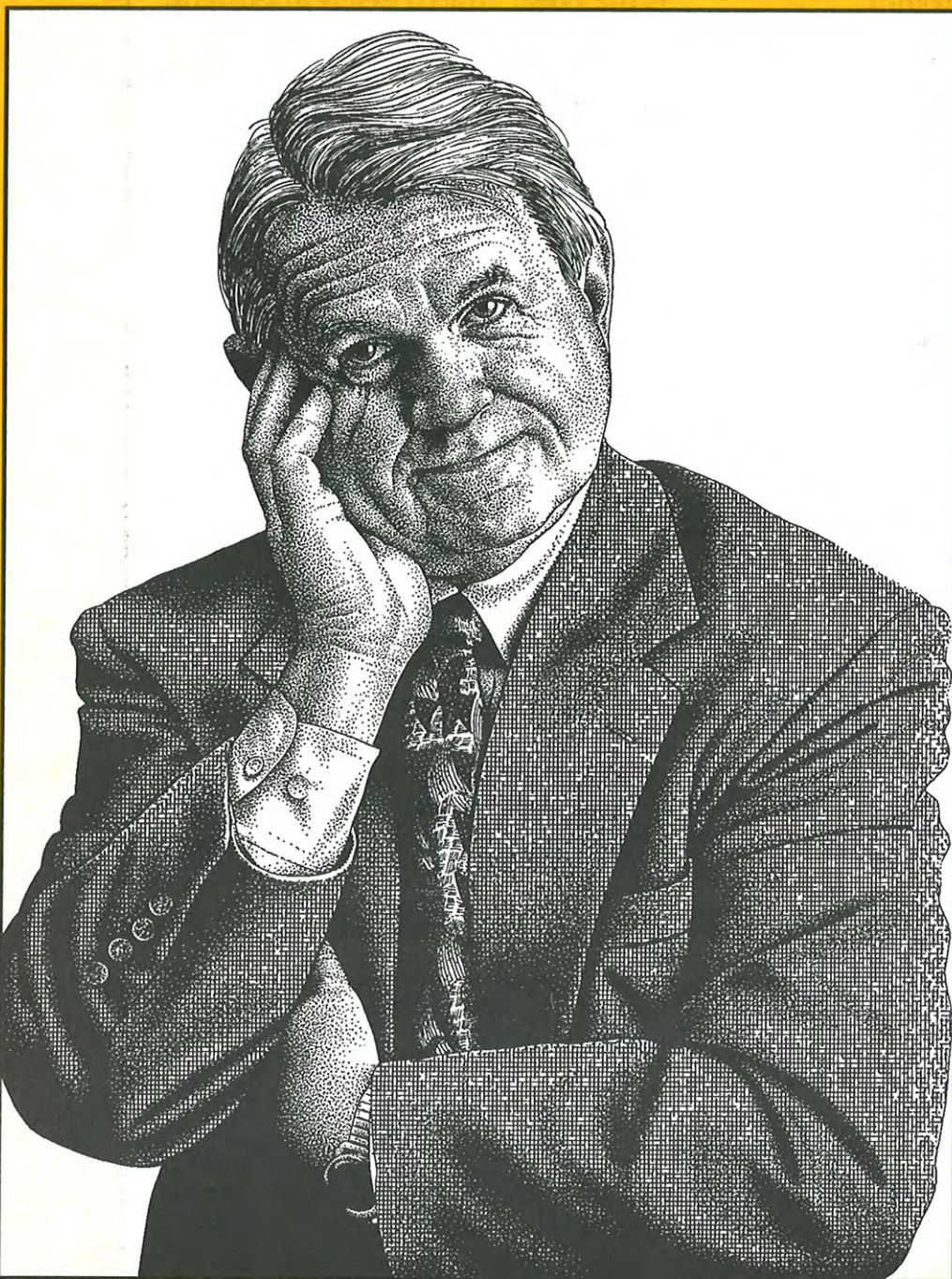


OCTOBER 1996

CONTACT

OFFICIAL PUBLICATION OF THE
NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF
FREE WILL BAPTISTS



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Pastor's Role in Worship

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Witnessing... for Every Believer?

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You Can Teach!

.....

The Ministry Myth

.....

It's a Man's World

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OCTOBER 1996

VOLUME 43, NO. 10

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Three Truths For Tomorrow

The disintegration of society produces alarm among Christians. Some of this can be traced to an unrealistic view of the world and history. A casual reading of the Bible reminds us that the world has always been a dangerous place for God's people. Human history is filled with wars, death, pestilence, persecution and pain.

Paul describes the last times in I Timothy 4 and II Timothy 3. Peter gives a vivid description of the approaching apostasy in II Peter 2-3. Jesus painted a detailed picture of the end time in Luke 17 and Matthew 24. Paul describes the close of the age in II Thesalonians.

In light of such perilous and perverted times, what instructions should be given to those who serve God? Paul reminds Timothy that there are three basic truths which can enable him to effectively live and labor for God. These instructions are still applicable today.

Discern the Times

Paul confirms that the times will get progressively worse. Trials, persecutions and afflictions will intensify from Pentecost until the second coming of the Lord. These perilous times shall come, continue and ultimately be concluded.

What trends characterize these *perilous times*? One trend is *selfishness*. Men shall love themselves. They will be self-centered. This trait is seen in the "me" generation.

Barnes notes, "The selfishness which is condemned, is that in regard to our own interests which interferes with the rights and comforts of others; which makes self the central and leading object of living; and which tramples on all that would interfere with that."

Another trend is *shamelessness*. Shamelessness manifests itself in un-

bridled arrogance. Barnes notes, "Nothing would be more indicative of the lowest state of degradation, than that in which all compacts and agreements were utterly disregarded."

Still another trend is *slander*. This trend manifests itself in such terms as false accusers, incontinent, fierce and despisers of those which are good. Barnes says, "Religion produces gentleness; the want of it makes men rough, harsh, cruel."

Another trend is *superficiality*. This trend manifests itself in such terms as lovers of pleasures more than God. They have a form of godliness, but it has no power to change their lives. Their religion exerts no influence in their lives.

Display the Traits

In the midst of this dark description of society, Paul did not wring his hands and tell Timothy that there was no way to minister to such a perverted and profane society. He simply appealed to his own life, labor and legacy. Paul exhorts Timothy to take the time to examine his manner of living and see that God's grace had been sufficient.

In I Timothy 4:12, Paul exhorts, "Let no man despise thy youth; but be thou an example of the believers, in word, in conversation, in charity, in spirit, in faith, in purity."

The challenge Paul gave Timothy in the midst of a corrupt society was to display the traits of Christianity. One of the greatest influences Christians

can have in society is to demonstrate Christianity by their lives. Paul set the example for Timothy to imitate. We should do the same in our society.

Dwell in the Truth

Paul reminds Timothy of the need to persevere (II Tim. 3:15). Timothy was to continue in the things he had learned remembering from whom he had learned them. Timothy had learned some absolutes and he was to hold on to them—the truths and traditions which he had been taught as a child and confirmed by the instructions of Paul.

Paul reminds Timothy of the *period* when he commenced his training. Timothy had known the scriptures from an early age. The scriptures had been the means of bringing him to a saving knowledge of Christ. We would do well to remember the value of teaching and training our children at an early age.

The Bible is a living, lasting and life-giving book. It is perfect, powerful, profitable and productive. It is sufficient for doctrine, reproof, correction and instruction in righteousness.

Barnes concludes, "There is no book that has so much power as the Bible; none that is so efficient in moving the hearts and consciences, and intellects of mankind. There is no book that has moved so many minds; none that has produced so deep and permanent effects on the world. . . . Let us, then, study and prize the Bible. It is a holy and a safe guard. It has conducted millions along the dark and dangerous way of life, and has never led one astray."

Christians who live the way God directs will be lights in this darkened world. Christians who know the times, traits and truth will not get off course. They have the compass which accurately charts the course. ■



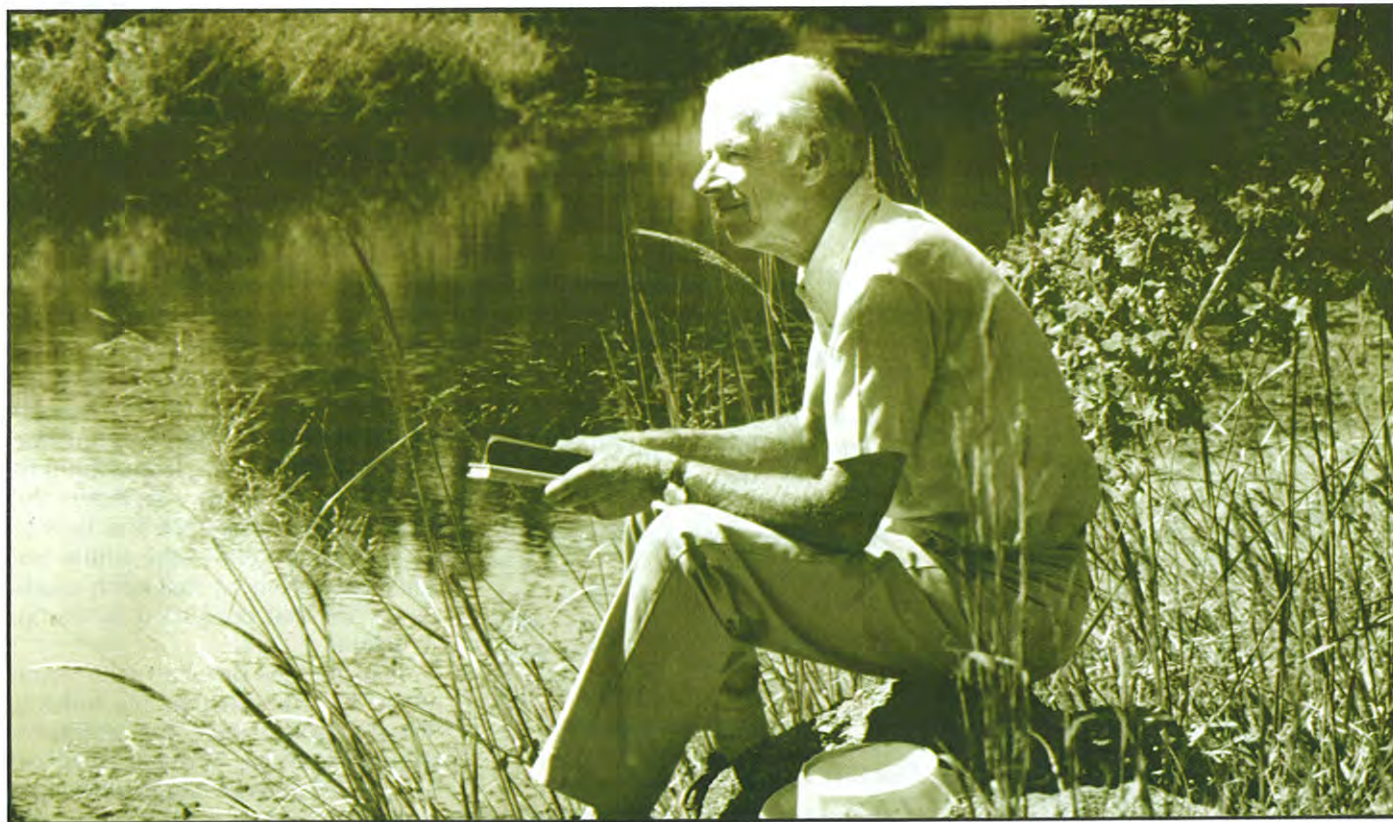
Melvin Worthington

The Secretary's Schedule

- Oct. 6-11** Eastside FWB Church
Muldrow, OK
- Oct. 13** First FWB Church
Ada, OK
- Oct. 14-17** Oklahoma State Association

The Pastor's Role in Worship

By Randy Sawyer



H. Armstrong Roberts

In his recently released book, *The Coming Evangelical Crisis*, John MacArthur Jr. recalls a character that comedian Flip Wilson used in his entertainment repertoire. The pastor's name was the Reverend Leroy and he pastored The Church of What's Happenin' Now. That was certainly food for religious humor in the early 1970s but no longer. In fact, numerous churches dot the ecclesiastical landscape today that could rightly be known as the Church of What's Happenin' Now.

Adopting a postmodern philosophy, many church leaders feel that to become relevant, we must address the "felt needs" of a disillusioned society. Tradition, therefore, must be discarded in lieu of an undated version that is less offensive to the boomers, busters and Xers.

The consumer is king, the pastor and pastoral staff are salesmen, and the church is a shopping mall, complete with cafeteria offering a variety

of dishes that will appeal to the palate of any would-be customer. This "marketing the church" approach is seen in many areas of church life, especially with regard to worship.

Mega-church pastor Rick Warren models this concept more effectively than most. In *Purpose Driven Church*, he argues that no style of worship is correct. "Your preferred style of worship," he writes, "says more about your cultural background than your theology." He adds, "The truth is, there isn't a biblical style of worship."

How do we respond to this line of thinking? Is there a biblical theology of worship? Does anything go?

Biblical Worship

In John's Gospel we find perhaps the most significant New Testament passage regarding worship. The text (4:20-26) contains three specific characteristics of worship as taught by Christ.

First, true worship is found not in its *form* but in its *focus*. This is not to suggest that the form is unimportant, but that it is always secondary. True worship above all else recognizes the centrality of God.

This would, of necessity, eliminate the consumer-oriented, needs-based philosophy. Worship is to be God-centered, not man-centered.

Second, the passage teaches that true worship is found not in an external display, but in an internal reality. "In Spirit" means that worshiping is a part of who you are as a human being. Artificial gimmicks cannot stimulate this kind of worship; it comes from who you are and what you are.

Third, John 4:20-26 stresses that true worship is found not through a subjective experience, but through an objective understanding. To worship "in truth" requires a growing knowledge of the word which increases one's appreciation of God's worth.

We can program a worshiper to

respond to certain stimuli, yet that stimuli may be altogether contrary to truth. A song may strike an emotional chord, while presenting a message that is theologically erroneous.

Scriptural Authority

Today's charismatic worship is commendable in its emotive aspects, but the general lack of biblical content is its greatest weakness. The church today, in fact, exists in a theological vacuum. What we believe is deemed unimportant, how we feel becomes paramount. The Christian community treats experience as the final voice of authority. True worship, on the other hand, demands a balance between the emotional and psychological.

In the same text, John 4, Jesus informed the Samaritan woman that "God is a spirit." As an invisible, immaterial spirit, God cannot be known unless He reveals Himself. It is a fundamental axiom of Christianity that only God can reveal God and He has done so in scripture.

Does it seem logical then, that a God who has specifically and carefully revealed Himself at the same time has chosen not to inform us as to how we may approach or truly worship Him? The fact is, the self-revelation of God not only enables us to know who He is, but offers definitive instructions on how to approach Him. Scripture alone must be allowed to regulate our worship.

Pastoral Responsibility

Responsibility for worship in the local church, therefore, rests with the pastor, his life and teaching. Today's trend is clearly to shift the role of the worship leader to musician or song leader. This paradigm rests on a false dichotomy.

The assumption seems to be that music is worship while preaching is something different. It is evident from scripture, however, that both singing and preaching constitute worship.

It is the pastor's duty to make absolutely certain that worship has a solid scriptural foundation. He should keep abreast of various trends in music and worship, and evaluate each by God's standard. His involvement in planning the service can also go a long way toward insuring that there is Bible-centered worship.

Furthermore, the pastor is to expound the scriptures so that in reality the Lord of the church is holding a conversation with His people.

"Word and worship belong indissolubly to each other," writes John Stott. "All worship is an intelligent and loving response to the revelation of God. . . . Therefore acceptable worship is impossible without preaching."

Finally, the pastor is to model true worship before the congregation. Being preoccupied with the details of the service or his sermon notes will not only affect the quality of his worship, but the congregation's as well.

Observations

This is but a brief look at one of the many passages that provide specific guidelines for effective worship. The fact is, there is a theology of worship that is thoroughly outlined in scripture. The principles of worship advocated by Christ in John 4 require that there be balance between "Spirit" and "truth," and the focus must always be "The Father."

If we continue to allow cultural forces and personal preferences to shape the way we worship, we will find ourselves in a "constant state of nervousness," never knowing what's next and tragically misleading our people with trends and fads which God never intended. May God grant His church a generation of men who will search the scripture and discover a biblical-centered approach to worship, worship God themselves and lead others to do the same. ■



ABOUT THE WRITER: Reverend Randy Sawyer, chairman of the Music Commission, pastors First Free Will Baptist Church in Gastonia, North Carolina.

Directory Update

ARKANSAS

George Lynn to Vista Church, Van Buren

GEORGIA

Arthur Smith to Mt. Olive Church, Reynolds

ILLINOIS

Jason Jean to Mt. Olive Church, Benton

SOUTH CAROLINA

David Anders to Pine Grove Church, Jefferson
Sam Truett to Faith Church, Darlington

TEXAS

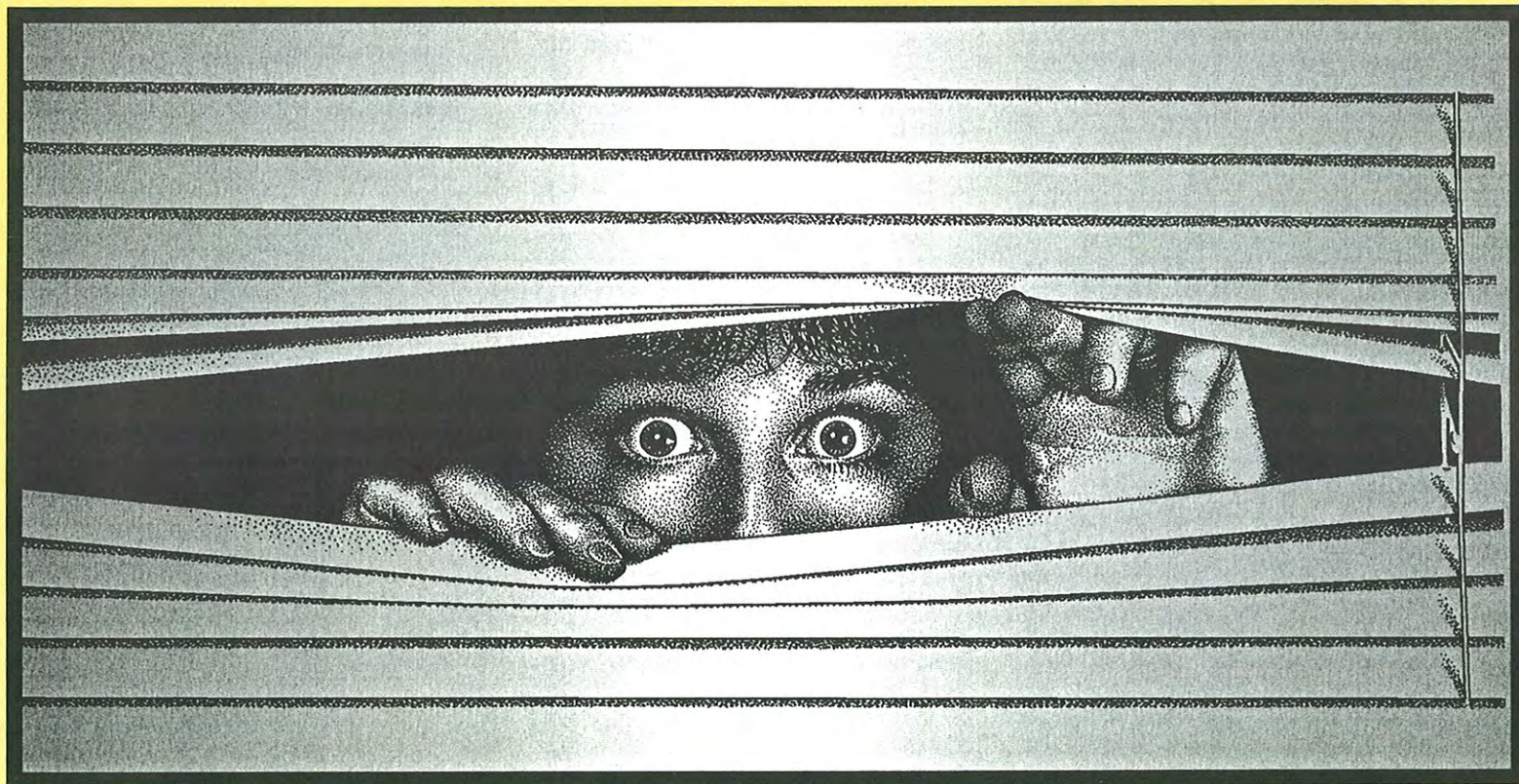
Elvis Fielding to Easley's Chapel Church, Comanche

Capital Stewardship/Victory Campaign July 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	28,955.88	9,223.31
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	58,908.17	19,648.92
Texas	11,547.20	7,266.52	4,280.68
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	\$274,530.60	\$492,052.79

Witnessing, Is It for Every Believer?

By Gordon Sebastian



It was the worst of nights, that Tuesday night, August 14, 1951, a night of partying and drunkenness. Yet, it was followed by the best day in my entire life, the day a sailor named Ted Young led me to Jesus Christ. Until that day, I had no idea a person could be saved and really know it. Neither did I have any idea that such a happening could take place on a battleship the day after the kind of night I had just had.

Ted? He was one of a kind. He was a soul winner. There were about 20 on my ship whom Ted had led to Christ. He was a graduate of Moody Bible Institute. He had sat under the preaching of Dr. Harry Ironsides. He was, thus, a strong proponent of eternal security.

Yet, Ted, who disciplined me, made

me feel that I could be in danger of losing what I had in Christ, if I didn't witness for Him. "Witnessing," said Ted, "is like prayer and Bible reading. It's the duty of every believer."

Hooked On Witnessing

So, I set out to do just that, to do for others what Ted had done for me. With the plan of salvation marked in my Gideon New Testament and with a simple gospel tract taped to the inside cover in case I got into trouble, I began my search for that first soul. And on November 28, just three months after my own conversion, I found him.

He was another sailor, a Roman Catholic from Chicago, who, like me, had never been shown God's plan of salvation. We were both so happy af-

ter he prayed the "sinner's prayer" we sang a chorus I taught him—"Thank You, Lord, For Saving My Soul."

Wow! What a couple of kooks we must have looked like to any sailor who just happened to be passing by. But it made the angels rejoice, and it made me rejoice. In fact, it hooked me.

From that time until now, I have been trying to convince church leaders and church members alike that witnessing is for every believer. In articles and columns for Christian publications, in conferences and revivals, at banquets and rallies, I've continued repeating the same refrain: witnessing is not a gift, not a calling, not a talent, not an option. Witnessing is a duty, the duty of every Christian (Mark 16:15; Acts 1:8; II Cor. 5:10-11, 17-21; and others).

The Intimidation Factor

Before his death, Freeman Allen was an active member of the church I now pastor who clearly understood that I meant even him. In the past he always had a valid excuse for believing he had an exemption from this "duty." You see, Freeman could neither read nor write.

Ah, but he could memorize. So he had his wife mark the Romans Road scriptures in his New Testament, and then with her help he memorized those verses. Once Freeman had the verses firmly in his mind, he became one of the best soul winners in our church. No one suspected that he was not reading those underlined verses he was pointing to.

Have you ever wondered why so few ever venture out to witness? Have you ever wondered why so many have satisfied themselves with the notion that this duty is not their duty? Oh, I know that ignorance of the clear teachings and commands of the New Testament is one of the reasons.

However, I think that more than mere ignorance, intimidation is the main reason Christians choose not to witness. They are afraid. Lurking behind that fear, you will find the chief culprit, Satan, who conjures up all kinds of scary scenes that just might follow any attempt we dare make to witness.

Strange, New Courage

However, the Bible tells us plainly that Satan is not only a liar, but the father of all lies (John 8:44). It has been nearly 45 years, and that deceiver still works his fear tactics on my imagination. Yet, in all the years I've witnessed for Jesus, none of the frightening things Satan tried to intimidate me with has happened.

No one pulled a gun on me, slammed a door in my face, spit on me, embarrassed me, arrested me or run me out of town. The worst thing that I remember happening to me was being asked to leave, and that happened only once. What a liar the devil is.

In 40 years of pastoring, I have observed that once a believer is convinced that witnessing is part of the Christian life and begins to hunger for souls to win to Christ and is willing to confront his fears in order to get start-

ed, God will begin to provide some amazing things in his life.

There will be the church that is aggressive for souls and offers training for witnessing. There will be the experienced soul winner looking for a novice to take under his wing to disciple. There will be the books and instructional materials discovered at a Christian book store or on a table at the church.

But, even more, there will be both a soul that needs witnessing to and a strange new courage to share the gospel.

Three Ways To Witness

Once you make up your mind to obey God, you are promised the assistance of the Holy Spirit (Acts 5:32). And remember, Jesus did commit His power to those who yield to His command to witness (Acts 1:8). As we follow Him through those early years of church history described in the book of Acts, we can't help but notice how easy it was to carry out His command.

There were three ways of witnessing described in the pages of this marvelous record. I call them The Sermon Plan, The Story Method and The Spot Commercial.

The Sermon Plan . . .

. . . is found in Acts 8 where Philip leads the Ethiopian eunuch to Christ, using a scroll that was open to Isaiah 53. Of course, this is the most advanced of the three kinds of witnessing, and is that which frightens so many just beginning.

The Story Method . . .

. . . is found in Acts 22 and 26. In these chapters, Paul shares the story of his conversion on the Damascus Road. Sharing your personal testimony is a powerful yet simple way to witness.

The Spot Commercial . . .

. . . is the easiest method. In Acts 16 Paul and Silas sang their commercial for Jesus. Anyone can put in a good word for the Lord. Imagine the impact upon society if Christians everywhere would just start bragging on Jesus in the market place. Surely any believer can do this.

John's Way

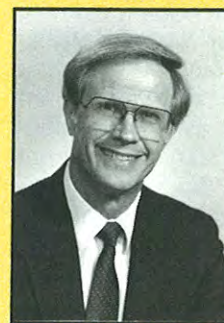
I have a member in my church who makes it easy for me to stand in the pulpit on Sunday and declare that witnessing is a duty for all believers, and that anyone, I mean anyone, can do it. His name is John. Everyone in my church knows John well. In fact, John is well known throughout town.

Every Sunday morning, John gives me a handful of decision cards with names and addresses of those he shared the gospel with and led in the sinner's prayer the previous week. John uses his Bible, and he knows the plan of salvation by heart. Yet, John is handicapped.

He was born with a nervous disorder that hospitalized him in a psychiatric ward for 13 years. Is John ashamed of that? Has he let it stop him? No. In fact, one of John's famous comebacks when he urges slack members to serve God is, "I was in a mental institution 13 years. What's your excuse?"

There are numerous notable Bible teachers, successful pastors and popular authors who are convinced that witnessing is a special gift and not for everyone. However, it does appear rather obvious that early Christians failed to understand that. Just reading the book of Acts convinces me that these early, primitive believers thought they had a duty to witness to everybody.

Whatever the case, I for one am mighty glad that a man by the name of Ted Young was a disciple of D. L. Moody and Dr. Harry Ironsides, and that he completely convinced me that witnessing was the duty of all believers. ■



ABOUT THE WRITER: Reverend Gordon Sebastian pastors Peace Free Will Baptist Church in Wilson, North Carolina.

How to teach a Sunday School class

Yes, You Can Teach!

By Mircheal Jones

In the teaching of every class, someone must suffer. Either the teacher suffers while preparing the class or the students suffer during the class!

By the results I observe in most Sunday School classes, it is apparent that the wrong people are doing the suffering.

I was saved when I was 14 and began teaching the adult Sunday School class at age 16. My training consisted of the Sunday School superintendent handing me a teacher's book and telling me he hoped it would help. My qualifications for teaching the adult class at such a young age came from the fact that I could read and many of the adults in that church could not.

Sadly, this is also the only training given to many teachers in the average church today. Their main qualification to teach is the fact that everyone else took a big step backwards when the superintendent asked for volunteers and left them standing out front all by themselves. No wonder students are beset with boredom and teachers are defeated by burn out.

In the 32 years since that superintendent handed me a teacher's book, I have almost continually taught a class of some kind from Sunday School to Bible institute to Wednesday Bible studies. Along the way I have learned several principles that

can help teachers successfully instruct the students entrusted to them.

Teaching Is Important

You must believe that when you accept the responsibility to teach people about the Word of God and the ways of God you are entrusted with one of the most awesome obligations known to man. You are not given that responsibility simply to entertain students during the Sunday School hour. And you certainly were not empowered to teach in order to climb on a soap box and tell everyone what you think about the government, the morals of society or other pet peeves.

Good teachers shape the beliefs, the behavior and the eternal abode of those they teach. This means that

teaching is not a position to fill but a responsibility to fulfill. And that type responsibility demands faithful attendance, a prayerful attitude and a consistent character.

Teaching Requires Preparation

Preparation means more than getting up a half hour early Sunday morning and hastily going over the lesson. Begin planning next Sunday's lesson no later than Monday evening. Read the scripture text and then the lesson. Grasp the truth God is conveying in the scripture.

Meditate (analyze it over and over in your head) on the lesson all week. Seek real life applications during the week to transform the lesson from words into a way of life. Secure and use the proper tools (study materials) to build a lesson that will establish saints and convict sinners.

Above all, pray for your class and for the lesson. Each week you will enter a battle zone in which students are too tired to listen, circumstances did not allow you the time or energy you need, and the devil is out to withstand God by defeating you. Pray for God's power and purity so that you will be effective in communicating God's Word to a world that desperately needs to hear it.

Teaching Must Be Tested

The only way to determine if you are accomplishing your mission is to



get feed-back from those being taught. Our church uses the children's church at 11:00 o'clock to reenforce the lesson taught during Sunday School. The response of the children to the games and questions in children's church make it immediately obvious if the teacher has done his job.

A good teacher continually uses review and repetition to evaluate how well he has taught and how much the student has learned. Otherwise, you may never realize that the look you took for attention was in reality a cover for a student lost in a daze or a day dream.

Teaching Is Tremendous

I would rather teach than eat. If you know how big I am, then you know I really love to teach! One of the great joys of life is seeing the light go on as people realize that God is able to deal with every difficulty they encounter. Teaching is more than a job you do on Sunday morning; it is a joy you anticipate as you share God's truths with others.

There are numerous books and courses available that show methods and mechanics of teaching. Get as many of them as possible. But teaching must be in your heart before it can do its work in your head. Learn what that means and you will understand the difference between just leading a class and putting all you have into teaching a message.

That is also when you discover that the suffering you do before class in order to keep your students from suffering in class is the most joyous suffering you will ever endure. ■



ABOUT THE WRITER: Reverend Mircheal Jones pastors Grace Free Will Baptist Church in Lake City, South Carolina.

THE TOGETHER WAY

July 1996

Receipts:

State	Design.	CO-OP	Total	July '95	Yr. To Date
Alabama	\$ 1,174.77	\$.00	\$ 1,174.77	\$ 6,216.65	\$ 4,291.38
Arizona	.00	.00	.00	.00	3,601.66
Arkansas	9,732.60	10,463.35	20,195.95	36,249.04	176,543.85
California	.00	1,200.99	1,200.99	907.59	7,276.66
Colorado	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00
Delaware	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00
Florida	.00	3,722.95	3,722.95	.00	20,776.88
Georgia	12,663.53	3,106.53	15,770.06	13,424.17	118,445.79
Hawaii	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00
Idaho	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00
Illinois	6,401.20	1,985.08	8,386.28	16,418.53	78,077.27
Indiana	.00	.00	.00	854.16	4,520.06
Iowa	90.00	.00	90.00	40.00	360.00
Kansas	.00	.00	.00	.00	353.15
Kentucky	585.65	441.01	1,026.66	1,043.87	5,623.06
Louisiana	.00	.00	.00	10.00	70.00
Maryland	.00	1,050.39	1,050.39	.00	2,309.47
Michigan	7,131.66	407.41	7,539.07	10,626.51	105,037.01
Mississippi	.00	317.17	317.17	473.65	3,373.63
Missouri	13,186.41	.00	13,186.41	10,561.38	84,394.44
Montana	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00
Nebraska	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00
New Jersey	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00
New Mexico	1,224.25	57.13	1,281.38	269.22	5,456.14
North Carolina	858.07	676.39	1,534.46	2,257.92	11,652.39
Ohio	5,822.48	3,176.95	8,999.43	5,245.16	76,591.38
Oklahoma	58,486.51	.00	58,486.51	50,435.37	386,332.77
South Carolina	20,718.19	82.28	20,800.47	18,297.75	146,046.19
South Dakota	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00
Tennessee	12,932.97	3,189.56	16,122.53	3,696.71	73,221.11
Texas	5,227.82	234.82	5,462.64	6,642.21	50,129.74
Virginia	2,846.28	50.00	2,896.28	.00	10,387.96
Virgin Islands	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00
West Virginia	.00	.00	.00	3,179.89	38,937.25
Wisconsin	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00
Canada	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00
Northwest Assoc.	.00	.00	.00	.00	41.93
Northeast Assoc.	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00
Other	.00	.03	.03	.06	.42
Totals	\$159,082.39	\$30,162.04	\$189,244.43	\$186,849.84	\$1,413,851.59

Disbursements:

Executive Office	\$ 9,693.99	\$16,589.08	\$ 26,283.07	\$ 26,603.11	\$ 187,464.54
Foreign Missions	96,032.29	3,121.79	99,154.08	92,095.19	694,690.33
FWBBC	10,467.74	3,121.79	13,589.53	12,889.81	111,031.08
Home Missions	36,642.63	2,443.12	39,085.75	42,585.57	337,662.67
Retirement & Insurance	879.18	1,900.20	2,779.38	2,429.25	19,675.66
Master's Men	1,608.93	1,900.20	3,509.13	5,055.61	24,686.72
Commission for Theo. Integrity	83.42	67.87	151.29	154.67	1,202.18
FWB Foundation	858.38	814.38	1,672.76	1,452.15	11,396.56
Historical Commission	79.55	67.87	147.42	144.22	1,093.04
Music Commission	87.29	67.87	155.16	130.10	1,074.90
Radio & TV Commission	83.45	67.87	151.32	140.58	1,148.47
Hillsdale FWB College	1,479.06	.00	1,479.06	1,170.53	9,702.48
Other	1,086.48	.00	1,086.48	1,999.05	13,022.96
Totals	\$159,082.39	\$30,162.04	\$189,244.43	\$186,849.84	\$1,413,851.59

Why Free Will Baptist churches benefit when they use Free Will Baptist literature.

Do I Really Have a Choice?

By Alton Loveless



"Randall House Publications shall promote Christianity through evangelism, edification, and the development and distribution of Bible-based, quality, reasonably priced curriculum and products." This brief mission statement has guided me in my role at Randall House Publications.

When I became general director of the Sunday School and Church Training Department in January 1994, I outlined a vision that included the following: streamlining the organization, stabilizing our financial picture, updating our material, strengthening the biblical content of everything we publish, moving into the 21st century with technology, resources, methods, processes, selling a vision for the future, and helping Free Will Baptists move toward revival.

I am convinced that Christian education and Sunday School are vital parts of evangelism. Without effective teaching and training, new converts

will not grow in the Lord, established believers will stagnate, and our churches will disintegrate.

Christian education is not an option; it is an order. It is not a luxury, but a life. It is not something nice to have; it is something necessary to have. It is not a part of the work of the church; it is the work of the church.

We Have a Dream

I am concerned about what our people think about their publishing house. Therefore, I want to offer innovative ideas to make Randall House Publications as good as the competition. These innovations will affect not only content, which presents our biblical teaching and champions our doctrine, but graphics and teaching methods as well. We hope to live up to our mission statement while remaining consistent with a biblical Christian education philosophy.

I am happy to report that some of

these dreams are becoming realities. While we haven't reached the summit of the mountain, we are on the slope and climbing. Our challenge for the future is for Randall House to establish an ongoing pattern of efficient, effective operations while growing and improving our materials, services and ministries.

After some difficult times, it has been rewarding to celebrate progress and commit ourselves to continued efforts of service and ministry. I do not ever want to lose sight of the fact that the Free Will Baptist Sunday School Department is an incredible instrument God can use to help our churches and support ministries.

Today, we have the greatest opportunity ever to take the gospel to the ends of the earth. We must pass on to those who come behind us the tradition of reaching, teaching, discipling, ministering and service. I do not want to leave a legacy of failed opportunities.

We Have a Desire

To make Christ known while we equip others to become servant leaders and teachers—this is our pledge and desire. We make every effort to produce Sunday School curriculum that is life-related, innovative and fresh, yet Bible-based. We design our material to emphasize holy living, realizing each opportunity to encour-

age life-change and enhance spiritual living. Please pray for our editors and writers as we endeavor to fulfill this mission.

We Have a Doctrine

As more churches use our material, we are able to develop a better curriculum championing our doctrine. Some people do not realize that every Sunday School publisher has a theological agenda. Some publishers lean toward a charismatic view, while others promote unconditional eternal security. Many independent publishers use the International Lesson Series which is originated by and contributes to the National Council of Churches, an ecumenical and theologically liberal, quasi-political organization.

Churches who use Christian education materials produced by other groups may wake up some day and find that their people have been slowly converted to a doctrine contrary to Free Will Baptist beliefs.

Recently, a pastor told me he was leaving us for a curriculum in which he had greater confidence. When I told him the company he switched to believed and promoted at least three of the five points of Calvinism and also contradicted our beliefs on baptism, communion and feet washing, he said, "Well, I still had rather have them."

Another trend among independent publishers who attempt to sell curriculum to all denominations is watering down content to produce doctrinally generic products. This material has become all things to all men and is fluffy and weak in Bible teaching.

At Randall House, we intend to remain true to our beliefs and the Word of God. We are making every effort to excel in regard to scriptural accuracy and doctrinal correctness. It is our job as a Free Will Baptist publishing house to promote doctrinal integrity. I think our churches should use Free Will Baptist materials as much as possible.

Randall House cannot grow or create new material without your help. The earnings from the sale of our material keeps us solvent and allows us to require no financial support from the Together Way Plan. Because of this, the other denominational agencies can receive more support.

With proceeds from the sale of our

material, we are able to donate products to our missionaries and do printing for our denomination. The annual National Youth Conference and the year-round youth ministry program coordinated by the Randall House Youth Division is underwritten by the Sunday School and Church Training Department. This ministry involves, evangelizes and edifies literally thousands of our denomination's young people and those who work with them.

We want to expand our ministries, but this is only possible as more of our churches use the Sunday School and Christian education material produced by Free Will Baptists, for Free Will Baptists.

We Have a Vision and a Goal

Randall House recently affirmed a new Vision Statement that lists seven goals for our Free Will Baptist curriculum:

1. Maintain sound Bible content.
2. Recognize the potential for revival through a return to God's Word.
3. Remain true to Free Will Baptist distinctives.
4. Create economical materials that are a good investment.
5. Develop educationally appropriate teaching methods and student materials.
6. Design graphically appealing and visually exciting products.

7. Strive for flexibility, considering users from diverse backgrounds and church sizes.

My goal as general director is to provide our churches with Sunday School and Christian education materials that are empowered by God to change the lives and eternal destinies of a multitude of individuals. I want the literature we produce to be the vehicle for applying the Bible to life.

The Bible is a living book on life. Our Bible is not just the sacred literature of a broken and despised people; it is the living Word of God for every human being alive today. In it is the medicine for every sickness, the payment for every debt, the answer to every heart-searching query, and the way of life for every lost soul who is willing to follow its teaching to the foot of Calvary's cross. ■



ABOUT THE WRITER: Dr. Alton Loveless serves as general director of the Sunday School and Church Training Department.

Seven Reasons to Use Randall House Curriculum

1. We attempt to apply Bible truth to everyday life. Our curriculum is designed to meet student needs while helping teachers find different approaches to make lessons fresh for all age groups.
2. We are pledged to evangelism, making sure our lessons are based on the Word of God to help a person meet and accept Christ.
3. We have an age-appropriate scope and sequence with comprehensive Bible coverage in each age level.
4. We offer both value and quality. Our curriculum is less costly than most others in the marketplace, and we are adding teacher helps and supplemental material while keeping our products competitively priced.
5. No money spent on our material is given to any organization opposed to conservative biblical Christianity.
6. We use only dedicated Bible-believing writers and editors who are active in their churches and whose purpose is reaching mankind with the redemptive Word of God.
7. We continue to use the tested King James Version of the Bible coupled with solid biblical and academic research to provide our users with the best interpretation possible.

Is the Local Church Really Important?

By Dave Nobles

In his book *The Key To Your Child's Heart* (Word Publishing, Dallas, Texas), Gary Smalley states that there was a time in his life when the family was not totally involved in church. This was due to the fact that his ministry changed and he became a missionary to families. This involved a great deal of traveling. Previous to this, he had been an associate pastor and both he and his family were involved in all activities of the local church.

After the children were grown and began to express themselves, each said that the time when they were not totally involved and active in a local church was a hurt to them. They needed the discipline of the local church. This was a serious problem to them.

He goes on to make this evaluation: "In some ways I felt that our family life substituted for the church: We had quiet times and devotions and prayer together. But for all the good things that came out of those experiences, I now believe that every family needs a strong local church. Our kids say they really missed the local church experience."

As I read this, it really caught my attention. So many today are saying that family time is an equivalent to the involvement in the local church. The excuse is usually that families get so little time together in this rat-race of a world that two, three or more times a week at church is just too much to ask. We have raised a generation of "Sunday-morning" Christians who consider it an inconvenience to be in



the house of the Lord too often.

It's interesting that these same folks have plenty of time for sports, a cabin in the mountains or on the coast, overtime on the job, Little League ball or some other activities. They spend hours at the school in PTA or have their family join the local recreation club.

Those activities have their place. However, to let any of them be more important than public worship and learning about Him who saved us is an abomination. It not only is sin, but it teaches our children, the next generation, that God is not really all that important.

If this generation is a Sunday-

morning-only crowd, what will the next generation be? Is the answer that they will not place God in their lives at all? Will we teach by our example that making money and playing games is more important than God and His church?

Some may say that they have a Bible study on Sunday night with the family at home and that is "their time." I remind you of the statement by Gary Smalley. He had all those things and it was not enough.

Why would we be surprised? Is not this the message that the Lord tells us in His Word? Hebrews 10:22-26 makes it clear that assembling together is vitally important. We are commanded not

to forsake the assembling because it is in that very environment we both minister to others and are ourselves kept from going back into sin. Maybe church is important after all!

Someone may say, "But I have not forsaken. There is nowhere that it states three or even two times a week." I agree that it does not. Yet, the implication is that as often as we can, we should desire to be in the assembly so as to "draw near" to the Lord.

In fact, we are to do more of it as we see the day (day of the Lord) approaching. To forsake it is to say that it is not important enough; we have more important things to do.

Certainly, there are times of sickness and providential hindrance.

There are those who work second shift jobs or jobs that require 24-hour duty such as hospitals and others. That is not the issue here or our problem in the local church. It is the casual attitude concerning faithfulness that has become the normal, not the exception.

We consider everything or anybody more important than being in the Lord's house. We must get back to the attitude of the Psalmist: "I was glad when they said unto me, Let us go into the house of the Lord" (Psalm 122:1).

One will say, "But, Preacher, there are times I don't get much out of church." Let's ask ourselves the question: When did church become a what-I-can-get activity? We come to the house of the Lord not only to gain but to minister. Over and over in the scriptures, we are told that one gains by giving.

The "me-first" philosophy is destroying not only the outside world, but the church. All too often we are not willing to be involved if it requires that we give something to gain something in return. This is, however, what being a servant of Jesus Christ is all about. I give as He ministers through me and, in the process, I gain far more than I give. Maybe we get little out because we put little in.

Do not make the same mistake that Gary Smalley and his family made. It is true that they were sincere and had pure motives. It is true that God did not strike them dead and condemn them to hell. Yet, they were the losers. I do not want you and your family to be the losers!

I'll see you in church and Sunday School. ■



ABOUT THE WRITER: Reverend Dave Nobles pastors Bethel Free Will Baptist Church in Woodbridge, Virginia.

Reprinted from the October 1995 issue of *The Link*.



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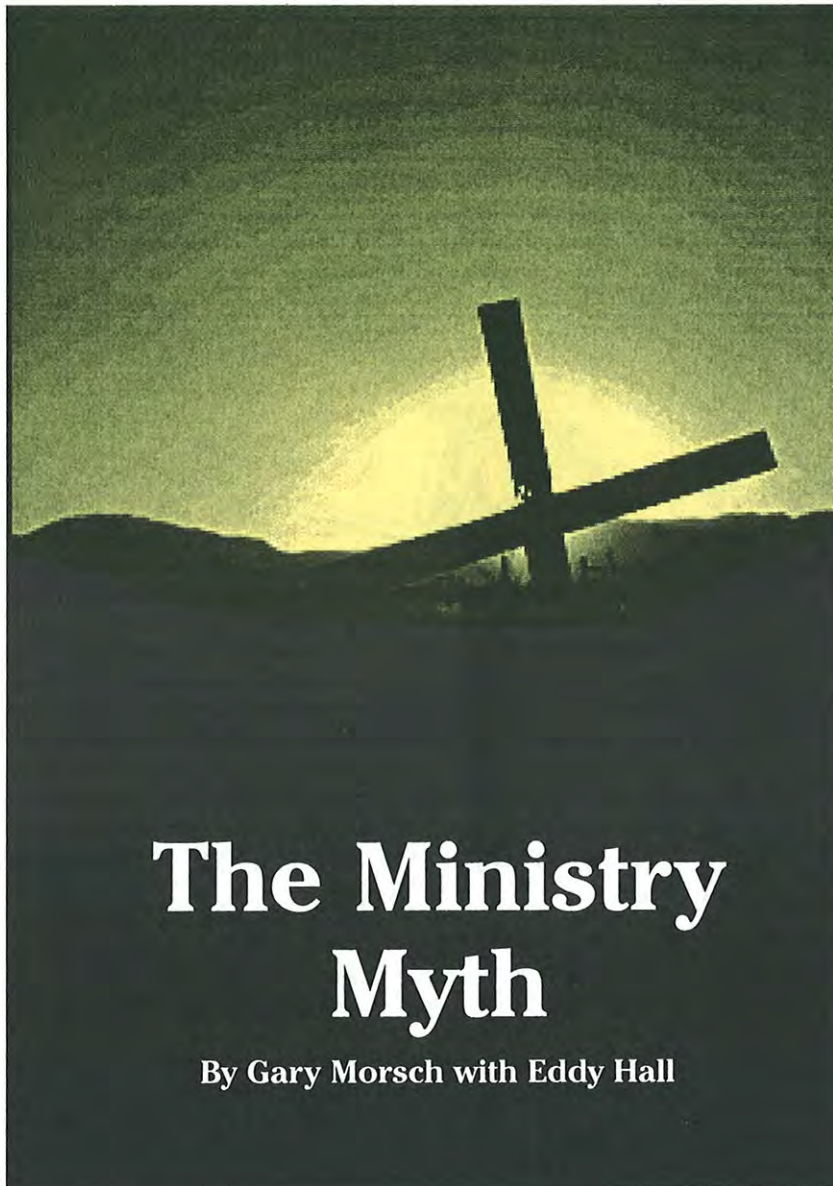
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**Most of
God's
"ministers"
are
laity.**



The Ministry Myth

By Gary Morsch with Eddy Hall

When I was 10 years old, this business of min-

istry all seemed so simple. Listening to a sermon about God's call to ministry, I believed God was calling me. That morning I knelt and dedicated my life to ministry, then stood and announced, "God has called me to be a minister!"

In the months that followed I often testified, "God has called me to be a minister." Supportive church members encouraged me: "You'll make a fine preacher just like your daddy."

Then several months later, I felt that God was calling me to work in the field of science. I was confused. Did God call people to be more than one thing?

I went to my dad. "Dad, can a person be a minister and a scientist at the same time?"

My dad thought for a while, then said, "Sure."

"What do they call someone who is both a minister and a scientist?"

"Well, let's see," my dad said. "I

guess you would say God has called you to be a research minister."

I had no clue what that was, but it sounded good to me, so for months I testified in church that God had called me to be a research minister. Eventually an older Christian advised me that there really was no such thing as a research minister and pointed out that God surely intended for me to go into "the ministry."

Searching For a Place

Never again did I stand in church and say that God had called me to be a minister. Though my call was as strong as ever, I had painfully learned that to mention my call publicly was to invite pressure to enter "the ministry"—to be a professional pastor, evangelist or missionary. I didn't believe God was calling me to be any of those things, but I couldn't explain how that could be true if God had called me to be a minister.

So, I just quit talking about my call.

I had long assumed that once I finished high school I would go

on to a Christian college. But when graduation time came, I found that I couldn't do it. How could I go to college when I was confused about what God wanted me to do? How would I know what to study?

My turmoil led me to do something untypical for a good Christian kid who was supposed to be enrolling in a Christian college. I joined the army.

It seemed an unlikely choice. It was 1969, the Vietnam War was going strong, thousands of soldiers were dying, and 17-year-olds had to have their parents' permission to go to war. But God used my time in the military to begin to clear up my confusion.

Wherever I was stationed, I got involved in a church, teaching Sunday School or working with the youth group. For a while I even served as a supply pastor. God was beginning to show me that being a layperson didn't keep me from being a minister. I came out of the army ready to

attend college and prepare for ministry—as a layperson.

I was beginning to understand that the confusion I had labored under for years was because I had believed what I now call the ministry myth: "Ministry is just for 'ministers.'" And "ministers," of course, meant only ministry professionals.

Once on campus, though, I found the ministry myth alive and well. I was often subtly reminded by well-meaning students and professors that a Christian serves God best as a ministry professional. Chapel speakers often challenged us to say yes to God's call to professional ministry. Rarely did any challenge us to say yes to God's call to minister as laypeople.

Then during my junior year, I sensed God leading me to change my major to premedicine. That surprised me. I had secretly longed to go into medicine, but had never seriously considered it because I didn't think that would be ministry. But God made clear to me that day that I was to minister through medicine.

My pastor confirmed this when he told me, "As a doctor you will have opportunities to minister to all kinds of people in the community that I will never be able to reach as a pastor." And so I spent the rest of my schooling preparing for ministry as a medical doctor.

High Cost of the Myth

My experience is not unique. The ministry myth has been so widely believed for so long that it has no doubt kept millions of Christians from seeing themselves as ministers and recognizing what God was calling them to do. And it has crippled the ministries of countless others by causing them to misinterpret God's call.

Although my friend Mark knew that laypeople could minister, he bought into the version of the ministry myth that says, "God can best use those who are in professional ministry." Wanting to serve God as effectively as possible, he quit his job, spent three years in seminary, then joined a church staff.

In his new position Mark was responsible to supervise the ministries of others. He quickly discovered, though, that administration was

not his gift. "I'm most effective in one-on-one ministry," he says. "And rather than coordinating existing ministries, I'd much rather be bringing new people in. I'd thought joining a church staff would give me more time to do that, but in reality it limited the time I could spend doing what I did best."

Mark resigned his church staff job and became an insurance agent. "Though I didn't realize it when I went into insurance," Mark says, "This is a perfect job for someone like me whose passion is to work with hurting people. Whenever an elderly client loses a spouse, I get a phone call.

"When any of my clients divorce, they have to come to me to change their insurance papers. And, of course, whenever one of them has a car accident, a fire or a serious illness covered by a policy I carry, the client comes to see me.

"I have lots of opportunities to talk with people in crisis. Most of them don't know Christ, and I can often share the source of my hope with them. Just a few weeks ago I told my wife, 'I've never before felt God using me in ministry like I have lately.'"

The ministry myth led Mark into a professional ministry position for which he was not gifted. It was only when he saw that God could use him more effectively as a layperson than as a ministry professional that God was able to put Mark's ministry gifts to fullest use.

An Unbiblical Division

For centuries much of the church has divided itself into two groups—the clergy, or "ministers," and the laity, the ones ministered to. Is this historic division rooted in scripture?

Not at all. The New Testament teaches that God has given every Christian one or more spiritual gifts for ministry. Paul wrote, "There are different kinds of gifts, but the same Spirit. . . . To each one the manifestation of the Spirit is given for the common good," (1 Cor. 12:4, 7, NIV).

Peter wrote, "Serve one another with whatever gift each of you has received," (1 Peter 4:10, NRSV). Though in the Old Testament only a select group of God's people served as priests, in the New Testament church all believers are priests (1 Peter 2:5, 9, NIV).

God does call certain people to lead in the church and their leadership is critical to the church's effectiveness. But scripture does not single them out as "the ministers."

Rather, it emphasizes the ministry of all believers: "The gifts he gave were that some would be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, some pastors and teachers, to equip the saints for the work of ministry," (Eph. 4:11-12, NRSV).

The call of these church leaders, then, is not to do the work of ministry so we don't have to, but to equip us to do ministry.

Gordon Cosby, pastor of the Church of the Saviour in Washington, D.C., puts it this way: "The primary task of the professional minister (is) training nonprofessional ministers for their ministry."

Christ's Hands in a Broken World

Only as we recognize that each of us is called to minister and as each of us says yes to that call can the church fulfill its mission to be the hands of Christ in a hurting world.

During World War II a statue of Christ that stood in the center of a French village was shattered in the fighting. Villagers carefully saved the pieces until the war was over, then rebuilt the statue. Once it had been reassembled, though, the people found that Christ's hands were missing. They weren't sure what to do. Should they leave the incomplete statue standing, or should they take it down?

Only after someone placed a small hand-painted sign at the statue's base were the villagers able to agree that the statue should remain standing. The sign read, "Christ has no hands but ours."

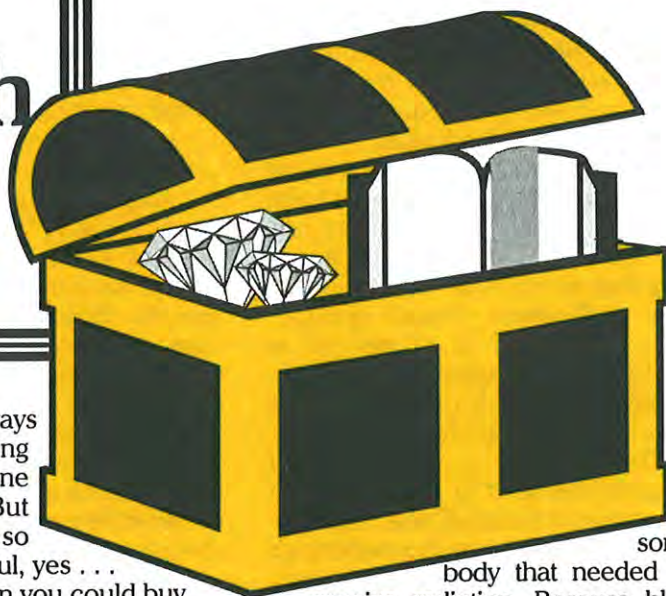
God has called you and me and every other believer to be His ministers. If we don't do it, no one will. Christ has no hands but ours. ■

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ABOUT THE WRITERS: Gary Morsch, M.D., a physician in Olathe, Kansas, is founder and director of the Center for Lay Ministry. Eddy Hall is a full-time freelance writer and editor from Goessel, Kansas. This article is adapted from their recently released book *The Lay Ministry Revolution: How You Can Join* (Baker 1996).

Useless Wealth

By Dennis E. Hensley



One of the greatest gem collections in the world is on display at the Smithsonian Institute in Washington, D.C. If you visit there, a guide will direct you to a special display which contains the Hope Diamond.

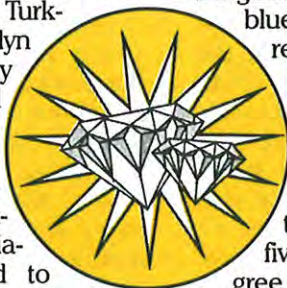
"What you see here," the guide will explain, "is the most famous gem in all of history. The Hope Diamond is the largest blue diamond ever discovered. It came from India, where it was rumored to have been the magic eye of the Hindu idol Rama Sita. When it was stolen, a curse was put on it."

The guide will pause to let this sink in, then continue. "After leaving India, the Hope Diamond became the property of Louis XVI of France and wife, Marie Antoinette, both of whom were beheaded.

"Subsequently, the diamond was owned by Simon Montherides, a wealthy Greek jeweler, then by Subaya, the sweetheart of a Turkish sultan, then by Evelyn Walsh McLean, a flashy socialite, all of whom had great tragedy come into their lives."

The guide then digresses a moment to explain how East Indian diamond merchants used to weigh a gem by balancing it against the tiny seeds of the carob tree; hence, the modern term "carat weight" came into the language.

"The Hope Diamond was donated to the Smithsonian in 1958 by Winston's Jewelers," says the guide. "It will always remain here, but if it were ever to be sold, the price would be \$200 million."



The crowd always gasps upon hearing this figure. Someone finally asks, "But why is it worth so much? It's beautiful, yes . . . but for \$200 million you could buy a warehouse of diamonds."

The guide is prepared for his question. "The Hope Diamond is valuable not only for its flawless beauty," he explains, "But also because it is a source of great power. A blue gem like this one can function as a semiconductor of electricity because it has what scientists call an 'atomic hole' in it. Thus, it can transmit messages to satellites, space ships or tracking stations hundreds of thousands of miles out in space. The blue diamonds are the only gems capable of this electrical transference."

The crowd nods in admiration, but the guide continues. "Furthermore, a blue diamond can identify and register alterations or changes in delicate electrical machines. For example, in calibrating medical instruments, the Hope Diamond could register difference in temperature as small as one five-hundredth (1/500) of a degree Celsius."

Murmurs can be heard throughout the crowd. The guide smiles as he sees he is succeeding in verifying the value of the diamond to everyone. But, he adds even more proof.

"The Hope Diamond is chemically inert," says the guide. "As such, if a person was suffering from cancer, blue diamonds such as this one could be set around that portion of the per-

son's body that needed to receive radiation. Because blue diamonds measure radiation as well as heat, the diamonds could designate to the therapist whether she was accurately sending the radiation to the cancer cells or inaccurately to the surrounding healthy cells."

"Amazing . . . Incredible!" the listeners say in genuine astonishment.

"Oh, yes," the guide agrees. "Truly, the Hope Diamond is a miracle gem. It can transmit signals thousands of miles, it can measure heat and radiation to hundredths of a fraction, it can help defeat cancer, and it can develop important industrial and medical instruments."

Everyone nods in agreement. But occasionally a discerning child will speak up.

"Something's bothering me," the child will say, scratching his head.

"Oh?" asks the guide. "And what's that?"

"Well," the little boy will begin, "you say this diamond is worth \$200 million because it can do so many miraculous things."

"Yes, yes . . . ?"

"But if it just stays here in the museum every day, underneath that heavy glass plate, all locked up and secured, and it never gets put to use . . . isn't it actually worthless?"

And, suddenly, both the crowd and the guide fall silent. The child, of course, is right.

Interestingly, a parallel to this mu-

seum scene is played out in homes each day. People who are in desperate situations of loneliness, fear, confusion, anxiety, stress, guilt or grief are pacing their floors until their carpets are threadbare. They are wringing their hands, biting their lips, pulling their hair and blotting their tears.

"Oh," they cry out, "if only there was some help for me."

And there, sitting upright on a bookshelf, right at eye level where they are pacing, is a beautiful, leather bound, never-opened Bible. It is a show item, part of the household library. After all, "Everyone owns a Bible."

Inside the Bible are comforting prayers, uplifting poems, inspiring stories of miracles, promises of God's love, lessons on life, hope for the future—absolutely priceless guides and insights for meeting all of life's crises.

And yet, sitting there on the shelf only to be looked at



from a distance and never to be pulled off its display and put into use, the Bible is as worthless as the Hope Diamond.

Fortunately, the Bible is not as inaccessible as the Hope Diamond. It doesn't cost \$200 million to obtain God's Word. It has been freely given.

Knowing this, maybe each of us needs to give thought to someone we know of who is suffering from life's setbacks. Couldn't we provide that person with a priceless treasure: a Bible.

After all . . . that's where the real "Hope" is. ■



ABOUT THE AUTHOR: Dr. Dennis E. Hensley is the author of 28 books, including *The Jesus Effect* (Pacific Press) and *Money Wise: Honoring God With Creative Money Management* (Harvest House).

OUR READERS COMMENT

Reader No Longer Interested

Please cancel my subscription to *Contact* magazine. I am no longer interested in the magazine.

If possible, could I get a refund on the issues I won't be receiving? If not, that's ok, but please cancel it as I just throw it in the trash.

Mrs. Susan Cope
Smithville, Tennessee

Others Feel Differently

Nobody enjoys *Contact* more than I do!

Tim Jordan
Ashford, Alabama

I enjoy *Contact* very much.

Violet Curtis
Ypsilanti, Michigan

Sure enjoy my magazine.

Hilma Marlin
Tupelo, Mississippi

Praises the August Issue

The August issue of *Contact* was one of the best. I enjoyed it very much. For the first time in 35 years I did not attend the convention, but I hear that it was a great one.

Reverend George C. Lee
Goldsboro, North Carolina

Better Each Month

Just a brief note today to tell you how very much I appreciate *Contact* magazine. It seems as though you all try to outdo yourselves monthly. Thank you for the excellent work you are doing for the Lord and the Free Will Baptist cause.

Reverend Damon C. Dodd
Colquitt, Georgia



**Tomorrow's leaders
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Escape from the Living Death

(Mark 1:40-42)

By Paul Harrison

Sometimes our problems are such that only God can solve them. The illness is incurable. The sin is unforgivable. The addiction is too strong. The pull of the flesh is overpowering. The habit, years in the making, is too deeply ingrained. The bitterness and hatred are too deep-seated. We are sick, we know, but we are also helpless before our illness.

That was the case with a Jewish man in the first-century days of Jesus. This unnamed man, mentioned in each of the first three Gospels, suffered from leprosy.

A Living Death

Leprosy, one of the oldest diseases known to man, was recognized by the Egyptians before 1500 BC. There are about 15 million lepers in the world, most in tropical Africa. In the early 1990s, however, there were 6,000 cases of leprosy in the U.S., with 300 new cases diagnosed yearly.

The disease appears in the form of nodules or swelling of the extremities, usually affecting the face, legs or feet first.

"The skin becomes furrowed; the ear lobes, lips and nose become thickened; the skin often becomes dry or scaly. . . . Ulcerations occur easily, and although they may heal, they often penetrate deeply and spread, causing appalling mutilation. Fingers and toes may drop off, and blindness may result" (Ryrie, *Miracles*, pp. 43-44).

We are not given details of how the disease affected the man in Mark, but Luke, the physician-historian, in a parallel account says that the man was "full of leprosy." I imagine him consumed with the disease, an older man on whom the gnawing death

had worked for years.

R. C. Trench, an English scholar of the last century, wrote: "Leprosy was nothing short of a living death . . . a poisoning of the very springs of life; a dissolution little by little of the whole body, so that one limb after another actually decayed and fell away" (*Miracles*, p. 134).

But while the physical aspects of leprosy were horrible for this man, the spiritual and psychological trauma that accompanied the disease was a nightmare. To the Jews, leprosy represented death and was therefore to be shunned.

Leviticus 13:45 instructed the Jewish community how to act toward the leper: "The person with such an infectious disease must wear torn clothes, let his hair be unkempt, cover the lower part of his face and cry out, 'Unclean! Unclean!' As long as he has the infection he remains unclean. He must live alone; he must live outside the camp." The idea was that no one was to touch a leper.

Alfred Edersheim, a Jew himself, described the stigma attached to the leper: "No one was even to salute (greet) him . . . If he even put his head into a place, it (the building) became unclean. No less a distance than four cubits (six feet) must be kept from a leper; or, if the wind came from that direction, a hundred were scarcely sufficient."

Edersheim referred to a Rabbi Meir who would not so much as eat an egg purchased in a street where there was a leper. Another Rabbi boasted that he always threw stones at lepers to keep them far off. Others hid themselves or ran away.

Over the years the Jewish Rabbis compiled lists of advice about reme-

dies for various illnesses, but in none of the lists is there mention of any remedy for leprosy. It was on the dreaded list of incurables. We might think of leprosy as the AIDS of the ancient Jewish world.

The Jesus Encounter

We are not told, but I wonder if this man had a wife and perhaps children. If so, the disease had separated the family. I wonder how many nights he cried himself to sleep, helpless and hopeless before his illness. I wonder if he ever wished to die.

I imagine him sitting off alone on a hillside, downwind from the group Jesus was teaching. The Lord's voice would carry, and I see the leper leaning forward from his seat, straining to hear the words of the greatest teacher



and preacher ever to grace the earth.

I can imagine the chill bumps running up his spine as he heard and understood the Master's words, as he dreamed of reunions with family, of meals with friends, of simple employment.

I'm sure the leper seized on those words of Jesus and rolled them over in his heart: "Blessed are those who mourn, for they will be comforted." And "Do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry about itself." And "Ask and it will be given to you; seek and you will find; knock and the door will be opened to you."

I can also imagine, however, the awful realization when one of his running sores began to itch, that what he was hearing was just talk, inspiring talk, but just talk. I can see tears brim in his eyes. He knew that for all the inspiration this eloquent teacher gave, he himself would always suffer as a leper, alone or perhaps with the company of other lepers.

But then I imagine something happened that totally shocked the leper. He watched a lady bring her blind son to Jesus and the Great Teacher showed himself also to be a Great Healer. Jesus touched the lad's eyes, and the young boy could suddenly see and began hugging Jesus and jumping up and down and shouting praises.

I imagine the leper watching as two men brought a lame friend to Jesus. When Jesus touched the man's legs, the lame man sprang to his feet in amazement.

I can imagine that leper on the hillside when he saw those scenes. Maybe he thought of the old Jewish story of God healing the leper Naaman through the prophet Elisha. I'm sure he pondered the miraculous healings he had just witnessed. And there in that stillness, hope was born in the heart of a previously hopeless leper.

I can hear him talking to himself: "Oh," he said, "He need not touch me for I know that I'm unclean; Elisha didn't touch Naaman; but oh, if only He were willing, this man could cure me. What no one else could do, this man can! If only He will."

I see him start down the hill. His heart must have been pounding when he approached the group. The Bible says in Mark that he bowed down on his knees before Jesus. Luke

adds that he fell on his face. I'm sure he was careful not to touch the Lord. Here he is, prostrate before the One in whom he had placed all his hopes. Slowly he looks up and speaks: "If you are willing, you can make me clean."

What would the Savior do? He had healed the blind. He had healed the lame. But how would Jesus respond to a ghastly, stinking leper? I love the way Mark puts it in his Gospel: "Filled with compassion, Jesus reached out his hand and touched the man."

Perhaps we would have been repulsed by the man, but Jesus cared for him, He hurt for him. This was characteristic of how Jesus reacted to hurting people. On one occasion He saw a group of distressed and suffering people, and the Bible records that "he had compassion on them" (Matt. 9:36).

Another time a crowd of people with many sick among them came to Jesus, and Matthew records that "he had compassion on them and healed their sick" (14:14). At the city of Jericho, Jesus was approached by two blind men and the scripture states that He "had compassion on them."

And in my favorite such account, Jesus came upon a young boy's funeral procession, led by the lad's sobbing mother. Luke writes of that occasion: "When the Lord saw her, he had compassion on her." It is, therefore, not surprising that, when Jesus saw this quivering leper, He had compassion on him.

And He did not just care privately and leave it at that; He touched the man. This touch revealed His caring heart. I wonder how Jesus touched him. Did He wipe a tear from his cheek? Did He take his hand? Did He put His arm around the man? I wonder how long it had been since anyone had touched this man.

If we had been there and had felt compassion for the man, we could have done nothing to help him. But that was not the case with Jesus. The Bible says that after Jesus had touched the man, He said: "I am willing. Be clean!"

Edersheim wrote: "It was, so to speak, an inward necessity that the God-Man, when brought into contact with disease and misery... should remove it by His Presence, by His touch, by His Word" (*Life and Times* 1:488).

Jesus touched the man, and then

the Bible states that "Immediately the leprosy left him and he was cured." The ancient church father Chrysostom said: "... nature herself gave way at His command."

Can't you just see the reaction of the crowd as they watched the cracked, gnarled, scarred and bleeding skin transform itself into smooth, healthy, baby-white flesh? Can't you just see the reaction of the man as he realized that he was cured?

What It Means Today

Sometimes our problems are such that only God can solve them. The illness is incurable. The sin is unforgivable. The addiction is too strong. The pull of the flesh is overpowering. The habit, years in the making, is too deeply ingrained. The bitterness and hatred are too deep-seated. We are sick, we know, but we are also helpless before our illness.

We may be helpless, but Jesus Christ isn't. He who created the universe, He who designed our intricate bodies, He who gave sight to the blind, He who healed the lame, He who cleansed the leper, He who forgave the prostitute, He who saved the thief, He is able to help you and me. He is able to forgive us and cleanse us. We are sick, He knows, but He is not helpless before our illness.

And just as Jesus had compassion on the leper, so He has compassion on us. He died on the cross for our sins. "By his stripes we are healed." He is willing to help. He is willing and able. If you pray and ask Him, He will help you. Just pray to God and say: "If you are willing, you can make me clean." ■



ABOUT THE WRITER: Dr. Paul Harrison pastors Cross Timbers Free Will Baptist Church in Nashville, Tennessee.

What Love Can Do

From My Heart

By Charles Thigpen

Many times I have thanked God for the sweet spirit of harmony, fellowship and love that we have in Tennessee—both among the preachers and among our lay people. Our people truly love each other. It can be seen in the many deeds of generosity and kindness shown. It can also be felt when Tennessee Free Will Baptists meet together, whether in small or large groups. My prayer is that we will never lose this heartfelt love and appreciation for each other.

As I travel over our beloved denomination, I am troubled at the lack of love that many of our people and our preachers have for one another. This is a serious matter. It should concern all of us. We should pray that this lack of love toward each other will speedily be confessed and forsaken.

The basic way to show that Christ is our Savior is to love one another. Whatever happened to the love, admiration and respect that preachers, and all other Christians, used to have for one another?

There was a time in Free Will Baptist circles that when God's men met together, one could sense the deep abiding love they had for one another. That has been replaced by a coolness—sometimes even a coldness—toward each other. We want to know, "Which side of the denominational fence is he on? Is he on 'my' side, or is he on the 'other' side?"

This is nothing short of a strategy of the devil to divide and destroy. He is the one who plants doubts in people's minds about others. He is the one who "sows discord among the brethren." When pride and suspicion come in—love goes out.

Jesus said, "By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another," (John 13:35).

In the first four of the five chapters of I Peter, the Apostle Peter speaks about loving one another. He says in chapter 1, "... see that ye love one another, with a pure heart fervently," (1:22). This is to be love shown toward all believers. It is to be manifest from a "pure" heart, clean, undefiled and not hypocritical. And it is to be shown to "one another"—in a warm, glowing and intense manner.

This love for other believers should be the most natural thing in all the world. Our Heavenly Father is the same; the joy of having our sins forgiven and our names written in Heaven is the same. The spirit of sonship should produce a spirit of brotherhood, trust and love.

Peter further states in 2:17, "Love the brotherhood." While all men should be treated kindly and with respect, believers should possess a deep affection and high regard for all who are one with us in Christ. He reinforces this truth by saying in 3:8, "love as brethren, be pitiful, be courteous."

These last two phrases could be translated, "tenderhearted, humble-minded." Some among Peter's readers had already suffered for Christ—for others, suffering was imminent. The best way to face any kind of adversity is to love God supremely and sincerely love others.

Perhaps the crowning verse that Peter writes about love is, "And above all things have fervent love among yourselves; for love shall cover the multitude of sins," (4:8).

Here again, Peter uses the term, "fervent," to describe the quality and

intensity of our love for each other. This love is generous and forgiving, even to the point of covering "the multitude of sins." This means to overlook the wrongs, imperfections, even sins of others.

If among Free Will Baptist ministers there could be a genuine revival of love toward each other, God would once again work in us and through us as we reach a sin-sick world. Our outreach will be weak and ineffective until we sincerely reach out to all our fellow ministers and to all believers with "fervent" love.

This is the way Paul described proper Christian charity, or love: "Love suffereth long, and is kind; love envieth not; love vaunteth not itself, is not puffed up. Doth not behave itself unseemly, seeketh not her own, is not easily provoked, thinketh no evil; Rejoiceth not in iniquity, but rejoiceth in the truth; Beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things. Love never faileth. . ." (I Corinthians 13:4-8a). ■



ABOUT THE WRITER: Dr. Charles Thigpen serves as promotional director for the Tennessee State Association of Free Will Baptists.

Reprinted by permission from the July-September 1996 issue of *The Echo*.

FREE WILL BAPTIST NEWSFRONT

Arkansas Adopts \$1.3 Million Budget

CONWAY, AR—Delegates to the 99th annual Arkansas State Association adopted a \$1.3 million budget during their August 6-7 session at Camp Beaverfork near Conway. The budget included the Christian Supply Store (\$625,000), Cooperative Plan (\$350,000), Mission Board (\$215,000), Youth Board (\$184,000) and the Christian Education Board (\$17,800).

Nearly 400 people registered for the gathering, according to state statistician Bob Isbell. Ninety-seven ministers, 73 lay delegates and 22 deacons were among the registrants.

Moderator James Forlines, elected to his fourth term, led business sessions. He appointed two committees which will report to the 1997 session—A five-man committee to study the feasibility of expanding or relocating the state bookstore and headquarters; a three-man committee to study the question of pooled health care for church employees in the state.

Delegates passed a resolution opposing legalized gambling in Arkansas. They also passed a resolution urging greater support for Free Will Baptist colleges, aimed primarily at increasing giving and number of students at FWBBC and Hillsdale.

Delegates confirmed the Executive Board's recommendation that Kevin Trimble be named to a three-year term on the Board of Trustees at Free Will Baptist Family Ministries in Tennessee.

Three ministers preached sermons on the association theme, "Attempt Great Things for God; Expect Great Things from God." Union Grove pastor David Bishop preached Tuesday evening. Sutton pastor Kerry Gandy preached Wednesday at noon, while Foreign Missions staffer Fred Warner preached the final sermon Wednesday evening.

Dr. Richard Cordell, Alabama executive secretary, preached twice to attendees at the Tuesday Bible Conference which met

at First FWB Church in Conway.

State Youth Director Bob Thompson reported 1,093 participants in the camping program with 111 conversions. The C. E. Board gave a plaque to Randell Williams for his years of faithful service on the board.

Retired pastor Ben Scott addressed attendees at the 22nd annual Master's Men Banquet on Wednesday.

Women Active for Christ president Mary Kelton reported 177 registrants for the 42nd annual session on Tuesday. Patsy Vanhook, missionary to France, addressed the WAC banquet.

Promotional Director David Joslin told delegates, "There are other geographical areas in America where Free Will Baptists are older, but the Arkansas State Association is the first to celebrate its centennial." The state will observe its 100th anniversary in 1998.

The 1997 state association will meet either August 6-7 or August 5-6 at Camp Beaverfork.

Canada Elects New Moderator

HARTLAND, NEW BRUNSWICK—The Reverend Dwayne Broad, pastor of Holmesville FWB Church in New Brunswick, was elected moderator at Atlantic Canada's 118th annual district association. He succeeds Reverend Oral McAfee who served four years as moderator.

The new moderator was elect-

ed as Canada's promotional director a year ago. He will continue to hold both positions and serve as Canada's General Board member to the National Association.

The June 29 session met at Saint John Valley Bible Camp, with 29 people attending, including nine ministers and 17 lay delegates. A \$7,300 budget won del-

egate approval.

The annual Bible Conference met preceding the district gathering. Large crowds came to hear a series of messages by Reverend Fred Hanson, pastor of Plaster Rock FWB Church.

The 1997 district meeting will convene June 28 at Saint John Valley Bible Camp.

Mexican National Association Meets in Reynosa

REYNOSA, MX—Three hundred Free Will Baptists from across Mexico met August 1-4 for the 36th annual National Association. The location of the meeting was changed to the Iglesia Bautista Libre Agua Viva in Reynosa, Tamaulipas, two weeks before the scheduled meeting because of the severe water shortage caused by drought conditions in Monterrey at the camp property. In spite of late changes, nearly 100 percent of the Mexican pastors attended with their church delegates.

The business session was conducted on Thursday with the General Board meeting led by president Lazaro de la Rosa. Delegates voted to dig a new, deeper well at the camp property. Estimated cost will be \$3,000. Distribution of the coop funds was changed to 30% for the national office, 30% for the district offices and 40% to the Seminary of the Cross.

Missionary coordinator James Munsey reported on his activities and the construction on the Seminary of the Cross. New national officers were nominated and elected. Javier Gallegos will serve as president, Jesus de la Rosa as vice president and Marco Antonio Mendoza as clerk.

Special visitors for the meeting included Home Missions director Trymon Messer and board members Earl Hendrix, Don Guthrie, Lynn Wood and Wendell Walley. During the meeting, they inspected the construction on the seminary and made plans for the new school year. Other visitors included executive secretary Melvin Worthington and his wife Anne, Home Missions Mexico representative Howard Munsey, Master's Men Texas senator A.V. Jennische and Jo Anne Wood.

The highlight of the meeting was preaching by Earl Hendrix,

Trymon Messer, Wendell Walley, Felix Zuniga and Howard Munsey. One man was saved and several people made commitments to God. One young lady confirmed her decision to attend the seminary.

Local ladies from Reynosa prepared and served meals at the seminary property. Many out-of-town delegates stayed there.

The 1997 convention will meet in Monterrey July 31 - August 3.

The convention was followed by national youth camp led by youth president Felix Zuniga and assisted by Jesus de la Rosa. The location of the camp also had to be changed to Reynosa to the seminary property.

Fifty campers attended. Special camp evangelist was Daniel Chang-Chi from Mexico City. He used biblical characters to teach young people salvation, commitment, growth and evangelism.

Scudder Retires from Publishing Ministry



WALNUT RIDGE, AR—The Reverend J. Leroy Scudder, a Free Will Baptist minister and Arkansas native, retired this summer after a 25-year ministry to Christian bookstores and churches with Scripture Press/Victor Books. He entered the publishing ministry in

1971 from First FWB Church in Savannah, Georgia.

During Rev. Scudder's years with Scripture Press/Victor Books, he serviced bookstores and churches with Sunday School curriculum, Christian books, Vacation Bible School materials, seminars and Sunday School conventions.

His most recent work was with Chariot products as well as Victor Books.

Scudder said, "While I look forward to a change in lifestyle and a change in direction of ministry, I will greatly miss ministering to Christian bookstores."

After taking an eight-week accrued vacation, Scudder marked September 30 as his official retirement day. He now resides in Walnut Ridge.

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See page 13 for
details.

Free Will Baptist Bible College Adds New Faculty

NASHVILLE, TN—Five new faculty members were added at Free Will Baptist Bible College this fall, according to Robert Picirilli, academic dean. The five men will teach in the areas of science, business, missions, youth ministry and psychology.

—Dr. James Davis, Science

Dr. Davis, a 1952 FWBBC alumnus, has pastored Free Will Baptist churches in Tennessee and Missouri. He has taught and preached in churches for 45 years. His Ph.D. is in biochemistry. He is retiring from Vanderbilt University where he has taught and done research for 17 years.



—Brad Sneed, Youth Ministry

Brad attended FWBBC in 1985-86 and earned his Master's at Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary. He did his undergraduate work at Hillsdale FWB College and worked in the college's Office of Development after graduation. He has served as minister of youth and children at Centerpoint FWB Church, Vilonia, Arkansas, and is leaving the staff of Second Baptist Church, Conway, Arkansas, to join the FWBBC faculty.



—Dr. Alan Matthews, Business

Dr. Matthews is taking a leave of absence from Trevecca Nazarene University to join the FWBBC faculty this year. In addition to an M.B.A. and Ph.D., he brings more than 20 years of practical experience to the classroom to help his students master computer technology in the business world.



—Dr. Bradley Thomas, Psychology

Dr. Thomas earned his M.Div. and Ph.D. at New Orleans Theological Seminary. He has taught pastoral training courses at the seminary and worked with its students as director of clinical pastoral training at Southeast Louisiana Hospital in Mandeville. He recently directed individual, group, and family therapy at Hope Haven Center in Marrero, Louisiana.



—Tom McCullough, Missions

Tom, another FWBBC alumnus, answered God's call to the mission field while he was a student. He returned to the U.S. in 1995 after 15 years of missionary service in France. He recently served as associate pastor of Central FWB Church, Royal Oak, Michigan.



Coming Next Month . . .

- ◆ **Work-Place Evangelism**
- ◆ **Mission Field: America**
- ◆ **The Lonely Church Planter**
- ◆ **... and More ...**

Ohio Steering Committee Meets

CINCINNATI, OH—The Ohio Steering Committee met Friday, September 6, for a day-long orientation session at the Cincinnati Convention Center to expedite plans to host the 61st annual national convention July 20-24, 1997. Plenary sessions of the National Association will convene in downtown Cincinnati at the Cincinnati Convention Center.

Executive Secretary Melvin Worthington said he blocked more than 1,200 rooms in three major hotels to house delegates. The convention housing form will be printed in the April 1997 issue of *Contact*, and in Free Will Baptist state papers as space is available.

The Ohio contingency includes the Steering Committee, state

moderator, state Auxiliary president and the NYC advisor.

Chairman:	Edwin Hayes
Registration Committee:	William Hayes
Hospitality Committee:	Billy Sharpston
Prayer Committee:	Mike Mounts
Ushering Committee:	Roger Childers
State Moderator:	Robert Prichard
Auxiliary President:	Sandy Mounts
NYC Advisor:	Manuel Lopes

The Steering Committee met 8:30 a.m. - 2:30 p.m. gathering information, reviewing committee assignments and discussing convention facilities. Committee members will meet twice in 1997 (January and May) to assess convention plans.

Ohio Focuses on Prayer

COLUMBUS, OH—The 58th annual Ohio State Association presented the 300 people who registered with a mandate for prayer, according to clerk Mike Stokes. The association theme, "Prayer: Our Greatest Need," received thorough treatment from three speakers.

Westside FWB Church pastor Freddy Dutton preached on the passion of prayer. Foreign Missions Department staffer Fred Warner preached on the practice of prayer. Home Missions Department staffer David Crowe preached on the power of prayer.

The June 21-22 session met at Heritage Temple FWB Church in Columbus. Moderator Robert Prichard was elected to his third term. Seventy-five ministers attended.

Three churches were recognized for their support of missions: Westerville FWB Church, Dailyville FWB Church and Gahanna FWB Church.

The Ambassador Bookstore announced a \$75,000 remodeling project to begin January 1997. The renovation will include new fixtures, carpet, signage and paint. The bookstore sponsored an open house for attendees.

The 1997 state association will meet June 20-21 at Heritage Temple FWB Church in Columbus.



Members of New Hope FWB Church in Chillicothe, Ohio, raised over \$4,000 for their building program.

FREE WILL BAPTIST Leadership Conference

December 2-3, 1996
Regal Maxwell House Hotel
NASHVILLE, TENNESSEE

Several **Tennessee** churches have pooled resources to provide between \$1,500 and \$1,700 per month to help cover medical expenses for missionary representatives **Don and Billie Sexton**. Don has Parkinson's disease. Ten years ago the Sextons began a walk-a-thon for foreign missionaries in Tennessee that has raised more than \$1 million. The Tennessee State Association named the annual event "The Don and Billie Sexton Walk-a-Thon for Foreign Missions."

Two churches united this summer. The **Randall Memorial FWB Church** in **Memphis, TN**, united with **Cross Creek FWB Church** in **Olive Branch, MS**. The Randall Memorial Church conducted its final services on May 26. The two churches met as one effective June 2. Cross Creek pastor **J. L. Gore** became senior pastor and Randall Memorial pastor **Greg Hollifield** became associate pastor.

Home missionary **Russell Wright** reports 51 conversions, 47 charter members and Sunday morning average attendance of 74 at **Heritage FWB Church** in **Kearneysville, WV**. The group had to wait two years for building permits after paying \$50,000 for property on which to build.

Pastor **Michael Sanstra** baptized six converts and received eight new members at **Faith FWB Church** in **Oak Grove, MO**.

Pastor **Ronnie Blanks** celebrated 10 years at **First FWB Church** in **West Plains, MO**, this August. He baptized five converts and received six new members. The church completed an addition to their building and conducted dedication services on May 26.

There's a new church in **Missouri**. Forty-six people logged on as charter members of **Lebanon FWB Church**. **Gary Sheets** pastors the new congregation.

Members of **Fulton FWB Church** in **Fulton, MS**, celebrated 50 years of service on July 14. **Robert Picirilli**, academic dean at FWBBC, preached the 50-year sermon. Four deacons recounted

the church's history—**Wendell Brown, Wayne Wood, Terry Harrell** and **Bob Hargett**. Pastor **Bill Van Winkle** said that a photographer captured it all on film.

The congregation at **Bethany FWB Church** in **Hazlehurst, GA**, completed \$25,000 worth of renovations. Then they called in Executive Secretary **Herbert Waid** and rededicated everything from the sanctuary to the heating system. **Roy Woods** pastors.

The centennial homecoming (that's 100 years) at **Thompson FWB Church** in **Colquitt, GA**, happened on July 14, according to Pastor **Walter Daniels**. Georgia pastor **Larry Powell**, who grew up in the church, preached the centennial message.

New Home FWB Church in **Colquitt, GA**, honored member **H. A. Harbin** on May 5 for his many years of faithful service and his musical talents. Mr. Harbin has about 250 songs in print. Several musical groups sang Harbin's music in an evening of tribute, according to Pastor **James Ursrey**.

Pastor **Leon Gibson** is talking about the spirit of revival at **Spring Grove FWB Church** in **Jesup, GA**. Twelve people have been saved recently.

Burglars ransacked the parsonage at **Pine Level FWB Church** outside **Chester, GA**. Pastor **Dilmos Johnston** was away on vacation at the time. The thieves hauled off small appliances, pictures from the walls, a computer, television and more.

Volunteer labor allowed members of **First FWB Church** in **Tecumseh, OK**, to remodel the north wing of the educational department without borrowing money. Pastor **Roger Ballard** is smiling big about the project because his office was included in the effort. He also told an interesting story about paying \$69 each for \$99 chairs for the conference room. Better ask him about it.

Some 500 people from 18 states attended the June 17-19 **Preaching Conference** at **Pigeon Forge, TN**, according to spokesman **David McGowan**. This included 122 pastors. A second

"Help Build the Fire" conference is set for June 16-18, 1997, at Pigeon Forge.

First FWB Church in **Pensacola, FL**, celebrated their 50th anniversary in June. Reverend **L. V. Pinson**, who has been part of the church for 40 years, was called on to share in the celebration. **Chuck Walker** pastors.

A new building program has begun at **Beulah FWB Church** in **Pensacola, FL**, according to Pastor **Len Scott**. Seven adults recently united with the church.

Members at **Exeter FWB Church** in **Exeter, CA**, broke a 20-year attendance record this spring when 151 people came to church. The previous record was 114. **Jason Hensley** pastors.

Pastor **Claudie Hames** reports 18 baptisms at **First FWB Church** in **Bakersfield, CA**. The church also purchased adjoining property for future expansion to be used for parking and a gymnasium for **Bethel Christian School**.

Seventy high school students attended Hospitality Days at **California Christian College** in **Fresno**. The school remodeled the college library this summer and refurbished the chapel. **James McAllister** serves as president.

Home missionary **Carlie Lloyd** reports five adult conversions in **Madison, WI**. The five opened their homes to Bible studies and follow-up lessons.

Home missionary **Jim Mertz** reports seven conversions and seven baptisms in **Wentzville, MO**.

South Conway FWB Church in **Conway, SC**, organized this spring with 42 charter members, according to Pastor **Ray Cribb**. The group began in August 1993, purchased five acres in 1994, and paid it off in six months and began a building program in March 1995. Thirty-six people have been saved since completing the building program.

Pastor **David Malone** reports two conversions, four baptisms, 16 new members and attendance at 133. That's at **Peace FWB Church** in **Granite City, IL**. By the way, the city donated a 4,400-square-foot apartment building to the church! ■

BOARD OF RETIREMENT

How Long Will Your Retirement Money Last?

David L. Brown

Recent surveys of Americans approaching retirement reveal one of their biggest fears is that they will outlive their money. How much is enough? How can I be sure that I have saved enough to last through my retirement years?

To answer these questions, first establish what you can expect from Social Security. Social Security benefits vary according to your income during your working years. For instance Bob, who has averaged \$15,000 a year, will receive a benefit from Social Security that is approximately 52% of his salary or \$7,800 a year. However, Joe, who has averaged a salary of \$45,000, will receive a benefit that is equal to only 34% of his salary or \$15,300.

Financial planners generally suggest that you should replace at least 70% of your income to retire comfortably. Using this minimum assumption, Bob needs to accumulate enough retirement savings to make up 18% ($70-52=18$) of his pre-retirement income while Joe needs to make up 36% ($70-34=36$) of his income.

The average person can expect a retirement benefit of about 40% from Social Security. Therefore, the first step in our retirement planning is to make sure we have saved enough retirement funds to produce a benefit equal to 30% of our salary.

How much do you need to save to reach this goal? The answer varies. The variable is not how much you make but how long do you have before you retire. The following calculations assumed an 8% return and 4% inflation.

Consider George, Sam and Ed, all earning \$24,000 a year. George is 25 years old, Sam is 35 and Ed is 45. Each start their retirement account today and set their goal to provide 30% of their present salary adjusted for inflation.

George needs to save only 4% of his income to reach this goal. Sam must save 6.8% of his income but Ed will need to save 14.2% of his income to reach this goal. Starting early greatly reduces the portion of your income you need to save for retirement.

Ed and others in a similar situation have some options. Social Security benefits increase each month retirement is delayed after age 65, up to a maximum of 36 months. Ed may need to continue working. He can cut the required savings rate to 7.3% by delaying his retirement

to age 68. This is the result of the Social Security benefit increase plus the three years of added deposits and growth of his personal retirement savings.

We now have some idea of how much we need, but how can we make sure that we do not run out of money in retirement? The Social Security portion of our benefits are guaranteed by the government, therefore, your concern is with the benefit provided by your retirement savings.

The Board of Retirement offers annuity plans guaranteed to pay lifetime benefits for one or two lives. Only through a guaranteed annuity plan can you be assured that you will have adequate benefits throughout your retirement.

Remember if Social Security provides 40% of your benefit, your retirement account goal should be to purchase an annuity contract that will make up the other 30%. The calculations used in this article assume that you convert your retirement account to a joint life annuity.

While you have other options in settling your retirement account, only the annuity settlements will give you the peace of mind that comes from knowing your benefits are guaranteed. Other options carry the risk that if you make poor choices you may in fact run out of money in retirement.

The Board of Retirement is here to help you plan for a comfortable retirement. You may contact our office to ask for a customized plan based on your specific age and income level. It is our desire to help you reach your retirement goals. ■



FOREIGN MISSIONS

Just Peanuts

by Carol Pinkerton

Madame Jerome used to dig in the diamond mines in Togo, West Africa. That was before she and her husband brought the family to Tanda, Côte d'Ivoire. Her husband is a small appliance repairman. Both of them work hard yet never seem to have quite enough to feed and clothe their family. Despite their difficult financial situation, their lives and faces are characterized by smiles.

Once, a visitor came to stay with them. The visit became quite lengthy, but at last the guest announced he would be leaving. As he departed, he placed 100 cfa (about twenty-five cents) in Madame Jerome's hand to help pay for his expenses. The couple had spent much more than that feeding him those many days! But instead of dwelling on the negative side, she chose to ask God to help her use that money to make more. She wanted to help her husband provide for the family needs.

Prayer With Legs

Madame Jerome prayed, then went to the local market to observe what people were selling and buying. At first she didn't see anything, so she returned home and prayed more. The next day, Madame returned to the market. This time she saw peanuts. "Why, I can buy 100 cfa's worth of peanuts, grill them, place them in plastic bags and sell them to people who pass by our house!" she thought to herself. "Thank you, Lord for helping me," she said. And she started the process.

Many students walk past Madame Jerome's house every day on the way to and from school. With that in mind, she got a small table, set it beside the road and placed her grilled peanuts in the small plastic bags where all could see them. Then she sat down and waited to see what God was going to do. She'd already committed all of this "business" to HIM.

What joy filled her heart as every bag of peanuts sold the first morning at less than five cents each. So, she returned to town and bought more peanuts. Her sales contin-

ued on a daily basis. God was good. Madame Jerome was helping her husband. She even calculated her profits and tithed her peanut money!

Competition

Then, when all was going so well, another lady came walking down the street with a small table on her head. She stopped beside Madame Jerome, placed her table next to hers and began selling her . . . peanuts!

Two days later, a third lady came down the street with a small table on her head. She placed it next to the table of lady number two and began to sell her peanuts! Three ladies selling the same item with their tables joining made profits small.

It didn't take many hours for lady number two to complain to Madame Jerome. She said, "Madame you need to do something about lady number three. Since she has come neither one of us makes very much profit. Tell her to leave. We were here first!" Secretly, those were the exact thoughts Madame Jerome had been having about both of these ladies. But to avoid an argument, she just picked up her table, placed it and the remaining peanuts on her head, and walked home.

God's Answer

A crowd gathered in the street as the voices got louder and louder. Two angry women were fighting . . . but Madame Jerome stayed in her house, praying to her God. When she came out much later, she found all had gone. She placed her table beside the road and once again began selling peanuts. She continues to this day. And she still tithes on her peanuts!■

*Madame Jerome*

Carol Pinkerton is a veteran missionary serving in Bondoukou, Côte d'Ivoire, West Africa.



WOMEN NATIONALLY ACTIVE FOR CHRIST

Woman's Window on the World

By Mary R. Wisehart

From My Window

"Do you have your lantern?" Robert Louis Stevenson remembered that question from a tradition he and his friends practiced in their summer vacations.

Just before the time at the seashore ended, the boys bought tin bull's eye lanterns. On a certain night, they fastened the lanterns to their belts, closed their coats over them and walked to an empty shack. Once there, they opened their coats and revealed their lights.

What Stevenson remembered most was how he and the others walked through the dark without a glimmer of light showing, thrilled and exulting because they knew they had a light within.

"The Lantern Bearers," Stevenson called his essay. How much more the world should know Christians as lantern bearers.

Like Stevenson and his friends, we can rejoice because we have a light within. The prophet Ezekiel told of a time when the light would be placed in us individually. "I will put my spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes, and ye shall keep my judgments, and do them," (Ezekiel 36:27).

God has given us a teacher, a counselor, a guide in the person of the Holy Spirit in us. In a world of darkness, that light guides us. "Unto the upright there ariseth light in the darkness," (Psalm 112:4). Never mind the dark world around us. We have the light.

Unlike the boys' lanterns, our lights should be evident. God has set us to "shine as lights in the world: Holding forth the word of life," (Philippians 2:15). We must not hide our light under wraps, but let it glow for all around us to see.

Amy Carmichael wrote, "Love is like water and like light. Remove whatever hinders it and nothing can hold it back." The light of God within us is surely like that. Once we remove the barriers of sin and disobedience, our light will shine forth. Nothing will stop it.

Do you have your light?

Pray for National Home Missions

November is the month for WNAC's week of prayer for Home Missions.

Material to help women in the prayer time is available from the Home Missions Department at P. O. Box 5002, Antioch, TN 37011-5002.

During the week women are asked to pray and give a sacrificial offering for mission work in the United States.

The Home Missions Department has recently accepted the responsibility for the cross-cultural ministry. Each of the national agencies, however, will be helping with that ministry. WNAC is glad to be a part of the work.

Time Set for Glorieta Retreat

The 1997 WNAC retreat at Glorieta Conference Center, Glorieta, New Mexico, is set for October 10-12.

Program details will be available after December.

Check the January/February 1997 *Co-Laborer* magazine for information on cost and registration procedures.

Have You Made Your Christmas List?

Consider giving a special Christmas gift to the women on your list this year.

Co-Laborer magazine, 6 annual issues available for \$6.75 (includes p & h).

First Fruits, a book of missionary stories showing God's working in answer to prayer, written and compiled by Lorene Miley, \$5 + p & h.

They Deserve A Second Chance, Shirley Combs' stories of the children in the children's home in Brazil, \$6.50 + p & h.

Tote bag with the WNAC name, \$6 + p & h. ■

A Faith For All Seasons

By Ted M. Dorman

(Nashville: Broadman and Holman Publishers, 1995, 391 pp., paperback, \$27.99).



Thomas Marberry

The author is a professor at Taylor University where he teaches an introductory course in Christian theology to students who reflect a variety of denominational backgrounds. This book is the outgrowth of that teaching experience. In particular, it responds to the kinds of questions that Christian young men and women are asking today. They not only want to know what we as Christians believe, they also want to know why we believe it.

This book takes a historical approach. It focuses on the first two or three centuries of the Christian era because it was during this time period that the basic beliefs of the Christian faith were developed.

Dorman gives great emphasis and attention to the books of the New Testament because they are the basic documents of Christianity. Their teachings have been regarded as normative throughout the centuries.

He also pays great attention to the writings of early theologians such as

Augustine, Irenaeus, Tertullian and others. Their writings often resulted from theological controversies, and these controversies helped shape the beliefs and practices of the Christian faith.

This book also emphasizes the contributions of Luther, Calvin, Wesley, Zwingli and others of the Reformation and post-Reformation eras. The writings of these men have greatly influenced the development of Protestant thought in the intervening centuries. Traditional Protestantism owes much to them.

The author reflects a high degree of scholarship without being overly technical. He presents clearly and fairly the differences between Protestantism and Roman Catholicism. He also presents honestly the differences between various Protestant groups on issues such as salvation, predestination, baptism, the Lord's Supper and eschatology.

This is a well-written textbook. It is comprehensive, clear and easy to

read. Its historical perspective is much needed today because many recent theology texts focus too much on the ideas and opinions of modern theologians. They do not give sufficient attention to the teachings of the New Testament documents and how the early church developed its doctrines from those documents.

There is one subject which Dorman should have considered but did not. In the chapter on the doctrine of scripture, he examines carefully the inspiration, interpretation and authority of the Bible, but he overlooks the issue of inerrancy.

Prior to the rise of higher criticism about three centuries ago, inerrancy was almost universally accepted. This work would have been better if it had examined briefly this important subject. In spite of its weakness, it is an excellent book. It can teach us a great deal about what we believe and why. ■

BEYOND BELIEF




RELIGIOUS COMMUNITY NEWS


Eat Right, Exercise and Go to Church on Sunday


NEW YORK, NY (EP)—Regular church attendance is good for your health, according to scientific studies compiled by *Time* magazine.

"People who regularly attend religious services have been found to have lower blood pressure, less heart disease, lower rates of depression and generally better health than those who don't attend," the magazine reported in a cover article about changing attitudes toward health.

Supporting the link between religion and health were a series of scientific studies reviewed by Jeffrey Leven, a gerontologist and epidemiologist at East Virginia Medical School, and David Larson, a research psychiatrist at the National Institute for Healthcare Research. After examining 200 studies on the effect of religion on health, they reported:

 A survey of 30 years of research on blood pressure showed that "churchgoers have lower blood pressure than non-churchgoers."

 A study of 30 female patients recovering from hip fractures found that "those who regarded God as a source of strength and comfort and who attended religious services were able to walk farther upon discharge, and had lower rates of depression than those who had little faith."

 Other studies found that men and women who attend church regularly "have half the risk of dying from coronary-artery disease as those who rarely go to church."

The researchers noted that "religious injunctions against drinking, drug abuse, smoking and other excesses" produced better health, but said that alone cannot explain their findings. "Larson likes to point out that in his own study, the benefits of religion hold up strongly, even for those who indulge in cigarette smoking," *Time* reported. "Smokers who rated religion as being very important to them were one-seventh as likely to have an abnormal blood-pressure reading as smokers who did not value religion."

The *Time* article suggested that prayer may provide some of the same health benefits as meditation. "Praying affects epinephrine and other corticosteroid messengers or 'stress hormones,' leading to lower blood pressure, more relaxed heart rate and respiration and other benefits," the magazine suggested.

A poll of 1,004 Americans commissioned for *Time* found that 82 percent of Americans believe "in the healing power of personal prayer."

Islam on the Grow

VIRGINIA BEACH, VA (EP)—Despite massive missionary outreach and evangelism efforts, the percentage of the world's population which practices the Christian faith has remained the same for a quarter-century, while the number of Muslims has grown dramatically, according to religion statistician David B. Barrett.

According to Barrett's figures, Christianity is still the world's largest religion with 33.7% of the world's population—the same as in 1970. Then, 1.25 billion Christians were among the 3.7 billion people on earth. Today, 1.95 of the 5.8 billion inhabitants adhere to the Christian faith.

However, during the same period, Muslims doubled their numbers, increasing from 564 million to 1.13 billion people. The main cause of this dramatic growth, according to Barrett, is the higher birth rate among the Muslim population. Thus, the Muslim percentage of the world population rose from 15.2% to 19.4%. Barrett calculates that both religions will show slight growth by the turn of the millennium.

The third largest group is comprised of the "non-religious," totaling 876 million people or 15.1% of the world's population. Barrett predicts that by the year 2000 this group will fall below the 15% mark, as in 1970.

The world's 793 million Hindus comprise 12.6% of the earth's population; by the year 2000, their numbers are expected to increase by one percent. The percentage of Buddhists, currently 5.6%, will most likely decrease slightly from the present 326 million adherents.

Atheists, numbering 222 million, have been retreating steadily since 1970, dropping from 4.6% of the world's population then to the current 3.8%. According to Barrett, this trend will continue. The new religious movements have stagnated at 2.1% (123 million people). Tribal religions have about 100 million adherents; their percentage of the world's population is decreasing and lies currently at 1.7%.

Runner Found Victory in Defeat

LAWRENCE, KS (EP)—Jim Ryun is a legend in the world of middle-distance running. A three-time Olympian and world-record holder for the mile, half mile, and 1,500 meters between 1966 and 1975, Ryun defeated an Olympic gold medalist and set a new American record before even entering college, and set a high school record for the mile that still stands.

He took a silver medal in Mexico City in 1968, and seemed destined for gold in 1972, but a foul in a preliminary heat landed him on the ground and out of contention. It seemed like the end for Ryun, but in many ways was

only the beginning.

"In that particular trial God didn't disappoint me," recalls Ryun, who served as a consultant to the 1996 Summer Olympics in Atlanta. "What He gave me was something far more valuable, an understanding that in trials and difficult times He doesn't abandon us. As years go along that's very important. He gave me, as a result of that, a much deeper understanding of life, and a richer life through Christ than I would have ever had."

Ryun, who became a Christian shortly before the '72 Olympics, says that faith in God gave him a healthier perspective on athletic competition. "Athletics generally put you in the center of the universe," Ryun told EP News. "It made me self-centered. Becoming a Christian gives you the understanding that you aren't the center of the universe—God is. You have been given a special talent, and should use it to glorify God."

Having that perspective makes one a better person—and a better athlete, says Ryun, who went on to run professionally. "A lot of times athletes become so focused that they lose perspective on life in general, and it affects their performance. I've seen athletes who haven't had that perspective, and they become so self-centered that they can't perform well."

That doesn't mean that a relationship with God will turn a young person into a super athlete, Ryun is quick to emphasize. "Just because you have God on your side doesn't guarantee success, but it guarantees a right perspective," he notes.

"One of the things that's hurting young people today is that we're offering them a fast-food atmosphere, full of remedies that won't endure for a lifetime. I'm concerned about where we're leading young people today. We're so concerned about self-gratification that we forget that the things that will endure are the things that are a little bit rough."

Falling in Munich in 1972 was rough, but it helped make Ryun the man he is today. "I think you have more of an opportunity in how you respond to loss than in victory, because people are watching to see how you respond," he concludes. "The good thing about losing—not that you'd want to major in it—is that you can learn from it." ■

It's A Man's World

What is a man's worth? God made it clear in Psalm 8:4-9 that man is something special—born to lead, marked for greatness, eternity in his heart. The man who knows he's more than an evolutionary accident lives life with a different perspective.

Stuart Briscoe makes a telling point when he writes, "Slightly lower than the angels' is a whole lot better than slightly higher than the apes. Let's get the order straight. God, angelic beings, man, animals and vegetables."

Men's Values. Retired Arkansas pastor Ben Scott closed out his pastoral ministry in December 1995. For years Ben wrote pithy editorials in his weekly newsletter. His last one tells about a politician whose television commercials ended with the expression, "He knows big wood from kindlin'."

Ben thought that implied the fellow had good judgment regarding values and supposedly knew what was important and what was not worth squabbling over. Which is more than Ben could say for Esau who didn't know big wood from kindlin' and sold his birthright for a mess of pottage.

The same goes for not-overly-brilliant Lot who moved to Sodom, offered his daughters to depraved men and lost his wife in a salt lick.

On the other hand, Ben thought that Joseph did know big wood from kindlin' when he left Potiphar's house in a hurry. Joseph lost his coat but kept his character. That's a man who understood values.

Men's Tenacity. Joseph Stowell said, "The true measure of a man comes when all the chips are down." As we know, all the chips get down frequently in life. It happens when, in spite of careful planning, a man grapples with financial disaster. Or when

an illness puts the family on the ropes. Or a hundred other times and ways.

What makes a man get up again? How does he keep coming back for more? Thomas 'A Kempis said, "Adversities do not make a man frail. They show what sort of man he is."

Men know that difficulty is the currency of life. Nobody escapes hard times or hard decisions. Men lend a hand to others when circumstances push them toward the edge.

An anonymous writer said, "When I dig another out of trouble, the hole from which I lift him is the place where I bury my own."

Instead of viewing adversity as destructive, perhaps we should see it as instructive. Vance Havner put it just right, "Sometimes your medicine bottle has on it, 'Shake well before using.' That is what God has to do with some of His people. He has to shake them well before they are ever usable."

Men's Humor. The best men even manage to see the humor in a flat tire. They are quick to laugh with others and don't take themselves *that* seriously. They laugh at themselves, never at you. They move through life with a chuckle.

Like the man who asked a female clerk in a bookstore, "Have you a book entitled *Man, Master of the Home*?" He could only grin when she replied, "Try the fiction department, please."

Or this manly humor: "Life isn't fair to us men. When we are born, our mothers get the compliments and the flowers. When we are married, our brides get the presents and the publicity. When we die, our widows get the life insurance and winters in Florida. What do women want to be liberated from?"

What's so amusing about it? The humorous part is that the man who wrote it was apparently afraid to sign his name!



Jack Williams

Men's Work. Men seem to know instinctively that they were put on earth to work. They don't consider work part of the curse placed on Adam. Work was always part of God's original plan; it's the overactive weeds and briars that put a point on the curse.

As Sydney Harris noted, "Few men ever drop dead from overwork, but many quietly curl up and die because of under-satisfaction."

Most men agree with Winefred Holtby: "God give me work till my life shall end and life till my work is done." Men find their place in the world through work. Men enjoy the challenge of painting it, moving it, kicking it and bringing home the proverbial bacon.

Men's Mistakes. Every man makes mistakes. The honest ones admit it. The smart ones correct it. The motivated ones use it to lever themselves out of the rubble.

However, there is one group of men who never make mistakes. You know who they are, the Monday morning quarterbacks who always know what to do but never have to do it.

Richard Halverson said of a man like this that he "always knows the way to go and never has to go himself."

But for the rest of us, if we drop the ball on Saturday, we have to pick it up on Monday and start again.

How big are you as a man? Some men are so small they can only rock the boat in life. Others are big enough to steady the boat. What size are you? ■

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