

AUGUST 1996

CONTACT

OFFICIAL PUBLICATION OF THE
NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF
FREE WILL BAPTISTS



**Our
Pastor
is # 1**

**We
Appreciate
Him**

.....
**Pastor
Appreciation
Issue**

.....
Muzzling the Ox

.....
Dress to Preach

.....
Pastor's Insurance

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AUGUST 1996

VOLUME 43, NO. 8

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Melvin Worthington

The Pastoral Profile

The pastoral epistles present a comprehensive view of the pastoral work and ministry. The Bible emphasizes two offices in the New Testament Church, bishops and deacons. These are the only offices which detail criteria for those who occupy them. The closest modern equivalent to the word *bishop* is pastor. The pastor oversees the congregation of believers, feeds them the scriptures, visits those in need and protects the flock from theological enemies.

Studies indicate that there is a shortage of pastoral candidates. Several have voiced alarm regarding the lack of interest among young men concerning pastoral work. This concern has resulted in efforts to recruit pastoral candidates, much like individuals are recruited for other professions.

However, we believe that God calls and gifts men for pastoral ministry.

The Desire

Paul reminds Timothy that those who desire the office of a bishop desire a good work. It is not wrong for men to want to serve in pastoral work.

Homer Kent, Jr. says, "This godly desire for the responsible task of overseership, if controlled by the Spirit of God, may deepen into a sacred conviction. Such a desire is the motive for preparation in college, Bible school, and seminary. Of course, desire for this task merely for the prestige or honor involved is not praiseworthy, but if longed for in the will of God is to be commended."

The Demands

The pastoral office demands hard, honest and humble service. Men seeking an easy life will not like the pastoral role. The devil seeks to destroy, disable and discredit pastoral work.

Kent says, "The overseership is not a mere honor to be enjoyed. . . . It is a good work but it is work. . . . It is attractive to beholders. Sincere Christians recognize the high calling of their minister, and thank God for it."

The Disposition

Paul told Timothy, "And the servant of the Lord must not strive; but be gentle unto all men, apt to teach, patient," (II Timothy 2:24).

Peter addressed the disposition of pastors, "Feed the flock of God which is among you, taking oversight thereof, not be constraint, but willingly; not for filthy lucre, but of a ready mind; Neither as being lords over God's heritage, but being examples to the flock" (I Peter 5:2-3).

The Peacemakers

Jesus said, "Blessed are the peacemakers: for they shall be called the children of God" (Matt. 5:9). Wrangling never produces repentance or conversion. There are times when pastors must contend for the faith, but they must not engage in continual contention and quarreling.

Barnes provides the following insight, "He should not struggle for mere victory, even when endeavoring to maintain truth; but should do this, in all cases, with a kind spirit, and a mild temper; with entire candor; with nothing designed to provoke and irritate an adversary; and so that, whatever may be the result

of the discussion, the bond of peace may, if possible, be preserved."

The Preparation

Pastors must be prepared. The phrase "apt to teach" suggests that pastoral candidates must be adept at explaining the scriptures. This requires a disposition which helps him continue his education whether it be formal or informal. Those who downgrade the need for continuing education short-circuit pastoral work.

Kent is on target when he says, "Although the ability to teach demands a certain inherent mental capacity, it assumes a knowledge of what is to be taught. Here is authority for Christian education. Any man who shows himself incapable of teaching others is not qualified for the eldership."

Paul reminds Timothy of his obligation to continue his education, "Study to show thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth" (II Timothy 2:15).

The Perception

Pastors must be perceptive. Paul warns Timothy of perilous times which would come. He wanted Timothy to exercise discernment. John called for his readers to "try the spirits" which implies the exercise of discernment.

Barnes suggests, "Win the heart first, and then modestly and kindly show him what the truth is, in a few words, and with as unassuming a spirit as possible, and you have him."

Pastoral work is a wonderful work. Let's pray that the Lord of the harvest will thrust laborers into His harvest field. ■

The Secretary's Schedule

Aug. 1-4 Mexican National Association

Aug. 5-11 Evergreen FWB Church
Iola, Texas

Aug. 10 Central Texas District Association

The Pastor's Salary

Muzzling the Ox That Treads Our Corn

By Trymon Messer

There is a biblical principle in I Timothy 5:17-18 and I Corinthians 9:9-11 that God's people need to consider. That principle relates to the success of getting the gospel out, God's approval on His church and whether we will have pastors for tomorrow.

This could be one of the most serious problems facing the Free Will Baptist denomination today and for the future.

The Ministerial Crisis

In 1991, I surveyed five states where Free Will Baptists are strong. I asked four questions:

(1) How many pastors died this past year? (2) How many pastors retired? (3) How many pastors left the ministry for various reasons? (4) How many pastors did you ordain?

I discovered that for every preacher we ordained in those states we lost five. There is already a great shortage of pastors in our denomination and our colleges are turning out fewer each year. Free Will Baptists are facing a crisis—a ministerial crisis—and many of our churches are at a standstill or dying.

Paul takes this Old Testament command concerning the ox plowing and applies it to the support of the ministers of the Lord.

Notice I Timothy 5:17, "Let the elders that rule well be counted worthy of double honour, especially they who labour in the word and doctrine." The pastor is an administrator, pastor, teacher and leader. Paul says they are worthy of double honor—

"double what they have had or to what others have" (Matthew Henry).

Paul quotes a scripture to confirm this command.

The ox was allowed to feed as it worked. Therefore, the more it worked, the more food it had (See Deut. 25:4).

God has always made provision for His ministers both under the law and now in the gospel.

The ox only treads out the corn from which people made bread that perished, but the minister breaks the Bread of Life which endures forever.

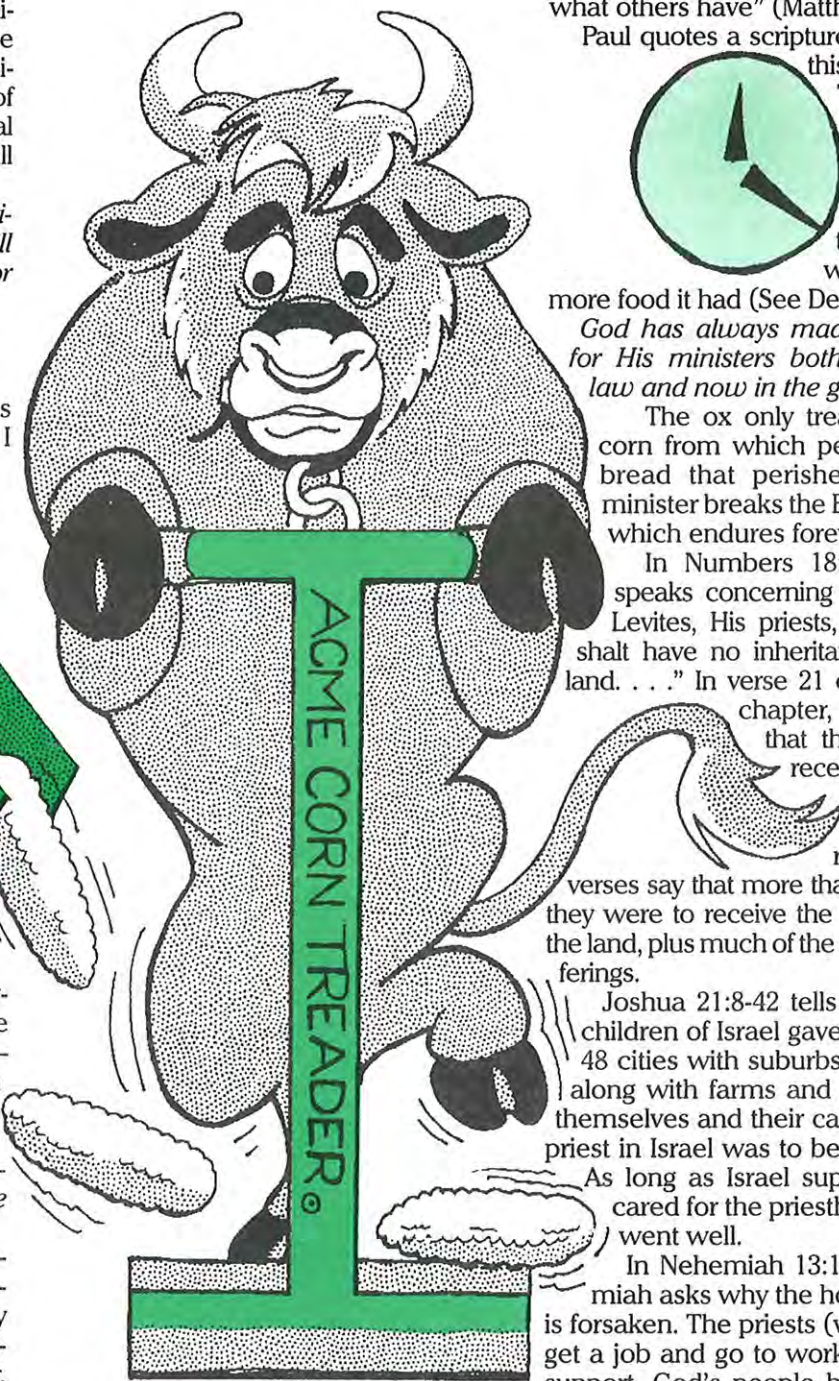
In Numbers 18:20-31, God speaks concerning the tribe of Levites, His priests, ". . . Thou shalt have no inheritance in their land. . ."

In verse 21 of the same chapter, He states that they were to receive the tithes of the children of Israel. Further verses say that more than the tithes, they were to receive the first fruits of the land, plus much of the sacrificial offerings.

Joshua 21:8-42 tells us that the children of Israel gave the Levites 48 cities with suburbs to dwell in along with farms and gardens for themselves and their cattle. To be a priest in Israel was to be somebody.

As long as Israel supported and cared for the priesthood, things went well.

In Nehemiah 13:10-11, Nehemiah asks why the house of God is forsaken. The priests (v. 10) had to get a job and go to work for lack of support. God's people had stopped giving to God His tithes (v. 12).



Art by Mike Messer

The Free Will Baptist Problem

The Free Will Baptist denomination as we know it is young, beginning in 1935. After the 1911 merger, we were a struggling, rural group of people with few churches and pastors. Our pastors were mostly farmers or miners who had their means of living and just wanted to help.

The people were very poor. We were in a depression. Many of our preachers were untrained and some preached against tithes and education. Others refused support. They did not want people to think they were preaching for money. They meant well, and we thank God for them.

But, the Results . . .

Many churches have a low view of taking care of their pastors. Garbage collectors make more money and have more benefits than God's man. Some of our pastors are still bi-vocational, and we thank God for these dedicated men. Some pastors and their families, however, are hurting financially.

Many do not own a home and cannot afford one. Others draw food stamps, and some who do not probably should. Many have no insurance or retirement and are barely making ends meet. Their wives and children suffer, and bitterness and resentment build up against the ministry.

The pastor hurts and is unable to provide for his family. As pastors grow older, their health begins to fail and they face a dark future. It is no wonder there is a shortage in the ministry!

Added to this, many of God's people seem to have lost interest in the Lord's work. They are non-committal, unfaithful, uninvolved and non-supportive. This is wearying to the hearts and hands of God's shepherds.

Paul Admits a Mistake.

Paul had preached to the Corinthians without cost to them and they did not respect or appreciate him (II Corinthians 11:7-8).

Not many people respect or appreciate a preacher who lives on the same level they do, morally, spiritually or financially. Any church that does not adequately take care of their pastor will not appreciate or respect him.

Note verse 7, ". . . in abasing myself. . . ." Paul became abased in the eyes of his people (meaning low in position or rank). In verse 8 we see that it was a welfare church. In verse 9 Paul stated that he had needs but could not depend on the church to meet those needs.

Corinth was the only church that challenged his apostleship and authority. (See also I Corinthians 9:1-2.) In II Corinthians 12:13, we see that the church that does not take care of their pastor is an inferior church. This is, of course, if they are able to take good care and do not do it.

This is the only time Paul asked a church to forgive him and admitted that he had wronged them of the benefit and blessing of supporting their pastor (v. 13b).

He asked them to ". . . forgive me this wrong." He had not required them to support him.

I wonder if this explains why many of our churches are not being blessed of the Lord and do not respect and appreciate their pastors. They are muzzling the ox that treads out the corn and failing to adequately take care of God's man.

In addition, the church is enjoying the benefits of *two for the price of one*. Many a pastor's wife is almost as valuable to the church as the pastor, yet churches do not even consider them.

Correcting His Mistake

In I Corinthians 9:1-11, Paul rebukes the Corinthian church.

In verses 1-2 he defends his apostleship—how disrespectful his own converts were. In verses 4, 7 and 9, he asks: (1) Don't we (Paul and Barnabas) have the right to eat and drink? (2) Don't we have the right to support our wives and families as Peter does? (3) Does a soldier have to support and feed himself? (4) Is a farmer not permitted to eat from his own vineyard and field? (5) Is a shepherd not permitted to eat and drink from his flock?

They felt no obligation to their own pastor. Does God take care of the ox?

After God gave this command to Israel, how do you think He would have reacted if the farmer had muzzled his ox? Will God bless a church that does not adequately care for the shepherd that God gave them, especially when

the pastor and his family are in need? You may say that you are doing the best you can, and that may be true.

My question is—*Would you handle the situation in a better manner if you could?*

I hope your answer is, *Yes!* If I could show you a plan that would meet all the needs of your pastor and not cost you anything, would you follow it? If your answer is *No*, you have a spiritual problem. Write down the salary and all the benefits you wish you could give your pastor.

Here Is the Plan!

If you are presently meeting your financial obligations as it relates to your operation, why not vote that from now on, you will give the pastor everything that comes in above present obligation until you get the salary and benefits he needs. Set a cap on it so that you will know when you have reached your goal. Make the salary figure a good one that will be worthy of God's man.

You may want to give him a percentage of everything that comes in. If you plan well for your pastor, it will accomplish five things for your church.

(1) It will be an incentive for the pastor to reach more people.

(2) It will help him to feel better about himself and his family. He will love the church more.

(3) He will work harder to keep the people you already have in the church.

(4) You will feel better about yourself because you are taking care of your shepherd.

(5) God's blessings will be upon your church.

All of this, and it won't cost you one cent more than you are already giving! All the increase would come from the growth of the church. Why not give this plan a try and see if you don't experience growth.

Our churches must confront the crisis that is facing Free Will Baptists and our country. This is scriptural and the right thing to do.

I leave you with these verses:

"And we beseech you, brethren, to know them which labour among you, and are over you in the Lord, and admonish you; And to esteem them very highly in love for their work's sake.

And be at peace among yourselves" (1 Thessalonians 5:12,13).

"Behold, the days come, saith the Lord God, that I will send a famine in the land, not a famine of bread, nor a thirst for water, but of hearing the words of the Lord:" (Amos 8:11). Could this famine be for a lack of God-called preachers?

You may ask what should be done if your pastor is not a good one. I suggest that the leaders of the church talk with him. Let him know what you expect and pray for him. Don't withhold your tithes or the support he needs. Two wrongs don't make a right.

If nothing that you have done helps, you do have the right to get another pastor. Before that happens, please make sure that you have done all you can do. Remember, good pastors are becoming increasingly hard to find.

Whether we have pastors for tomorrow depends greatly on how we take care of our pastors today. Your church will need God's approval and blessing upon it. Don't muzzle the ox.



ABOUT THE WRITER: Trymon Messer serves as general director of the Home Missions Department.

**This Month,
Show
Your Pastor
that
You
Appreciate
Him.**

THE TOGETHER WAY

May 1996

Receipts:

State	Designated	CO-OP	Total	May '95	Year To Date
Alabama	\$ 234.61	\$.00	\$ 234.61	\$ 17,414.01	\$ 2,967.78
Arizona	81.50	.00	81.50	.00	2,413.74
Arkansas	16,456.45	14,053.40	30,509.85	31,283.99	135,282.73
California	.00	974.14	974.14	794.48	4,948.67
Colorado	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00
Delaware	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00
Florida	.00	.00	.00	1,364.40	16,987.98
Georgia	21,037.82	3,172.19	24,210.01	20,589.71	91,120.98
Hawaii	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00
Idaho	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00
Illinois	8,016.47	1,852.09	9,868.56	21,394.79	59,653.99
Indiana	2,370.89	187.76	2,558.65	1,297.71	4,129.84
Iowa	90.00	.00	90.00	.00	270.00
Kansas	.00	153.15	153.15	17.33	353.15
Kentucky	952.67	387.60	1,340.27	984.64	4,219.40
Louisiana	.00	.00	.00	10.00	50.00
Maryland	.00	.00	.00	.00	1,034.08
Michigan	17,825.39	4,532.60	22,357.99	10,258.15	83,451.51
Mississippi	145.50	458.91	604.41	791.64	2,500.72
Missouri	12,263.14	.00	12,263.14	12,134.05	61,926.04
Montana	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00
Nebraska	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00
New Jersey	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00
New Mexico	.00	.00	.00	523.70	3,191.88
North Carolina	2,587.84	590.00	3,177.84	3,263.58	8,519.70
Ohio	.00	.00	.00	13,448.75	42,663.77
Oklahoma	57,976.05	.00	57,976.05	44,560.16	285,030.09
South Carolina	21,881.99	109.57	21,991.56	18,844.69	105,446.37
South Dakota	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00
Tennessee	1,447.19	923.61	2,370.80	2,911.64	49,377.21
Texas	9,201.36	516.63	9,717.99	17,959.88	35,475.20
Virginia	.00	.00	.00	2,708.48	6,628.14
Virgin Islands	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00
West Virginia	6,140.81	78.20	6,219.01	6,276.53	30,563.94
Wisconsin	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00
Canada	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00
Northwest Association	.00	41.93	41.93	.00	41.93
Northeast Association	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00
Other	.00	.00	.00	.08	.23
Totals	\$178,709.68	\$28,031.78	\$206,741.46	\$228,832.39	\$1,038,249.07

Disbursements:

Executive Office	\$ 10,569.64	\$15,417.48	\$ 25,987.12	\$ 30,165.62	\$ 137,902.05
Foreign Missions	100,100.42	2,901.28	103,001.70	120,538.00	502,188.21
FWBBC	15,865.78	2,901.28	18,767.06	15,371.57	84,933.79
Home Missions	45,624.61	2,270.59	47,895.20	49,625.06	253,135.71
Retirement & Insurance	910.01	1,766.00	2,676.01	2,761.38	14,430.86
Master's Men	1,742.19	1,766.00	3,508.19	3,884.67	17,950.96
Commission for Theological Integrity	136.53	63.07	199.60	189.04	892.59
FWB Foundation	645.53	756.87	1,402.40	1,717.39	8,248.59
Historical Commission	120.51	63.07	183.58	178.59	816.44
Music Commission	96.83	63.07	159.90	150.88	784.49
Radio & TV Commission	106.91	63.07	169.98	161.33	838.83
Hillsdale FWB College	1,375.03	.00	1,375.03	1,358.07	7,111.42
Other	1,415.69	.00	1,415.69	2,730.79	9,015.13
Totals	\$178,709.68	\$28,031.78	\$206,741.46	\$228,832.39	\$1,038,249.07

How Can He Dress Like a Pastor

(On The Salary We Pay)?

By Jim Turnbough

It happens often . . . I knock on a stranger's door or enter the hospital room of someone unknown. My new acquaintance quickly says, "I thought you must be a pastor." How do they know? Is it my gray Buick . . . my spirit-filled smile . . . my portly physique? Could the most obvious clue be my appearance? Surely the way a pastor dresses should complement his ministry.

The Pastor's Wardrobe

So how does a pastor dress? We must admit that the general standard for personal grooming in today's business world has changed. Major corporations at one time expected their professional workers to wear suits and ties, but now a national magazine reports that 67% of corporations allow a more casual style of dress.

At one time several companies permitted employees to dress casually only on "dress down Friday." Today there is talk of initiating a "dress up Friday."

It appears that many of our pastors are following this trend and dress for their everyday routine in golf shirts and casual pants. I believe our appearance does make a difference.

Dr. Barbara Yelverton, a psychologist in Greenville, North Carolina, reported an experiment

to test the psychological effect of clothing on an audience of teachers. She showed teachers two pictures of the same boy.

In one picture, the boy was dressed neatly in clean pressed pants and shirt. In the other picture, the same boy was shown in old, too-short pants and a soiled, torn T-shirt.

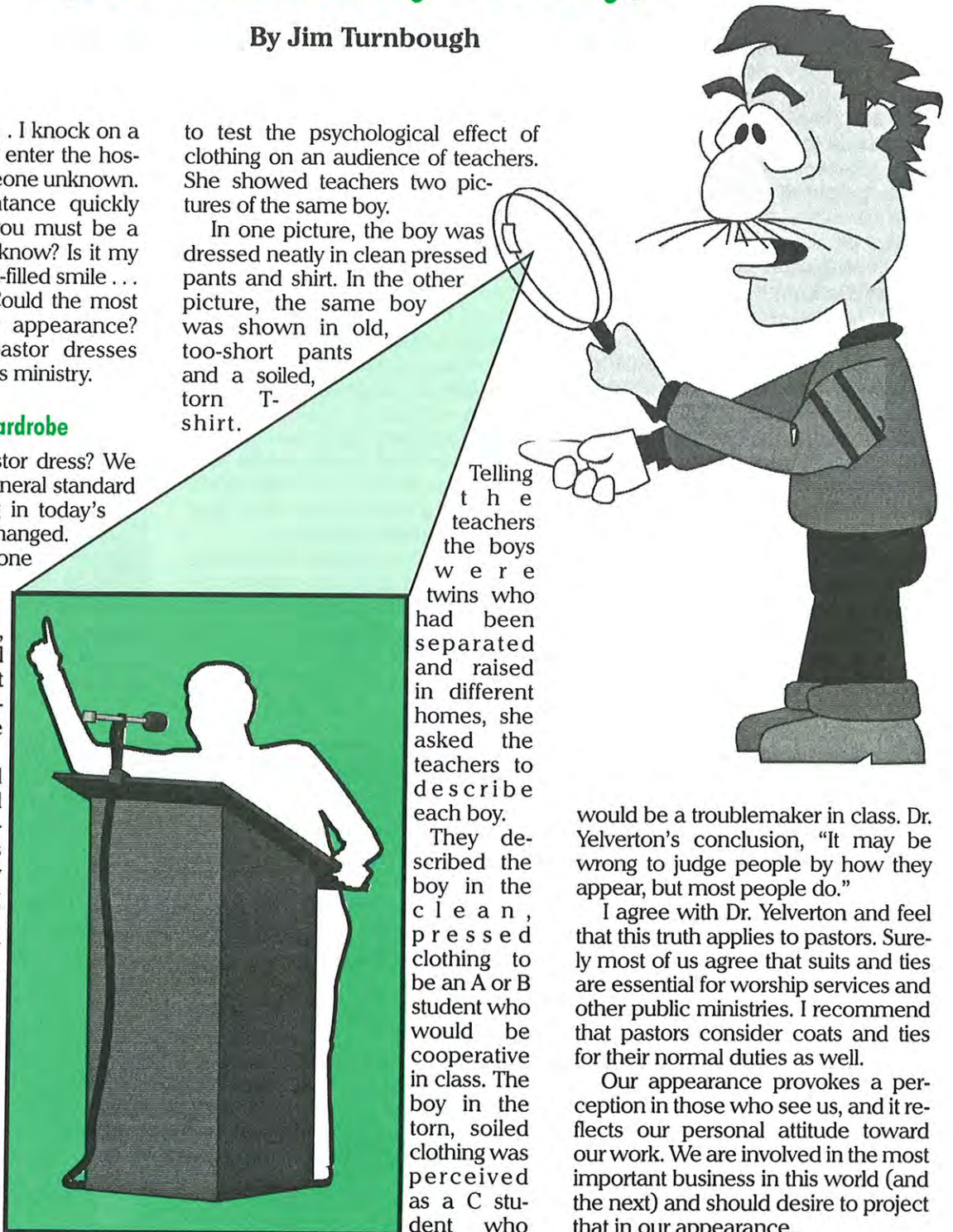
Telling the teachers the boys were twins who had been separated and raised in different homes, she asked the teachers to describe each boy.

They described the boy in the clean, pressed clothing to be an A or B student who would be cooperative in class. The boy in the torn, soiled clothing was perceived as a C student who

would be a troublemaker in class. Dr. Yelverton's conclusion, "It may be wrong to judge people by how they appear, but most people do."

I agree with Dr. Yelverton and feel that this truth applies to pastors. Surely most of us agree that suits and ties are essential for worship services and other public ministries. I recommend that pastors consider coats and ties for their normal duties as well.

Our appearance provokes a perception in those who see us, and it reflects our personal attitude toward our work. We are involved in the most important business in this world (and the next) and should desire to project that in our appearance.



The Pastor's Wisdom

Having determined that we need to dress in a business-like manner, we have to determine how to do so. A pastor will always need at least three or four good suits and also some sport coats and dress pants for every-day wear.

Add to these several dress shirts, ties, belts, shoes and all the other accessories, and you have a regular expense that can seem to be impossible on a pastor's salary. Let me share some seemingly obvious but practical ideas of how to make this work.

We need to remember that clothing is expensive, but a necessary expense. Often we plan a budget and make allowances for housing, cars, insurance, etc., but we do not leave anything for clothing. Perhaps gifts and extra money will provide for some of our clothing needs, but we need to plan in advance for regular purchases.

Do not decide that with limited funds you can only purchase the cheapest clothing possible. It is better for a pastor to have a few clothing items that are of good quality than to have several cheaply made outfits. Look for better quality items that are on sale at the end of the season. Be sure to check outlet stores where first quality clothing can be purchased at less than retail prices.

In my personal experience, I seldom go looking for clothing specifically. Rather, I tend to buy when I

happen to find a good price on something that I can use.

Look for conservative styles and colors that will not be out of date quickly. It is also wise to consider colors that blend easily with other outfits. When you are traveling, for instance, it is nice to have shirts and ties that may work with more than one coat or suit, or an extra pair of pants that might match a coat to make an extra outfit.

Take care of the clothing you have. Suits should be cleaned and pressed regularly. While this is expensive, it preserves good clothing and certainly makes for a better appearance. A pastor might consider having his dress shirts done at the cleaners. The cost is usually minimal and the results are worth the cost.

The Pastor's Wallet

When a pastor surrenders to serve the Lord in a full-time ministry, he automatically determines to attempt to live on whatever God supplies through churches. So, by God's grace, he learns to feed, house, clothe and educate his family in a respectable fashion on a salary that is often less than other similar professions.

The pastor's wardrobe is likely to be pretty far down his list of concerns, yet it is vital that his personal appearance reflect a serious attitude and the look of a professional man. He will be in contact regularly with both Christians

and the unsaved. His desire should be that nothing that in his appearance or clothing hinders his ministry.

The average pastor will need to spend several hundred dollars per year on his clothing. A supportive congregation can help him in this area. Certainly this expense should be considered when a church is determining their leader's salary.

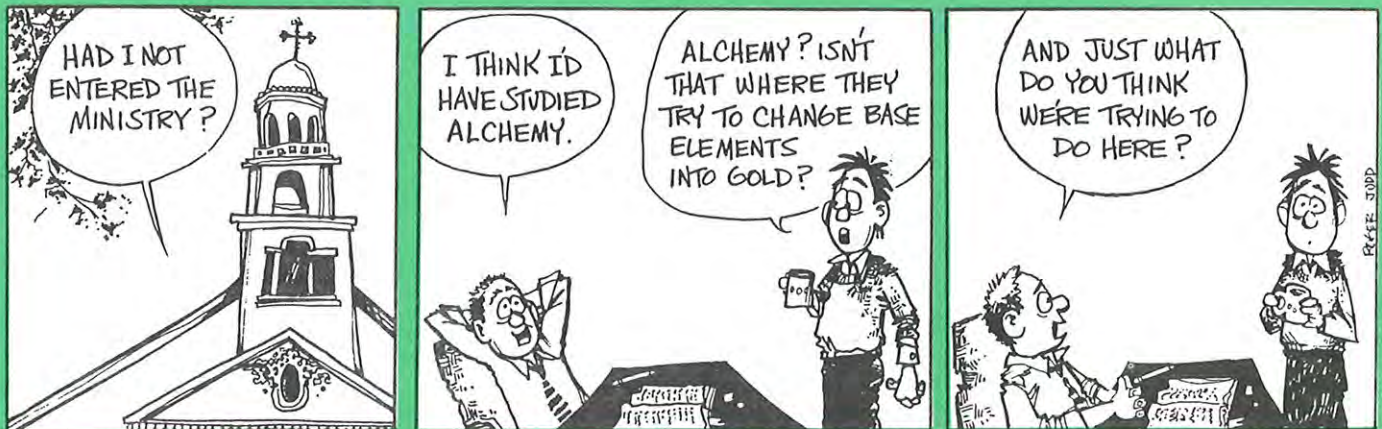
Then there are other ways a pastor can be assisted. For instance, I have been blessed to pastor churches where a deacon would recognize this need and take me shopping for a new suit occasionally.

In my present church, the deacon board puts together enough money to buy their pastor a new suit as a Christmas present. Surely God will add an extra blessing for those gracious, thoughtful Christians who support their pastor in ways like this. ■



ABOUT THE WRITER: Reverend Jim Turnbough pastors Trinity Free Will Baptist Church in Greenville, North Carolina.

BEYOND BELIEF



Your Pastor's Insurance Needs

By Steven R. Hasty



Sure, you love your pastor and his family. And yes, your church has made sure his salary is adequate. Wouldn't it be wonderful if you could also make sure he would never have to face the grinding effects of poverty, defaulting on a loan or worse yet, divorce or premature death due to stress?

All these dilemmas could result from lack of adequate insurance. While much of your pastor's job requires faith, exposure to an unnecessary risk resulting in financial loss may wreck his faith, ruin his testimony, his health, his family, his finances—and his future usefulness for God.

Church Responsibility

What is your church's responsibility? What types of insurance should be considered? Will just any insurance company do?

Your church's responsibility is directly related to its ability to pay for such coverages. But even though budgets may be tight in a smaller church, you can still provide your pastor with adequate insurance protection.

For example, if enough members practice tithing, almost any size church can provide for the basic needs of a pastor and his family. Just 10 members, each earning an average wage, can generate enough income by tithing to pay a salary.

Ten more could pay the church mortgage and utilities. Another 10, through storehouse tithing, could provide for insurance needs and giving to outside causes. And that's if you have just 30 tithers!



So, before giving up in despair due to size, consider whether everyone is giving in a biblical manner.

Insurance Options

Your pastor's basic insurance needs are hospitalization coverage, homeowner's (or renter's coverage if he lives in a parsonage), automobile insurance, group term life insurance, and a retirement contribution plan.

Supplemental Insurance

Supplemental insurance can include burial, mortgage protection, income continuation, disability, cancer and long-term care insurance packages.

Hospitalization insurance should be one of two types—major medical or an HMO. Major medical is available through several companies. Check with your local life agent, car insurance representative or insurance broker.

Ask about strength ratings, deductibles and co-payments. Standard deductibles are \$250, while standard co-payments are 20%. This usually means they pay 80% of the first \$10,000.

Some plans are PPOs, meaning there is a specific list of doctors and hospitals which you must use or face higher deductibles and co-payments.

Another possibility is HMOs or Health Maintenance Organizations. These plans are usually somewhat less expensive since you are assuring them that you will take all your medical needs to a certain physician group associated with a certain hospital. Ask your favorite doctor or hospital for details and where to apply.

Group Term Life

Group term life is available through the Free Will Baptist Board of Retirement at low rates. Two plans are available. The first is for a maximum amount of \$25,000, and is available with no health questions asked for those who work a minimum of 20 hours per week in a church-related field and enroll as a participant in the retirement program. Premiums are level until retirement.

The second plan of group term life insurance offers amounts from \$10,000 through \$50,000, whether or not the Christian worker is a participant with the Board of Retirement. A spouse rider is available for half the amount of insurance or a maximum of \$25,000. Children insurance riders,

(Continued on page 12)

When a new pastorate turns sour, what can a pastor do?

My Key Doesn't Fit The Door!

By Pastor X

Changing pastorates is never easy, especially when you don't do it that often. Then add the grandiose idea that you leave all your problems behind with that other congregation. Sometimes when you work to supplement your pastoral salary like I do, you overlook the details.

Believing it was God's will to change churches and thinking that Christian people say what they mean and mean what they say, we moved to a church that had recently changed affiliation from Southern Baptist to Free Will Baptist.

A board with "Free Will" tacked over the word "Southern" greeted me as I pulled into the parking lot that first Sunday. The church was in a small town farming community and had been without a pastor for some time. Some had suggested that the church close and sell the property. I felt that I was their last hope.

Pie in the Sky

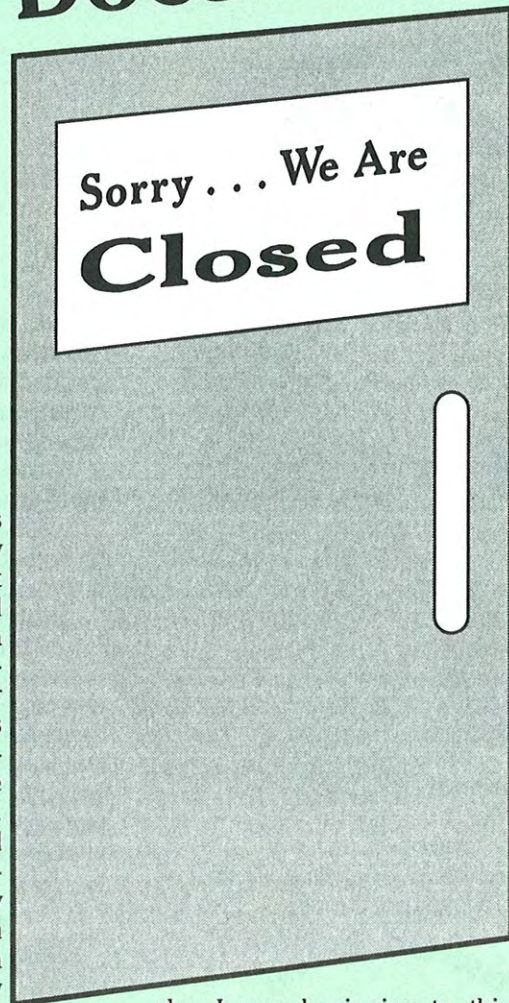
When I asked anyone's opinion, they would reply, "You are our pastor; whatever you can do to make our little church grow." I had never pastored a church with that philoso-

phy. I was beginning to think we should change the name to Pie In The Sky Free Will Baptist Church.

However, I became suspicious of stories told about previous pastors by two church ladies. Looking back, I am ashamed for believing the stories they told about former pastors and their wives.

When I started visiting people and having coffee with farmers in the local cafe, everyone seemed to have a story to tell about my Pie In The Sky Church. Their scars prevented them from feeling welcome to come hear the new preacher. They usually ended their stories with, "You will see."

I had been told that there was only one opposing vote to me being pastor.



That excited me, since I had never pastored where only one person opposed me.

But as I visited with members outside the inner circle, I realized there might not have been an official business meeting to elect me as pastor. At our first monthly business meeting, I made sure the church elected me. There was not one opposing vote.

In spite of old wounds, our attendance increased. Too rapidly it now seems.

Something's Wrong

On Easter eve, I sat down to dinner with my family. The phone rang. Our daughter answered it and passed it to my wife. A perplexing look came over her face.

A familiar voice, one of the church ladies, said, "We are going over to the church to clean; you and your husband be there."

My wife had never heard the woman speak in that tone of voice. I waited until after dinner to go to the church. You don't speak to anyone in that manner, especially your pastor.

No one was at the church when I got there. To my wondering surprise, my key would not fit the front door!

Could the lock be changed, or did I have the wrong key? After trying other keys to no avail, I walked to the back door. Remembering the stories, I nervously inserted the key. The door unlocked. I felt guilty for thinking you-know-what. I went to the front door; the lock had been changed.

I rationalized that the lock had gone bad and needed changing, and they would give me a new key in the morning. Then I noticed that the "Free Will" sign was gone. The sign now said, "Southern Baptist" church. Still unsure, I rationalized that they were upgrading the printing of "Free Will" to match the rest of the lettering.

By Sunday morning, tensions were high. I pretended that nothing was wrong. That afternoon the lock was changed back to the original one, so I thought it was all over. Wrong!

The Teen Revival

Our next big event was a weekend youth revival with a teen evangelist. We advertised in the local paper, mailed out flyers and made announcements on the Christian radio station to create excitement for the weekend special. I announced a fun time at the school gym Friday night and a Saturday night pizza party.

Wednesday evening after the local newspaper hit the streets, the phone rang. A member asked if I had called off the gym night. He said there was a notice in the paper that our insurance did not cover activities off the church property, and that all such activities must stop immediately.

A quick call to our insurance agent

confirmed that organized church activities were covered regardless of where they were held, so the program continued as planned.

Our church is small with a cooking area near the auditorium. Realizing it would be difficult for a young preacher to compete with the aroma of pizzas, I arranged to have them cooked and delivered after church.

Thursday before the revival started, I noticed that the church was cooler than usual and turned up the thermostats. When the furnace didn't kick on, I tried unsuccessfully to light the cook stove. The gas company had no record of the gas being turned off. Someone wanted to sabotage our youth revival.

As a result of the revival, six people asked to be baptized Sunday night. I filled the baptistry Saturday evening and put a heater in it to take the chill off the water.

The phone rang, and the church lady's familiar voice asked, "Whose water heater is that in the baptistry?"

She then said, "You have 30 minutes to get that heater out of the baptistry. As of now, you are no longer our pastor. You are fired. We will have a meeting tomorrow at 2:00 p.m. to take care of this business." The heater was gone when I arrived at church.

Our high attendance for the revival was 60, with six baptisms and several new members joining the church. I thought that with those kind of results things would settle down, and I could get down to business. Wrong!

Disappearing Furniture

The phone rang one afternoon. A helpful neighbor near the church said, "You better get over here; they are cleaning out the church."

When I arrived at the church, they were gone. So was the organ, baptistry drapes, Sunday School tables, nursery furniture and offering plates. By this time they had quit coming to church, so we planned to function without the missing items and without them also. Wrong!

The phone rang again. The helpful neighbor said, "You better get over here; they are putting 'closed' signs on the church."

When I arrived they were gone, but a "closed" sign was on the church sign and a "no trespassing" sign on

the end of the building. All the door locks had been changed, and a "closed" sign was on the front door.

I remembered stories about previous pastors. I remembered hearing the town people and former pastors telling the same stories. I decided to stay anyway. I figured they would do the same thing to the next pastor. It was time someone stood up to this kind of immature behavior.

I located folding chairs and had services on the lawn with their signs still on the church. News travels fast in a small town. People drove by to see what was happening as we conducted church on the lawn Wednesday night, Sunday morning and night.

More Trouble

That week I received a letter with 11 names on it, most of them not church attenders, saying that I had been fired and had 30 days to get my books out of the church.

Since there had been no official business meeting for signing the letter and since there were more with me than with them, I talked with a lawyer and a law official. Both stated that in Baptist churches the majority rules. If you have a majority, saw off their locks and put yours on.

I made arrangements for someone from the sheriff's department to be at our lawn services Sunday evening. After church we had a business meeting that had been previously announced.

We voted to saw their locks off, put on new ones and take down the "closed" and "no trespassing" signs. We also voted to dismiss the 11 who signed the letter stating that I was fired. The by-laws made provisions for such action. With this action behind me, I thought the church would move on in peace and harmony. Wrong!

Up A Ladder

After several weeks, the church decided to remove the Southern Baptist sign and put up a Free Will Baptist sign. I was on top of a step ladder next to the sign when two church ladies came by and tried to shake me off the ladder. Some of their reinforcements showed up and created quite a scene.

The helpful neighbor called some of my members and told them, "You better get over to the church; they

have your pastor surrounded.”

A few minutes later, several of my people and the law arrived. Church continued several weeks without interference. I thought it was all over. Wrong!

While I was away for a funeral, they sawed off our locks, put on new locks, plus padlocks, put boards across the doors and signs that said “Closed until further notice by order of trustee.”

I talked with the lawyer asking for an order of protection. He said that he had never done anything like this before and to give them another chance. Since it was a civil and not a doctrinal matter, I felt that we had the protection of Romans 13.

Before The Judge

It was a difficult thing to do. All my ministry I had done everything I could to get people to come to church. Now I was asking a lawyer to draw up an order to keep people away.

Because of the closed-until-further-notice sign, we were having church on the lawn again. One Sunday morning during church, one of the church ladies drove up on her riding lawn mower and started mowing the church yard. Grass and rocks were flying everywhere.

My people were upset. I told the lawyer about the lawn mower epi-

sode, and he agreed that we had to do something. The opposition had also been to a lawyer and brought a suit against me. The sheriff delivered all our papers the same day on the same trip.

When court date arrived and our lawyer presented our case, their lawyer said he was not prepared for this kind of case. A plea bargain was reached until another court date could be arranged.

They had to remove the boards from the doors, give me keys and return all the items they had taken. We had to share the building. They could have it at certain times, and we could have it at certain times, but neither group was to interfere with the other. Wrong!

Another 18 months of total confusion waited for us. I was accused of molesting a young girl while baptizing her and of beating up one of the church ladies. Sunday School posters were taken down, my books boxed up and placed at the door, books rearranged on shelves, outside lights disconnected, inside lights tampered with, windows bolted down, handicap ramp removed, baptistry plumbing disconnected . . . and more.

When the case finally made it to court again, the judge ruled in our favor. Thinking it was all over, I pro-

ceeded full-speed ahead. Wrong!

The case was appealed and lasted another nine months, but we didn't have to share the building. No one hates what had transpired more than I do. However, you can't have church in total confusion. I pray that with God's help the church and community will recover.

Oh, by the way, when the church minutes were summoned for court, they read, “Pastor X showed up October the 10th, 1993, and started preaching.” ■ *



ABOUT THE WRITER: “Pastor X” is a Free Will Baptist minister who still pastors the church described in this article. He says, “I would like to encourage young pastors to not take off every time things start going wrong.”

*Dates, names and places changed in this article.

Insurance (from page 9)

providing \$2,000 coverage on each child, may be added. Premiums are level for five-year intervals at which time they renew at slightly higher rates. Face amounts reduce at age 65 and 70.

Errors and Omissions

Some churches have life insurance policies with the church as beneficiary, so that if a pastor dies whose gifted ministry has especially blessed the church, it can continue its programs and giving patterns unabated while the pastoral search is made in an unhurried manner.

One insurance company provides “E & O” insurance. Sad to say, we live in a society riddled with lawsuits,

some for frivolous reasons. No matter how well-meaning and biblical your pastor's counseling ministry, someone he tries to help could cry “wolf,” in a lawsuit. In such cases, “Errors and Omissions” insurance can provide the funding for his legal defense.

Quick Tips

Follow these tips: Review your pastor's compensation and benefits package annually; only deal with insurance companies which have a high strength rating (A++ is A.M. Best's highest rating, AAA is Standard and Poor's highest.)

Yes, tell him (and his family) that you appreciate him. Pray often for God's blessings on his ministry.

But, show your love by providing a specially-designed (with them in

mind) protection package.

After all, you may save him from a financial calamity lurking in his future. Better yet, you may save his reputation, his credibility, maybe even his marriage. ■



ABOUT THE WRITER: Reverend Steven Hasty, a Free Will Baptist minister, is a member of Donelson Free Will Baptist Church in Nashville, Tennessee.

The Online Bible for you.

The CD-ROM Bible

By Larry Davis



When I became a Christian, the preacher who won me to the Lord gave me two books—a one-volume commentary by Adam Clarke and *Halley's Bible Handbook*. They were my greatest treasures. The Bible had just become the most important book in the world to me and I knew next to nothing about it.

I had never seen a commentary or reference book of any kind pertaining to the Bible. You can imagine what it was like for a 25-year-old convert to have two powerful works placed in his hands. I was astounded that such a wealth of information about the Bible was available.

Interest

A short while later I discovered *Strong's Concordance*. I felt like I could unravel all the mysteries. Then I

found the *Open Bible*, the *Thompson Chain Reference Bible* and others.

Now, I want to share with you the one book, other than the Bible, that has most enhanced my ability to study. There's a slight catch. It's not a book, it's a disk. The most powerful tool in my study arsenal is a computer, and the greatest book in my library is itself a library on a thin circular disk of plastic.

Intimidation

Until 1990 I was computer illiterate. I used to jokingly say I was waiting for my kids to learn about computers in school so I could learn from them. The thought of using a computer was synonymous with intimidation. We fear the unknown, and a computer was one of my biggest unknowns.

I backed into the computer world. A friend told me about his church

newsletter and the positive things it was doing for his church. I realized that the most practical way to do a newsletter was with a computer. After casually inquiring among my church family, I learned that I had an in-house computer expert.

While millions of people tapped the power of the computer a long time ago, many of us preachers have never discovered what a grand tool the computer can be for studying the scripture and dealing with a variety of administrative chores.

If you are serious about harnessing the power of a computer for your ministry, you probably will not have to look far to find some help. You may have someone in your congregation who is knowledgeable about computers and can show you how to make it work for you.

The woman in our church who helped me taught computer skills at

the vocational school. She set up a special class and 15 people from our church went through the initiation together. (I wonder how many other skills are out there in our congregations just waiting on the pastor to request help?) With her promise of assistance and a purchase by the church, we stepped into the computer world.

My only goal was to get a machine to do my newsletter and manage church data. What a pleasant surprise when I soon discovered that I could also file my sermons and research notes on one little disk rather than piles of paper. (Though I was not a proficient typist, I found that I could type fairly well on a computer.) The best was yet to come.

Information

One day a preacher friend stopped by and we talked about ways to use a computer. He told me about a Bible program he had on his computer. He brought a copy and loaded it on my computer. It was the most amazing "book" I had seen since my first exposure to Adam Clarke and *Halley's Handbook*.

I could now do word studies, look up definitions in Greek and Hebrew, find scores of cross-references to a passage, all with a couple of keystrokes. I could easily find a list of verses on any subject, give the list a name and save it in a file for future use without having to look it up again. I could add my personal notes to definitions and save that information so that when I pulled up the definition again, my notes came with it.

Online Bible

The name of the program is *Online Bible*. It contained several translations of the Bible, *Strong's Concordance*, several lexicons, *Treasury of Scripture Knowledge* (650,000 cross-references), two dictionaries and other references works. I now had at my fingertips a whole library.

My desk top would not hold the number of books that I could bring up with the touch of a key. I could do more research in 30 minutes with this program than I can do in four hours with a large stack of books, and I could save the research right in the program

without having to look it up again.

That was in 1990. The program has been improved since then. The *Online Bible* truly is a Bible scholar's dream. There is still more good news about *Online Bible*.

Software copyright laws are plain. When you buy a computer software program which is copyrighted and adhere to the law, you are not entitled (legally) to make copies of the program and give to your friends. If it is meant to be freely distributed, it will probably say so.

The unique aspect of this *Online Bible* is the announcement on the first screen of the program. It says, "Please make copies for your friends, no royalty due."

Once you acquire the program, you can make copies for everyone in your church. It has a copy program built into it. It is specifically designed to make copies for someone else. You can distribute it to everyone you know.

It takes almost no computer skill to duplicate it. Just to be informed, I went to the local bookstore and looked at some popular Bible programs. The store had them all on computer to preview—*Quickverse* by Parsons, *Logos* and *PC Study*. *Online Bible*, in my opinion was easier to use, just as powerful in what it could do and cost less to acquire. *Logos* and *Quickverse* cost several hundred dollars and cannot be copied for redistribution (legally).

Online Bible costs \$30 for the CD-ROM version and around \$25 for the program on 3.5" disk. Since the NIV and NAS text are still copyrighted, you will have to pay extra for these texts. The program comes in both Windows and DOS versions. To utilize the whole program you need a CD-ROM drive and Windows, but it is not essential for running the heart of the program.

The program contains the instruction manual. However, you can get started doing some pretty fancy research and never use the manual. It runs almost as well on a 286 as it does on a Pentium 75. You can run it right off the CD-ROM or load it on the hard drive, if you have disk space.

Online Bible comes with several languages. Here is the list of texts found on the CD-ROM version: Dutch, German, Russian, Spanish,

Tribal, Maori, Finnish, Greek from four major texts and Hebrew. You do not have to buy anything extra. The foreign languages come with it.

Online Bible is produced by Larry Pierce, a Canadian who directs a group called Woodside Fellowship. Larry informed me that all the profits from *Online Bible* are given to missions. It is obvious they are not in it for the money, else they would not sell it so cheaply or grant free duplication rights.

There is one reservation about the program. Like so many other works used by our people, this one is produced by Calvinists. On the CD-ROM version, some commentaries and study notes are definitely Calvinistic. When you make copies of the program for other people, you do not have to copy the commentaries. You have a lot of flexibility in selecting what you distribute. ■

For more information about the *Online Bible*, write or call:

Larry Pierce

11 Holmwood Street

Winterbourne, Ontario

Canada, NOB 2V0

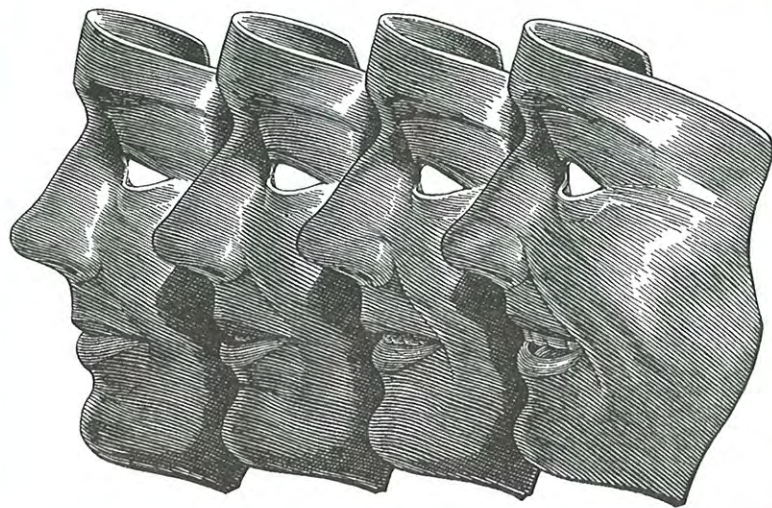
Fax Number: (519) 664-1444

Phone: (519) 664-2266

Larry requests that you call week-day afternoons only. All information about the *Online Bible* in this article is printed by permission of Larry Pierce.



ABOUT THE WRITER: Reverend Larry Davis pastors Bethany Free Will Baptist Church in Norfolk, Virginia.



The Joy and Benefit of Series Preaching

By Jeff Cockrell

The story is told about a young preacher called to his first pastorate. The first Sunday he delivered a great message. Everyone praised their new pastor for such a wonderful message.

To their dismay, the next Sunday he preached the same message. Of course the church people became concerned and perplexed. When he preached the same message the third Sunday, the deacons decided to have a talk with their new pastor.

The deacons explained that they enjoyed him being their pastor, and that they understood he had some

learning to do. The deacons asked, "But, preacher, don't you have more than just one sermon?"

He responded, "Oh, yes! But you haven't done anything about the first one yet."

Gives Balance

As a pastor I find it beneficial to emphasize certain subjects in preaching for a few weeks. As I change my focus after each series, I give my congregation the whole Word of God.

My personal aim is to say with the apostle Paul, "I have not shunned to

declare unto you all the counsel of God" (Acts 20:27). Series preaching helps me accomplish this task.

Series preaching gives your people a balanced spiritual diet. Too, the congregation knows where you are going week-by-week. Excitement can build as people look forward to upcoming messages in the series. This excitement will cause members to invite others to hear messages.

I once preached a series on the book of Philippians. Folks seemed eager to hear how to have joy in spite of trouble, in spite of people, in spite of worry and in spite of things.

Special Preparation

I recently preached a series on angels. My purpose was to present the biblical view of angels in light of current beliefs and encourage my congregation regarding God's care as He uses angels to minister to Christians.

Two months before the start of the series, I read five books on angels and sections on angelology and demonology in systematic theologies. As I collected information, I came up with a general outline and sketched out eight messages.

Each week as I prepared to preach the selected message in the series, I focused my attention on the passage or message for that particular week. At the start of the series, I had my course charted and knew where I was going.

This is the aspect that makes series preaching easier than searching for a new sermon each week. Someone reported that one hour spent planning saves three hours of work. Series preaching has caused me to believe this statement.

If I preach a book of the Bible, at least four weeks before the series starts, I read the book several times. I seek to understand the book's context and general theme.

The question I want to answer is: "What is the message of the book and how does it apply to my congregation?" I then work on a rough outline for the book and begin collecting information from articles, books and journals.

I am currently preaching a series on the book of James on Sunday evenings titled "Marks of Spiritual Maturity." In a day of easy believism, my purpose is to show an illustration of a mature Christian.

Consult The Calendar

Use the calendar. January is a good time to preach on spiritual revival or the vision of the church. February is a great time to preach a short series directed to young people on the biblical meaning of love. Consider how effective a series on the family would be between the weeks of Mother's Day and Father's Day when people are thinking about family.

Because many people are away on vacation during summer months,

it is a good time to preach some of the psalms of praise. Select six or eight psalms and there's your summer preaching program.

As you look at each psalm, discuss the individual situation in which the writer praises God. If people miss a week or two, they do not miss a major point in the series like they would if you preached on "Steps to Revival."

When people start thinking about the beginning of the new school year, preach on studying the Word of God.

Use Church Events

Use the events of the church to develop series of messages. If your church is in a building program, preach from the book of Nehemiah and focus on Nehemiah's vision to build the wall around Jerusalem and his commitment to the task.

If your church is preparing to elect officers for the new year, plug in a series on the biblical qualifications of leaders. And of course, every preacher longs to preach on giving during stewardship month.

The pastor can preach messages on the present needs of the church. Preach a series of messages on hope and encouragement. Churches experiencing a divisive spirit need God's Word concerning the unity of God's people.

Holy Spirit Guidance

Above all, series preaching must be done under the guidance of the Holy Spirit. The task of preaching is not a business or just a job, it is a high calling. The task of preaching God's Word carries a great responsibility as well as a great privilege (see James 3:1).

Preaching must not be done without the preparation of prayer. Time spent in prayer allows the Lord to direct you as you prepare to preach each series. There have been occasions in my ministry when I paused in a series to preach a particular message the Lord laid on my heart.

Series preaching is exciting preaching. It allows you the opportunity to unfold the deeper mysteries of God and reveal how God's Word can cause change in people's lives.

After his return from church one Sunday a small boy said, "You know what, Mommie? I'm going to be a

minister when I grow up."

"That's fine," said his mother. "But what made you decide to be a preacher?"

"Well," said the boy pensively, "I'll have to go to church on Sunday anyway, and I think it would be more fun to stand up and yell than to sit and listen."

May pastors hunger to unfold the excitement contained in the pages of God's Word, and may churches appreciate their pastors for their work in feeding them the manna from God. ■

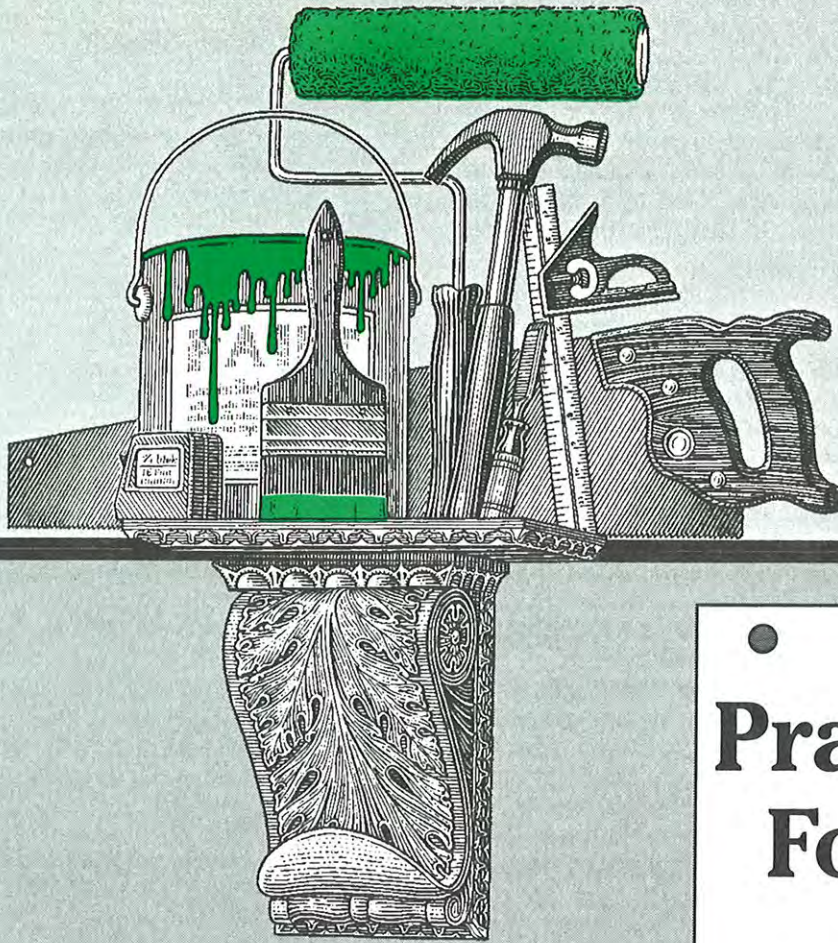


ABOUT THE WRITER: Reverend Jeffrey Cockrell pastors Satilla Free Will Baptist Church in Hazlehurst, Georgia.

Coming in September

1996 National Convention Report

- Registration
- Election
- Business
- More



Practical Tools For Worship

By David Bates

Three kinds of people come to church for worship services. First, *possessors*—Those who know Christ as Savior. They come to give of their time, their testimony, their treasure and their talents. They are givers and they come to serve.

Second, *professors*—those who say they are Christians but who come to take. They take your time, your treasure. They enjoy being entertained. One young man literally stole the offering in my church a few years ago, giving a whole new dimension to the phrase “take an offering.”

The third kind of people who come are the unsaved. They are observers and outsiders, who know little about worship.

What occurs in the worship service has a life changing effect on

everyone. A former pastor of mine said, “The same sun that melts the butter hardens the clay.” That’s why in the same service you may have some who rejoice, some who repent and some who become angry over most anything.

The Pharisee’s Profession

I am reminded of the Pharisee and the Publican. The Pharisee believed in being religious. He enjoyed putting on his best suit and loading his family into his new car and cruising down to the church on Sunday. He would never consider missing a service. He had great respect and admiration for God’s house.

He professed that he believed in God and he even said prayers, but his faith was in his own abilities rather

than in the loving faithfulness of the heavenly Father. He believed that he could make no mistakes and that he was better than other men. He paid tithes, he fasted twice a week and he never missed a church activity.

His prayers were a ritual because of his self-proclaimed goodness. He didn’t confess sin because he believed he had none. He was pleased with himself that he was not like other men.

The Bible says, “He despised others.” He had no compassion for lost souls. He was never a witness for the love of God. He arose for worship with great confidence that God was pleased with all his efforts. He was a professor!

In Matthew 15:8-9, God says, “This people draweth nigh unto me with their mouth, and honoreth me with their lips, but their heart is far from

me. But in vain they do worship me, teaching for doctrines, the commandments of men."

The Publican's Confession

Alongside this man filled with pomp and pride stands another man who seems troubled. He is called a Publican. He too has come to pray and worship. He too believes in God and in prayer, but his prayer sounds remarkably different.

Luke 18:13 says that "He smote his breast." Somehow this honest, simple man had a firm grasp on the truth about God. He, like Isaiah, sensed God's holiness and it caused him to see himself as sinful.

In recognizing God's holiness, this man did not excuse or deny his sin. He cried out for mercy. He came to the Lord in humility. We can't work ourselves or meditate ourselves into a state of humility.

The monks of old tried to achieve humility by mortifying the flesh or bringing themselves down. They had it backwards. Humility isn't an act of the will. It is a condition of the heart that occurs after seeing a glimpse of God's glory as Isaiah did. He said, "Woe is me!"

Jesus said (John 12:32), "And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto me." When Christ is lifted up, evangelism occurs. Men experience conviction and salvation and are brought into a spiritual condition that makes worship possible.

John the Baptist said, "He must increase, but I must decrease." The success of John the Baptist was not that he brought himself down. It was that he lifted up Jesus. He claimed that he wasn't fit to latch Jesus' sandals. The higher we lift Christ, the smaller we become.

Jesus said in Matthew 5:6, "Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness: for they shall be filled." Do you want to be a worshiper? Do you want to be righteous? Jesus said if you hunger, you shall have it.

The Pharisee had self-righteousness. He deceived himself into believing he was a worshiper. His righteousness was as filthy rags.

Romans 3:10 says there is none righteous. But remember, under grace we are declared righteous. To

those who say you can't be holy and can't be righteous because of depravity, I ask one question. What ever happened to sanctification?

II Corinthians 5:17 says if any man be in Christ he is a new creature. Old things are passed away, all things are become new. God transforms confessing men like the Publican into possessing men.

Prescription For Worship

First, hunger—the degree to which we experience the righteousness of God is dependent on the degree to which we hunger and thirst for Him.

Second, humility—we deceive ourselves when we enter our churches and attempt to worship with pride as our guide. Proud of our ministry, proud of our programs, proud of talent, proud of our accomplishments and proud of our successes.

When we see Christ, His Glory, His might and His righteousness, we as the Publican did will beat our breasts and cry out, "Lord have mercy on me."

Third, holiness—Hebrews 12:14 says, "Follow peace with all men and holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord." Peter says, "Be ye holy; for I am holy" (I Peter 1:16).

God made us for His pleasure. We bring Him great joy—when we receive His salvation, when we see Him high and lifted up, when we hunger for His righteousness, when we approach Him with a humble spirit, when we worship Him in spirit and in truth, when we remove our masks and empty the secret closets of our hearts. ■



ABOUT THE WRITER: Reverend David E. Bates is associate pastor at First Free Will Baptist Church in Farmington, Missouri. He is a member of the Music Commission.

Directory Update

ARKANSAS

Jim Walker to First Church, Greenwood from Crossroads Church, White Lake, MI

GEORGIA

Carl Miller to Double Branch Church, Hawkinsville from Bakerville Church, Bonnie, IL

MISSISSIPPI

Benny McKinney to First Church, Booneville from Bethlehem Church, Pontotoc.

Ricky Basden to Macedonia Church, Rienzi

NORTH CAROLINA

Phil Ange to Belvoir Church, Greenville from Jefferson Road Church, Sumter, SC

Joe Haas, Sr. to Emmanuel Church, Jacksonville from Southeastern FWB College

Nathan Eason to Fellowship Church, Micro from Springwood Church, North Belmont

TENNESSEE

Sterl Paramore to Cookeville Church, Cookeville from First Church, Park Hills, MO

OTHER PERSONNEL

Steve Faison to Horton Heights Church, Nashville, TN, as music and youth director from Free Will Baptist Bible College as scheduling coordinator

Chad Williams to Harmony Church, Wheat Ridge, CO, as youth director

Bill Adkisson to Harmony Church, Wheat Ridge, CO, as minister of evangelism

Remember

*Your
Pastor's Wife*

on

*Pastor
Appreciation
Sunday*

September 8, 1996

WNAC's Contributions to the Free Will Baptist Denomination



Women Who Serve

By The WNAC Staff

Women Nationally Active for Christ, once Woman's National Auxiliary Convention, has a rich heritage. Since 1935, WNAC has made an indelible impression upon the denomination. Mrs. Fannie Polston stated the purpose in 1935: to give Free Will Baptist women a larger share in winning the world to Christ. Sometimes stated in different ways, the essential purpose remains: to help women fulfill their place in the Great Commission.

Mrs. J. L. Edge of Texas stated that Free Will Baptists led the way in the United States by giving women their place in the Lord's service. This article mentions a few of the women's

contributions. Only God recognizes some contributions.

The WNAC founders were women of vision. Women like Sally Parsons (New Hampshire), Mary Welch and Fanny Polston (Tennessee), Alice Lupton (North Carolina), Lizzie McAdams (Texas) and Eunice Edwards (Missouri), had hopes and dreams for Free Will Baptist women.

Mrs. Fannie Polston wrote, "Ideas are like sparks that flash upward and outward. . . . Sometimes they strike responsive thoughts in others minds and when carefully tended burst into flame." Sparks from those women found kindling, and the flame still burns in the hearts of our women.

Stewardship

In the 1930s, WNAC sponsored stewardship declamation contests for young people. Originally, the fourth vice president encouraged stewardship studies and tithing. Strong teaching on these subjects cultivated good stewardship. WNAC has always emphasized sacrificial giving.

Finances

Our women have given faithfully since 1935—and even before. One of the first large projects was \$2,000 to purchase a tent for Home Missions revivals. In 1957 we raised more than \$10,000 to build a mission station in

Côte d'Ivoire, and four years later gave more than \$13,000 to purchase medical supplies. We also raised \$12,000 to build a church in Monterrey, Mexico.

Since 1935, women have given more than \$6 million for denominational causes. In 1995, WNAC gave more than \$574,800 to denominational causes. Those benefiting from WNAC's generosity include Home and Foreign Missions, children's homes, Free Will Baptist colleges, local churches and various community ministries.

Prayer

Women's contributions go far beyond the financial. Prayer ministries of these godly women sustain missionaries and encourage pastors and denominational leaders.

Mrs. Fannie Polston stated that prayer produced WNAC and prayer continues to nourish it. WNAC sponsors three annual weeks of prayer for missions. Women also join in Prayer Fellowship at 9:00 a.m. each day for churches, pastors, missionaries and denominational agencies. Many women's groups have prayer chains, praying for needs of local congregations. WNAC recommends prayer studies and plans prayer retreats.

Education

WNAC has always been interested and involved in Christian education. In 1939 the women gave 10¢ each toward a Free Will Baptist school. Women gave \$2400 in 1954 for the first organ at Free Will Baptist Bible College. WNAC established the Memorial Student Loan Fund in 1957.

Countless Free Will Baptist young people rise and call WNAC blessed because of its emphasis on education. Thanks to low cost loans, approximately 300 pastors, missionaries, youth workers, musicians and other Christian workers trained for service.

A former FWBBC student writes, "I consider the education I got at Free Will Baptist Bible College, via the instrumentality of WNAC student loans, to be of inestimable value."

Also, WNAC has provided financial aid to five students on our mission fields through the Foreign Student Scholarship Fund founded in 1981.

Youth

"We will pray for Christian leaders from among our young people, that they may find a definite Christian service, a life's work and the path to a larger happiness and usefulness in the world," Mrs. Fannie Polston wrote, as she requested a day of prayer in 1929. Free Will Baptist women manifest great concern for young people.

When WNAC organized, the second vice president had responsibilities for encouraging young people at educational institutions, suggesting materials for young people's auxiliaries and helping with the stewardship declamation contests.

Mrs. Cleo Pursell became second vice president in 1947, and wrote the book, *Working with Our Youth*. That year the women began publishing materials for the youth groups. The groups included Go-Tells, 12-17; Young People's Auxiliary, 17-25; Business Woman's Auxiliary and The King's Messengers, boys, 12-17. All the groups sometimes included young men. With Mrs. Pursell's encouragement the youth raised funds for books at Free Will Baptist Bible College, visual aids and bicycles for missionaries, a station wagon for missionaries on itinerary and medical supplies for Africa.

Stewardship continued as the theme for declamations until 1954, when missions became the topic. These contests continued until 1964 with the women awarding winners \$100 scholarships to Free Will Baptist Bible College.

When Helen Sanders became youth chairman in 1955, she and her husband prepared manuals and edited program books.

The National Association requested in 1963 that the women combine their youth work with the League to become the Church Training Service.

The last reports for youth groups, show 191 GTAs, 206 YPAs, 38 Boys' Auxiliaries, and 76 Missionary Midgets organizations. Membership totaled 5,114.

When no major organizations for young people existed among Free Will Baptists, the women began their work. Young people practiced speaking in declamation contests. The system of earning ranks taught them discipline and rewarded their progress.

Women encouraged young people

to commit their lives to the Lord and train for His service. Student after student could testify to showers before going off to college, prayer and financial support while there or a loan from the Memorial Student Loan Fund.

Only eternity will show how many young lives WNAC women touched, shaped and molded.

Publications

Before WNAC's birth, women were publishing literature to fill the budding organization's needs. In 1927 Mrs. Polston published a forerunner of the WNAC manuals, containing suggested constitution and bylaws and other helps for starting local societies. As the organizational structure grew and changed, manuals changed to reflect growth.

The manual published in 1995 contains suggested constitution and bylaws, officer's guides, and annual report forms. For years manuals have influenced how Free Will Baptist women function in groups and work together.

Local women's groups also needed material to use in their meetings. The first Yearbook included programs for 1931-1932. The programs in the yearbooks promote missions, prayer, stewardship and church loyalty. Yearbooks continued annually until 1961 when a quarterly magazine, *Co-Laborer*, replaced them.

In 1987 *Co-Laborer* became a bi-monthly, but its emphasis remains the same: to provide opportunities for women to understand and fulfill the Great Commission. WNAC resumed publishing yearbooks in 1995. Monthly programs in *Co-Laborer*, program ideas, helps in the yearbooks and other publications motivate and aid women in service.

WNAC provides Free Will Baptist women opportunity to submit programs, articles, poetry, plays and artwork through an annual Creative Arts Contest. Often the winners are published in *Co-Laborer* and collections of poetry and plays.

The printed word carries a certain power and permanency. For almost 70 years, WNAC's publications have challenged Free Will Baptist women with a greater vision for evangelizing the world. WNAC's publications promote its purpose by unifying, motivat-

If A Church Is To Grow . . .

By J. Dale Weaver

What attitudes and aims must be present for a church to begin experiencing growth? It takes just the proper atmosphere and chemistry—or should I say, the proper humility and submission—for a church to see growth. Four things figure strongly into this:

A Proper Foundation—The Word of God.

Many churches stress organizational growth, programs, plans . . . all of which are important. But the basic necessity for a church to grow is a proper attitude toward the Bible. To accept its authority, inspiration and truth, and to put into practice its infallible instructions, will bring growth (Isaiah 55:11).

A Proper Focus—The Son of God.

In looking at the scriptures, I always consider Peter when I think about Christians trying to accomplish something for God. You know the story of Peter in Matthew 14:22-36. As long as Peter kept his eyes on Jesus, he could walk on water! When he took his eyes off Jesus, he began to sink. In much the same way, as long as the church focuses on Christ, we can accomplish anything—lose that focus, and we, too, will fail.

A Proper Fellowship—The People of God.

The Book of Acts shows us the best kind of fellowship in the church: "And they continued steadfastly, in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers" (Acts 2:42). When this kind of fellowship prevails, the Lord adds to the church daily such as should be saved.

A Proper Faith—The Mind of God.

When the church begins to think like Christ and to act like Christ, He will begin to pour out blessings on His church (Philippians 2:5).

Churches will grow when they follow God's pattern. It's His promise and plan! ■

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ABOUT THE WRITER: Reverend J. Dale Weaver is a Free Will Baptist minister who resides in Irmo, South Carolina. He completed the Master of Divinity degree in May at Columbia Bible College and Seminary.

Home and Foreign Mission boards, our women helped support missionaries such as H. M. and Lizzie McAdams. With the formation of a foreign mission board in 1935, women rallied to support Laura Belle Barnard in India. Support for missions through WNAC has grown steadily in the last 60 years.

Since 1962, Free Will Baptist women have stocked the Provision Closet with domestic items. In the past 10 years, women gave goods valued at \$298,209.72 to the Closet—or the Missionary Mall as some call it. This ministry benefits home and foreign missionaries. Sometimes we wish the walls were elastic to accommodate Free Will Baptist women's generosity.

The Tuesday morning mission service is a highlight of the WNAC Convention. The service offers a chance to meet a missionary we have prayed for and supported.

Statistics show only a fraction of women's support for Free Will Baptist home and foreign missionaries. WNAC's support for missions includes sharing finances, upholding in prayer, giving generously to the Provision Closet and teaching missions persistently. Our women have a reputation for small and not-so-small gifts to individual missionaries. Showers, cards, letters, packages, meals, hospitality—in these and other ways women express their love and appreciation for God's sent ones.

Missionaries, pastors, denominational leaders, young people—many Free Will Baptists have benefited from the generosity and caring concern of WNAC women.

All Free Will Baptists owe a debt of gratitude to WNAC. Because of women's dedication to the Lord and commitment to carry out His last command, we have served as a reminder to our denomination of the unfinished task. Perhaps WNAC's greatest contribution is its example of selfless service. ■

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ABOUT THE WRITERS: Dr. Mary Wisheart serves as WNAC's executive secretary-treasurer, Suzanne Franks as *CoLaborer* editor, Yvonne W. Hampton as executive assistant.

ing, inspiring and educating women.

Missions

Missions is written all over WNAC. Some even say that WNAC is synonymous to Free Will Baptist missions. The founders of WNAC worked tirelessly to promote missions education in the churches. Mrs. Polston's words reflect her zeal for missions education. "The study of missions or missionary educa-

tion, is a very essential part of our work and we feel that it cannot be omitted from any church program that makes any pretense of being complete."

Some early local groups helped the church pay bills and the pastor's salary, probably out of necessity. Generally, however, those early groups had a greater vision and encouraged the church to reach the world for Christ.

Before Free Will Baptists had

FREE WILL BAPTIST NEWSFRONT

Flood Damages Illinois Church

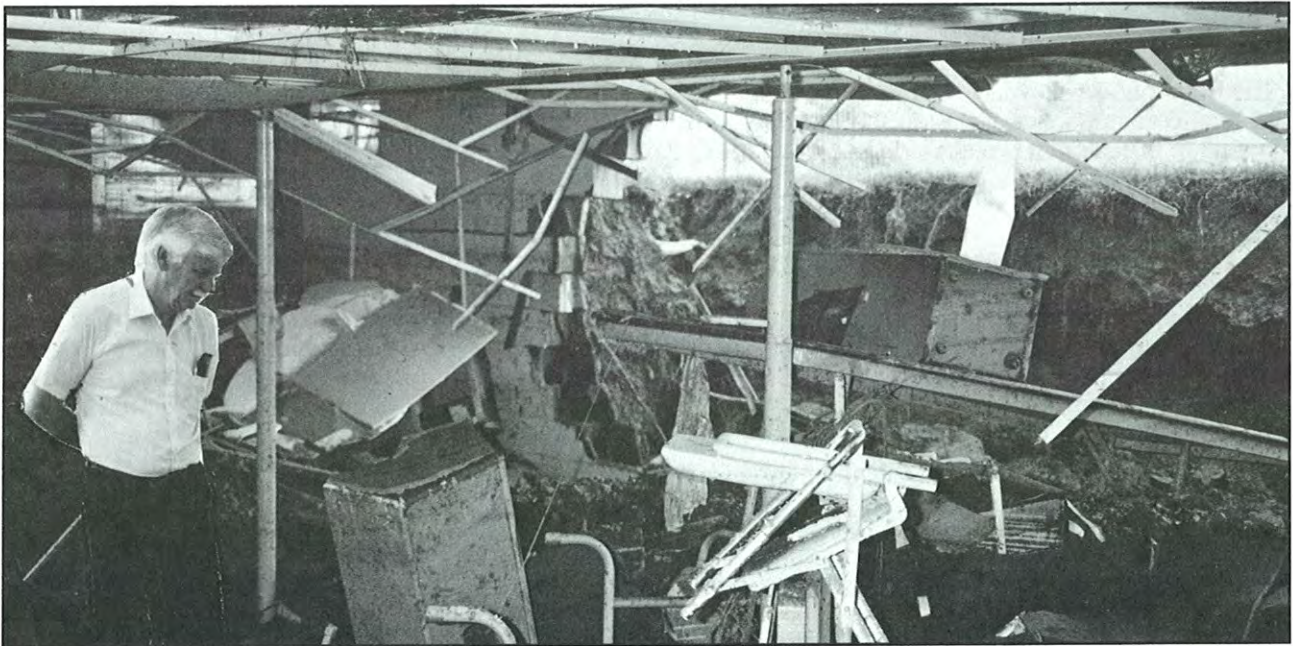
PITTSBURGH, IL—Storm clouds dumped seven inches of rain in less than two hours across Southern Illinois on May 10. The parking lot at Pittsburgh FWB Church was covered under four

feet of water, according to Pastor Danny Gray, from their hinges and swept away all the kitchen appliances including the stove.

At press time, the church was meeting in the Pittsburgh Grade School. They never missed a

wall. The church's insurance will accept no responsibility. The congregation must absorb total rebuilding and relocation costs.

Illinois promotional secretary David Shores urged churches to



Pastor Danny Gray surveys damage caused by flood.

feet of water, according to Pastor Danny Gray.

The flood waters also washed out about 30 feet of the basement wall leaving a wake of mud and debris. When the basement wall gave way, the force of the water ripped doors

worship service. Two days after the flood, 125 people met for worship.

According to the June 1996 issue of *Illinois Newsletter*, the present building cannot be used because of damage to wiring and the instability of foundations and

designate July 7 as "Pittsburgh Church Day" and take a special offering for the hard-hit congregation.

The Pittsburgh FWB Church is a member of the South Central Illinois Quarterly Conference.

Florida Adopts Mission Statement

OCALA, FL—The 52nd annual Florida State Association met at the Ocala Hilton Hotel on May 8-11 and adopted a mission statement, according to Clerk Randy Bryant.

The mission statement affirms that God has called Florida Free Will Baptists to obey His Great Command (Luke 10:27) and fulfill His Great Commission (Matt. 28:18-20) through five means: Exalting Jesus Christ, evangelizing the lost, establishing biblical churches, equipping the saints and edifying the Body of Christ.

More than 200 people attended the meeting, including 49 ministers. The State Youth Convention attracted 425 people.

Moderator Tim Owen led business sessions. Delegates adopted a \$102,000 Together Way budget.

Three men were honored with plaques of appreciation for their work. They included: Bob Allen, 10 years on the Mission Board; Randy Brooks, a layman who served 22 years on the Executive Committee; Leroy Cutler who served as state moderator eight years.

Four ministers preached sermons on prayer developing the association theme, "Boldly to the Throne." The speakers were Pastors Len Scott (Pensacola), Roger Duncan (Seffner), Alan Austin (Marianna) and retired minister, Dan Merkh.

The Florida WAC met Friday with state president Diana Bryant moderating. Missionary to Japan Ruth McDonald addressed the worship service and missionary banquet.

Florida's State Youth Convention met Friday and Saturday. FWBCC staffer Kenny Simpson addressed the Friday night rally. Florida youth agreed to participate in the "Make A Way For Uruguay" project, an effort to raise \$150,000 to build a church in Montevideo.

The 1997 state association will meet May 7-10 at the Ocala Hilton.

Horton Misses First Conference in 39 Years

FAIRFAX STATION, VA—Reverend Lester Horton, pastor of Fairwood FWB Church in Fairfax Station, missed his first quarterly meeting in 39 years this May. However, it took something major to keep him away. The 66-year old minister had brain surgery on April 18 and was unable to attend for the first time in four decades.



Brother Horton has pastored the same church nearly 40 years, Fairwood FWB Church. He has conducted weekly radio broadcasts more than 37 years.

He currently serves as General Board member for the Maryland State Association. He is also the state's promotional officer, publishes the state newsletter and moderates the state association.

He has helped organize 22 Free Will Baptist churches. In addition, Horton has conducted revivals in more than 20 states.

What Lester Horton may have lacked in formal education, he has exceeded with his drive, his never-say-can't spirit and a love for the work of God among the Free Will Baptist people.

Brother Horton was converted from a life of deep sin in 1953, licensed to preach three years later and ordained to the ministry in 1957. He wrote his personal testimony in the booklet, "A Product of Grace," a stirring account of God's power to change men.

Lester Horton has been one of the stabilizing influences across the denomination locally, on a state level and on the broader national scale.

Michigan Re-Elects Varney Moderator

ROMULUS, MI—Delegates to Michigan's 40th annual state association gathered at Romulus FWB Church and elected retired minister J. B. Varney to his second term as moderator.

Promotional Secretary Gene Norris reported that 175 people registered for the May 17-18 meeting. Twenty-six ministers, 33 lay delegates and eight deacons led the voting delegation.

One major item of business included a proposed amendment to change the number of

consecutive terms a person can serve on boards from two to three. The amendment was tabled for one year.

Delegates authorized the following disbursement of state Together Way funds: Fifty percent goes to national ministries. Fifty percent stays in Michigan—Michigan Missions (25%), General Fund (24%), Detroit 2001 (15%), Promotional Office (15%), Youth Board (10%), Bedford Project (5%), C.E. Board (3%), Master's Men Board (3%).

Four Michigan pastors preached sermons during worship services—Lloyd Locklear (Woodhaven), Rudy Shankle (Ypsilanti), Joseph Jones (Wayne) and Wayne Runion (Ypsilanti).

The Alumni and Friends of FWBCC sponsored a Saturday breakfast with staffers Tim Campbell and Roy Harris present.

The 1997 state association will meet May 16-17 at a site to be determined in the New Hope Association.

Reverend William Calvert Passes Torch

GASTONIA, NC—After more than 33 years as pastor of the same church, Reverend William Calvert retired from the full-time pastorate May 26 in a day filled with tribute and honor. The 65-year-old North Carolina leader had pastored First FWB Church in Gastonia since 1962.

Brother Calvert passed the torch (literally) to one of his sons in the ministry, Reverend Randy Sawyer, on Sunday morning. Calvert had encouraged the congregation to name Sawyer as his successor two years ago in order to effect a smooth transition.

The two men co-pastored for two years in a remarkable example of cooperation and leadership. Calvert told friends, "I'm not retiring from service, just changing hats." He will continue to serve as a part-time associate responsible for pastoral care ministries.

Civic and government officials from across North Carolina attended the ceremonies, including Rep. Sue Myrick. Governor Jim Hunt and Senator Jesse Helms sent congratulatory letters.

"It was a pretty emotional time for me," Rev. Calvert said. He told his flock that "it had been a joy, not a burden, to be your pastor."

The church family honored their long-time pastor with dinners, banquets, receptions and hundreds of cards. Then they gave him a \$17,000 check to help retire the mortgage on his home.

Randy Sawyer praised Reverend Calvert as a man of impeccable character, honest, hard-working and a model pastor.

Under Calvert's leadership, First FWB Church grew to a 700-member congregation. He not only served his local church but also moderated the North Carolina Association of Free Will Baptists.

Calvert and his wife, Georgia, have been married 46 years.

Three North Carolina Ministers Die

GREENVILLE, NC—Three North Carolina ministers died in a 10-day period in May, according to Tom Lilly, promotional director. The May-June 1996 issue of the *Promotional Department Newsletter* carried information regarding the deaths.

Reverend Herbert Winchester, 51, died May 8 after suffering a heart attack that day. Brother Winchester was pastoring Faith FWB Church in Washington at the time of his death.

Reverend Benny Turner, 57, died May 15 after a brief illness. He was serving as mission pastor at Southside FWB Church in Hickory. He had pastored several North Carolina churches.

Reverend Ralph Osborne, 84, died May 12 after a brief time of failing health. Reverend Osborne had been in retirement several years after leaving his last pastorate at Corinth FWB Church in Dunn.

Funeral services were conducted for Reverend Herbert Winchester on May 11, for Reverend Benny Turner on May 18, and for Reverend Ralph Osborne on May 21.

Pastor
Appreciation
Sunday

September 8,
1996

Did you ever want to preach at a Cowboy Camp Meeting? **Oklahoma** evangelist **Wade Jernigan** did just that—seven times, in fact, at the June 12-16 gathering in Lenapah, OK. Then he trailed over to New Mexico in July and did it again at the 44th annual Rancher's Camp Meeting.

Things are on the grow at **Harmony FWB Church** in **Wheat Ridge, CO**. Pastor **Charles Harris** reports that rapid growth in the youth program required dividing teens into two groups. **Mike Harris** directs the younger teens.

A few days after a tornado destroyed their family home in **Van Buren, AR**, Mrs. **Lisa Johnson** saw a woman standing in her driveway talking with others about the storm. Several minutes later, Mrs. Johnson realized that the woman in her driveway was first lady, **Hillary Clinton**. The Johnsons are members of **Vista FWB Church**.

Lake Hills FWB Church in **Hot Springs, AR**, began in January 1996. By March 2, the group conducted dedication services with 110 people attending. The new church began paying \$750 monthly in April to erase construction costs. Home missionary **Don Guthrie** leads the congregation.

Members of **First FWB Church** in **Beaufort, NC**, gave a record \$23,427 in faith promises to missions, according to Pastor **Henry Van Kluyve**. The church which averages 225 in attendance supports 12 foreign and six home missionaries.

Grimesland FWB Church in **Grimesland, NC**, reports 11 baptisms since Pastor **Albert Rollins** assumed leadership in March.

Canadian pastor **Fred Hanson** has begun preparing and mailing "Messages That Matter" sermon outlines at \$15 per packet. He had six different series available at press time with 10 more in preparation. Hanson pastors **Plaster Rock FWB Church** in **New Brunswick**. For more information, con-

tact him at P.O. Box 93, Monticello, ME 04760.

Evangelist **Homer Willis** celebrated 57 years in the ministry on May 5. He preached his first sermon in 1939 at age 15 and continues a robust evangelistic schedule. Dr. Willis is 72. He resides in **Nashville, TN**.

Members of **Peace FWB Church** in **Granite City, IL**, purchased 6.5 acres and had it rezoned for church construction. Pastor **David Malone** reports 12 new members and 10 people meeting weekly at his home for Bible study.

Crossroads FWB Church in **Effingham, IL**, celebrated their 15th anniversary in May. The Crossroads Christian Academy completed 12 years of operation. Pastor **John Hollis** reports five conversions and three baptisms. The group plans to construct a Family Center/Gym.

Pastor **Bruce Beal** reports 12 conversions at **First FWB Church** in **Austintown, OH**.

The active youth group at **Westerville FWB Church** in **Westerville, OH**, traveled to Chicago and distributed 13,000 brochures under the guidance of Chicago missionary pastor **David Potete**. **Mike Mounts** pastors the Westerville youth.

Members of **Pleasant Valley FWB Church** in **Pedro, OH**, celebrated 80 years of service in June. Charter member **Eliza Stamper** still plays the piano every service. **Don Friend** pastors.

Pastor **Darrell Howell** reports six conversions and seven baptisms at **Victory FWB Church** in **Marengo, OH**. During the summer months, the church began conducting Saturday evening worship services instead of Sunday evening services in order to give youth leaders more time for activities with the youth.

In a two-month period this spring, Pastor **Curtis Booth** reported 14 conversions, five baptisms and 13 new members at **Gahanna FWB Church** in **Gahanna, OH**. A guest speaker, **Mary**

Ellen Morton, gave a moving presentation on abortion.

Pastor **Billy Sharpston** reports 22 new members in Sunday School, three conversions and eight rededications at **Heritage Temple FWB Church** in **Columbus, OH**.

Eight baptisms and four new members help Pastor **Wiley Perkins** to smile at **Samantha FWB Church** in **Leesburg, OH**. One young man, **Matt Eyelet**, answered the call to preach.

Oklahoma's **Gaines Creek Association** sponsored a three-day Bible study on the second coming of Christ in May. Hillsdale staffer, Dr. **Thomas Marberry** spoke four times. The study met at **Bethel FWB Church** in **Allen, OK**.

Pastor **Curtis Linton** reports 3,128 in attendance and 358 conversions at **Cornerstone FWB Church** in **Tulsa, OK**.

First FWB Church in **Ponca City, OK**, celebrated their 20th anniversary in July. The group set attendance records with 224 worshipers. Pastor **David Biggers** baptized six converts.

Sixty-five people filled the altars during the 13th anniversary celebration at **Faith FWB Church** in **Glenpool, OK**. Pastor **David Archer** reports that 1,071 attended the services.

Members of **Peace FWB Church** in **Florence, SC**, burned the mortgage on five acres adjacent to their present facilities. Pastor **Donnie Miles** said the church paid off the note eight years early.

Arcadia FWB Church in **Arcadia, SC**, celebrated 68 years of service to the community. Pastor **Donald Seay** has led the church more than 34 years.

Thirteen members of **First FWB Church** in **Kingstree, SC**, read the Bible through last year, according to Pastor **Wayland Owens**. Members also completed construction on the shell of their 8,000-square-foot Family Life Center. It will eventually contain a basketball court, kitchen and nursery. ■



BOARD OF RETIREMENT

Meet Our Staff

By Ray Lewis

***William (Bill) Evans***

graduated from FWBBC in 1962 with a major in Bible and a minor in pastoral training. That fall he married Brenda who teaches English at Brentwood Academy in Nashville. They are the parents of three married sons: Jeffrey, Lee and Ben.

After graduation, Bill began a 21-year pastoral ministry in four states. He became active at the district, state and national level of the denomination. He served on the Board of Retirement from 1970 to 1982, the last 10 as chairman. He spent seven years (1983-1990) as field representative or director of a deferred gift program with World Literature Crusade.

He joined the Retirement staff in 1990 as an understudy to director/founder, Herman Hersey. He was named director on August 1, 1993. He also serves as the director of the Free Will Baptist Foundation.

***D. Ray Lewis***

received his business degree from Pembroke State University. He earned his Bible and pastoral administration degree at Free Will Baptist Bible College and attended graduate school at Middle Tennessee State University. He has pastored in North Carolina, Alabama and Tennessee.

Ray came to work for the Board of Retirement on May 16, 1983, after teaching one year at FWBBC. He has served as the business manager and executive assistant. At the April 1996 board meeting, he was named the associate director of the Board of Retirement. His wife, Ida, is the publications editor for the Home Missions Department. They have two children, Chris and Kelly.

***David L. Brown***

is our member services manager. The Arkansas native joined our staff in May 1992. He earned his B.A. degree from FWBBC in 1979. He later acquired a major in accounting from Tennessee State University. He is a certified public accountant. He and his wife Temisia have one son, Reese.

As member services manager, David is responsible for providing and monitoring services to participants in the retirement plan. Participants should contact him for projections of retirement benefits, and when they are ready to retire or settle their accounts. Questions about contributions or receipts should be directed to him.

***Dianna Harris***

serves as secretary for the Board of Retirement. She grew up in a Free Will Baptist minister's home, the third of five children. Her mother led her to the Lord at home when she was five years old. She has worked within the Free Will Baptist denomination all her life.

She is married to Roy Harris, director of stewardship development at Free Will Baptist Bible College. They have two children, Melissa and Aaron. She has been with the Board of Retirement and Insurance two years.

Dianna says, "I love the Free Will Baptist denomination and am proud to be a small part."

■



FOREIGN MISSIONS

You Can't Get There from Here!

By Jim Sturgill

I'm certain this old cliché is familiar. It's not pleasant to get hit with it at a very inconvenient time. Yet the pursuit of this cliché kept me running for several weeks in February.

For a year now our Korean-made *Besta* van has been worth its weight in gold in Belo Horizonte, Minas Gerais, Brazil. We call it "The Beast." It has brought people to church, where they have met the Lord and experienced changed lives. When we bought it, we were assured that our current driver's license was adequate. We were told it was the same as the old Volkswagen van that we had in the past.

Then, in early December, we took our daughter, Vera, to Uberlândia to the home of coworkers Curt and Mary Holland where she was to help teach their children for a month. We planned to meet them in Jaboticabal in the state of São Paulo at the Worker's Conference and bring her back home.

A Routine Document Check

As Vicki and I were returning from Uberlândia, we were stopped for a routine document check by the highway patrol. That's where my "exciting adventure" began. I was informed emphatically (and expensively) that I needed a professional license to drive our van because it seats more than nine passengers.

Several Brazilian friends said I should just keep on driving here in town while I went through the process of upgrading my license. I was able to tell them that God's Word teaches us to obey the laws of the land. Therefore, if I wanted to teach them to obey, I could not disobey. To their amazement, the van stayed in the garage until I passed all the exams necessary to become a professional chauffeur.

It took 45 days, more fees than I ever imagined, and a trip to Jaboticabal, where we had lived before, to take the tests. I had to have my eyes checked, be psychologically evaluated, take driving classes in an old *Mercedes Benz* clunker of a bus, and drive for the police examiner.

Jim Sturgill has served as a missionary to Brazil since 1970. He and his wife, Vicki, are currently in a church-planting role in the city of Belo Horizonte.

Marvelous Opportunities

You may wonder why I'm telling you all of this. It is simply the following: God gives us marvelous opportunities to speak up for Him if we are just able to recognize them. We may not even be around to see the results, but the Word will bring its fruit.

The owner of the driving school, the driving instructors, the psychological evaluator, the eye doctor, the policeman and quite a few others had a chance to find out why the "crazy American missionary" wouldn't just continue to drive with the wrong type of license. They received a lesson as well: they heard that Jesus loves them and wants to save them.

No, I couldn't (*get there*) reach them from Belo, but I had a lot of fun telling people about Jesus when I went somewhere else to start! ■

NEEDED! New Missionaries!

Brazil	2 church-planting couples-São Paulo 3 church-planting couples-Minas Gerais 1 church-planting couple-Minas Triangle 1 Bible institute teacher-pastoral trainer (career or short-term) 1 specialist to train leaders/trainers for youth camp and Sunday school programs (career or short-term) 1 instructor for church music ministries (career or short-term)
Côte d'Ivoire	10 church-planting couples 2 RNs, Doropo 1 teacher, Bouake, ICA-master's degree preferred 2 teachers for Bible institute, Bouna
Japan	5 units (a unit is one couple or a single) general missionaries 1 institute director
Panama	2 church-planting couples
Spain	8 church-planting couples, some able to teach in the Bible institute
Uruguay	4 church-planting couples 1 Bible institute teacher-administrator
China, Mongolia Vietnam	Teachers of English*
CIS (Former USSR)	Teachers, pastoral trainers and short-term

* See Free Will Baptist Foreign Missions for details.

FOREIGN MISSIONS, P.O. Box 5002, Antioch, TN 37011-5002

The Eighth Commandment

Thou shalt not steal. (Exodus 20:15; cf. Deuteronomy 5:19) A broad commandment like this covers a lot of ground. Stealing takes on many forms, and this commandment serves as an especially good example how all the commandments are interwoven.

A person can rob God (Mal. 3:8,9). Holding back whatever is due Him is stealing what is properly His, and one's tithes are not the only things at stake. If we aren't careful we can also rob God of honor He ought to have, or of time; and then we break the first and second commandments too. Indeed, if we withhold ourselves from Him, in the commitment and devotion He commands as our Creator, we are stealing what is rightly His.

A person can also steal from others: not giving one's parents (or other authorities) the respect due them is one example, and that gets us back to the fifth commandment.

Mostly we think about taking things that don't belong to us. And of course that's one of the important things involved. I learned the lesson before I was five, when I took a pencil from my grandfather's general store; whereupon my Mom turned the car around and made me take it back and confess.

In the Bible, the thief had to do more than that, he had to make restitution—at least double what he had taken and sometimes four or five times as much. And if he couldn't pay, he would be sold into service until the debt was paid. (See Exodus

22:1-4, for example.)

But there are other ways to steal from others. You may steal a person's reputation by spreading falsehood. You may rob another of innocence by pressuring him or her into wrongdoing. You may steal information by cheating, or take credit for something that rightly should be someone else's.

You may rob Uncle Sam of the taxes due by misrepresenting your income or expenses. And in many of these we soon break the ninth commandment too. (And the connection between this and the tenth commandment is too obvious to describe.)

Indeed, we can even steal from ourselves (or our families) by foolishly wasting our resources, for example, or by robbing ourselves of peace and forgiveness and the blessing of God in our lives through a fierce and selfish independence that resists Him.

The truth is, stealing and selfishness are Siamese twins, and selfishness is at the root of all sin.

Interestingly, the New Testament (as with all the commandments) shines a light on this commandment that makes it ever so clear: "Let him that stole steal no more: but rather let him labour, working with his hands the thing which is good, that he may have to give to him that needeth" (Ephesians 4:28).

In other words, then, the biblical teaching, instead of wrongly taking from others, is to support oneself with honest labor. But even more, the *Christian* standard is to quit being a taker and become a giver, using work as the



Robert E. Picirilli

means of having something to give.

That's not just a way of negating wrongdoing, then. It's a way of positively practicing what's right. Not just putting away sin and avoiding grieving the Spirit, but putting on the new man and bearing the fruit of the Spirit. Only thus can we defeat our depraved, selfish "need" to take what belongs to others.

And we mustn't fool ourselves: we all have that desire. ■

Capital Stewardship/Victory Campaign May 1996 Update

State	Goal	Gifts	Balance
Alabama	\$ 76,397.63	\$ 4,981.15	\$ 71,416.48
Arizona	1,228.93	2,883.71	(1,654.78)
Arkansas	76,860.94	43,062.13	33,798.81
Atlantic Canada	1,570.51	897.00	673.51
California	17,216.76	1,444.20	15,772.56
Colorado	789.18	1,165.00	(375.82)
Florida	20,703.30	6,347.42	14,355.88
Georgia	38,179.19	28,708.88	9,470.31
Hawaii	184.54	727.26	(542.72)
Idaho	353.37	25.00	328.37
Illinois	16,176.29	4,949.47	11,226.82
Indiana	7,868.27	1,846.75	6,021.52
Iowa	266.99	0.00	266.99
Kansas	1,287.82	280.00	1,007.82
Kentucky	35,454.34	5,674.29	29,780.05
Louisiana	94.23	1,925.00	(1,830.77)
Maryland	6,812.10	1,539.38	5,272.72
Michigan	15,116.19	16,004.22	(888.03)
Mississippi	15,559.86	3,843.23	11,716.63
Missouri	60,484.40	33,789.91	26,694.49
Montana	27.48	100.00	(72.52)
Nebraska	102.08	119.00	(16.92)
New Mexico	596.80	630.55	(33.75)
North Carolina	59,118.06	7,131.40	51,986.66
Northeast Assoc.	883.41	270.00	613.41
Northwest Assoc.	1,087.58	201.00	886.58
Ohio	40,923.66	19,588.10	21,335.56
Oklahoma	92,271.60	10,432.08	81,839.52
South Carolina	18,335.75	3,102.00	15,233.75
South Dakota		175.00	(175.00)
Tennessee	78,557.09	58,498.17	20,058.92
Texas	11,547.20	7,216.52	4,330.68
Virginia	24,323.33	2,027.93	22,295.40
Virgin Islands		200.00	(200.00)
West Virginia	46,204.51	998.00	45,206.51
Wisconsin		61.00	(61.00)
Other		2,978.85	(2,978.85)
Totals	\$766,583.39	\$273,823.60	\$492,759.79

YOUTH UPDATE

COMING SOON TO A CITY NEAR YOU!

THE NATIONAL YOUTH WORKER RETREATS

FEBRUARY 14-16, 1997
BRANSON, MO

STONECROFT CONFERENCE CENTER

FEBRUARY 28-MARCH 1, 1997
MONTEAGLE, TN

JIM OLIVER'S LODGE & CONFERENCE CENTER

Mark these dates on your calendar and make plans to join us at one of these two exciting locations for our 1997 National Youth Workers' Retreats. You'll find fellowship, education, inspiration, resources, friends, and encouragement.

Our Retreat speaker will be Barry St.Clair of Reach Out Ministries. Barry's involvement in youth ministry spans thirty years. Highlights include playing on the first Athletes in Action team, touring the Orient with Venture for Victory, and serving as Director of Youth Evangelism for the Southern Baptist Home Mission Board. Currently he serves on the board of the National Network of Youth Ministries, the advisor board of the Fellowship of Christian Athletes, and the National Prayer Committee.

Barry has authored over twenty books for youth leaders and teens, including the Moving Toward Maturity series, Taking Your Campus for Christ, and Penetrating the Campus. His most recent book is the Magnet Effect.

For more information, please contact the Youth Ministries Division at 1-800-877-7030.

Ex-Convict Plants Church in Muslim Homeland

CHARLOTTESVILLE, VA (EP)—A hard-core criminal led to Christ while in jail has returned to his Muslim-populated homeland and planted a church.

According to Bob Emery, director of ministries in ex-Soviet lands for Christian Aid, a Muslim from the Caucasus region was convicted under the communist system and sent to a prison in Komi, Russia, where all hard-core prisoners were sent. He was in his 28th year of a 30-year sentence when he was visited by a Voice of Hope missionary.

Gregor (not his real name) accepted the Lord and devoted the last two years of his sentence to intensive study of the Bible. By the time he was released, God had transformed him into a missionary.

Just before his release, he received a letter from his father. "Come as soon as you can," his father wrote. "I have weapons and we will fight our enemies." At that time, peoples in the Caucasus region were fighting for independence.

The transformed prisoner wrote home, "Dad, I will come, but the only weapon I have is the Sword of the Spirit, and this weapon will bring peace not only to my homeland, but also the hearts of my people."

Upon hearing that, his Muslim father rejected him, as most Muslims do when a family member leaves Islam. But Gregor returned to his homeland anyway and began to tell of his newfound Savior. He took the gospel into streets and parks. While foreign missionaries were not allowed in because of the civil strife, God raised up a church through the ex-convict. According to Christian Aid, about 100 believers now gather to worship the Lord Jesus Christ in that place.

Chinese Officials Approve of Bible School

BEIJING, China (EP)—Chinese officials have approved the establishment of a new Bible school in the Southeastern Shanxi Province, just 100 miles from where the same officials raided another

Bible school, shut it down and arrested the director, a report from the Christian Aid Mission said.

Christian Aid Mission is sponsoring the new school and 14 others throughout the communist country. The director of the ransacked Bible school and two of their co-workers remain in custody.

The new facility will be able to train 80 workers. "Despite the apparent inconsistency, believers praise the Lord for the new school," a statement said.

Attacking one school and allowing Christians to establish another is contradictory, but it's the Chinese government's way, explained Freddie Sun, director of Christian Aid's China division.

Sun, who spent 10 years in prison performing hard labor for his faith, concluded, "These acts aren't done according to laws or principles. The attitude and emotion of the local enforcement agency determines what is allowed at any particular moment."

Wycliffe Prints 400th NT Translation

PORT MORESBY, Papua New Guinea (EP)—Wycliffe Bible Translators passed a milestone when they completed their 400th translation of the New Testament and presented it to a native group in Papua New Guinea.

The Barai natives, a group of people who live in southeast Papua New Guinea near the Owen Stanley Mountain Range, were the recipients of the new translations, according to the German news service Idea.

Morris Are, a native of the Barai people, said, "If we read the Bible in English, our people do not understand the texts. However, if we read to them in their mother tongue, the message speaks to their hearts."

Wycliffe Bible translators, named for 14th century English theologian and Bible translator John Wycliffe, have translated portions of the Bible into more than 2,000 languages. Currently, more than 6,700 languages are known to be spoken throughout the world.

Wycliffe estimates that another 1,000 translations are needed before the Bible

will be in a language readable by every nation.

1996 Yearbook Documents Church Life

NEW YORK, NY (EP)—Are you looking for a good conversation starter for your next church pot-luck dinner? Look no further than the newly released *1996 Yearbook of American and Canadian Churches*. The annual report is a veritable treasure trove of little-know facts about religion in North America.

For instance, did you know that more than half of all U.S. church members belong to one of three denominations: the Roman Catholic Church, the Southern Baptist Convention and the United Methodist Church? According to the *Yearbook*, these three denominations have a combined inclusive membership of 84,388,790, just over 53 percent of the total 158,426,003 reported to the *Yearbook* by 99 denominations.

Did you know that four of the 10 largest U.S. denominations have predominantly African-American membership? The *Yearbook* says those bodies are the National Baptist Convention U.S.A. (With 8.2 million members), Church of God in Christ (nearly 5.5 million); National Baptist Convention of America (3.5 million), and African Methodist Episcopal Church (3.5 million).

Did you know that nearly one-third (31.6 percent) of the 65,174 theological students in the U.S. and Canada are women? The *Yearbook* found 20,613 women studying theology in 1994 in the 226 member schools of the Association of Theological Schools (ATS) in the U.S. and Canada. Their numbers and proportion have increased steadily since the ATS first began counting enrollment by gender in 1972; at that time the 3,358 women theological students constituted 10.2 percent of total enrollment.

The annual *Yearbook* is the only comprehensive annual source of statistics from churches in the U.S. and Canada. While not a complete census, the *Yearbook* is the most complete available summary of denominational membership. ■

After the First Sermon



Jack Williams

Three years before I went to college the best day of my life, the worst day of my life and the most frightening day of my life all happened on the same Wednesday night. I preached my first sermon. The fact that I was 16 years old, had been a Christian eight months and did not know any preachers younger than 45 pumped up the fear factor.

Forty people braved the mosquitos to hear a kid who didn't wear a tie dismantle the 10 Commandments in eight minutes. Then I surprised everybody by shutting up and sitting down.

That's right. I read each Commandment and said everything I knew about them in eight minutes flat. I stammered. I stuttered. I felt the weight of the world on my shoulders. I don't remember one thing I said. If I'm lucky, neither does anyone else.

Felt Dumb. No matter how many sermons a minister preaches in his lifetime, he still must get past the first one. If he does that, he learns some priceless lessons. I sure did.

No one told me that Wednesday night just how bad things were. But I had an idea. . . .

A year later after I'd preached Sunday morning and several folks got saved, the song leader paused on his way out the door. He said with a grin, "I heard your first sermon. Until today, I didn't think you were going to make it."

I knew exactly how he felt.

Needed Help. I knew I was in big trouble if I didn't learn something in a hurry. I had depleted my entire arsenal of biblical knowledge in eight minutes, and three churches sent word that they wanted "the young preacher" to speak.

My pastor couldn't help much because he pastored two churches and only came to our community on the

second and fourth Sundays each month. Nobody had any books to read except a Sunday School quarterly. So I did the only thing I could think of to do which turned out to be the best thing I could have done.

Read Bible. I read the Bible like a thirsty man drinks water on a hot day. Never mind that I didn't understand most of what I read, just holding that Book in my hands and reading those words built a fire inside my mind that made me know I'd plugged into something bigger than me.

I read the Bible early, late and often. I read it on lunch breaks from the cotton fields. I read it at night. I took it to the woods and sat under cypress trees reading that Book. The voice of God came clear, powerful and almost overwhelming.

At times I'd get so full that I'd have to close the Book—my cup ran right over the top, my soul flooded, my life changed forever. The Bible stirred me as no other book had.

Easy to Criticize. It only took one time in the pulpit to learn that it was easier to criticize the sermon than to preach one. What an awakening! I'd thought that preachers simply opened the Bible and sermons jumped out.

It didn't work that way, at least not for me. I was shocked to realize that I could study two weeks and unload it all before 11:30 on Sunday morning. I read a lot of scriptures so that my sermons would last more than 10 minutes. My best effort was the day I read the entire ninth chapter of Luke for a text at a quarterly meeting.

Then my worst nightmare came true.

Crunch Time. Six months after I preached my first sermon, a church called me as pastor. That says less about my ability than it does about the availability of preachers. It was me or nobody.

I found myself as a 17-year-old high school senior pastoring a church of 45 people. Suddenly, I was preaching three sermons a week. Every time I learned something new, the congregation got it immediately.

There was no time to grow up slowly. I was in over my head with no turning back. A year later, two churches called me as pastor and both of them were 100 miles away. Since I had no car, I spent a lot of time riding buses between Arkansas and Louisiana.

Kind Words. I learned to treasure a kind word. One fellow told me that I stuttered so badly in the pulpit he could hardly understand me, but that when I sang he understood every word. Since I knew I didn't talk plainly, I took his musical observation as a compliment.

Another member said, "When you're out of the pulpit, you act like a kid, but when you step behind the podium you change." For years, I thought that was the kindest remark anyone had ever made to me.

Surrounded By Love. Those wonderful people were so glad that God had called a boy to preach in their community that they smothered me in love. I was a member of everybody's family, welcome at every dinner table and treated as an equal when it came time to pray publicly.

The older laymen picked up the administrative duties in church and left me to prayer and Bible study. Later, I discovered that what they did was exactly what God wanted them to do (Acts 6:2-4). They were smarter than they realized.

God Bless those spiritual fathers and mothers. My world is now a world of books and deadlines. But before I owned a book or missed a deadline, I met God's people on the banks of a bayou. They heard my first sermon and trusted God for the difference. ■

CONTACT

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August
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