

# CONTACT

OFFICIAL PUBLICATION OF THE  
NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF  
FREE WILL BAPTISTS

## I'm Thankful For . . .

1. Safety in danger
2. Small churches
3. A soldier's sacrifice
4. Valuable imperfections
5. Pioneers
6. Fruitful investments
7. Mules and tomatoes
8. Light in the darkness
9. New shoes for old
10. . . . .

.....  
**Whose Life  
Was Saved?**

.....  
**Small Churches**

.....  
**No Greater Love**

.....  
**Imperfect But  
Valuable**

.....  
**Thankful 7 Times**



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NOVEMBER 1997

VOLUME 44, NO. 11

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## Generation Gap

**T**he term, "generation gap," is nothing new. There has always been a difference in succeeding generations.

What should be the response of the Church to the generation gap? The writer of Acts intimates that generations are different when he discloses, "For David, after he had served his own generation by the will of God, fell on sleep, and was laid unto his fathers . . ." (Acts 13:36).

### The Facts

The writer of Ecclesiastes describes change when he declares, "One generation passeth away, and another generation cometh: but the earth abideth for ever," (Eccl. 1:4). When we read history, even Bible history, one fact claims our attention. Change does occur.

One generation serves God and the following generation forsakes the Lord. Secular and sacred history provide examples of children who raged, rebelled, rejected and renounced the lifestyle of their parents.

The writer of Ecclesiastes denotes constants when he asserts, "The thing that hath been, it is that which shall be; and that which is done is that which shall be done: and there is no new thing under the sun. Is there anything whereof it may be said, See, this is new? It hath been already of old time, which was before us," (Eccl. 1:9-10).

In spite of changes in society, some constants remain. No generation is exempt from the commands of the living God. The Bible's absolutes apply to each generation. Human nature has not changed. Many who are quick to admit their addictions have no concept of their sinful condition before a holy God.

The writer of Ecclesiastes draws conclusions when he declares, "Let us hear the conclusion of the whole

matter: Fear God and keep his commandments: for this is the whole duty of man," (Eccl. 12:13).

The bottom line for every generation is to reverence the person of God, respond to the precepts of God and to remember the punishment of God.

### The Features

Proverbs describes four generations in graphic detail. The first generation is described as ungrateful (Prov. 30:11). This generation is proud and disrespectful. Their self-sufficiency manifests itself in no respect or reverence for their parents. They recognize no indebtedness to their parents.

Children's attitudes and actions toward parents reflect their attitude toward God. Cursing one's parents results in the same punishment as blaspheming God (Deut. 21:18-21).

The second generation is described as ungodly (Prov. 30:12). This generation is pure in its own eyes and yet they have not been washed from their sins. Jesus describes this type individual when He addressed the Pharisees. They were hypocrites, refusing to go into the kingdom and refusing to let others go in as well. They had eternal religion but no internal reality.

Churches are filled with people who put on the externals of religion but know nothing of the transforming power of the gospel. This generation has overlooked its depravity.

### The Secretary's Schedule

#### November 1997

- 6-7 Alabama State Association
- 10-12 Tennessee State Association
- 13 CMP Board Meeting
- 14-15 Georgia State Association
- 19-23 Faith FWB Church  
Darlington, SC



Melvin Worthington

The third generation is described as untouchable (Prov. 30:13). It is described as one with lofty eyes. They are arrogant, aggressive, abusive and abrasive. Instead of displaying humility, they are haughty. Instead of being repentant, they are rebellious. Instead of being contrite, they are self-confident. They consider themselves better than others and are untouched by the needs of those around them.

The fourth generation is described as untamed (Prov. 30:14). This generation has teeth like swords and knives. They devour the poor and needy. They are unmoved by the distress and deprivation of those around them. They are wild and untamed, venting their wickedness where there is little ability to offer resistance.

### The Focus

In many respects, each generation is different and yet alike. Rather than focus on the particular characteristics of each generation, our focus should be on truth. God declares that the truth will set men free.

Our focus should also be on the authentic transformation. The power of God can and does transform the lives of those who believe. All who are in Christ are new creatures. We must not settle for less than authentic transformation of sinners.

Third, our focus should be on the assigned task. The task Jesus assigned to the Church was to go into all the world and preach the gospel to every individual. The task has not been repealed. The Church does not have a right to focus on any other agenda but the assigned task.

This generation is not unlike every other generation. The needs of mankind remain the same in every generation. There is nothing new under the sun. So let's get on with the assigned task. ■



## A Story of How God Answers Prayer

# Whose Life Was Saved?

By James and Mitzi Munsey

### Mitzi's prologue

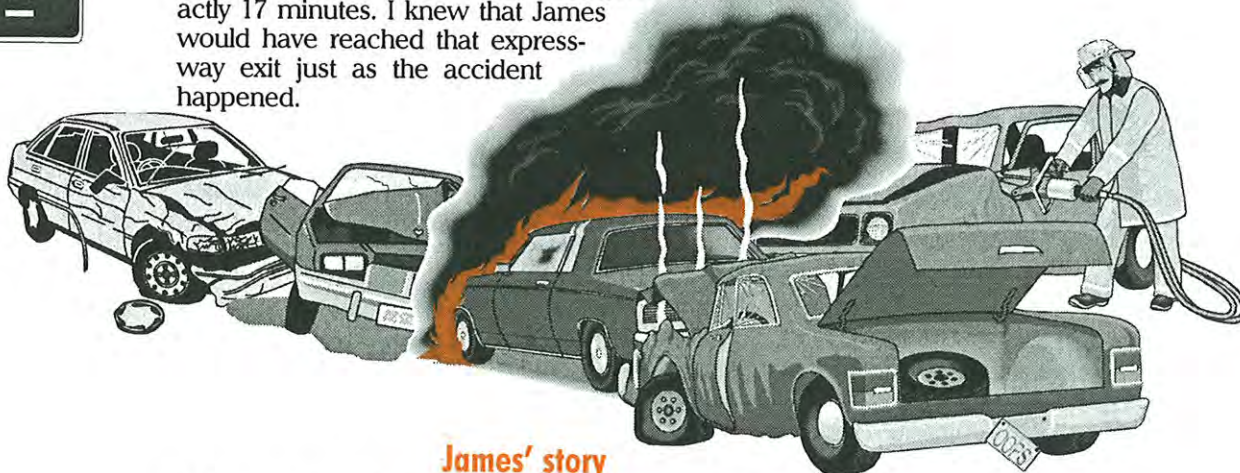
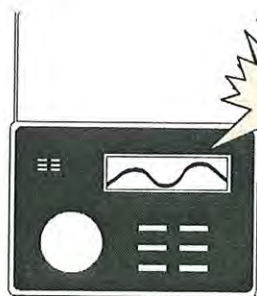
One Friday afternoon a few months ago, my husband left to drive to the neighboring town of McAllen, about 16 miles away. We were preparing to go north to visit some of our churches to promote the work in Mexico. Only minutes after he left, I had a strong fear that something was wrong. James travels in Mexico away from phone contact for days at a time and I have peace about that, but this time I was concerned about a simple 20-mile trip. I began to pray.

My mind recalled Psalm 34:4, "I sought the Lord, and He heard me, and delivered me from all fears."

I prayed hard for 10 minutes after James left, then, having done all I could, I went about preparing the evening meal. The radio was on and I listened as the daily traffic report began.

... traffic report ...  
5-car pile-up ...  
... severe injuries ...

My heart began to pound hard as I heard the announcer warn all drivers heading toward McAllen to exit the expressway before reaching the 10th Street Exit. There had been a horrible five-car crash with severe injuries on the expressway. I looked at the clock; James had been gone exactly 17 minutes. I knew that James would have reached that expressway exit just as the accident happened.



### James' story

I kissed my wife and rushed out the door with a long list of errands and a short time to complete them. Rush hour traffic was in full swing on the expressway and I regretted that I had not left earlier.

About four miles from home, I had to brake suddenly; traffic almost came to a complete stop. As I strained to see the cause of the delay, I saw a blue sedan on the inside lane of the expressway going about 35 mph.

Cars were passing on the right side of the slow-moving vehicle. Tired and frustrated motorists blew their horns and raised their fists. The sedan finally managed to get to the outside lane and just as I passed, the driver pulled off to the side of the expressway.



As I passed the blue sedan, I glanced over and saw that an elderly lady was driving. In that instant, God spoke very clearly to my heart. *You must stop!*

I pulled over in front of her car. The lady trembled badly as she fumbled to roll the window down. Finally, she opened the car door a little instead. I asked her, "Ma'am, do you need help?"

"Oh, thank God, someone stopped," she said. "I'm lost, and I want to get back home. I can't find my exit."

I knew I had to help her get off the expressway. She had stopped in an emergency lane near an overpass. Instinctively I knew it was a precarious and dangerous place.

She told me she lived in John Knox Village, a retirement center in Weslaco about five miles back. By then I definitely felt that the Lord wanted me to take her all the way home. She agreed to follow me in her car back to her home.

After a slow start, she followed me off the next exit ramp. I led her along the frontage road, not wanting to get back up in heavy traffic. I regretted the delay, but I could not help but feel that this elderly lady might have been killed up there in traffic.

When we got to the retirement village, I got out and approached her car. The first thing she said to me was, "Are you a preacher?"

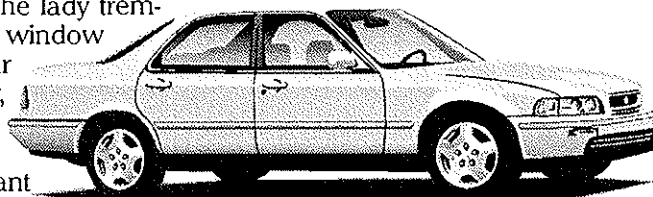
"Yes I am," I said, "I think God sent me by to help you today."

"I know God sent you," she replied, "I have never been so scared. I thought I was going to die, and I just called out to God to send someone to help me get back home, and you came by." She cried as she told how terrified she was of the heavy traffic and of being lost.

I left her safe in her home and continued on to McAllen feeling smug that I had been able to help someone in need. I had been God's instrument to answer someone's prayer. In fact, I may have even saved her life.

I knew I could not complete my errands before stores closed, but I felt good anyway. It was strange how that heavy traffic did not bother me now.

Closer to McAllen, I saw emergency vehicles on the side of the expressway cleaning up what remained of an earlier accident. Traffic was just beginning to move past the accident site, so I passed and went on my way to complete at least some of my errands.



### Mitzi's epilogue

Hours later, James was still not home. I called a couple of the places I knew he needed to visit and they had not seen him. The radio did not give any more information about the accident. Didn't God say to trust Him in all things? I prayed, "Lord, I trust You, to keep him safe and bring him home soon."

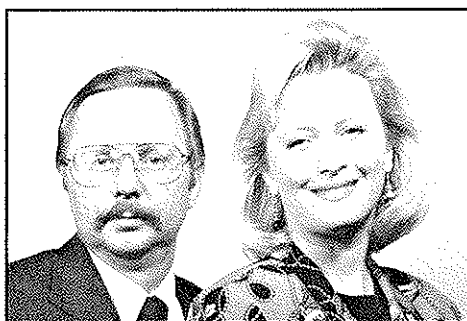
Almost as soon as I finished that prayer, I heard James pull in the driveway. I met him at the door, hands on hips, asking why he was so late.

He said, "Wait until you hear what happened." And he began to tell me the whole story of the lost lady and how he had helped her.

When I realized what he was saying, the thrill of seeing so clearly God's amazing power overwhelmed me. *I told James that he knew only half the story.* I told him of my fear for his safety, of praying for him, and of hearing about the accident that surely occurred the same time James would have reached McAllen. We both marveled at God's grace.

*James was God's instrument to answer that lady's prayer of need. And maybe her predicament was the answer to my prayer to keep James safe.* Deuteronomy 33:12 says, "The beloved of the Lord shall dwell in safety by Him."

How many times has His mighty presence protected us from harm? We may not know until we see Him face to face. We only know that He has been faithful to keep us safe through thousands of miles of travel. He is our Rock and we plan to faithfully depend on Him. ■



ABOUT THE WRITERS: Reverend James Munsey serves as Home Missions' coordinator for Mexico. He and his wife Mitzi have three children.



# Churches Thank God for Small ~~Things~~

By J. M. Creech



A small Free Will Baptist church in Côte d'Ivoire similar to the one at Nopourdouo.

I will never forget that little African church. Missionary doctor Kenneth Eagleton told us that we were going to a village church that Sunday morning. We drove 30 miles south of Doropo in Côte d'Ivoire and stopped our vehicle beside the dirt road.

The village was up on the left side of the road, its dwellings made of mud with thatched roofs. The smell of cooking smoke from the morning meal lingered in the air. We walked up the path to the Free Will Baptist Church, the only church in the village.

## Thatched-Roof Church

The church was a small, thatched-roof structure with open sides. Crudely made backless benches and a log laid up one side provided seating. And

the pulpit—the first thing to claim my attention—was made of small limbs with the bark still on them. It had a small space to lay the Bible.

Since the sun wasn't shining, it was hard for Ivorians to know exactly what time church would begin; but when the singing started, it didn't take long for that little church to have standing room only.

An old lady worshiped, seated on the front end of the log. A small naked child wandered in and sat on the log, too. An older lady brought a small stool on which to sit. Others came and we had church. We worshiped the Lord together. A reverence and a reality about that service made me thankful to be there with them.

My thoughts went back across the Atlantic Ocean to my own church that morning. I suddenly realized that we

do not need an air-conditioned, padded-pew, brick building to have church. We do not need a piano or organ to sing praises to God. We do not need electricity or a parking lot (we were the only ones who drove a car to church that morning), in order to have a place of worship.

We do not need brass offering plates to worship the Lord with tithes and offerings, or an oak pulpit to preach the Word. It dawned on me that God loved this little church just as much as He loved the church I pastor, or any other church. Thank God for that small church at Nopourdouo.

## Beyond Gold Fish and Rooftops

Back in our "eat gold fish" and "preach on top of the church" days, I remember someone saying that God



does not love a small church but for just a short time, because He wants all of His churches to be big churches. I did not believe that then and I certainly do not believe it now.

I do think that God may want some of our churches to be bigger than they are, for there are certain programs and ministries that a large church can offer which are impossible for a small church. But does this fact cause God not to love small churches?

If I did not thank God for small churches, I could not believe Jesus when He said "... where two or three are gathered in my name, I am in the midst." If I did not thank God for small churches, I could not thank Him for many of the New Testament churches, some of which met in homes.

If I did not thank God for small churches, I could not thank Him for most Free Will Baptist churches, for most of them are considered small churches. One preacher said jokingly (?) that he was going to stay with Free Will Baptists because he was afraid of crowds.

### Unique Fellowship

I have found that there is a special kind of fellowship in a small church where everybody knows everybody else. In some large churches, people do not know who they worship with every Sunday. There are those in small churches who do have a vision. They are willing to do what they

can for the cause of Christ, and they deserve a good pastor just as much as those in large churches.

### Personal Support

It seems that small churches rally behind people in the church and the community when there is a need or there has been a death in the family. A farmer who's had a tragedy may find his church brothers and neighbors in the field harvesting his crops.

Most families who have a death often must tell people not to bring any more food; they have more than they can handle. It has been reported that in some large churches, the church folk will not provide a meal for the family who has had a death unless the pastor is asked to preach the funeral (pastor's regulation).

Some large churches find it hard to host the quarterly meeting because the people do not want to be bothered with providing a meal for sister churches. Not so with small churches. They go all out in order to do their part.

It might be wise for our denomination to check up on some facts. Just ask FWBBC and our missions department where the bulk of their financial support comes from. They might tell you, "the small churches."

### Despising Small Things

Many have the idea that "big is better" and they "despise the day of

small things . . ." (Zechariah 4:10a). But I thank God for small churches. While this does not excuse us from doing what God wants us to do for Him, I believe that we ought to thank God for all churches where the gospel is preached and those who faithfully carry on the work. They are all important to God.

While the Nopourdouo Free Will Baptist Church in Côte d'Ivoire may never be able to afford a tin-roofed building with better pews, they can have church. They may still use that small drum and gourd with shells attached as their musical instruments, yet they can still lift their voices and hearts in praise to God. They may never be able to afford a full-time pastor, a better pulpit, or a ride to church, but the Word of God will still be preached.

That church is God's church, and I thank God for it. ■



ABOUT THE WRITER: Reverend J. M. Creech pastors Bellview Free Will Baptist Church in Colquitt, Georgia.

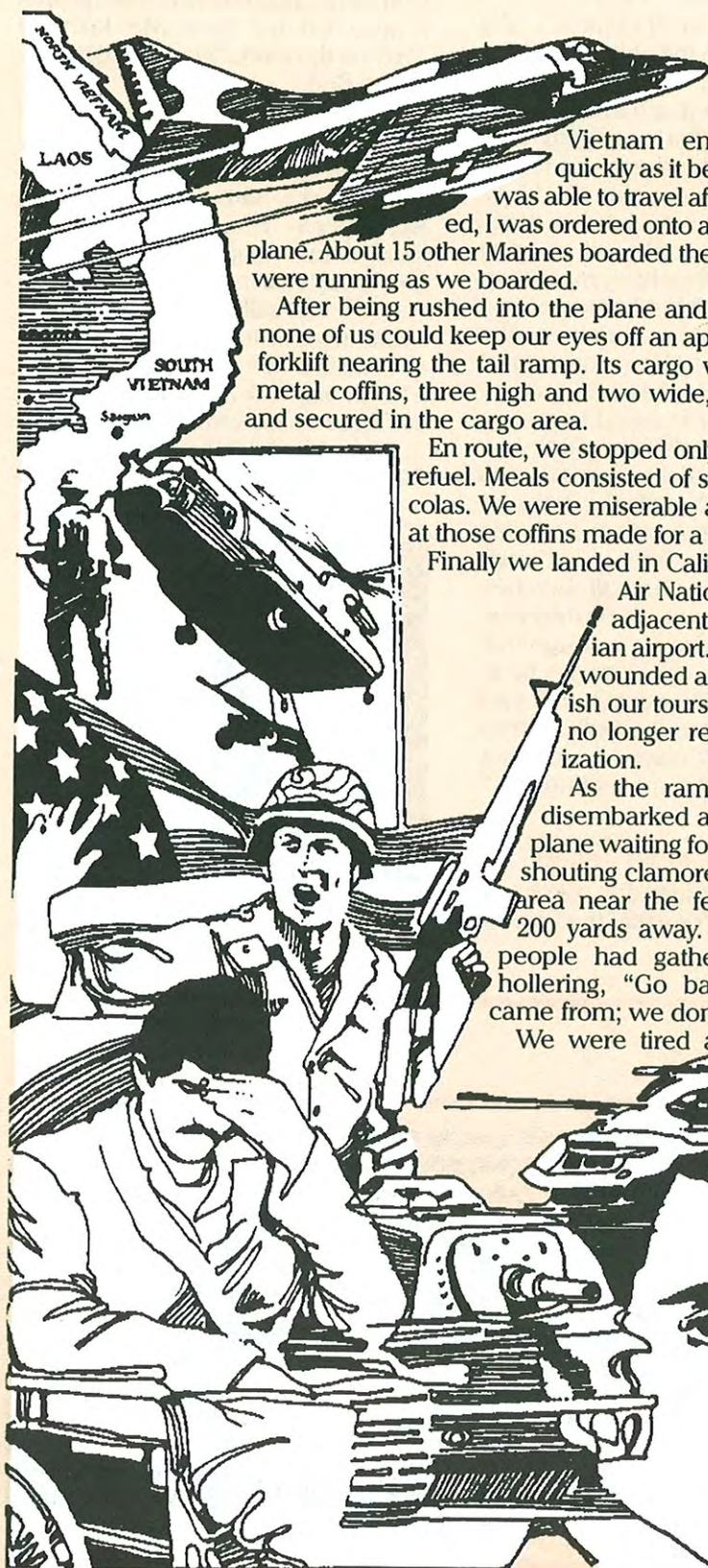
## BEYOND BELIEF





# No Greater Love

By Chuck Cushman



**M**y tour of duty in South Vietnam ended almost as quickly as it began. As soon as I was able to travel after being wounded, I was ordered onto an Air Force cargo plane. About 15 other Marines boarded the aircraft. Engines were running as we boarded.

After being rushed into the plane and strapped down, none of us could keep our eyes off an approaching green forklift nearing the tail ramp. Its cargo was obvious. Six metal coffins, three high and two wide, were set down and secured in the cargo area.

En route, we stopped only long enough to refuel. Meals consisted of sack lunches and colas. We were miserable and tired. Staring at those coffins made for a somber flight.

Finally we landed in California at a small

Air National Guard base adjacent to a large civilian airport. Most of us were wounded and unable to finish our tours, although some no longer required hospitalization.

As the ramp lowered, we disembarked and stood by the plane waiting for our bags. Loud shouting clamored from a public area near the fence line about 200 yards away. There 30 or 40 people had gathered and were hollering, "Go back where you came from; we don't want you."

We were tired and weary and

paid no further attention to the group shaking the fence and becoming more violent.

A forklift approached, lifted the coffins and backed away from the plane. I saw the senior of our group, a gunnery sergeant, wave the driver down, jump on the forklift and talk to the operator.

He got off and approached our group saying loud and clear, "Fall into two squads! We're escorting our brothers past that mob."

We knew the crowd could clearly see us, but without saying a word our weary group fell into two squads, one on each side of the coffins. The gunny ordered, "Hand salute!" Although worn out from the flight with some on crutches, some limping from wounds, we all stood tall and smartly saluted the coffins.

As our procession proceeded slowly along the fence line toward a large warehouse, the hecklers suddenly became silent. I don't believe they were capable of respect toward us. I think they did it only because they were amazed at what we were doing.

Near the warehouse where we could proceed no further, the forklift stopped. As we were beginning an about face, the driver honked his horn. When we turned and looked toward him, he smiled and slowly saluted us. ■

ABOUT THE WRITER: Chuck Cushman is a member of First Free Will Baptist Church in Tucson, Arizona.



# Where Imperfect Things Are Valuable

By Joshua Thomas

And Moses said unto the LORD, O my Lord, I am not eloquent . . . but I am slow of speech, and of a slow tongue. (Exodus 4:10)

**N**ext time you enter a housing development, look closely at the individual houses. The structures themselves may well prove to be breathtaking. There are sections of huge windows, elaborate masonry and elegant woodwork. The signature of experienced craftsmanship is evident.

But the truly amazing part occurs when we compare the flawless houses to the tools that built them. Step into the carpenter's shop and this is what you will find:

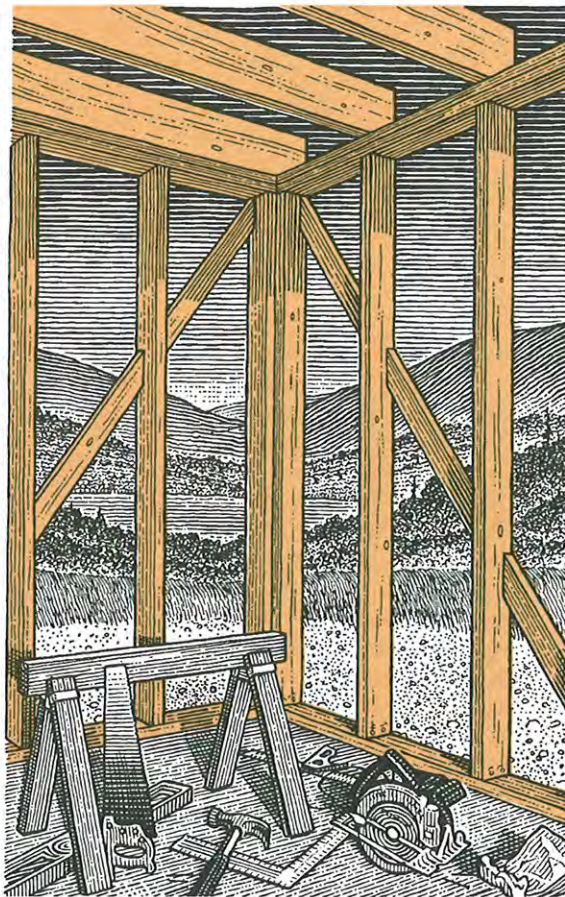
You'll find a hammer whose cracked handle is splintered and paint-stained. There'll be a screwdriver whose shaft is slightly bent and showing unmistakable signs of gradual rusting. You'll see a dusty skill saw with electrical tape wrapped around the cord.

Everywhere you look, you see imperfection. We will never understand how some-

thing so complete as a beautiful house could come from tools so broken unless we discover their common bond. That common bond is the carpenter.

You see, when something is being built, we rely not on the quality of the tools but on the efficiency of the builder. Just as the carpenter uses weathered implements to create magnificent structures, so the Master Builder, Jesus Christ, uses imperfect people to build perfect things.

When we judge ourselves to be unworthy of the Lord's work, we are only looking at the tool. We fail to consider the Builder and what He is capable of doing with chipped and cracked lives that have been touched by grace.



**ABOUT THE WRITER:** Joshua Thomas attends Hillsdale Free Will Baptist College. He is a member of First Free Will Baptist Church in Norman, Oklahoma.





# Pioneers: Leaders of Tomorrow

By Michael R. Lewis

**W**hat leaps to mind when you think of pioneers? Smoking muskets carried by men who wear raccoon skin hats and live in small mountain cabins? Do you think of an elderly, white-haired gentleman standing before a crowd describing the day he first flipped a switch and the darkness disappeared? Do you think of a man driving a horseless carriage out of a manufacturing plant to the applause of thousands? Or maybe you think of two brothers deciding it was time to at least see if man could fly?

When we think of pioneers, we usually focus on the end results, not the process, years of challenge, heartache and failures it took to get to those results. We think of Moses leading Israel to the brink of the promised land, not the first 80 years of his life when he killed a man then shepherded sheep in the hot countryside.

We will always admire, respect and aspire to be pioneers just like our heroes. There is a great need for those with the pioneering spirit to continue on the mission God has given them. However, being a pioneer is not for the fainthearted. We need to be reminded of what happens to, and what it takes to become, pioneers.

## *Pioneers are laughed at*

Many of the people we revere as pioneers were laughed at and mocked when they were alive. Imagine what little Danny Boone's friends thought when he told them he wanted to move to Kentucky. "What you need to do is just stay right here, get a nice job and try to make something of yourself."

He did want to make something of himself, but he didn't want to do it the same way everybody else did. A burning fire deep down in his heart yearned for something more, something different. And like most pioneers, he knew he had to "go out there" to try and find it. Whatever "it" was.

Alexander Graham Bell was laughed at by politicians; Albert Einstein was kicked out of school for being dumb; Martin Luther was labeled



## *Leading The Way*

a trouble-maker. Most pioneers are not respected for their ideas, ideals or actions when they first announce them.

How ironic that we live in a society built on individualism and independence that shuns those who are not like everybody else.

Christian, do you contemplate becoming a pioneer? Be forewarned: expect pressure from the pioneer po-



lice—friends, family members and co-workers who will try to talk you out of it.

### *Pioneers are rewarded . . . later*

We live in a society that must have everything right now. Instant gratification. On the way to work, people stop at the convenience store for gas and a cup of coffee because it's easier and faster to purchase it than to prepare it. For lunch, they buy a candy bar and cola from the vending machine down the hall.

After a long day at work, they pick up dinner at the drive-through and take it home to eat because it's faster and they are hungry right now. Then they sit down to eat in front of the television so they (at least the men) can watch their favorite 13 shows at once.

Whatever they want, they want it right now.

When it comes to being a pioneer, however, rewards are usually delayed. Lee Iacocca gained the admiration of Wall Street only after he turned Chrysler around. Not only were the brokers unimpressed by the process, they ridiculed him. But they sat up and took notice when they saw the results.

A true pioneer finds rewards in the process just as much, if not more so, than in the final results.

### *Pioneers are unassuming*

With a brief stroll down memory lane, everyone can think of those from high school and college that professors and classmates saw as "up and comers." But when we ask about them or see them, we realize that they weren't and aren't.

Perhaps the former class valedictorian dropped out of college and works at a machine shop and sells real estate on the side. The most popular girl in school whom everyone knew was going to make it in the world struggles as single mother of two. There may be nothing wrong with them; rather, it is likely how we perceived them.

It may be that quiet young man in the back of the classroom who becomes a famous pharmacologist or pastor or inventor. We have a tendency to look at the outward appearance while God looks at the heart of the matter.

It's a tragedy that we elect political leaders based not on their vision of

tomorrow but on their appearance of today. The irony is that with the pioneering spirit of previous physicians, even personal appearance is alterable. Some churches select pastors based not on their vision of the kingdom but on their polished appearance and suave personalities.

It was an unassuming shoe salesman named Dwight L. Moody who became a tremendous man of God. God has always taken the common and made something uncommon.

### *Pioneers ignore the status quo*

A young man entering the ministry stopped to visit a growing church that had much land on which to build, a school and a day care. When the pastor finished showing him around, the young man said, "Boy, I sure would like to fall into something like this."

He was obviously not a pioneer. He had no concept of what the pastor had gone through to lead the church to that level of growth.

Someone with a pioneering spirit doesn't want to maintain status quo. He doesn't want to fall into something that someone else has built; he wants something different. Something more.

The minister with a pioneering spirit sees a big church not as a goal but as a potential model. He will see the potential in a small church, serve and pray and lead so that it too will someday be a model for others. They will strive to become leaders through challenge, integrity and success, not through inheritance.

In the business world there are those who want to be CEOs, and then there are those who want to become CEOs. Likewise in the ministry, there are those who want to be leaders, and there are those who want to become leaders.

Many want to be pioneers but only a few will *become* pioneers.

### *Pioneer yet? Only time will tell*

We all want to be called pioneers in our group, careers or thoughts. But only time will tell who is and who isn't a pioneer, a leader. No one really knows if he's a true pioneer until others see him as such. Most pioneers aren't around to see that nice bronze statue of themselves standing in the

town square.

When you look around creation what do you see? We have information coming in from literally light years away. We can communicate with a multitude of others at once all over the world. Pharmacies are filled with medications that cure some of the world's deadliest diseases. Surgeries are performed to allow the heart of a corpse to continue pulsating life through the body of a young child.

So we ask, what is there left to discover? What else could be out there to find that we haven't already found?

As for me, I love roller coasters. To most people, they're all the same: they go up and then they go down. They're partly right. But for me, they all twist and turn differently and at different times.

The ministry is like that. There is no other message to discover or proclaim. However, opportunities and possibilities of means to share that message with the world all over are for the most part, still to be discovered.

A minister with a pioneering spirit will be more challenged, intrigued and drawn to that little church that wants to, right past that big church that is.

There are some wonderful and effective church growth seminars around but I am convinced that most of them are either nothing more than evangelistic revival meetings or they're geared more for the church that's already growing through 200 and wants to keep growing to 500.

Sure, that's pioneering in a sense. But the minister with the pioneering spirit will either seek to grow a new church or lead the one with only 30 or so to *start* growing.

A true pioneering spirit may move to a different part of the state, country or world to blaze a new trail.

It takes a pioneer to change the world. You may be that kind of world changer. Your idea may be the one that rewrites history. ■

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ABOUT THE WRITER: Reverend Michael R. Lewis pastors Mile High Free Will Baptist Church in Northglenn, Colorado. He is a graduate of Hillsdale Free Will Baptist College and is completing a master's degree in organizational management from the University of Phoenix.



**W**hen it's our own money, we all want the best return that we can get on our investment. My wife Opal and I have some funds invested with the Free Will Baptist Board of Retirement. At the end of each quarter I am interested in how well our investment did.

I can tell you that I am very pleased. General director Bill Evans is doing an outstanding job. I highly recommend the Free Will Baptist retirement program and Brother Bill Evans.

We've also invested some funds with several of our Home Missions church planters. Glory to God! Opal and I struck it rich! I have been told that one soul is worth all the riches of this world. I don't really know about that, but one thing that I do know is that Christ left all the riches of Heaven, came to this earth and gave His last drop of blood to redeem the souls of men (1 Peter 1:18-19).

When I visit or read the reports of those missionaries in whom we have invested and see the glorious return on our investment, I lift my voice and praise His dear name. Just a few days ago, one of those missionaries called to give a victorious report of souls that had just been saved and the tremendous growth of his church. I thought, "Well, glory! We own stock in that mission church!"

We also do some foreign investing. We just sent another large offering to Mexico. What a tremendous investment! Did you know that for just \$12,000 per month, we can support 14 full-time pastors, the Seminary of the Cross, its staff, food supplies and the

# Investing for Good Returns

By Trymon Messer

tuition for several students? And the returns are unbelievable.

I feel that I can spot a good investment, so we are now investing some funds in our missionary builder, and I am thrilled about it. We will get some returns on every church he builds or souls that are saved in that church or as a result of that church.

Our biggest and best investment, however, is that we give to the general fund, because it draws a return on everything we do in the Home Missions Department. Richard Adams and David Crowe are great preachers and many people are saved weekly under their preaching. I am investing in that, our loan fund, cross-cultural ministry, church growth and evangelism. Yep, Opal and I have struck it rich!

Think of the many churches that have gone self-supporting. They will be giving students, workers, preachers, missionaries and funds back into the denomination until Jesus comes. Do you have an investment in that?

Think of the investment that Benjamin Randall made, not only in Free Will Baptists, but in my own life and the life of many of you as well. I am benefiting from that and enjoying the blessings of the investment that this great saint of God made over 200 years ago.

An investment in Home Missions is an investment to help plant churches, reach souls and mend broken homes, hearts and lives. It helps stop abuse and hurt in the homes and lives of those God has changed.

Thousands upon thousands of people are churchless (160 million in America), hopeless and Christ-less. May God give us the courage, vision and burden to invest in their lives. Please give the best gift you possibly can to Home Missions this November . . . "Home Missions Month." Make an investment that assures the greatest returns (Luke 6:38). ■

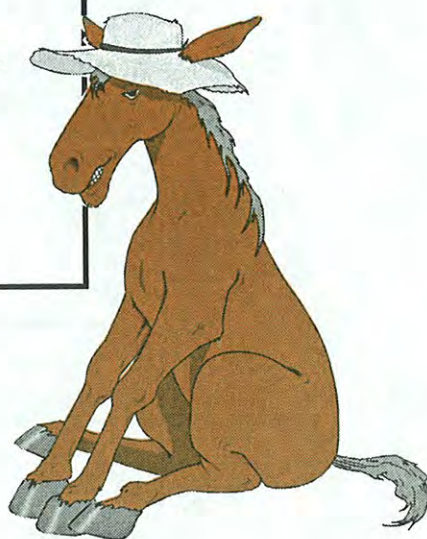


ABOUT THE WRITER: Mr. Trymon Messer is general director of the Home Missions Department.



# I Never Plowed a Mule

By Sterl Paramore



**O**kay, I admit it. I never plowed a mule. There, I've said it and I'm glad. Among the several things that have limited me as a Free Will Baptist, perhaps this is the chief. I don't know what it's like to affix my hands to a plow handle, keep my eyes on a stake and plow a straight row. (On the other hand, I *do* know what it's like to grip motorcycle handlebars and wreck in a gravel parking lot.)

If there's anything that has hurt me in the pulpit, it's that I cannot truthfully use the phrase that elicits more amens than any other used in our denomination, "Well, I'm just an old country boy." I have been amazed and envious at preachers who use this phrase speaking from true life experience.

Trust me. If your sermon is lagging or people are listless, just throw in, "Well, I'm just an old country boy," and the windows will rattle with the concussion. At the end of the sermon, people will clap you on the back heartily and try to fabricate family relationships with you.

The closest I can get is that my favorite foods are rice, collard greens and black-eyed peas (in that order). But that's hard to work into a sermon.

While I'm at it, I may as well confess that I never grew a decent tomato in my life. I never grew a tomato regardless of its character, decent or

otherwise. Everybody's already got 'em, so I don't need to contribute to the glut. This excludes me from much religious life. I can never join in when my brethren ask thoughtfully, "Got any 'maters?"

Rudolph was never so lonely. You may be surprised at what a big deal this is.

A friend asked me several years ago, "Do you think an earned doctorate means much to our people?"

I answered, "If you pit a guy with an earned doctorate in consideration for a church against a guy who can really grow a tomato, the doctor doesn't stand a chance."

It would be wise for the young minister to incorporate such experiences into his life in the event of a life-experience pop quiz. Honestly, I have tried to do this. I once milked a cow with my bare hands and even ate chitlins for the sake of the ministry. Still, I never plowed a mule.

Young man . . . young man, your arm's too short to box with tradition. The prudent minister, until he reaches significant age, will conceal his education beyond his senior year (whatever grade that may have been) if his educational experience was so great as to make him ineligible for a full refund upon withdrawal. Of all the reality checks, this one was the greatest for me.

I love us. I don't know what would have been, as far as I'm concerned, were it not for Free Will Baptists. To have come so far with so much difficulty in so short a time is truly amazing. Sometimes I marvel and wonder if we're what Jeff Foxworthy had in mind. Everything I am and have is wrapped up in Free Will Baptists, tomatoes and mules notwithstanding.

About three miles from my home in Cookeville is a small farm where a man raises mules. He has about three-score beautiful reddish-brown animals. I gotta admit—sometimes I ride by, watching them graze peacefully near the roadside and wonder, "What if . . . ?" ■



**ABOUT THE WRITER:** Reverend Sterl Paramore, who still has never plowed a mule, pastors Cookeville FWB Church in Cookeville, Tennessee.



# Prisoner of Darkness

By Kirsten Caison



**A**lonely prisoner lies in his dank cell, nerves on edge and pulse jumping. Night has fallen, and once more, he must be on his guard. Darkness bathes the prison in eerie shadows and masked corners, chasing away what little comfort a prison can offer during the day. He must sleep with one eye open, never resting till daybreak. When sunlight peeks over the eastern horizon, he knows he can finally be at peace. Night and its unknown dangers can't harm him anymore.

Children fear the dark because they do not know what may be lurking in the shadows. Night time disfigures friendly objects, and the unknown overwhelms their minds. Children are accustomed to light and prefer to dwell in it.

Parents and child psychologists correctly state, "A child's fear of the dark is only a phase; they can and

will outgrow it."

I believe there is an age when a childhood fear of the dark is exchanged for fear of the light! What else can explain man's undeniable fascination with things dark and evil?

Ephesians 5:12 plainly states, "For it is shameful even to speak of those things which are done by them in secret," (NKJV).

Obviously, certain behaviors are easier performed by light, such as reading or the simple act of observation. Others are more suited to a dimmer atmosphere, like sleeping, catching fireflies or playing hide-and-seek.

However, we humans soon learn that darkness is also particularly useful in disguising flaws, masking doubts and fears and hiding indiscretions. The concealing properties of darkness must also muddy our brains and cloud our reason, because we seem to think that dark-

ness makes sin disappear.

Our attitude, like that of "free love," claims no responsibility for any action because we feel that no one else could possibly know what we have done. Therein lies the faultiness of our thinking, for the Bible says,

Lord, You have searched me and known me.  
You know my sitting down and my rising up;  
You understand my thought afar off.  
You comprehend my path and my lying down,  
And are acquainted with all my ways.  
For there is not a word on my tongue,  
But behold, O Lord, You know it altogether,  
(Psalm 139:1-4, NKJV).

How much plainer can it be? "Secret" acts are not really secret, for God knows all and sees all. And still we live in the dark, pretending that our sins are invisible when, in reality, we are helping coals of fire upon our own heads.

The first step into light is admitting our guilt and acknowledging that we



need help. The second is accepting that the only way to step out of the dark and into the blinding light is through Jesus Christ.

Ephesians 5:14 challenges, "Wake up from your sleep, Climb out of your coffins, Christ will show you the light!" (The Message).

Those living in darkness are said to be dead, living in coffins! But God's promise is just as vivid as His metaphor: if man will take the first step, then Jesus will give us the light! No longer will he wallow in darkness, fearing the exposure of his faults; rather, he will stand proudly in Jesus' circle of light, and be seen as perfect as He.

What a privilege, and what an awesome adventure, to be living free in Jesus. The change is complete: "For you were once darkness, but now you are light in the Lord," (Ephesians 5:8, NKJV).

That lonely prisoner in the first

paragraph? My friend, that is you. Sin beckons, the devil taunts and evil seduces at every threshold. Darkness is their playground, and they are in the habit of functioning in it since they are as far removed from Jesus, and therefore the Light, as is possible.

You, however, are capable of only stumbling and groping for something familiar in the foreign realm of darkness. You are easy prey, and sleeping with one eye open will never be enough to protect you. The enemy is faster, stronger and sneakier than even the harshest of criminals.

'Might as well admit it: you are weak, and any efforts on your part are ineffectual against the devil and his demons. But take heart! God has told us, "... my strength is made perfect in weakness," (II Corinthians 12:9, NKJV).

You don't have to fight the darkness yourself. With Jesus as your Ally, darkness won't even stick around to

see the fight! "And the light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not comprehend it," (John 1:5, NKJV).

I challenge you—throw off your shackles and step into the light. An adventure like no other awaits you, and the forecast calls for a brightly shining Son all the way Home. ■



ABOUT THE WRITER: Kirsten Caison, a high school senior, is a member of Southwest Free Will Baptist Church in Oklahoma City, Oklahoma.

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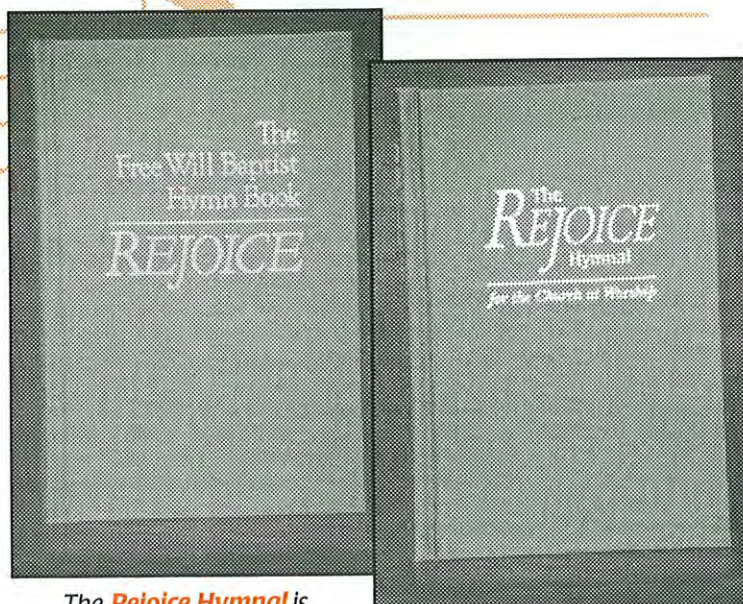
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# New Shoes for Old

By Joe Seay



It was a lie, telling the dirty, tattered stranger I wasn't going his way. A convenient lie. Everyone knows how dangerous it is to pick up a hitchhiker, but I could have just told the truth and refused to give him a ride.

The conviction of the Holy Spirit settled in upon me and I wrestled with my conscience as I put my key into the ignition. I've been a Christian for many years and I'm not in the habit of lying to anyone about anything. But who could blame me in this case?

The ragged young man with uncombed hair and a heavy beard had approached me as I left the bank, just as I was getting into my car. "Could you help me, please?" had been his opening line.

"What can I help you with?" I asked with a wary eye on the distance between us.

He wanted to know the location of the Navy recruiting station and he needed a ride there. That's when I told him I wasn't headed that way, even though I was. After all, this pitiful looking character didn't need a blunt rejection from me to add to the wounds he already carried. And I couldn't afford to give him a ride.

What if he planned to attack me and steal my car?

Then I hear the voice. "Give him a ride," it said.

Had I imagined it? Was my guilty conscience playing tricks on me? I heard it again. "Give him a ride."

I couldn't tell if I was hearing the words with my physical ears or only in my mind, but they were distinct and to the point. "Lord, is that really You?" I prayed softly. But I already knew what I was going to do.

I got out of my car and told the man I *would* be going by the Navy recruiting station and would be pleased to give him a ride. As we drove along, he rewarded me for my generosity by commenting, "This sure is a nice car."

Suspicions leaped into my mind. He wanted my car. What might he do to get it?

"Lord, I'm in Your hands now," I prayed silently.

Then the young man began to share some of his experiences with me. He had come to town looking for work but had been unable to find any. He was broke, homeless and discouraged. He was only 19 years old and far from home.

He was lonely and disappointed in people. In fact, he had decided that his best option was to "join the Navy and see the world."

I was touched by his sincerity and began to ask about his priorities and what he felt was important in his life. It turned out that he didn't really want to join the Navy, but had made that decision out of a sense of desperation. In fact, he wasn't even sure the Navy would want him, looking the way he did, especially his shoes.

I looked at his feet, which sported a pair of old worn-out sandals. He explained that he had spent several nights in the back yard of a vacant house and the night before, while he slept, someone had stolen his shoes. He didn't have money to buy food, much less shoes, so he'd looked around until he found the discarded sandals.

By this time I had warmed up to this hungry, friendless young man who was about the same age as my son. So I invited him to go with me to



the Christian Men's Club luncheon. I was on my way there now.

He declined saying he didn't want a hand-out. In response, I heard these words come out of my mouth, "If you will go with me to this meeting and allow me to treat you to a good meal, I believe God will provide you a pair of shoes."

What kind of answer was *that*?

*Did I say that?* I wondered. *Lord, is that You again?*

My passenger perked up. "Do you really think God will do that?" he asked.

Sounding as confident as I could, I replied, "I'm sure He will."

So my new friend in his wrinkled clothes, single-strap sandals and long hair went with me to the luncheon. He ate a big plate of food, but politely refused to return for seconds, in spite of my urging.

When the time came for me to introduce my guest, I mentioned my new friend's need for shoes and my promise that God would provide him shoes if he attended the meeting. By then I was certain the Lord was going to supply this likable young man with a more substantial pair of shoes than the sandals he had found.

As the meeting proceeded, another stranger entered the drama. He was a man who had attended the Christian Men's Club mid-weekly luncheon only once in the 17-year history of the club. And the day he attended was the day I promised a needy young man a pair of shoes.

Unnoticed, this man slipped out of the room. Five minutes later he returned and handed my young guest a box. "Here," he said. "These are for you."

Inside the box was a pair of cowboy boots. My friend was thrilled. In west Texas, cowboy boots are perpetually stylish. "Did he just give these to me?" he asked.



"He sure did!" I answered.

"But I have a big foot," he said. "I wear a size 12 shoe. I wonder what size these boots are."

I had an answer ready, "I'm sure they are size 12."

They *were* size 12 and when my friend tried them on, they were a perfect fit. Of course! God knew what size his feet were.

After the meeting, several Christian men joined me in explaining the love of Christ for everyone. Our new, young friend repented and committed his life to Jesus Christ. Then he agreed to call his parents in another state and tell them about his decision.

There was great rejoicing that day over a young man's opportunity to exchange tired old sandals for cowboy boots and his decision to exchange filthy rags for robes of righteousness.

As for me, my ability to hear from the Lord was refined and encouraged that day. And I was reminded of the awesome joy available to those who hear and obey the still, small voice of God. ■



**ABOUT THE WRITER:** Joe Seay is a 63-year-old free-lance writer who resides in Greenbrier, Arkansas.

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# FREE WILL BAPTIST NEWSFRONT

## Leadership Conference Set for December

ANTIOCH, TN—The annual Free Will Baptist Leadership Conference will meet December 1-2 at Regal Maxwell House Hotel in Nashville, according to executive secretary Melvin Worthington. Some 150 state leaders are expected to participate in the two-day conference.

Conference registration begins Monday, December 1, at 2:00 p.m. After an opening dinner at 5:30 p.m., attendees will gather for a two-hour session in the hotel's Grande Ballroom.

The 1997 conference theme will be "The Grace of Giving."

Seven one-hour sessions will be planned around the theme.

Al Taylor, stewardship director with the Church of God (Cleveland, TN), will deliver the keynote address and speak four times.

Other speakers and seminar leaders include Frank Ingraham, a Nashville attorney and William Evans, general director of the Board of Retirement.

National Association moderator Carl Cheshier and assistant moderator Tim York will preside. In the first gathering of its kind, moderator Carl Cheshier will lead a two-hour meeting Tuesday

afternoon for the chairmen of all national boards to discuss salary guidelines for department personnel.

Monday afternoon preceding the Leadership Conference, executive secretary Melvin Worthington and the four Free Will Baptist college presidents will meet for a time of fellowship.

The Leadership Conference will conclude Tuesday evening at 9:00 p.m. National boards will then meet separately to conduct the business of each agency.

## Mexican National Association Meets in Monterrey

MONTERREY, MEXICO—The 37th annual meeting of the Mexican National Association of Free Will Baptists met July 31-August 3 at El Uro Camp in Monterrey. Attendance reached a high of 300 for Saturday evening and Sunday morning sessions.

The association theme, "Submitting to Authority," was developed by four special speakers. Pastor Gonzalo Medina spoke on "Submission to Divine Authority." Executive secretary Melvin Worthington spoke on "Submission to the Authority of the Church." Home Missions director Trymon Messer spoke on "Submission to the Authority of the Family." Pastor Salvador spoke on "Submission to Civil Authority."

Business was conducted Thursday, the General Board

meeting was led by president Javier Gallegos. Delegates heard reports of various national organizations.

James Munsey, missionary coordinator for Mexico, reported on his activities. Ramon Zuniga was presented as the new president of Seminary of the Cross. He reported plans for opening the new school year.

Pastor Jesus de la Rosa, El Uro Camp custodian, reported on the new well and condition of the buildings at the camp. Delegates also heard Women's Auxiliary president Sylvia Guapo's report.

The National Women's Auxiliary met Saturday. James Munsey spoke during the worship hour continuing the theme by speaking on, "Submission to Judgement."

Elvira Gonzalez, wife of Pastor

Hilarino Gonzalez, was elected new president of the national organization. Plans were made for a ladies' retreat in November.

During the Sunday morning session, a special four-year Bible diploma was presented to Paulina Puga by Ramon Zuniga, president of Seminary of the Cross.

Special visitors for the meeting were Home Missions director Trymon Messer and board members Wendell Walley and Earl Hendrix; executive secretary Melvin Worthington and his wife Anne; Texas Home Missions representative Ed Morris and Pastor Kenneth Cash.

Ladies from Mexico's Northeastern District prepared excellent meals for the meeting.

The 1998 national association will meet at El Uro Camp July 30-August 2.



## New Church Organizes in North Carolina

WENDELL, NC—Charity FWB Church in Wendell, NC, organized Sunday afternoon, August 10, with 35 members. Pastor Jerry Johnson gave the welcome to 67 attendees.

North Carolina promotional director Jim Marcum preached the organizational message. Billy Blackmon presented a detailed history of activities leading up to the organizational service.

Reverend Nathan Eason gave the charge. Reverend Johnny Sexton presented the Church Covenant. Van Mitchell, Lisa Holland and Beth Young presented the special music program.

The congregation is meeting temporarily in an educational center in Wendell just off State Highway 97. They are searching for land on which to build permanent facilities.

The church emerged from prayer meetings which began November 19, 1996. The first Sunday services were conducted February 16, 1997,

with David Paramore preaching. Twelve different preachers filled the pulpit until May 28.

The church called Jerry Johnson as full-time pastor June 1.



Wednesday night prayer meeting at Charity FWB Church.

## Southeastern College Has 150 Students

WENDELL, NC—Fall classes at Southeastern FWB College began August 27 with 150 students, according to President Billy Bevan. Students from 18 states compose the student body.

The fall enrollment includes 66 freshmen, 45 sophomores, 24 juniors and 15 seniors. Many students are preparing for full-time Christian service in churches, Christian schools and mission fields.

President Bevan said that he expects work on the 21,000-square-foot Student Activity Center to be completed by mid-year 1998.

Fall "Get Acquainted Days" scheduled November 13-15 at Southeastern will be open to high school 10th, 11th and 12th graders, according to Dr. Jack Lassiter. The cost is \$20 per student. Interested students should call the college's toll-free number (1-888/847-3922) for registration forms.

## Pastor Cutshall Celebrates 30 Years

LIMESTONE, TN—Reverend Alfred Cutshall marked 30 years as pastor of Limestone FWB Church August 24. The congregation scheduled a pastor appreciation day and arranged a day of surprises for the east Tennessee minister.

Member Ralph Shipley presented a \$3,000 check to Pastor Cutshall from the church, \$100 for each year he has led the congregation. Member Faye Mitchell presented him with a Sunday School pin for 29 years of perfect attendance (Pastor Cutshall was sick one Sunday).

Visitors from two other Tennessee churches where Reverend Cutshall pastored also participated in the celebration—Kingsley Avenue FWB Church (Greeneville) and Centerview FWB Church (Newport).

Officials called attention to several dimensions of Pastor Cutshall's ministry, including the first couple he married, the first convert he baptized, the first deacon he ordained and more.

Several guests spoke from behind a closed door of past events in Brother Cutshall's career, many of whom he identified. One of those was Foreign Missions Department director Eugene Waddell who commended the Limestone congregation for giving \$38,000 to world outreach.

Members provided a meal for all attendees as the celebration came to a close.

## CCC Doubles Enrollment

FRESNO, CA—California Christian College began the fall semester with a 98% increase in enrollment over the spring semester, according to Greg McAllister, academic dean. The Fresno school registered 88 full-time, seven part-time and four audit students, for a total of 99 students.

This number includes 31 Slavic students and six South Korean students. CCC has launched ESL remedial courses for refugee and non-resident immigrant students, and a Russian language Bible program for Slavic students.

President Jim McAllister traveled to South Korea in June 1997, and plans to travel to the Ukraine in summer 1998. Pastor Leonid Morgun, Ukrainian refugee and professor at CCC, recruited students from refugee communities in Sacramento and Fresno.

CCC looks forward to further growth in spring 1998.



## Free Will Baptist Bible College Enrolls 342

NASHVILLE, TN—Free Will Baptist Bible College enrolled 342 students from 27 states, the U. S. Virgin Islands and nine foreign countries for the fall semester, according to Dr. Charles E. Hampton, registrar.

By classes, they number 99 freshmen, 87 sophomores, 73 juniors, 74 seniors, and nine special students. Full-time students number 289; 53 are part-time.

The 19 foreign students come from Bahamas—2, Brazil—2, Canada—8, France—1, Panama—2, Romania—1, Russia—1 and Spain—2. By states they number:

Alabama .....	18	Nebraska .....	1
Arkansas .....	18	New Mexico .....	1
Arizona .....	2	North Carolina .....	24
California .....	2	Ohio .....	12
Colorado .....	2	Oklahoma .....	6

Florida .....	13
Georgia .....	14
Idaho .....	1
Illinois .....	43
Indiana .....	12
Kentucky .....	10
Louisiana .....	1
Michigan .....	11
Mississippi .....	7
Missouri .....	18

South Carolina .....	11
South Dakota .....	2
Tennessee .....	72
Texas .....	3
Virginia .....	13
Washington .....	2
West Virginia .....	3
U.S. Virgin Islands .....	1
Foreign .....	19

Other breakdowns show the following:

Men .....	194	Single .....	286
Women .....	148	Married .....	56
Free Will Baptist .....	321	Other .....	21



New incoming students at Free Will Baptist Bible College.

## Hillsdale College Enrollment Up 25%

MOORE, OK—With 89 freshmen students, one of the largest groups in the school's history, enrollment jumped 25% at Hillsdale FWB College, according to Sue Chaffin, registrar. Some 150 students enrolled for the fall semester.

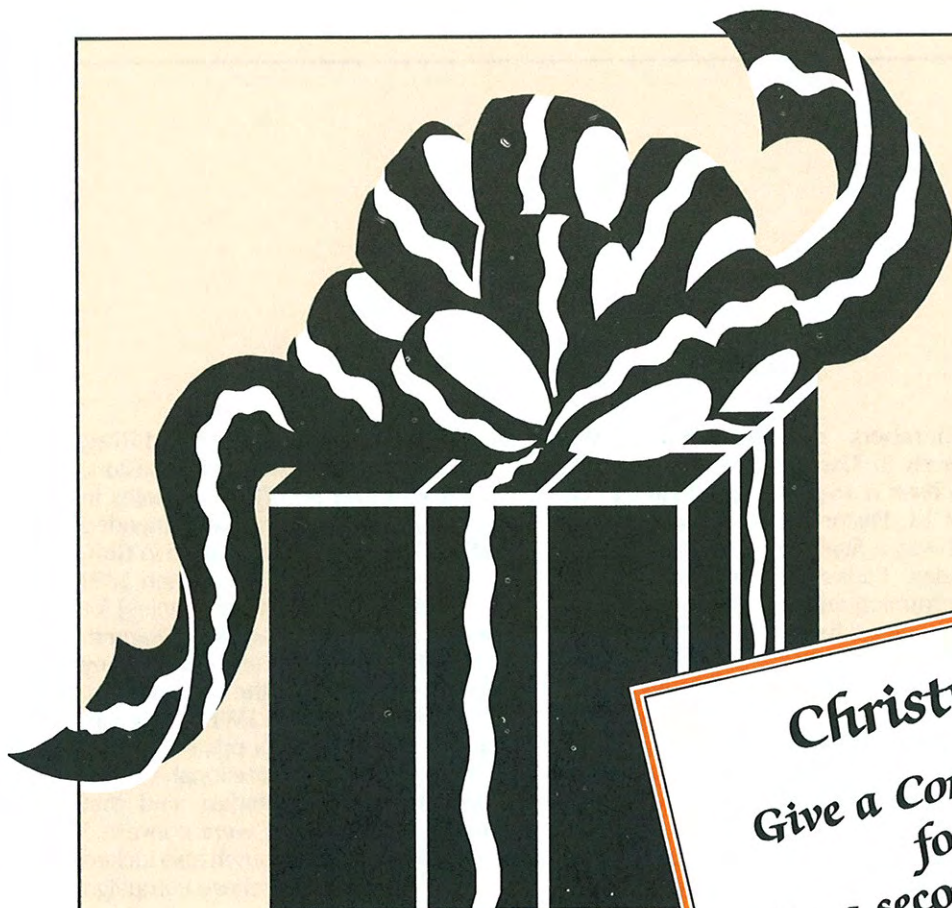
By classification, the fall enrollment includes:

Freshmen .....	89
Sophomores .....	30
Juniors .....	13
Seniors .....	11
Non-Degree Students .....	7

International students hail from 10 foreign countries: Brazil, Cuba, Indonesia, Iran, Japan, Lebanon, Nigeria, Saudi Arabia, Spain and Russia.

Reverend Carl Cheshier, moderator of the National Association of Free Will Baptists, became president of Hillsdale College on August 1. The new president came from a 28-year pastorate at Cavanaugh FWB Church in Fort Smith, Arkansas.





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**Southgate FWB Church** in **Southgate, MI**, broke ground in July for a 6,000-square-foot fellowship hall. **Ron Helms** pastors.

Fifty years ago, a group of **Missouri** ministers were called to **Cabool** in order to organize a church there. They did just that. The **First FWB Church** observed its jubilee celebration in August. **Russell McDaris** pastors.

Members of **Mill Creek FWB Church** in **Fredericktown, MO**, declared June 29 as Victory Sunday. Pastor **Ricky Chapman** led a mortgage burning ceremony as the congregation paid off a 10-year loan four years early. The church had signed the mortgage in 1990 to finance an educational and fellowship addition. Former executive secretary, **Clarence Burton**, delivered the morning message.

The **Arkansas** chapter of Friends and Alumni of Hillsdale FWB College organized August 6. President **Bob Thompson** as well as fellow officers **Andy Pearcy** (vice president) and **Don Guthrie** (secretary/treasurer) will keep constituents informed about Hillsdale College events and goals.

**Florida** preacher **Arnold Woodlief** marked 45 years in the ministry in July. He has pastored three churches in Florida and conducted revivals in six states. In addition, Woodlief maintains a street and jail ministry and an outreach to the elderly.

Five new Maytag washers and dryers, valued at more than \$4,000, were delivered to **FWB Family Ministries** in **Greenville, TN**. The machines, a gift from Burton Rubber Company (Jonesborough, TN), were provided by Monk's Appliance at a substantial discount.

Pastor **Bobby Shepherd** completed 16 years at **First FWB Church** in **Batesville, AR**. The church declared August, "Teachers and Officers" appreciation month and held a September 23 banquet in their honor. The Master's Men chapter refurbished the church sign with three-dimensional letters.

Members of **Pocahontas FWB Church** in **Carbon Hill, AL**, voted to purchase a 15-passenger, 1996 van on July 13. Pastor **Roger Lucas** thought that was a fitting conclusion to a great Sunday. Earlier that evening, he led communion and feet washing services and baptized three new converts.

After flood waters receded, members of **First FWB Church** in **Olivehurst, CA**, installed a new floor and moved back into the sanctuary. Pastor **Emery Webb** said the group had been worshipping in the dining hall.

**Blue Point FWB Church** in **Cisne, IL**, celebrated their centennial anniversary October 12. The church recently replaced the sanctuary roof and remodeled the bell tower roof. **Ernie Lewis** pastors.

The youth at **Ina FWB Church** in **Ina, IL**, raised \$3,000 for the David Potete land fund (Potete pastors a mission church in Chicago). They then went to Chicago and presented the funds in person. **David Shores** pastors the energetic Ina group.

They named June 22 **Charlie Chandler Day** at **Peace FWB Church** in **Granite City, IL**. Brother Chandler served 35 years as Sunday School superintendent until health forced him to resign. Members gave him a book of cards, well wishes and notes from the congregation. **David Malone** pastors.

**Dolan Burris** won the Silver Star for bravery in World War I. He returned home to serve 12 years in the Arkansas General Assembly, teach 27 years, serve as Justice of the Peace and write a 285-page book about his family and life. Mr. Burris was a long-time member and deacon at **Mount Vernon FWB Church** in **Russellville, AR**. He died August 1 at age 103. Pastor **Earl Stapleton** officiated at the funeral.

Thirty-six years ago, **Fletcher "Bud" Riley** joined **Hazel Creek FWB Church** in **Kirkville, MO**. He served 21 years as Sunday School superintendent and still serves as deacon. This summer, the

**Hazel Creek Church** named Bud Riley, "Father of the Year." **Ken Reiter** pastors.

Did you ever see 72,000 pennies in one pile? The 57 children who attended VBS at **Oak Valley FWB Church** in **Geff, IL**, have. They raised more than \$330 (including the mountain of pennies) for Illinois home missionary **Ken Doggett**. Pastor **James Boggs** leads the penny savers...and the rest of the congregation.

Members of **Peace FWB Church** in **Wilson, NC**, conduct a prison ministry at Rocky Mount Correctional Center. Pastor **Gordon Sebastian** said that more than 14 inmates were converted in the past year. The church also kicked off a \$150,000 land purchase campaign in August.

**McCurtain FWB Church** in **McCurtain, OK**, dedicated a 7,000-square-foot building June 22. The structure contains a 200-seat sanctuary, seven classrooms, nursery, kitchen and fellowship hall. Pastor **N. L. Craig** said the good news is that the church is debt-free. Oklahoma executive secretary **Jack Richey** preached the dedicatory message Sunday afternoon.

Members of **First FWB Church** in **Henryetta, OK**, celebrated their 50th anniversary August 31. **John Staggs** pastors.

Pastor **Terry Hennecke** led mortgage-burning ceremonies at **First FWB Church** in **Brunswick, GA**. The debt-free congregation now has 17 acres and seven buildings, including a Christian school.

Pastor **Carl Miller** reports 18 conversions at **Double Branch FWB Church** in **Unadilla, GA**. Morning worship averages 140.

**First FWB Church** in **Lebanon, MO**, gave member **Ermel Hefton** a plaque for 50 years' service as a deacon. **Ken Haney** pastors. ■



## FREE WILL BAPTIST BIBLE COLLEGE

### *"What Did You Do Last Summer?"*

By Bert Tippet, Public Relations Director

In spite of the barrage of nightly bad news, I refuse to give up on young people. Indeed, I love those I work with. They constantly amaze and encourage me.

A young student told me the other night how he recently took his youth group a long distance to help a struggling pastor establish a church. He and his kids knocked on some 500 doors, getting out the word about the church and the Lord. Now, that's good news!

But I am finding there is more good news where that came from; among the students now enrolled at FWBBC.

When our students began returning this fall, two things surprised me.

First, I was surprised (and pleased) at how glad they were to be back. I had supposed many would be returning reluctantly. After all, they were coming back for more classes, term papers, exams and all the rest that goes with intensive college life. But every student I asked told me he or she was looking forward to getting back. I like that. I'm glad our students want to be here, and miss the college and those of us who work here when they are away.

But I was also amazed when they told me all they did during the summer.

Many held down jobs at home or in Nashville. That isn't so amazing, of course. It is pretty much to be expected. In spite of our financial aid programs, students tell me they still have to work in order to come to school. FWBBC students still make good workers. We hear it all the time. Businesses actively recruit Bible College young people for part- and full-time jobs.

Others toured for the college during the hot summer months, conducting services in Free Will Baptist churches in 12 states. The Rejoice Ministry Team leader, Chris Adams, reported numbers of decisions in their services. So did Justin Meek, leader of The Evangelists Drama Team. Both felt the Lord used their ministries in significant ways.

The summer camping ministry was a big part of the summer for other students. Kenny Simpson, Recruitment Director for the college, ran into several as he visited camps across the denomination. He says they were doing a good job. Kenny reports five decisions for salvation and more than

60 rededications in the camps he visited in Alabama, Georgia, Florida, and Ohio. "Youth camp is a great time to evaluate one's priorities," he observed. "The harvest is truly plenteous, but the laborers are few."

Twelve FWBBC students were part of the Go & Be Team that left May 22 for Ivory Coast. For six weeks, they sat under the instruction of missionaries Clint Morgan and Mike Cousineau, learning how to share the gospel cross-culturally. They reported that the experience opened their eyes to the foreign fields and the possibility that God might want them to serve in such places.

The Legacy of Praise Quartet, which has toured extensively for the college (a great bunch of guys from Arkansas), went to Russia with Rick Amato's RAM Ministries. They handed out 110,000 Bibles and saw more than 100 saved! "You could tell that some people had never seen the Word," said Tim Smith. Shane Davison remembered worshipping in the Moscow Baptist Church on a hot Sunday morning. More than a thousand were gathered in a building that seats 600-700. "These people really know who God is," he said. Bobby Edwards added, "In this place, that has been Satan's playground, the need for the presence of God becomes very real."

FWBBC students ministered in many other places, but this sampler gives you the idea.

There is plenty of bad news out there about the Generation-X. It can be pretty depressing. But that isn't the whole story. There are plenty of young people, from FWBBC and other places, who spent their summers constructively, making a world of difference for the Lord. ■

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## FREE WILL BAPTIST FOUNDATION

# *The Gift That Keeps on Giving*

By Frank Giunta

John is a 56-year-old married man with two children. He is successful in business with an annual income of \$125,000.

Derek is 43, married and has no children. He is employed in computer electronics. His annual income averages \$70,000.

Nancy is 34 and single. She is a physical therapist with an annual income of \$38,000.

As widely different as these three people appear to be on the surface, there is something they all share—they are devoted Christians, eager to get the gospel out to all the world. Their differences do not stop with their vocations or the wide gaps in their income. Each shares a different concept of the best way to give to the Lord's work.

Nancy is sold on the idea of getting money into the hands of her favorite ministry, the college where she received her basic Bible training. She feels the money is urgently needed to cover expenses for daily operating costs.

Derek and his wife feel that it is best to leave a bequest from their joint estate for their favorite home missions work. They reason that since they have no children and all of their family seem to be doing well financially, the money God has given them could go back into His work, providing enough funds to finance the beginning of a new mission project.

John's focus is on the medical missions program serving the Lord on a foreign field. He is interested in providing funds on a long-term basis.

Each of these devoted Christians reveal a warm and generous heart for the Lord's work, but the idea of giving their money is very different. Let's take a look at the types of gifts that they have decided upon.

1. Nancy has chosen to send cash that will go toward the daily expenses of her alma mater. No doubt as a student she heard urgent appeals for "cash to pay the bills."

I cannot fathom any aspect of God's work succeeding without its monthly and annual supporters.

2. The idea that Derek has is to leave a substantial bequest from his and his wife's joint estate through their will. He

cannot think of a better place for their money than in the Lord's work.

They are excited about the prospects of their estate single-handedly providing funds for an entire home missions project in some unevangelized area.

3. John is our last example and portrays the concept of the gift that keeps on giving. John is fully aware of the money needed for start-up cost; he also understands the importance of sufficient funds to take care of operating expenses. He feels that if God's work is to be maintained properly it must have regular and dependable infusions of money. He has discovered that *endowment* giving does exactly that.

An endowment can be established through the Free Will Baptist Foundation for a wide variety of denominational programs, for as little as \$1,000. Gifts to an endowment provide the kind of dependable regular income that eliminates many of the money problems with which ministries struggle.

The endowment program is an old and tested program that is growing in popularity because of its favorable benefits. Many of our national ministries already have endowment programs established that could be added to in any amount. In addition to our national ministries the endowment program has almost unlimited potential for churches, quarterlies and state programs.

The Free Will Baptist Foundation endowment program earned 15.5% on its investments for the six months ending June 30, 1997. This meant a great return for ministries that were endowed.

Cash gifts to endowments are fully deductible!

If you are interested in information on the remarkable gift that gives and gives and keeps on giving, contact us at: The Free Will Baptist Foundation, Post Office Box 5002, Antioch, TN, 37011-5002 or call me at home 573/335-6240. ■





## HOME MISSIONS

*Priority Check*

By David Crowe

When I came to Home Missions in February 1996, Brother Trymon Messer told me to make the missionaries top priority. My job was to make that happen. I began visiting missionaries on the fields where they serve, staying three days, sometimes more, with each missionary family.

While with the missionaries, I try to encourage them and the people of their church. I attempt to motivate for church growth and soul-winning. I listen to problems and complaints and just let them unload. I fellowship with the home missions family and get to know them. The home missionary and I discuss their goals for the future and how they plan to reach those goals. Time is spent in preaching to their congregation, praying with them and for them, promoting Home Missions.

In 19 months, I've visited 55 missionaries, associate missionaries and tentmakers. By the summer of 1998 I will have visited all our home missionaries, including five new missionary families. I write the missionaries almost every month to encourage them, to challenge them and to motivate them to have special days in the fall and spring (Roll Call Sunday).

There have been many salvation decisions, rededications and other commitments. Several young men have answered the call to preach or to full-time Christian service. It is evident to me that we have some wonderful families serving as Free Will Baptist home missionaries. I have been treated like royalty in each place I have visited. Most of our home missions churches are growing and doing well. For the few that are not, we are trying everything we know to help them.

In *prayer*, the missionaries are the top priority. We started a prayer program titled, "Praying Down the Walls," that puts emphasis in prayer on the missionaries.

In *training*, the missionaries are the top priority. The missionary training and evaluation conference is held each January in Nashville. All missionaries are required to attend and many bring their wives. This conference puts the emphasis in training on the missionary.

In *mission services* across our denomination, the missionaries are the top priority. The missionaries are scheduled first, and then if we still have services to fill, the office staff is used,

putting the emphasis on the missionaries.

I hope you have noticed a different attitude and atmosphere among our missionaries and in our office. There is a new excitement about Home Missions.

It is important to me that you understand we have made the missionaries top priority, but this does not come without a price. The general fund pays my salary and most of my expenses to visit the missionaries. (Some of the mission churches are able to and do pay a small part of those expenses.) The general fund pays for the promotions and publicity we give our missionaries. The general fund bears the brunt of deficit missionary accounts and funds the annual training conference. The general fund provides the office staff that supports the missionaries.

At this time the general fund is over \$65,000 in the red. We depend on the Benjamin Randall Offering each November to pull out the general fund each year. I cannot express how much we depend on this offering to keep all our programs going. I believe the Home Missions general fund is worthy of your support, in light of all that it does to make our missionaries the top priority.

Our general director has also made the missionaries his priority. He needs our help, yours and mine, to see that this never changes. Please prayerfully consider taking a special offering on Benjamin Randall Day, November 23.

For every offering of \$35 or more, Home Missions will send "The Heritage Collection Set." This includes a copy of each of the five books that Home Missions has printed about Free Will Baptist history and heritage. These books may never be printed again. You will want all five for your library.

Also, this may be the last time the heritage tour will be offered for winners of the different categories. There will be some new sights on the trip in the fall of 1998. If you ever plan to go, work hard this year to win the trip. You may not have another opportunity.

Thanks to each of you who have helped us make the missionaries top priority at Free Will Baptist Home Missions. With God's leadership and your faithful support, Home Missions will continue to encourage, educate, evaluate and elevate the missionaries. ■



## Capital Stewardship/Victory Campaign

August 1997  
Update

State	Goal	Gifts	Balance
Alabama	\$76,397.63	\$ 5,041.15	\$71,356.48
Arizona	1,228.93	2,883.71	(1,654.78)
Arkansas	76,860.94	43,422.13	33,438.81
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	30,085.88	8,093.31
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	5,949.29	29,505.05
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	33,814.91	26,669.49
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	65,936.89	12,620.20
Texas	11,547.20	7,516.52	4,030.68
Virginia	24,323.33	2,027.93	22,295.40
Virgin Islands		200.00	(200.00)
West Virginia	46,204.51	1,023.00	45,181.51
Wisconsin		61.00	(61.00)
Other		2,978.85	(2,978.85)
<b>Totals</b>	<b>\$766,583.39</b>	<b>\$283,684.32</b>	<b>\$482,899.07</b>

## Directory Update

### ALABAMA

Ronnie Lloyd to Sardis Church, Eufaula

### FLORIDA

Derek Washington to Travelers Rest Church, Altha

### NORTH CAROLINA

Jerry Johnson to Charity Church, Wendell  
from Travelers Rest Church, Altha, FL

### OHIO

Paul Williams to Frederick Church, Wheelersburg



August 1997

Receipts:			August 1997		
State	Designated	Co-op	Year To Date Total	Designated	Year To Date Co-op
Alabama	\$ 341.42	\$ .00	\$ 341.42	\$ 3,460.63	\$ .00
Arizona	.00	.00	.00	2,868.15	235.00
Arkansas	15,682.68	13,693.29	29,375.97	105,078.73	100,057.98
California	.00	1,072.40	1,072.40	55.00	7,916.26
Colorado	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00
Delaware	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00
Florida	.00	4,150.00	4,150.00	170.88	16,150.00
Georgia	14,611.73	2,246.64	16,858.37	141,904.13	22,116.19
Hawaii	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00
Idaho	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00
Illinois	7,358.89	2,228.52	9,587.41	74,787.51	19,170.90
Indiana	757.47	77.49	834.96	7,739.57	1,469.97
Iowa	.00	.00	.00	310.00	2,152.30
Kansas	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00
Kentucky	937.08	435.92	1,373.00	9,186.58	4,148.33
Louisiana	.00	.00	.00	50.00	.00
Maryland	.00	.00	.00	.00	2,341.78
Michigan	7,618.90	2,718.94	10,337.84	98,982.37	21,915.26
Mississippi	140.03	385.52	525.55	919.78	2,923.34
Missouri	37,994.98	.00	37,994.98	351,036.48	.00
Montana	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00
Nebraska	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00
New Jersey	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00
New Mexico	2,294.99	42.06	2,337.05	7,793.62	406.39
North Carolina	3,077.53	1,433.60	4,511.13	8,710.84	9,701.61
Ohio	8,552.15	4,635.74	13,187.89	62,730.36	26,860.04
Oklahoma	55,514.12	10,409.88	65,924.00	429,725.92	16,825.26
South Carolina	22,954.38	129.39	23,083.77	232,572.20	847.40
South Dakota	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00
Tennessee	22,193.89	5,128.35	27,322.24	85,067.65	15,932.41
Texas	4,107.76	316.09	4,423.85	50,734.87	2,933.63
Virginia	586.69	25.00	611.69	6,962.37	200.00
Virgin Islands	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00
West Virginia	4,541.96	84.53	4,626.49	35,749.13	484.65
Wisconsin	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00
Canada	171.33	11.42	182.75	1,040.35	42.89
Northwest Assoc.	.00	.00	.00	.00	15.00
Northeast Assoc.	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00
Other	.00	(0.01)	(0.01)	210.00	.11
<b>Totals</b>	<b>\$209,437.98</b>	<b>\$49,224.77</b>	<b>\$258,662.75</b>	<b>\$1,717,847.12</b>	<b>\$274,846.70</b>

### Disbursements:

Executive Office	\$ 6,232.22	\$24,612.42	\$ 30,844.64	\$ 73,851.05	\$137,423.56	\$ 211,274.61
Foreign Missions	131,434.85	5,660.85	137,095.70	1,035,609.79	31,607.32	1,067,217.11
FWBBC	12,303.81	5,660.85	17,964.66	110,166.98	31,607.32	141,774.30
Home Missions	53,432.90	4,430.24	57,863.14	422,385.52	24,736.16	447,121.68
Retirement & Insurance	911.65	3,445.73	4,357.38	9,490.11	19,239.24	28,729.35
Master's Men	975.39	3,445.73	4,421.12	14,407.59	19,239.24	33,646.83
Comm. for Theo. Integrity	57.29	123.05	180.34	812.60	687.12	1,499.72
FWB Foundation	1,052.06	1,476.75	2,528.81	10,598.64	8,245.38	18,844.02
Historical Commission	40.78	123.05	163.83	675.42	687.12	1,362.54
Music Commission	34.67	123.05	157.72	610.65	687.12	1,297.77
Radio & TV Commission	45.05	123.05	168.10	675.61	687.12	1,362.73
Hillsdale FWB College	1,081.67	.00	1,081.67	10,108.95	.00	10,108.95
Other	1,835.64	.00	1,835.64	28,454.21	.00	28,454.21
<b>Totals</b>	<b>\$209,437.98</b>	<b>\$49,224.77</b>	<b>\$258,662.75</b>	<b>\$1,717,847.12</b>	<b>\$274,846.70</b>	<b>\$1,992,693.82</b>



## James—the Less

**T**hree of the last four of the apostles—Judas being the exception—are the ones we know least about. This one is identified consistently as “Judas, the son of Alphaeus” in all four lists (Mt. 10:2-4; Mk. 3:16-19; Lk. 6:14-16; Acts 1:13) and is always named ninth.

There are at least three men named James who were closely involved with Jesus: (1) the better known apostle, brother of John and son of Zebedee, martyred in the early persecution of the church; (2) James “the Lord’s brother” (Gal. 1:19) who became prominent in the early Jerusalem church (Acts 15:13), often known as James the Just; and (3) the ninth apostle who is the subject of this article.

One writer, Fred Wyand, observes that “the Scripture leaves us in total ignorance about him, save to say that he was the son of Alphaeus.” Almost, but not quite: it also tells us that James’ mother was named Mary (and his brother Joses), since commentators are nearly unanimous in identifying him as the James referred to in Mt. 27:56; Mk. 15:40, 16:1; and Lk. 24:10.

Once we accept this, it is clear that Mark calls him “James the less” (AV, NASB), or “James the younger” (NIV, RSV)—as the word (Greek *mikros*) might also be correctly translated. Literally it means “little” or “small,” and could refer to stature (like our “shorty”) or age.

### Value of a Name

It is also possible that he came to be called this, in distinction from one of the other two, because he was lesser known. Either way, whether because he was small, younger or thought of as insignificant by comparison, it doesn’t do much for one’s ego to get identified in such a way.

I know a pair of cousins (also cousins of mine) who are both named

“Junior.” To keep them straight we called the older one “Big Junior” and the other one “Little Junior.” You can imagine that the second one, especially, didn’t like his nickname. (And it didn’t help that “Little Junior” soon outgrew “Big Junior”!) Regardless, this James is forever known in the church as James the Less.

By the way, there are possibilities of other family relationships for our James. Since Matthew/Levi was also identified as “son of Alphaeus,” many think that he and James the Less were brothers. We can’t be sure of that.

Some think this Apostle is also the same as “James the Lord’s brother,” but those who make this identification are usually trying to defend the so-called “perpetual virginity” of Mary and claim that the four brothers of Jesus were really his first cousins, adopted by Joseph and Mary. There are no convincing grounds for this view.

More appealing is the possibility that Cleophas/Clopas was the Aramaic form of the Greek name Alphaeus. If so, our James was son to one of the two disciples Jesus appeared to on the road to Emmaus. But even that possibility is beyond our ability to state confidently.

### Value of Small Things

Nor does it matter. What James teaches us is, in fact, the value of the little things, the unknown, in the family and service of the Lord. This James, too, was one of the 12, chosen by Jesus after a night of prayer, an intimate associate of His, hearing His teaching and receiving His Spirit and accepting His commission and going forth to obey.

No matter that he did not earn fame or write his name large in the record. Most of us don’t, and we still count with our Father in Heaven. Little is much when God is in it.



Robert E. Picirilli

### Value of Godly Parents

We may also learn the value of godly parentage. Whatever the case with Clopas, it is clear that Mary, the mother of James the Less, was one of those who was close to Jesus. Mark puts her with the group of three faithful women from Galilee who were present at the cross, who carefully observed where Jesus’ body was laid, and who came on Sunday morning to wrap His body in spices to slow the deterioration and cover the smell.

What’s clear from all this is that this Mary, too, loved Jesus dearly. Mark says she was one of those who “followed Him and ministered to Him.” We are not hard put to imagine that her son caught her love and received her uncompromising encouragement to follow Jesus with the full commitment required of the apostles. (And if “Cleopas” is the same as Alphaeus, there’s all the more reason to think on these lines.)

We who have been similarly influenced are grateful for the mothers or fathers who nurtured our love for the Lord. And we who are parents are encouraged by this to be the best examples and encouragers we can be. We don’t require that they be famous in the family of God, but we hope and pray that they’ll be faithful, even if few outside the family circle ever know their names. ■



## ESPECIALLY FOR YOUNG PREACHERS

### Say, "Thank You"

**T**he young preacher, his wife and family are often recipients of gifts and kind comments which are usually expressions of love and appreciation. Learn to say, "Thank you," graciously.

#### Without Explanations

Maybe you did spend just a few dollars for that pin-striped suit at the second-hand store. Possibly the widow did give you her deceased husband's suits. That pair of shoes at age 10 still shines with a gleam. Or maybe you did purchase three shirts for the price of one.

Every kind comment does not demand an explanation. Don't tell anyone what you did or didn't pay for it. Just say, "Thank you." If people are kind enough to say how nice you look in that blue suit with matching tie, you be just as kind by smiling and responding with gratitude.

If the one giving the compliment seems to expect an explanation, reply that the Lord has been so good to provide your needs. Just learn to say, "Thank you!"

#### Write Thank You Notes

Some church members enjoy expressing their appreciation for you and your ministry through gift giving. A cake, a bag of tomatoes, a \$50 bill, a birthday gift, a book for your library, a Christmas present—all appreciated gifts. All the givers deserve a note of gratitude from you. If they are generous enough to share with you, you should be grateful enough to respond with a note of thanksgiving.

Purchase thank you notes by the box. Be sure to write a few words in the card, naming the gift. Express how much you appreciate the gift. Set a goal to mail the card within 24 hours.

#### Express Appreciation for Meals

The preacher is often blessed with meals provided in restaurants or homes during special church meetings such as revival services and missionary conferences. Write a note of appreciation before going to bed that night. Mail the card the next day.

If someone provides a dish of food, eat it all or empty the food into your own dish. Wash the container. Place a note in the bottom of the dish, thanking the person for the delicious food. Return the dish immediately.

#### Practice Thanksgiving

You could probably count your blessings all day. Living in an age of unthankfulness, the ambassador for Jesus Christ needs to intensify a spirit of gratitude. As a young preacher, the Lord will use many different sources to meet your needs. Always display a grateful attitude. Most of God's creatures seem to take for granted His blessings. The young preacher should be the opposite. Practice *thanks-living*.

Write notes to your church members. Commend them for their faithfulness in Christian service. Assure those who hurt of your prayer support. Express sincere gratitude to someone every day. A good time to do this could be on their birthday.

#### Be a Grateful Husband

A preacher's wife cooks the meals, cleans the house, rears the children, answers the telephone, smiles when she doesn't feel like smiling, attends all church services, and maybe even waits with you until the last person leaves the church. She deserves notes of thanksgiving with the words and actions of her preacher husband.



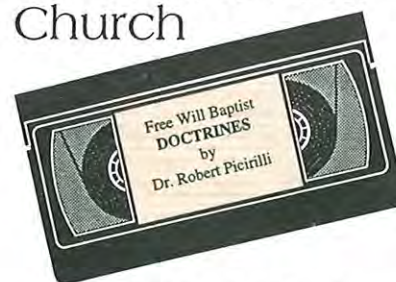
Dennis Wiggs

Too often the young preacher takes his dear wife for granted. He may congratulate, commend, praise and exalt everyone else in the congregation and forget the one who means the most to him. Learn to practice thanksgiving first at home.

#### Count Your Blessings

All of us enjoy being around someone who is thankful and excited about God's abundant blessings. The young preacher needs to learn early in his ministry how to practice thanksgiving in the pulpit, parsonage and public life. It is contagious! ■

### VIDEOS For Home and Church



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# YOUTH UPDATE

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## RELIGIOUS COMMUNITY NEWS

### Guatemalan Pastor Released, Murder Charges Dropped

SAN RAYMUNDO, GUATEMALA (EP)—Guatemalan pastor Eugenio Nij, arrested in early March on a highly disputed murder charge, was released from prison July 29 and all charges have been dropped. Christians around the world responded to his plight, flooding government offices with demands for justice.

Nij was charged with murder for allegedly participating in a mob attack on two suspected baby-snatchers. Nij's brother-in-law, Dean Pinney, said Nij was not in the area when the attack occurred, but was on the opposite side of town teaching at the free school established by the New Iberian Mission Association.

Pinney also reported that during a March 31 hearing, the local district attorney handling the case admitted she was being pressured from "higher up" to prosecute the pastor. The judge had expressed outrage at the lack of evidence in the case.

Nij was raised in poverty without a father, and trained at a young age to be a carpenter. After his uncle led him to Christ, he vowed to become an evangelist and lead his people—mostly Mayan Indians—to Christ. At Colegio Biblico in Texas he met and married his missions professor, then returned to his homeland to build a church, an orphanage and a school.

According to Pinney, official reports on the case indicate that the prosecuting attorney had sent men into prison to gather evidence against Nij, only to find that the men became Christian converts during their visits. Pinney said that during his months of forced prison ministry, Nij led 260 people to Christ.

### China Closes 200 House Churches

WENZHOU, CHINA (EP)—Chinese government officials have closed or demolished 200 house churches in Wenzhou, southern Zhejiang province, since the beginning of 1997, when a drive to force

unofficial churches to register with the government was intensified.

About 40 Christians had been arrested during the month of June, though many were released after a 500 Yuan (\$65) fine. According to the official Protestant church—the Three Self Patriotic Movement (TSPM)—Wenzhou has "the highest concentration of Christians in China," with 600,000 Christians in a population of 7 million, though some observers believe the real number may be nearer one million.

The 10 counties that make up greater Wenzhou are among the most prosperous in China, and many house church Christians in more rural areas built churches for themselves prior to 1996. But since 1996 the government's registration campaign has forced many to register or lose the building—or even have it bulldozed.

Southern Zhejiang vies with southern Henan province for having the highest proportion of Christians in China, though Zhejiang is much smaller than Henan (40 million people compared to 110 million). Many believers daub red crosses on their houses, and some even display in large gold lettering over their businesses words like "Immanuel" and "Ebenezer."

A member of the Jiuen Di Men TSPM church in the city of Wenzhou told Compass Direct, "In some counties like Jong Jia there is literally a church every kilometer." Many of the churches are huge, thousand-seat buildings, with five-story-high spires dominating the skyline.

### Bible Readers Happier

WHEATON, IL (EP)—Looking for happiness? Look no further than your Bible. A new survey commissioned by Tyndale House Publishers found that nearly 90% of frequent Bible readers say they feel at peace all or most of the time, compared to 58% of people who read the Bible less than once a month.

Mark Taylor, president of Tyndale

House, said that regular Bible reading helps people "find a higher degree of meaning and happiness."

Other Survey findings:

- 81% of frequent Bible readers said they feel content most of the time or all of the time, and 69 percent reported being extremely satisfied with their lives. By comparison, among people who rarely or never read the Bible, 67% reported that they regularly felt content, and 57% described themselves as extremely satisfied with life.
- Among regular Bible readers, only 15% indicated that they worry about being accepted, compared to 28% of infrequent Bible readers. Some 22 percent of non-readers said they worry "somewhat" or "very much" about death, compared to only 12% of regular Bible readers.
- Nearly two-thirds (64%) of those who read the Bible more than once a week said they feel joy all or most of the time, a figure that is nearly twice that of those who read the Bible less than monthly (35%).
- A clear purpose and meaning in life was reported by 92% of frequent Bible readers, compared to 69% of infrequent Bible readers.

### "Son of Sam" Killer Says Born Again

NEW YORK, NY (EP)—Two decades after his killing spree terrorized New York, David Berkowitz says he has become a born-again Christian. The *New York Daily News* reported that Berkowitz, known as the "Son of Sam," says he is now the "Son of Hope."

Berkowitz, who pleaded guilty to six murders, said at the time that a neighbor's dog instructed him to commit the murders. In eight shootings between June 1976 and June 1977, he wounded eight people and killed six. At the scene of one shooting, he left a message saying, "I am a monster. I am the Son of Sam." He received six consecutive sentences of 25 years to life.

In a letter to the *Daily News*, Berkowitz said, "I truly deserve punishment and death." He added that he prayed for his victims and their families, and claimed that he remembered very little about his crimes. "Sir, please understand that the past is too painful for me to dwell on," he wrote.

Berkowitz works as a clerk/typist for Chaplain Services at Sullivan Correctional Facility in upstate New York. ■



## Thank You Seven Times

**L**ast Saturday afternoon, I bought a four-month-old boy from his three-year-old brother for one dollar. Both parents were home and witnessed the negotiations. While neither parent objected, they had odd smiles on their faces when the three-year-old took my dollar and gave me his brother to seal the transaction.

As I started to leave, the young entrepreneur, unprompted, shouted, "No!" He ran over to me and said, "Here, I don't want the dollar. I want my brother!"

That made both parents laugh and gave me fresh insight into the values they were teaching my grandsons, especially the three-year-old. I'm thankful for busy parents who take time to teach their children that people are more important than money.

**A North Carolina preacher** called this week and talked about changes in his life. He has walked the high road as well as the difficult road for 10 years. His health turned against him, some old friends walked away, and at times he questioned his own self-worth.

He won't know until he reads this that he has been one of my heroes for 35 years. He also won't know that he dumped a bit of Heaven into my soul when he stopped me just before he hung up the phone and said, "I love you, Jack Williams. You've always treated me like a decent human being."

Maybe I'd better not print his name. After all, he has his tough-guy reputation to protect. I'm thankful for men who make big tracks in life and yet retain the common touch.

**A friend's car** had a tire almost flat. We drove it to a local Firestone dealer for repair. When we went back a few hours later to get her car, I noticed that the passenger-side front tire on my car was almost flat, too.

The attendant offered to repair it while I waited. So I read a book, kicked a few new tires on display and watched people scurry in and out. Someone called my name and said, "Your car's ready."

The busy attendant tossed me my keys and walked away. When I asked where to pay, he turned and said with a grin, "No charge. This one's on the house." I'm thankful for small surprises when you least expect them.

**My wife called** me home in 92° August heat to do a final inspection after Sears installed gutters and leaf guards on the house. Three guys rushed from roof to yard and back to the roof as I arrived. They were almost done.

On the walk-through, I noticed that the three-man crew had installed leaf guards on both the front and back gutters while the contract only called for guards on the front. I pulled out my contract and pointed to the work order, expecting an increase in price.

The chief gutter man said, "Well, we always try to do more than is expected. We want our customers to recommend us to others. So, happy Labor Day!" I'm thankful for big surprises when you know you don't deserve them.

**In January 1967**, I resigned my church and applied for a curriculum writer's job at the FWB Sunday School Department. To his credit, the general director did not hire me. This came as a shock to me, since he had offered me a similar position two years earlier.

That "no" answer sent me on a 10-year whirlwind ride from the gulf coast to the west coast where I gained more pastoral experience, learned to write business letters and work with difficult people, survived graduate school and taught Bible courses to college students for eight years.

When I became editor of *Contact*, I

understood why the 10-year whirlwind had been necessary. I needed everything I had learned and more.

I'm thankful for wise men who know that sometimes it's better to say, "no," even when it hurts, than to say, "yes," and dwarf the potential of a friend.

**The people I work with** amaze me. Steve can drive an 18-wheeler, fix a broken weed eater and handle thousands of pieces of mail going all over the world. Bill and Mary have both stared down cancer, and yet carry ministry loads that would stagger most of us.

Dari owns a million-dollar voice and the eyes of an eagle. Business people regularly praise her phone decor. And when she does the final proofing before *Contact* goes to press, mistakes that I overlooked run up and grab her hand like she's their mother.

Richard raises more money in a month than I'll see in a lifetime. Shirley juggles schedules for an entire staff of men and makes travel arrangements for missionaries in eight countries. Jim and Don tame technology to create radio and video programs. I'm thankful to work with people who are smarter and more efficient than me.

**The psalmist lifted** the nation of Israel to a higher level with, "Enter into his gates with thanksgiving, and into his courts with praise: be thankful unto him, and bless his name," (Psalm 100:4).

Perhaps we can reach that higher state by joining in George Herbert's prayer, "Thou who has given so much to me, give one thing more—a grateful heart!"

I'm thankful to live in a nation that sets aside one day each year for a national holiday called Thanksgiving. And I'll be a little more thankful if the Cowboys beat the Oilers on Thursday. ■



Jack Williams



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November 23, 1997

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