

JANUARY 1998

CONTACT

OFFICIAL PUBLICATION OF THE
NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF
FREE WILL BAPTISTS

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Man on Fire!

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The Counterfeit
Jesus

.....
How Bad Do You
Want It?

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Visitation Blitz

.....
Year of the Dog



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The Spectrum of Stewardship

Stewardship remains an elusive concept in the minds of many. Studies indicate that stewardship courses in seminaries, Christian colleges and Bible colleges are almost non-existent. Consequently, those being prepared for the pastoral ministry often have had not one college or seminary course on the theological concept of biblical stewardship.

This editorial is the first in a series of stewardship studies for 1998. Over the next 12 months, I will provide in "Secretary Speaks" a systematic survey of stewardship precepts, principles and practices. Stewardship is consistently, carefully and clearly woven into the fabric of the scriptures. It is my earnest prayer that the Lord will enable us through this study to find and fulfill our stewardship responsibility.

The Truth

The truth regarding stewardship is that it occurs repeatedly in the Bible. Adam was given stewardship responsibility in the garden when God gave him dominion over the fish of the sea, the fowl of the air, the cattle of the field and over the whole earth. God instructed Adam to dress the garden and keep it.

The truth regarding stewardship is overwhelming. This truth encompasses the entire spectrum of the Christian's life. We are simply overwhelmed with the demands, discipline and distinctive details for biblical stewardship. Stewardship is required of every Christian.

The truth regarding stewardship is obvious. Stewardship responsibility and reality are not part of God's hidden agenda. It is obvious from the first description of God's creation including man. This obvious truth has been neglected to the detriment of the church.

It remains somewhat of a mystery why pastoral training programs, discipleship curriculum and pastoral

preaching has refused to emphasize biblical stewardship. The plain truth is that stewardship is a practical and perceptive way to measure spiritual development in the life of every Christian.

The truth regarding stewardship is offensive. Biblical stewardship is often painful for those wrapped up in materialism and marketing. The insatiable appetite to accumulate and amass possessions is challenged by biblical stewardship. Rather than confront and challenge the spirit of the age, we often conform.

Consequently, we cease to preach biblical stewardship lest we offend those who remain self-centered, selfish and self-sufficient. Those who oppose the biblical concept of stewardship remain the losers. They miss the blessings and benefits which flow from a life given to scriptural stewardship.

The truth of stewardship is obligatory. Stewardship is not an option but an obligation. Christians cannot disregard, denounce or disobey the demands of stewardship. The proper response to our stewardship obligation is obedience. This obligation has not been repealed but is repeated time and time again in scripture.

The truth of stewardship is observed. A perusal of the biblical record provides illustrations of individuals who fulfilled their stewardship responsibility. They practiced the principles, provided the por-



Melvin Worthington

trait and presented the precepts of stewardship.

The Terms

One term which needs to be understood when discussing stewardship is *steward* or *stewards*. The word steward or stewards surfaces 13 times in the scriptures. It means a house distributor (i.e., manager) or an overseer (i.e., a person employed in that capacity) A steward is one who manages the domestic affairs of a family or minor. The term denotes the *person* or *persons* engaged in stewardship activities.

Another term which needs to be understood when discussing stewardship is *stewardship*. This word appears three times in the Bible. It means the performance of a steward (a house distributor, manager, overseer or an employee in that capacity). *Stewardship* deals with the work of steward, while *steward* denotes the person who embraces and engages in stewardship activity.

The Texts

Hundreds of biblical texts address stewardship responsibility. This series of studies on the topic will provide a *comprehensive portrait or overview* of the biblical doctrine of stewardship. An attempt will be made to address the basis, basics and blessings which flow from embracing and exercising biblical stewardship precepts.

This study will also *identify the clear precepts or oughts* of the biblical doctrine of stewardship. Attention will be given to the focus, facets, foes and fidelity needed in the arena of biblical stewardship. Embracing and exercising biblical stewardship is an essential ingredient in developing disciplined disciples of the Lord Jesus Christ. ■

The Secretary's Schedule

January 1998

- 13-16** Convention Planning Trip
Tulsa, Oklahoma
- 22-24** Ohio Ministers/Deacons Retreat
Big Prairie, Ohio
- 27-30** RCMA Conference
Indianapolis, Indiana

The incredible story of Mark Elliott.

Man on Fire!

By Jack Williams



Thirty-seven-year-old Mark Elliott heard a low growl behind him. He turned and stared into an eight-foot-high wall of fire racing toward him across the floor of his mother's bedroom. When the 1,400° flash fire touched Mark's clothing, permeated with fine dust and sealant compound after three days of laying wood flooring, he exploded in a fireball.

His clothes blazing, Mark ran from the house and rolled in the yard to extinguish the flames. He would later discover that he broke his right arm and tore the rotator cuff, but for the time, that went unnoticed.

"I knew I was in bad shape," Elliott said, "when I looked down and saw skin falling off my arm and the bones in my hands. The pain was terrible."

Mark's mother, Mrs. Ann Elliott, saw him run from the house engulfed in flames and called 911. Within eight minutes firemen from the small town of Forest roared into the front yard of the Elliott home. Three minutes later, an ambulance from Oak Grove 10 miles away skidded to a stop.

"It seemed like hours," Mark said. "Both the local firemen and the ambulance arrived in an amazingly short time. But I was hurting so bad I thought it was longer."

In spite of quick response by rescue personnel, 100 people had already gathered at the rural Elliott home when emergency units arrived. Nearly everybody was off work because of the January 1 holiday. Several had scanners which picked up the 911 call.

"We all know everybody," Mark says. "When people heard there was a fire at the Elliott house on Chamberless Road, they came from everywhere. Telephones began ringing all over West Carroll Parish."

Mark Elliott pastors Corbin Ferry FWB Church, a rural North Louisiana church that sits on the banks of Bayou Macon midway between Lake Providence and Forest in the heart of cotton country.

While waiting in the yard for emergency crews to arrive, Mark's clothing re-ignited. The second blaze damaged his side and stomach. A

neighbor, George Pilant, who heard the explosion in the Elliott home and ran to help, put out the second fire with his hands.

Mark had to be restrained from re-entering the house, because he had not seen his parents get out. His mother's diabetic feet prevented her from moving quickly and he was worried about her safety. Prompt action by firemen limited household damage to the two bedrooms.

Preacher of Fire

As Mark hunched over in the yard with smoke rising from his clothes and blackened skin hanging from his hands and arms, he said something his mother will never forget.

"The yard was full of people. Mark looked up at them and said, 'If there's anybody here who is not saved, the fires of Hell are worse than this . . . and I'm burning to death,'" Mrs. Elliott related.

Mark addressed the crowd several times before firemen arrived. Then he turned to Bruce Pilant (son of

George Pilant) and said, "Bruce, if you're not saved, you'd better get saved. Hell is going to be hot."

Mark's wife, Toni, just missed the fire. She brought lunch to Mark and returned to their home in Forest with their two daughters, Elizabeth (14) who was still on crutches from arthroscopic surgery on her knee, Rachel (11) and the daughter of a friend she was babysitting.

The girl's mother heard about the fire and called Toni. That phone call set in motion a series of events which changed Toni's world. She would not return home for many days.

Although Mark did not lose consciousness, he began having trouble breathing after fire fighters arrived.

The Miracles Begin

"I knew I was dying," Elliott recalls. "My breathing was getting shallower with each breath. I turned to one of the firemen and said, 'Ron, I'm dying. Pray for me that I can breathe.'"

The fireman prayed and Mark's breathing eased. West Carroll Ambulance Service personnel tried to remove his charred clothing. His shirt came off but the heavy jeans he wore had seemingly melted into his skin.

The time was between 1:30 p.m. and 2:00 p.m. on Wednesday, January 1, 1997. Attendants placed Mark in the ambulance and the race against death began. The first stop was West Carroll Hospital in Oak Grove.

Doctors began frantic efforts to intubate him. To their horror, his neck and throat had swollen and they could not insert the tube. They gave him a series of shots to quieten him.

Oak Grove emergency personnel searched for medication to relax his throat but could not locate any in their supply; they finally sent to Lake Providence for it. When the medication arrived and was given to Mark, nothing changed.

For two hours that seemed like eternity, doctors struggled to insert the breathing tube. Repeated calls to the Delta Regional Medical Center in Greenville, Mississippi, confirmed that the burn unit would not accept Mark as a patient unless his air passage was cleared. Without the tube inserted, he had no chance to live.

Meanwhile, hundreds of people

from East and West Carroll Parishes converged on the hospital in Oak Grove praying for Mark. But after two hours, local physicians knew they were out of options and out of time. They reluctantly backed away and told family and friends there was nothing more they could do. Death seemed minutes away.

Among those gathered at the hospital praying were ambulance driver Dennis Seamans and Reverend Milton Pray, pastor of First Baptist Church in Oak Grove. When physicians declared they could do no more to clear Mark's air passage, Dennis Seamans asked Milton Pray to have a special prayer, then, "I'm going to try one last time to insert the breathing tube."

Everyone knew the gesture was futile, but Dennis insisted. After the special prayer, Seamans reached for the tube and approached the now unconscious Mark Elliott. As physicians and family looked on in astonishment, Dennis inserted the tube in a matter of seconds. The first miracle had occurred. There would be others.

Officials wanted to airlift Mark to the Greenville burn unit by helicopter, but could not because heavy fog grounded all aircraft. That meant a 50-mile race against the grim reaper by ambulance across the North Louisiana delta, up U.S. 65 to Lake Village, Arkansas, and a final dash across the Mississippi River on the two-lane Greenville bridge.

The 78 Days

Toni Elliott climbed into the vehicle beside her husband. His 220-pound, 6'3" body looked so frail. It would be 78 days before she left Mark's side. Siren screaming, the ambulance headed east on Highway 2.

The news was not good from doctors at Greenville's Delta Regional Medical Center. The searing flash fire with super-heated temperatures had nearly cooked Mark. Seventy percent of his body had second- and third-degree burns, largely third-degree which is the most severe.

He had less than a 10 percent chance to live. Officials thought he'd probably be blind, lose both ears and both hands, lose his right leg and arm, lose the end of his nose and be unable to speak. As Mark's major or-

gans began shutting down, their pessimism seemed justified.

At first, his fight for survival continued minute by minute, then hour by hour, then one day at a time. Doctors placed him on a ventilator immediately and gave him oxygen so he could breathe. For seven weeks, he was kept sedated with powerful drugs. At one point, 15 tubes carrying medication and fluids ran into Mark's neck. He was immobilized so that only his head moved.

No one expected him to live. No one that is, except his wife, Toni, who refused to leave the burn center. She would not give up nor allow the burn center staff to give up on Mark. Toni was told that if her husband survived, he would face a minimum of three months in the center as well as extensive skin grafts and surgeries. She never blinked.

January 5. Mark received five units of blood. Then he required blood so often and in such quantities that three blood drives in Louisiana and Arkansas barely kept pace. One of those drives, the largest for an adult in the history of West Carroll Parish, brought in 206 units.

Infection, the great threat to burn victims, gnawed away at Mark's strength. January 3, he needed a cooling blanket to moderate his temperature. By January 6, his temperature rose to 102°. His left lung filled with fluid as physicians desperately fought death on Mark's behalf. Weekly surgeries on his hands and arms began.

Around-the-clock care kept him alive until January 20. Toni, staying at the Light House apartments provided for family members, received an urgent call at 2:30 that morning. Mark was in serious trouble.

His blood pressure bottomed out at 60/28, his heart rate shot up to 164, both lungs filled with fluid and his temperature skyrocketed to an unbelievable 108°. Doctors prepared Toni for the worst, telling her that he could go either way before dawn. To everyone's amazement, Mark was alive at sunrise.

He gradually stabilized but remained critical for days. The surgeries, which had been halted, began again. On February 4, his right pinky finger was amputated.

The Darkest Hours

For seven weeks, Mark lived in a dark dreamworld surrounded by medical personnel and sedated to tolerate the pain. In his twilight world of drugs, high-tech equipment and tubes, he lay virtually immobilized, alone with his thoughts.

He had recurring dreams that he was shot and in a Mexican prison where women tortured him by scraping his skin with wire brushes, causing excruciating pain. In fact, nurses did regularly scrape dead skin from his body. His mind played out the dream in order to cope with the pain.

When Mark regained consciousness and became aware of the extent of his injuries, he was devastated. "My greatest fear was that I might not be able to preach again or take care of my family."

The hopelessness of his situation rose in his mind like a specter to ridicule his faith and manhood. He felt trapped and useless.

Mark's bed was placed close to the nurses' station with a curtain that could be drawn around him. "When the curtain was drawn, all I could see was the wall clock at the nurses' station. I was so lonely and in so much pain. I lived for 12:00, 4:00 and 8:00—that's when my wife and daughters could visit for 30 minutes."

The growing knowledge that he would have a very different life once he left the burn center provided Mark with both his worst and best moments.

"One night about 2:30 a.m., I was so frustrated with my situation that I challenged God in the darkness," Mark said quietly. "Lord, how can you ever use me like this? I'm handicapped; I can't move; I may never stand in the pulpit again. What possible use can I be to You?"

Almost immediately, a distraught nurse Mark had never seen entered the burn unit. She was not supposed to be there; she worked in another area of the hospital. Attendants had just wheeled in her best friend who had dropped dead at age 33. She was inconsolable.

"I wish I had a preacher I could talk to," the weeping nurse said.

A burn center attendant replied, pointing to Mark, "Here's a preacher; talk to him."

For the next hour, the "handicapped" Mark Elliott, trapped in the burn center and unable to move without assistance, witnessed to the nurse. Mark asked her to get his Bible and told her where to turn. When she found the scripture passages, Mark had her read them aloud. He then explained the verses and told her about a hope stronger than death.

When she left, Mark had his answer. "God showed me that He could use me at 2:30 in the morning locked in a burn center. If He could use me there, He could use me anywhere."

But the danger to Mark's health was (and still is) altogether real and the hours were often desperate as physicians worked heroically to keep him alive. Half a dozen times they thought they had lost the battle.

"I saw God's throne one night," Mark said. "Two angels began walking toward me. They had come for me and I was ready to go with them. Just before the angels reached me, they stopped, looked at me, then turned around and walked back.

"I was that close to death. Maybe that occurred the night my blood pressure dropped so low and my temperature reached 108°."

Standing Tall

Events were moving more rapidly than they seemed to be for Mark and Toni. He sat up for the first time on Thursday, February 13. By February 16, he came off the ventilator and feeding tube, but he had trouble hearing and his eyes still burned. February 19 he entered the whirlpool for the first time and began the painful process of removing dead skin.

By February 26, Mark's left hand was healing well. His face had no scars because a canister-type respirator mask covered his nose and mouth during the fire. The mask probably saved his life even though his lungs were damaged.

March 6 was a red-letter day for the Elliott family. Burn center officials allowed Toni to take Mark out for a drive. She took him home to Louisiana for a one-hour visit.

The most important day of 1997 came at dawn on March 30, Easter Sunday. Doctors agreed that Mark could attend sunrise service at Corbin

Ferry FWB Church. During that service, a holy hush fell on the congregation. Grown men wept as Pastor Mark Elliott rose in his bandages and stood among his people as one who had returned to them from the dead.

Mother's Day, May 11, Mark preached his first sermon at Corbin Ferry since the fire. He walked slowly to the pulpit, read Matthew 7:24-27, and preached for 40 minutes on the subject, "I'm Still Standing."

Mark told the crowd, "God let me live so that I could come back and be a witness to you. Life is a choice. I chose Christ. So can you."

Just before he preached, a doctor from the burn center told Mark, "You're not supposed to be here. In fact, you're not supposed to be alive." The videotaped sermon has been viewed by thousands of people, including burn center personnel.

By May 29, Mark began preaching regularly on Sunday mornings at Corbin Ferry. He needed that spiritual uplift because as doctors learned more about nerve damage to his hands and right shoulder, fear of amputation surfaced again.

Infected bones in his right hand were removed and replaced with plastic implants. Mark turned 38 years old on July 2. He was finally at home, but facing 1½-hour treatments, seven days a week, on his hands.

Physicians told Mark that he must undergo a two-year rehabilitation program before he could consider working again. But eight months after the flash fire, he returned to work at Forest High School where he has taught special education students for nine years.

The Long Road Ahead

Even so, he is there on a provisional basis with approval of the school superintendent. Mark had 20 surgeries between January and June 1997. He faces at least five more. Sometime in the next year, a decision will be made whether or not to amputate the fingers of his right hand.

The restrictions go deeper. He has some memory loss, perhaps related to the high fevers. He wears a blue Job's Pressure Garment (a special glove) on his left hand that holds his fingers rigidly splayed until more skin

grafts can be completed. He hopes to regain full use of his left hand. He still wears a body suit to keep pressure on the injured areas.

Mark's physical problems go beyond the fact that he still cannot shave, bathe or dress himself without assistance. He speaks of his wife Toni in words of the greatest love. He knows that he could not make it without her fierce loyalty, her unselfishness concerning his needs, and her determination to stand by him regardless of circumstances.

"The first time I saw myself in the mirror after the fire, I yelled at Toni, 'I'm so ugly! How could you love someone as ugly as I am?'"

Toni's response brought Mark up short, "Mark Elliott, I didn't marry you for your looks in the first place."

Mark chuckles, "I reckon she's telling me that I wasn't a hunk before the fire, so why be upset over a few scars?"

"There's not a better woman in the world than Toni," he whispers. Mark's accident exacted a price from Toni that few wives are prepared to pay. She pays that price with an easy joy.

Something else changed for Mark—his sermon preparation. Since he can't hold a pencil or type, he holds his thoughts in his mind until he can tell them to Toni several times a week. She writes them down, then on Saturday night she and Mark finalize his outline.

Mark says that since he is unable to turn the pages in his Bible, his outlines are longer now that Toni writes out what she thinks he means. He grins, "I may turn Toni into a theologian yet."

As a bivocational pastor, Mark lives in two worlds—his pastorate and his job. He preaches Sunday mornings and Wednesday nights; another minister speaks Sunday nights.

Into the Future

"I've got a long way to go," Mark says, "but by God's grace I'll make it."

The future is one big hurdle after another for Mark and Toni Elliott. They have already come back from death's door. Mark's first major step was to get off the ventilator and breathe on his own. He did that.

He moved to the whirlpool baths. After weeks of effort, he could sit up

alone. Then came hard weeks of occupational and physical therapy with days beginning at 6:30 a.m. He learned to walk again. He went home. Now he's back in the pulpit and back in the classroom. The remaining surgeries loom ahead.

"My greatest challenge now is to live what I've been preaching," Mark said. "This has been the most humbling experience I've ever had. I've learned that there are some things more important than my living a healthy life—and that's folks getting saved."

Looking back, Mark reflects, "I don't regret what's happened to me. I'd go through it all over again—the pain, the fear—if it meant that somebody would get saved. Something like this makes men bitter or better. I intend to be a better man, not a bitter man."

The Denomination

"God bless the Free Will Baptist people!" Mark says. "You can tell everybody that there's not a finer group of people anywhere than Free Will Baptists. They reached out to me and my family and loved us unconditionally."

During the eight months that Mark and Toni Elliott were out of work (Toni took a leave of absence from her fifth grade class at Forest School), the denomination sent baskets full of cards to the burn center. They called and visited and encouraged and gave financially.

Mark was moderator of Arkansas' Saline Association at the time of the fire. Through efforts of Saline Association pastors and Arkansas promotional director David Joslin, ministers filled the pulpit at Corbin Ferry FWB Church for five months.

Members of Corbin Ferry Church rallied to Mark's needs through prayer, calls and visits. The church continued his salary while he was hospitalized. The men of the church frequently spoke on Wednesday and Sunday nights.

"That's what held us up and gave us strength," Mark says. "We couldn't have made it without the loving concern of the wonderful Free Will Baptist people. They didn't just talk; they did something. They got in the prob-

lem with us and made a difference."

When Mark's sick time and vacation days ran out at the school, and their insurance benefits were exhausted, God continued to meet financial needs for the family.

Elliott Day

As their financial resources dwindled, Mark told his wife, "We're like the woman who came to Jesus with an issue of blood. We've spent all on doctors and are no better. Now we need to touch the hem of His garment. God will provide for us."

By mid-January a Mark Elliott Benefit Account had been established at the Hibernia Bank in Oak Grove.

There was more. A few weeks later, local officials signed a proclamation designating March 1, 1997, as "Mark Elliott Day" in West Carroll Parish. The day included a benefit dinner and talent show.

The West Carroll Gazette's March 5 edition reported that more than 3,000 plates were served as friends and neighbors rallied to support the courageous young pastor.

Gazette editor Johnny Turner said, "People of West Carroll Parish come through when they are needed."

"I know three things for sure," says Mark. "There is a God; there is a Hell; Romans 8 does work." Mark and Toni have touched the hem of His garment.

Two Surprises

Two incidents at the burn center typify the timing of God for Mark and Toni. The first concerns a recurring flat tire.

On April 25, after Toni had repaired the same tire several times, Mark sent her to a Greenville Wal-Mart to buy two new tires. Some time later, Wal-Mart called to report that the tires were on the car but that two lug bolts had broken off one tire. They were closing and couldn't fix it.

Toni and Mark had planned to drive to Louisiana that day and were uneasy making the trip unless the lug bolts were repaired. It was Friday afternoon and Greenville was shutting down for the weekend.

At 4:55 p.m., Toni drove to a Kelly Tire store. An attendant said they

were closing in five minutes, but that she could talk with the boss if she wished.

Toni explained the problem to the boss, "I'm afraid to drive to Louisiana with two lug bolts missing."

"You're from Louisiana?" he inquired. "Have you moved to Greenville?"

Toni related that her husband was at the burn center.

The boss said, "Why, I've been praying for you! I'm a pilot. I was at the airport when people came in and told me about Mark. 'Been praying for you every day. Sure, we'll fix your tire.'" He also said that the manager of the burn center was a friend of his.

Five minutes later the boss called, "Come here, Toni. Meet the manager of the burn center. See how God put us all here together. If you and Mark have any trouble, I'll fly you to Louisiana."

The second incident concerns Mark's eyes. Doctors had warned that Mark might be permanently blind from the fire damage. He had worn glasses for years. The day finally arrived when the bandages came off.

That's when God slipped another surprise to Mark. Not only could he see, but when his eyes were tested, he no longer needed glasses.

"Like the three Hebrew children, I can see clearer now that I've been through the fire," Mark grins, his blue eyes twinkling.

New Beginning

Mark Elliott pastors his home church and teaches in the high school where he graduated. Everybody in the community and local town knows the tall young preacher who pastors Corbin Ferry FWB Church.

Converted at age 10 and rededicated to Christ at age 19, Mark heard Reverend Robert Crawford preach one Sunday at Corbin Ferry Church. Crawford presented Free Will Baptist Bible College to members. In 1980, Mark and his wife Toni moved to Nashville to attend college.

"I was a farmer when Brother Crawford preached that sermon," Mark says. "Like Elisha, I laid down the plow and started over again for God. There was no turning back for me."

Mark graduated from FWBBC in

1984. He pastored briefly in Baton Rouge, then settled into his 10-year pastorate at Corbin Ferry. The church grew and so did Mark.

On December 30, 1996, Mark and his brother Phillip began removing carpet from the bedrooms in their parents' home and replacing the carpet with wood flooring.

The brothers sanded the floors of the bedrooms and planned to put a sander sealer down on January 1. Their clothing was permeated with three days worth of fine dust and sealant compound.

A 19-year-old employee of Mark's dad (Mr. Joe Elliott) died earlier that week on a hunting trip after being kicked by a horse. The funeral was January 1. Phillip went to the funeral. Mark decided to finish sealing the floors.

Ann Elliott, Mark's mother, walked into the small bedroom where Mark was working about 1:30 p.m. and offered him some freshly-baked cookies. He declined saying he would eat some when he finished. She went back to the kitchen.

Mark stood up, wearing the canister-type respirator mask. A gas-fired hot water heater in a bathroom off the bedroom kicked on and sucked fumes from the sealant compound toward the open flame.

Mark heard a low growl behind him. He turned and stared into an

eight-foot-high wall of fire racing toward him across the bedroom.

The fire brought with it a new beginning. A different Mark Elliott emerged from the flames. He speaks with a rasp now. He has learned to wait patiently on God. He knows firsthand the power of prayer. He measures life more carefully than he did.

The fire brought new beginnings for others as well. A woman was converted because she heard Mark's testimony in the yard the day of the accident. Bo McAllister, a young man in the community, answered the call to preach. He now preaches at Corbin Ferry FWB Church on Sunday nights while Mark recuperates.

On October 2, 1997, Mark Elliott stood in a small classroom at Forest High School and quietly told a reporter, "I've had my trial by fire. I don't know why the fire was necessary, but I do know that God walked with me in the fire. I accept what happened as God's will for my life. I've seen a little bit of Hell; I've tasted a lot of Heaven." ■

If you would like to send a letter or card of encouragement to Mark, write him at:

**Reverend Mark Elliott
P. O. Box 345
Forest, LA 71242**

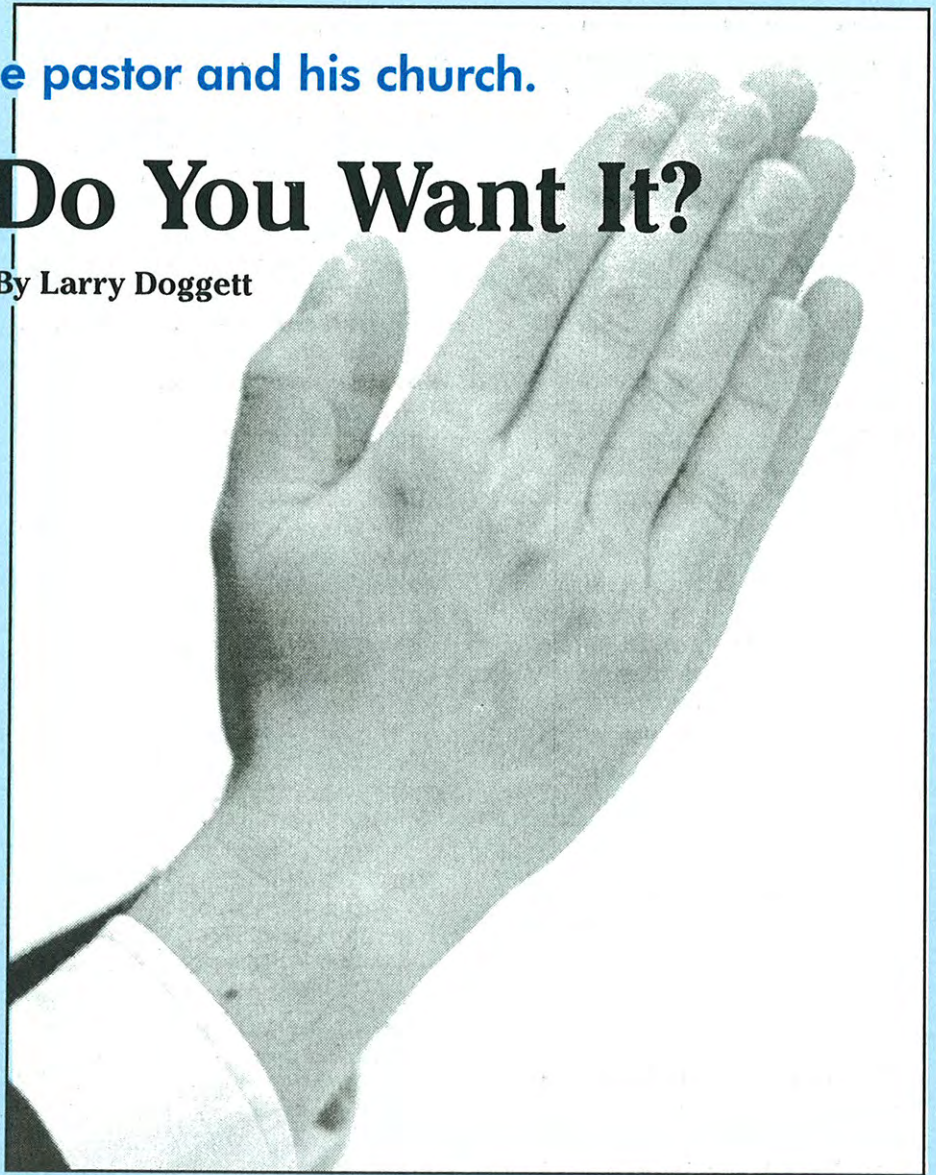


The Elliott Family: Toni (L), Rachel, Mark, Elizabeth (seated)

What revival cost one pastor and his church.

How Bad Do You Want It?

By Larry Doggett



Have you ever said this: "Lord, move me out of this desert place. I've done everything that I know to do to motivate the people." Me, too! I kissed pigs. I swallowed gold fish. I even preached off the church roof to get people to attend. I used slogans, sponsored contests and had big meals.

Sometimes this helps for a few Sundays, but then everything just goes back to the same old grind: three songs, make the announcements, take an offering, preach and go home the same as when we came.

I thought I was doing everything I should and could to pastor my church. I prayed, read my Bible, studied, visited, preached and taught the Word. But as I was praying one morning concerning our upcoming three-day revival services, I found myself complaining to God because it seemed He was not moving in our services like I wanted Him to.

Burden for Revival

My praying had become more complaining than crying out for a re-

al move of God. However, out of the midst of my complaining, God spoke to my spirit with merciful conviction saying, "*How bad do you want this revival?*"

I thought, *Well, Lord, You know I want revival in my church.*

God spoke to my spirit again, saying, "*How bad do you want it?*"

As God began to break me with conviction, I found myself weeping before Him, and my complaints turned to concern. I found myself crying out to God saying, "Whatever it takes, God, whatever it takes, I want revival."

I knew out of my years as an evangelist and pastor that God would require something of me. Anytime you make a vow like I just made, God will

turn your world upside down. I had been praying and complaining for my church to change, and here I find God starting to make changes with me.

Basis for Revival

From the *burden for revival* came the *basis for revival*, and that was to sincerely pray. God heavily burdened me to start getting up at 4:00 a.m. (Oh, me!) every morning to pray.

My initial reaction was, "Lord, are you sure—4:00 a.m.! Don't You mean 7:00 a.m. or maybe 4:00 p.m.—not 4:00 a.m.!"

But the words kept ringing in my heart again and I simply could not get away from them, "*How bad do you want it?*"

So I started getting up at 4:00 a.m. and praying for five to six hours every day for revival. At first, it was a real battle, because I am not an early morning person. The devil would fight and I would hear the words, "How bad do you want it?"

As I spent more time with God, He birthed in me a great vision for our church and what He wanted to do in it. We had a pastor's prayer group of about eight people who met faithfully with me every Sunday morning to pray for our services. I began sharing the vision God had given me of our church exploding with revival and growth. I began challenging this group to pray, for God had wonderful things in store for us.

As I spent those five and six hours alone with God every day, I found that it didn't seem to be enough. I would get in my prayer closet and not want to leave it because it was so glorious. Of course, I did leave because of other pastoral duties, but I took with me a special presence of God and His power.

Blessings of Revival

The time came for our three-night revival services. We went from the *burden for revival*, to the *basis for revival*, to the *blessings of revival*. I don't know and don't have time to tell you all that happened, but this one thing I do know—God came down and moved in the services. The three-night revival turned into 10 and the great news is even though the revival services have ended, the revival hasn't.

Our church has become the talk of our church and the talk of the town. Glory to God! As the spirit of revival continues, we have had 42 saved and baptized, and almost that many have joined our church. We have had at least 68 rededications. I finally quit counting them.

Some folks asked to be re-baptized after they rededicated themselves to the Lord. We've had visitors every Sunday since the revival and our altars have continued to stay wet with tears of people not only getting right, but seeking the face of God for the spirit of revival to continue.

The Sunday morning pastor's prayer group has grown from eight to 30. We started new services on Thursday and Saturday nights which are added to the Sunday morning, Sunday night and Wednesday night services—because some are so hungry for the moving of God.

We have seen God do tremendous things because many of our people have caught the vision and sacrificed with fasting and prayer. Our church attendance continues to climb. We are so thankful for what God is doing in us and through us.

Do I or we take any credit for this move of God? No! No! Ten thousand times, no! To God be all the glory! Have we found the great secret for revival? Yes, fast and pray and pray and fast.

God's Word says in II Chronicles 7:14, "If my people, which are called by my name, shall humble themselves, and pray, and seek my face, and turn from their wicked ways; then

shall I hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin, and will heal their land."

When God's people answer the call of God to fast and pray, God will always do His part. That's exactly what is happening in our church. Not only is God healing us at Rose Hill Free Will Baptist Church, but revival is reaching others outside our church and bringing them in.

Beyond Revival

Much has changed in our church. No, the singing, preaching, teaching and visiting haven't changed that much, but the praying sure has. The prayers have been backed with godly praise and worship which in turn has brought God's presence with power in our services and lives. A dead God in a lifeless church will not require much of you. But a living Lord in a church on fire will! And God is still asking, "How bad do you want it?" ■



ABOUT THE WRITER: Reverend Larry Doggett pastors Rose Hill Free Will Baptist Church in Monticello, Arkansas.

Directory Update

ALABAMA

Ronnie Floyd to Sardis Church, Eufaula

GEORGIA

Jimmy Smith to First Church, Eastman

ILLINOIS

Ivan Ryan to Arnold View Church, Creal Springs from Portland Church, Portland, TN

Kenneth Edwards to Harmony Church, West Frankfort

KANSAS

Stephen Harris to First Church, Ulysses from Pleasant Mound Church, Buffalo Springs, TX

MISSISSIPPI

Ambers Aldridge to Damascus Church, Dekalb

John Partain to First Church, Petal

Robert McLain to First Church, Richton

Wayne Robinson to Springdale Church, Oxford

SOUTH CAROLINA

Mitchell Edge to Parkway Church, Spartanburg

Jesse Smith to Trinity Church, Spartanburg

Don Craft to Calvary Church, Georgetown

TEXAS

Levan Hubbard to Fellowship Church, Bryan from Rolling Oaks Church, Maumelle, AR

One-day-a-month visitation program.

Visitation Blitz

By Clifford D. Donoho



Nearly all pastors have tried to implement the standard Thursday night visitation program that we all know so well. You know how it works. We all meet at 6:45 p.m., have prayer, divide into teams of two and visit three or four families.

The problem is that very few, if any, show up for church visitation at all. As pastors, we have prodded and even laid guilt trips on folks for not showing up. I have even caught myself scolding those who did show up because others didn't.

There is ample scriptural authority to justify a visitation program:

Mark 16:15, "And he said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature."

Matthew 28:19-20, "Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost; teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have

commanded you; and, lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world. Amen."

Acts 1:8, "But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you; and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in Judea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth."

Acts 20:20, "And how I kept back nothing that was profitable unto you, but have shewed you, and have taught you publicly, and from house to house."

Luke 14:23, "And the lord said unto the servant, Go out into the highways and hedges, and compel them to come in, that my house may be filled."

These verses indeed tell us that

every believer has a personal responsibility to witness. The only way to get people to visit or come to visitation is for them to see their personal responsibility to fulfill the Great Commission.

The reason church members do not come to visitation is that they do not want to do it. People can find time to do anything they really want to do.

The purpose of the visitation blitz program is to involve every church member in church visitation. While it might not work for you or your church, it works in Davenport, Iowa! I can not get people to come every week to an organized visitation, but they will come to a once-a-month church visitation.

Give it a try. You may like it.

The Plan

We start with a dinner at the church. Although the church purchases the food up front, we charge \$2 for adults and \$1 for children. *One family volunteers to buy and prepare dinner at the church.* After they have served the meal, they have met their responsibility in the church visitation program.

The idea is for folks to get off work, go home to clean up and come to church. They don't have to take time to eat at home. They can't even eat at McDonald's for this price.

One family signs up to wash dishes and clean up the fellowship hall. This is a big job, but when they have finished, they have met their responsibility in the visitation program.

One family volunteers to stay at the church and babysit. This includes helping with homework and taking care of children too small to go on visitation. Our church has a TV and VCR with a supply of Christian films to help entertain the children.

One family volunteers to stay at church and telephone people who have visited our church in the past but have not attended services for at least six months. As pastor, I list names and phone numbers for them to call.

If they run out of names, they can go to the phone book. Our goal is to call everyone in Davenport and invite them to our church. I have printed out a dialogue that makes it easier to call people they don't know and invite them to church.

Everyone else goes out on teams (two to a team) and visits one home. I have already made an appointment for them. A team is expected to arrive between 7:00 and 7:30 p.m. When they get to the home, they are to cover three areas:

1. Small talk. Find something to compliment—the people, their home, etc.
2. Talk to every family member about their spiritual condition. Take them to the Word. The Bible cannot be improved upon; use it in their home.
3. Talk about our church, telling everything positive and exciting that the Lord is doing in and through our church.

Everyone must be back at the church by 8:15 p.m. to collect their children. Everyone is on their way home by 8:30 p.m. I discovered that members will get involved when they realized they have a personal responsibility to meet in the Great Commission, and when it is organized.

Church members do not like going into homes unannounced. The people in our church have expressed what a big help it is knowing that visitation is over at a pre-set time. This gives parents a definite schedule that helps with children getting home and ready for school the next day.

Problems

1. Our church is too small, and we don't have enough families to do all the jobs.

If your church is too small for a different family do each job, you might have to double up. For instance: The family that prepares and serves the meal may have to clean up. The family making the telephone calls might have to babysit. Remember, these are families doing these jobs, not just one person. Involve the young people.

2. Where do prospective names come from for appointments?

I keep a list of everyone with whom I come in contact. I have found folks to be friendly everywhere I go. They may not want me to come to their door unannounced.

However, if I meet them at the store, the mall or the gas station, I am able to get names and addresses of prospects who will allow me to visit and tell them about our church.

Get your church together and make a list of neighbors, friends and family members who do not attend church. The key is to always be on the lookout for a prospect.

3. Our visitation is so unorganized, how can we possibly do this?

The best way to keep organized is to stay on a timetable. Keep the program before the congregation and

watch excitement build. Results will follow. You will have visitors, lost family members and neighbors who will visit the church.

It will not be long before the church will start to grow and you will see people come to the altar to ask Jesus into their hearts. The people in your church will be changed when they see God blessing "their" visitation efforts. God blesses His people who are doing what His Word instructs us to do.

4. The people in our church think it is the job of paid personnel to visit.

Again, the key is to make every Christian aware of their responsibility in fulfilling the Great Commission. We must get people in our churches to understand that being a Christian is not something they do. It is something they are!

There is no perfect visitation plan. Right or wrong, people are living busy life styles and will not come out to visitation every Thursday night. One of my duties as pastor is to motivate the people and find ways to accomplish God's plan.

I have tried to move the emphasis of visitation from a tool to increase our numbers to that of a personal responsibility to accomplish the Great Commission. I found that a scheduled once-a-month visitation blitz works for our church. Now church visitation is not only anticipated, it is well attended! ■



ABOUT THE WRITER: Home Missionary Clifford D. Donoho pastors Heritage Free Will Baptist Church in Davenport, Iowa. He serves on the Master's Men Board.

Part one of an 11-part series on cults in America.

The Counterfeit Jesus

By Tom Forehand, Jr.



Mormons (The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints), Jehovah's Witnesses (Watchtower Bible and Tract Society), Christian Science, The Unification Church (Reverend Moon's Holy Spirit Association For The Unification of World Christianity), The Way International, Church of Scientology, Unity School of Christianity, Unitarian/Universalists, and New Agers . . . What do they all have in common? Each teaches a non-biblical view of Jesus Christ.

A First-Century Warning

But I fear, lest by any means, as the serpent beguiled Eve through his subtilty, so your minds should be corrupted from the simplicity that is in Christ. For if he that cometh preacheth another Jesus, whom we have not preached . . . (II Corinthians 11:3-4a).

Paul's fear: false "apostles" would deceive Christians about the person of Jesus. Unbeknownst to those at Corinth, certain false teachers had transformed "themselves into the apostles of Christ" (II Cor. 11:13) and were teaching a counterfeit Jesus ("another Jesus").

Since these false teachers no doubt looked like Christians, acted like Christians and even used the word "Jesus," it was easy for them to deceive unwarned believers. So Paul insists that Corinthian Christians take a closer look.

Modern-Day Need To Examine

Just as Jesus predicted, many false prophets have been associated with Christianity throughout the centuries (Mark 13:22; Matt. 13:29-30). Some

such prophets have looked and sounded legitimate but have taught a counterfeit Jesus. For this reason, Christians of today also need to take a closer look at Satan's deception centered around the identity of Jesus.

During the following months, we will examine several well-known religious groups. Each group teaches about Jesus—but each group teaches a counterfeit Jesus! In our study, we shall not examine other world religions such as Judaism, Hinduism, Buddhism or Islam; these religions openly reject Jesus Christ as the one and only way to God.

Instead we want to study "aberrant-Christian" groups, sometimes called "sects." "Aberrant" means "to err from." And these groups have seriously "erred from" the truth about Jesus (and the Christian godhead). Some of

these groups claim to be "Christian." Others do not, but imply that a person may be a member of that sect and also be a "good Christian."

It is just as difficult today to recognize the false doctrines of these aberrant groups as it was in the first century. Why? Sect leaders often use biblical words but give them non-traditional meanings. For this reason, most Christians who deal with such religious groups are confused at best and are deceived into joining the sect at worst!

Any attempt to track all such sects may be futile. In 1979, *Moody Magazine* estimated that there were more than 3,000 of them "in America alone"¹ Over 200 different sects based on the teachings of Joseph Smith, Jr., the Mormon prophet, have come into existence since 1830!²

"Another Jesus"

The Bible teaches that Jesus Christ is and always has been God by nature (John 1:1-3; Col. 1:16; Gal. 4:8). He is the eternal Creator, not a created being. At Bethlehem, He fully acquired a second nature—the nature of man (Phil. 2:6-8; I John 4:2). Thus He is the *only* God-Man. Because he is fully God, it is appropriate that He be worshipped by both men and the angels (Matt. 4:10; Heb. 1:6; Phil. 2:9-10).

Though Jesus Christ is God by nature, so are the Holy Spirit and God the Father. These three *alone* have the nature of God. These *three* are the *One* true God of the Christian faith. Those who reject these biblical truths of tri-unity (trinity or three in unity) are considered to be outside of the Christian faith.

All the aberrant-Christian groups we shall study reject the trinitarian view of God. Yet, such sects have members who live by high moral standards and are law abiding citizens; some of them are great neighbors, businessmen and PTO associates.

Still, one's lifestyle is only part of the "fruit" that the Lord urges us to examine (Matt. 7:20). We also need to examine what a person teaches—the fruit of his lips (Hos. 10:13; Prov. 12:14). Such an examination will be our goal over the following months.

Some sects and their counterfeit

"Jesus" are:

Jehovah's Witnesses (Watchtower Bible and Tract Society)—Jesus is an archangel.³

Unitarian/Universalists—Jesus is strictly human.⁴

Christian Science—"Jesus is the human man, and Christ is the divine idea; hence the duality of Jesus the Christ."⁵

Unity School of Christianity—"[D]istinguishes between *Jesus* the man and *Christ* the divine consciousness" which is available to all human beings.⁶

New Agers—Jesus is one of many evolving, immortal souls often reincarnating in a pantheistic existence.

Church of Scientology (of L. Ron Hubbard)—Scientology implies that Jesus is one of many gods.⁷

The Unification Church (of Reverend Moon)—Jesus is not God.⁸

The Way International—Jesus is not God.⁹

Mormons (The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints)—Jesus was a literal spirit brother of Lucifer.¹⁰

Reminder: Love!

Do you have a friend or relative in one of these aberrant-Christian groups? If so, do you berate him or pray for him? Remember: as a Christian you have an obligation to pray for the members of these groups.

Christians who are diligent to expose the doctrinal errors of sects also need to be diligent in *speaking kindly to the members of these groups*. Even though we are all involved in a spiritual war, these dear people are not the real enemy (Eph. 6:12). The arch enemy is Satan who tries to take advantage of us all (II Tim. 2:24-26). ■

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ABOUT THE WRITER: Reverend Tom Forehand, Jr., is the Tennessee Director of Watchman Fellowship. If you have questions about aberrant-Christian sects in America, contact Tom at P. O. Box 3035 Clarksville, TN. 37043 or E-mail TAFTJ@juno.com.

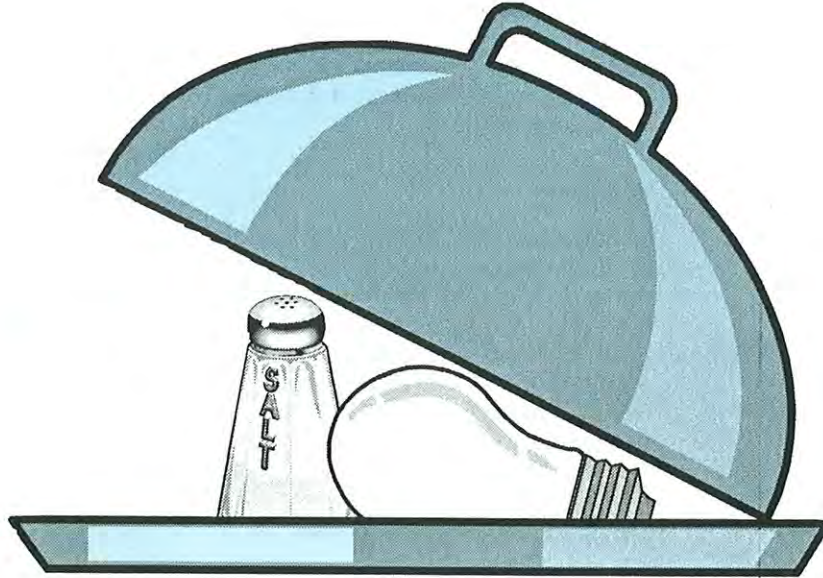
Endnotes

(Recommended reading materials in bold face)

1. Gary Wall, "A catalogue of cults: Where they stand on the deity of Christ." *Moody Monthly*, July/August 1979, p. 27.
2. See Steven L. Shields, *Divergent Paths of the Restoration A History of the Latter Day Saint Movement*, 4th Ed., Rev. and Enl. (Los Angeles: Restoration Research, 1990).
3. *Aid to Bible Understanding* (New York: Watchtower Bible and Tract Society, 1971), p. 1152.
4. Frank S. Mead, *Handbook of Denominations In The United States*, New 5th Ed. (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1970), p. 203.
5. Mary Baker Eddy, *Science and Health with Key to the Scriptures* (Boston: The First Church of Christ, Scientist, 1934), p. 473.
6. Rick Branch, "Unity School of Christianity." *Watchman Expositor*, V. 10, No. 9, 1993, n.p.
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9. Victor Paul Wierwille, *Jesus Christ Is Not God* (New Knoxville, Ohio: American Christian Press, 1986), p. 5.
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When Salt Isn't

By Mark H. Braisher



Living in our world today *and* being the witnesses we need to be is a difficult and confusing dilemma. Since Christ is our example, it is vital that we live holy lives. Christians are commanded to go into the world. We live in the world as salt and light. As we deal with this dilemma, it is important to determine what Christ would do in similar settings.

Consider Matthew 9. In this chapter, Jesus goes to a meal at the home of the new convert, Matthew. Matthew, a tax collector, had many friends considered traitors to their Jewish heritage and "sinners." It is at a gathering of such rascals that Jesus appears as "salt and light."

We see three things in this passage. First, the unlikelihood of the situation. Second, Christ's method of evangelism. Finally, application for our own lives and churches.

The Unlikely Situation

This is a strange situation, not only to the religious leaders of the first

century, but also to religious leaders of the 20th century. For one thing, the host is an unlikely man. Who would have thought that Matthew the tax collector would turn out to be an evangelist for Jesus?

Unlikely Circumstances

Matthew did not know any better than to invite all his buddies over for a meal and invite Jesus to speak with them. Church history tells us that Matthew may have died a martyr in Ethiopia. It sounds as if Matthew, the unlikely individual, never recovered from his practice of being salt and light.

Unlikely Setting

What was Jesus doing eating and drinking with these sinners? The Pharisees did not understand it, and I'm afraid that many of us would not understand it either. In this passage, Christ lives out His parable of going out to the highways and hedges and compelling the people to come. Je-

sus did go to the clean, but also to the dirty. He was never afraid of getting dirty Himself. His concern *was* the dirty and so He went after them.

Unlikely Answer

Jesus did not offer excuses or try to hide, but rather told His critics that He did not come for the likes of them anyway. Should we become more acquainted with these unlikely situations? Should we go into these types of situations and then boldly answer our religious critics?

Often, we become too "clean" and "whole" for Christ to save us. The filth of the world never offended Jesus. It was the so-called "clean" and "holy" that was offensive.

Christ's Method of Evangelism

First, He found a person in need. That was Matthew. He needed deliverance from sin and the hold that it had on him. Jesus went out on the street and found the person in need.

Next, Christ knew if He found a person in need, this person would bring to Him others in need. Indeed, Matthew did this.

Finally, when Jesus had the crowd, what did He do? He showed mercy. He did not stand with the Pharisees and condemn, but He defended His own actions and thus showed mercy to those in need. How we need to realize that those outside of the kingdom of God are a people in need of mercy.

Life Application

Here's how this could apply to our lives.

Isolated

If we do not enter these unlikely settings and use the methods of Christ, we become isolated and insulated from the world. We are separated from them. Too often we separate ourselves from the world in the four walls of our church buildings. We no longer go outside our premises with outreach or activities. We develop a focused mindset where we become convinced they are the bad guys and we are the good guys.

Ignorant

Once we become isolated, we become ignorant of the world. We no longer know their needs, their attitudes, their ways. We are ignorant of the ways of the fish that we are called to catch. When this happens we find that we cannot catch them, just as the hunter who does not know the ways of his prey cannot snare the prize. We no longer know the world in which they live.

When we isolate ourselves, we're ignorant of their needs. We're ignorant of their attitude toward the church. We are ignorant of the situations in which they find themselves. We often become unaware of the pains they deal with on a day to day basis.

Apathetic

After we grow ignorant, we become apathetic. Soon after we are unaware of the ways and needs of the world, we reach a point of no longer caring about them. We no longer care

if they live or die, go to Heaven or Hell. When we cannot see, and to some degree experience the storm, we are not concerned about its effect on us or those we love.

This is a sad point when we no longer care for those who are living in the world which was our home as well. We forget that we once lived there, and their dying, their suffering are no longer concerns of ours. We see suffering on the news, but it does not prick our conscience. It does not cause us to hurt.

Arrogance

Following close behind our apathy is our arrogance. When we do not know and care, we forget from where we came, and from what God saved us. We feel as if we are something better. We feel as if there is just something about us that compelled Christ to love us more than those outside the fold. We feel we are somehow spiritually above those outside in the world. Now we stand on dangerous ground.

Are No Longer

Finally, what happens next is scary. After we leave our mission we are no longer where we were, and then we are no longer. Oh, we may exist. We may have services, praying and do good things. But since we are not what we were meant to be, we really are no good to anyone, "when the salt has lost its savor."

The salt cannot be salty unless it is placed on the meat to preserve it. Light hidden is of no value to anyone. It is insignificant and ineffective. But light in the darkness shines forth and breaks through the darkness. As we've gone progressively, or regressively, through these steps of isolation, ignorance, apathy and arrogance, we then are no longer of value to the world. As a candle put under a bushel or salt that has lost its savor, we are no longer of any effect upon the world.

Personal Evaluation

Here's a question to help you evaluate: *What effect is your church and your life having on the world in which you live? Are you lighting it up or just taking up space? Is your*

church known in the community for the good it has done and the lives that have been changed? Or is it known for an attitude of arrogance? We can sometimes become so "clean" and afraid to dirty ourselves with the world that we are no longer of any value to the world.

When Jesus dealt with the woman caught in adultery, He did not do as the Pharisees and stand at a distance. He spoke to the woman with love and compassion. When all the others had left, He stood alone with the woman that the world considered dirty.

Let us not lose our savor and shine the light in our dark world! ■



ABOUT THE WRITER: Dr. Mark Braisher serves as associate minister of church growth/adult education at First Free Will Baptist Church in Owasso, Oklahoma.

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FREE WILL BAPTIST NEWSFRONT

Archie Mayhew, Pastor/Missionary, Dies

MODESTO, CA—Reverend Archie Mayhew (71), pastor of Modesto FWB Church, died October 26. Funeral services were conducted October 31 with Reverends Tim Rolan and Don Robirds officiating.

Reverend Mayhew pastored the Modesto congregation six years prior to his death. He previously pastored in Tennessee. However, his longest term of service occurred in Ivory Coast, West Africa, where he served 17 years as a missionary.

The Mayhews were commissioned as missionaries in 1964. After returning from the field at age 55, Mayhew was elected to the Foreign Missions Board



where he served 12 years.

Mayhew, a native of St. Cloud, Minnesota, was converted at age 27 in Modesto, ordained to preach in 1957 and graduated

from Free Will Baptist Bible College in 1963.

He served in the U.S. Navy during World War II and was deployed in the Pacific Theater, seeing action on Okinawa.

"Archie was just an evangelist at heart," said his wife, Sarah. "The Lord called him to Ivory Coast and that's where he was happiest. Most of our work was in the villages."

In addition to his wife, Rev. Mayhew is survived by his children, Jerry D. Mayhew, Sheryl D. Alvernaz and Merry D. Rorabaugh, all of Modesto, and Larry D. Mayhew of Bowling Green, KY, and five grandchildren.

Theology Symposium Meets at Hillsdale College

MOORE, OK—The second annual Theology Symposium met October 24-25 at Hillsdale FWB College. Presenters and attendees from seven states read and discussed six papers on topics ranging from anointing with oil to a provocative critique of Calvinism, according to spokesman Daryl Ellis.

Planners also scheduled a six-man panel to discuss post-modernism, the successor to modernism, which has infected the media and invaded classrooms across America.

The Theology Symposium is sponsored by the Commission for Theological Integrity. The 1998 Sym-

posium will meet November 6-7 on the Free Will Baptist Bible College campus.

Those wishing to present a paper must reserve a spot by March 1, 1998, by sending a one-page summary of the writer's intent including questions the paper will answer. While topics are not limited, papers addressing different aspects of pastoral theology are encouraged.

Requests for presentation slots should be sent to Daryl Ellis at 1405 Butterfield Road, Aurora, IL 60504 or by e-mail butterfldc@aol.com.

Pastor Survives 60-Hour Ordeal

SPRINGFIELD, MO—A crew mowing the right of way on a twisting Missouri road in the Ozarks on October 22 rescued 84-year-old Grover Terry who had been trapped 60 hours in his wrecked car. Reverend Terry, who pastors Cedar Ridge FWB Church in Long Lane, Missouri, blacked out Sunday night as he rounded a curve on the 28-mile drive to his home in Marshfield.

Pastor Terry was badly injured when his car left the road, tumbled into a ravine and came to rest in high weeds and brush, hidden from sight. He lay helpless in freezing temperatures Sunday evening (October 19) until Wednesday morning when the road crew found him.

One of the road crew members climbed down into the ravine after spotting the car. He scraped ice from the windshield and discovered Pastor Terry huddled on the front seat soaked in blood. He had been there three cold nights without food, water or heat.

Terry was airlifted to St. John's Regional Care Center in Springfield and placed in intensive care. He suffered from hypothermia, dehydration, the loss of a great deal of blood and numer-



ous injuries. His kidneys stopped functioning. He was listed in critical condition. Medical personnel said that the cold kept him from losing more blood.

The medical team began trying to raise his body temperature, get his blood pressure and heart stabilized and get his kidneys functioning again. He was given four units of blood. Little attention was given at first to the non life-threatening injuries such as a broken nose, broken ribs and a possible broken wrist and knee.

Tests revealed that the blackout which caused the wreck was an irregular heart rate, the heart sometimes stopping for several seconds. On Wednesday, October 29, one week after

his rescue, a pacemaker was installed to regulate his heart rhythm. X-rays revealed that his wrist and knee were not broken, only badly bruised.

Terry's son, Gene Terry, pastors Seymour FWB Church in Seymour, Missouri. He began a search Tuesday morning, October 21 after his father did not answer his phone and failed to show up for his daily visit at the nursing home where Mrs. Terry is an Alzheimer's patient.

Local authorities were notified Tuesday evening. Family, friends and church members joined the search as radio and television stations ran announcements about the missing minister.

After Gene Terry had driven the road from Marshfield to Long Lane twice with no success, he began to suspect foul play since Brother Terry was known to carry a large sum of cash.

Texas executive secretary, Thurmon Murphy, married to Brother Terry's daughter Karen, praised the providential hand of God that the road crew found Terry alive. "The right of way on that road is mowed only once a year, and this was the day."

Mississippi Elects Gore Executive Secretary

BOONEVILLE, MS—Reverend J. L. Gore, veteran home missionary and pastor, was named executive secretary by delegates at the 33rd annual Mississippi State Association. Gore pastors Cross Creek FWB Church in Olive Branch. He moderated the October 31-November 1 sessions which met at Martin Hill FWB Church in Booneville.

State clerk Benny McKinney said that delegates created an Executive Board to oversee the

work of the newly-created Executive Office.

More than 150 people attended the two-day meeting, including 26 ministers, 22 lay delegates and 11 deacons.

The association theme was, "Mississippi Free Will Baptists in Review." Three pastors preached sermons detailing the theme: Gerald Henderson (Charity FWB Church, Laurel), Earl Langley (Beech Springs FWB Church, Saltillo) and Mike Edwards (Anti-

och FWB Church, Burnsville).

Foreign Missions staffer Fred Warner and missionary to Brazil Bobby Poole, completed the preaching program.

Mississippi Master's Men sponsored a Saturday breakfast, while the Women Active for Christ focused on their Friday evening banquet.

The 1998 state association will meet October 30-31 at First FWB Church in Amory.

Oklahoma Adopts \$3 Million Budget

EUFULA, OK—Delegates to Oklahoma's 89th annual state association approved a \$3 million budget for 1998, according to clerk Keith Burden. That includes \$390,000 in Cooperative Plan receipts to be allocated. Hillsdale FWB College (33%), National Ministries (24%), Executive Office (22%), Mission Board (15%) and Christian Education Board (6%).

The October 13-16, 1997, session met at Fountainhead Lodge in Eufaula. Some 350 people registered for the meeting, including 136 ministers, 67 lay delegates, 27 deacons and 15 missionaries.

Moderator David McDougal was elected to his fourth term.

Four Oklahoma ministers preached sermons developing the association theme, "In the Last Days." Pastors Bill Adcock (Enid), Connie Cariker (Tulsa) and Bob Duncan (Prague) joined Hillsdale College president Carl Cheshier to handle pulpit duties.

In other action, delegates adopted a firm resolution opposing gambling in the state. The resolution was prompted by State Question 672 which will ask Oklahoma residents to vote February 10 to determine if casino gambling will be legalized.

Plaques of appreciation were presented to Ponca City pastor David Bigger for serving two

terms on the Missions Board, and to Ardmore pastor Charles Bigger for serving two terms on the Executive Board.

State Missions Director Bill Jones outlined the Total Support Program by which churches will underwrite the budgets of all Oklahoma-based missionaries, both home and foreign. Delegates unanimously adopted the TSP program.

Tuesday evening an All-Boards Appreciation Dinner brought the various state board members together for a time of fellowship.

The 1998 state association will meet October 12-15 at Faith FWB Church in Glenpool.

Lawnie Coffman Publishes Life Story

SEARCY, AR—"The man who would not die" published his life story in 1997. Reverend Lawnie Coffman, 75-year-old Arkansas minister and World War II veteran, published *My Leg of the Race*, a tightly-written 29-page booklet detailing his early life, military career and ministry.

Coffman was Arkansas' most decorated soldier in World War II. One of his comrades in arms began introducing him as "the man who would not die" after Coffman survived multiple wounds in 1944. He published *The Promise* some years ago, a booklet of his war memoirs. He received seven citations as an infantry sergeant with the 35th in-



fantry division in Europe.

Brother Coffman was converted in 1946, licensed to preach in 1950 and ordained as a Free Will Baptist minister in 1951. His 47-year ministry has been invested

in Arkansas churches.

Coffman served 23 years with the Arkansas CTS Board, chaired the Arkansas Home Missions Board 10 years and served on the national Board of Retirement.

Copies of *My Leg of the Race* may be purchased for \$3.00 each by writing:

Reverend Lawnie Coffman
12 Blue Ridge Drive
Searcy, AR 72143-7102

The book may also be secured from Randall Bookstore (Nashville, TN) and the Christian Supply Store (Conway, AR).

FWBBC Hosts First Resident Missionary

NASHVILLE, TN—Sarah Malone, Free Will Baptist missionary to China, became Free Will Baptist Bible College's first Missionary in Residence November 3-7.

In addition to speaking twice in chapel and at the mid-week campus prayer meeting, she conducted an evening class for missions students on how to do an area study.

"Sarah really connected with our students," said Bert Tippet, FWBBC's public relations director. "She presented missions in a manner they could understand and conveyed her own passion for reaching the unsaved, worldwide."

One in every six students enrolled at FWBBC this semester is a missions student.

International Students Enroll at CCC

FRESNO, CA—More than 50 Russian, Ukrainian and Armenian students now attend California Christian College on a full-time basis, according to president James McAllister.

Thirty-five of the students are enrolled in the "Church Planting" class (pictured) taught by

President McAllister. The class is taught in English and then translated.

The students are all refugees from formerly Russian-controlled countries, now living in California. The response to these classes has been overwhelming, according to college officials.

The student body of more than 100 full-time students is composed of African-Americans, Mexicans, Koreans, Russians, Ukrainians, Armenians, Caucasians and Indians.



The "Church Planting" class at California Christian College.

Georgia Family Gives \$55,000 to Bible College

NASHVILLE, TN—Free Will Baptist Bible College received a gift of more than \$55,000 in November from the Clifton Lightsey Trust, in Statesboro, Georgia. Dr. Ralph Lightsey, trustee, presented the check to FWBBC president Tom Malone and noted:

"Near the end of his life, my brother, Clifton Lightsey, set up a trust to provide care for his invalid daughter. He further stipulated that after her death, his home church, his local association and Free Will Baptist Bible College share in the remainder of the assets. I am grateful for his vision; and, as chairman of the trust, I am happy to present this check in the amount of \$55,426.94 to the college as its share of the proceeds."



President Tom Malone (L) accepts check from Dr. Ralph Lightsey.

Happy New Year!

Apparently only Pastor **Homer Young** was afraid the heavy rains on October 12 would keep people away from **First FWB Church in El Reno, OK**. Visitors and members ignored the rain and broke the attendance record when 105 showed up Sunday morning to worship.

Mission pastor **Ray Wilson** reports four conversions and attendance at 35 in **Osseo, MI**. Ground breaking for an auditorium took place in August. Area volunteers leveled the ground, put up the framework and roofed the building.

Pastor appreciation day at **Philadelphia FWB Church in Clinton Township, MI**, found Pastor **Gene Norris** with a gift certificate, cash and cards of thanks for his leadership. Another highlight occurred when charter member **Ova Bean** was awarded a Sunday School pin for 43 years of perfect attendance.

Evangelist **Van Dale Hudson** took advantage of an unusual witnessing opportunity outside a Cary, NC, motel while waiting for the pastor to arrive. He witnessed to four people from the People's Republic of China. One of the four, a university professor who had never heard the name of Jesus or seen a Bible, both heard the Name above all names and saw a New Testament as Brother Hudson carefully shared Jesus with him.

Thirty-five people participated in the Gospel ordinance, the washing of the saints' feet, for the first time on Sunday night September 28 at the 20-month-old **Lake Hills FWB Church in Hot Springs, AR**. **Don Guthrie** pastors.

Pastor **Robert Posner** has a problem, the kind of problem that every pastor prays to have. **Lifegate FWB Church in Tyler, TX**, is out of room. The sanctuary is full. All Sunday School rooms are full.

Congratulations to Pastor **Claudie Hames** who just completed 33 years at **First FWB Church in Bakersfield, CA**. The congregation expects to soon pay off the new property they bought for future expansion.

Riverbend FWB Church in Clarks-

ville, TN, conducted its first service on September 7 with 135 in attendance. Most of the 135 were unchurched people who responded to a brochure they received in the mail. Pastor **Glenn McReynolds** has started discipleship classes.

Pastor **J. L. McAlister** celebrated his 30th year as a Free Will Baptist minister. He leads **Exeter FWB Church in Exeter, CA**. The McAlisters also celebrated their 47th wedding anniversary.

More than 300 people joined hands Saturday, September 13, in a huge circle to dedicate the new property for **Discovery FWB Church in Stockton, CA**. **Matt Upton** pastors.

Members of **Capitol FWB Church in Sacramento, CA**, presented Pastor **Larry Condit** a check for \$3,000 to celebrate his 25 years of faithful service. Gifts and cards from members accompanied the check.

Pastor **Galen Dunbar** led 179th anniversary celebration activities at **Bethany FWB Church in Timmonsville, SC**. State moderator **Sherwood Lee** was guest speaker.

New Home FWB Church in Tulsa, OK, kicked off its 70th anniversary celebration. Pastor **Roy Dale Smith** began his 10th year in leadership at the church.

Dedication services for the new addition at **Parkview FWB Church in Desloge, MO**, got underway in September, according to Pastor **Charles Miller**. The church was organized in March 1928 under the leadership of **Lizzie McAdams** with 14 charter members. Seventeen ministers have served as pastors.

Pastor **Richard Atwood** reports eight baptisms at **Townsend FWB Church in Townsend, DE**. Member **Nick Fisher** earned the rank of Eagle Scout by finishing a major project. Nick's project was completing one of the rooms in the church's new educational wing.

Home Missionary **George Harvey, Jr.**, reports the paving project complete at **North Valley FWB Church in Phoenix, AZ**. Now he has a new project that may prove more difficult. Member-

ship in the new church includes two sets of twins and one set of triplets. Let's hope Pastor Harvey has a very good memory and an eye for detail!

The student body at **Free Will Baptist Bible College in Nashville, TN**, gave a \$200 love offering to Pastor **Mark Elliott** who was severely burned in a fire a year ago. Elliott pastors **Corbin Ferry FWB Church near Oak Grove, LA**. **FWBBC** student body president, **Matt Price**, spearheaded the \$200 love gift project.

"How to Successfully Succeed"—That's the name of a four-part sermon series that Pastor **Michael Waddell** began in October. He pastors **Soul's Harbor FWB Church in Pensacola, FL**.

Members of **Beulah FWB Church in Pensacola, FL**, dedicated their new fellowship hall on October 5. The hall was dedicated in memory of founding pastor **R. H. Reddick**. The dedicatory message was preached by **Lindbergh Bass** who led the church 27 years. **Len Scott** pastors.

Pastor **Roger Mullins** reports nine new members and one rededication at **Meadowbrook FWB Church in Middletown, VA**.

Members of **Shiloh FWB Church in Madison, VA**, dedicated a new vestibule, according to Pastor **David Austin**. The church also reported eight conversions.

Pastor appreciation day at **Red Bay FWB Church in Red Bay, AL**, ended with Pastor **Tom Scott** sitting in a new recliner, a gift from members. The church also scheduled a reception in his honor and sang his favorite songs during morning worship.

The major outreach event of the year at **Northwest FWB Church in Chicago, IL**, ended with some 130 first-time visitors. Pastor **David Potete** leads the mission congregation.

Home missionary **Bill Phillips** reports 14 conversions and attendance at 31 in **Valley FWB Church, in Sandy, UT**. The church has 11 teens in its youth group. ■

FREE WILL BAPTIST BIBLE COLLEGE

Students "Into All The World"

By Tom McCullough, FWBBC Missions Teacher

I can see the world from my office door. No, not literally, of course. I haven't been transferred to the MIR space station nor has the Lord shared with me that attribute of omnipresence unique to Him.

You see, I teach Missions at Free Will Baptist Bible College: when I walk out that office door every day I catch a glimpse of what God is doing in our world from at least two perspectives.

On the wall outside my office in the Academic Building, I have placed a map of the world. It identifies by color the places on our globe that have had little or no evangelistic activity. The big bright red spaces indicate the billions of people who live every day with no hope of hearing the gospel. Researchers who know about census taking and population distribution tell me that this mass of humanity is divided into roughly 12,000 groups of people who don't have a church strong enough to evangelize their own societies. They call them unreached people groups.

I tell you about this map not just to validate my statement about seeing the *world*, but because this map plays a part in a challenge I've placed before our students for the future. Next to the map is a poster with the exclamation, "Mark your mission!" It asks the students to place a *Pin of Intent* on the map where God seems to be leading them. Just in September I recorded six blue pins (male students), seven red pins (from females), and eight from couples. If you're quick at "ciphering" you've counted pins representing 29 students. And these pins are scattered over every continent! Some of them are even located in countries traditionally closed to official missionary activity.

So, at least in a figurative sense, I have the privilege of looking into the future and seeing how the world will be a different place as a result of our students making their mark on it.

But that is not my only perspective on the world.

Every day, as I meet with students in class, as we walk to chapel, as we bow together in prayer band, and as we talk and counsel in my office I see the world in [through?] their lives:

Carmen tells me that Mei (her international con-

versation partner from China) told her recently that Carmen is the first person who ever told her that Jesus is alive. She was so interested that she went to church with Carmen the very next Sunday. In their next conversation, her Chinese guest blurted, "Carmen, I think you've almost persuaded me to be a Believer!"

James and Nellie are a very young married couple in their second year at the college. When asked if they would be interested in being nominated for a ministry scholarship that would take them to China and thus cause them to miss a whole year of school, they responded, "We are still young, our whole lives are ahead of us, and there are so many possible doors of ministry open to us, we would be foolish not to consider this as a part of God's leading in our lives.

Robert came to me at the beginning of the school year. "I'm ashamed of the time I've wasted here at school. It's high time I got serious. I think God is directing me to the foreign field and I'd like to apply for the summer program going to Côte d'Ivoire."

In like manner, *Jerrod*, a senior, confessed that for a year and a half (since he's been coming to Prayer Band) the Lord has been urging him to at least investigate how he could use his teaching degree on the foreign field. He, too, will be going with us to Africa in May.

Darla, who is also involved in sharing with international students every Monday evening says, "It's exciting when you explain what the Bible is to someone who has never known; to see the outstanding effect on that person who *hears it for the first time*."

Every day, in a myriad of ways, I see the world becoming a better place because of the transformation taking place in the lives of my students. They report to me how a certain conference or retreat was "awesome," how a particular chapel speaker "really rocked" (I think that is a good thing.), how the Missionary in Residence seminar was "super insightful" and helpful, how our class on the lostness of man was heart breaking, or how incredible it is to be friends with a student from a different culture.

Yes, I can see the world from my office door. And what a privilege it is to be involved in sending laborers into that world. ■



FREE WILL BAPTIST FOUNDATION

All Assets Not Created Equal

By David Brown

When it comes time to leave your estate to your heirs, you need to know that there are good assets and bad assets in your portfolio. Some assets pass to your heirs with no tax consequences, others have tax consequences even in small estates. Perhaps the worst asset you can give your children is your retirement plan or Individual Retirement Account (IRA).

Retirement plan contributions and earnings generally accumulate tax-deferred. For most retirees this is a good deal as their income tax rate is usually less in retirement than in their working years. However, taxes must eventually be paid on these funds. Therefore, when you pass these funds to your heirs through your estate, they must pay the tax. In some cases distributions from these accounts push heirs into higher tax brackets, and they may lose up to 31% of this particular asset to income taxes alone.

Consider the estate of Mary Gray who has been told she is near death. She has the following assets:

Home and Contents	\$150,000
Car	10,000
Savings Account	10,000
Individual Retirement Account (IRA)	20,000
Whole Life Insurance Policy	5,000
Checking Account	5,000
Total	\$200,000

It has always been Mrs. Gray's intention to fund an endowment benefiting several Free Will Baptist ministries with a tithe of her estate. Does it make any difference where the \$20,000 comes from within her estate? Yes, it makes a big difference.

Mrs. Gray has two children in the 31% tax bracket for federal income tax and in the 9% tax bracket for their state income tax. Her will states that after the \$20,000 has been given to the Foundation, the remainder is to be split equally. The executor sells the car and liquidates the life insurance. He then funds the endowment with cash. When he distributes the remaining assets the children receive \$90,000 each, but they also receive tax bills for federal and state income taxes of \$4,000.

They netted \$86,000 each from the estate as illustrated below:

Total Estate	\$200,000	
Less Endowment	(20,000)	
	<u>180,000</u>	
Cash Portion	160,000	Divided by 2 = \$80,000
IRA	20,000	
Less Taxes	(8,000)	
	<u>\$12,000</u>	Divided by 2 = <u>6,000</u>
Total		\$86,000

Suppose that Mrs. Gray changes the beneficiary of her IRA to the Foundation for an endowment for her favorite ministries. Using this bad (taxable) asset as her charitable gift, she gives the 10% she planned and provides her children an additional \$8,000 by avoiding taxes so that each receives the \$90,000 she intended.

Using an endowment, you can perpetuate a gift to your favorite Free Will Baptist ministry. In the example above, Mrs. Gray chose to leave the \$20,000 to the Foundation to set up an endowment to equally benefit foreign missions, Bible college and home missions. She has been giving \$500 a year to each of these ministries. If the endowment earns a 7.5% return, Mrs. Gray will continue to give these gifts till Jesus comes back as illustrated below.

Endowment Principal	\$20,000
Return	.075
Interest per Year	1,500
Divided by 3	\$500 for each ministry

When larger estates (over \$600,000) are involved, a retirement unitrust can be utilized to shift a retirement plan out of the estate to avoid the double whammy of both estate taxes and income tax. It is possible for taxes in a large estate to consume well over 50% of the retirement plan if the estate is not carefully planned.

The Foundation may be able to help you make a gift to Free Will Baptist ministries while saving taxes on your estate and even increasing the portion you pass to your heirs. Chartered in 1980 as the planned giving arm of the denomination, we can help you arrange a gift to a Free Will Baptist ministry from a tax-sheltered savings or retirement account. Contact our office for a no-cost, no-obligation review of your wishes. ■



HOME MISSIONS

Home Missions Needs Your Help!

NOW is the time to become a part of this timely and exciting ministry!

By Richard Adams

Home Missions has never had more open doors and exciting opportunities than right now. We employed Brother David Crowe to help our missionaries build indigenous Free Will Baptist churches. Our cross-cultural ministry is accelerating. Missionary builder Howard Gwartney and his crew are busy. The Church Extension Loan Fund has financed over 120 loans!

Director Trymon Messer is working with all our colleges to institute church planting classes. Brother Messer's booklet, "Enough is Enough," is being widely used in many churches. Because of implementing this program we are receiving reports of churches growing and reaching the lost in their communities. More good men are answering the call to the mission field. It's really exciting to see what God is doing.

We want you to partner with us in this great work by helping us financially. An excellent way to help financially is to join the *Benjamin Randall Club*. We challenge each of you to become a member.

The Benjamin Randall Club Is:

An exclusive club for those who have an unusual burden for planting Free Will Baptist churches throughout North America. Membership is open to individuals, churches, businesses, Sunday School classes, Woman's Auxiliaries, Master's Men groups, singing groups and any others who wish to join.

The club has three categories: The "Benjamin Randall Club" for those giving \$50 or more monthly, the "Gold Club" for those giving \$100 or more monthly, and the "Platinum Club" for those giving \$200 or more monthly. These special people, churches and organizations regularly and faithfully send unrestricted gifts to the Home Missions Department. These undesignated funds pay for many important helps and services that are not paid from missionary accounts.

What Does the General Fund Provide?

Home Missions is responsible for starting new Free Will Baptist churches in areas where there are none in the United States, Canada, Mexico, the Virgin Islands and Puerto Rico.

Some home missionaries work solely under

the Home Missions Board. Others work jointly with a state or district board or a local church, and some, such as associate missionaries, receive only designated support.

Many Home Missions programs assist missionaries and mission churches in obtaining land, constructing buildings and establishing self-supporting congregations.

General Fund Money Helps Provide the Following Programs:

- National Home Missionaries
- Evangelism Conferences
- Joint Project Workers
- Church Growth Conferences
- Associate Missionaries
- Roll Call Sunday
- Tentmakers
- Available Pastors/Churches List
- Aquila and Priscilla Workers
- Soul Winning and Church Growth Materials
- Summer Missionaries
- Missions Materials, Tapes, Videos, Books
- Church Extension Loan Fund
- Mission Grams
- Missionary Builder and Team
- Establishing Free Will Baptist Churches
- Church Blueprints
- Cross-Cultural Ministry
- Missionary Conferences
- Traveling Team Expenses

How to Become a Member:

Churches, individuals or organizations place the Home Missions General Fund in their budgets for at least \$50, \$100 or \$200 per month. For further information write or call our office at 615/731-6812. ■



RANDALL HOUSE PUBLICATIONS

Our Future is our Focus

By Alton Loveless

Someone once said, "The faster you go, the farther you have to look down the highway."

In just 24 months, we will enter the 21st century. And life as we know it will have radically changed. But those changes won't all come at once. They'll come subtly and imperceptibly.

For instance, we, God's people, the church, must be cognizant of the tremendous changes that have taken place in the last few decades in the world's population. It is also important that we recognize that change is still the order of the day. But it is even more important to our task of evangelizing the world to comprehend, as best we can, what world population changes will be in place at the beginning of the 21st century and beyond.

Change in population growth and character means that never before in the history of Christianity has the church had more people to teach about Jesus than we have today. It means that never before have we had such diversity in economics, politics, religion and other cultural mores than we have in our time.

Never before have we been more aware of the existence of "other people" than we are today. We have more people and more different kinds of people to teach about Jesus than the church has ever had. And such changes are continuing and will continue as long as God allows the earth and man to exist. We must get on with the job of evangelizing the masses in the setting of such change with skill and precision.

In raw statistics, the Population Reference Bureau estimates on their most recent "World Population Data Sheet" that in mid-1992 there were 5.4 billion people living in the world. The birth rate per 1,000 population was 26, while the death rate was only nine. With that kind of increase, the population of the world will double in only 41 years. Thus, by the year 2010, the population is projected to be 7.1 billion and by 2025, 8.5 billion.

In a more digestible way of expressing statistics, Frank Kalbe Jansen in an article titled, "World Population Growth," (*Target Earth*) wrote, "Every two seconds, five people are added to the global population. Three are Asians. The earth houses about 7% of all humans that have ever lived."

Jansen also states, "A look at the population

growth chart shows that this 'population explosion' is a recent phenomenon. About the time of Christ there were 169 million, and over the next 1650 years it grew to 500 million. The first billion was passed in 1830. The next billion took 100 years. The third billion took only 30 years to complete, then 15 years for the fourth billion." Population growth and change can occur without our realizing it as graphically as we should, especially since we have the responsibility of evangelizing the world.

He then supports his contention by pointing out that, ". . . in the 20th century the rate of growth increased until every day there are 78,000 new Christians and every week 1,600 new Christian churches." Statistically, those professing to be Christians rose from less than 500 million in 1900 to an expected 2 billion by the year 2000.

It is important that Free Will Baptists prepare for the new changes facing the church. As we conclude the 20th century, we need to look at our present strengths and resources and form a strategy that will create, not just continued growth, but build new churches, spread our ministries to include all peoples. Free Will Baptists have the greatest opportunity to go beyond its present status and have the greatest outreach in the next millennium.

We at Randall House have a new focus—the future. ■



ABOUT THE WRITER: Dr. Alton Loveless is general director of the Sunday School and Church Training Board.



Robert E. Picirilli

Judas, Not Iscariot

How would you like to go down in history as not someone else? This apostle, appearing either 10th or 11th in the lists, did not start out that way. Matthew (10:2-4) identifies him as Lebbaeus, whose surname was Thaddaeus, Mark (3:16-19) simply as Thaddaeus, and Luke (6:14-16) and Acts (1:13) as Judas, the brother of James. This is the reason Jerome, one of the early church fathers, referred to him as Trinomius (that is, three-name).

The King James words, "the brother of" are italicized, showing that they were added by the translators. The original Greek simply says, "Judas of James," and in theory this could mean brother of, son of, father of, perhaps even other relationships.

The stronger probability is that it means son of, here, and this is the reason other versions render it that way.

Judas is the same as Judah, thus a name that was very common among the Jews. We are not sure what James was his father. Some think the apostle James of the inner circle, brother of John, son of Zebedee. This would make Judas a grandson of Zebedee, nephew of the apostle John. While it is not impossible, perhaps not even improbable, we can not be certain of such an identification.

The one who called him, "Judas, not Iscariot," was John, thus providing the only other reference to this apostle, by name, in the New Testament (John 14:22). On that occasion Jesus was giving the apostles extended instruction after the Last Supper.

This Judas followed Peter, Thomas and Philip with a series of interruptions. Peter asked, "Where are you going?"

A little later, Thomas asked, "How can we know the way?"

Subsequently, Philip observed, "Show us the Father and that will be

enough."

Finally, Judas/Lebbaeus/Thaddaeus asked, "How is it that you will manifest yourself to us, and not to the world?"

It's difficult to be sure exactly what his question indicated. A literal translation would read, *How (or, why) has it come to pass (or, What has come to pass) that to us you are going to manifest (or reveal) yourself and not to the world?*

Was he primarily curious about what had brought about this decision of Jesus, or was he trying to understand just how Jesus would manage to reveal Himself to the apostles without revealing Himself to the world? Did he even mean to imply that Jesus would be misguided to hold back a revelation of Himself from the world?

Jack Stallings suggests that he could not imagine why Christ would want to keep that [Messianic] manifestation secret, and that may well be correct.

Regardless, the question probably reveals that Judas, like Peter, Thomas and Philip, failed to understand well what Jesus was saying in this lengthy discourse. (We're glad He promised that they would afterward receive the Spirit to lead them into a fuller understanding!)

Jesus' response, however, said what Judas needed to hear: Those who love Him will be objects of the Father's love. Those who keep His Word, who make a home for that Word in their hearts, can expect Father and Son to come make their home with them.

With him (Greek *par autō*) means at his side, signaling a close, personal relationship. "Home" (King James "abode," Greek *monē*, "dwelling") is the same as in 14:2, mansions, rooms. Jesus is preparing us a dwelling place in the Father's house; meanwhile, His dwelling place is in our hearts!

On the other hand, those who do not love Jesus and observe His words can expect no such thing. The Word, unwelcome, will not enlighten their hearts; the Spirit will not come to them and make a home for God within. The cold and darkness of death will continue; there will be no revelation of Christ to bring them to life.

Judas, not Iscariot, was soon to understand this in his own experience, as do all believers. We have a revelation of Christ that the world does not have. He has made Himself known, at home, within us. Apostles aren't the only ones who need this.

We know nothing further, for sure, about this Judas except that he is the one who has come to be known as St. Jude (as in the children's hospital in Memphis, Tennessee).

The Armenian Church regards him as its founder, and the safest part of the tradition about Judas is that he did indeed evangelize eastward into Armenia/Syria and Northern Persia.

One ancient legend is that King Abgar of Edessa (in the area now in southern Russia) wrote a letter to Jesus Himself, before the crucifixion, asking Him to come and heal him. The legend continues that Jesus did not go but promised to send one of His disciples after the ascension, and that Judas was sent, converted and healed King Abgar and many others, ministered in the area for many years, and was finally martyred and entombed near Mt. Ararat.

Knowing how much of that to credit is beyond our ability. We are able, however, to be confident that Judas was faithful to death and that He who made His home in Judas' heart took him home with Him at the last.

Mark it well, then: this Judas was not the traitor, not a bad identification for any of us. ■

Lead Your Church Financially

Most young preachers pastor smaller churches, which means that financial policies are often already established. The wise young preacher will attempt few changes at first. He must gain the respect and trust of the congregation. He should set goals for the congregation and try to prepare the way for the next pastor.

Prepare a Budget

Leading members to prepare a budget is the first step to give directions to church finances. I had rather call it a "faith financial guide." The first budgets should be short, including such essentials as pastor's provisions, church operation and outreach ministries. Encourage church leaders to reevaluate the financial guide annually.

As the church accepts the advantages of a budget, feel free to make suggestions that certain pastoral provisions be added. For example, the pastor's travel allowance, medical insurance, social security, retirement, denominational meetings and housing could be added to the budget.

A good method of determining the pastor's financial provisions is to ask the deacons, church board or finance committee who are employed to write down their total salary, including benefits. Then get the average salary among those men. That average would be a good norm for the pastor's total provisions.

Auto Allowance

One of the pastor's greatest expenses is sustaining an adequate vehicle. The busy pastor may drive 30,000 miles a year. Most of that mileage occurs when he travels to hospitals, visiting, participating in denominational meetings and traveling to and from church facilities.

A good method of providing the pastor's auto allowance is to determine what the government allows for income tax purposes. Multiply that by the average number of miles the pastor drives annually transacting church business.

Medical Insurance

Providing medical coverage for the pastor and his family benefits the church as well as the pastor. A caring church would want to provide for the pastor and his family in the event of illness. That can be done through providing adequate medical coverage.

Better to pay monthly premiums than for the church to feel obligated to take up large special offerings to help pay off the pastor's medical bills. Group policies are often available at a discount rate for young pastors.

Retirement Benefit

Help yourself, as well as the next pastor, by establishing a retirement program in the church budget. If you leave the church, this important provision will continue for the next pastor. A monthly contribution to the denominational pension plan grows quickly and painlessly if it is included in the church budget.

This forced retirement plan helps the young preacher prepare for a future that he may not consider now. Contact the Board of Retirement for information about enrolling in a growing retirement program.

Social Security

Some churches pay at least half the pastor's social security. Many pay it all. Very few churches could continue to pay the salary of a disabled pastor while employing a new one.



Dennis Wiggs

Church Representation

The pastor represents the church in the district, state and national meetings. The budget should include adequate reimbursement in this important category, including mileage, food and housing.

Parsonage/Housing Allowance?

Churches discuss advantages and disadvantages of owning a parsonage. Many churches provide adequate housing allowance to cover the mortgage, insurance, taxes, utilities and upkeep for their pastor's own home. A housing allowance allows the pastor to build up equity in a home.

The young preacher who settles in for the long haul may prove to the church the advantage of their providing him a housing allowance. This relieves the church of the responsibility of upkeep for the parsonage.

Exercise Patience

It may take years to establish a workable faith financial guide. The young preacher must exercise much patience and wisdom as he leads his congregation in financial matters. He must not think of just himself. He may not pastor that particular congregation his entire ministry. Therefore, whatever financial suggestions he makes should also keep his successor's needs in mind.

Most pastors in our denomination are underpaid. Young preacher, if your congregation is not providing a livable salary, get on your knees and ask the Lord to meet this need. He may move you to another church or move the leaders in your present church to increase your salary provisions. ■

YOUTH UPDATE

Youth Day '98 February 1, 1998

Youth Day 1998! The first Sunday in February has been set aside as a day when the faith of Free Will Baptist youth will be put to work. Thousands of young people across the country sit in the pews of their churches week in and week out - just waiting for an opportunity to take part in the ministry of their church. Youth Day is for them!

Make plans now to use this day to spotlight young people and showcase their talents in service for the Lord. Hundreds of ways to involve students in Sunday school, worship services, or other church-related programs will result from a few moments of creative planning. Several ideas are listed below to help you get things rolling:

Young people can preach, lead singing, provide special music, play an instrument, usher, hand out bulletins, design the bulletin, work in children's church, teach Sunday School, provide drama or a skit for the morning service, visit elderly members of the church in the afternoon, make cards or baskets and deliver them to a nursing home, sponsor an afternoon activity for children, or sponsor an evening fellowship meal and serve it to the church family.

Too often, children and teens are regarded as "future" members of the church. In reality, they should be a vital part of the church today! Youth Day will allow them to become ACTIVE members in the church of Jesus Christ. Take this opportunity to let kids share their talents or recognize those who already do.

The Man from Idaho

By Pat and Roy Thomas

(Antioch, TN: The Home Missions Department of the National Association of Free Will Baptists, 1995, 173 pp., paperback, \$10.)



Thomas Marberry

Roy Thomas is no stranger to Free Will Baptists. He has served our denomination as pastor, home missionary, field secretary for home missions and as general director of the Home Missions Department. He retired from that position December 31, 1995, after approximately 35 years of service.

The first two parts of the book were written by Roy's wife, Pat Thomas, who has served with him in the ministry since 1954. These parts summarize Roy's life and career. The third part, written by Roy, is a collection of his six favorite sermons which he preached in churches across the country.

Roy was born in Colorado, an unusual birthplace for a Free Will Baptist preacher. At that time there were few Free Will Baptist churches in the western part of the nation, and none in Colorado. Roy would later open that state for Free Will Baptists.

During Roy's early years, the family moved frequently. They settled in Idaho when they ran out of money and could go no further. They farmed in Idaho's Magic Valley, one of the richest agricultural regions in our country.

They worked hard and became rather successful. By the time Roy was in high school, the family had one of the largest irrigated farms in Magic Valley.

Roy was not born into a Christian home. His parents were kind, loving, hard-working people, but they were unsaved. In 1951 he left home to join the Air Force. While he was away, a Free Will Baptist preacher named Virgil Florence moved his family to Idaho and began a church in the town of Buhl.

Roy's parents were soon saved and began to write him letters about their newly-found faith in Christ. Roy went home on furlough for Christmas, and while there he accepted Christ as his Savior.

He matured in the faith rapidly. While serving in Korea, he studied his Bible and the Free Will Baptist *Treatise*. During that year of foreign service, he developed many of the basic beliefs and convictions which served him well in the ministry.

Roy answered the call to preach in 1953 while still in the Air Force. He returned to his duty station in Roswell, New Mexico, with a strong desire to

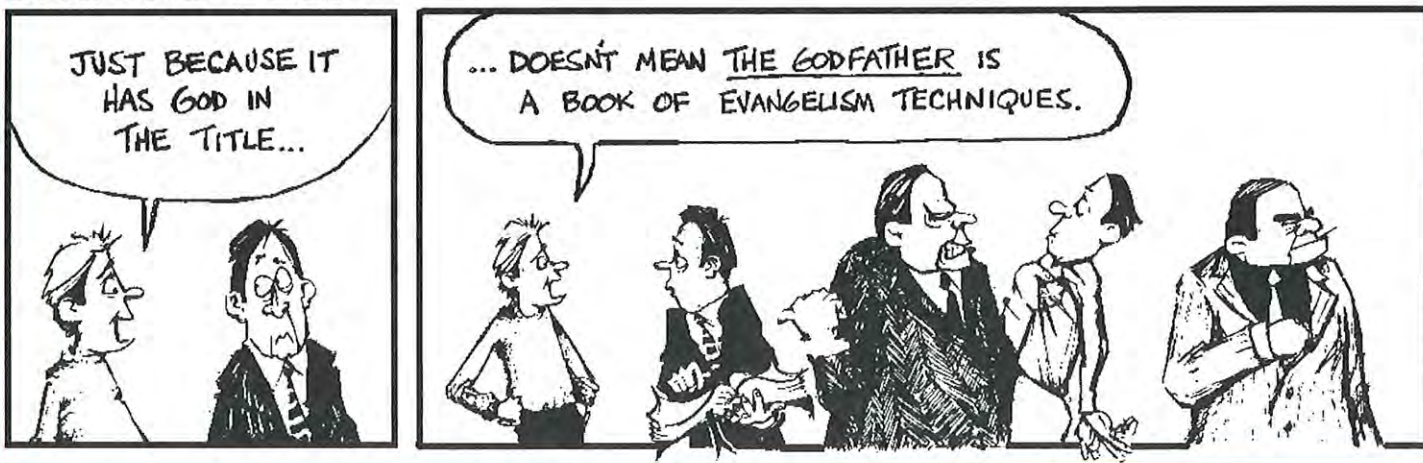
see a Free Will Baptist church in that city. In 1954 he married Pat King, and they began serving Christ as a team.

Shortly after their marriage, Roy and Pat began the church in Artesia, New Mexico. They left the church in 1956 to attend Free Will Baptist Bible College where he graduated in 1960. In August 1960, they were appointed home missionaries to Denver where they served 10 years.

Roy accepted a position with the Home Missions Department in 1971. He continued to serve that department in different capacities for the remainder of his career. He served as general director longer than any other person. He led the department during the years of its greatest growth.

This book is not a biography of Roy Thomas. It contains no evaluation of his contributions; it makes no attempt to analyze his life and thought. It is a well-deserved tribute to a man who has devoted his entire adult life to the service of Christ and Free Will Baptists. Roy and Pat Thomas deserve the thanks and appreciation of all Free Will Baptists. ■

BEYOND BELIEF



Capital Stewardship/Victory Campaign
October 1997
Update

State	Goal	Gifts	Balance
Alabama	\$ 76,397.63	\$ 5,056.15	\$ 71,341.48
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	30,135.88	8,043.31
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	6,224.29	29,230.05
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	33,924.91	26,559.49
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	20,438.10	20,485.56
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	69,714.81	8,842.28
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)
Totals	\$766,583.39	\$285,963.39	\$480,620.00



October 1997

Receipts:			Year To Date	Year To Date	Year To Date
State	Designated	CO-OP	Designated	CO-OP	Total
Alabama	\$ 878.52	\$.00	\$ 4,945.78	\$.00	\$ 4,945.78
Arizona	35.58	.00	3,776.95	371.90	4,148.85
Arkansas	12,031.58	11,946.02	133,230.90	126,656.50	259,887.40
California	.00	1,172.06	1,172.06	9,965.81	10,170.81
Colorado	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00
Delaware	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00
Florida	120.25	.00	120.25	16,150.00	16,533.19
Georgia	16,254.67	2,995.70	19,250.37	27,779.53	200,368.53
Hawaii	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00
Idaho	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00
Illinois	23,507.12	2,698.20	26,205.32	23,827.39	133,157.73
Indiana	755.95	.00	755.95	9,906.72	11,478.38
Iowa	.00	.00	.00	2,439.37	2,749.37
Kansas	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00
Kentucky	1,619.00	323.13	1,942.13	4,743.09	17,275.67
Louisiana	.00	.00	.00	100.00	100.00
Maryland	.00	.00	.00	.00	2,566.78
Michigan	19,935.24	4,089.72	24,024.96	133,679.13	161,515.57
Mississippi	396.50	248.43	644.93	3,497.04	6,497.63
Missouri	44,260.04	.00	44,260.04	433,447.39	433,447.39
Montana	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00
Nebraska	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00
New Jersey	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00
New Mexico	1,243.38	60.20	1,303.58	9,808.60	10,310.99
North Carolina	742.60	1,138.18	1,880.78	10,665.07	21,759.56
Ohio	9,157.96	4,314.61	13,472.57	78,694.59	112,005.95
Oklahoma	59,204.79	9,246.21	68,451.00	533,300.61	569,481.29
South Carolina	38,491.27	103.62	38,594.89	300,450.05	301,513.51
South Dakota	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00
Tennessee	4,520.61	698.65	5,219.26	98,153.92	116,171.03
Texas	4,971.23	245.15	5,216.38	63,370.65	67,207.66
Virginia	615.78	25.00	640.78	8,174.63	8,424.63
Virgin Islands	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00
West Virginia	4,848.74	52.35	4,901.09	44,618.02	45,237.67
Wisconsin	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00
Canada	162.86	5.30	168.16	1,294.33	1,349.44
Northwest Association	.00	.00	.00	95.02	110.02
Northeast Association	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00
Other	.00	.02	.02	390.00	390.13
Totals	\$243,753.67	\$39,362.55	\$283,116.22	\$2,166,453.06	\$352,351.90

Disbursements:					
Executive Office	\$ 7,173.56	\$19,681.30	\$ 26,854.86	\$ 88,646.23	\$ 176,176.24
Foreign Missions	148,573.69	4,526.69	153,100.38	1,306,825.64	40,520.41
FWBCC	11,944.93	4,526.69	16,471.62	134,780.11	40,520.41
Home Missions	62,794.56	3,542.63	66,337.19	537,635.48	31,711.62
Retirement & Insurance	1,047.33	2,755.34	3,802.67	11,780.13	24,664.54
Master's Men	2,459.33	2,755.34	5,214.67	18,348.54	24,664.54
Com. for Theo. Integrity	71.68	98.42	170.10	969.32	880.90
FWB Foundation	697.41	1,180.88	1,878.29	11,907.77	10,570.54
Historical Commission	52.58	98.42	151.00	782.59	880.90
Music Commission	42.66	98.42	141.08	698.87	880.90
Media Commission	59.52	98.42	157.94	804.09	880.90
Hillsdale FWB College	1,313.62	.00	1,313.62	12,860.99	.00
Other	7,522.80	.00	7,522.80	40,413.30	.00
Totals	\$243,753.67	\$39,362.55	\$283,116.22	\$2,166,453.06	\$352,351.90

Coming Next Month...

- The Battered Band
- Leadership Conference Report
- 1998 State Associations
- Tripping on the Tongue

Year of the Dog

Have you noticed that people don't send cats to obedience school? Are cats too dumb to learn? Nope, the problem is attitude, not intelligence. Dogs want to please their masters. Cats, on the other hand, please themselves and use you as a scratching post if you cross them.

The fact is, dogs work for a living while cats loaf. Say a burglar creeps through your window at 3:00 a.m. Guess who sounds the alarm and maybe even chomps on a leg? The much-maligned pooch, that's who. Brother Meow, on the other hand, by his silence acts more like an accomplice.

Dogs retrieve and fetch, roll over and heel while cats simply act bored.

Check this out: Dogs rid the world of Jezebel (1 Kings 21:23). When Gideon whittled down his army of 32,000, the final test for the select 300 included only those soldiers who alertly lapped water like a dog (Judges 7:5). And to be clear on the matter, "... a living dog is better than a dead lion," (Ecc. 9:4).

Dogs watched over Job's flocks (Job 30:1). There's precedence for keeping dogs in the house and feeding them (Mark 7:28). Men turned their backs on the beggar, Lazarus, but dogs came and licked his sores clean (Luke 16:21).

That's a good track record for the dog, frequently referred to by the more discerning as "man's best friend." Now, let's move on to what dogs can teach us.

The September 1997 issue of *From the Beehive* carried a snappy list titled, "Things We Can Learn from Our Dogs." It included 13 sure-fire canine principles. Here's the first one.

"Run, romp and play daily." If that sounds familiar, it's because your doctor told you the same thing

last fall when you had your annual physical. Get out of the house, exercise and enjoy life. Nobody enjoys a good romp in the yard more than a dog that's been cooped up in the house (spelled o-f-f-i-c-e) all day.

"On hot days, drink lots of water and lie under a shade tree." Does dog principle #10 also sound familiar? Doctors usually tell patients to stay out of the hot sun and drink 8-10 glasses of water a day. Dogs have practiced this for a long time and seldom wander far from cool water or a shade tree. (You may substitute Gatorade and a rocking chair.)

"Be loyal." Dog principle #5 is world famous. A dog never turns tail and runs under the front porch when trouble steps into the yard. He won't bite the hand that feeds him. You can count on him when the bullies in life come looking for you.

We need to do some serious study on this "Be loyal" idea. If you think you're somebody important, try bossing around another man's dog. Dogs wrote the book on loyalty and being there for you when everybody else walks out.

"Thrive on attention and let people touch you." That's dog principle #9. The reason some folks act so antsy is that they bare their teeth and never let people get past their growl. Pat a dog gently on the head and you'll come away with a strange sense of serenity.

There's a special kind of healing that only comes with touch. Our society of lawsuits and charges of harassment has lost one of its most priceless qualities—the freedom to be open and transparent.

"When loved ones come home, always run to greet them." Let's hear it for dog principle #4! This is a great



Jack Williams

way to welcome home Dad, Mom or the kids. Replace the accusing, "Supper is cold. Where were you?" with, "Oh, I'm so glad you're here!"

Dogs don't ask how bad your day has been. They accept you as you are, lick your hand and tremble with excitement because someone they love is back in their world. All they want is your attention, a touch, a kind word. They don't complain about the dryer or invite their mother-in-law home unexpectedly.

"No matter how often you're scolded, don't buy into the guilt and pout . . . run right back and make friends." Dog principle #12 is a pretty good philosophy of life for man or beast.

Dogs don't hold grudges. They'll forgive just about anything. Maybe that's why when life falls apart with our other relationships, we like to pull a warm dog close and hug on him. Hmm, that might work with a husband, too.

"Never pretend to be something you're not." Dog principle #6 will prevent an identity crisis. You see, a dog never confuses himself with a pick-up truck or a blue jay. He knows what he is and who he isn't. He knows his limitations and lives life with his strengths. In other words, he doesn't chase a cat bigger than he is, because he might catch him.

Dogs know when it's their duty to bark. They don't waste their energy trying to moo, crow or hiss. The idea here is to know what you can do, and spend your life doing it well. This lowers the frustration level.

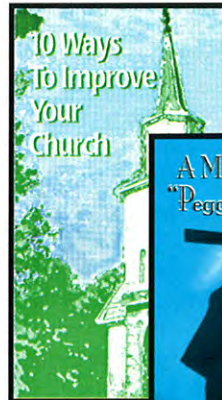
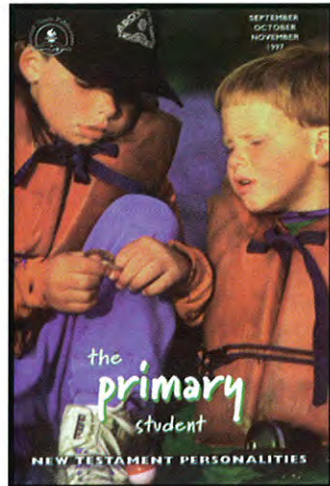
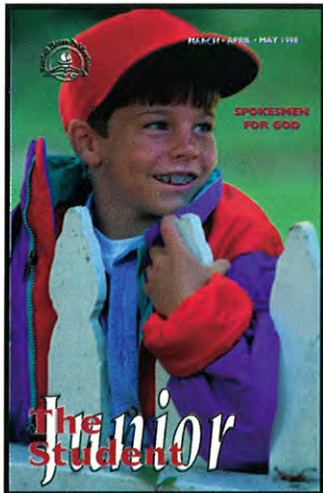
Get on board with me here. Let's put the bite on bad attitudes and frolic more in the sunshine. Maybe we should declare 1998 The Year of the Dog.

Woof! ■

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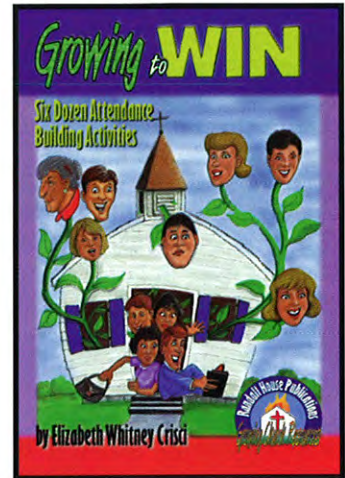
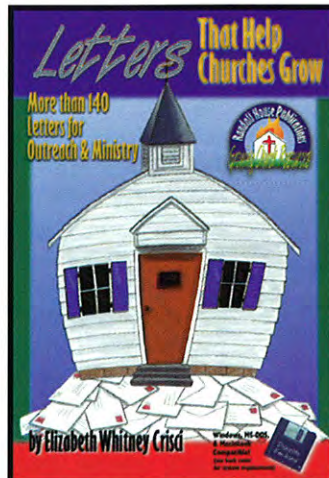
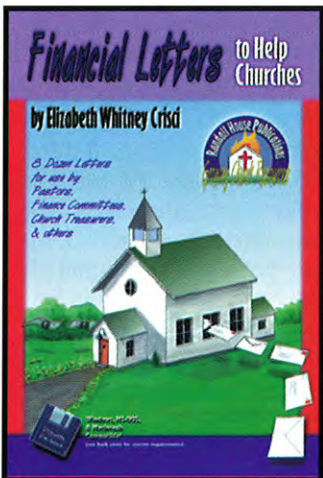
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