism or charismaticism, have capitulated to the rally-style worship services popular in many independent circles. This also is alien to our tradition.

Thus, both formalism and excessive emotionalism, which have made significant inroads into our denomination, should be resisted as imported traditions which are alien to who we are as a people. We must resist the tendency to think of different worship practices as merely “styles,” but rather as sacrifices to God which have great import for us as regards our doctrine and our self-concept as Free Will Baptists. We must instill in our children a respect and a love for the customs of their grandparents and great-grandparents. To refrain from this is to forget where we came from and hence to deny who we are as a religious people.

### *Ignoring Feet Washing*

Another serious erosion of worship tradition and theology has arisen in the area of the Christian ordinances, particularly that of feet washing. Many Free Will Baptist churches that once practiced feet washing in connection with the Lord’s Supper as a matter of course have now either dispensed with the ordinance altogether or have tacked it on as an occasional appendage—

a “neat thing to do”—completely separate from the Lord’s Supper.

Like the other deviations, this comes from one of two sources: a lack of understanding of our tradition or a feeling of inferiority when we compare our practices with those of other denominations. We need to place greater emphasis on this essential aspect of our tradition, giving our young people pride in this ordinance.

This pride will only come from systematic biblical teaching explaining why Free Will Baptists have always practiced the ordinance and why the ordinance is more relevant today than ever. It is time that our church leaders model the practice of this ordinance before congregations, rather than the scenario in so many of our churches, where ordained deacons and even some ordained ministers quietly “slip out” or “have to leave” after the Lord’s Supper and before feet washing.

Those ministers who de-emphasize the blessed ordinance are not only throwing away our tradition, but indeed are also failing to live up to their calling and position as Free Will Baptist preachers and guarantors of our sacred doctrine.

### *Erosion of Our Tradition of Polity*

Not only are there signs of the erosion of our worship tradition, but there are also signs of the erosion of our tradition of polity, the type of government in our churches. This is seen in a few basic areas. We might discuss three, all of which are examples of the supplanting of our own tradition of polity by either polity traditions of other denominations or secular/corporate influences.

### *CEOs Replace Servants*

The first erosion of our tradition with regard to Free Will Baptist polity is the increasing pastoral authority and board-authority in local churches. Many Free Will Baptist churches are dominated by preachers who, whether they realize it or not, have given up the role of servant of the church for that of over-arching dictator on the one hand (reflecting influences from other denominations) or C.E.O. on the other (reflect-

ing influences from contemporary business or corporate life).

Other churches, while not giving in to strict pastoral authority, elect executive boards which make all or most of the crucial decisions for the church. Both these models are importations which are alien to our scripturally-based tradition which emphasizes the priesthood of all individual believers and manifests a respect for this priesthood in a system of direct democracy in which all members of the flock have a vote in the affairs of the church.

In many of our modern-day Free Will Baptist churches, this emphasis is given lip-service at best and is done away with at worst.

### *Board Dominated Associations*

This problem also manifests itself in associations in which the executive committee or general board makes all the crucial decisions for the association and squelches anything it does not want to see go before the body. This was illustrated to me in a recent conversation with a young Christian who is new to the Free Will Baptist associational scene. She related that she didn’t even see why we go to these meetings and have delegates and so forth since everything’s already decided beforehand anyway.

This kind of board-control reflects influences more from corporate America than from the New Testament and our tradition. We must be careful not to let the importance of these questions be lost on us. We must realize that how we govern the church is a matter with important theological implications, not merely a “management style” which can be learned from Harvard Business School, nor a church machinery which can be borrowed from the Methodists for a more “cost-effective, time-effective” church life.

### *Political Rally Nationals*

A shocking illustration of the over-politicization of our denomination was seen at the National Association in 1993, when what seemed like scores of people were standing at the doors handing out handbills and buttons, campaigning for their agenda

for the business meeting the next morning. May God remind us that our conventions are not congressional sessions or meetings of the Democratic or Republican National Convention, but meetings rather of the Church of the Living God.

If we cannot conduct our business in a way that pleases God, rather than borrowing from late 20th century power politics, then let us stay at home. If we are not careful, He may drive us out with a whip as He did the money-changers of old.

### **Reclaiming and Preserving our Tradition**

All the above problems are evidence of a lack of understanding or a lack of concern for our tradition, which emphasizes freedom, simplicity and order in worship, the washing of the saints' feet, the priesthood of all believers as demonstrated in direct democracy, and the spiritual rather than secular nature of the church. These erosions of our tradition demonstrate a need to reclaim our tradition. How can this be done?

#### *Inform the People*

First, we must make it a priority to educate our people—especially our young ministers—in our tradition. This involves a thorough understanding of our history, a thorough understanding of how Free Will Baptists have interpreted the Bible with

regard to these matters throughout their history.

It seems that many of us have no interest in or knowledge of where we came from—of why we have come to believe what we believe and do what we do. I see in many young Free Will Baptist college students an inability to articulate to others what it means to be Free Will Baptist.

This stems from a lack of pride, which stems from a lack of understanding. Pride and a sense of belonging come only when people know what they should have pride in and what it is they belong to. There is too much trying to forget about or play down the fact that most of our churches are small and were started by hard-working, country people—our grandfathers and grandmothers who were proud of who they were, of what they believed and of how they did things. We owe it to future generations to instill in our young people a sense of pride, a sense of heritage.

#### *Institutional Responsibility*

Our educational institutions need to place greater stress on our tradition, on our identity, not merely by giving lectures about historical dates, places and associational minutes, but also by giving lectures and writing books and pamphlets about the kind of people our forefathers were—their culture, their music, their spiri-

tuality, their lifestyles, their values.

Free Will Baptist Bible College has heralded the call with the inauguration of its annual Heritage Lectures. It simply will not do to pick the Methodists or Independent Baptists or other evangelicals (whichever the case may be) and then seek to “move up” and adapt to their traditions—this will only gut us of the only asset we have: the Bible-based tradition of our forebears.

A knowledge of our Bible-based past—of our tradition—and an application and communication of the tradition to the contemporary setting is the only thing that will give us the insight and the courage we need to perpetuate our Free Will Baptist faith into the 21st century. ■



ABOUT THE WRITER: Reverend Matt Pinson is a minister in the West Florida Association of Free Will Baptists and a member of First Free Will Baptist Church of Pensacola, Florida. He earned the B.A. and M.A. degrees from the University of West Florida and has just completed his master's degree in church history at Yale University. He will begin doctoral work this fall.

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# **July 10 National Convention Day of Prayer and Fasting**



# R

## Prescription for Revival

By Bobby Jackson



*Disease . . .  
Doctor . . .  
Prescription . . .  
Medicine . . .  
Cure.*

**T**he words suggest that someone is sick. The physician has diagnosed the case, given a remedy, and if the patient will take the medicine, he will get well.

In a spiritual sense the words imply the same. When God's people become spiritually sick, there is a Physician with a prescription that promises recovery to health.

Solomon had finished the magnificent temple in Jerusalem. In his prayer of dedication he asked the Lord to have mercy upon His people when they sinned.

"And the Lord appeared to Solo-

mon by night, and said . . . If my people, which are called by my name, shall humble themselves, and pray, and seek my face, and turn from their wicked ways; then will I hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin, and will heal their land," (II Chronicles 7:12-14.)

The prescription is given by the Lord to His people called by His name. Revival and evangelism may be two threads in one blanket. Revival produces evangelism, and evangelism fuels the fire of revival. Yet, in a strict sense revival applies to the people of God.

It is evidently conditional. Charles Finney observed that spiritual revival is no more a miracle than growing a crop of corn is a miracle. The Lord promised, "If my people . . . then will I." The sinsick patient must take the medicine.

The verse suggests not four prescriptions, but four ingredients inseparably mixed together. The praying includes humility, seeking God

and repentance. The humbling of self involves each of the others, and so all of the conditions are part of one heart attitude. However, in order to analyze the attitude, the elements will be considered separately.

### Humility

"If my people . . . shall humble themselves."

It has been said that humility is not becoming a floor mat for others to walk on. Humility and meekness are said to be power and strength under control. This definition certainly needs to be expanded. What did it mean to Jesus to "humble Himself?"

" . . . he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross" (Philippians 2:8).

Humbling self to Christ meant being rejected, mocked, ridiculed, despised, spat upon, laughed at, nailed to a cross to die the most excruciating death that Roman ingenuity could devise. That makes being a



floor mat sound like a cake walk.

Self-humiliation is self-crucifixion. The problem between man and God is self. All sin is essentially selfishness. So the only solution to the problem is to take self to the cross. Paul understood this. He identified himself with Christ on the cross, "I am crucified with Christ . . ." (Galatians 2:20).

"That I may know him, and the power of his resurrection, and the fellowship of his sufferings, being made conformable unto his death" (Philippians 3:10).

Most Christians want Easter Sunday without Good Friday. They want the joy of the resurrection and eternal life without the agony of death on a cross. There is no Easter Sunday without Good Friday.

"Humble yourselves therefore under the mighty hand of God. . . ." exhorted Peter (I Peter 5:6). How do we do this? Take that proud, arrogant, egotistical, boasting self to the cross and nail him there to die a painful death of denial and rejection.

This is necessary if revival is to come.

## Prayer

"If my people . . . shall pray."

Nehemiah's prayer for restoration and forgiveness is a great example of revival praying.

". . . I beseech thee, O Lord God of heaven, the great and terrible God, that keepeth covenant and mercy for them that love him and observe his commandments" (Nehemiah 1:5). God must be seen in His awesome greatness, mercy and love.

"Let thine ear now be attentive, and thine eyes open, that thou mayest hear the prayer of thy servant, which I pray before thee now, day and night, for the children of Israel thy servants, and confess the sins of the children of Israel," (Nehemiah 1:6).

Prayer must be persistent and earnest "day and night," and include a genuine confession of sins. He rests his case upon the Lord's faithfulness to keep the promise of restoring His people to Himself, if they turn to Him from their sins (Nehemiah 1:8-9).

This is the prayer that brings revival.

## Seeking the Lord

"If my people . . . shall seek my face."

Someone suggested that the Lord was saying, "Look me in the eye." As your father may have said when you were caught in disobedience, "You look at me, and tell me again whether or not you are guilty." No evading, dodging, excusing, you must come clean with God.

There is the clear requirement here to pursue God, honestly, simply, singularly, with the whole heart. His promise is, "And ye shall seek me and find me, when ye shall search for me with all your heart" (Jeremiah 29:13).

There is no geography with God. The distance between man and God is spiritual, and has to do with the heart attitude of the man. He is as near to you as your breath. Anyone who seeks Him aright finds Him.

This is what revival is all about.

## Repentance

"If my people. . . shall turn from their wicked ways."

Revival becomes necessary because of sin and wickedness in the lives of God's people. Therefore, no revival will ever come until they stop sinning.

Isaiah 55:7 is still in the Bible, "Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts: and let him return unto the Lord, and he will have mercy upon him; and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon."

Note that the mercy and the pardon are contingent upon forsaking his wicked way and returning to the Lord.

Confession of sin to God must mean more than telling him you have sinned and listing the sins. That is absurd. He already knows you have sinned and what your sins are. Real confession includes repentance.

"What is repentance?" a pastor asked of a congregation.

A little fellow responded, "Preacher, it just means to be sorry enough to quit."

No theology book has any better definition than that.

Revival comes when God's people

change their minds about sinning.

The summary and conclusion to this whole matter may be found in a proclamation by the President of the United States, August 12, 1861. If the admonitions of this proclamation be taken to heart, revival will come in 1861 or in 1994:

"And whereas it is fit and becoming in all people, at all times, to acknowledge and revere the Supreme Government of God; to bow in *humble* submission to His chastisements; to *confess* and *deplore* their *sins* and *transgressions* in the full conviction that the fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom; and to *pray*, with all *fergency* and *contrition*, for the pardon of their past offenses, and for a blessing upon their present and prospective action. . . .

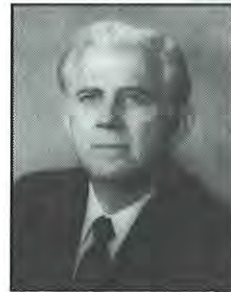
"Therefore I, Abraham Lincoln, President of the United States, do appoint the last Thursday in September next, as a day of humiliation, prayer and fasting for all the people of the nation."

That about says it all—humble self, pray, turn from our wicked ways.

The problem is: *It is easier said than done.* Men are not made humble nor repentant by presidential proclamation.

The question is: *Will you do it?*

The answer is: *If you will, then He will hear from heaven and will forgive your sin and will heal your land.* That is revival, in any day. ■



ABOUT THE WRITER: Reverend Bobby Jackson is a Free Will Baptist evangelist who resides in Greenville, North Carolina. He has conducted more than 1,400 evangelistic campaigns in the past 38 years and preached more than 10,000 sermons.

We want to grow, too!

# Don't Leave!

By David M. Sutton



**J**ust as some strain of Asian flu seems to sweep the USA each winter, the annual Let's-Pull-Out-And-Go-Independent bug seems to strike some of our pastors who think the denomination's changing too slowly or not at all. We need to do something about that bug. We've lost too many pastors and churches because of his influential bite. I think I'll enroll in "exterminator" school and find out what insecticide will send him running for the cracks. I'll let you know when I get my diploma.

In the meantime, and in behalf of my denomination, I want to invite you to stay. From the local church to the Double in a Decade Campaign, we really want to grow and we need your help to do it. I'm sure we are not all we can be, but praise the Lord, we are so much more than we used to be. We have made tremendous progress through the years, and

together in a spirit of unity and cooperation, we can move on to see our goals and dreams become realities.

There are several reasons why I plan to stay and remain faithful and loyal to my denomination. These reasons in a real sense are antibiotics that will ensure me a strong immunity against the attacks of "The Bug."

### *The Call of God*

I was in a Free Will Baptist church when God called me into the ministry. It was clear to me from the beginning that I was to minister here. I never had a thought of going elsewhere. I knew the call was not temporary, and therefore, I made plans to stay for a lifetime.

### *A Sense of Indebtedness*

I owe a sizeable debt to Free Will

Baptists. I came from the Methodist church as a teenager 36 years ago. I've always had a place to serve. In those early days I was League president in my district. I preached my first sermon at the Gaar Corner FWB Church near Ada, Oklahoma. I received my pastoral training at OBC (now Hillsdale). I've served on numerous boards and have held various offices on district, state and national levels.

As a pastor, I've received a paycheck every week, without exception, from Free Will Baptists since 1969. My denomination has been good to me and my family. If I should live to be 100 years old, I doubt that I could fully repay the debt that I owe.

### *A Significant Investment*

While it is true that my denomination has been good to me, it's also true that I have a sizeable investment in my denomination. For more than

35 years I have been supporting the ministry of my denomination through tithes, special offerings and other means. I have traveled thousands of miles to various conferences and meetings.

As a member of the mission board for many years, I have helped to establish churches in Oklahoma and Texas. I had the honor of being a joint-project worker at Jenks, Oklahoma, in 1973. I have now pastored 25 years. My near lifetime investment is with Free Will Baptists. I guess that I should not be surprised that my heart is here also.

### *Family Love and Loyalty*

I'm from a large family of four brothers and three sisters. What a blast we have when we all get together. There are 80-plus counting all of the nieces, nephews and spouses. I love every one of them, but I also love my Free Will Baptist family.

I look forward to the national convention each year, partly because I will get to see my family and enjoy fellowship with them. I'm proud to claim you as my very own, and I never want to do anything to embarrass you or tarnish the family name. I'll do my best to help you and encourage you, to be loyal in every possible way.

### *Sound Doctrine*

Our doctrine is biblical and trustworthy. It is safe and encourages

godly, separated living. We are not extreme in any area, but neither are we weak and indifferent. We proclaim the whole counsel of God and still believe that sin is sin. We still believe that Jesus Christ is the only provision for sin, and we still invite sinners to repent and come to Him for salvation. I can truthfully say that I am not ashamed of anything that we believe and teach.

### *High Biblical Standards*

In my opinion, our standards are high and commendable. I don't know of a group anywhere that surpasses us. I realize that we don't always agree on every issue concerning standards, but I am convinced that we all have a desire to honor the Lord in what we say and do. We are not immune from worldliness and we need to always be on guard against conformity to it, but I am proud of the stand that we have maintained through the years.

Some of the critical issues that have dominated the agenda of many groups have not even needed to be mentioned in our meetings. There's no question where we stand on such things. May God help us to continue to hold the standard banner high.

### *My Personal Commitment*

Whatever happened to commitment? When I make a promise to the Lord, shouldn't I keep it? When I say "I will," shouldn't I mean it? Do I have

a right to do my own thing or go my own way when things do not go as I think they ought?

It's easy to throw in the towel and quit when things do not go my way, but it's better to tough it out and stay put. Commitment means that I stay until the Lord Himself says differently. I must make sure that "the still small voice" I hear is that of God rather than that of the U-Haul man.

And so, my friend, when the "bug" knocks at your door (and he surely will), tell him to get lost. Tell him your denomination is really not as bad as some few are saying. Tell him the extra money is not worth the investment that you will lose. Tell him that you love your family too much to desert them. Tell him you're going to stay and help accomplish our goals and dreams. Tell him that you still remember your commitment to the cause. ■



ABOUT THE WRITER: Reverend David Sutton pastors First Free Will Baptist Church in Duncanville, Texas. He is a member of the Sunday School and Church Training Board.

## BEYOND BELIEF



# When Divorce Comes to Church

By Jim McAllister

**T**hey stood before me proud, excited and obviously very much in love. There seemed to be nothing but happiness ahead of them. They were young but mature. They were Christians and members of the church. They were friends of the pastor and closely involved with many key members of the church. They both had good jobs, and their first home was a nice house in the suburbs, not much trouble anticipated here. They should live happily ever after.

But something happened. I was no longer their pastor, in fact, I didn't even live in the same state, but something happened. I heard that they had separated, then divorced. They had a child, and he was now the survivor of a divided home. Their friends, including myself, all wondered what could have happened.

Through the years I have seen several couples who should have made a success of marriage, but they failed. I have seen deacons, evangelists, pastors, denominational leaders and church laymen fail at obtaining marital bliss.

What is the problem? This divorce



problem among fundamental, Bible-believing Christians is reaching epidemic proportion.

I have been fortunate. In 36 years of pastoring upwards of 3,000 members in five churches, I have only had three divorces occur in the churches under my pastorate. I say fortunate because I consider divorce in the church family one of the greatest tragedies that can happen to that congregation. My record of only three divorces in 36 years will probably be changing because of the present attitude of people toward divorce.

## Hard Questions

It is understandable that the unsaved world should take lightly the marriage vow and walk away from responsibilities. One can readily see how the ungodly would become unfaithful and fall into the evil trap of adultery. It makes sense that the unrighteous would lie, deceive or be

deceived.

We should not be surprised that they would count their commitment as nothing and break their marriage promise. Divorce should not be a surprise in this day of ungodliness and unbelief. They live together outside marriage and make morality a joke. Why wouldn't they bring additional shame on God's plan for man and woman and divorce their mates? But what can be happening to the Christians? Why do Christian leaders and their wives act like the unsaved? Why would they go so far that they would disregard the laws of the One who makes them different?

I was counseling a preacher and his wife. Suddenly the wife said, "Brother Jim, you think I don't like my husband. That isn't true. I hate my husband."

That's pretty heavy stuff for a person who claims to be an Arminian. Someone very dear to me said, "You preach and teach Arminianism, but live like Calvinists."



What is the church's responsibility in this matter? How do we minister to the divorced? How do we counsel those considering divorce? How do we prevent divorce? These are serious questions, and we pastors face these questions almost daily.

### Tell the Truth in Love

First, the church does have a responsibility. The pastor must be diligent in preaching against adultery, immorality, divorce and the promiscuous life style. But we must not drop a bomb on an anthill. We may be doing that.

We need to preach our doctrine unashamedly as it pertains to matters of morals, modesty, marriage and divorce. However, we also must preach and teach strongly on the subject of love and commitment. I am convinced that divorce is a sin and the result of sin.

No person should have to tolerate infidelity or endure abuse, but somehow we are failing to convey to our youth, as well as adults, the fact that lying is a fatal sin and breaking the marriage vow is lying. So preaching, teaching and counseling are all musts for the pastor and church. Failure to do these things in an organized and biblical manner leaves the church with a certain amount of blame for the unfortunate things that happen.

### Effective Counseling

Second, how do we counsel those who are considering divorce? Here's how. Listen to both parties. Prepare yourself in advance. Recognize problems that are over your head. This is no place for an over-inflated ego. Stick with the scriptures. After all, God does have a lot to say about marriage and divorce. You can trust His Word.

Be fair. Don't suggest anything for others to do that you couldn't do, or wouldn't do. If there is no physical abuse involved, I suggest taking plenty of time. Divorce lasts a long time, so they should be sure. Frequently, time works out problems.

### Ounce of Prevention

Third, how do we prevent divorce? Every pastor should promote



a strong Christian and church-oriented marriage counseling program. Just being a pastor doesn't necessarily make the minister qualified to do counseling. While training can be secured, it may not always be best for the pastor do this work himself. It may be a detriment, rather than a blessing.

If the pastor decides this is not his ministry, he should find and recommend a qualified person for this work. The people will need this kind of help.

If the church has a teaching and training ministry that prepares people for marriage, teaches them how to act and react in marriage, and shows how to work through marital problems, most divorces between Christian people can be avoided. I prescribe books to read, videos to watch and seminars to attend. I teach an adult Sunday School class, and this class deals with marriage at least one-fifth of the Sundays each year.

### Heal the Hurting

Fourth, how do we minister to the divorced? Kindly, as we would to an injured person. Passionately, as we would if they were critically ill. Firmly, as we would if they were our own children. We must minister truthfully, for they must know the truth in order to be set free.

Matthew 5:31-32 and Malachi 2:16 tell us that God hates divorce, but He loves the divorcee. The divorcee is an injured person, a sick person, a person who has acted like a child and hurts deeply. The divorcee needs help and must be convinced to accept it.

The pastor and church must be adequate for this problem. Classes, support groups, seminars, books, videos, encounter groups, professional curriculum and sermons are a few of the helps possible. Probably all will be required.

In conclusion, divorce is a sign of failure. It is a result of weakness and inadequacy. It is sin. The church must preach and teach against it. It must be avoided at all costs. But in spite of all the church does, it occurs, the divorced one must know that there is still a vital place in the church for them.

Make sure they feel wanted. They have a wounded spirit and a bruised ego. We must revive their will and resurrect their hope. They need the church now. Make sure we give it to them. ■



ABOUT THE WRITER: Reverend Jim McAllister serves as president of California Christian College and pastor of Harmony Free Will Baptist Church in Fresno, California.

# Protecting our Children

By Eddie Moody



**U**ntil recently, child sexual abuse was seldom discussed in the local church. There was little need to mention it. But because society has changed, we must exert special effort to guard children from harm. Whose job is it? It's everybody's job in one sense, but especially the job of parents.

Parents are in the best position to protect children from sexual abuse. There are several steps you can take to increase the safety of your child.

## **Maintain a close relationship with your child.**

Most children are molested by someone they know (e.g., an uncle, parent, cousin, teacher, baby-sitter, neighbor). This underscores the importance of parents maintaining a close relationship with their child.

Children need to know they can tell a parent anything. Many children who have survived sexual abuse say something like this, "My mother would have never believed her favorite brother was doing that to me."

## *Talk and listen to your child.*

Children should feel comfortable telling parents about someone who frightens them or tries to touch them in a private area. Parents should discuss with children their activities after returning from spending time with a friend or a baby-sitter. This helps the parent understand what is

going on in the child's life, and it gives the child the opportunity to talk about anything that is troubling them. Parents should be aware of where their children are and who they are spending time with.

## *Discuss the difference between a secret and a surprise.*

The difference between a secret and a surprise is difficult for many children to grasp. Explain the difference to your child and tell them to tell you if anyone tells them to keep a secret. Until children grasp the difference between a secret and surprise a few surprise parties might be spoiled, but the child's safety is most important.

*Discuss the concept of body ownership.*

Emphasize the child's right to control access to their own body, and explain that no one should ever touch them in a "private area."

*There is safety in numbers.*

Instruct children to avoid playing alone, and to avoid using public rest rooms alone.

*Discuss contingency plans.*

Teach children the range of people they can go to when they sense they are in danger. For example, discuss who they should go see at school or the mall if they feel threatened. Discuss contingency plans for the child to follow if they are ever touched.

*Discuss how to deal with strangers.*

Teach children to be wary of strangers who are overly friendly, never listening to strangers who tell them their parents sent them to pick them up.

*If you encounter a molester . . .*

Instruct children to try to run away and tell an adult if they encounter a child molester. Explain it is all right to comply with the molesters demands if they are physically threatened. Always contact law enforcement about close calls. The next child may not be as fortunate.

There is great difficulty in teaching children to defend themselves from child molesters without robbing them of their childhood. Prevention can be taught by using Bible stories where biblical characters like David encountered danger and the Lord sustained them. Our Christian faith alone can be very comforting in helping children deal with the dangers of this world.

**If abuse occurs . . .**

How families and friends deal with the abuse of a child makes all the difference in their recovery.

*Express love and listen to the child.*

Express love for the child, and believe the child's story. Do not interrogate them about what hap-

pened, and be sure they do not get the impression you do not believe them. Support and praise the child for telling what has happened to them, and encourage them to resume normal activities as soon as possible.

Show empathy, belief and a lack of blame. Explain that what happened was not their fault. Remind children who feel guilt that God will forgive us of anything (1 John 1:9). Ask the child if they want to be hugged or cuddled before touching them, some will be afraid of any physical contact.

*Be understanding.*

Often a child does not report the abuse immediately. In such cases be understanding, not judgmental. Offenders frequently threaten to take the survivor's life or that of their loved ones. In some cases offenders have reportedly killed animals in front of the child to emphasize the point.

*Be calm.*

Parents must be willing to discuss the event with the child without getting upset. Avoid showing shock or disgust when the child reveals what has happened. Do not force children to talk about what has happened to them, but keep communication lines open by creating an atmosphere where the child will feel safe to talk.

Parents may find it helpful if the child draws how they feel or describes what happened by using dolls. These methods are often easier for children to discuss the abuse and deal with their trauma.

*Don't discuss retaliation.*

Avoid discussing retaliation against the perpetrator. This can result in the survivor avoiding discussing the trauma out of fear for the safety of family members which delays the recovery of the child.

*Seek professional help.*

Survivors of sexual abuse should be taken to a physician for a medical exam and for counseling to help overcome the trauma. Families whose children have been sexually abused may need counseling, since

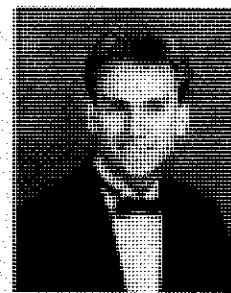
many will blame themselves for this tragedy.

**Special resources.**

As Christians, we have special resources to cope with the trauma of sexual abuse. These resources are usually ignored by professionals. We have the Bible, Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit. Children and their families can cast their anxieties upon Christ and know that He cares for them (1 Peter 5:7), and is making intercession for them.

Meditation upon biblical passages can help survivors overcome guilt and resume normal lives. Remind survivors that the offender cannot destroy their soul despite harming their body (Matthew 10:28), and wherever they go the Lord goes with them holding their hand (Isaiah 41:13).

Families can be comforted through the knowledge that the Lord is a refuge in times of trouble (Psalms 9:9;46:1). Remember the power of prayer, and that Romans 8:26 tells us that the Spirit helps us in our weakness when we do not even know what we should pray. The Holy Spirit can also soothe like nothing of the world. It was Jesus who referred to the Holy Spirit as the Comforter in John 14:16. ■



ABOUT THE WRITER: Eddie Moody, an active lay counselor, is a graduate student at North Carolina State University. He is a member of Immanuel Free Will Baptist Church in Durham, North Carolina, and a graduate of Free Will Baptist Bible College.

## Principles on Pain: V

# The Believer's Focus

By Tom McCullough

**M**any more are the lessons to be learned from the book of Job. It seems, from an unforced reading of his trials, that Job wavered between two opposite ways of looking at the adversity in his life. The first two chapters reveal his remarkably upbeat perspective. He saw no reason to question God and trusted Him implicitly despite tremendous physical and emotional turmoil.

For one reason or another, however, his outlook changed and for the next 37 chapters Job saw nothing but his pain and suffering. I would propose that a Christian perspective on pain is not the first but a combination of the two.

### How to Navigate

In his book *If God is so Good, Why do I Hurt so Bad*, David Biebel likens a proper Christian perspective on pain to the use of the navigational tool called a sextant. Before modern satellite tracking systems, a captain would ascertain his ship's position on the open sea with this two-scoped instrument.

He would focus one scope on the horizon and the other on a known star. With the proper charts and a little trigonometry he could then obtain his bearings. A friend tells me there is also a mirror involved in the sextant that somehow draws the horizon and the star together to the eye of the navigator.

When we experience a great loss or are personally gripped with pain, we are like a ship bobbing on the open sea of life. We have no clear sense of where we are, where we are headed or which way is home.

Most Christian advice to those in this type situation is, "Fix your eyes on the Lord." The advice is good as far as it goes, but sometimes it leads the sufferer to ignore the painful horizons of human reality.

Let's face it, we don't yet live in heaven. We fool ourselves by trying to convince ourselves that everything

will be rosy as long as we "keep looking up!" We live in a fallen world and are, therefore, subject to the consequences of Adam's sin in this life. The person who is constantly looking up may get a fix on God but he still can't figure out where he is in the process of grieving or living.

Others (skeptics mostly) would tell us to fix our single scope on the horizon of human realities. They might even suggest that this is necessary in order to think positively to overcome the pain. But, in reality, these people never rise above a simple resignation that sighs, "It is my lot to suffer."

Biebel suggests, and I concur, that the only helpful and healthy approach to suffering uses both scopes: one on the horizon, agreeing that life can be excruciatingly painful, and the other on God, beckoning us to trust Him anyway. We must believe that He will redeem this evil for good in the end.

When we do this, allowing the mirror of God's Word to bring the two scopes together, we invite Jesus into the now of our pain, emptiness and loneliness and hear Him inviting us into the now of His peace and joy.

Paul was obviously navigating with both scopes of his sextant when he described his journey of faith . . . "as dying, and, behold, we live; as chastened, and not killed; as sorrowful, yet always rejoicing; as poor, yet making many rich; as having nothing, and yet possessing everything," (II Cor. 6: 9-10).

### Chantal's Pain

Chantal recently lost her husband René to an extremely painful fight with cancer. She has been left alone with four small boys. In a letter to my wife, Patty, she testified to the difficulty of navigating the waters of suffering in this life.

"Here we are, two months since René's passing. In spite of the hope I have in the Lord, my pain is great and always present in my heart. It's true that at the time of his death it was comforting for me to know that he suffered no more, but since . . . his absence has been something very difficult to deal with. Days of revolt followed the pain . . . now I have days when it is just hard to live.

"It is true that the Lord is present and that He will help me because He is not deaf to the prayers of so many people who are praying for us. As you say in your letter, 'How can someone deal with cancer without God,' and how can one live without Him, seeing this life is so full of suffering





and good-byes? It is at this point where one sees that all is vanity and the only things that really count are things eternal."

Chantal is going to make it through this storm in her life for she is navigating with both scopes intact.

David Biebel sums up in poetry the tension of keeping our eyes simultaneously fixed on the horizon and on heaven. He writes from first-hand experience as he, too, suffered the loss of his young son.

I look into the Father's eyes  
And wrestle with a thousand "Whys"  
Why this? Why now? Why him, not I?  
Why us, not them? I can't disguise  
The hurt, the rage, unbridled pain  
Erupting from my soul, again.  
If that's the way it's going to be  
Then build Your Kingdom without me.

But then, again, where can I go  
To hear a word of hope, and know  
The promise that beyond the pain  
The ballad has a glad refrain  
But what for now? And how can one  
Still vocalize, "Thy will be done"?

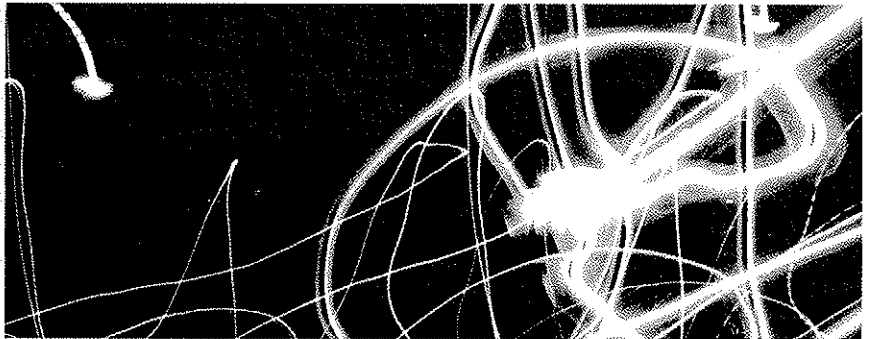
And soon I hear a song begin,  
Celestial, but from deep within.  
A new, yet ancient melody  
Of joy and pain, disharmony.  
Or do the strains combine somehow,  
A lovely paradox of sound?

The paradox of pain is that, like Job, we will see Him best when we see Him through tear-stained eyes. "I know that thou canst do everything, and that no thought can be withheld from thee. . . . I have heard of thee by the hearing of the ear, but now mine eye seeth thee," (Job 42: 2, 5). ■



ABOUT THE WRITER: Tom McCullough is a Free Will Baptist missionary to France.

## Why So Much Attention on Pain?



A recent visit to my local Christian bookstore revealed at least 35 titles devoted to suffering and the believer's response to it. These represent, in fact, only the tip of the iceberg as it relates to the reams of pages being devoted to the subject these days.

Why is this so? Are pain and suffering something unique to the countdown years to the 21st century? Not on your life. They are as old as Job himself. There are at least two reasons to explain the recent resurgence of interest in this area.

### Attempt to Control

First, we westerners are finding this topic more and more fascinating due to our realization that total victory over pain and suffering is impossible. Let me explain. Americans are more in control of themselves and their environment than ever before. We have done more to subdue and even alter our cosmos than in any generation since Adam.

Nonetheless, diseases such as cancer and AIDS, severe famine, natural catastrophes and the spiraling incidence of violent crime all serve to remind us that we are not masters of our universe. If, then, man cannot eliminate suffering, he must attempt to attain a higher spiritual plane where physical and emotional pain and suffering no longer affect him.

The eastern religions and new age philosophies are doing a good job of preaching this gospel. Unfortunately, this incomplete resolution has its adherence among Christians. "If

you can't beat it, escape it," would be a good working slogan for the message many preach today.

### Backlash

Second, our bookshelves are sagging under the weight of pain and suffering self-help books because of the backlash against the name it and cloim it theology that flourished only a few short years ago. Astute observers of the Christian scene have seized the opportunity to redeem those hurting brethren who named healing but were never able to claim it.

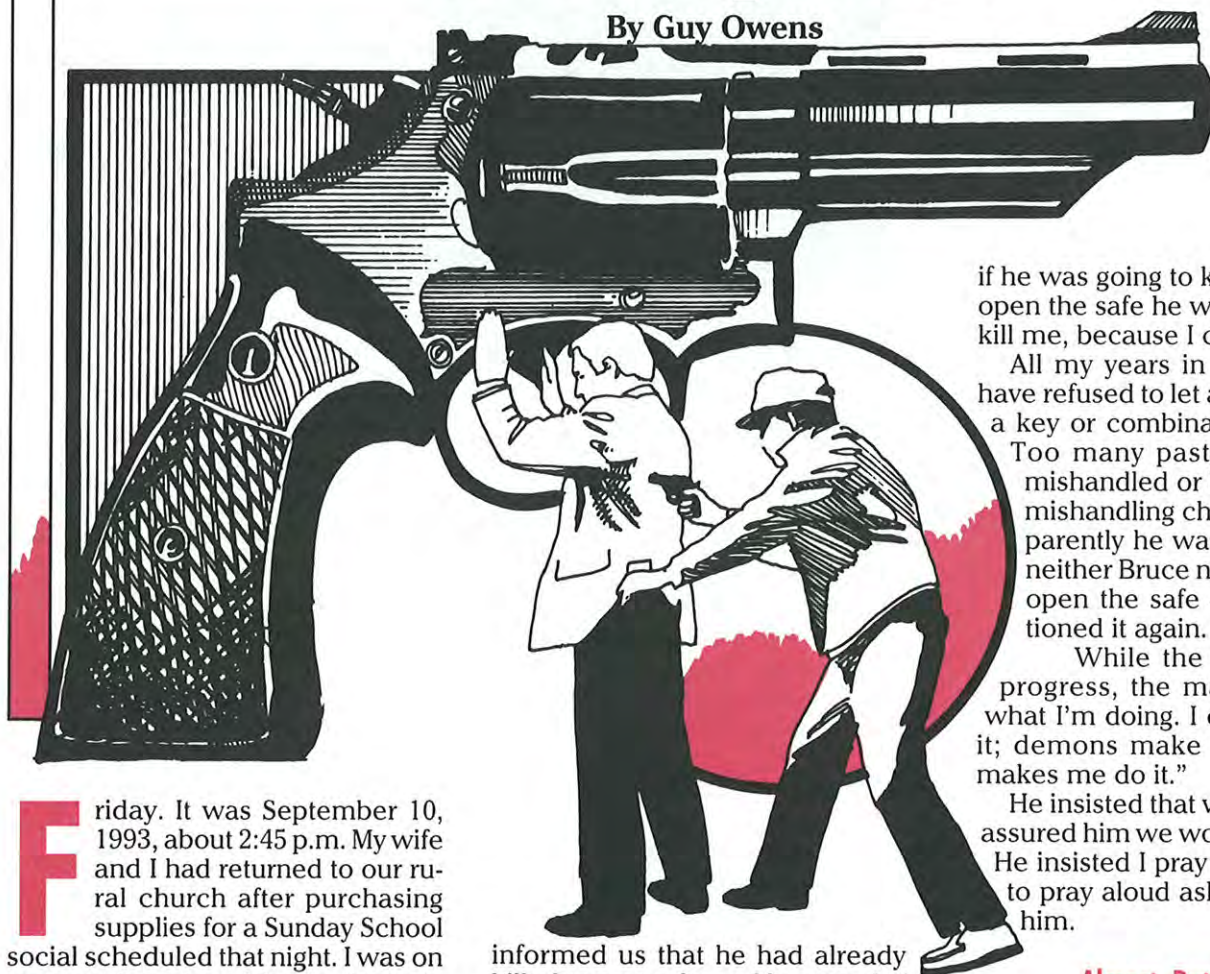
A good percentage of books written recently endeavor to go beyond giving false hope and rather encourage biblical coping strategies. The real good ones go even one step further by teaching that some coping is not enough. Coping that is mere stoic, fatalistic acceptance of what *must be* is not biblical.

The mature believer, they suggest, faces his pain and suffering squarely, never denying its evil origin (We do live in a fallen world!), but always resting in the confidence that He who permitted it is able to succor his spirit and teach him truth for eternity.

There are at least two recent works that fit into this last category. *When your Rope Breaks*, by Stephen Brown, (Nelson), and *If God is so Good, Why do I Hurt so Bad?*, by David Biebel, (Navpress). C. S Lewis' classic *The Problem of Pain*, (Macmillan), is more philosophical but will appeal to some. A new work by Philip Yancey and Dr. Paul Brand suggests that pain itself is a marvelous gift from Gad.

# Lessons I Learned from the Hold-Up Man

By Guy Owens



**F**riday. It was September 10, 1993, about 2:45 p.m. My wife and I had returned to our rural church after purchasing supplies for a Sunday School social scheduled that night. I was on my way to put perishable items in the refrigerator and then go pick up chickens for the barbecue man.

## What I Found

Our offices are located in the fellowship hall. As I approached the fellowship hall, I saw assistant pastor Bruce Kimbrell through a partially opened door to my study. He was there making radio tapes. As I opened the door to the fellowship hall, I was immediately accosted by a gun-wielding stranger.

A middle-aged black man wearing a broad-brim hat, wrap-around sun glasses and a dust mask stepped out of my office into the hallway and sprayed some type of spray in my face. He ordered me into the office and demanded my money. The man

informed us that he had already killed two people, and he sounded like killing two more would be no problem to him.

I had walked in on a robbery in progress. The man had already robbed Bruce and demanded that he open the church safe. I told the man I had no money, but then realized I did have money in my inside coat pocket which I had left in the car. He insisted that I get the money, even followed me outside to get it. He grabbed the \$124 and stuffed it in his pocket.

## Threats of Death

As we re-entered the building, the robber insisted that I open the church safe or he would kill me. I told him, "I do not want to die," but that I was prepared to die. I also told him that

if he was going to kill me if I did not open the safe he would just have to kill me, because I could not do it.

All my years in the pastorate, I have refused to let a church give me a key or combination to the safe. Too many pastors have either mishandled or been accused of mishandling church money. Apparently he was convinced that neither Bruce nor I knew how to open the safe and never mentioned it again.

While the robbery was in progress, the man said, "I hate what I'm doing. I don't want to do it; demons make me do it; dope makes me do it."

He insisted that we pray for him. I assured him we would pray for him. He insisted I pray then, so I began to pray aloud asking God to help him.

## Almost, But Not Quite . . .

As I began to pray, it seemed his left leg gave way as though he were going to kneel to pray. I thought, "What a way for a robbery to end!" But he recovered and proceeded with the robbery, threatening us with death every few seconds.

I told him he did not want to kill us, that Jesus loved him and would help him. He said, "Jesus doesn't love me." I assured him that God did indeed love him.

"I've got to find somewhere to put you," he said. He needed somewhere to lock us securely while he made a getaway. He forced us to leave my office and go down the hallway toward the kitchen.

As we walked he said, "I've been here before," as though he was tak-

ing us to a place to lock us. Since there was no room with a lock, he pushed us into a cluttered storage closet next to the kitchen in the most remote part of the building.

### Echoes of Satan

It became apparent that he was frustrated about what to do with us. He could not lock us in so he could make an escape. Somewhere between my office and the storage closet, he picked up a small attache case. He removed a large hunting knife and pointed that at me.

There he stood, a 25-caliber automatic pistol in one hand and a large hunting knife in the other. He was extremely agitated, and began a sort of prancing, dancing motion moving from the hallway into the closet trying to hit me. He said, "Satan is telling me to kill you. Satan is telling me to kill you. Satan is telling me to kill you. I've got to kill you. I've got to wound you. I got to see some blood!"

### Time to Pray

For the first time in the episode, I realized I had not prayed for protection. I had been too busy obeying his every command, and he had been talking so rapidly, demanding, threatening. I began to pray silently in the inner man, pleading the power of the blood of Jesus as protection against harm that might be done to me. There we were, backed into a closet, a gun constantly pointed at our heads.

Why, I do not know, but of all the things I could have thought of, I thought of my recently deceased friend, Rev. Danny Howell, pastor of First Free Will Baptist Church, Florence, South Carolina. Danny had died as result of a fall. I thought, "It looks like there may be two former pastors die." I had pastored First Florence for six and one-half years.

When I prayed, God helped me to reason and see that I could close the closet door. The door opened into the closet. The man had just said three times that Satan was telling him to kill us. Now while he pranced, gun in right hand and knife in left hand, from somewhere deep within him a seemingly different, high pitched voice said, "Kill him! Kill

him! Kill him!" as though a previously given command had gone unheeded.

### Prayer in Action

At that instant, with my left hand, I struck the door one time closing it instantly as I dropped to my knees pressing against the door to keep it closed. Simultaneously with the closing of the door two shots rang out.

We had no way of knowing whether he would empty the gun at us through the thin hollow-core door. Bruce and I quickly got a folding table stored in the closet up against the door for additional protection. Shortly when no other shots were fired, Bruce said, "I've got to get out of here. I've got to get you some help." I told him I was okay and that everything now was going to be all right.

### The Aftermath

"No, you are shot," he said. I told him I was not shot. But he insisted, "You're bleeding." I had felt nothing. One bullet had gone past me into the wall behind; the other struck me in the upper body between the neck and shoulder.

Bruce slowly opened the door, bounded across the fellowship hall, out the double doors into the yard. He went to the parsonage next door, informed my wife, Marie, and got a gun, while she called 911. I was taken by the Falkland Rescue Squad to the hospital where I was kept overnight. The bullet had passed through the muscular part of my body without hitting a bone.

That was Friday afternoon. I preached Sunday morning.

The robber was arrested three days later after a high-speed chase. He acknowledged that he was the person who shot the pastor. We learned that he had, until recently dismissed, been an elder in a nearby church.

The trial was one of the saddest days of my life. It was painful to hear the testimony of what a good man he had been for 12 years (by approximately 20 witnesses), and then to see how far he had fallen.

He was tried and sentenced to the state prison for 33 years. I spoke to

him in the courtroom and visited him in jail. He told me he had rededicated his life to the Lord and asked me to forgive him, which I did. Prior to his fall, he had preached in local jails and prisons. He has had several converts since being incarcerated. I have offered to purchase gospel tracts and Bibles should he need them.

### Lessons I Learned

- Violent crime can happen to anyone. I never dreamed a thing of this nature would happen to me.
- God's grace is sufficient. I did not panic. I was able to talk and reason with the man, even to testify to him. Though I could not keep my knees from shaking, I was not afraid. Most of all, I was not afraid to die in the face of death.
- There may be no time to pray. I did not feel, "Oh! If I am going to die, I'd better pray." As a 17-year-old boy, I was converted to Christ.
- There is power in prayer. When I prayed and pled the blood of Jesus, God immediately intervened.
- A sovereign God is in control, and He loves me. Nothing can harm us, until God is finished with us. I could have been killed or wounded in the head and have become an invalid the rest of my life, but I received only a flesh wound. ■

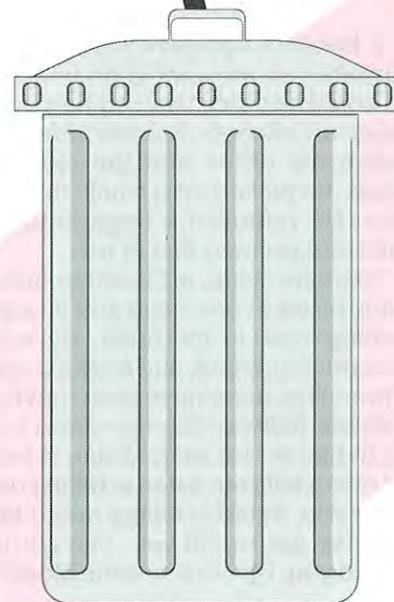


ABOUT THE WRITER: Reverend Guy Owens pastors Belvoir Free Will Baptist Church near Greenville, North Carolina.

# The Trash Can Celebration

By Dana Thompson  
As Told to Jim Thompson

Dear Mr. Trashman . . .



**S**ome events should be recorded in capital letters. The day we threw the Trash Can Celebration in Farmington, Missouri, qualifies as one of those. Because the event giving rise to it started at midnight the night before, The Celebration had to wait for daylight.

The story started on April 18, 1977, when Sandy Ritter (a close friend dating back to the fifth grade) told me with tears in her eyes that she just couldn't stand the thought of Heaven and me not there.

She had been saying this for months, but only then did it penetrate my comfort zone. We had belabored the condition of my soul over a cup of coffee, had come to no agreement and were winding up our visit on the back steps when she hit me with that argument clincher.

## The Romans Road

Half in fear and half in exasperation, I led her into the house, shooed the kids out and agreed to listen to some things from the Bible. I felt a bit numb as I sat there listening to what I later learned was called the Romans Road.

At some point I acknowledged that what she read made sense, and since they were "Bible," I believed they were true. When she pointed out my need to do something with this newly gained knowledge, I moved to my knees. She prayed and I agreed. Then I prayed and she agreed.

When we got to our feet—in a rush because we both had dinners to prepare—I remember feeling dazed, wondering how long before it wore off, knowing that highs always bottom out.

I spent the rest of the evening pon-

dering what had occurred, expecting something that would validate this happening.

Although I was a sound sleeper, I awakened repeatedly during the night, always with the feeling uppermost in my mind of expectancy. Maybe subconsciously I was waiting to hear the angels rejoice over the reclamation of a rascal. By mid-morning the next day I had to talk to someone.

Since Sandy Ritter was teaching, I decided to call her pastor, Bro. Jim McAllister. With fingers jerking in and out of the little rotary dial, I finally dialed the church number, introduced myself and asked if I could come and talk with him. When I got to his office, he read many of the same verses to me, asked me if I believed they were true, and we ended up praying again!

## The Family Struggle

I still hadn't mentioned anything to my husband—don't know whether I thought he wouldn't understand or maybe I was afraid that he would laugh. When our girls, Tammy, Sandy and Kerry, (Deby, our eldest, was in college in Kansas City at the time) got home from school, I told them that the following night we were going to the Ritter's church. This was met with loud protests from Tammy.

Being the wife of a car salesman had taught me a few things about negotiating. We discussed the options—church on Wednesday night or great bodily harm—and then made a deal. The girls would go with me to the Free Will Baptist church every service for one month. Then we would re-deal.

There I was, a two-day old Christian already flinging myself on His mercy. Not knowing how to pray, I just said, "Lord, I've opened my big mouth again, but I know that if You can save me from Hell, You can do something in Tammy's heart."

The girls and I went to church that Wednesday night and when the invitation was given, I went to the altar. While it may have just been weeping saints, it sounded a whole lot like rejoicing angels as I got up from my knees, enfolded in the warm arms of Jesus and friends.

The next Sunday morning Sandy and Kerry eagerly got ready for church. Not Tammy! When I went to see why she had not made an appearance for breakfast, I found her still in bed—not really asleep, just testing my resolve.

I called, shook and pulled down the bed covers. Praying all the while that it would not be necessary, I informed her she was going to church with us if I had to carry her. After a few nervous moments of Tammy glaring and Jim saying he didn't think I should force her to go, she haughtily got out of bed.

Whew! Thank you, Lord!

Dear, merciful Jesus turned our

whole (almost) world around and on May 8, 1977, Tammy, Sandy, Kerry and I were baptized together.

Jim wasn't ready to trade in his old life yet, so he declined our invitation to come see us baptized. He later told us it was one of the most miserable evenings of his life, knowing that we were being baptized and that he wasn't there.

### Christian School Decision

Then the girls decided, and I agreed, that they should go to Farmington Christian Academy the following school year, except Jim objected. Said we couldn't afford it. Said it wasn't necessary. Said he thought we were getting too religious.

But they insisted that God was big enough to get the job done, and although I did so with no great hope, I secured application forms from the school, filled them out, had the girls get their school entrance physicals and wrote out a check for the first month's tuition. I didn't sign it, though. We knew that Daddy would have to give his approval.

The Holy Spirit directed us to daily on-our-knees prayer meetings that he would relent. We didn't mention school to Jim after the first time—we just kept reminding the Lord in those prayers that there were four of us praying together and if it was going to be mentioned again, He would have to do it.

He did.

Early on the morning of July 15, Jim woke me with the words, "You can send them to that school if you want." I let out a yell, the girls came running with applications in hand and we settled it then and there.

We had been praying every day that God would make Jim unhappy, lonely, wretched and aware of his lost condition. We even prayed that when he went out drinking, he would have stomach distress and discord among his Elk-dom brotherhood. (And he did.)

### Giving God a Deadline

Then one day the girls decided that we had not been praying the right way, because they had prayed that Jim would give approval for them to go to Christian school before

the deadline for enrollment—and he had with a week to spare. They decided to give God a deadline.

I explained that I didn't think that was the way to do it, but despite my comments their prayer became, "Save Daddy before school starts!" They reasoned that if God could create a whole universe in six days, a month ought to be enough time to get Daddy saved.

So we prayed.

A few days later, Jim came straight home from work—no Country Club, no Elks—and announced that he had quit drinking but would still keep booze on hand for when his friends dropped by. Was the Lord answering our prayers about salvation?

We began to suspect that he was sneaking around reading the Bible and Hal Lindsey's *The Late, Great Planet Earth*. We devised a few tests—such as laying them at a particular angle on the table or on a different table altogether.

It wasn't long before we could follow his marker through the book of John. The Holy Spirit must have been directing his reading, because who would begin a book—even the Bible—in the middle?

He still was not ready to confess his need, so our youngest, Kerry, started placing the little tract, "This is Your Life," on his bedside table or propping it up by the ham radio microphone on his desk.

We could tell that the tract was affecting him by the many times she had to dig it out of the waste basket. Her ministry that summer was replacing that little black booklet that he later said haunted him.

Yet, he never mentioned it and neither did we. The only negative comment he made during this time was that we spent an awful lot of time at church.

Then one morning about a week before school was to start, the girls and I agreed. This was the day for Bro. Jim, our pastor, to go down to the car lot and visit him. We could see that he was almost through the book of John and was reading it openly now.

We asked Bro. Jim to visit him between five and six since he would be there alone. We prayed a lot that day. When evening came, we jumped

in the car and drove "roundings" on the office, peeping at each intersecting street to see if Bro. Jim's car was still there.

Finally, on one of the passes we met the pastor driving up 'A' Street, but he wasn't driving like a man who had just led someone to the Lord. We went back home and waited.

When Jim got home a little later, I wanted to ask him about the pastor's visit but didn't want to stir up anything. By 8:00 p.m. when nothing had been said, I went to bed with a raging headache.

About midnight, Jim began shaking my shoulder and saying, "Wake up, I've got something to tell you."

He said, "I've just prayed and asked Jesus to forgive my sins and save me."

We woke the girls, made a pot of coffee and talked the rest of the night. At one point he said that the pastor had told him to call anytime that he was ready to be saved. But in my mature three-month Christianity, I wouldn't let him, made him wait until seven the next morning.

### The Celebration

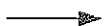
Which brings us to Celebration Day. We had an early morning Pouring-Out-The-Booze Party; breaking seals on expensive liqueurs, retrieving cases of beer that the girls and I had hidden in the basement, joyfully, gleefully, piling the trash can full to overflowing, crying together not at the loss of several hundred dollars, but at the new-found freedom from bondage.

Then one of the girls commented that it looked like we'd just thrown a wild party.

It bothered us that the trash man might get the wrong impression. We hoped for a chance to explain it to him sometime and then just forgot it, until the girls came in from the back yard and insisted that we go with them to see something.

They led us, single file, down the flagstone path and around the red-bud tree to the gate that separated the two sections of our backyard.

When they opened the gate with "Tah-dahs" we saw, fastened to the top of the booze bottle heap a poster:



## Footwashing in John 13 and the Johannine Community

By John Christopher Thomas

(Sheffield, England: JSOT Press, 1991, 214 pp., paperback, \$14.95)



Thomas Marberry

**F**ree Will Baptists are one of a relatively small number of denominations in the United States which practice foot washing as a regular part of their worship activities. The publication of a major work on this subject is certainly of great interest to our denomination. The author is a professor at the Church of God School of Theology in Cleveland, Tennessee. Thomas has studied the subject of foot washing in graduate seminars at Princeton Theological Seminary and the University of Virginia. This book was completed as the author's doctoral dissertation at the University of Sheffield.

As the author notes, the subject of foot washing has received comparatively little attention in New Testament scholarship. Books and articles on the subject are rare. Two important monographs on the subject were done in the 1960's in Germany, but neither of them has been translated into English. For this reason, they are not widely known or used in this country.

Most commentaries on the Gospel of John deal with the subject in their analysis of chapter 13. The author found that most commentaries,

even major ones, devote only brief attention to feet washing. They make little or no attempt to determine how widely it was practiced in the early church or how it was understood by early Christians.

Thomas sets out to prove that feet washing was known and practiced among groups of Christians who were followers of the Apostle John and used his writings extensively in their worship and Christian life. He also examines how the practice of feet washing was interpreted by this group of believers.

Through a careful analysis of the biblical materials and early Christian writings outside the New Testament, the author accomplishes these goals. He presents a considerable body of evidence which indicates that feet washing was known and practiced within this early Christian community. It is difficult to determine, however, the precise extent to which it was practiced. There is no evidence to indicate that feet washing was universally practiced in the early church.

Thomas acknowledges that it is more difficult to determine the precise meaning and significance which

was attached to feet washing. There is evidence to indicate that it was practiced in several different contexts, not always as a part of a worship service. It was connected in some way with the forgiveness of sins committed after baptism, but there is no reason to believe that the practice of feet washing guaranteed the forgiveness of sin without the necessity of repentance and faith.

This is the most comprehensive work available on the subject of feet washing in English. It surveys the literature available on the subject. It gives a careful analysis and interpretation of the original Greek text of John 13:1-20. It examines the practice of feet washing in the ancient world and the statements of several early Christian writers on the subject.

This is a scholarly book; it presumes that the reader has some knowledge of Greek and some understanding of current issues in the field of New Testament scholarship. I do not agree with his analysis at every point, but there is no doubt that the author has made a most significant contribution to understanding an often misunderstood and unappreciated practice. ■

*Dear Mr. Trashman,  
We didn't throw a wild  
party last night.  
Our Daddy just got  
saved and he doesn't drink  
this stuff anymore.*

*(signed)*

**Tammy Thompson  
Sandy Thompson  
Kerry Thompson**



Dana Thompson with  
grandsons Stephen and John



Jim Thompson

**ABOUT THE WRITERS:** Mr. and Mrs. James Thompson (Jim and Dana) now live in Russellville, Alabama. Jim is bus captain, preacher in junior church and a deacon. Dana is a Sunday School teacher, junior church and bus worker. They are members of First Free Will Baptist Church in Florence, Alabama.

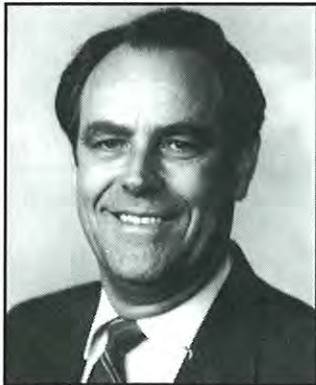
Tammy Thompson Gentuso and her husband, Dr. Paul Gentuso are in their first term as medical missionaries to Côte d'Ivoire, West Africa.

Sandra Thompson Fitzgerald (Mrs. Daniel Fitzgerald) is involved in the bus ministry and children's church and teaches Sunday School.

Kerry Thompson Hill (Mrs. John Hill) is a member of Red Bay Free Will Baptist Church in Red Bay, Alabama.

# FREE WILL BAPTIST NEWSFRONT

## Florida Names Sasser to Promotional Post



OCALA, FL—Reverend Millard Sasser was introduced to delegates at Florida's 50th annual state association as the new executive secretary. The 54-year-old Florida native planned to move from Fresno, California, to the Ocala area in late June. For the past six years he has pastored Clovis FWB Church and served as academic dean at California Christian College in Fresno.

Sasser addressed state delegates twice during the May 4-7 session at the Ocala Hilton Hotel. He told attendees at the final worship service, "The task before the Florida State Association is greater than it has ever been." He called for state unity

while acknowledging that "changes are coming."

In addition to his California ministry, Brother Sasser has pastored in Florida, Tennessee, Missouri and Washington. He was licensed to preach at age 16, ordained at 17 and began a radio ministry that same year. He attended Free Will Baptist Bible College and University of West Florida, and graduated from Missouri Baptist College.

Officials reported that 130 people registered for the state association, including 46 ministers. Moderator Leroy Cutler gavailed delegates through business sessions.

One of the association highlights occurred Wednesday evening when the Florida Historical Commission unveiled a 20-minute historical video production narrated by chairman Darrell Holley. The commission also published Volume II of a 60-page bulletin titled *The Historical Review* containing eight articles of historical significance to Florida Free Will Baptists.

In other action, delegates passed resolutions supporting

Free Will Baptist national leaders and the Florida Executive Committee. After extended discussion, delegates agreed to meet at Ocala Hilton for their 1995 and 1996 sessions. They then directed the Executive Committee to search for a central location other than the Ocala Hilton for future years, preferably a church-type site.

The Thursday night worship service included a \$10,000 offering for the Bayshore FWB Mission at St. Petersburg. Missionary Curtis Allgood pastors.

*Contact* editor Jack Williams preached three times, including one lecture on Free Will Baptist history.

President Diana Bryant reported that the Florida Woman's Auxiliary changed its name during their Friday business session. They are now Florida Women Active for Christ. Delegates voted to send a letter of support and encouragement to the national WNAC staff. Missionary to Côte d'Ivoire, Judy Bryan, spoke four times to delegates.

The 1995 session will meet May 24-27 at the Ocala Hilton.

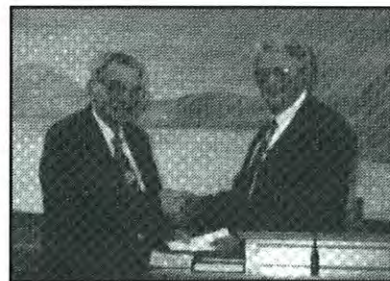
## Foothills Association Honors R. J. Reynolds

MARION, NC—When North Carolina's Foothills Association met this spring, the 19 member churches declared the day, "R. J. Reynolds Day" in honor of retired Free Will Baptist minister, Reverend R. J. Reynolds.

Moderator W. L. Kell presided over the special occasion. Officers had waited until the asso-

ciation met at Bethel FWB Church in Marion to honor Brother Reynolds. Rev. Reynolds pastored Bethel Church for 23 of his 40 years in the ministry.

Association clerk Ray Stockton said, "Brother Reynolds is special to each of us in this association. We would like to honor him with . . . his special day."



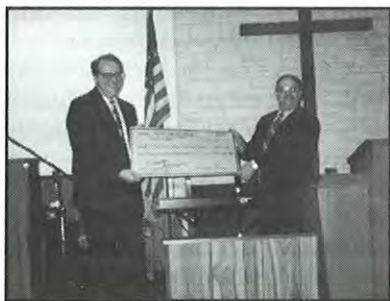
Reverend R. J. Reynolds (L),  
Moderator W. L. Kell.

## Church Celebrates \$100 Sunday

URBANA, OH—Pastor Roger Childers challenged every family in Urbana FWB Church to give \$100 above their regular giving to Foreign Missions on April 24. The church responded with a \$6,800 gift to Free Will Baptist Foreign Missions.

Pastor Childers said he had used the \$100 Sunday successfully for several years for special local needs such as mortgage reduction, building costs and parking lot paving. This past January, he and the church board presented the Foreign Missions challenge to members and asked them to prepare for an April offering.

Twenty-three families responded on April 24 with an ex-



*Pastor Roger Childers (r) presents check to Ohio Executive Secretary Edwin Hayes.*

tra \$100 for missions. The church's regular tithes and offerings did not diminish, according to Pastor Childers.

The local Woman's Auxiliary asked the church to match from the general fund whatever was given on \$100 Sunday. The church agreed.

Pastor Childers said, "On Foreign Missions Sunday, we received the \$2,300 from families, \$555 from the Woman's Auxiliary, and other gifts totaling \$3,401. The church matched that \$3,400 from its general fund."

The Urbana Church is a member of the Central Ohio Conference in the Ohio State Association.

## Taylor University Honors Billy Melvin



CAROL STREAM, IL—Former Free Will Baptist executive secretary, Billy A. Melvin, received Taylor University's highest alumni award this spring, the "Legion of Merit." The award is presented "to an outstanding alumnus or alumna who has attained distinction by national and/or international accomplishment." This marked the 10th time in Taylor University's history that the Legion of Honor has been awarded.

Dr. Billy Melvin serves as executive director for the National Association of Evangelicals (NAE). He is a member of Butterfield FWB Church in Aurora, Illinois.

The citation further stated that the award was given in recognition of Melvin's "exemplary leadership in the evangelical community, and for his commitment that the much-needed voice of Christianity be heard nationwide."

The presentation also noted that due to Melvin's leadership, NAE "has become a major force in the religious life in the United States, and has earned him national recognition as one of the most knowledgeable observers of the evangelical church communities."

In addition to his work with NAE, Melvin serves on the boards of the National Coalition Against Pornography (N-CAP) and the Religious Alliance Against Pornography (RAPP), is chairman of Christian Leaders for Responsible Television (CLear-TV) and is a member of the Board of Trustees of the American Bible Society.

Dr. Melvin graduated from Union Theological Seminary with a bachelor's of divinity in theology, received the doctor of divinity from Azusa Pacific University in 1967 and the doctor of laws degree from Taylor in 1984.

## Southeastern Sets Missions Conference

WENDELL, NC—Four ministers will speak at Southeastern FWB College's 11th annual Missionary Conference this fall, according to President Billy Bevan. The October 20-21 conference will focus on both home and foreign missionary outreach.

This year's conference theme is, "Leave All to Follow Him,"

taken from Luke 18:28-30.

Speakers include: Dale Bishop, foreign missionary to Japan; Cliff Donoho, home missionary to Iowa; Doug King, pastor of Cramerton FWB Church in Cramerton, NC; and Danny Dwyer, vice-president of Southeastern College.



*King*



*Dwyer*



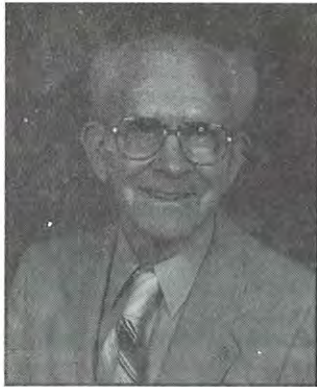
*Bishop*



*Donoho*



## Missouri Leader, Rev. Harry Beatty, Dies



WEST PLAINS, MO—The Rev. Harry Howard Beatty, former promotional secretary for the Missouri State Association, died February 27. He was 82. Memorial services were conducted March 2 at Carter Funeral Home in West Plains. Rev. Glen Murray officiated.

Rev. Beatty's ministry began in the Thayer, Missouri, area when he was converted at age 19 and called to preach the same night. He invested his life in Missouri and Oklahoma Free Will Baptist churches as a pastor and church planter.

He served as Missouri's first promotional secretary from October 1961 until June 1975. He was well-known for giving a "hallelujah report" of the Lord's work among Free Will Baptists. His lively, enthusiastic reporting of the state cooperative plan stirred quarterly meetings and state associations.

He counted the summer of 1944 as one of the highlights of his ministry. That summer he conducted three revival meetings and witnessed 100 conversions.

Brother Beatty was born August 16, 1911, in Oregon County, Missouri. He is survived by two sons, Kenneth Beatty and Gordon Beatty; a brother, Harold Dansmore; eight grandchildren and 13 great-grandchildren.

## New Mexico Now District Association

CARLSBAD, NM—Delegates to the 26th annual New Mexico State Association voted to become a district association with two quarterly meetings, according to Moderator Jim Pollock. The restructured organization is now the New Mexico District Association with two quarterly meetings—Land of Enchantment and First New Mexico Quarterly Meetings. Since there are only four Free Will Baptist churches in New Mexico, the return to district status allows all the churches to meet together more frequently.

The April 7-9 state association met at Faith Memorial Chapel FWB Church in Carlsbad. Moderator Jim Pollock was elected

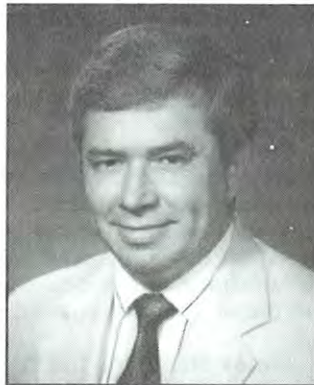
to his second term. Thirty delegates and visitors registered.

Home Missions director Roy Thomas preached twice at the meeting. Other speakers included Texas pastors Thurmon Murphy and Keith Woody, and Randall House director Alton Loveless. Mrs. Pat Thomas spoke at the Auxiliary Banquet Friday afternoon.

New Mexico churches gave a \$600 gift to the Victory Campaign, exceeding their quota to eliminate indebtedness on the National Offices Building.

The 1995 district association will meet April 6-8 at First FWB Church in Artesia.

## Georgia Pastor Joins FWBBC Staff



NASHVILLE, TN—Rev. Roy Harris, pastor of First FWB Church in Savannah, Georgia, will join the Free Will Baptist Bible College staff in early July to work in the area of public relations, according to Dr. Tom Malone, president.

Rev. Harris will work with FWBBC public relations director Bob Shockley until Rev. Shockley retires in December.

This will be the third time Rev. Harris has worked for the college, serving both times previously as dean of students, 1977-80 and 1987-91. The Indiana native graduated from the Bible

College in 1977. His pastorates have included service at churches in North Carolina and Kentucky as well as his present ministry in Georgia.

President Malone cited several strengths he believes Rev. Harris will bring to his work for the college. "He is an able planner, a gifted organizer, a talented preacher and he knows our denomination well," he said. "I think Roy is well accepted by our Free Will Baptist pastors and alumni."

### Directory Update

#### CALIFORNIA

Charles McKinney to Tulare Church, Tulare from Friendship Church, British Columbia, Canada

#### MISSOURI

Mark Williford to New Life Church, Licking

#### OTHER PERSONNEL

Roy Harris to Free Will Baptist Bible College, Nashville, TN, as public relations director from First Church, Savannah, GA, as pastor

## CURRENTLY...

**Bethel Christian Academy of South Roxana, IL**, needs an administrator and two elementary teachers. The school has a low student/teacher ratio. They prefer applicants with administrative experience for the principal position, but will consider applications on a case by case basis. Send resumes to **Randy Corn**, 1417 Herbert Street, South Roxana, IL 62087. Hurry! Classes begin August 22. The academy is a ministry of **Bethel FWB Church**.

And speaking of **Bethel FWB Church**, they're calling it the largest single day offering in their history. Pastor **Randy Corn** of the **South Roxana** congregation said the church gave an offering of \$12,580 on April 24. This culminated a 10-week campaign to raise funds for their parking lot. The total project will cost \$25,000. The group now has more than \$21,000 on hand.

The **Kansas State Home Missions Board** has been asked to oversee the work in **Wellington**, according to board chairman, **James O. Mize**. The new missionaries are **Mark and Kimberly Coyner**. They reported eight people in attendance at their first service in April.

Pastor **Hertis Stone** reports nine new members and four baptisms at **Wyandotte FWB Church in Mansfield, OH**.

**Ohio** evangelist, **Clovis Hanover**, reports 265 conversions during his 45 revival meetings in 1993.

**Cristina McClary** and **Danny Brod** earned all-state honors for **Nebraska** and were selected to participate in the inter-generational orchestra of Omaha concert series. Cristina plays the violin and Danny plays the trombone and acoustic guitar. Both are students at Millard South High School and members of **Maranatha FWB Church in Omaha**. **Jerry McClary** pastors.

**Karl Sexton** is a youth leader at **Gateway FWB Church in Virginia Beach, VA**. He reported that in the past year young people from the church knocked on more than 5,500 doors, ministered to 1,000 people in nursing homes and distributed several thousand tracts. Twenty-five teens assisted in VBS. Another 20 went on a mission trip to **Waldorf, MD**, to assist home missionary, **Frank Owens**.

**Dale Burden** pastors.

Members of **Sunnyview FWB Church in Lebanon, MO**, honored Pastor and Mrs. **Bill Eden** for four years of leadership. Rev. Eden has been pastoring churches for 33 years. The pastor was given a card of appreciation, a \$50 gift and a dinner at the church.

Pastor **Keith Reese** led members of **Mt. Pisgah FWB Church in Cabool, MO**, as they dedicated their new auditorium, classrooms and pastor's study. Deacon **Paul Wade** gave a brief history. Nine members were recognized for 50 years of service.

Pastor **Mike Trimble** reports 11 conversions, five baptisms and seven new families attending **Kirby FWB Church in Taylor, MI**. Sunday School attendance has increased beyond 180 while Sunday morning worship averages 225.

**Urbana FWB Church in Urbana, OH**, honored Pastor **Roger Childers** for 15 years in leadership.

Pastor **Dave Bates** reports 11 new members and two baptisms at **Unity FWB Church in Middleburg Heights, OH**.

Pastor **Wylie Perkins** says it was a grand day when the **Samantha FWB Church in Leesburg, OH**, purchased a new grand piano. He also reported 11 baptisms.

Pastor **James McComas** has been busy. He received 13 new members into **Sterling FWB Church in Sterling, OH**. He also reports nine rededications and six baptisms.

Pastor **Billy Joe White** of **Wellington FWB Church in Wellington, OH**, went to West Virginia to see his mother. When he got there, he ended up conducting a tent revival in her back yard. Hi, Mom!

When members of **South Avenue FWB Church in Lancaster, SC**, celebrated their 40th anniversary, they did more than plan a day of special activities. The group also plans to relocate the church and change the name to **Canaan FWB Church**. Pastor **Dale McCoy** reports eight baptisms.

Pastor **Russell Horne** led members of **Calvary FWB Church in Columbus, GA**, during dedication services for their new facility. The new property includes a sanctuary which seats 260 people,

eight Sunday School rooms, two nurseries, library, children's church, pastor's study and other ministry rooms.

Members of **Black Oak FWB Church in Marshfield, MO**, honored Pastor **Jack Day** for 25 years at the helm.

Pastor **Ronnie Mitchell** reports 11 new members at **First FWB Church in Mt. Vernon, IL**.

**White Rock FWB Church in Phenix City, AL**, reports 16 new members and six baptisms. **David Dollar** pastors.

When Pastor **Mark Williford** showed up for his first Sunday service at **New Life FWB Church in Licking, MO**, so did 112 other people. They also responded with a \$1,600 offering. Every new pastor deserves that kind of support on his first day in town.

**First FWB Church in Kirksville, MO**, celebrated their 40th anniversary. Five charter members were honored for their faithfulness. **Lynn Beck** pastors.

Here's an idea that brings smiles to the *Contact* circulation manager. When **Flossie Moses** and **Jeannie Brown** were recognized as eldest and youngest mothers on Mother's Day at **Blackwell FWB Church in Blackwell, OK**, they got something extra. Pastor **Wayne Bookout** awarded each of them a complimentary subscription to *Contact!*

**Damascus FWB Church in Marianna, FL**, celebrated Family Day this spring and logged their largest attendance ever with 288 people present, including more than 100 visitors. **Allan Austin** pastors.

**High Point FWB Church in Lancaster, SC**, reports eight conversions and six new members, according to Pastor **Stuart Snow**. The church averages 200 in Sunday School and 280 in morning worship. They celebrate 50 years of service in 1994.

Pastor **Stanley Konopinski** expected one new member to join **Trinity FWB Church in Oklahoma City, OK**, that Sunday morning. He was wrong. Ten people united with the church, one was saved and three more rededicated their lives. The next Sunday, he baptized five and received two more members. ■

**Capital Stewardship/Victory Campaign**  
**April 1994**  
**Update**

State	Goal	Gifts	Balance
Alabama	\$ 76,397.63	\$ 1,745.00	\$ 74,652.63
Arizona	1,228.93	1,905.00	(676.07)
Arkansas	76,860.94	29,361.44	47,499.50
Atlantic Canada	1,570.51	.00	1,570.51
California	17,216.76	160.00	17,056.76
Colorado	789.18	1,105.00	(315.82)
Florida	20,703.30	3,671.12	17,032.18
Georgia	38,179.19	18,746.82	19,432.37
Hawaii	184.54	500.00	(315.46)
Idaho	353.37	.00	353.37
Illinois	16,176.29	1,225.00	14,951.29
Indiana	7,868.27	1,400.00	6,468.27
Iowa	266.99	.00	266.99
Kansas	1,287.82	.00	1,287.82
Kentucky	35,454.34	2,992.29	32,462.05
Louisiana	94.23	1,340.00	(1,245.77)
Maryland	6,812.10	250.00	6,562.10
Michigan	15,116.19	6,451.50	8,664.69
Mississippi	15,559.86	1,360.35	14,199.51
Missouri	60,484.40	29,642.68	30,841.72
Montana	27.48	50.00	(22.52)
Nebraska	102.08	.00	102.08
New Mexico	596.80	600.00	(3.20)
North Carolina	59,118.06	2,759.00	56,359.06
Northeast Assoc.	883.41	.00	883.41
Northwest Assoc.	1,087.58	100.00	987.58
Ohio	40,923.66	10,451.81	30,471.85
Oklahoma	92,271.60	4,447.58	87,824.02
South Carolina	18,335.75	1,070.00	17,265.75
Tennessee	78,557.09	27,595.72	50,961.37
Texas	11,547.20	5,600.52	5,946.68
Virginia	24,323.33	800.00	23,523.33
West Virginia	46,204.51	520.00	45,684.51
Wisconsin		55.00	(55.00)
Other		2,978.85	(2,978.85)
<b>TOTALS</b>	<b>\$766,583.39</b>	<b>\$158,884.68</b>	<b>\$607,698.71</b>



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# THE TOGETHER WAY

April 1994

**RECEIPTS:**

State	Design.	CO-OP	Total	April '93	Yr. To Date
Alabama	\$ 5,749.87	\$ .00	\$ 5,749.87	\$ 11,953.08	\$ 36,271.92
Arizona	.00	10.00	10.00	.00	818.13
Arkansas	17,698.24	11,862.49	29,560.73	27,164.48	108,690.96
California	.00	.00	.00	.00	1,691.06
Colorado	.00	.00	.00	.00	6,325.83
Delaware	.00	.00	.00	.00	100.00
Florida	642.50	4,672.48	5,314.98	3,162.26	6,743.25
Georgia	12,578.02	1,576.27	14,154.29	14,965.14	46,847.11
Hawaii	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00
Idaho	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00
Illinois	8,573.17	3,085.18	11,658.35	6,853.77	47,309.98
Indiana	.00	.00	.00	1,012.48	2,475.62
Iowa	.00	.00	.00	.00	180.00
Kansas	.00	.00	.00	21.10	37.84
Kentucky	.00	500.73	500.73	.00	2,139.07
Louisiana	40.00	10.00	50.00	.00	350.00
Maryland	.00	985.58	985.58	.00	2,248.29
Michigan	3,666.58	402.00	4,068.58	16,720.17	50,239.96
Mississippi	72.73	682.96	755.69	397.47	2,837.24
Missouri	12,850.88	26.00	12,876.88	10,842.08	51,195.06
Montana	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00
New Jersey	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00
New Mexico	1,415.72	11.95	1,427.67	.00	2,260.55
North Carolina	1,002.69	1,010.00	2,012.69	1,103.31	11,205.03
Ohio	145.00	.00	145.00	3,175.62	18,383.74
Oklahoma	45,290.37	701.93	45,992.30	46,876.79	167,322.95
South Carolina	24,562.82	113.54	24,676.36	14,243.83	77,429.63
Tennessee	4,783.64	1,357.68	6,141.32	6,330.68	34,865.13
Texas	11,667.34	137.26	11,804.60	19,413.11	41,273.17
Virginia	249.52	.00	249.52	1,590.26	4,165.10
West Virginia	4,600.97	113.28	4,714.25	4,981.15	17,976.18
Wisconsin	.00	.00	.00	.00	55.00
Canada	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00
Northwest Assoc.	.00	.00	.00	45.85	100.00
Other	.00	(.02)	(.02)	(.14)	.04
<b>Totals</b>	<b>\$155,590.06</b>	<b>\$27,259.31</b>	<b>\$182,849.37</b>	<b>\$190,852.49</b>	<b>\$741,537.84</b>

**DISBURSEMENTS:**

Executive Office	\$ 9,712.57	\$17,489.17	\$ 27,201.74	\$ 25,323.09	\$108,806.88
Foreign Missions	89,372.33	2,247.13	91,619.46	92,566.14	364,401.11
FWBBC	8,374.29	2,247.13	10,621.42	15,068.25	50,974.41
Home Missions	31,038.43	1,758.61	32,797.04	40,777.31	140,811.42
Retirement & Insurance	900.20	1,367.83	2,268.03	2,490.47	8,437.17
Master's Men	1,392.14	1,367.83	2,759.97	3,748.74	12,107.81
Commission for					
Theo. Integrity	84.52	48.85	133.37	204.37	548.05
FWB Foundation	776.45	586.21	1,362.66	1,547.46	5,694.89
Historical Commission	71.44	48.85	120.29	174.49	478.59
Music Commission	74.51	48.85	123.36	154.74	476.17
Radio & TV Commission	84.51	48.85	133.36	184.66	532.19
Hillsdale FWB College	4,506.12	.00	4,506.12	2,362.82	10,288.79
Other	9,202.55	.00	9,202.55	6,249.95	37,980.36
<b>Totals</b>	<b>\$155,590.06</b>	<b>\$27,259.31</b>	<b>\$182,849.37</b>	<b>\$190,852.49</b>	<b>\$741,537.84</b>



## THE FREE WILL BAPTIST FOUNDATION

### *Wills, Who Needs One?*

By D. Ray Lewis

In 1540, the English Parliament passed the *Statute of Wills*. Landowners and their heirs were pleased with the law. Since there were few landowners, the majority of the English had no interest in this statute.

Today, nearly everyone has something they want to leave to heirs. About 25% of all people over the age of 50, however, do not have a will. Is this significant? Do you need a will? Jane Bryant Quinn puts it this way:

*"You own stuff  
You will die.*

*Someone will get your stuff."*

If you want to determine who gets your "stuff," you must have a will. This is true no matter how much or how little property you have. If you don't have a will, the laws in your state determine how your property will be distributed. This can create legal headaches and possible conflicts for your survivors.

In many states if there is a surviving spouse and children, the spouse may get anywhere from one third to one half of the estate, with the balance going to the children. Your spouse may have to share property with your parents, brothers and sisters and in some cases nieces, nephews or others.

A will can also be the most effective way of assuring that special bequests are carried out. Do not use your will to leave burial instructions or donate organs for medical use. Usually by the time the will is read, it's too late.

A will allows you to select whom you want to serve in these positions:

**Executor:** every will needs an executor. This is the representative of the estate, appointed to carry out the terms of the will and provide for the payment of final expenses of the deceased, including claims against the estate and estate taxes. The executor can be a lawyer, surviving spouse, friend or relative.

**Guardian:** one of the hardest names to come up with when drawing a will is the guardian for your children. Once you decide, don't let it surprise the person you select. Discuss it with that person and provide funds to compensate them.

**Trustee(s):** if a trust is established—funds entrusted to and managed by a third party on behalf of beneficiaries—a trustee should be

appointed. A trust can be left in the care of trustees such as the Free Will Baptist Foundation or a bank or other financial entity in cooperation with a friend or relative.

If you are married, both should have coordinated wills because each may have property you want to dispose of separately. Also, if one spouse inherits the other's estate but does not have a will, the second estate may not be distributed as wished when the surviving spouse also dies.

Although a will doesn't have to be drawn up by a lawyer, most people use one to insure that their will conforms to state laws. The majority of hand-written wills are declared invalid because of mistakes in wording or procedure. Only about half the states even recognize "home-made" wills. Because many such wills contain imprecise language they may be successfully attacked in court and declared invalid.

Periodically review your will. Make sure it is up to date in light of your current marital situation, job, investments, family, state of residence and business. Any significant change in your financial or personal life can be a reason for review. Changes in the law also can require a change in your will.

After reviewing your will, do not simply write in a change. You will either invalidate the entire will or not legally make the change. There are two proper ways to change your will: (1) create a new one including the changes; (2) add a codicil to the existing will.

Keep your will in a safe, fireproof and easily accessible place. Some use a safe-deposit box, but many states require the box to be sealed upon your death, and your family will need a court order to open it. Some people have two safe-deposit boxes—the husband puts his will in his wife's box and the wife's goes in the husband's.

Many people keep their wills in their lawyer's office, with a copy at home. Make sure your family knows who the lawyer is. If you've named a bank to be the executor, it may keep the will.

So, unlike the majority of the early English population, we all should be interested in and have a will. ■



## HOME MISSIONS

*New Mexico Needs Help!*

By Roy Thomas

I recently visited the New Mexico State Association in Carlsbad. This was an historic but sad occasion, because the delegation voted to dissolve the state association composed of two district associations and become a district association. The reason for this action was that there were not enough workers to fill the offices of a state association and two district associations.

It was brought to the attention of the delegation that just a few years ago there were 11 churches in the New Mexico State Association. Three of those were in West Texas and the other eight in New Mexico. However, because four New Mexico churches and two in El Paso, Texas, have closed for lack of pastors, only four churches are left to carry on the work.

Two of the remaining four are without pastors. The church in Albuquerque, a city about the size of Nashville, has been without a pastor for almost two years. Faith Free Will Baptist Church in Carlsbad hasn't had a pastor in more than two years.

These churches can't hold on indefinitely without shepherds to guide the flocks. It is very difficult for a church without a pastor to reach people for Christ and train them to carry on the work of the Lord. Pastors are desperately needed.

The New Mexico Free Will Baptists are a brave group. They have been good stewards, and the four remaining churches in the state have property and nice buildings completely debt free. The people there are faithful to the Lord and loyal to the National Association of Free Will Baptists. In fact, during the state

meeting, the delegates paid their state's quota toward the Victory Campaign to retire indebtedness of the National Offices Building.

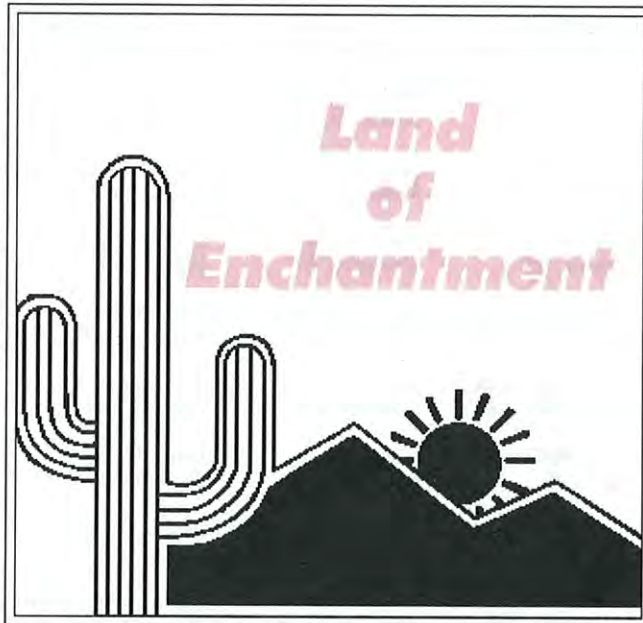
I have a deep love for the people and churches of New Mexico. As a young airman stationed in New Mexico in 1954, my first sermons were preached in the Free Will Baptist church in Hobbs. It was the only Free Will Baptist church in the state at that time. They were an encouragement and inspiration to my Christian life.

The Hobbs church has produced some faithful workers down through the years. My wife grew up in Hobbs, and she was saved in that church. Five of its faithful members who were attending the church back in 1954 were present at the April 1994 state association.

After my wife and I married in July 1954, we started the First Free Will Baptist Church in Artesia, New Mexico. A few months later a young couple, Jim and Katie

Pollock, accepted Christ as Savior and are still faithfully serving the Lord. In fact, as a layman, Jim Pollock is moderator of the New Mexico State Association.

New Mexico is a wonderful state to live in, and opportunities to serve the Lord abound everywhere. Preachers are desperately needed in this "Land of Enchantment." Surely among our preachers who are not pastoring or among those who are wanting to move, there are some men God could use in New Mexico. Please help me pray that the Lord of the harvest will send forth laborers into His harvest. Contact the Home Missions Department for information on the churches and opportunities of service in the Land of Enchantment. ■



# YOUTH UPDATE

## The 1994 Truth and Peace Leadership Conference

The 11th Annual Truth and Peace Leadership Conference will meet July 4 – 21 in Clarksville, TN; Nashville, TN; and Little Rock, AR. The 72 high school students will participate in team-building activities, leadership training, Bible study, and intense on-the-job training during the 1994 National Youth Conference. These young people represent 19 states from across the denomination. We ask for your prayers as they participate in this life-changing experience!

Timothy Aldridge Brandon, FL	Jason King Birmingham, AL	Eric Saulsgiver Nashville, TN	Bethann Bowman Batesville, AR	Allysa Hampton Nashville, TN	Lori McCraney Decatur, AL
Jermi Anderson Plymouth, MI	John King Pinson, AL	Brandon Shipp Nashville, TN	Wendy Cockrum Sesser, IL	Elizabeth Haynie Locust Grove, OK	Laura Mullen New Castle, IN
Aaron Baker Nashville, TN	Dave Koester Park Hills, MO	Leon Stalls Reidsville, GA	Corrie Coker Turbeville, SC	Shawna Johnson Wewoka, OK	Deanna Nicholson Ashland City, TN
Timothy Bishop Newport, AR	Brandon Lee Topeka, KS	Jason Taylor Glasgow, KY	Stacey Crank Wayne, MI	Charae Jones Florence, AL	Angela Romero Owasso, OK
Jon Bullick Owasso, OK	Philip Long Valley Mines, MO	Justin Thomas Albany, GA	Chanda Daughtry Glennville, GA	Davina Jones Rogers, AR	Suzanne Roy Taylor, MI
Shane Davison Springdale, AR	Jeremy Maxwell Russellville, AR	Brooks Wade Colquitt, GA	Tina Dixon Dayton, OH	Julie Massengill Goldsboro, NC	Felicia Sasser Fresno, CA
Brad DeCicco Decatur, IL	Craig McDougal Ada, OK	Lisa Apple Belleville, AR	Kristy Douglas St. Anne, IL	Megan McDonald Bryan, TX	Laura Sides Millersville, MO
Jeff Elder Bixby, OK	Justin Meek Louisia, KY	Lisa Barron Fresno, CA	Stacey Driggers Cades, SC	Briana McMillan Smithville, MS	Heather Smith Colona, IL
Doug Eoff Rogers, AR	Adrian Nease Glennville, GA	Rebecca Blanchard Adamsville, AL	Rebecca Gorenflo Newport, TN	Heather McMillan Smithville, MS	Kelly Smith Northport, AL
Daniel Floyd Church Hill, TN	Jerrod Pilgrim St. Peters, MO	Debbie Boster Channahon, IL	Amy Gunnels Smithville, MS	Jennifer McNeeley Bradley, WV	Jennifer Sykes Garner, NC
Luke Fornash Huntington, WV					Stephanie Trimble N. Little Rock, AR
Aaron Harris, Savannah, GA					Sara Watson Springdale, AR
Brent Hutsell Van Buren, AR					Joyce West Willis, MI
Jason Hutsell Van Buren, AR					Tonya Williams Mt. Hope, WV
Dale Johnson Bratt, FL					Melody Williams Martinez, GA
					Michele Wilson Russellville, AR



## The Shoutin' Business

**O**ne month before my 17th birthday I attended my first Free Will Baptist association-wide business meeting. It lasted two days and half of two nights, and set the standard by which I've measured every business meeting since then.

I could tell that they had done this sort of thing before. In fact, I got in on the 63rd annual session of the Saline Association in Arkansas. The moderator was out of town, so the assistant moderator stepped up. Then they elected a new assistant moderator and a reading clerk.

That done, the clerk commenced to read (Yes, read!) 21 church letters aloud to the congregation. I know it sounds boring, but I was fascinated. The clerk read without a break until 11:00 o'clock, and then stopped for the preaching service. We preached, ate and came back at 1:00 p.m., so he could read the rest of those letters.

**After a rousing fellowship** handshake, the brethren appointed nine committees to expedite association business. And wonder of wonders, they put *me* on one of them—the Statistical Committee.

Of course, I didn't know a church statistic from a John Deere tractor, but somebody decided to put a 16-year-old kid dressed in blue jeans on the committee. All I have to say is, "Thank God for Brother J. C. Rawls," who did the work and graciously listed my name beside his on the report.

**That night, after dinner** on the grounds, we returned for evening services. I got another surprise. Before the sermon, we had a "devotional service." Now, for those of you who don't know what an old-time devotional service is, let me say that it's a creative way to put two sermons in one service.

This young fire-brand preacher

who was up for ordination led the devotional. When he finished devoting, he then led a testimony meeting.

Folks jumped up like popcorn to testify. I'd never seen anything like it, but I sure did like it.

**Things got kind of high** spiritually. Next thing I knew some sister started to shout. First time I'd ever heard a Free Will Baptist shout. Folks began crying. By the time the testimony meeting shut down, 55 people had testified and 16 rededicated their lives.

Then came the preaching service from Revelation chapter 21 which is a whole other story. It was after 10:00 p.m. before we left church.

**Saturday morning** at 9:00 a.m. we had a full house and started business again. Those nine committees appointed on Friday had somehow found time between the preaching and testifying to write up seven resolutions, identify the 17 who died the previous year, examine credentials, prepare temperance admonitions and recommend five young preachers to be ordained.

All day long, between devotions and sermons and another fellowship handshake, we reported and voted and resolved and in general took care of business. Saturday night we came back for the final worship service.

You're not gonna believe this, but we had *another* stem-winder devotional service. This time 46 folks testified. And when the preacher finally stopped, 16 more people came to the altar—five got saved and 11 made rededications.

**Free Will Baptist business** meetings! They started me off right. Those dear folks demonstrated a reverence for the business of God, and a gentleness toward each other even when they disagreed sharply in times of debate.



Jack Williams

I was in awe of those early business meetings. I listened so hard my ears hurt from concentrating lest I miss anything. I've never gotten over it.

Why? Because it was a chance to sit with God's people and take care of God's business. Oh sure, we disagreed and debated and got loud, and got right after one another verbally.

But it was us. It's who we were. We were family taking care of family business.

**Some of our national** conventions remind me of the Jerusalem Conference in Acts 15 when the spiritual heavy hitters went one-on-one about issues important enough to divide the New Testament Church. Did they back away from controversy? No. They discussed and debated until they reached a consensus. It wasn't easy and it wasn't quiet. Then everybody took the consensus vote home with them, and the Church moved on.

That's what we do every year at our annual business meeting called the national convention. We arrive at consensus. Nobody's happy all the time, and some of us never like anything anytime. But most of us adapt as consensus is reached and move on.

A good business meeting can be just as uplifting as a good prayer meeting. That's because good prayer meetings usually precede good business meetings.

**Join us at the national** convention in Little Rock. It's time to discuss budgets, select board members, address issues, preach and testify, and plan for the future.

Best of all, we're meeting less than 90 miles from Pleasant Valley FWB Church where I attended my first Free Will Baptist conference. There're enough of those shoutin' folks still alive to lift us one more time above controversy to consensus. ■

CONTACT

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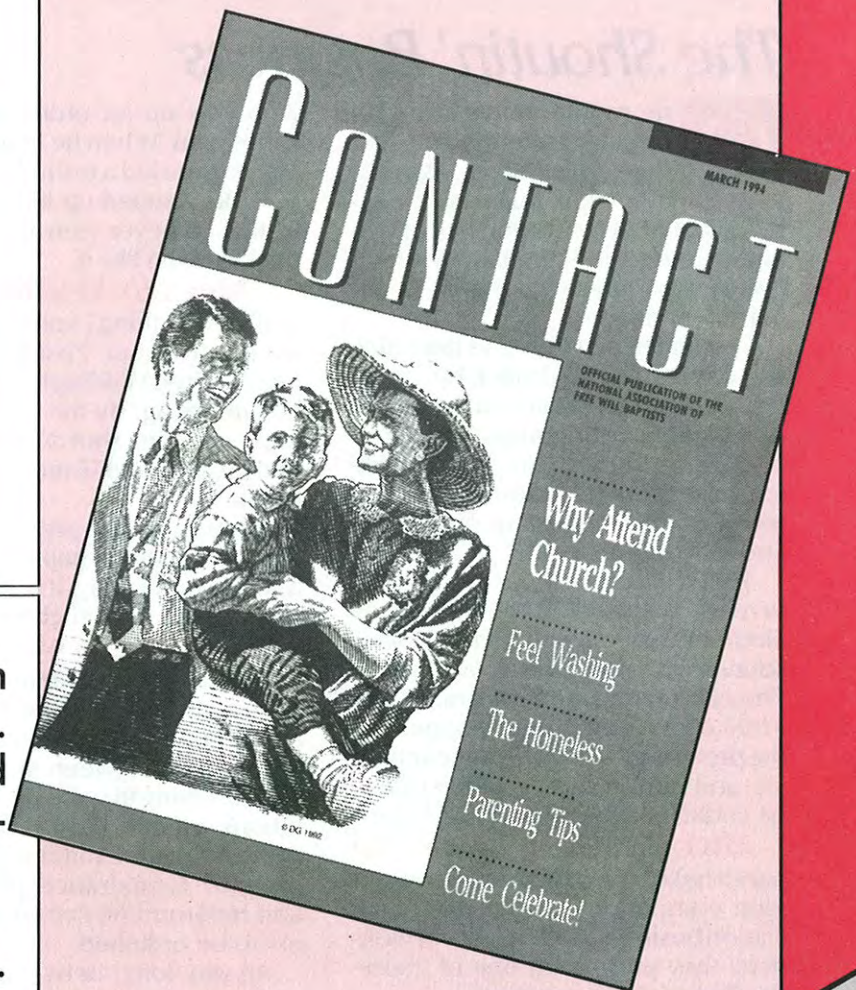
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