

DECEMBER 1997

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NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF
FREE WILL BAPTISTS

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Guidelines for Giving

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I'm Going Back

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Angels in Men's Clothing

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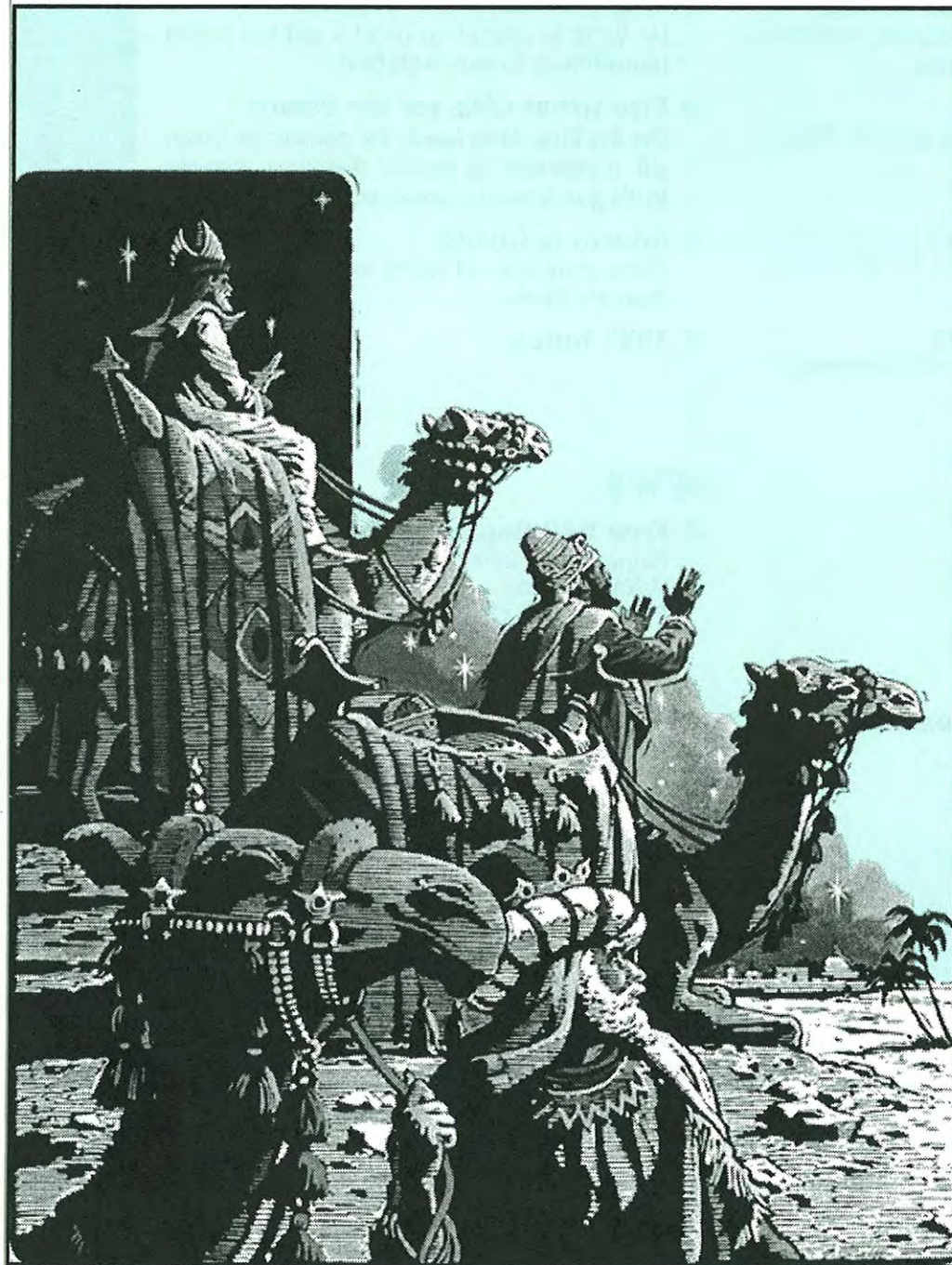
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Gifts for the Pastor

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Red Kettle Caper



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The Simple Story

The Bible records numerous times when angels gave specific announcements regarding significant events which were to take place. One of those significant times was the birth of Jesus Christ.

The promise of His coming was made repeatedly in the Old Testament. Those who believed looked with great anticipation to the fulfillment of the promises. Christmas is a time when we can remember, reflect and rejoice in God's faithfulness in fulfilling his promises. The Christmas story focuses on the fact that God is faithful to His promises.

The Angelic Announcement

The angelic announcement of the incarnation of Christ is revealed in the Gospel record. Matthew begins the New Testament with,

And she shall bring forth a son, and thou shalt call his name Jesus: for he shall save his people from their sins . . . Behold, a virgin shall be with child, and shall bring forth a son, and they shall call his name Emmanuel, which being interpreted is, "God with us," (Mt. 1:21, 23).

Luke explains,

For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord, (Luke 2:11).

John is more philosophical, "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning with God . . . And the Word was made flesh and dwelt among us (and we beheld his glory, the glory of the only begotten of the Father), full of grace and truth," (John 1:1-2, 14).

Paul describes it this way,

Who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God: But made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men: And being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross. Wherefore

God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name: That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth; And that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father, (Phil. 2:6-11).

Christians need to focus on the fact that God became man in the incarnation of Christ. This was accomplished through the *virgin birth* of Christ as described in Matthew and Luke's account of Christ's birth.

Paul wrote,

But when the fulness of the time was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law, To redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons," (Gal. 4:4-5).

The Apostolic Affirmation

John the Baptist identified Jesus Christ,

John bare witness of him, and cried, saying, This was he of whom I spake, He that cometh after me is preferred before me: for he was before me . . . The next day John seeth Jesus coming unto him, and saith, Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world . . . And I saw, and bare record that this is the Son of God . . . And looking upon Jesus as he walked, he saith, Behold the Lamb of God!" (John 1:15, 29, 34, 36).

John's account is consistent with angelic announcements in Matthew and Luke that Christ came into the world to save His people from their sins. He became sin for us that we might be righteous in Him. His death was a substitutionary, sacrificial, suf-

ficient and satisfactory death. His death paid the sin-debt for all human beings and provided redemption for all who believe the gospel.

The Anticipated Advent

The writer of Acts records the post-resurrection ministry of Christ including His ascension. He describes the ascension,

And when he had spoken these things, while they beheld, he was taken up; and a cloud received him out of their sight. And while they looked steadfastly toward heaven as he went up, behold, two men stood by them in white apparel; Which also said, Ye men of Galilee, why stand ye gazing up into heaven? this same Jesus, which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen him go into heaven, (Acts 1:9-11).

The second advent of Christ remains the hope of the Christian. We are admonished to live in the light of His coming, love His coming, look for His coming and faithfully labor faithfully till He comes. The Christmas season allows us opportunity to evaluate priorities, practices, purposes and pursuits.

Paul challenges his readers,

And that, knowing the time, that now it is high time to awake out of sleep: for now is our salvation nearer than when we believed. The night is far spent, the day is at hand: let us therefore cast off the works of darkness, and let us put on the armour of light. Let us walk honestly, as in the day; not in rioting and drunkenness, not in chambering and wantonness, not in strife and envying. But put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make not provision for the flesh, to fulfil the lusts thereof, (Rom. 13:11-14).

The Christmas season encourages us to reflect on both the angelic announcement—the incarnation, and the anticipated advent—the imminent return of Christ. What a blessed season to focus on these facts. ■



Melvin Worthington

The Secretary's Schedule

December 1997

1-2 Leadership Conference
Nashville, Tennessee

3-4 Executive Committee Meeting

15-17 Directors' Retreat



Guidelines for Christmas Giving

By Carol Reid



Imagine that first Christmas night. Angels compare their Christmas outfits and worry about their choir's cantata. Shepherds complain about their overtime on the holiday. The wisemen compare bargains and worry if the gifts they chose will be suitable for the Christ Child. Joseph worries about the charge card bills coming in next month, what with travel expenses and new baby and all.

Not exactly! But somehow, 2000 years later, we have skewed the whole meaning of Christmas. We spend much more time and energy buying and wrapping, decorating and baking than we do focusing on God's great Gift. We plan the program at church, but forget to praise the Christ Child. We have the party but forget Whose birthday Christmas is!

If we can refocus on Jesus and His remarkable incarnation, then perhaps we can put Christmas giving in perspective. Here are some guidelines to help you plan your Christmas giving this year.

Give to Jesus First

After all, it is His birthday. Determine to give a special gift. Some peo-

ple plan to give at least an additional tithe of what they spend on Christmas shopping. Some give to a special charity: the local rescue mission, a children's home or an orphanage. Some choose a needy family or child through local organizations like the Angel Tree and help buy Christmas gifts for them.

Special gifts to missionaries or to the Paul Kettelman Memorial Christmas Fund offering at FWBBC are also ways to give to the Lord. At the very least, your child can clean out his toy box and give to Salvation Army so that others can have Christmas.

Help your family learn that Christmas is all about giving. Encourage your children to have only one item on their wish list—not the whole Sears catalog. Have a birthday cake for Jesus; sing "Happy Birthday" at Christmas breakfast. Include children in giving to others. Truly, "to give is more blessed than to receive."

Give Yourself

In the hustle and bustle of the season, we sometimes forget to give the gift of our time. Don't forget to have that "cup of Christmas tea" with an elderly loved one; you will both benefit. Sit down with the children or grandchildren to read the Christmas story and a few other books too! Enjoy family and friends as you have opportunities to be together.

In the presents you wrap, give a bit of yourself. Perhaps your family can have a "homemade" Christmas—with crafts and cookies and poetry and family recipes and kind deeds to share with one another instead of purchased gifts. Or you can give "white elephant" gifts from your home to enjoy a laugh with your loved ones.

What about having an old family photo retouched and copied for the

cousins to treasure? Or putting the slides or home movies on video or preparing a scrapbook for each family member of old Polaroids? Or cleaning the old school papers out of the attic and presenting them to their authors (or the children of their authors) under the Christmas tree?

Old lunch boxes, tool kits, baby clothes and newspaper clippings are also big hits. Give love and memories and time; they won't break or wind up at Good Will next Christmas.

Start New Trends

What about setting a \$5 limit on all your extended family's Christmas gifts? Everyone can still get something—maybe lots of somethings—but no one's budget will be destroyed. Shop all year to find bargains and trinkets. Go to Everything's-A-Dollar stores to find children's toys. Shop at the grocery store for peanuts and chocolate or the ingredients for a special recipe to go under the tree.

Some friends of ours celebrated a "thrift store" Christmas—every gift had to be purchased at a thrift store or yard sale. They loved the thrill of the hunt and sharing their treasures with each other.

For years, my daddy suggested that the men of the family just exchange \$20 bills. The idea would save hours of agony in the mall and assure that everyone got what he really wanted. (This never materialized because they always worried that someone wouldn't participate!)

But if you hate to shop, why not give cash and then celebrate the Christmas sales after the holiday when the pace is slower and the bargains are better? Plan a special day to shop together to extend Christmas even further.

Consider an old-fashioned "swap" at Christmas time, with everyone bringing one gift to trade, instead of buying for each member of the extended family. Or consider giving family gifts like games, puzzles, magazine subscriptions, a great book, a Christmas decoration, restaurant gift certificates, or concert tickets instead of the regular socks and ties.

Maybe your family would like to travel to a special Christmas program or favorite camp or park instead of spending money on gifts. You can give each other wonderful memories and time together without stepping foot in Wal-Mart.

A little creativity may mean that your Christmas isn't like your neigh-

bors' or your friends'—or even like *your* Christmas was last year. But wouldn't that too reflect God's wonderful gifts to us and help us better celebrate Him?

We're not commanded to celebrate Christmas, you know. We just can't help but rejoice when we reflect on the good news of "God with us" and "peace on earth, good will toward men." Make that the focus of your Christmas this year—not shopping malls and Santa Claus and charge cards. Celebrate the Christ Child—God's best Gift to us! ■



ABOUT THE WRITER: Mrs. Carol Reid is librarian at Free Will Baptist Bible College. Carol serves as organist at Cross Timbers Free Will Baptist Church in Nashville, Tennessee, where she is a member.

Fran's \$20

By Carol Reid

No one would consider Fran a wealthy woman. She was a grandmother, worked in a fabric mill and was as faithful to our church as the preacher's wife. She didn't know us very well; we had only attended church with her since August that year when we had moved to Greenville for my husband to continue his graduate school education. But she loved our two little boys, ages five and seven, and welcomed us to the fellowship at First Free Will Baptist Church.

She handed me a \$20 that first Sunday night in December, quietly, sort of on the sly. "I want you to have this to get something for the boys for Christmas," she said.

I looked her in the eyes and couldn't keep the tears from clouding mine. We weren't particularly needy that Christmas. Our bills were paid; we had food in the refrigerator. Some toys would be under the tree for the children and a few presents for the cousins

and grandparents. But \$20 would fill up the stockings and add another action figure for both kids.

More than that, Fran's \$20 reminded me that I had a friend—someone who saw and understood my needs. That Christmas, I didn't want more for myself—I wanted to be able to give more to my family. Fran didn't ask; she just observed and then acted, sharing her heart with mine, supplying my need.

Fran's \$20 meant that my Heavenly Father was still watching over us, in unexpected ways, using His children to minister to us. What a wonderful reminder of His manifold gifts to us!

Every Christmas I remember again and can't help but blink back tears. And now every Christmas, I try to give Fran's \$20 to someone else who needs to be able to give, who needs to know that someone loves her, who needs to be reminded of the Heavenly Father's faithful provision and tender care for His children. Thank you, Fran.

A Return to the Real Christmas.

I'm Going Back

(to the way it was)

By David Reece



I recently sat and watched my grandchildren excitedly make their way through a monstrous pile of packages. I wondered, *Just what in the world have we done to our children?* Package after package was viciously attacked and unwrapped only to lose its luster and value to the mystery of the next item.

Thrown aside, often without a complete unwrapping because the next was bigger or made a noise, toys became momentary delights. Mountains of wrapping paper and trash piled up. The child, when finished, could not have attached a name to any gift. Nothing was a personal gift; they were just things due because of a birthday or other special occasion.

Now it's Christmas and guess what we value now? Gifts, of course. It's a gift for everyone from everyone, just so no one is offended by big or small. We decide that a certain value must be met and get a man's gift or woman's gift or child's gift. What's personal about that process? Where is the care and consideration for personal need or a gift for you because I love you?

How Did We Get to This?

Christmas has become giving for the sake of giving or giving for the sake of receiving. I'm not sure which. What's wrong with this picture? How did a Christian family come to this?

I believe it was an honest mistake. Gifts are wonderful when given in the spirit of charity or to express our appreciation and hope for each other.

Over the years we have been able to give and enjoyed the privilege. But we've decided that we are each responsible for everyone, even those we never see. No one should be exempted from the gift list. This has created the obligation gift. The obligation no longer is a gift but a duty or a levy that every member must pay. What started as sincere affection in a home of five developed beyond that beginning.

What's Wrong with This?

The wrong is not in wanting every-

one to receive fairly or have a gift. The wrong is what we have done to the motive of giving. For instance, what do we teach my grandchildren with an endless pile of gifts from everyone?

First, we teach them that *things* are the identity marks of happiness or success, and that we want them to have those things because things are important. In other words, he who has the most toys is the most important person at the party. That's materialism.

Where is that taught in the Bible? It isn't. In fact, Jesus teaches sacrifice, giving, thankfulness, charity and that man cannot serve mammon and God. But we want our kids to have more than we had or we want them to have what other kids have. We have failed our children.

Second, we take away the personal attachment to the gift and the giver. With 25 gifts on the floor for one child, with more than one item from each giver, how could that child remember who gave what? How can anything be special under those circumstances? You can have but one "special" item from anyone. Therefore, the child thinks of none of it as special.

Remember When it Was Special?

Does anybody remember Dad's special toy? It was the only toy I ever remember Dad talking about receiving for Christmas as a boy. Most Christmas gifts for both Dad and Mom as children were fruits and candies and maybe one other item.

Dad's toy truck was the only gift he received that year and he dropped it down the toilet accidentally. Do you suppose he would have missed it if there had been 24 others? I doubt he would have noticed.

How about our childhoods? Were there always loads of toys? I don't remember them. What I do remember are those single items: a doll for each of my sisters, a toy gun for my older brother and one for me, a truck for our little brother.

Do you remember the fruitcakes Mom made and the hours and hours it took? The turkey or chicken for lunch, the church Christmas program? Do you know why we remember those things? Because in Dad's home no materialism surfaced. He

didn't have the money.

Those items we received were special because we knew Christmas would be tough and that Dad and Mom would do the best they could. Thank God they could not buy everything we dreamed of, but let us feel and experience the sacrifice they made for us.

In recent years, the family has grown. Our desire to accept and not hurt the new ones has driven us away from what we were taught. We give gifts sometimes with no names on them. How like the world we have become.

Gifts Were Personal.

Do you remember the gifts we used to give each other? One sister tied knots, another sewed pillows. We guys gave knives or something we had made. Sometimes the gift was a jar or bag of something from the garden we canned or froze, a Bible marker or something we knew the other person needed.

Quite honestly, I miss those special days when we were more personal and gave because we wanted the other person to know we loved them. One of the greatest gifts I receive each year from my church people is a hand-drawn Christmas card from a retired man. I've kept every one of them. For long hours he uses his hands to draw just for me. That's special and he is special to me. I treasure his gift enough to remember.

My Plan.

I'm going back. Back to yesterday where a gift was truly a gift and given because I love my family. You don't have to accompany me, and that's okay if that's your choice. But my wife and I are going. Our children need to experience less materialism and more genuine sacrifice.

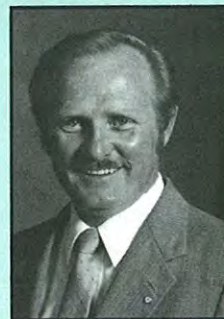
I'm going to give less but with more thought and heart. I plan to teach by example. I'm going to attempt to make the event less like the world and more family-friendly, like it used to be. Christmas was the family, the excitement, the meals and special foods, and if we were blessed, a gift.

Here's my suggestion for my family: Let's return to the simple plan that

Dad started.


1. A family cares for each other. Brothers and sisters remember each other. All remember Mom.
2. Let each of us as Dad's children do what he did within our own families. Give gifts as individual families.
3. Give to a needy family who has less. I remember one Christmas when Dad was concerned for a family that lived "under the hill." He went to the church and pursued the matter until he was sure they would be taken care of for Christmas.
4. Put Christ back in Christmas in our families.

I'm going back. Come with me if you will. Our families and children are at stake and we, Dad and Mom's children, can make a difference in our families. ■



ABOUT THE WRITER: Reverend David Reece is moderator of the Maryland State Association. He pastors Heritage Free Will Baptist Church in Fredericksburg, Virginia.

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Angels in Men's Clothing

By Geneva Poole



The time came for our family to return to Brazil where we serve as missionaries. As always, there were mixed emotions, but it was different this time.

During that furlough, my dad had two lung surgeries. He was still weak from his second surgery when we returned to Brazil. I felt I was still needed at home, but at the same time, my husband and I both had peace that we should return to the field as scheduled.

I knew that God was able to care for my parents without me, and God was so good to prove that He would.

A few weeks after we arrived in Brazil, Mom wrote that when she defrosted their chest-type freezer, the drain stopped up and neither she nor Dad could bend over the side far enough to open it. Their frustration did not last long. A stranger came to the door.

This stranger was a university professor who was looking for my dad to make an estimate on a tract of timber. He saw Mom's dilemma and came to her rescue, not leaving until

he had helped clean the freezer and put the frozen goods back inside.

A few weeks later, Mom and Dad decided to visit my sister and her family. Dad felt that the little pickup was easier to handle, so they started off in it. A couple of hours away from home on an interstate highway, a water hose broke, but Dad did not stop immediately.

When he did stop, it was too late and the motor had already been damaged. What were they to do? No one seemed interested in helping. Cars whizzed by. I am sure they both silently asked God for help.

Then help came. A car pulled off the road. A nicely dressed young man stepped out and asked if there was a problem. He took Dad to a nearby town and found a mechanic to check the pickup. Then he helped locate a wrecker to pull the pickup to a garage in my dad's home town.

The young man asked Dad what they wanted to do. After deciding to return home, this nice man told them he would take them. They were driven back to their home. As my par-

ents got out, they invited this stranger, who no longer seemed a stranger, in for awhile; but he refused. And to the amazement of everyone, he refused any monetary exchange for his time, trouble and expenses.

Once again God had proven to me that He would take care of my parents.

I have often wondered if those strangers were not angels in men's clothing. ■



ABOUT THE WRITER: Mrs. Geneva H. Poole and her husband, Bobby, serve as Free Will Baptist foreign missionaries in Brazil.

Why I Celebrate Christmas

By Ray W. Ritch



In my youth as Christmas neared, I looked forward to what I was going to get. We did not get a lot in those days because my father was a coal miner. But I still looked for something.

My mother was a good Christian woman who carried us to church and taught us about Christ and why He came to earth. She died when I was very young. I went against her teachings.

When I was older, I went into the U.S. Air Force and was away from home Christmas of 1946, 1947 and 1948. During these years all I could think about was partying. Christmas was just a day to go out and party with those I called friends.

I came home in 1949. The first Sunday in June I went to a little Free Will Baptist church in East Thomas, Alabama, that morning. I saw a beautiful young lady at church, so I went back that afternoon to a fellowship meeting. That night I went back hoping to learn the name of this young lady. (I married that beautiful young lady in 1950.)

I did not realize it at the time but that church had good singing, testifying and preaching. When the invitation was given, I went to the altar and met God. I left church that night with a new understanding of Christ.

As I studied the Bible and learned more about Christ and what He had done for me, I loved Him more and more. Today, Christmas has a whole different meaning than it did when I was a teenager. I do not think as much about what I will get as I do about what was given for me.

As I think about the price Jesus paid on the cross and what He suffered as He walked down here, what

I have done seems so small in my eyes.

As I sit at my desk and think back over the years and the Christmas plays we produced, I realize that as good as some have been, they did not do justice to the birth of Christ.

We talk about the birth of Christ and decorate for the holidays, but I wonder if it really means as much to us as it should. The world today has taken Christ out of Christmas and made it Xmas. With their way of thinking, they should have a dollar sign instead of an X.

Merchants want to see how much money they can make, and a lot of the fault lies at the feet of Christians. We try to buy everything for our children because, we say, we want them to have more than we had growing up. As I consider the gifts we give one another, I think about the gifts Christ gave for me.

The book of John gives us a whole list of gifts He has given:

- 10:11—the Good Shepherd gives his life for the sheep.
- 6:51—Christ is the Living Bread which came down from heaven for our sustenance.
- 14:12—Christ promised us peace so we should not be afraid.
- 14:16—the gift of the spirit for our comforter.

I Peter 2:21 says that Christ gave us the gift of His example that we should follow in His footsteps.

As I think about why I celebrate

Christmas, I like to look at the word itself and what it represents to me:

- C**—the **Christ Child**, the Son of God.
- H**—**Heaven** where He has prepared me a home.
- R**—**Redeeming** grace of God.
- I**—the **Image** of Christ that I have.
- S**—**Salvation** that He freely gave.
- T**—the **Trials** and **Tribulations** He helps me overcome.
- M**—the **Messages** He wants me to preach.
- A**—He is **Always** ready to hear when I pray.
- S**—His **Spirit** in my heart, and His **Soon** coming again.

As I celebrate this Christmas, I realize that I am one day closer to going to be with the One who gave His life for me. May we as Christians always look to Him as the lifeline to Heaven. If Christ had not been born, there would be no Christmas to celebrate. I am thankful that He loved me enough to be born in a lowly stable.

As I think about all the preparations we go through each year as we anticipate Christmas, I wonder what kind of preparations we make to welcome Him anew in our hearts.

Christmas should be a time of rejoicing and renewing our love for Him. We seem to push Christ to the back of the list of plans for the season. He should be number one in our lives every day, but especially this time of year.

May our goal be to win as many souls as we possibly can. Then we will have that many more reasons to celebrate Christmas; more souls are ready to meet the Christ of Bethlehem.

These are a few reasons why I celebrate Christmas. ■

ABOUT THE WRITER: Reverend Ray Ritch pastors Huffman Free Will Baptist Church in Birmingham, Alabama.



Gifts. I love to receive them, but there are times I sure have a hard time selecting them to give. Like a baby shower gift—do I go extravagant or stay practical? Or a bridal shower—do I purchase an everyday gift or should it be a special occasion item? At times I wanted to give a gift to a special person like my pastor and I wasn't sure what would make a great gift for him.

That was before my husband became a pastor. Now after being in the pastorate four years, I can think of some pretty great gifts—like a one-way ticket to the far ends of the earth. Not really, but after observing first hand what a pastor's life is like, I have a better idea what would make a great gift for him.

Gift Certificates

One great gift for any pastor would

be gift certificates to local fast food restaurants. In some ways, pastors are like doctors—they are on call 24 hours a day. Their schedules are filled with appointments and at times they must eat on the run.

There may be times when an emergency arises and he is away from home at meal time. The gift certificate provides for him that meal he may otherwise have to miss. (Not that it would hurt him to miss an occasional meal, but hey, he is human and his stomach calls out, "Feed me! Feed me!")

Books

Another great gift for the pastor who is responsible for knowing the answer to all questions is books. Books are the tools for his trade. The average pastor will spend 10 hours combing through his books studying for one message or lesson. He will study from every resource available.

But most of these books are expensive. Many come in sets or volumes, and he may be trying to complete a set. Find out some of this information from him (or his wife).

Keep in mind that most pastors are "picky" about the authors they read. They know who they agree with doctrinally and philosophically. If you expect your pastor to have all the answers, help provide him those needed resources—books.

Relaxation

With all the stress our pastors are under, a gift to help him relax would be great. Most people have some type of hobby or something they really enjoy doing for relaxation. For me, playing the piano is my way to relax.

Golf for some is a means of relaxation. Almost every pastor I know enjoys golf. He may not be very good at it, but he still loves to play. Trying to

Advent is Giving

By R. F. Smith, Jr.

Advent, the Christmas Season, is best defined by one word: *Love*. And love's finest definition may be: *Give*.

It occurs to me that there are three basic methods of giving.

"Give until it hurts." This age-old phrase has appeal. If I give "until it hurts," then I am aware of the gift and the process of giving. And it does something to me. The pain gives a certain gain.

But the problem with the method of "until it hurts" is that many people have such a low pain threshold! It doesn't take much giving before they start feeling pain.

Another method is "Give until it helps." That's good. It moves us beyond "giving until it hurts" onto a higher level of giving that says, "Hurt or pain, I will not stop giving until it helps."

It's the method or level of giving that hangs in there until the special need is met. But the real emphasis with this form of giving is "on what it will do for others." And once the need is met, giving often stops. When we give until it helps, we assume that there is a point where our giving not only has helped but can be halted.

There is a third method of giving that is the real principle of giving and loving: "Give until it heals." Christmas was God giving "until it heals." The perfect example of

such giving is seen at the cross and in the Christ of the cross. There He gave until it hurt, until it helped, until it healed.

The bottom line of all giving is to bring healing; the healing of the need we set out to meet. And in the process there is a healing of ourselves—a healing of selfishness or stubbornness that brings steadfastness of faith and in faith.

Remember old Scrooge in Charles Dickens' *A Christmas Carol*? Bitter, selfish, alone and isolated from everyone, especially himself, he was the perfect example of what happens when life is not allowed to flow outward.

Then something happened, too long to recall but remembered by most. He had never given until it hurt or helped, but in that inner struggle with the spirit of Christmas, he was moved to start giving. And it was the giving of himself and his money and other resources that he found healing; a healing that made him well not only to those around him but a healing that brought health to him.

Give until it hurts, helps, heals. Which? ■

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

hit a little ball over a course, up and down hills, into the woods or water or bunker trying to get it to go into a small hole would totally stress me out. But these guys come home less stressed after nine holes. Maybe it's because they're able to take their frustrations out on that little ball.

Some pastors prefer fishing to golf. Listen to him talk about the "one that got away" and you are sure to find out what kind of lure or rod and reel he needs to keep the next big one from getting away.

So, give the golfer the gift of paid green fees for 18 holes, or maybe a new club, or even a large package of golf balls to replace those lost in the woods or water. And give the fisherman a lure, a special rod and reel or some other fishing item needed to help him catch the big one.

If your pastor isn't a golfer or fisherman, find out what his hobby is and provide him with the opportunity to indulge.

New Clothes

Clothing always makes a great gift.

Pastors have an image to uphold in our communities; they are expected to always look good. Their clothing helps make this image. Most pastors' work clothes are our dress clothes. As you know, clothing of any kind is expensive, especially dress clothes.

You may think that you could never select an item of clothing to go with his wardrobe. You will not go wrong with standard colors of blue, black, grey or tan for pants. White shirts are also great gifts. He can never have too many; just ask his wife. Ties are also good gifts. If you don't feel comfortable selecting an item of clothing for him, a gift certificate to his favorite clothing store would be perfect.

Created Gifts

The last great gift for the pastor, the ones I have seen bring more joy to my husband, are those gifts created by the giver. Let me explain.

There's the picture of the preacher behind the pulpit drawn by the seven-year-old, and a note written about "my preacher" from one of the little girls in the congregation. There's that

poem on his wall about his life as a preacher composed by one of the ladies. In our home hangs a hand-crafted shelf and over the fireplace a handmade mantle. These gifts are priceless treasures.

Use these suggestions to make your gift-giving to your pastor something special this year. ■



.....
ABOUT THE WRITER: Mrs. Phyllis York, president of Kentucky Women Active for Christ, is a member of Heritage Temple Free Will Baptist Church in Ashland, Kentucky. She is married to the pastor, Dr. Tim York.



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FREE WILL BAPTIST NEWSFRONT

Ralph Staten, Former National Moderator, Dies

KNOXVILLE, TN—The Reverend Ralph Lee Staten, former moderator of the National Association, died October 6 at age 86. The Arkansas native was widely respected as a speaker, debater and writer. He moderated the National Association 1960-1962.

Brother Staten was converted in 1928 at age 16, licensed to preach in 1932 and ordained as a Free Will Baptist minister in 1933—he preached 65 years. As a 24-year-old minister, he attended the organizational meeting of the National Association of Free Will Baptists in 1935.

By 1977 when he retired, Staten had pastored 34 years in six states—Arkansas, Alabama, Oklahoma, North Carolina, Virginia and Tennessee. He then served as interim pastor on at least two occasions.

He was instrumental in leading the Arkansas State Association to join the National Association. He moderated the Arkansas State Association 12 years (1938-1950) and served as clerk seven years (1929-1936).

Dr. L. C. Johnson, former president of Free Will Baptist Bible College reflected, "Brother Staten was a very stable person. You al-



ways knew where he stood. He was very deliberate; he was never impulsive. He was extremely fair. He always thought his position through carefully before he spoke."

Tennessee promotional director Dr. Charles Thigpen said in his eulogy, "Brother Staten impacted the Free Will Baptist denomination as few men have done. He was an encourager to me personally. He was a great help to me during the six years that I served as moderator of the National Association. He was my friend. He was a role model to me—and one of my heroes."

A gifted writer and speaker, Staten served on the national Radio-Television Commission (now

Media Commission), the Sunday School Board, the national Publication and Literature Board, as well as numerous state and local offices.

For many years, he published the monthly newspaper, *Congregational Crusader*, a collection of sermon outlines, doctrinal essays and denominational news. He also wrote four booklets, including a defense of the Free Will Baptist position on perseverance, *Perseverance in Preservation*.

He served four years (1957-1961) as dean and instructor at Piedmont Bible Institute in Cramerton, NC. He was the first editor of at least three publications: *Arkansas Free Will Baptist Landmark*, *Piedmont Promoter* (NC) and *Progressive Promoter* in Oklahoma. He served as promotional secretary in Alabama and North Carolina.

Funeral services were conducted October 8 at Wooddale FWB Church in Knoxville with Reverends Robert Hobbs, Raymond Riggs and Charles Thigpen officiating. Interment was in Pocahontas, Arkansas.

Brother Staten is survived by one son, Randall, and his two daughters, Ruth Ann and Janis.

WNAC Western Retreat Registers 130

GLORIETA, NM—The second WNAC Western Retreat met October 10-12 in Glorieta, New Mexico, with 130 women attending the three-day session, according to *Co-Laborer* editor Suzanne Franks. The retreat theme focused on "God's Schoolhouse" and Psalm 25:4-5.

Mary Neal (Ind.), former WNAC president, led the praise and worship service, with Carol Reid (Tenn.) and Sue Patton (Ark.) serving as instrumentalists.

Speaker Lorene Miley, former missionary to Africa, led a class on inductive Bible study. She gave instructions on how to study a Bible book, a chapter, a verse, a word, a topic, a character, a doctrine or devotionally. Then attendees conducted a hands-on study for themselves.

Saturday evening service featured two speakers: Janice Banks, missions professor at Hillsdale FWB College and former missionary to Japan; and Fay Forlines, short-term missionary to Russia and a retired school teacher. Each gave her testimony on how God has taught and continues to teach through life experiences.

Sunday's snow and wind chill of 15 degrees did not interfere with instruction at God's Schoolhouse. Carol Reid, librarian at Free Will Baptist Bible Col-

lege, explained the take-home assignment. Her message included steps for applying God's Word and verse by verse applications from Titus 2:3-5.

The group received a missions offering of



\$1,168.57 to be divided among eight Free Will Baptist missionaries who attended the retreat. To help WNAC with retreat expenses, another offering was received which totaled \$802.95.

The retreat concluded with *Pomp and Circumstance* as each woman received a diploma from WNAC for attending "God's Schoolhouse."

Kilgore to Lead FWB Family Ministries



GREENEVILLE, TN—Dr. James H. Kilgore, a Free Will Baptist minister and educator, has been named executive director for Free Will Baptist Family Ministries in Greeneville. He assumed his position on October 1.

Born in Wise, Va., the son of a Free Will Baptist pastor (Rev. Harold Kilgore), Brother Kilgore was converted early in life and answered the call to preach at age 19.

Kilgore served as administrator at Seffner Christian Academy in Seffner, Fla., for the past six years. During his time as administrator, the school experienced accelerated growth from 150 students to over 600 students. The school also expanded from K-2 through eighth grade to K-2 through 11th grade.

Dr. Kilgore graduated from Free Will Baptist Bible College in 1989. He now holds a doctorate in education administration.

In addition to his academic

responsibilities, Kilgore pastored eight years in Virginia and served two years as assistant director at FWB Camp Jacob in Clintwood, Va.

Concerning his relocation to Free Will Baptist Family Ministries, Kilgore said, "I feel that God has called me here for a purpose. I want to help this ministry expand and better serve the needs of hurting children and their families."

James and Amanda Kilgore have been married 20 years. Amanda writes junior Sunday School curriculum for Randall House Publications. Their son, Jamie, is eight years old.

Alabama Church Celebrates Sesquicentennial

MILLPORT, AL—Members of Macedonia FWB Church in Millport gathered September 21 to celebrate 150 years of preaching the gospel. All-day services, including sermons by five former pastors and dinner on the grounds, reminded the congregation how far God had brought them.

Pastor Grant Webb welcomed attendees and brought the final message of the day. Former pastors J. H. Tilley (1944-1953), Roy Plymon (1976-1979), Karl Novak (1980-1981), Larry

Reynolds (1982-1988) and Mike Mounts (1989-1992) spoke 15 minutes each.

Specially prepared anniversary booklets were distributed to the 150 attendees. Tammy Fields coordinated the booklet compilation.

Macedonia FWB Church is a member of Alabama's Mt. Moriah Association. The church is the second oldest Free Will Baptist church in Alabama.

The church organized in 1847 under the leadership of Ellis

Gore who rode a horse to North Carolina to be ordained as a Free Will Baptist minister. Ellis brought back a *Treatise* and other denominational information.

Land for the original church was donated by O. B. Hardin. The church bought four additional acres on which to expand. The current church structure stands on the original property site.

The chairman of the deacon board is a great-grandson of one of the first deacons ordained in 1847.

Tree Planting Honors Hobert Ashby

DAYTON, OH—Members of First FWB Church in Dayton celebrated a unique homecoming September 28 by planting a tree to honor pastor emeritus Hobert Ashby. The tree along with an ac-

companying plaque will serve as reminders to future generations that Reverend Ashby gave 33 years of his life to the Ohio congregation.

Brother Ashby was unable to

attend the tree-planting ceremony because of illness. His son, Dr. Stephen Ashby, stood in for his father.

Pastor Alan Barnes led the ceremony after the morning service. He recounted how ancient Israel memorialized important events in which God had moved among His people. He then spoke of Psalm 1 which tells of the righteous man who is like a tree which brings forth fruit in its season.

During Hobert Ashby's pastorate in Dayton, some 30 men answered the call to preach. In addition to the local pastoral duties, Ashby served 22 years on the Ohio Executive Board and two terms as state moderator.

He was also elected to a six-year term on the national Home Missions Board.



Dr. Stephen Ashby and his son Serogia plant tree.

Leadership Conference

Regal Maxwell House Hotel
Nashville, Tennessee
December 1-2, 1997

FWBBC Announces Bible Conference Speakers



Drummond

NASHVILLE, TN—Free Will Baptist Bible College's 1998 Bible Conference will feature outstanding preaching from men who know God and His Word, according to President Tom Malone. This year's speakers are Dr. Lewis Drummond, Rev. Nathan Ruble and Dr. Tim York.

Dr. Drummond is professor of evangelism and church growth at Beeson Divinity School in Birmingham, Alabama. The Alabama native has had a worldwide ministry as pastor, teacher and author. His pastorates include Baptist churches in Alabama, Texas and Kentucky with memberships as high as 3,500.

Drummond's teaching ministry



Ruble

has taken him to England, Croatia and Romania. He served four years as president of Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary in Wake Forest, North Carolina.

Rev. Ruble is executive secretary of the Missouri State Association of Free Will Baptists. He is a 1970 alumnus of Free Will Baptist Bible College and began pastoring in 1971. He has served as moderator of the Missouri State Association and as a member of the national Home Missions Board. He currently serves on the General Board and Executive Committee of the National Association of Free Will Baptists.

Dr. York began preaching at age 12 and has been a driving



York

force for many years among Free Will Baptists in Kentucky. The FWBBC alumnus pastors Heritage Temple FWB Church in Cannonsburg, Kentucky, and served for 11 years as promotional secretary of the Kentucky State Association. He also serves as assistant moderator of the National Association of Free Will Baptists.

The conference will be a gathering for hundreds of Free Will Baptists, especially for alumni of the college who see it as their annual homecoming. All are welcome.

The conference is scheduled for March 8-12.

Scholarship Honors Tennessee Pastor

NASHVILLE, TN—A scholarship has been established at Free Will Baptist Bible College in honor of the late Reverend Charles McNeese. The Charles McNeese Memorial Scholarship will be available to a married student from any state who is in pastoral training and at least a sophomore.

Tennessee's South Central Quarterly Meeting where Brother McNeese pastored, created the scholarship, according to clerk Steve Swango. Brother McNeese was moderator of the quarterly meeting at the time of his death this summer.

McNeese pastored Faith FWB church in Columbia, Tennessee. He and his wife ministered in Georgia and Tennessee for 11 years.

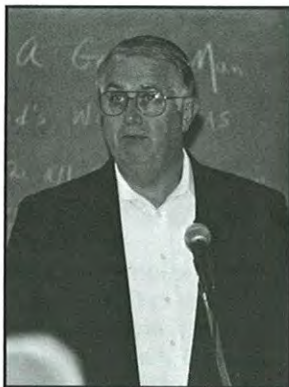
Charles McNeese answered the call to preach late in life. He entered FWBBC at age 44 and graduated in 1986.

Officials said that the scholarship recipient will be selected by the FWBBC scholarship committee. In addition to pastoral training and marriage stipulations, the recipient must demonstrate financial need.

Those who wish to contribute to the Charles McNeese Memorial Scholarship should send checks *directly* to:

Free Will Baptist Bible College
Attn: Financial Aid Department
3606 West End Avenue
Nashville, TN 37205

McAllister Keynotes West Virginia Conference



Jim McAllister

RIPLEY, WV—The second annual West Virginia Men's Conference met October 2-4 at Cedar Lakes Conference Center. Conference coordinators Russell Wright and Ivan Asbury reported that 54 ministers and laymen registered for the three-day event.

Reverend James McAllister, president of California Christian College preached at all plenary sessions. McAllister, who also pastors Harmony FWB Church in Fresno, Calif., shared a number of personal experiences as he preached.

"Men came from all over the state," Russell Wright said. "We came together to pray and put into practice the things we learned."

Huntington pastor Ivan Asbury agreed with Wright's evaluation, "The opportunity to worship, pray and fellowship with our men is something we need more of. Our district conference and state association meetings are busy with business matters."

West Virginia State Senator, Harry Dugan, a member of Heritage FWB Mission (Inwood), attended the conference. Master's Men director James Vallance also joined the men at Cedar Lakes Conference Center.

The 1998 conference will meet October 1-3; several men have already pre-registered. Officials will determine whether to add an additional day to the schedule.



West Virginia men attend October conference.

Coming Next Month

Man on Fire!

The incredible story of Pastor Mark Elliott.

The Counterfeit Jesus

How Bad Do You Want It?

Visitation Blitz

Youth camp for members of **First FWB Church** in **Monroe, MI**, took an unexpected twist, according to Pastor **Jim Robinson**. A tornado hit the camp Saturday morning chasing campers to shelter. They discovered a four-year-old girl trapped in a tent under a fallen tree. She was in critical condition when rescued.

First-year **Michigan Youth Camp** director **Don Myers** reports 174 campers and workers. A number of decisions were made including 15 conversions, 60 rededications and six baptisms.

Officials at **Free Will Baptist Family Ministries** in **Greeneville, TN**, conducted groundbreaking ceremonies for the P.A.T.H. Shelter. More than 100 people gathered to participate in the event. This marks the first new building on campus in several decades. A \$1 million capital campaign is 60 percent complete.

Pastor **Walter Statzer** marked his 25th year at **Shiloh FWB Church** in **Bristol, VA**. Members sponsored a covered dish dinner in his honor.

Construction began September 8 on a Family Life Center at **First FWB Church** in **Lebanon, MO**. The 7,500-square-foot structure will house Sunday School rooms, kitchen and recreational facilities. **Ken Haney** pastors.

"Farmer Day" at **First FWB Church** in **Checotah, OK**, honored Reverend **Ulmont Farmer** on his 100th birthday. Brother Farmer began preaching in 1970, is still active in the church, serving on the Official Board and mowing the church lawn every week. His son (Dan Farmer) pastors **First FWB Church** in **Moore, OK**.

The first **California Youth Leadership Conference** met in **San Diego** this summer and was hosted by **Los Ranchos FWB Mission**. Nineteen teens from nine churches participated. In addition to several hours of classes daily, the teens knocked on 1,400 doors in preparation for the mission's first service.

The **Cumberland Youth Camp** hosted 483 Free Will Baptist campers this summer, according to camp manager **Marion Pettus**. The six-week camp resulted in 83 salvation decisions. The camp, located near Woodlawn, TN, is a ministry of Tennessee's Cumberland Association.

Faith FWB Church in **Glenpool, OK**, began conducting two Sunday morning worship services in October, according to Pastor **David Archer**. During the last year, the church purchased a 1.5 acre tract of land and added two staff positions.

The September homecoming at **Way of the Cross FWB Church** in **Salisaw, OK**, celebrated 16 years of service to the community according to pastor **Jerry Copeland**. Former pastors **J. C. Holderfield**, **Stanley Smith** and **Wade Jernigan** preached during the day's activities.

Some 350 people showed up for homecoming at **Red Bay FWB Church** in **Red Bay, AL**, according to Pastor **Tom Scott**. The church presented a plaque to **Marlin and Mary Lou Saint** for serving 22 years as coaches for the Bible Bowl team. Visiting preacher **Clayton Hampton** preached the morning message.

Members of **North Memphis FWB Church** in **Memphis, TN**, completed a remodeling project to place aluminum siding on the church. Pastor **David Burgess** also led members to participate in the country-wide LifeChain for Life in October.

Home missionary **Curtis Alligood** said he baptized four converts in the largest baptistry he'd ever seen—the Gulf of Mexico. People on shore came by asking questions about the unusual service in the **St. Petersburg, FL**, area.

Jeff Sloan, home missionary to **Fort Wayne, IN**, reported that the group will purchase 5.25 acres with two accesses to the property. Summer service attendance reached 56 people.

While a 700-seat auditorium is un-

der construction, members of **First FWB Church** in **Owasso, OK**, will conduct "Church on the Court," says Pastor **Leonard Pirtle**. The congregation hopes to be out of the gymnasium and into the new sanctuary by mid-1999.

Members of **Temple FWB Church** in **Winter Garden, FL**, added a 1,200-square-foot extension to their fellowship hall, according to Pastor **Jack Woods**. The 40x30 addition was built for use at the August 10 homecoming service. Members paid the entire amount by gifts with no indebtedness to the church.

Tom's Creek FWB Church in **Nippa, KY**, celebrated 121 years of service on June 29. Pastor **James Kelly Caudill** has led the congregation for 24 years. He is the church's ninth pastor. The membership has grown from 15 in 1876 to over 1,000.

Pastor **Roger Ballard** reports six conversions at **First FWB Church** in **Tecumseh, OK**. The church sponsored their second annual Prayer Retreat in September.

Bethel FWB Church in **Woodbridge, VA**, turned 30 years old this fall, according to Pastor **Dave Nobles**. Founding pastor **Elzo Bevan** was guest speaker for the day.

Pastor **Ken Dodson** told members at **First FWB Church** in **Park Hills, MO**, that it was time they "got the lead out." He wasn't kidding, because excavators found an 18-pound chunk of lead while preparing the ground for a new addition. Members plan to purchase a new steeple for the sanctuary.

Major renovations at **Lerwick FWB Church** in **Arthurette, New Brunswick, Canada**, included new steps and steeple. The church also rebuilt their sound room, installed a new sanctuary rug, paved the parking lot and repainted the church. **Michael Chase** pastors.

Pastor **Cliff Donoho** reports 18 conversions at **Heritage FWB Church** in **Davenport, IA**. ■



WOMEN NATIONALLY ACTIVE FOR CHRIST

Woman's Window on the World

By Mary R. Wisehart

From My Window

"Remember ye not the former things, neither consider the things of old. Behold, I will do a new thing" (Isaiah 43:18,19).

Soon enough the days of 1997 will be "the things of old." We are at the close of the year. About this time I like to read back over my journal. Amazing how many things I have forgotten. Here I can see that the Lord supplied, provided, answered prayers and blessed in so many ways. Here and there is a trial, a sorrow, a time of wondering and waiting, not knowing how God is going to use this for His glory.

Yet the days passed and now I may put the mistakes, the failures, the successes and the triumphs behind me. The days with their opportunities and problems are gone forever.

But look what's ahead. Like a brightly wrapped package, 1998 awaits us. Like children trying to guess what's in that Christmas package, we think about tomorrow. We make plans, set goals and make New Year's resolutions.

As 1997 ends we celebrate that new thing that happened many years ago. God came down to us as a tiny child, born of a woman. Emmanuel, God with us. Great and wondrous new thing. He put behind us the old covenant and established a New Testament. He gave a new command: "That ye love one another, as I have loved you, that ye also love one another." Of course love was a part of the Old Testament, but Jesus could say, "As I have loved you."

A new thing. Our God tasted death on the cross for us—His enemies. "But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us."

Most glorious of all, He rose from the grave and ascended back into heaven. We follow Him into eternal life.

The Holy Spirit came, a new thing, to abide with us, making our bodies His temple.

So as the old year ends, we can forget the failures and triumphs of the past. We can look forward with joy to 1998 because He has made us new creatures. And all things are new in Him.

Calling All Churches

January is enlistment month for WNAC. A new year is a good time to start a woman's

group. Check the minutes of your district or state to determine how many churches there are in your area. Then compare these with the number of women's groups reported at the last annual meeting. Shocking, isn't it, how many women are not a part of WNAC?

You can change this picture in your area by helping women organize. Find some women who are interested in forming a group. Get in touch with the district or state field worker or the presidents of those organizations.

WNAC will be glad to send materials, including a Manual, Yearbook, brochures, and as many magazines as there are interested women.

If January is a bad month for travel in your area, choose another month. Let's enlist all our women in service for the glory of God.

It's Not Too Late

It's not too late to subscribe to the 1998 *CoLaborer* magazine. The magazine has something for all women. The programs make it helpful for local women's groups. The pertinent articles are helpful for all women in our churches. Reports of what women are doing in the States in other countries can motivate women to serve wherever they are.

Below is a subscription card. See that your women have the opportunity afforded to read good literature and find out what other Free Will Baptist women are reading, thinking and doing for Christ.

CoLaborer: A Free Will Baptist Magazine for Women Subscribe today!
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FOREIGN MISSIONS

A New Mission Work

By Tanya Hart

I have been involved serving with the Free Will Baptist Department of Foreign Missions in some capacity for seven years. My last foreign assignment was to teach at International Christian Academy in Bouake, Côte d'Ivoire. During that time I had to be flown home because of a serious medical emergency.

Commitment Strengthened

My illness has limited my ministry on foreign soil but has not changed my heart. In fact, during this time of recovering my commitment has grown stronger. Two months after being flown home from Côte d'Ivoire the Lord laid a burden upon my heart about a new mission work for Free Will Baptists. We have been working on the details since December 1995, and the ministry was placed into action in March of 1996.

When I made the career decision to teach children, that decision was a result of the love I have for kids. I taught school for several years at Trinity Christian School in Greenville, N.C. While teaching at TCS, the Lord opened the door for me to teach physical education in Brazil as a student missionary. Because of that missionary exposure, my love was enlarged to encompass kids all over the world.

New Work Started

The Board of Foreign Missions has approved a new, visionary ministry under my direction. After working with missionary kids (MKs) on several mission fields, I became aware that no organized or effective ministry was available to them. Free Will Baptists were behind other denominations in the area of MK ministries. Therefore, we have been losing a tremendous opportunity to minister to and learn from our best resources—MKs.

Now, I am volunteering my services to Free Will Baptist Foreign Missions as a caregiver to MKs. I am presently responsible for a 12-phase project aimed at ministering to all of our missionary kids. Seeing God work in this growing program is exciting, and hearing how an MK's need has been met is supremely satisfying.

Dedicated People Needed

I am dedicated to this ministry and would still like to implement many new services and opportunities for our MKs. Prayer partners, financial support, and dedicated people are greatly needed in this new endeavor. Those interested in knowing more should contact me. I am available by phone at (919) 746-7322 or (919) 746-2144 or by e-mail at the following address: thart@coastalnet.com.



Tanya Hart, volunteer coordinator of a ministry to FWB MKs, resides in Greenville, N.C. She edits and mails a newsletter especially for MKs called "The Connection."



Capital Stewardship/Victory Campaign
September 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	.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	33,824.91	26,659.49
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	10,612.08	81,659.52
South Carolina	18,335.75	3,102.00	15,233.75
South Dakota		175.00	(175.00)
Tennessee	78,557.09	66,080.96	12,476.13
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)
Totals	\$766,583.39	\$284,018.39	\$482,565.00

Directory Update

ALABAMA

Burt Hall to White Rock Church from Arnold
View Church, Creal Springs, IL

GEORGIA

Chuck Walker to New Light Church, Morgan



September 1997

Receipts:			Year To Date	Year To Date	Year To Date
State	Designated	CO-OP	Designated	CO-OP	Total
Alabama	\$ 606.63	\$.00	\$ 4,067.26	\$.00	\$ 4,067.26
Arizona	873.22	136.90	1,010.12	371.90	4,113.27
Arkansas	16,120.59	14,652.50	121,199.32	114,710.48	235,909.80
California	150.00	877.49	205.00	8,793.75	8,998.75
Colorado	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00
Delaware	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00
Florida	92.06	.00	262.94	16,150.00	16,412.94
Georgia	14,430.20	2,667.64	156,334.33	24,783.83	181,118.16
Hawaii	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00
Idaho	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00
Illinois	11,035.71	1,958.29	85,823.22	21,129.19	106,952.41
Indiana	1,411.20	101.69	9,150.77	1,571.66	10,722.43
Iowa	.00	287.07	310.00	2,439.37	2,749.37
Kansas	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00
Kentucky	1,727.00	271.63	10,913.58	4,419.96	15,333.54
Louisiana	50.00	.00	100.00	.00	100.00
Maryland	.00	225.00	.00	2,566.78	2,566.78
Michigan	14,761.52	1,831.46	113,743.89	23,746.72	137,490.61
Mississippi	1,684.31	325.27	2,604.09	3,248.61	5,852.70
Missouri	38,150.87	.00	389,187.35	.00	389,187.35
Montana	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00
Nebraska	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00
New Jersey	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00
New Mexico	771.60	35.80	8,565.22	442.19	9,007.41
North Carolina	1,211.63	254.70	9,922.47	9,956.31	19,878.78
Ohio	6,806.27	2,136.71	69,536.63	28,996.75	98,533.38
Oklahoma	54,207.36	271.75	483,933.28	17,097.01	501,030.29
South Carolina	29,386.58	112.44	261,958.78	959.84	262,918.62
South Dakota	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00
Tennessee	8,565.66	1,386.05	93,633.31	17,318.46	110,951.77
Texas	7,664.55	658.23	58,399.42	3,591.86	61,991.28
Virginia	596.48	25.00	7,558.85	225.00	7,783.85
Virgin Islands	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00
West Virginia	4,020.15	82.65	39,769.28	567.30	40,336.58
Wisconsin	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00
Canada	91.12	6.92	1,131.47	49.81	1,181.28
Northwest Assoc.	95.02	.00	95.02	15.00	110.02
Northeast Assoc.	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00
Other	180.00	.01	390.00	.12	390.12
Totals	\$214,689.73	\$28,305.20	\$242,994.93	\$ 1,932,536.85	\$ 2,235,688.75

Disbursements:

Executive Office	\$ 17,459.08	\$14,152.65	\$ 31,611.73	\$ 91,310.13	\$ 151,576.21	\$ 242,886.34
Foreign Missions	122,642.16	3,255.09	125,897.25	1,158,251.95	34,862.41	1,193,114.36
FWBBC	12,668.20	3,255.09	15,923.29	122,835.18	34,862.41	157,697.59
Home Missions	52,455.40	2,547.46	55,002.86	474,840.92	27,283.62	502,124.54
Retirement & Insurance	1,242.69	1,981.34	3,224.03	10,732.80	21,220.58	31,953.38
Master's Men	1,481.62	1,981.34	3,462.96	15,889.21	21,220.58	37,109.79
Cmsn. for Theo. Integrity	85.04	70.77	155.81	897.64	757.89	1,655.53
FWB Foundation	611.72	849.15	1,460.87	11,210.36	9,094.53	20,304.89
Historical Commission	54.59	70.77	125.36	730.01	757.89	1,487.90
Music Commission	45.56	70.77	116.33	656.21	757.89	1,414.10
Media Commission	68.96	70.77	139.73	744.57	757.89	1,502.46
Hillsdale FWB College	1,438.42	.00	1,438.42	11,547.37	.00	11,547.37
Other	4,436.29	.00	4,436.29	32,890.50	.00	32,890.50
Totals	\$214,689.73	\$28,305.20	\$242,994.93	\$ 1,932,536.85	\$ 303,151.90	\$ 2,235,688.75

Simon—The Zealot



Robert E. Picirilli

In the four lists of the apostles (Mt. 10:2-4; Mk. 3:16-19; Lk. 6:14-16; Acts 1:13), this Simon appears 10th in two of them, and is not mentioned otherwise in the New Testament. Although he had the same name as Peter, he has consistently been distinguished from him as “the Zealot,” or “Simon Zelotes” (transliterating the Greek name into English letters) using the characterization that Luke (in the Gospel and Acts) used for him.

But Matthew and Mark identify him as Simon “the Canaanite” or “Cananaean”—spelled in at least five slightly different ways in the various manuscripts. This word has often been taken to suggest where Simon was from, as though from some place named Cana or Canaan. But this seems to be a misunderstanding; apparently the word is really a transliteration into Greek letters of the Aramaic word for “zealot.” Thus all four lists are effectively calling him by the same nickname.

What is reasonably clear, therefore, is that this refers to a group of people with whom this Simon had identified himself before his enlistment among the apostles. Of course, it is possible for anyone, all by himself, to be “zealous” for some cause and so to be known as a zealot.

But we know that there was an identifiable group of people existing in the first century known as the Zealots. And so it is highly probable that this Simon had been devoted to the cause which that group represented before he became identified as an apostle of Jesus Christ.

Who were the Zealots? This was a political-religious sect among the Jews that devoted themselves zealously to the cause of independence from Rome. They were militant fanatics, activists expressing hatred for

the Roman overlords, fervently fostering rebellion.

According to *Nelson's Illustrated Bible Dictionary* they “thought of themselves as following in the footsteps of men like Simon and Levi (Gen. 34:1-31), Phinehas (Num. 23:1-13) and Elijah (1 Kin. 18:40; 19:10-14) who were devoted supporters of the Lord and His laws and who were ready to fight for them.”

The Jewish historian Josephus traces the beginning of the Zealots to one “Judas the Galilean” who attempted to lead a revolt against taxation connected to the Roman census of A.D. 6. They may even have been descended—in spirit at least—from the Maccabees of the intertestamental period. The Zealots thought that all who meekly accepted the Roman dominion of the Jews and paid taxes to the emperor were in effect traitors to the Jewish people and to the God they worshipped.

Within a few years of Jesus' death, the Zealots had become a violent band of sneak assassins called “Sicarii” (from the Latin word for dagger) who carried concealed daggers with which to kill traitors and Romans, afterward attempting to escape quietly into a crowd. (See Acts 21:38 for a possible reference.)

Indeed, it was the Zealots, taking control of Jerusalem in A.D. 66, that led to the Roman invasion that ultimately ended in the destruction of Jerusalem in A.D. 70 and to the fall of the last stronghold of the Zealots on Masada in A.D. 73.

We have no reason to think of Simon as an assassin, but all the rest of this probably characterized him before he became a full-time follower of Jesus. Thus Simon was an idealist, a radical, a revolutionary. How he came to know Jesus, and what changed him into one devoted to the

cause of Christ we do not know.

But radicals make good Christian disciples, provided they can find in Christ the cause they seek. Those who are devoted to one cause are often fervently devoted to another when they have been converted to a different leader. Indeed, those are the very kind of people needed to carry the gospel and build the church.

Far too often we are easily satisfied, content, unenthusiastic about anything. The Lord needs servants who will be devoted to Him and His church, zealous, eager and active in His work (cf. Rom. 12:11, for example).

We need to be discontented with the powers that be, working fervently in the cause of a greater rebellion, seeking to overthrow the dominion of the Archenemy and the kingdoms of this world, striving to enthrone Him who has a right to the thrones of all the nations. We need to free men from the yoke and tyranny of sin and bring them under the authority and rule of King Jesus.

As noted above, we don't know what brought this Zealot to enlist in Jesus' cause, but enlist he did—and in company with someone like Matthew/Levi who had “sold out” to the Romans to collect their taxes, at that! (Jesus is like that, He can bring together the unlikely of companions!) In some way he came to understand that here was the true Reformer, the One who would overthrow a worse bondage. He saw in Jesus the inevitable Victor in the cause of Truth and Righteousness. And he enlisted with all his might and zeal.

We can hardly do less. ■



Dennis Wiggs

Keep Your Mouth Shut!

Almost everything the preacher declares is heard by someone. The average person looks up to the preacher. His words hold value in the ears of the listener. The children listen to learn. Some adults strain to hear every word so they can quote the preacher. People love to tell others what "the preacher said." The young preacher must keep in mind how his words influence the listener and are often passed on to others.

Respect Prayer Requests

Church members or local citizens often share personal prayer requests with the preacher. This simple act reveals the confidence people put in the man of God. It is sin to promise to pray with someone about a burden and then forget to pray. Prayer requests are better written down, possibly in a prayer diary, and remembered before the Lord as promised.

It is unethical to reveal to others the prayer burdens. For people to lose confidence in the young preacher means they will refuse to issue future requests for prayer.

Counsel in Confidence

In this age of marital, financial, emotional and physical problems, the young preacher will be sought out for counsel. The best counsel is often just listening. To mention from the pulpit an illustration of someone counseled last week is absolutely awful.

Maybe the name is not mentioned, but if the one counseled is in the congregation, that person most likely will never return for more advice. The preacher is much safer preaching bib-

lical illustrations rather than referring to those he has advised in his study.

Tell Your Wife?

Venting feelings about a counseling session may make the young preacher feel better, but how does it make his wife feel? Prayer requests, confession of sins, personal problems of church members should all be kept between the preacher and his omniscient God. To share everything revealed in the study just may harden his wife against a church member or even the ministry.

The man of God must determine within his own soul how much he should share with his mate. He should seek the Lord's guidance. It may be better for the family atmosphere if words of encouragement, challenge and optimism are uttered. Talking about people and their problems could turn the spouse and even the children against church members.

Remember, that which is shared in a counseling session is confessed and the person achieves personal, spiritual victory. God forgives and forgets. So should the preacher. The wife may have more difficulty forgetting if she has not sat in the entire counseling session, seen the tears and heard the confessional prayer.

Tell Preacher Friends?

Sad to say, the young preacher may not be able to share with every preacher his burdens and problems. Remember the three preachers fishing? They began to confess their weaknesses. One shared in confidence his problem of the flesh. The second preacher did the same. The

third preacher declared, "My weakness is gossip. I can't wait to get off this boat!"

Ecclesiastical gossip can be vicious. "A lie can travel half-way around the world before truth gets its boots on." Some preachers enjoy discussing other preachers. Don't forget that, young preacher. Better to keep the mouth shut most of the time. It may be wise to tell nothing but good.

If you find a preacher who can keep your secrets, then cry on his shoulder. If you can't find one, just be content telling the Lord. Keep your mouth shut.

Remember, many people thrive on the bad. Tell what God is doing in your congregation and your life. Testify of a soul who has trusted Christ as Savior. If no one has been saved, give a report of those who are under conviction. Be optimistic.

Tell the Lord?

Maybe all of us ought to evaluate our praying. Is it all petitions? Or, do we praise Him Who is worthy to be praised? Possibly keeping our mouths shut on our knees is a worthwhile project. Just listen and meditate on the greatness of God. Sing praises to the Lord.

Praying can become a complaining, begging, crying session. Spending quality time on the knees may demand keeping the mouth shut and the heart yearning for the presence of the power of the Lord. ■

YOUTH UPDATE

WANT TO GO TO AFRICA?



EACH ONE REACH

We are raising \$100,000 to build a new pavilion, wall, and parsonage on the Abidjan compound in Cote D' Ivoire, West Africa. If we reach our goal, we'll be sending members of the top money-raising youth group to help with the construction. Begin raising your money now, and send in your collections to the YMD! And by the way, brush up on your French language skills!

All you have to do is:

- Participate in the Youth Ministries Division Each One Reach One Program
- Help us reach our \$100,000 goal
- Be the youth group that raises the most money*

* Some restrictions apply

For a complete brochure, call the Youth Ministries Division at 1-800-877-7030.

✋ Join the *Nehemiah Club* and help **BUILD THE WALL!** Raise money to build a foot of the wall or individual blocks.

✋ Join the *Abraham Club* and help **BUILD THE TABERNACLE!** Raise money to buy a square foot of the authentic African thatch roof or seating inside.

✋ Join the *Elisha Club* and help **BUILD THE PARSONAGE!** Raise money to buy an entire room or square foot of the house for the African pastor.

"Ruth, Esther," Word Biblical Commentary, Vol. 9

By Frederick Bush, edited by David A. Hubbard and Glenn W. Barker

(Dallas: Word Books, 1996, 514 pp., hardback, \$29.95).



Thomas Marberry

Frederick Bush is the D. Wilson Moore Professor of Ancient Near Eastern Studies at Fuller Theological Seminary. He is a recognized scholar in the field of Hebrew language and philosophy.

Ruth and Esther have often been overlooked both in the field of Old Testament studies and in the worship of the church. Few major commentaries are devoted to them. Most pastors seldom preach or teach from either book. Sunday School materials seldom include more than one or two lessons drawn from them.

Yet, both books make important contributions to the history and theology of the Old Testament. Ruth gives one of the few pictures of life among common people during the early period of Israel's history. Esther gives a rare glimpse of Jewish life during the Persian period of Israel's history.

This commentary by Bush is a comprehensive and technical work. He gives extensive bibliographies on almost every chapter. These bibliographies include the most outstanding commentaries and other works in English, French and German. The author gives excellent summaries of

current research on Ruth and Esther.

Bush examines date, authorship, purpose, literary genre, text and theology of these books. He notes that both are anonymous writings. To determine when these books were written, he examines carefully the theology of each book, the socio-legal institutions which prevailed at the time of writing, the language used, etc.

He concludes that Ruth was probably written during the late pre-exilic or early post-exilic time. Esther is more difficult to date because two different Hebrew versions of the book have survived. There is also a Greek version which is quite different from the Hebrew. He concludes that the official Hebrew version (from which our English translations are made) was written about the fourth century B.C.

Bush gives much attention to interpretation. He examines the meaning of almost every phrase in the Hebrew text of these books. He devotes considerable attention to important words and passages which are difficult to translate or interpret.

Perhaps the greatest contribution of this commentary is the author's analysis of the books' theology. He of-

ten asks the question, "What message was the author trying to give us when he wrote this passage?" He notes that the author of Ruth presents Ruth, Boaz and Naomi "... as models for his readers to emulate ..."

He explains that the role of God in the Book of Ruth is subtle and indirect, but He is clearly the guiding force behind the events presented in the book. God works through "... the ordinary motivation and events of his people ..."

This is the best commentary on Ruth and Esther that I have read in a long time. It does an in-depth analysis of these important, but often neglected, books.

Bush avoids the temptation to reconstruct the Hebrew text according to some preconceived idea. He accepts the text as it is and tries to interpret it. I agree with most (but not all) of his conclusions. I think his dating of the books, for example, is somewhat late.

This is not a commentary for the novice. It demands that the reader have some familiarity with current issues in the field of Old Testament studies. It is also difficult to use effectively without some knowledge of Hebrew. ■

BEYOND BELIEF



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Volume 44

January - December 1997

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- Columns are listed in chronological order.
- The Newsfront index is alphabetized in six main sections: churches, ministers, laymen, state ministries, national ministries and other.

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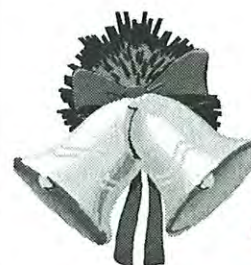
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*The Contact
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and your family
peace during this
holiday season and the
New Year.*

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Brown, Nuel	September, 20
Burch, Tommy L.	May, 19
Cheshier, Carl	July, 18
Cutshall, Alfred	November, 19
Davenport, Frank	July, 19
Davis, Winford	September, 20
Day, Thomas	August, 18
Floyd, John	April, 18
Greene, Ted	January, 19
Horton, Lester	September, 23; October, 18
Johnson, L. C.	August, 19
Kilgore, James H.	December, 14
Lilly, Tom	August, 19
Marcum, Jim	June, 19
McNeese, Charles	December, 16
Shepherd, Jim	May, 19
Staten, Ralph	December, 13
Warner, Robert	June, 19
Young, Carl	March, 20

Cults in America

Beginning January:
an 11-part series
on what you need to know
about the cults in
the United States of America

Churches

Alabama

First FWB Church, Dothan	June, 20
First FWB Church, Red Bay	March, 19
Macedonia FWB Church, Millport	December, 15
White Rock FWB Church, Phenix City	June, 21

Arkansas

Allen Chapel FWB Church, Batesville	January, 20
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California

Eastside FWB Church, Petaluma	March, 20
New Beginning FWB Church, Buena Park	April, 18

Georgia

First FWB Church, Albany	February, 17
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Missouri

Amity FWB Church, Niangua	May, 20
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North Carolina

Charity FWB Church, Wendell	November, 19
First FWB Church, Gastonia	June, 20

Ohio

Urbana FWB Church, Urbana	August, 18
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Tennessee

Donelson FWB Church, Nashville	September, 21
First FWB Church, Mountain City	March, 21
Limestone FWB Church, Limestone	November, 19

Virginia

Adwolfe FWB Church, Marion	October, 18
Fairwood FWB Church, Fairfax Station	October, 18

States

Alabama	January, 20	Michigan	September, 22
Arizona	May, 22	Mississippi	February, 16
Arkansas	October, 17	Missouri	September, 23
Atlantic Canada Association	October, 18	New Jersey	August, 20
California	September, 20	New Mexico	July, 18
Florida	August, 19	North Carolina	June, 19; August, 19
Georgia	January, 21	Ohio	September, 22
Idaho	August, 20	Oklahoma	January, 21
Illinois	June, 20	South Carolina	May, 21
Kansas	August, 20	Tennessee	February, 17
Kentucky	October, 18	Texas	August, 20
Maryland	September, 23	West Virginia	August, 18; December, 17
Mexico	November, 18		

Other

1997 State Association Meetings	February, 19	Hillsdale Spring Enrollment Up 30	May, 20
600 Attend Pigeon Forge Conference	October, 19	International FWB Fellowship Sets 1998 Program	March, 18
Alabama Children's Home Receives New Van	January, 20	Kilgore to Lead FWB Family Ministries	December, 14
CCC Doubles Enrollment	November, 19	Retreat Attracts 1,000 Women	April, 19
College Presidents Meet for Fellowship	April, 17	Second Preaching Conference Set at Pigeon Forge	April, 20
Correction	January, 19	Southeastern Announces Graduation	March, 18
First Oklahoma to Celebrate Centennial	January, 19	Southeastern College Has 150 Students	November, 19
Hillsdale College President Resigns	May, 19	Southeastern Conference	September, 22
Hillsdale Enrollment Up 25%	November, 20	Southeastern Sets Fall Opening	July, 20
Hillsdale Names Carl Cheshier President	July, 18	Southeastern Sets Spring Camp Meeting	February, 18

The Red Kettle Caper

One cold Friday evening before Christmas 1996, my wife ("J. J.") and I drove to Sam's Wholesale Club in South Nashville. A young man stood outside the exit doors bouncing on the concrete beside a red kettle. I showed the guard my identity card, located a cart for J. J., turned her loose with the checkbook and walked outside to speak with the young man guarding the Salvation Army kettle.

"Things are kind of slow today," he said as I pushed two dollars into his red kettle.

"Would you like a cup of coffee?" I asked. He sure did.

"We're allowed two 15-minute breaks a day," he said. "But I never leave my kettle except for a restroom break. I want to be here when the people give."

I liked his attitude about his job and the people who gave. He thought it was important to say, "Thank you," when people dropped their gifts in his red kettle.

Promising to return with a cup of hot coffee, I passed the entrance guard again, flashed my ID card a second time and ran right into a problem at the snack area. No coffee. That seemed strange with coffee stacked 30 feet high on nearby shelves.

So I left Sam's a second time, drawing an odd look from the exit guard. I informed the cold young man at the red kettle there was no more coffee.

"That's all right, sir," he said. "I had something to drink a couple of hours ago. Thanks for trying."

Turning away I asked, "Say, how about a Coke to drink?" That would be fine. I walked by the entrance guard for the third time, flashing my ID card. She did a double take.

The snack area attendant said

they were also out of Cokes. Yes, the stuff was stacked everywhere in the warehouse. She offered an alternative of potato chips and Pepsi. This was the best I could do with a king's ransom worth of food on every side?

I walked by the suspicious exit guard for the third time. Her eyes trailed me out the door with unspoken questions. I offered no answers.

The young man at the red kettle saw me coming. He accepted the chips, the Pepsi and the explanation with a quiet, "Thank you."

"By the way, have you had dinner yet?" I asked. No, he'd eaten a light lunch six hours earlier. "Would you like a hamburger and fries?" Yes, he would.

For the fourth time, I passed the entrance guard. She smiled wearily.

As unlikely as it seems, the snack attendant had one more surprise waiting. No hamburgers. And yes, the display cases a few feet away creaked beneath a load of ground beef. (I know this sounds like a bad movie script.)

The attendant suggested a hot dog instead. Since I didn't want to go out and ask if the red kettle keeper disliked dogs, I took a chance and ordered one for him.

That hot dog wiener was big enough to defend itself. I scooped up the last four slices of pickles and onions, baptized it all with mustard the way I like it and headed out the exit door for the fourth time. The guard's mouth dropped open. She didn't ask and I didn't tell.

Three people exited in front of me. They all ignored the shivering young man hunched behind the red kettle. He nodded thanks as I explained that Sam's had no more hamburgers for sale. Truth be known, I felt

foolish and ready for this caper to end.

The fifth time I walked by the entrance guard, she waved me on without a glance at my ID card. I found J. J. trying to lift a 25-pound bag of rice into the cart. I let her finish then offered to help with a box of cereal. Only another misunderstood husband could appreciate the scalding look she gave me.

After standing in a *l-o-n-g* line to check out, the cashier scanned my ID card with "Free Will Baptist" on it. She smiled big as sunrise and said, "I got saved last Sunday night!"

We had a praise gathering at the cash register as we wrote a check and listened to her exuberant testimony. That one moment turned the lights on in my soul. She beamed, "God bless you," as we walked toward the door.

The exit guard shook her head as I walked out for the fifth time in 45 minutes.

"Hey, Mister!" a warm voice called. I turned to see a broad smile from behind the red kettle. "Right after you brought me that Pepsi and hot dog, a lady stopped by and put in a \$20 bill! Things are really looking up!"

They certainly were.

There's a Christmas story on every street corner. If you want to find one, just stir the kettle and stand in line. You'll be surprised at the big payoff on such a small investment. ■



Jack Williams

CONTACT

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